

A City Steeped in History and Culture

HOKKAIDO OTARU

北海道

小樽



 **TARU** — *A World of Nostalgia*

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HISTORY

From a City of International Business to a City of International Tourism

Otaru has a long and proud history as a town of international business. This rich cultural heritage lives on, charming the hearts of countless visitors.



The city of Otaru grew to become one of Japan's most prominent port cities between the end of the 19th century and the middle part of the 20th century. Many of the historical buildings as well as the trademark Otaru

canal were built at the height of Otaru's trade dominance when the city moved markets as far away as London. Today, the charm of Otaru's unique townscape, which features a mix of Japanese and Western style architecture, draws in many visitors from around the world.

The Otaru Canal – The City's Most Visited Tourist Destination

A pleasant downhill stroll from Otaru Station leads visitors to the doorstep of the Otaru Canal, first completed in 1923. The Otaru Canal was not built to carry water inland, but rather is simply a narrow waterway created between the shoreline and a land reclamation project in the harbor. After the start of the 1960s, a plan was hatched to fill in the entire canal to create a road, but a preservationist movement soon spread throughout Japan which caused a change of plans. In the end, half of the original canal was filled in to create a road, while the remaining half became the Otaru Canal in its current form. Today, the canal has become Otaru's most visited tourist destination, with the surrounding area calling home to many restaurants, souvenir shops and hotels with picturesque views.



Half of the original Otaru Canal was filled in to make way for a road. The north end of the canal—known as North Canal—retains the width of the original waterway.



A City Alive with Stories

Canals, historical buildings, and ancient engravings speak of the pride and vigor of Otaru's past generations.

The city of Otaru flourished since ancient times alongside the herring catch. The Meiji Government placed its first office in charge of developing Hokkaido in Otaru, and as a result the city would grow into an important international trading port. At the height of its trade dominance, a number of major banks opened branches in the downtown core of the city, with the area often referred to as "Wall Street of the North".



Former Otaru Branch of Nippon Yusen Co.

First built in 1906 in a European renaissance style with cutting edge stonework techniques at the time, the Former Nihon Yusen Co. building has been designated as an important cultural property by the government of Japan and was also used to film the movie Love Letter.



Otaru Museum

The Otaru Museum features the Canal Building and the Main Building, which was built on the railway yard of the original Hokkaido Railway. Exhibits include old steam locomotives and Japan's oldest engine still in existence (designated an important cultural property). The Canal Building showcases a collection of 2,000 articles detailing the history and natural environment of Otaru.



Temiya Cavern Preservation Center

The Temiya Cavern features ancient wall engravings completed nearly 1,600 years ago. Initially thought to be an ancient language until modern times, today theories indicate that these wall engravings are pictures of shaman and animals.



Otaru Herring Mansion

Designated as a tangible cultural property by the government of Hokkaido, the interior of the stately Otaru Herring Mansion exhibits rare articles from the city's past including fishing equipment, domestic utensils and photographs. (Closed during the winter season.)

The Bank of Japan Otaru Museum

First completed in 1912, the Former Otaru Branch of the Bank of Japan is a renaissance style building that preserves the cornerstone of the city's once proud status as "Wall Street of the North". Today, the building leverages its historical atmosphere to function as a museum that highlights the history of the Bank of Japan and Japan's financial system.



Former Mitsui Bank Otaru Branch (Nitori Museum of Art)

Completed in Showa 2 as the 6th generation Former Mitsui Bank Otaru Branch. It was built by Sone Chujo Architectural Firm, a representative figure of Japanese architecture. The bank building features Renaissance-style stately masonry on the exterior, corridors and a high ceiling with beautiful decorative plasterwork on the interior.



A City of Mountains, Hills and the Sea

Cherry Blossoms at Temiya Park

SIGHTS

Blessed by the sea and the mountains each season brings another beautiful landscape.

