

The Ginza Panorama Route – Trek Japan’s Northern Alps 4 Nights/ 5 Days Small Group Tour



**Images courtesy of Nagano Tourism*

The Panorama Ginza Route is one of the most beautiful hikes in the Japanese Alps. As you walk along the ridgeline of the mountains here, you’ll feel like the 3,000-meter peaks of Mt. Yari and Mt. Hotaka are close enough to touch. In the distance, Mt. Fuji floats ever on the horizon. This incredible scenery becomes an unforgettable memory of a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

GoNAGANO

Highlights:

- Experience the beauty of the Northern Japanese Alps, summiting 4 peaks along a ridgeline trail, dropping into lush valleys of old growth forests.
- Meet Japanese trekkers in the mountain huts, where you will have superb, local food.
- Visit shrines and castles and eat delicious fresh soba noodles, legendary cuisine of Nagano prefecture.
- Rejuvenate in the healing thermal 'onsen' springs of Shirahone Onsen

Location: Central Nagano

Main Activity: Alpine Trekking

Difficulty: **Advanced** +2,650m / 8,695ft elevation gain, 40kms /25 miles trekking over 4 days on exposed alpine trails with steep technical sections.

Season: Mid June to mid October (peak hiking season is July/August)

Pax: Minimum 4 Maximum 8

Price (net): Please ask

Departures: On request basis. Requires booking at least 6 months in advance to secure mountain huts and guides.

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(Contact: Nagano Travel Operation Center)

[Map](#)

[Day-by-day Itinerary](#)

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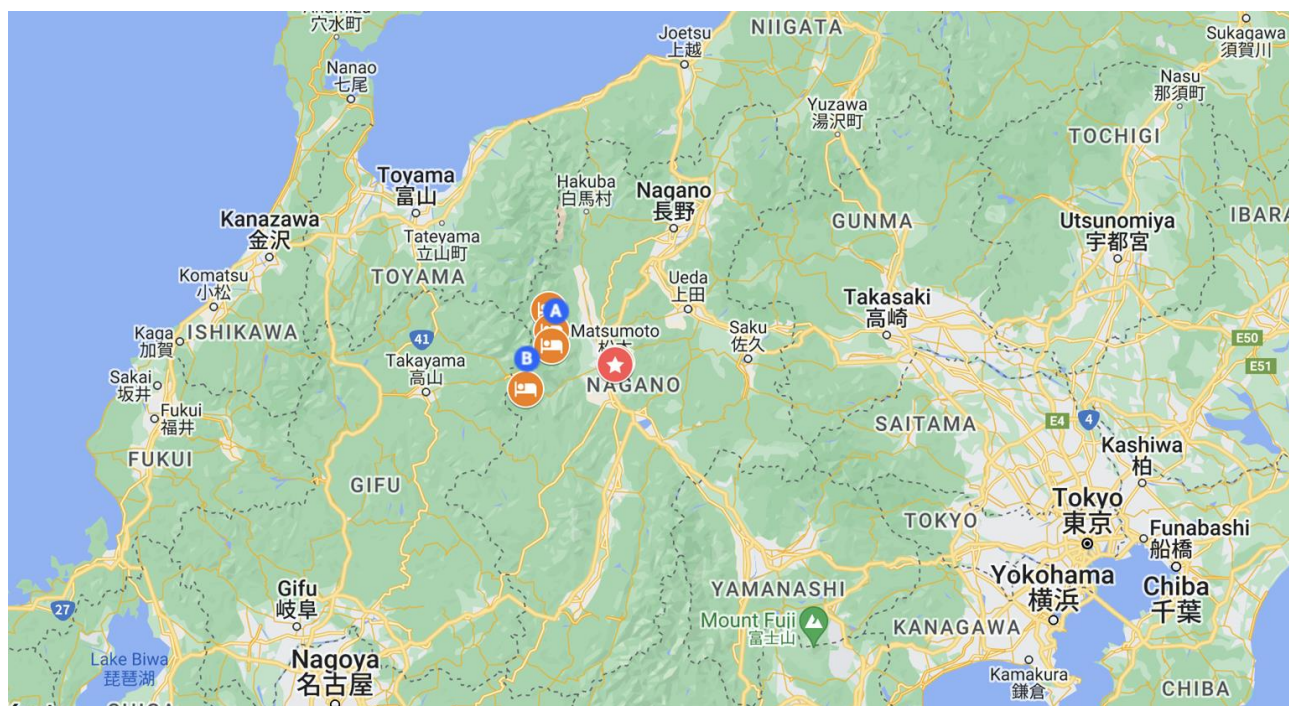
[Packing List](#)

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Tour location map

Click image for Google Map to view accommodation locations

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=13i7uaz2G3Rewdg5ADTxoHp2bplg14eM&usp=sharing>



Panorama Ginza route estimated distances and times.

