

Off the Beaten Path: A Different Side of Japan

2023 CHERRY BLOSSOMS SEA OF JAPAN, SADO ISLAND, TAKAYAMA FESTIVAL & HIROSHIMA

Hot springs onsen experience with seasonal Kaiseki Dinners! New & improved itinerary!

12 Nights / 14 Days • 28 Meals (12 Breakfasts, 8 Lunches, 8 Dinners)
Escorted from Honolulu • Includes English-Speaking Local Guide
April 08 – 21, 2023 • Tour Manager: Miye Lamansky

OVERVIEW:

One of Japan's largest islands, Sado Island has an interesting history. Its culture can be seen in its unique traditional arts and entertainment. The Takayama Festival is rated as one of Japan's three most beautiful festivals alongside Kyoto's Gion Matsuri and the Chichibu Yomatsuri. It is held twice a year in spring and autumn in the old town of Takayama, and attracts large numbers of spectators. From delightful hot springs (onsen) to specially prepared Kaiseki Dinners, this tour has something for everyone! Join us!

VISIT:

Omiya • Niigata • Sado Island • Nagano • Matsumoto • Takayama
Shirakawago • Kanazawa • Tojinbo • Awara • Amanohashidate • Kinoshiki
Tottori • Tamatsukuri • Izumo • Matsue • Iwakuni • Suo Oshima • Hiroshima

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS:

JR Super Express Train Ride • Niigata Furusato Village • Jet Foil Ride to Sado Island
Oni-Daiko (Demon Drums) Performance • Sado Gold Mine • Kitazawa Flotation Field
Japanese Crested Ibis Conservation Centre • Tarai-Bune Boat Ride • Shukunegi
Northern Culture Museum • Zenkoji Temple • Jigokudani Monkey Park (for Snow Monkeys)
Daio Wasabi Nojo • Takayama Morning Market • Takayama Festival • Old Town
Sannomachi Street • Shirakawago • Wada House • Shiroyama View Point • Kenrokuen Garden
Eiheiji Temple • Tojinbo Cliff • Amanohashidate • Tottori Sand Dune • AEON Mall
Izumo Taisha • Goen Yokocho • Matsue Vogel Park • Matsue Castle • Kintaikyo Bridge
Museum of Japan Emigration to Hawaii • AEON Mall

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES:

Imayo Tsukasa Sake Brewery Tour and Tasting • Soba Noodle Making • Gold Leaf Application Experience

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES:

Shirakawago

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* Fares are per person, USD based on double occupancy and INCLUDE ALL AIRLINE TAXES AND FEES. Airline fuel supplements, taxes and fees are subject to change and tour member is responsible for any increases. Some airline-imposed personal charges, including but not limited to baggage, priority boarding and special seating, may apply. For details visit www.tripadvisor.com/AirlineFees. After initial deposit, a \$75 per person Non-Stop Travel (NST) Cancellation Fee will apply. Group departures may be cancelled, if there are less than 24 tour members. Final Payment to NST for "non-cruise" Air and Land Package must be made by Money Order or Personal Check. NST does not guarantee that all tour members will fly together with Tour Manager. Tour Manager assignments, number of meals offered on tour, tour price, discount, and the "final" tour itinerary are subject to change with/without notice. **NST reserves the right to correct errors or omissions including but not limited to, fares, fees and surcharges at any time.** Deposit: \$500 per person. Final Payment Due: 11/29/22. Cherry blossoms are subject to weather conditions. † Early Booking Discount is per person. Purchase of Non-Stop Travel's complete Air and Land Package is required. †† Earn Rewards Every Time You Refer a Friend. For each "New-to-NonStop Travel" customer you refer, both you and your referral can receive a \$25 discount off your next NST escorted group. 090222



Day 1: Sat, Apr 08 – HONOLULU. Depart Honolulu.

Day 2: Sun, Apr 09 – TOKYO – OMIYA. Arrive in Tokyo. After entry formalities, transfer by coach to your hotel in Omiya. The remainder of the evening is at your leisure. The hotel is conveniently located a 5 minute walk from the JR Omiya Station, which is one of the largest stations in the Saitama Prefecture. There will be various choices for shopping and dining at the train station. **PALACE HOTEL OMIYA** (1 Night)

*Baggage will be carried by truck from Omiya to Nagano, skipping Sado Island. Prepare an overnight bag for 2 nights.