Otaru is known as a city of mountains, hills and the sea because of its topography that includes countless ridges, crests and valleys that stretch from Mt. Tengu to the sea. In addition to the Mt. Tengu and its sweeping views of the city, Otaru features a number of scenic locations in and around the city.

Two of Otaru's most famous hills can be found on Funamizaka Street and Jigokuzaka Street. Each of the city's named hills has their own unique story.



Funamizaka Slope

Asahi Scenic Observatory

Located directly behind Otaru Station when facing the sea, the Asahi Scenic Observatory offers commanding views of the city below. With walking trails nearby, visitors can easily take a stroll in the natural wonders of the vibrant local forest.



Shukutsu Panorama Observatory

Shukutsu Panorama Scenic Observatory offers a bird's eye view of Hiyoriyama Lighthouse and the Otaru Herring Mansion in one direction and views that extend from the Mashike Mountains to Cape Ofuyu and the Shakotan Peninsula. The location is known for its breathtaking summer sunsets over the Sea of Japan.





Noteworthy Cuisine Using Fresh Local Ingredients

Sushi

Sushi is perhaps Otaru's most famous culinary delight. There are over 100 sushi restaurants in the city serving up the freshest seasonal seafood the Sea of Japan has to offer.



Shiribeshi Cotriade

Inspired by the traditional fish soup from Brittany, France, this hearty stew is filled with local Shiribeshi ingredients such as fish, vegetables, fruit and dairy.



Genghis Khan / Ankake Yakisoba

The Hokkaido local specialty dish Genghis Khan can also be found in Otaru, while Ankake Yakisoba is currently witnessing a boom among locals.



Beer

With its access to local pure water, breweries in and around Otaru closely adhere to the German Beer Purity Law that calls for beer to be made only from water, malt, hops and yeast.



Shako (Mantis Shrimp)

Otaru shako are second to none in taste and size. The Shako Festival in Otaru held in conjunction with the catch in fall each year offers visitors the chance to taste local shako prepared in a wide range of dishes.

DINING

Otaru's vibrant cuisine owes its quality to the extraordinary freshness of local ingredients and pure water.

With its access to pure water and unrivaled seasonal ingredients, Otaru features a thriving food culture including sushi, sweets and locally brewed beers. The city also calls home to many markets that have been used by its residents since the city was first founded. These markets sell fresh seafood from the Sea of Japan and mountain delicacies only found in Hokkaido.



Sweets

With a long-storied history in trade and welcoming foreign cultures, Otaru has developed a unique and budding sweets culture. The city offers everything from traditional *wagashi*, to stylish Western sweets.





Industrial Heritage

SITE TOURS

What better way to truly appreciate the flavor than to learn the painstaking labor and joys of the makers?

The industrial heritage of Otaru includes a wide range of industries such as sake, wine, beer, processed seafood, glass work and music boxes. Some local factories also offer tours.



Throughout its history Otaru has been known as a sake making town. Today, there are sake brewery in the city with over 100 years in the business. There are also local wineries, popular among Japan's wine aficionados, which only use ingredients sourced from Hokkaido.



Processed seafood, including *kamaboko*, a ball of minced fish paste deep fried in oil, is widely considered the soul food of the locals. Don't pass up the opportunity to try a freshly deep fried kamaboko while in Otaru. In addition, factory tours provide a chance to see local master craftsmen at work.



A local brewery located in a building designated as a historical heritage site by the city. The brewery offers regular tours and free sake tastings.



Otaru's rich glass industry tradition began with the manufacturing of glass buoys for the fishing industry and lamp chimneys. In recent years, glass artisans from throughout Japan have descended on Otaru, as today more than 10 glass studios are located in the city.



Emerald Green Ocean and Lush Mountains

ACTIVITIES

Even among the wide reaches of Hokkaido, Otaru is remarkable for the variety of ways to enjoy outdoor life, thanks to the surrounding sea and mountains.

Create ever lasting memories from your journey with a cruise to stunning sea vistas, including emerald green waters and sheer uniquely-shaped rock cliffs.