Day 2	<i>Nakabusa Onsen to Mt. Tsubakuro</i>	~5km	5 - 6 Hours
Day 3	<i>Enzanso Hut to Jonen Hut</i>	~10km	6 - 7 Hours
Day 4	<i>Jonen Hut to Chougatake hut</i>	~8km	4 - 5 Hours
Day 5	<i>Chougatake to Kamikochi</i>	~6km	3 - 4 Hours

Meals along the trail.

Lunch: daily bento box provided by your guides

Dinner/Breakfast: dine at the mountain hut restaurants.

*Huts do not offer special dietary meals, so if vegan / gluten free or other dietary requirements are needed, we can assist to carry in such food and prepare separate meals.

Overview of the 5 night/ 6 day tour

Day 1: Starting in Matsumoto City, explore the city and castle.

Overnight stay at Matsumoto Kagetsu Hotel

Day 2: Transfer early morning to the Nakabusa trailhead

Hike up to Enzanso via the Kassen ridge

Enjoy the serene surroundings and stay at Enzanso Mountain Hut

Day 3: Trekking from Mt. Tsubakuro-dake to Jonen Hut

Trek through the Panorama Ginza trail from Mt. Tsubakuro-dake to Jonen Hut

Overnight stay at Jonen Mountain Hut

Day 4: Trekking from Mt. Jonen to Chogatake

Continue the trek along the Panorama Ginza trail from Mt. Jonen to Chogatake

Overnight stay at Chogatake Hutte

Day 5: Trekking from Chogatake to Kamikochi, arriving by midday to the finish point.

Transfer to Shirahone Onsen, known for its milky hot spring water

Relax and unwind at an Onsen Ryokan.

Day 6: Transfer to Matsumoto Station for onward travel.

Mountain Huts - A Distinctive Aspect of Japanese Mountaineering

Staying in Japanese mountain huts offers a unique and memorable experience. These huts are strategically positioned along the main trails, serving as cozy retreats for hikers, whether embarking on a multi-day trek or just a day excursion.

Similar to hostels, these mountain huts feature shared sleeping arrangements. Despite the close quarters, it fosters a lively atmosphere where hikers can unwind together over drinks and snacks after a day on the trails.

While creature comforts like showers may be absent, and the hut schedule leans towards early nights and early mornings, these mountain huts excel in fostering a strong sense of camaraderie and provide nourishing, hearty meals for weary climbers.

Day 1

*The Azusa Express train from Shinjuku station in Tokyo to Matsumoto station is the most convenient access to Matsumoto city. (Not included in tour price but can be arranged upon request)

Midday start time

Your guide will meet you upon arrival at Matsumoto station. Any luggage can be transferred to the hotel from here.

Enjoy a guided walking tour from the station through Matsumoto city that includes a light lunch at a local soba noodle restaurant and a visit to Matsumoto Castle. One of the main attractions is Matsumoto Castle, also known as the "Crow Castle." It is one of Japan's original castles, dating back to the 16th century. The city serves as a gateway to the Japanese Northern Alps too.



3:00pm Check into Hotel Kagestu. This beautiful heritage building is located very close to Matsumoto castle. <https://matsumotohotel-kagetsu.com/en/>

Spend late afternoon exploring nearby Nakamachi Street, a charming and well-preserved area in Matsumoto, known for its traditional wooden merchant houses (kura). The street is lined with shops, cafes, galleries, and craft boutiques, offering visitors a glimpse into the city's traditional atmosphere. Pick up any last minute supplies and items in preparation for the next 3 days hiking in the alps.

Activity - Easy flat walking | 3.5km/2.2miles | Time: 2 hours

Accommodation – Hotel | Private room twin share with private bathroom

Included Meals - Dinner & Breakfast

Day 2

Early breakfast and check out. Any luggage not required for the trek can be forwarded to the Ryokan Onsen for the final night (day 5).

7:30am Your Trekking guide will meet you at the hotel in Matsumoto this morning. Transfer to the trailhead to start the Panorama Ginza trek. Approximately 50mins by vehicle.

From the trailhead at Nakabusa Onsen, the Kassen Ridge trail ascends 1250m up to the hut and is considered one of the three steepest ascents in the Alps. The 5km steep ascent through the forest up to the Gassen Hut for a rest stop. The last push to the saddle to be rewarded with the trek's namesake – Panorama views.



Upon reaching Enzanso, check-in and enjoy lunch looking out at the views. In the afternoon, make one more push up to the summit of nearby Mt. Tsubakuro and back.

The trek is short, but allow most of the morning and afternoon to complete this day. Early rest and dinner. Lights out at 8pm.

