



SAMURAI TOURS

Adventures in Discovering Traditional Japan

www.samuraitours.com

Best of Shikoku and Kyushu



15 Days / 14 Nights

Best of Shikoku and Kyushu

Tour Overview

With its mild climate, tranquil gardens, famous hot springs, active volcanoes, historic castles, beautiful countryside, and warm-hearted people, this part of Japan offers a dramatic experience that will create travel memories for a lifetime.

Destinations

Osaka, Tokushima, Megijima, Takamatsu, Kotohira, Kochi, Matsuyama, Beppu, Usuki, Kagoshima, Nagasaki, Yoshinoharikoen

Tour Factors



Cultural Immersion



Pace



Physical Activity



Tour Details

The rural mountainous island of Shikoku is the smallest of the four major islands of Japan, and is also the one least visited by foreigners. However, this tranquil island offers elements of traditional Japan that are hard to find elsewhere. For more than 1,000 years, Shikoku has been the focus of “henro” (pilgrims) following in the footsteps of Kobo Daishi (the 9th century Buddhist monk who helped change Japanese religion forever) in their ever-elusive search for enlightenment.

Kyushu, the third largest and southern-most island of Japan, was at one time the most important gateway into Japan for foreigners. But at the same time, according to Japanese legend, it was from Kyushu that the first emperor, Kimmu, began his campaign to unify Japan. Kyushu is therefore considered to be the cradle of Japanese civilization.

You will follow in the footsteps of Kobo Daishi, the 9th century Buddhist monk, and visit numerous important religious centers in Japan including Kotohira Shrine, a favorite destination of pilgrims for hundreds of years, and Takachiho, steeped in Japanese mythology. You will bathe in some of Japan’s oldest, most famous and most popular onsens. You will climb to the top of Japan’s largest Samurai castles. You will visit some of Japan’s best gardens, and tour Nagasaki, once the only gateway to Japan for foreigners, and much, much more.

Tour Highlights

- ✓ Awa Odori Kaikan Dance Demonstration
- ✓ Walk along the Shikoku 88 Temple Pilgrimage while visiting 5 temples
- ✓ Ritsurin Garden
- ✓ Konpira Shrine
- ✓ Kochi Morning Market
- ✓ Matsuyama Castle
- ✓ Usuki's Stone Buddhas
- ✓ Kagoshima and Nagasaki

Tour Inclusions

- ✓ Travel Guard Gold Policy (for American tour members only)
- ✓ Reserved Seat Train Tickets on all Inter-City Travel
- ✓ Meeting service at the arrival airport
- ✓ Sending service to the appropriate train station
- ✓ Baggage transfer from city to city
- ✓ Electronic version of Tour Handbook and Japanese History

Tour Exclusions

- ✗ International airfare is NOT included.
- ✗ A printed itinerary is not included
- ✗ Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks and desserts are NOT included



Tour Destinations

- Osaka
- Tokushima
- Takamatsu
- Kochi
- Matsuyama
- Beppu
- Usuki
- Kagoshima
- Nagasaki
- Yoshinogarikoen

Itinerary

Day 1 Arrive in Osaka

After clearing Customs and Immigration (which can take up to three hours due to increased tourism to Japan) you will be met at either of Osaka's Airports (Kansai/Itami) by a private taxi service. The meeting service will help with your transfer to Osaka. No meals included.

Travel: 1 Hour; Walking: Light

Day 2 Travel to Tokushima; Tokushima - Awa Odori Kaikan, Mt Bizan Ropeway, Boat Cruise

