



SAMURAI TOURS

Adventures in Discovering Traditional Japan

www.samuraitours.com

Shikoku and Kyushu Rail and Drive



15 Days / 14 Nights

Shikoku and Kyushu Rail and Drive

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, Wakimachi, Takamatsu, Kotohira, Iya Valley, Matsuyama, Usuki, Takachiho, Kagoshima, Yakushima, Nagasaki, Yoshinogarikoen

Tour Factors



Cultural Immersion



Pace



Physical Activity



Tour Details

The rural mountainous island of Shikoku will charm you with its natural beauty, mild climate, laid-back atmosphere and friendly people. It is the smallest of the four major islands of Japan, and is also the one least visited by foreigners, although 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 to 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 Japanese emperor, Kimmu, began his campaign to unify Japan. Kyushu is therefore considered to be the cradle of the Japanese civilization. With its grumbling volcanoes, steaming hot springs and rugged mountains along with its relaxed and uncomplicated atmosphere, Kyushu is not to be missed.

You will walk through the ancient cedar forests of Yakushima. 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. Bathe in some of Japan’s oldest, most famous and most popular onsen and climb to the top of Japan’s largest original 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.

Rail and Drive Tours

The Japan public transportation system in Japan is one of the best, if not the best in the world. However, if you want to travel to the remote areas of Japan, public transportation is sometimes either non-existent, too infrequent or too slow to be practical. Automobiles are the best way to access these remote areas. Our Rail and Drive tours are a convenient combination of public transportation and chartered taxis or chartered vans, allowing us to really get “off the beaten path”. And because we keep the group sizes smaller, it allows us to go where tour buses cannot. (Because of seat limitations, these tours are limited to a maximum of 8 people.)

Tour Highlights

- ✓ Awa Odori Kaikan Dance Demonstration
- ✓ Walk along the Shikoku 88 Temple Pilgrimage while visiting 5 temples
- ✓ Ritsurin Garden
- ✓ Konpira Shrine
- ✓ Iya Valley and Kazurabashi Vine Bridge
- ✓ Matsuyama Castle
- ✓ Usuki's Stone Buddhas
- ✓ Takachiho Gorge and Amano Iwato Shrine
- ✓ Takachiho Yokagura Dance Performance
- ✓ Yakushima Island
- ✓ Kagoshima and Nagasaki

Tour Inclusions

- ✓ Travel Guard Gold Policy (for American tour members only)
- ✓ Reserved Seat Train Tickets on all Inter-City Travel or Travel by Private Vehicle
- ✓ One ride on a Shinkansen (bullet train)
- ✓ 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
-  Iya Valley
-  Matsuyama
-  Usuki
-  Takachiho
-  Kagoshima
-  Yakushima Island
-  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 Tokyo's Osaka Kansai Airport 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

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. 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. We will also go to the top of Mt Bizan by ropeway for a birds-eye view of Tokushima, and a boat cruise along the canals of Tokushima. Before leaving the hotel in the morning, we will transfer your main luggage forward to Takamatsu. You will be traveling to Tokushima and Nagasaki with an overnight bag only. You will need enough items for 3 days and 2 nights. 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

Shikoku is famous for the 88 Temples Pilgrimage. Many of 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 5 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 Wakimachi, Tour Wakimachi, Travel to Takamatsu; Tour Yashima

After breakfast, we will travel to Wakimachi located in the western Tokushima prefecture. Wakimachi is home to a 430-meter row of well-preserved buildings from Japan's Edo period that includes 50 traditional homes with distinctive udatsu on their roofs—high-winged wall structures that were originally built on the edges of the roof to prevent fire from spreading to or from

adjacent houses. After visiting Wakimachi, we will travel to Takamatsu on the coast of the Seto Inland Sea. Before continuing to Takamatsu, we will stop at Yashima, a plateau just outside of Takamatsu. Yashima was the site of a famous 12th century battle between the Taira and Minamoto clans, the origins of the Samurai. In addition, you will get an excellent view of Takamatsu and the Seto Inland Sea. Breakfast at the hotel and dinner at a local restaurant is included.