Activity – Trekking (steep ascent) 5km | 3.1miles. 5 – 6 hours

Accommodation – Mountain hut | Shared room | Shared Bathroom (no bath/shower)

Included Meals - Dinner & Breakfast + bento box lunch for next day

Day 3

Japanese hikers tend to start hiking at the crack of dawn, so be ready for an early start to enjoy the morning golden light. Typically, a 6am departure.

The day's hike begins relatively easy with a gentle traverse, then dipping down to a technical section with chains and stairs at the base of Mt. Otensho. The ascent is steep and tiring, scrambling up loose rocks and gravel for about 45 minutes.

At the top of the mountain is Daitenso Hut—a perfect place to stop for lunch.

Having summited the highest peak of the Panorama Ginza route, the rest of this day's hike is mainly a descent. While slowly descending Mt. Otensho and heading to Jonen hut, enjoy the uninterrupted views of Mt. Yari and the alps. The Jonen hut is about 2.5 to 3 hours from the top of Otensho.



Upon reaching Jonen Hut in the saddle of the ridge by mid afternoon, rest up and enjoy the Japanese alpinism culture chatting with other hikers about the day.

Another early dinner. Lights out at 8pm.

Activity – Trekking 10km | 6.2miles. 6-7 hours

Accommodation – Mountain hut | Shared room | Shared Bathroom (no bath/shower)

Included Meals - Dinner & Breakfast + bento box lunch for next day

Day 4

With the hut facing East, the first morning rays will welcome a new day for an early start on the trail.

The third day on the trail may seem shorter than yesterday, but it does start with a steep and rocky hour-long climb to the top of Mt. Jonen, the highest point for the day. It offers panoramic views of the mountains and into the Kamikochi basin below.

From here, the ridgeline dips and rises, sometimes quite suddenly, dropping below the tree line and soaring above it again. After about 3.5 hours of traversing, Mt. Chouyari appears, a small peak between Jonen and Mt. Chougatake. From there, it's just 1.6 kilometres, or about 45 minutes, to the peak of Chougatake and the last mountain hut.



The Chogatake Hut sits in the middle of the ridgeline, facing Mt. Yari and the Hotaka mountain range. This lodge's specialty is its miso, made and fermented in-house from locally grown rice and soybeans.

Enjoy a final hearty mountain hut dinner. Lights out at 8pm.

Activity – Trekking 8km | 4.9 miles. 6 hours

Accommodation – Mountain hut | Shared room | Shared Bathroom (no bath/shower)

Included Meals - Dinner & Breakfast + bento box lunch for next day

Day 5

The final day on this trek is a mainly a decent down into the valley basin below with a flat trail to reach Kamikochi by lunchtime for a cold beer and steak lunch.



One of the most famous areas within the Japanese Northern Alps is Kamikochi, a picturesque valley located in the Azusa River basin. Kamikochi is known for its pristine beauty, crystal-clear rivers, and dramatic mountain scenery. You may spot some monkeys (Japanese Macaques) who have learnt how to catch fish from the river!

Upon reaching the iconic Kappa Bridge in Kamikochi, sit down to a well earned steak lunch and cold beer to conclude the trek! (vegetarian/dietary options available)

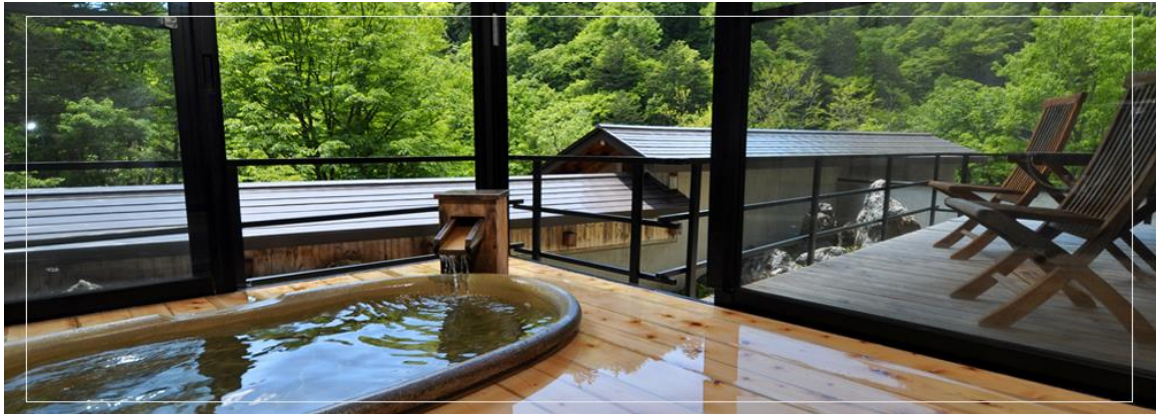
Day 5 continued....

