

Yukiguni - Northern Nagano Winter Adventure 3 Nights/ 4 Days FIT or Small Group Tour



**Images courtesy of Nagano Tourism*

Winter in Nagano is a magical place. With snow monkeys bathing in hot spring onsens, visitors walking around windy streets of sleepy villages in traditional yukatas, shrines and temples offering religious ceremonies that span hundreds of years, and infinite untouched snowy mountains, Nagano in Winter is sure to delight. Unlike skiing, a snowshoe adventure offers the opportunity to slow down and explore Nagano's expansive scenery by foot while enjoying its numerous culinary, religious, and cultural features. Almost every step of the way is on completely untouched powder snow where no one has stepped before.

GoNAGANO

Highlights:

- Explore Zenkoji, participate in Shakyo and Zen meditation, followed by a stay in Togakushi's shukubo and a walk to Oku sha.
- Visit Shibu Onsen for soba making, see the snow monkeys, and enjoy local sake and craft beers, ending with a stay at Ryokan Shibu.
- Travel to Shiga Kogen for stunning views from Yokoteyama, snowshoe down Shibu Toge, and conclude with dining at a local izakaya in Shibu Onsen.

Location: [Northern Nagano](#)

Main Activity: Snowshoe Walking and Cultural Experiences

Difficulty: **Easy** moderate fitness ability to walk up to 5 kms. No snowshoe experience required.

Season: Late December to mid March (for snow based experiences)

Pax: Minimum 2 Maximum 8

Price (net): Please ask

Departures: On request basis. Requires booking at least 2 months in advance to secure accommodation and guides

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(Contact: Nagano Travel Operation Center)

[Map](#)

[Day-by-day Itinerary](#)

[Inclusions/Exclusions](#)

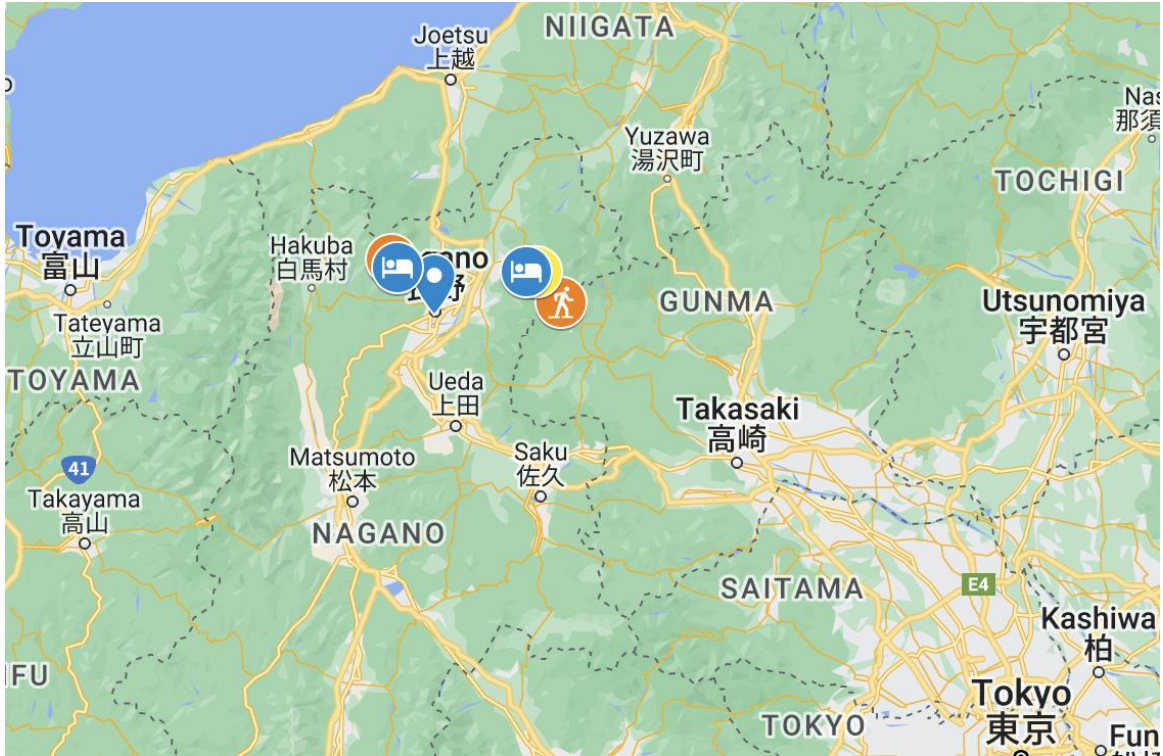
[Packing List](#)

[Please Read Information](#)

Tour location map

Click image for Google Map to view key locations covered in this tour

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1mYD-WhmsaDIGa2PdNGGrpKX5V1cNkg4&usp=sharing>



Overview of the 3 night/ 4 day tour

Day 1: Tour starts from Nagano Station (accessible by Shinkansen 80 mins from Tokyo) Visit Zenkoji temple and transfer to Togakushi
Overnight stay in a Temple lodge.

Day 2: Snowshoe trek through the forest and Okusha shrine, hidden deep in the mountain side. Transfer to Shibu Onsen in the afternoon.
Overnight stay in an Onsen Ryokan

Day 3: Visit the world famous snow monkeys early in the morning before the crowds. In the afternoon make your own soba noodles, a staple food of Nagano.
Stay a second night at Onsen Ryokan

Day 4: Visit Japan's highest elevation ski area Yokoteyama for alpine views and snowshoe trekking. Lunch in Obuse and transfer to Nagano Station for onward travel.



