

How to Enjoy Hokkaido

How to enjoy Hokkaido on the cheap! Tips for visitors from abroad!



写真提供:平取町立二風谷アイヌ文化博物館

Appreciating Ainu Culture

Hokkaido's Saru River flows from the Hidaka mountain range to the Pacific Ocean. At the middle region of the river is Nibutani. Records from the latter half of the Edo period (1603 until 1868) state that there was a *kotan*, or Ainu village, here. From the Meiji period (1868–1912) onwards, the homes of the people of Nibutani gradually changed from *chise*, or traditional homes, to modern dwellings. Today, Nibutani Kotan, in Biratori Town, has many Ainu cultural facilities, including recreated traditional *cise*. At the *Biratori Chouritsu Nibutani Ainu Bunka Hakubutsukan* (Biratori Municipal Nibutani Ainu Culture Museum), visitors can learn about—and experience—the Ainu culture of the Saru River basin through four different zones. These are The Ainu Way of Life, Dramas of the Gods, Blessings of the Earth, and A Tradition of Figurative Art. Also visit the Kayano Shigeru Nibutani Ainu *Shiryokan* (Museum). Kayano Shigeru, an extraordinary person, was the first Ainu *kokkai-giin* (Diet Member). Many years ago, I assisted with an English translation of Ainu folktales that he had collected. The concepts were not easy for us to understand, so Mr. Kayano patiently taught us much about the Ainu *sekai-kan* (worldview). The museum and archives contain over 1,000 pieces, including Ainu folk artifacts that he collected for over 40 years. But please realize that Ainu culture is not simply a museum piece, but is very much alive today. The nearby *Takumi no Michi* (Street of Artisans) is lined with Ainu artisan workshops. You will see examples of traditional crafts such as *Nibutani-ita*, carved wooden trays, and *Nibutani-attus*, fabric woven from the fibers of tree bark. In 2013, these become Hokkaido's only items to be designated as official traditional crafts by the *Keizai-sangyou-shou* (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry)! You can purchase goods made using these crafts at the Nibutani Craft Center or at one of the many workshops on the Street of Artisans. By the end of the day, I'm sure you will appreciate and respect the Ainu worldview. (Museums: 9:00-16:30; Closed during winter. Entry tickets are sold separately and in combination, so it is worthwhile to confirm facility openings and plan your day ahead of time.)

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平取町二風谷で“今も生き続けるアイヌ文化”にふれる旅。

日高山脈から太平洋まで流れる沙流川(さるがわ)の流域に位置する二風谷(にぶたに)はアイヌの伝統文化が色濃く残る地域です。現在、「二風谷コタン」に平取町立二風谷アイヌ文化博物館や沙流川歴史館、平取町アイヌ文化情報センターなどの関連施設があるほか、伝統的なチセ(家)が復元されています。アイヌの暮らしを学びながら体験でき、1,000点以上の民具の展示を通して“今も生き続けるアイヌ文化”にふれることができます。旅の最後には地域で活躍している工芸家たちの作品をお土産にどうぞ。

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