

How to Enjoy Hokkaido

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



写真提供: ノンノの森ネイチャーセンター



Back to Nature

Are you feeling tired or stressed? Or are you simply in need of some self-care? Luckily for you, Hokkaido is one of the most popular destinations for *uerunesu* (wellness) tourism. Part of the reason is Hokkaido's many hot springs and forests. The simple act of spending time in a forest is a Japanese wellness practice, and it is called *shinrin-yoku* (forest bathing). In fact, Japanese doctors recommend forest bathing as a relaxing break from *awatadashii* (hectic) urban life. An advanced form of forest bathing is *shinrin serapii* (forest therapy). Forest therapy *saidaika-suru* (maximizes) the positive effects of the *kaori* (scents), sounds, air, and scenery of the forest. For a unique wellness experience, visit the town of Tsubetsu in the eastern part of Hokkaido, only 30 minutes from Memanbetsu Airport. At Tsubetsu's *Nonno-no-Mori* (Nonno Forest), you can experience forest therapy with the expert help of certified guides! (90 minutes; daily 9:30 and 13:00; June–Oct. Reservations required. JHS and above ¥3850; elementary ¥1650.) After the session, you will surely wish that you could bring home some of those relaxing forest scents. And guess what—you can! On another nature tour, a guide will show you how to collect various plants from Nonno Forest. After that, you will use a *jouryuu-ki* (distiller) to make your own bottle of *haabu* (herbal) water to take home! (90 minutes; daily 10:00 and 13:30; year-round. Reservations required. JHS and above ¥4400; elementary ¥2750; preschool ¥1980). After a good night's sleep, get up early the next morning for a guided tour to Tsubetsu *Touge* (Pass). You might be able to see a spectacular sight, an *unkai* (sea of clouds) that covers Lake Kussharo in the early morning. The clouds change colors as the sun rises. On days when a sea of clouds does not appear, you will still enjoy the *subarashii keshiki* (stunning scenery) of Lake Kussharo and the surrounding mountains in the morning sunlight. (90 minutes; daily 5:20; June–Oct. Reservations required. JHS and above ¥3850; elementary ¥1800; preschool ¥700). Finally, before leaving the area, as part of your wellness experience, please enjoy a meal made with *jimotosan* (locally-produced) organic milk, vegetables, and beef. Why does everything taste so good? I can think of three reasons: the fresh air from the forests that make up about 80% of Tsubetsu's total area; the clean water from the Tsubetsu River and the Abashiri River; and the hard work of the local farmers. Oh yes, perhaps there is one more reason. After refreshing your body and mind with forest therapy and beautiful scenery, you must have a good appetite! **J**

「森林セラピー®」で心と体が休まる旅を。

忙しい毎日の中で疲れやストレスが溜まっていませんか?豊かな自然に恵まれた北海道は心身のリフレッシュに最適な観光地といえます。中でも女満別空港から車で約30分の場所に位置する津別町では、6月～10月まで「森林セラピー®」が体験できます。天然記念物のクマゲラやアカゲラをはじめとする野鳥やエゾシカ、キタキツネなどの野生動物が暮らす「ノンノの森」を散策し、森の香りや音、空気を全身で感じられるほか、集めた樹々の葉からハーブウォーターを抽出して持ち帰ることもできます。早朝には津別峠展望台から眺める雲海ツアーも行われているので、ぜひ早起きをして参加してみてください。神秘的な絶景に心奪われることでしょう。

文＝米坂スザンヌ(米国カリフォルニア生まれ、フランス語学士、英語修士、1983年から札幌在住。北海道大学名誉教授。)

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