There are three golf courses in Otaru, including Hokkaido's oldest. The city also calls home to several park golf courses that are easy and enjoyable even for newcomers to the sport.



Otaru also offers a variety of horse trekking enjoyable in each of the four seasons, with trails including lush old growth forests as well as snow plains. Views from the top of Mt. Haruka are also magnificent.



Discover the many ocean adventures that await you in Otaru, including cruises to see the beautiful local coastline, sea kayaking to take in the blue ocean and natural vistas up close, relaxing on a traditional houseboat or enjoying an outing on a sailboat.



Explore the many satisfying tourist destinations Otaru has to offer including an aquarium, gondolas, scenic observatories and ski areas.

The Otaru Aquarium—Hokkaido’s largest—highlights local as well as polar marine life with displays that include 5,000 fish and wildlife spanning 250 species.

The Otaru Aquarium is known for its dolphin, sea lion and penguin shows.



The Otaru Tenguyama Ropeway Scenic Observatory was given one star by the *2009 Michelin Green Guide Japan*. As the most scenic viewpoint in Otaru, the nightscape as seen from atop Mt. Tengu has been recognized as among the three best in Hokkaido.



Otaru calls home to three ski areas, including Mt. Tengu, Asarigawa Onsen Winter Resort and Snow Cruise ONZE.



Discover one of Hokkaido’s best snow powders as well as night skiing. The city’s three ski areas provide fun and enjoyment for beginners and advanced skiers alike.

Karamatsu Park located near Mt. Tengu Ski Area also features a full-fledged cross country course once used for the National Sports Festival of Japan.



Experience snowshoe trekking with the backdrop of a winter wonderland. Some ski areas also provide full rental sets for skiing, snowboarding and snowshoe gear.





Hands-on glassmaking is a favorite among visitors

Cross-cultural Understanding Through the Act of Creation

Broaden your horizons by taking part in one of the many hands-on classes in the city. Choose from glassmaking, candles, music boxes and ceramic ware, or try them all.



Create a handmade and beautifully crafted glass bead accessory as a keepsake from your journey.



Why not spend 15 to 30 minutes to create your very own unique candle?



All you need to do is choose a favorite song and parts to create your very own custom made music box. Groups are also welcome.



Another popular pastime in Otaru is to dress up and take pictures in a Venetian dress or carnival costume. Visitors can also rent a kimono to wear for a day while in Otaru.

CRAFTS

Enjoy a taste of foreign culture, creating a memorable moment on your journey.

Enjoy the Warmth of Uniquely Otaru Seasonal Events

EVENTS

Ushio Festival, a symbol of summer in Otaru, along with the wondrous “Otaru Snow Light Path” is just one of many delightful seasonal events.

Otaru hosts an array of events throughout each of the four seasons, with events held almost weekly from spring through the end of summer. Come interact with the locals and create even deeper memories of your journey to Otaru.



Otaru Ushio Festival

Held each July, the Otaru Ushio Festival is one of the city’s most popular summer events featuring a grand parade known as the *Ushionerikomi* that slowly dances its way through downtown as well as a fireworks display.