Before breakfast you will prepare your luggage for transfer to Takamatsu. Your overnight bag will need to be packed for 3 days and 2 nights. You will bring your luggage to the lobby of the hotel for transfer. After breakfast, we will start the day with a welcome/orientation meeting. We begin our adventure by traveling to Tokushima on the island of Shikoku by public bus. Tokushima is best known for its Awa Odori festival and dance held every year in mid-August. Over a million people come to Tokushima during the 4 day festival to watch the eighty-thousand dancers dressed in colorful yukatas and half-moon shaped straw hats who parade through the city waving their hands and shuffling their feet to an insistent two-beat rhythm played on taiko drums, flutes, and shamisen. The festival started in 1587 when the first daimyo (feudal lord) of Tokushima is said to have initiated the celebration on completion of his castle. The people enjoyed it so much that they held the celebration the next year, and so on for the centuries that followed. Since we will not be in Tokushima during the festival, we will do the next best thing by visiting the Awa Odori Kaikan. This museum chronicles the history of the festival and features numerous exhibits relating to the dance. Best of all, we will attend a one hour live performance demonstrating the dances performed during the festival. In the evening, we will enjoy a ride up the ropeway to enjoy the lights of Tokushima and a boat cruise through the city. Breakfast at the hotel and lunch and dinner at a local restaurant are included.

Travel: 4 Hours; Walking: Light

Day 3 Walk along the 88 Temple Pilgrimage

In addition to the Awa Odori festival, Tokushima is also famous as the start and the end of the 88 Sacred Temples Pilgrimage. These 88 temples were founded by Kobo Daishi, one of the most influential Buddhist Monks in Japanese history. The route of this pilgrimage takes one all the way around the island of Shikoku. If you are walking the entire route, as was done for hundreds of years, the pilgrimage would take about two months. Today, tour buses whisk pilgrims around the entire route in about two weeks. Today we will be a "henro" (pilgrim) for a day by following a section of the pilgrimage and visiting 6 of the 88 temples on our path to enlightenment. Breakfast at the hotel is included.

Travel: 1 1/2 Hours; Walking: Heavy

Day 4 Travel to Takamatsu; Tour Megijima

After breakfast, we will travel to Takamatsu on the coast of the Seto Inland Sea. After dropping off our luggage and stopping for lunch, we will take a short ferry ride to the island of Megijima. Megijima is associated with Onigashima, the Ogre Island from the popular Momotaro legend in which a small boy visited the island to fight its resident ogres. The cave where the ogres lived can

be found near the top of the highest mountain. It is thought the cave was created by Chinese pirates nearly a thousand years ago. There is also an observation deck where you can get a commanding view of the surrounding Seto Inland Sea and the numerous small islands in the area. Megijima is also one of the venues for the Setouchi Triennale art festival and features several artwork-turned homes and a few other art pieces on permanent display. Megijima's atmospheric village of old wooden houses and narrow lanes is located around the ferry terminal and is protected by high stone walls. Late in the afternoon, we will return to Takamatsu where we will be staying and retrieve our main luggage. Breakfast at the hotel and dinner at a local restaurant is included.

Travel: 2 Hours; Walking: Medium

Day 5 Takamatsu - Ritsurin Garden; Kotohira - Konpira Shrine, Kanamaruza Kabuki Theater

Today we will begin by touring Ritsurin Koen. This is considered to be one of the most beautiful gardens in Japan, taking more than one hundred years to create. Here we can also take a short break to enjoy green tea and sweets in a peaceful teahouse overlooking a koi-filled pond. We will then take a train to the nearby city of Kotohira where we will visit Konpira Shrine, one of Japan's most famous Shinto Shrines. Konpirasan is the main shrine of the multiple Kompira shrines found around Japan that are dedicated to sailors and seafaring. Located on the wooded slope of Mount Zozu in Kotohira, the approach to Kompirasan is a series of 785 stone steps. For many centuries Kompirasan has been revered as a mixture of Shinto and Buddhism until it was officially declared a shrine in the beginning of the Meiji Period during government efforts to separate the two religions. After visiting the shrine, we will tour the Kanamaruza Kabuki Theater. Built in 1835, Kanamaruza Theater is Japan's oldest surviving, complete kabuki theater. From time to time, it still stages kabuki performances. Breakfast at the hotel and lunch at a local restaurant included.

Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Heavy

Day 6 Travel to Kochi; Kochi - Chikurenji Temple, Hirome Market

Before leaving for the day you will prepare your luggage to be transferred to Matsuyama. You will need to prepare your overnight bag for 3 days and 2 nights. After breakfast we will travel to Kochi on the southern coast of Shikoku. After lunch at a local restaurant, we will visit Mount Godaisan. We will start at the Kochi Observatory where you can get a bird's eye view of the city of Kochi and Pacific Ocean. Next, we will visit Chikurenji Temple, one of the 88 temples (#31) along the Shikoku Pilgrimage. The temple grounds also contain a beautiful 5-story pagoda as well as a famous garden. In the evening, we will have dinner at Hirome Market where you can sample the local specialties. Breakfast at the hotel, lunch at a local restaurant, and dinner at a local restaurant included.

Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Medium

Day 7 Kochi - Free Day

Today is a free day to enjoy Kochi. Visit Kochi Castle, one of only 12 remaining original castles in Japan. Enjoy beautiful Katsurahama Beach, or explore the covered shopping streets in downtown Kochi. Breakfast at the hotel included.

Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Medium

Day 8 Kochi - Kochi Morning Market; Travel to Matsuyama

In the morning we will visit the Sunday Morning Market. The Sunday Market is an open-air market

that has continued for more than 300 years since the Edo period. The market is held on one lane of a main street which extends from the Otemon main gate of Kochi Castle. It is open from the early morning to evening of every Sunday with about 500 stalls lining the street. In the afternoon we will travel to Matsuyama, where we will retrieve our main luggage. Breakfast at the hotel, lunch at a local restaurant and dinner at a restaurant or ryokan are included.

Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Medium

Day 9 Matsuyama - Matsuyama Castle; Travel to Beppu

Before leaving, we will prepare our luggage for transfer to Kagoshima. You will prepare your overnight bag for 3 days and 2 nights. In the morning we will tour Matsuyama Castle. Matsuyama Castle is one of Japan's most beautiful original castles. It is located on Mt. Katsu, a steep hill in the city center providing visitors to the castle with a bird's eye view of Matsuyama and the Seto Inland Sea. The castle was constructed between 1602 and 1628. The current three storied castle tower was constructed in 1820 after the original five storied one was destroyed by lightning. We will continue on to the city of Beppu on the island of Kyushu. The city of Beppu is one of the largest, if not the largest onsen (hot springs resort) in Japan. There are thousands of small therapeutic baths with mineral-laden water or thermally-heated sand baths that can steam, boil, or poach vitality into aching muscles and weary travelers. Breakfast at the ryokan and dinner at a local restaurant or ryokan are included.

Travel: 4 Hours; Walking: Medium

Day 10 Beppu - Beppu Hells; Usuki - Stone Buddhas

We start the day by touring the famous Beppu "Hells." The boiling mud, forming concentric circles as it oozes through the ground and the colors of the ponds of this "hell-on-earth" are sure to fascinate and entertain. In the afternoon we will travel by train to the nearby city of Usuki. Here we will find 60 Buddha statues that were carved into the soft stone cliffs. These statues were carved during 12th to 14th centuries, and have been designated as National Treasures. We will return to Beppu by train. The evening is free to enjoy the hot springs, or visit the Takegawara Onsen. Built in 1879, it is Beppu's most famous onsen and offers both sand and regular hot spring baths in an atmosphere of the past. Breakfast at the hotel/ryokan is included.

Travel: 2 1/2 Hours; Walking: Heavy

Day 11 Travel to Kagoshima; Kagoshima - Senganen Park, Shiroyama Park

After breakfast, we will travel to Kagoshima. We will start our tour of Kagoshima by visiting the Senganen Garden. Senganen Garden is a Japanese style stroll garden located along the coast of Kagoshima Bay. The most striking feature of the garden is its use of Sakurajima and Kagoshima Bay as borrowed scenery. The garden also includes small ponds, streams, shrines and a bamboo cave. The garden was constructed in 1658 by the Shimazu clan, one of Japan's wealthiest and most powerful feudal clans during the Edo Period. The Shimazu clan ruled the Satsuma domain (present day Kagoshima) for almost 700 years. After the Edo Period, they continued to be influential as some of the earliest adopters of western science and technology. At the center of the garden stands the Iso Residence. After the end of the Edo Period, the Iso Residence became the main residence of the Shimazu family. Next we will visit the small Shoko Shuseikan Museum located next to the garden which originally served as one of the earliest western style machinery factories in Japan. Today it contains exhibits about the culture and maritime activities of the Shimizu clan and the early factory and machines which contributed to Japan's modernization in the 1800s. We continue our tour of Kagoshima with a visit to Shiroyama. Shiroyama Park is located on Mount Shiroyama. The mountain formerly served as the site of Kagoshima Castle (Shiroyama literally translates to "castle mountain"). From the Shiroyama Observatory you will enjoy beautiful

