



[place] *The northern-most city of Japan, Wakkanai borders on the Sea of Okhotsk and is a rustic, quiet sort of place, centred on fishing and a small amount of local tourism.*

In a Nutshell

Officially established as a city in 1949, Wakkanai has the unusual distinction of being the northern-most city of Japan. It is mainly dependent on **fishing** and **seafood processing** (being an exclusive economic zone for such) and a small amount of **tourism**

, mostly from within Japan; the latter, however, has been in steady decline in the last decade. The population currently stands at around 39,000, having **fallen by roughly 30%** since the 1980's.



What to See

Wakkanai Park, within walking distance of the station, has an observation tower, a number of old memorials and an impressive view of the city and the Sea of Okhotsk beyond.

Noshappu Point

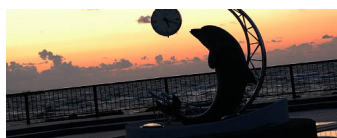
is a short 10 minute bus / taxi ride away, with a short seaside esplanade, a lighthouse and small aquarium and

onsen

facilities.

Cape Soya

, the northern-most point of Japan, is about 50 minutes by car away from the station.



What to Eat

Wakkanai is primarily known for its seafood, and good-quality sea urchin, ikura (salmon roe) and especially crab can be had at fairly low prices here. A few restaurants serve **isobeyaki** (seafood and vegetables cooked in a scallop shell) and the tourism association is currently pushing

tako shabu shabu

(shabu shabu with frozen, thinly-sliced takoyaki instead of beef)



Getting There

The **Super Soya** and **Sarobetsu** limited express trains together provide three services daily from Sapporo (around 7:30am, 12:30pm and 5:30pm) taking five hours in total, for ¥9,660 (£70.90 / \$113.10) each way. JR pass holders travel free.



Transport

Buses run infrequently between most of the main attractions. Please ask at the train station for timetables.



Recommendation□

Wakkanai was certainly one of the places that left the strongest impressions - although whether that might have been from the epic train journey there, or the biting cold, I can't say. But its strange, almost forlorn **emptiness** certainly has its own unique charm, and there is no denying that the **seafood** is spectacular here. Is it worth the five-hour trip from Sapporo? Hmm. Maybe, but know what you're getting into, and I wouldn't stay for more than the half-day.



More Information

[Wakkanai Sightseeing Association](#)
[Blog: Day 16 - Wakkanai](#)

Been to Wakkanai? What did you think? Was it worth it? Any recommendations as to where to go, or what to eat? [Send in an e-mail](#) , comment below or Twitter twitter.com/foodjapan