Otaru Glass Market

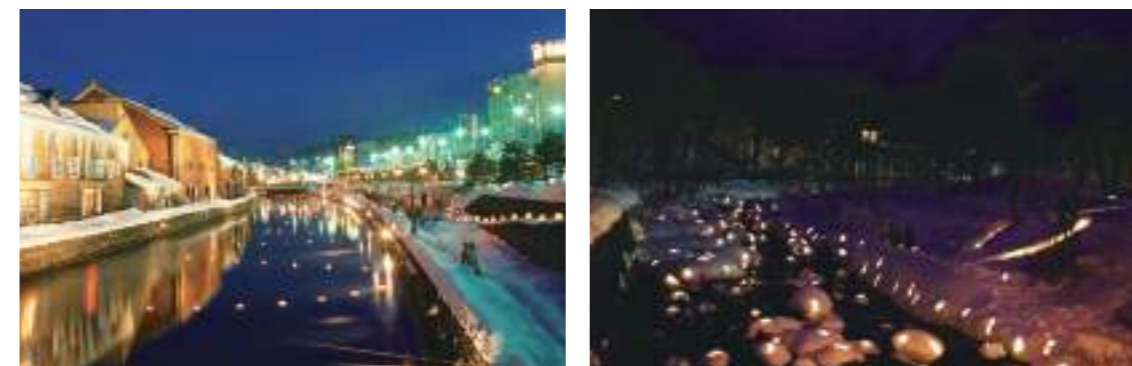
Glass studios from Otaru and throughout Japan descend on Otaru, hosting a huge glass market to sell and display their work at the former Temiya National Railway Line.

Otaru Snow Story

Various events to enjoy the Otaru winter are planned from November to February. The Wine Glass Tower is displayed the Canal Plaza main venue and blue lights illuminate the canal creating a magical effect.



A Fun Midwinter Event
The Otaru Snow Light Path



Otaru Snow Light Path

One of Hokkaido’s most visited winter events, the Otaru Snow Light Path is held annually in February lighting up the historic townscape of Otaru with soft, warm candle light.



Overnight Accommodations in Otaru

ACCOMMODATIONS

From urban hotels to complete resort hotels, visitors will enjoy quality hotel life.

Otaru is home to a number of hotels with stunning panoramic views overlooking Otaru’s canal, port and seascape. Many feature upscale urban bars and restaurants while others have spas, sports gyms and pools. Whatever your need, whether it be enjoying the hotel’s facilities for the day or staying for an extended period, there is a hotel in Otaru to accommodate you.



Hotel guest rooms in Otaru come in all shapes and forms to fit any budget, from high-end luxury to reasonably priced accommodations. Regardless of price, however, each hotel extends its guests unmatched hospitality.



Local hotels are an urban oasis that sooth fatigue from travel. Otaru also has full-fledged resort hotels that feature a variety of relaxation-inspiring facilities and amenities.

If journeying to Otaru to enjoy the nightlife, arranging for an overnight accommodation in the city is the wise choice. This way you can go see the nightscapes of Otaru, hit up its lively nightlife spots or just relax in the hotel lounge. Staying locally also means you can wake up early to take in the quiet and solitude of the city in the morning.





Soak in an open-air onsen to experience the four seasons of nature as they were meant to be.

Experience Japan's renowned hospitality

Asarigawa Onsen, widely known as the inner parlor of Otaru, is a resort area featuring hot springs, hiking trails and a ski area. Escape from the hustle and bustle of the city for a quiet and relaxing retreat in heart of the mountains.



lodging facility

Downtown Otaru

Authent Hotel Otaru	https://www.authent.co.jp/
dormy Inn Premium Otaru	https://www.hotespa.net/hotels/otaru/
Canal Side Hotel Otaru Furukawa	https://www.otaru-furukawa.com/
Hotel Nord Otaru	https://www.hotelnord.co.jp/
Hotel Sonia Otaru	https://sonia-otaru.com/
Grand Park Otaru	https://grandparkotaru.com/
Hotel Neuschloss Otaru	https://www.neuschloss.com/
Ginrinsou	https://www.ginrinsou.com/
Hotel Torifito Otaru Canal	https://torifito.jp/otarucanal/
Unwind Hotel & Bar Otaru	https://www.hotel-unwind.com/otaru/
THE GREEN OTARU	http://the-green.jp/

Asarigawa Onsen

Otaru Kourakuen	https://www.otaru-kourakuen.com/
Otaru-Asari-Classe Hotel	http://www.classe-hotel.com/
Winkel Village	http://www.winkel.co.jp/
Hotel Musashitei	https://www.musashitei.co.jp/
Otaru Ryotei Kuramure	https://www.kuramure.com/

Surrounded by verdant nature, Asarigawa Onsen is located about 20 minutes by car from downtown Otaru.

