



Sapporo Information



Sapporo is Japan's 5th largest city with a population of 1.9 million, and the capital of Japan's northern island of Hokkaido. Only 150 years or so have passed since the pioneers first arrived, making it a relatively young city. Since the staging of the Winter Olympics in 1972, Sapporo has continued to develop into a truly international city, hosting various international events including the FIFA World Cup in 2002, the Ski Jumping World Cup, the Nordic World Ski Championships, and in 2017 is set to host the Asian Winter Games. Despite being a large metropolis, a short trip out to the suburbs reveals abundant natural scenery, where outdoor leisure activities such as hiking, canoeing and camping can be enjoyed. Each of the four seasons bring their own delights, and every year many tourists from both home and abroad visit the region, which is famous for being one of Japan's leading producers of delicious foodstuff. The city also ranks number one among the places Japanese people would like to live.

History



Originally inhabited by the indigenous Ainu, the full-scale colonization of Sapporo by the Japanese government began in 1869. The name Sapporo is said to have derived from the Ainu words sari poro pet meaning a river lined with a large reed bed, or sat poro pet meaning large dried-up river.

Thanks to the efforts of Edwin Dun and Horace Capron, who were hired from the United States by the government during the colonial period, the American influence on urban planning, architecture, agriculture and stock farming is still evident today.

Climate

Hokkaido's climate, with its four distinct seasons, means that summers are warm



with temperatures exceeding 30°C on some days, and winters are very snowy with some days as cold as minus 10°C. Unlike Japan's main island of Honshu, Hokkaido has no rainy season, and spring, summer, autumn and winter can each be enjoyed in their own distinctive way.

Sapporo is situated at the same latitude as Milan in Italy and Toronto in Canada, and is unique in that it is the world's only city with a population of over one million, where more than 5 meters of snow falls every year.

Culture



The Pacific Music Festival (PMF), an international educational music festival

aimed at nurturing young musicians from around the world, which began after a proposal by Leonard Bernstein, is held every summer. In addition, the Yosakoi Soran Festival (June), which developed from a traditional Hokkaido folk song and began as a student-planned event, is now a huge event that attracts participants from throughout Hokkaido, Japan and even overseas. The city also boasts professional baseball, soccer and basketball teams.

Food



Thanks to the extreme differences in temperatures and the natural environment of the mountains and the seas, Hokkaido is a treasure-trove of agricultural and marine products. Dishes made from such fresh, delicious ingredients, as well as sweets prove extremely popular throughout Japan, and such delights are



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famous as the “Hokkaido Brand” overseas, too. Delicious food from all around Hokkaido can be found in Sapporo, and the cuisine is an important element of tourism here. In particular, the Susukino area of the city is where many restaurants and bars can be found, with the choice too exhaustive for even the locals.

Typical Sapporo dishes include ramen, jingisukan (mutton barbeque) and soup curry, with subtle differences in flavor according to individual establishments. Sapporo Beer, which is available throughout Japan, has a special beer that can only be enjoyed in Hokkaido.



Hot springs



Hot-spring water can be found even in central Sapporo, and there are a number of facilities where non-overnight guests can also enjoy bathing. For those wishing to relax a little more, the Jozankei Onsen area is recommended.

This spa area includes several accommodation facilities where hot springs and dining can be enjoyed, and is popular among overnight guests from both home and abroad. Many of the facilities offer traditional Japanese-style rooms, where guests can experience Japanese culture while relaxing in a yukata robe.

Shopping



The downtown districts around Sapporo Station and Odori are expansive shopping areas, where establishments from department stores to small shops sell almost everything from world-famous brand products to handmade knick-knacks.

Famous Hokkaido confectionary can be found in the basements of most major department stores. Those looking for electrical goods should head for the area around Sapporo Station.

Entertainment



Sapporo has various cultural facilities, including museums, art galleries and even a zoo, but maybe the best way to enjoy Sapporo is the Susukino area at nighttime. This entertainment district is chock-a-block

with izakaya-style wining and dining establishments and bars, and their close proximity means you can walk between several on a “pub crawl” just like the locals.

Being an entertainment district, the streets are bustling with people at night, and are safe enough for females to walk alone.

Exchange Cashing

Many city center banks offer foreign exchange services, however they only open between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm. Outside these hours, the following places are recommended.

Hokkaido Bank Foreign Exchange Plaza (Odori area: Hinode Bldg. B2, Minami 1-jo Nishi 4-chome (South 1 West 4?), Chuo-ku, Sapporo)

Weekdays: 10:00 am – 7:00 pm

Saturdays: 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

※Closed on Sundays and public holidays

Credit card cashing is available at Seven Bank ATMs (this service is not available at other banks’ ATMs). Seven Bank ATMS are located inside Seven Elevens (24-hour convenience stores) and Yodobashi Camera (Sapporo Station area) in the city.

For further details, please refer to the following website.

<http://www.sevenbank.co.jp/intlcard/index2.html>

Useful website

For more details about Sapporo and sightseeing, please visit the following URL.

Hokkaido Tourism Organization <http://en.visit-hokkaido.jp/>

City of Sapporo <http://www.welcome.city.sapporo.jp/english/index.html>

Sapporo Tourist Association <http://www.sta.or.jp/english/>

Tourist Information Desk

English staffs available at a several Tourist Information Desk.

Please find the information at

<http://www.welcome.city.sapporo.jp/english/access/information.html>.