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Off the Beaten Path: A Different Side of Japan

2023 CHERRY BLOSSOMS SAIGO TAKAMORI HISTORY TOUR

Very unique tour itinerary! Fly non-stop to Fukuoka and return from Osaka!

10 Nights / 12 Days • 23 Meals (10 Breakfasts, 7 Lunches, 6 Dinners)

Escorted from Honolulu • English-Speaking Local Guide

March 31 – April 11, 2023

Saigo Takamori (1828–1877) was one of the most influential samurai in Japanese history. As a leader in the Meiji Restoration, he was instrumental in the overthrow of the Tokugawa shogunate (military government) and the return of the control of the country to direct imperial rule under Mutsuhito (the emperor Meiji). While this brought about the modernization and Westernization of the country, it also meant the abolishment of the privileged social status of Saigo's beloved samurai class.

Disenfranchised with his new government, Saigo escaped to Kagoshima and opened a private military academy as a way to employ the faithful samurai who had also left Tokyo to follow him. As tensions grew between the imperial government and the samurai class, Saigo was reluctantly persuaded by his peers to lead a revolt against the government just 9 years after helping to place it in power. The rebellion lasted just 9 months before Saigo was shot and mortally wounded. The rebellion died along with him.

Unable to overcome the affection that the people had for this paragon of traditional *samurai* virtues, the Meiji Era government pardoned him posthumously in 1889. He was dubbed, "the last Samurai" by the Japanese people, who appreciated the fact that he remained loyal to his virtues and the way of the samurai until his death in 1877.

In the early 21st century, Western audiences became familiar with Saigo's life through a fictionalized account of his ill-fated rebellion in the Hollywood-produced film *The Last Samurai* (2003).

VISIT: Fukuoka • Kagoshima • Sakurajima Island • Makurazaki • Chiran • Hinatayama
Kirishima • Miyazaki • Kumamoto • Hitoyoshi • Kyoto • Uji • Osaka

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS: JR Super Express Train Ride • Terukuni Shrine • Tenmonkan Street
Saigo Nanshu Kenshokan • Reimeikan • Ishin Furusato-Kan • Saigo Takamori Tanjouchi
Ferry Ride to Sakurajima Island • Yunohira Observatory • Ferry Ride to Kagoshima • Chiran Bukeyashiki
Chiran Tokko Peace Museum • Saigo Takamori Statue • Former Site of the Private School
Senganen Garden • Segodon Village and Lodge • Kirishima Shrine • Udo Jingu Shrine
Nichinan Kaigan Coast • Oni no Sentaku Ita • Kumamoto Castle • Sakura no Baba • Suizenji
Taharasaka Museum • Kumagawa Boat Ride • Aoi Shrine • Eikokuji • Kiyomizu Temple
Sanmen Zaka • Ryozen Museum • Byodo-in Temple • Toji Temple • Sanjusangen-do
Kuromon Ichiba Market • Dotonbori Shopping • Shinsaibashi Shopping • AEON Mall

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES: Katsuobushi (Bonito Flakes) Making Experience
Meiji Sake Brewery Tour and Tasting • Japanese Sweets Making Class

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES: Kiyomizu Temple • Byodo-in Temple • Toji Temple

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WHISPER — Wireless Tour Guide System!
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Day 1: Fri, Mar 31 – HONOLULU. Depart Honolulu.

Day 2: Sat, Apr 01 – FUKUOKA. Arrive in Fukuoka. After entry formalities, transfer by coach to your hotel in Fukuoka. Walk to a nearby restaurant for dinner. THE ROYAL PARK HOTEL FUKUOKA (1 Night) (D)

Day 3: Sun, Apr 02 – FUKUOKA – KAGOSHIMA. After a sumptuous breakfast buffet at your hotel, bus transfer to Hakata (Fukuoka) Train Station. Depart for Kagoshima Station via **JR Super Express Train**. First stop this morning is **Terukuni Shrine**. Dedicated to Shimazu Nariakira, the last daimyo of Satsuma, Terukuni Shrine is the most important Shinto shrine in Kagoshima city. Next enjoy free time on **Tenmonkan Street** for shopping and enjoying lunch (on your own). After lunch, explore **Saigo Nanshu Kenshokan** (Saigo Nanshu Memorial Museum) which exhibits Saigo Takamori's possessions, clothing, his handwritten diary and Chinese-style poetry, and a variety of other items. Visit **Reimeikan** – Kagoshima Prefecture History Center, before transferring to the hotel in Kagoshima. Enjoy a Western-style dinner at the hotel. Don't miss your chance to soak in the **hot springs onsen**. The panoramic spa boasts magnificent views of Sakurajima floating in Kinko Bay. KAGOSHIMA SUN ROYAL HOTEL (3 Nights) (B, D)