More hotels can be searched with keywords "Otaru hotels" on the Internet, <https://www.city.otaru.lg.jp>



Enjoy the Magnificent Scenery All to Yourself

Discover a new side of Otaru by staying overnight in the city.



Explore Otaru on Foot

EXCURSIONS

From Day Trips to Long Stays

Below you will find several recommended walking and bus tours of the city. Each tour takes around 3 hours to complete on foot and/or by bus. Feel free to combine tours together to match the length of your stay in Otaru.

*Note that the length of each course may vary depending on how long you spend at each destination.

Recommended 1 Day Tours (Mode: On foot and by bus)

A course + E course Time Required: About 5 hours

● Overview: See the city's downtown historic buildings and tour the mountains behind Otaru for commanding views of the city.

B course + F course Time Required: About 5 hours

● Overview: Visit popular glass studios and music store shops, followed by a trip to the Asarigawa Hot Springs area.

C course + D course Time Required: About 4 hours

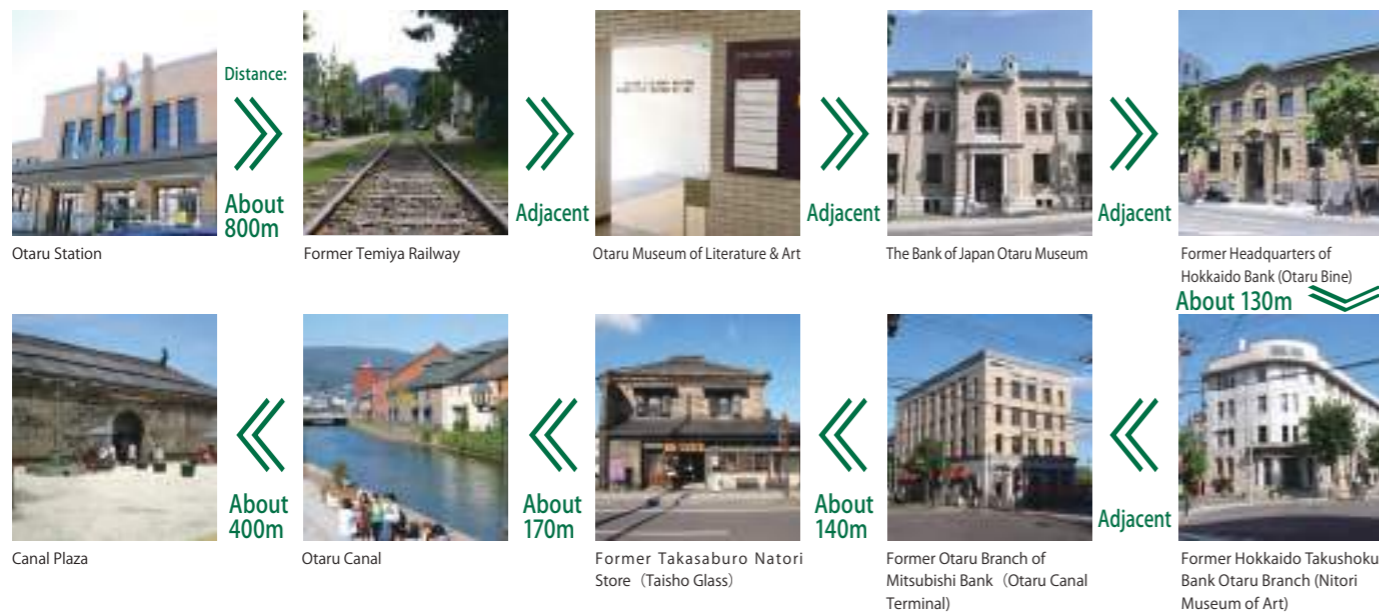
● Overview: See the heritage sites around North Canal and visit Shukutsu the once flourishing herring fishing town.