Travel: 2 Hours; Walking: Light

Day 5 Takamatsu - Ritsurin Garden; Kotohira - Konpira Shrine, Kanamaruza Kabuki Theater; Travel to Iya Valley

We will begin today 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. Then we travel to the nearby city of Kotohira. Here we will visit Konpira Shrine, one of Japan's most famous Shinto Shrines. Kōpirasan is the main shrine of the multiple Kōpira shrines found around Japan that are dedicated to sailors and seafaring. Located on the wooded slope of Mount Zozu in Kotohira, the approach to Kōpirasan is an series of 785 stone steps. For many centuries, Kōpirasan 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. We will end the day by driving to Iya Valley. We will stay overnight at the Iya Onsen located high on a steep slope overlooking the Iya Valley. You can enjoy the view or soak in the baths located 170 meters below the ryokan next to the river and only accessible via a steep cable car ride. Or, you can walk to the nearby Manikin Peeing Boy statue posed as if he is peeing off the edge of a 200 meter cliff into the valley below. Breakfast at the hotel and lunch at a local restaurant and dinner at the ryokan are included.

Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Heavy

Day 6 Iya Valley - Kazurabashi Vine Bridge; Travel to Matsuyama; Matsuyama - Matsuyama Castle

We will start the day by visiting the nearby Kazurabashi Vine Bridge in Iya Valley, a remote mountain valley located in the center of Shikoku. In the past, vine bridges were the only way of crossing the Iya River. History is unclear of their origins. Legends say that Kobo Daishi built the first one, while others say they were first built by Heike refugees hiding in the Iya Valley after their defeat in the Genpei War (1180-1185). The Kazurabashi is one of the few vine bridges that still remain. It has a 45 meter span and is 15 meters above the river. In the morning, we will drive to Matsuyama, where we will tour the temple of Ishiteji. This temple is one of the 88 temples (#51) on the Shikoku pilgrimage. Ishiteji is known for its Niomon Gate, a designated national treasure. The main hall and pagoda are also designated important cultural properties, and all of the structures exhibit the typical architecture style of the Kamakura Period (1192-1333). Later, we will visit the 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. Before leaving the hotel in the morning, we will transfer your main luggage forward to Matsuyama. You will be traveling to Iya Valley and Matsuyama with an overnight bag only. You will need enough items for 2 days and 1 night. Breakfast at the hotel and dinner at a local restaurant are included.

Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Medium

Day 7 Matsuyama - Free Day

Today is a free day in Matsuyama. If you would like, you can visit the famous Dogo Onsen. It is thought this was the first onsen in Japan, and its history goes back more than 1,000 years. The current main onsen building was built in 1894, and includes a bath reserved exclusively for visiting Emperors. Breakfast at the hotel and dinner at the ryokan are included.

Travel: N/A; Walking: TBDF

Day 8 Travel to Usuki; Usuki - Usuki Stone Buddhas; Travel to Takachiho; Takachiho - Yokagura Dance Performance

After breakfast we will take a ferry to the city of Usuki on the island of Kyushu. Just outside the city of Usuki, 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. However, the reason these stone statues were created here and who created them is unknown. Later in the afternoon, we will travel to Takachiho. Takachiho is known as a "Power Spot," a place of profound religious importance and natural beauty, which radiates spiritual energy. Takachiho is also steeped in Japanese mythology. It is the supposed site of a legend where Amaterasu, the Shinto Sun Goddess, disturbed by her brother's cruel pranks, hid herself in a cave, prompting the other gods and goddesses to try and lure her out. They did so by dancing, causing everyone to roar with laughter. Amaterasu left the cave to see what all the fun was about, and in doing so she returned her light to the world. In the evening, at the Takachiho Shrine, we will attend a Yokagura dance performance. It is said these are examples of the dances used to coax Amaterasu out of hiding. Before leaving the hotel in the morning, we will transfer your main luggage forward to Kagoshima. You will be traveling to Usuki, Takachiho and Kagoshima with an overnight bag only. You will need enough items for 2 days and 1 night. Breakfast and dinner at the hotel are included.

Travel: 6 Hours; Walking: Light

Day 9 Takachiho - Takachiho Gorge, Amano Iwato Shrine; Travel to Kagoshima

In the morning, we will visit the Takachiho Gorge and Amano Iwato Shrine. The Takachiho Gorge is a narrow chasm cut through the rock by the Gokase River. The sheer cliffs lining the gorge are made of volcanic basalt columns. Halfway along the gorge is the 55-foot high Minainotaki waterfall cascading down to the river below. There are two ways to enjoy the gorge and the waterfall. The first perspective is from a paved path that follows the edge of the gorge. The cave where Amaterasu hid herself is on the grounds of the Amano Iwato Shrine. However, it is too sacred to be seen. We can, instead, visit the cave where the other gods met to plan how to coax her out of her hiding place. In the afternoon, we will travel to the city of Kagoshima. Breakfast at the hotel are included.