After lunch in Kamikochi, a short transfer (20 mins by bus) to rest up and bathe in the healing onsen waters at Shirahone Onsen Ryokan, a traditional Japanese Inn.

Stay at Yumoto Saito Ryokan. <https://www.shirahone.net>

Your luggage forwarded from the first night will be waiting for you here. You will be longing for a shower and bath after 3 nights in the mountains.

Shirahone Onsen Ryokan is not only a place to unwind and rejuvenate but also a testament to the rich history and cultural heritage of hot springs in Japan.



Immerse yourself in traditional Japanese hospitality; sleep in tatami-matted rooms and futon beds, take communal baths (private onsen baths also available).

This night will be a farewell banquet to share stories and reflect on the trekking adventure with your fellow hikers over an exquisite kaiseki (multi-course) meal featuring local and seasonal ingredients.

Activity – Trekking 6km | 3.7 miles. 4 hours

Accommodation – Ryokan | twin share Japanese tatami room with futon beds | Private bathroom | public and private onsen pools available.

Included Meals - Dinner & Breakfast

Day 6

Enjoy a relaxing morning over a big Japanese breakfast.

Transfers will be arranged to take you back to Matsumoto station for onward travel.

Tour concludes at midday at Matsumoto station.

*Alternatively, transfers to Takayama can be arranged depending on travel plans.

Activity – NA

Accommodation – NA

Included Meals – Breakfast

Accommodations :

Day	Location	Type	Room
1	Matsumoto	Hotel	Private, western style rooms with ensuite
2	Alpine Trail	Mountain Hut	Shared, futon sleeping area or bunks/ shared bathroom
3	Alpine Trail	Mountain Hut	Shared, futon sleeping area or bunks/ shared bathroom
4	Alpine Trail	Mountain Hut	Shared, futon sleeping area or bunks/ shared bathroom
5	Shirahone Onsen	Ryokan	Private tatami mat and futon bedding with ensuite bathroom

Please note that you may be asked to show your passport when checking into accommodation in Japan. It is a requirement for accommodation providers to take a photocopy of the passport of overseas guests.

Tour Inclusions:

- 5 nights accommodation
- 5 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 5 dinners + snacks and refreshments
- Drinking water (many access points to refill your own bottle)
- English speaking guides throughout the tour
- Qualified and experienced mountain guide(s). Guest to guide ratio 6:1. We have a documented Emergency Response Plan (ERP) and all guides carry first aid kits.
- All transportation from the start point at Matsumoto station to the finish point back to Matsumoto station

Exclusions:

- Travel to the start/finish points of this tour
- Alcoholic beverages
- Additional room charges such as minibar, extra cleaning
- Any personal expenses
- Rental clothing and gear for trekking.

Packing List

Below is a list of essential items for trekking in an alpine environment. Understandably, you may not want to lug all that gear to Japan, so there are rental options. Please let us know if you would like to rent items when applying to this tour.

Essentials

- Rain wear – waterproof jacket and pants
- Hiking boots
- Fleece or down jacket
- Thermal layers top and bottom
- Spare socks
- Gloves & beanie
- Hat, sunscreen and sunglasses
- Water bottle/hydration system – at least 2L capacity
- Head lamp
- Toiletries / personal medications
- Backpack to carry items above
- Rain cover for backpack
- Travel insurance
- Passport
- Cash (small shops and restaurants often only accept cash)

Recommended Items

- Folding walking poles
- Gaiters for boots
- Preferred snacks
- Sleeping bag liner and own pillow (inflatable type)
- Sanitizers/wet wipes
- Battery for charging devices
- Swim wear (just in case!)

Please Read Information

Fitness and suitability of this tour

This tour will appeal to experienced hikers who are physically able to take on rigorous multi day treks. This is not for beginner hikers, though may suit people who have high level of fitness through other athletic pursuits such as running marathons.

The mountain huts DO NOT HAVE SHOWERS. Guests must be willing to stay in mountain huts without showers for an extended period (3 nights).

Dietary Restrictions

Japan abounds in culinary delights, and we always aim to dine like locals. We are mindful that our guests may have food allergies and dietary restrictions. If you can let us know these requirements on application to this tour, where possible we will cater to meet those needs.

A note to vegetarians/vegans: Outside of the city centres, it is difficult to find 100% plant-based food. Even a humble bowl of miso soup is likely to contain dashi or fish broth. Some degree of flexibility will go a long way when dining in rural areas.

Emergency Response Plan

Safety is paramount and you can be assured all our guides are experienced and certified Wilderness First Aid Responders. All our guides, including your host throughout the itinerary, will carry a First Aid Kit and have a response plan to communicate with authorities in case of a medical emergency. A risk assessment of the weather and potential hazards will be undertaken throughout the trip with alternative plans ready to action where required.



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