Former Temiya Railway and Wall Street Walking Tour

● Mode: On foot ● Time Required: About 2 hours

Visit Otaru's historical buildings from the time when it was known as "Wall Street of the North".



Tour of the City's Historic and Glassmaking Streets

● Mode: On foot ● Time Required: About 2 hours

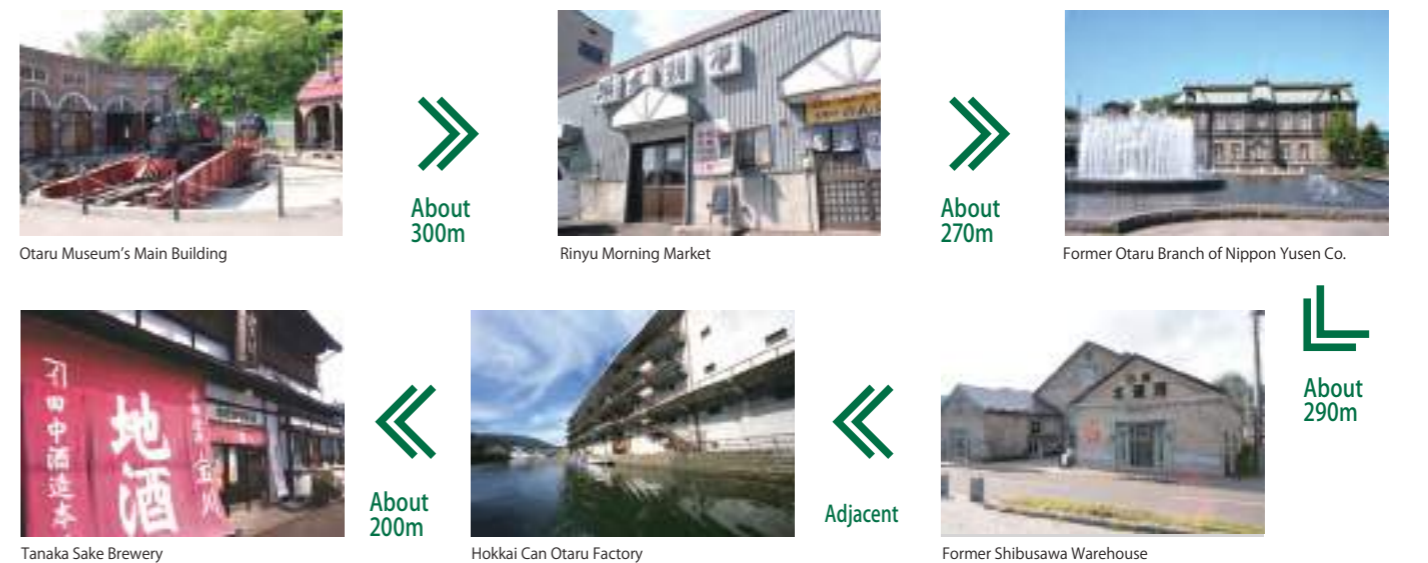
Explore the townscape steeped in history and visit the most popular glass studios and music box stores.



North Canal Walking Tour

● Mode: On foot ● Time Required: About 2 hours

Discover the old vestiges and heritage of Otaru Canal's North Canal area.



COURSE
D

Shukutsu Herring Heritage Tour

● Mode: Bus and on foot ● Time Required: About 3 hours (roundtrip time from downtown Otaru)

Discover the herring fishing cultural heritage of the Shukutsu area and enjoy the sights and sounds of the Otaru Aquarium.



Otaru Herring Mansion



Adjacent



Hiyoriyama Lighthouse



About 400m



Otaru Aquarium

About 500m



Otaru Kihinkan (The Former Aoyama Villa)



About 850m



Ibaraki Nakadebari Banya



About 870m



Shukutsu Panorama Observatory

COURSE
F

Asarigawa Onsen

● Mode: Bus and taxi ● Time Required: About 3 hours

Enjoy a relaxing day trip to Asarigawa Onsen with stops at nearby tourist destinations.