Day 1

*The Hokuriku Shinkansen from Tokyo Station is the most convenient access to Nagano city. (Not included in tour price but can be arranged upon request)

Late morning start time

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

Start with a walk up to Zenkoji Temple, one of Japan's most important Temples. Founded in the 7th century and stores the first Buddhist statue ever to be brought into Japan when Buddhism was first introduced in the 6th century. Lunch at one of the many restaurants around the Temple grounds.



2:00pm Transfer by vehicle to Togakushi (50 mins). In contrast to Nagano City's Buddhist Temple Zenkoji, the woods of Togakushi are dotted with Shinto shrines. For over 1000 years, ascetic monks have traveled here seeking training and enlightenment.

Check in to Gokui a Pilgrims Inn. Afternoon of contemplation with Shakyō and Zen meditation.

*Shakyō is a Japanese Buddhist practice handwriting Sutras. Shakyō is considered a form of meditation and spiritual practice.

A highlight of staying in a Shukubo Pilgrims Inn is the *shojin ryōryō*, vegan temple food that is incredibly delicious, even if you are not vegan!

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

Accommodation – Shukubo Gokui Pilgrim's Inn (Not en suite)

Included Meals - Lunch & Dinner

Day 2

7:30am Start the day with 'Chouhai' or Morning Prayers, the Monk performs this daily ritual and anyone can join, simply take in the atmosphere. Allow 20 mins.

Enjoy a healthy breakfast before departing for the days activities.

A short drive for today's snowshoe hike in the beautiful forest around Togakushi Shrine and Joshinetsu national park. We begin the day by snowshoeing through the woods, before coming to an opening and a frozen lake. On clear days, the view of Mt. Togakushi in the background is stunning. We continue onto a cedar lined avenue with 400-year-old trees and a famous thatch gate. We snowshoe down to the shrine entrance, where are picked up and taken to a late lunch in Togakushi village.



In the afternoon, transfer by vehicle to Shibu Onsen, about 1.5 hours drive to rest up and bathe in the healing onsen waters at a Shibu Onsen Ryokan, a traditional Japanese Inn. A 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). A highlight is the exquisite kaiseki (multi-course) meal featuring local and seasonal ingredients.

Activity – Snowshoe trekking 5km | 3.1miles. 3-4 hours

Accommodation – Ryokan Japanese Inn | Private Tatami mats & futon bedding room | Private bathrooms (Western beds can be arranged)

Included Meals - Dinner, Lunch & Breakfast

Day 3

Start today with a visit to the Snow Monkey Park. It is a short drive to the Snow Monkey trailhead and a short hike (1.5 km) This is highly popular with visitors both domestic and overseas, especially in the winter months. Getting there early in the morning is ideal before all the tourist buses arrive.



After the morning visiting the monkeys, return to Shibu Onsen village where we try our hand at making our own soba noodles with a charismatic teacher. Soba noodles can be eaten throughout Japan but they are especially famous in Nagano. With abundant buckwheat and fresh water from the mountains, Nagano's artisans make simple yet incredibly aromatic soba.

Dinner at a local Izakaya restaurant
Stay a second night at the Ryokan Japanese Inn

Activity – Light walking 5km|3.1miles. 3 hours

Accommodation – Ryokan Japanese Inn | Private Tatami mats & futon bedding room | Private bathrooms (Western beds can be arranged)

Included Meals - Dinner (local restaurant) Breakfast, Lunch

Day 4

After checking out of the Ryokan, drive 40 mins to Shiga Kogen where we take a series of chairlifts up the highest elevation ski resort in Japan. On clear days the views are spectacular with sights of both Mt. Fuji and the Sea of Japan. We stop to enjoy a coffee and crumpet at the crumpet cafe, before descending 3 hours to the bottom of Yokoteyama Ski Resort.



After the snowshoe trek, a vehicle will transfer you back to Nagano City.

The return drive back to Nagano, stop by the town of Obuse. This historic town lined with elegant Edo-style homes and quaint gardens was once loved by Hokusai, the ukiyo-e woodblock print artist best known for depicting Mt. Fuji and towering ocean waves. The town pays its respects to the celebrated artist with the Hokusai Museum and many points of interests to fill the creative soul. Obuse is a major production area for sweet chestnuts, within a prefecture that is already known for its excellent rice, buckwheat and sake, so you are sure to find plenty of tempting treats.

Finish at Nagano station late afternoon for your train back to Tokyo, or next destination

Activity – Snowshoe trekking 6km|4.2 miles. 4 hours

Accommodation – none (final day)

Included Meals - Lunch

Accommodations :

Day	Location	Type	Room
1	Togakushi	Pilgrim Inn	Private room, futons/ share bathroom (ensuite options available)
2	Shibu Onsen	Hot Spring Ryokan Inn	Private room, futon bedding and private bathroom. Private hot springs can be reserved
3	Shibu Onsen 2nd night same	Hot Spring Ryokan Inn	Private room, futon bedding and private bathroom. Private hot springs can be reserved

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.

The listed accommodations are examples, and other lodging options are available.

Tour Inclusions:

- 3 nights accommodation
- 3 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 3 dinners + snacks and refreshments
- Drinking water (many access points to refill your own bottle)
- English speaking guides throughout the tour
- Activities outlined in this itinerary
- Qualified and experienced snowshoe trekking 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 Nagano station to the finish point back to Nagano 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!)

Important Information

Fitness and suitability of this tour

This tour will appeal to visitors wanting to enjoy the winter wonderland of Nagano. It is ideal for non-skiers and perhaps first timers to experience snow. Snowshoes are a great introduction to enjoy the winter environment. Moderate fitness is required.

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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