views of downtown Kagoshima, Kagoshima Bay, and Sakurajima. We will retrieve our main luggage when we check in to the hotel. Breakfast at the hotel, lunch at a local restaurant, and dinner at a local restaurant is included.

Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Medium

Day 12 Travel to Nagasaki; Nagasaki - Chinatown, Dejima, Glover Garden

Before leaving for the day you will prepare your luggage for transfer to Osaka. You will need to prepare your overnight bag for 3 days and 2 nights. Today we will travel by Shinkansen (bullet train) and express train to the city of Nagasaki. After arriving in Nagasaki we will visit Chinatown for a lunch of Champon, a Chinese version of the Japanese favorite of ramen. The afternoon will start by visiting Dejima, a man-made island in the port of Nagasaki constructed in 1636. A few years later the Dutch trading factory was moved to Dejima. The Dutch workers, the only remaining Westerners allowed in the country, were restricted to Dejima during Japan's two centuries of isolation. Today Dejima is no longer an island, as the surrounding area was reclaimed during the 20th century. However, a number of Dejima's historical structures have been reconstructed, including various residences, warehouses, walls, and gates. There are many displays in these buildings documenting the daily life of the Dutch residents. Next, we will tour Glover Garden. Glover Garden is an open-air museum exhibiting mansions of former western residents of Nagasaki. It is located on the hill where western merchants settled down after the end of Japan's era of seclusion in the second half of the 19th century. You can also enjoy a panoramic view of the city from the garden. Breakfast at the hotel, lunch at a local restaurant, and dinner at the hotel or at a local restaurant are included.

Travel: 1 1/2 Hours; Walking: Heavy

Day 13 Nagasaki - Free Day

Today is a free day to enjoy everything Nagasaki has to offer. You can visit the Nagasaki Peace Park and Museum that commemorates the atomic bombing of Nagasaki on August 9, 1945 which destroyed wide parts of the city and killed tens of thousands of inhabitants. The park is home to the massive Peace Statue as well as various other memorials. A monument around a black pillar marks the atomic explosion's epicenter in the nearby Hypocenter Park and stores the list of the bomb victims. Breakfast at the hotel included.

Travel: TBD; Walking: TBD

Day 14 Travel to Yoshinogarikoen; Tour Yoshinogarikoen; Travel to Osaka; Sayonara Dinner

Today we will return to Osaka by express train and Shinkansen (bullet train). Along the way, we will stop at Yoshinogarikoen Historical Park. The park contains a reconstructed village of the Yayoi Period (3rd Century BC to 3rd Century AD). Archaeological records were carefully studied to recreate the life and culture from this time. In its day, the original village was one of Japan's largest. After arriving in Osaka we will check into the hotel and retrieve your main luggage. In the evening we will enjoy our Sayonara Dinner. Breakfast at the hotel and dinner at a local restaurant/ryokan are included.

Travel: 5 1/2 Hours; Walking: Medium

Day 15 Return Home

It's time to say goodbye. You will be escorted to Shin Osaka Station. From there you will travel to either of Osaka's Airports (Kansai/Itami) . Breakfast at the hotel is included.

