

How to Enjoy Hokkaido

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



Eco Museum Osashima Center (Atelier 3 More)

Small village, large legacy

For tourists, biggest is often best. Likewise, visitors to Hokkaido go to its highest mountain (Asahidake), its deepest lake (Shikotsu), its largest city (Sapporo), and its tallest building (JRTower). But how about visiting Hokkaido's smallest village? That would be Otoineppu, located halfway between Asahikawa and Wakkanai. As of January 2025, it had an estimated population of only 584. Yet it is known not only for its size, but for being a *mori to takumi no mura* (a village of forests and artisans). To find out why, first drop by the Eco Museum Osashima Center (Atelier 3 More). This building used to be Atelier 3 More, the workshop of Bikky Sunazawa (1931-1989), a well-known artist, and now it is his memorial museum. On display are around 200 works by Sunazawa, a *dokugaku* (self-taught) *kiborika* (woodcarver), painter, artist, and sculptor of Ainu origin. The museum also recreates Sunazawa's *atorie* (atelier). (April 26 through October, 9:30-16:30; Closed Monday, or Tuesday when Monday is a holiday. Admission: ¥300; JHS and younger: Free.) Sunazawa created *choukoku* (sculptures) that could be touched and moved, rather than merely seen. Do his sculptures inspire you to feel the warmth of wood with your own hands? If so, please visit Mokuuyuukan, a *mokkou* (woodworking) facility where locals can create their own wood projects. They can buy wood, borrow *dougu* (tools), and get advice from staff members. As a visitor, you can experience simple woodworking from a kit. For example, depending on how much time you have, you can create a cutting board (¥500), a photo frame (¥1000) or other wooden objects. (Monday-Friday, 10:00-16:00. Closed Saturday, Sunday, public holidays. Opening dates and times may change, so please check the Otoineppu village website at the QR code below. Admission: Adults and SHS ¥220, ¥330 in winter; JHS and younger: Free.) This creative energy is further *hagukumareru* (nurtured) at Hokkaido Otoineppu Art and Craft High School, where students from all over the country come to learn woodworking and painting. The smallest village in Hokkaido is leaving a larger legacy than you might expect! On the way back, be sure to buy Otoineppu's famous black *soba* (buckwheat) noodles as a souvenir.

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“森と匠の村”として知られる、北海道で最も小さな村とは。

北海道で最も大きな都市は札幌ですが、最も小さい村をご存知ですか？それは旭川市と稚内市の間に位置し、推定人口わずか584名(2025年1月時点)のおといねっぷ村。実は“森と匠の村”としても知られています。北海道出身の現代彫刻家・砂澤ビッキが創作活動をしていた土地で、かつて工房だった場所は「エコミュージアムおさしまセンター(アトリエ3モア)」という記念館になり、砂澤氏の作品が約200点展示されています。他にも「山村・都市交流センター 木遊館」では、2〜4時間で完成できる“キット制作”で鍋敷きやカトラリーケースを作ることができます。さらに「北海道おといねっぷ美術工芸高等学校」には工芸や美術を学びたい学生が全国から集まり、未来の芸術家が育まれています。



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