Day 4: Mon, Apr 03 – KAGOSHIMA – SAKURAJIMA – KAGOSHIMA. Start the day with a visit to **Ishin Furusato-Kan**, the Museum of the Meiji Restoration. Next, visit the **Takamori Saigo Tanjouchi**, the monument marking his place of birth. Now board a **ferry to Sakurajima**. Sakurajima is one of Japan's most active volcanoes and the symbol of Kagoshima. The volcano smokes constantly, and minor eruptions often take place multiple times per day. After lunch, visit **Yunohira Observatory**. Return to **Kagoshima by ferry**. Return to your hotel for a relaxing evening. Enjoy a special dinner at your hotel. (B, L, D)

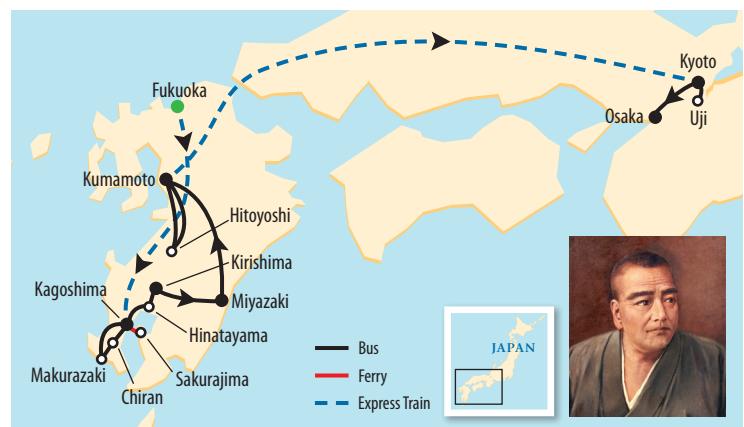
Day 5: Tue, Apr 04 – KAGOSHIMA – MAKURAZAKI – CHIRAN – KAGOSHIMA. After breakfast, begin a full day of sightseeing, starting with **learning how to make katsuobushi**. Katsuobushi is dried, fermented, and smoked skipjack tuna. Shaved Katsuobushi and dried kelp (kombu) are the main ingredients of dashi, a broth that forms the basis of many soups (such as miso) and sauces (e.g. soba no tsukejiru) in Japanese cuisine. Then visit a **Meiji Sake Brewery**. Enjoy a **tour and tasting** of their best sakes. Enjoy lunch at the restaurant next door. After lunch, we're in for a treat as we visit, Chiran, a small town in the middle of the Satsuma Peninsula in Kagoshima Prefecture. Within the town there is a preserved samurai district with houses and gardens that date back about 250 years. Stop to explore a **Chiran Bukeyashiki** (Samurai residence). Last stop is at the **Chiran Tokko Peace Museum**. A thought-provoking, and to many, a controversial museum dedicated to the lives and deaths of 1,036 suicide pilots or kamikaze, who sacrificed themselves in the name of the Japanese emperor in the latter stages of World War II. This evening enjoy a buffet dinner at your hotel. (B, L, D)

*Baggage will be sent from Kagoshima to Miyazaki, skipping Kirishima. Prepare an overnight bag for 1 night.

Day 6: Wed, Apr 05 – KAGOSHIMA – HINATAYAMA – KIRISHIMA. Today, we visit the **Saigo Takamori Statue, Former site of the Private School, Senganen Garden, Segodon Village, and Segodon Lodge**. After we visit **Kirishima Shrine**, we settle into our hotel for the evening. Be sure to check out the **Super Garden Onsen Hot Springs!** A one-of-a-kind concept! Tonight enjoy a special Japanese dinner at your hotel. KIRISHIMA HOTEL (1 Night) (B, L, D)

Day 7: Thur, Apr 06 – KIRISHIMA – MIYAZAKI. Our first visit this morning is **Udo Jingu Shrine**. This unusual shrine features a vivid vermilion pavilion inside a cave on a finger of Point Udozaki, reaching out into the Pacific. Enjoy a scenic drive on the **Nichinan Kaigan Coast**. Then we enjoy the very unique landscape of **Oni no Sentaku Ita**, the "ogre's washboard." Stop at an **AEON Mall** shopping center on our way to the hotel. ANA HOLIDAY INN RESORT MIYAZAKI (1 Night) (B, L, D)