Travel: 4 Hours; Walking: Medium

Day 10 Ferry to Yakushima; Yakushima - Yakusugi Land, Kigensugi Cedar Tree, Overnight on Yakushima

After breakfast, we will board the ferry to Yakushima, a subtropical island off the southern coast of Kyushu. The island has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage site, and is covered by an extensive cedar forest with many trees more than 1,000 years old. Yakushima is also known in Japan for the amount of rain it receives. The locals claim it rains "35 days a month". In the afternoon, we will walk around Yakusugi Land, an area with many yakusugi (1000+ year old Yakushima Cedars). This area is one of the most accessible places on Yakushima to see the ancient cedar trees, as many of the trees are just a short walk from the parking area. Before checking into

the hotel on the island for the evening, we will visit the nearby Kigensugi. It is thought to be more than 3,000 years old and the only Yakusugi on the island accessible by car. Breakfast and dinner at the hotels is included.

Travel: 4 Hours; Walking: Heavy

Day 11 Yakushima - Okonotaki Waterfall, Senpironotaki Waterfall, UNESCO World Heritage Area of Yakushima; Return by ferry to Kagoshima

Today we will drive around the perimeter of the island. Along the way, we will stop at Okonotaki Falls and Senpironotaki Falls, Yakushima's largest waterfalls. We will drive along the mountainous slopes and cliffs on the western coast of Yakushima. This area is designated as the UNESCO World Heritage section of the island, and the roads are too narrow and winding for buses to navigate. Here, you are likely to encounter yakushika (Yakushima deer) and yakuzaru (Yakushima monkeys). Later in the afternoon, we will return to Kagoshima by ferry, and check into the hotel. Breakfast at the hotel is included.

Travel: 4 Hours; Walking: Medium

Day 12 Kagoshima - Senganen Garden, Iso Residence, Shoko Shuseikan Museum; Travel to Nagasaki

We will start our tour of Kagoshima by visiting the Senganengarden. 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 and shrines. 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. In the afternoon we will travel by train to Nagasaki. Before leaving the hotel in the morning, we will transfer your main luggage forward to Nagasaki. You will be traveling to Nagasaki with an overnight bag only. Breakfast at the hotel and lunch at a local restaurant are included.

Travel: 4 Hours; Walking: Medium

Day 13 Nagasaki - Dejima, Glover Garden, Nagasaki Peace Park and Museum

The day starts by visiting Dejima. Dejima was 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 has been 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 Gardens. 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. Next, we will visit Chinatown for a lunch of Champon, a Chinese version of the Japanese favorite of ramen. In the afternoon, we will visit the

Nagasaki Peace Park and Museum. The Nagasaki Peace Park and Museum commemorates the atomic bombing of Nagasaki of August 9, 1945, which destroyed wide parts of the city and killed ten 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 name list of the bomb victims. 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 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. In the evening, we will enjoy our "Sayonara" Dinner. Breakfast at the hotel and dinner at a local restaurant are included.

Travel: 5 1/2 Hours; Walking: Medium

Day 15 Return Home

It's time to say goodbye. You will be transferred to either Osaka's Kansai or Osaka's Itami airport (depending on your departure) by private, pre-arranged taxi service. 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 10, 2020 - May 24, 2020	¥801,835/ ¥95,372	Closed
Oct 18, 2020 - Nov 1, 2020	¥801,835/ ¥95,372	Available
Feb 28, 2021 - Mar 14, 2021	¥801,835/ ¥95,372	Available
May 9, 2021 - May 23, 2021	¥838,764/ ¥95,372	Available
Oct 17, 2021 - Oct 31, 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.
- Local, licensed, English-speaking, Japanese guides
- Electronic version of itinerary
- 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 offer Japanese breakfasts only.)
 - 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.)

- Admission fees to the destinations and activities listed in the Tour Highlights column on the right. (Itinerary specifics subject to change)
- Sayonara dinner at the end of the tour
- 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 Nagasaki (one bag only).
- Baggage transfer from Nagasaki 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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MEMBERSHIPS/ASSOCIATIONS

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