Travel: 1 Hour; Walking: Light

Walking level descriptions:

Light – 0 to 2 miles on level ground

Medium – 2 to 4 miles on level ground or 0 to 2 miles on hilly ground

Heavy – 4 to 6 miles on level ground or 2 to 4 miles on hilly ground

Dates & Pricing

Dates	Price (land only) / Single Supplement (All prices are per Person)	Status
May 17, 2020 - May 31, 2020	¥541,086/ ¥95,372	Closed
Oct 25, 2020 - Nov 8, 2020	¥801,835/ ¥95,372	Available
Mar 7, 2021 - Mar 21, 2021	¥801,835/ ¥95,372	Available
May 16, 2021 - May 30, 2021	¥838,764/ ¥95,372	Available
Oct 24, 2021 - Nov 7, 2021	¥838,764/ ¥95,372	Available

Inclusions

- **Travel insurance from Travel Guard**, one of the world's largest travel insurance providers, will be provided to everyone from the United States. All others will receive a \$100 per person credit and will be responsible for obtaining their own travel insurance in their own home country. (The insurance provided by Samurai Tours will cover the land portion only. Insurance to cover airfare and other additional expenses is the tour member's responsibility.)
 - Exact coverage dependent on state
 - For residents of the following states please click here for your available plan. CO, FL, IN, KS, MN, MO, MT, NY, and WA
 - For all other states and the District of Columbia click here
 - **Travel Insurance Surcharge:** Depending on your age at the time the travel insurance is purchased, you may be subject to the following surcharge for your travel insurance. Travel insurance surcharges will be due at the same time as your tour deposits. (the surcharge itself is not insured)
 - Up to 69 - \$0
 - 70-74 - \$104
 - 75-79 - \$180
 - 80-84 - \$356
 - 85+ - \$545
 - **Travel Insurance Opt-Out:** If you would prefer to opt out of the travel insurance, please note this at the time of registration. You will receive a \$100 credit per person, which will be reflected on your invoice. In the event that you would need to cancel your tour, cancellation penalties may apply. See the Terms and Conditions page for the Cancellation Fees Schedule.
- Meeting service at Osaka's Kansai Airport (KIX) or Osaka's Itami Airport (ITM) by a private taxi meeting service and transfer to Osaka hotel
- Optional meeting service at either Tokyo's Narita or Haneda Airport will be an extra \$100 fee per group. If you are arriving or departing at Tokyo's Narita or Haneda Airports, there will be an extra \$150 fee per person for the train tickets to/from Osaka for either of these airports (the meeting service is required if you want us to purchase the train tickets to Osaka for arrival, if you are arriving at one of the Tokyo Airports, the meeting staff will help you board the train. You will travel on your own to the Shin Osaka station, and will be met there and escorted to the hotel.)
- Sending service to Osaka's Kansai Airport (KIX) or Osaka's Itami Airport (ITM)
 - If you will be leaving from Tokyo's Narita Airport or Haneda Airport, there will be an extra \$150 fee per person for the train tickets from Osaka to one of these airports.
- For those requiring meeting or sending services on dates other than the scheduled arrival/departure dates, there will be a \$100 fee for the meeting service from the airport into Osaka or the sending service to Kansai Airport.
- Lodging for 14 nights in Japanese-style ryokans and western style hotels
- Meals
 - Japanese-style or western-style breakfast every morning (please note: some ryokans only offer Japanese breakfasts)
 - Five Japanese-style lunches
 - Eight Japanese-style dinners
- The appropriate amount of free time to allow you to explore and discover your own personal Japan.
- All transportation costs when traveling with the group. (Transportation costs during scheduled free times are the tour member's responsibility)
- Electronic version of itinerary
- Admission fees to the destinations and activities listed in the Tour Highlights column on the right. (Itinerary specifics subject to change)
- Baggage transfer from Osaka to Takamatsu (one bag only)
- Baggage transfer from Takamatsu to Matsuyama (one bag only)

- Baggage transfer from Matsuyama to Kagoshima (one bag only)
- Baggage transfer from Kagoshima to Osaka (one bag only)
- Each tour member receives an electronic copy of our tour handbook. This handbook is full of tips and suggestions taken from our Japan travel experiences that allow you to better plan and prepare for your trip, and therefore enjoy your trip even more. The tips and suggestions included cover everything from how to save while exchanging money, what to pack, some basic Japanese-language tips, general etiquette do's-and-don'ts, ryokan customs, etc.

Exclusions

- Airfare is NOT included.
- Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks and desserts are NOT included
- A printed itinerary is not included

Thank you for downloading this PDF version of our tour. Please visit our website at www.samuraitours.com/tours for the most current dates, prices and information.

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