Day 8: Fri, Apr 07 – MIYAZAKI – KUMAMOTO. Begin the day exploring **Kumamoto Castle**. Next, visit **Sakura no Baba**, which features shops and restaurants that offer souvenirs and specialty foods unique to the Kumamoto region. Enjoy lunch (on your own) here. After lunch, visit **Suizenji Garden**. Last stop today is the **Taharasaka Museum**. Your local tour guide will have many suggestions for dinner tonight. ANA CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL KUMAMOTO NEW SKY (2 Nights) (B)



Day 9: Sat, Apr 08 – KUMAMOTO – HITOYOSHI – KUMAMOTO. Start the day with a **river boat ride down Kumagawa** (Kuma River), which begins in the mountains of Kumamoto near the border with Miyazaki and then travels 115 kilometers before emptying into the Yatsushiro Sea on Kyushu's west coast. In the middle of its journey it passes through the Hitoyoshi Basin and Hitoyoshi, the old Edo Period castle town that was once a busy river port shipping lumber downstream and is nowadays known for its hot springs and the Hitoyoshi Steam Locomotive. After lunch visit **Aoi Shrine** and **Eikokuji**. Return to the hotel for an evening of leisure. (B, L)

Day 10: Sun, Apr 09 – KUMAMOTO – KYOTO. After breakfast at the hotel we make way to Kyoto Station by **JR Super Express Train**. Enjoy a bento box lunch aboard the high-speed train. Upon arrival in Kyoto, first stop at **Kiyomizu Temple** (literally "Pure Water Temple"). Return to the bus via the **Sannen Zaka**, a paved pedestrian road lined with traditional buildings and shops filled with Kyoto treasures. Explore **Ryozen Museum** before transferring to the hotel. After check-in, explore the many restaurants and shops conveniently located near your hotel. Remainder of the day as at your leisure. The local guide will have suggestions for dinner. MIYAKO HOTEL KYOTO HACHIO (2 Nights) (B, L)

Day 11: Mon, Apr 10 – KYOTO – UJI – KYOTO. Begin the day by traveling to Uji to visit **Byodoin Temple**. Together with its garden, the temple represents the Pure Land Paradise and was influential on later temple construction. Byodoin was initially built in 998 as a countryside retreat villa for the powerful politician Fujiwara no Michinaga, not as a temple. **Toji Temple**, literally "East Temple," was founded at the beginning of the Heian Period just after the capital was moved to Kyoto in the late 700s. Toji's five storied pagoda is the tallest wooden pagoda in Japan, and has become a symbol of both the temple and Kyoto as it can be seen from many places across the city. After lunch, explore **Sanjusangen-do**, a Buddhist Temple founded in 1164 that is famous for its massively long hondo (main hall) and collection of sculptures, including 1,001 standing thousand-armed Kannon. Finish the day with a fun **Japanese Sweets Making Experience**. Return to the hotel. The remaining of the day is at your leisure. (B, L)

Day 12: Tue, Apr 11 – KYOTO – OSAKA – HONOLULU. After hotel checkout, start the day with a visit to **Kuromon Ichiba Market**, a lively covered market which stretches for 580 meters in Osaka's Chuo Ward. The market is famous for its fresh seafood, fruits and vegetables, meats, dried fish, pickles, and confectionery. Many stalls will prepare, cook, and serve their food to you right on the spot! An excellent place to stroll, sample, and snack on a delicious variety of fresh market foods. Next, visit **Dotonbori**, one of Osaka's most popular tourist destinations, this street runs parallel to the Dotonbori canal. It is a popular shopping and entertainment district and is also known as a food destination. **Shinsaibashi Shopping Arcade** and the surrounding area is Osaka's premier shopping center. Approximately 600 meters long, this area is unique as it combines chain retail stores and trendy boutiques with expensive department stores and top designer fashion labels. A final shopping stop will be made at an **AEON Mall** before making our way to Kansai International Airport. Depart Osaka and arrive Honolulu on the same day. Aloha and Welcome Home! (B)

UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Kiyomizu Temple (1994), Byodoin Temple (1994), Toji Temple (1994).

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