Otaru Canal



About 180m



Otaru Beer (Otaru Soko No.1)



About 2.4km



Otaru Port Marina

About 8km



Asarigawa Onsen



About 3km



Asari Dam(Lake Otarunai)



About 1km



Asari Sky Loop Bridge

COURSE
E

Scenic Observatory and Winery / Sake Brewery Tour

● Mode: Bus and taxi ● Time Required: About 3 hours

Witness the stunning views from a scenic observatory and try your hand at glassmaking as well as wine and/or sake tastings.



Asahi Scenic Observatory



About 4km



Tenguyama Ropeway



About 170m



The Glass Studio in Otaru

About 7.6km



Tanaka Sake Brewery Kikkogura



About 10km



Kenashiyama Observatory



About 2.8km



Hokkaido Wine

COURSE
G

Shakotan Area

● Mode: Bus and other means ● Time Required: About 4 hours

For those with more time, explore the neighboring towns of Yoichi and Shakotan.



Otaru canal



About 20km



Yoichi Town / Nikka Whisky Hokkaido Factory - Yoichi Distillery



About 1.7km



Yoichi Town / Old Shimoyoichi Unjoya

About 8.2km



Shakotan Town / Cape Kamui



About 26km



Shakotan Town / Sightseeing cruise aboard the New Shakotan



About 1.5km



Yoichi Town / Candle Rock

HOW TO ENJOY OTARU

DESTINATIONS

Otaru offers new discoveries to the visitor, no matter how many times you may have visited the city. Come explore the many and constantly changing faces of Otaru.



Otaru Canal



Former Temiya Railway



Northern Wall Street



Otaru Port Marina



Former Otaru Branch of Nippon Yusen Co.



Otaru Aquarium



Marchen Crossroads



Sakaimachidori Shopping Street



Shukutsu Panorama Observatory



Canal Plaza



Temiya Park



Tenguyama Ropeway



Otaru Herring Mansion



Ski Resort



Otaru Yataimura Renga Alley



Beach



Market



Otaru Art Base Stained Glass Museum



[Love Letter]

Otaru was also used to film Love Letter, a famous Japanese movie known for the line "Ogenki desu ka? (How are you?)"



Funamizaka Slope



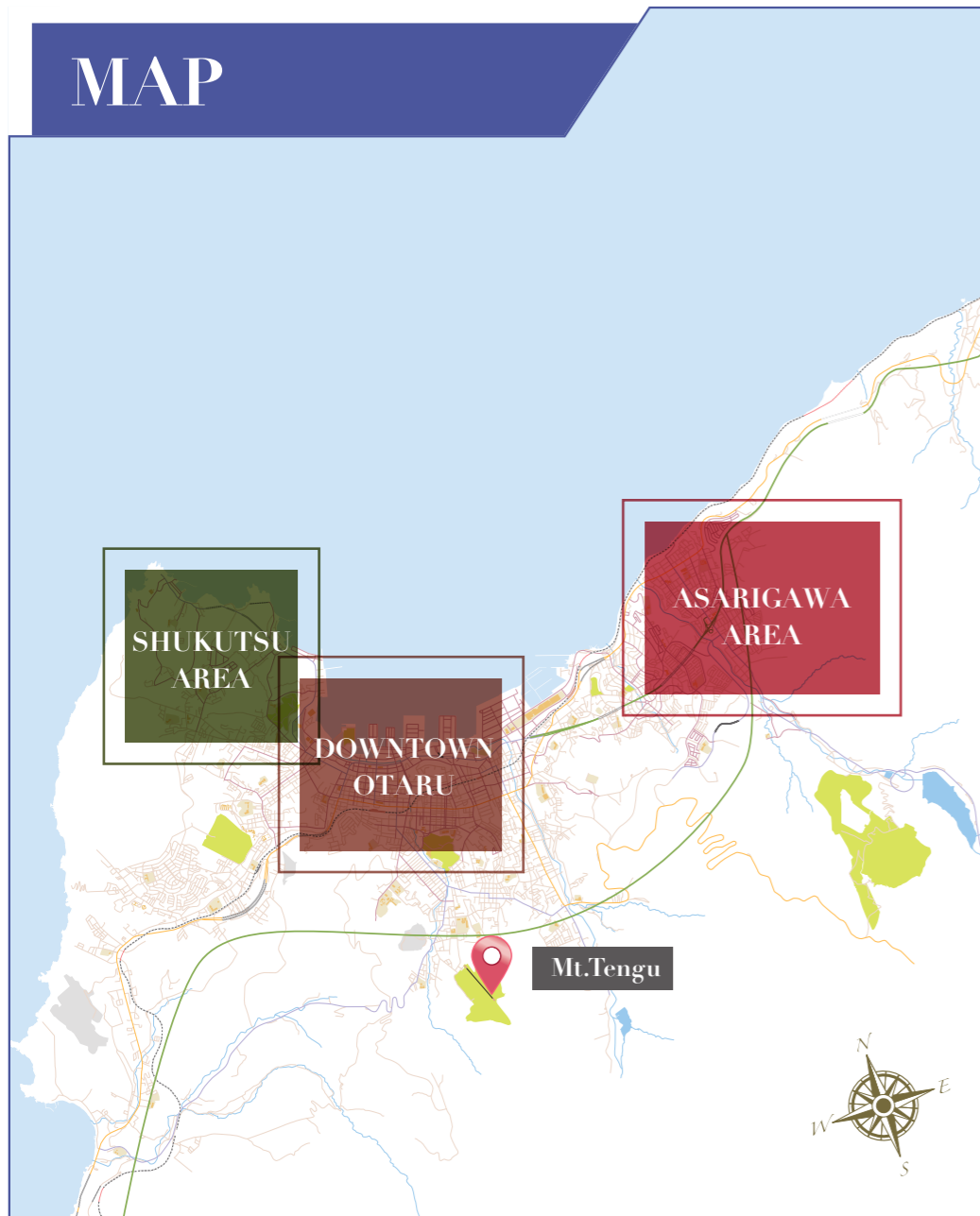
The Glass Studio in Otaru



Otaru City Hall



MAP



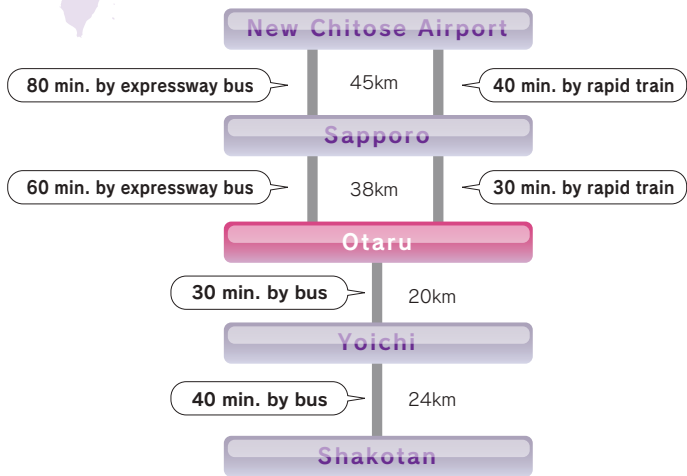


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HOKKAIDO OTARU

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Access



**Tourism Promotion Office, Industry,
Ports and Harbor Department,
Otaru City Government**

4-3 Minatomachi, Otaru City, Hokkaido, 047-0007
 Tel. 0134-32-4111 / Ext. 450 / Fax. 0134-27-8600
 Email kanko@city.otaru.lg.jp
 URL <https://www.city.otaru.lg.jp/>

For more information,
go to the Otaru Tourism
Association website.