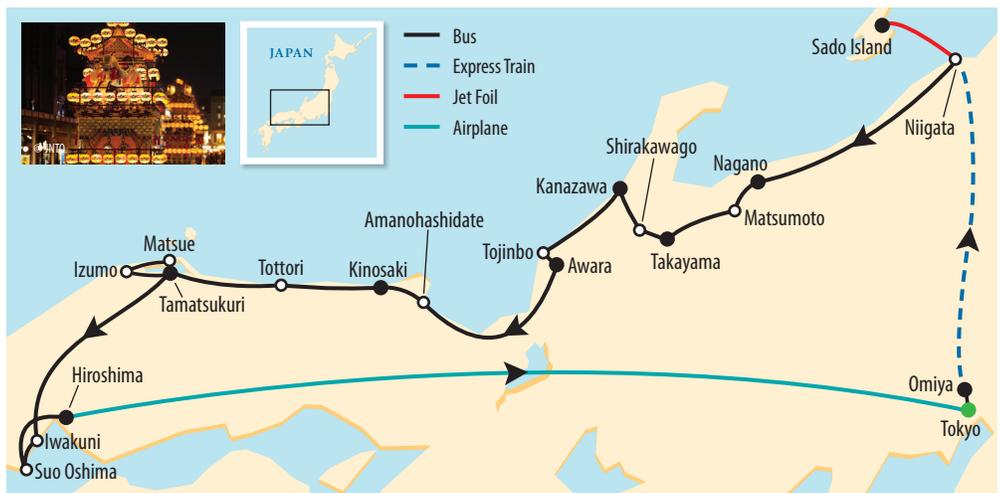
Day 3: Mon, Apr 10 – OMIYA – NIIGATA – SADO ISLAND. After a sumptuous breakfast buffet at hotel, walk to the Omiya Train Station. Take the **JR Super Express Train** to Niigata. Sightseeing in Niigata by coach, visiting a **Niigata Furusato Village** and **Imayo Tsukasa Sake Brewery**. Transfer to Niigata Port. Ride a **jet foil** to Sado Island. Arrive in Sado Island and transfer to hotel. Enjoy a traditional, multi-course **Kaiseki Dinner**, featuring ingredients unique to Sado Island. Enjoy an **Oni-Daiko (Demon Drums) Performance** during dinner. Don't forget to try out the onsens – which are divided for men and women – allow you to **enjoy the hot springs** whether indoors or outdoors. The high-quality service and facilities are sure to become some of your fondest memories of your visit to Japan. **HOTEL YAHATAKAN** (2 Nights) (B, D)

Day 4: Tue, Apr 11 – SADO ISLAND. Full day sightseeing of Sado Island by coach, including the **Sado Gold Mine**, **Kitazawa Flotation Field**, and **Japanese Crested Ibis Conservation Centre**. **Make your own soba noodles** and eat your delicious creation for lunch. After lunch, take a traditional **"Tarai-Bune" boat ride**. The tarai-bune tub boats floating along the Ogi coastline are considered the symbol of Ogi. These boats are constructed out of cedar wrapped with bamboo on the outside, with a diameter of about 150 cm. Developed and used during Edo and Meiji periods, the tarai-bune tub boats, mainly operated by women, were ideal for tight turn and stability amidst the abundant reefs and coves along the Ogi Peninsula. These boats were originally used for collecting shellfish and seaweed from around the coast. Then visit the charming fishing village of **Shukunegi**. The entire village is designated as a "National Historic Site." Take a stroll along the narrow streets of Shukunegi Village to feel the history and experience the living conditions of people living during the Edo period. As this area was previously a trading port for ships going to Edo (Tokyo) and Osaka, many who lived here were ship carpenters and sailors. Here, you will be able to find the popular sankaku-ya which is a triangle-shaped house, built to fit the shape of the land available at that period of time. Enjoy a special dinner tonight at La Plage restaurant. (B, L, D)

Day 5: Wed, Apr 12 – SADO ISLAND – NIIGATA – NAGANO. Take the **jet foil** from Sado Island to Niigata. Visit the **Northern Culture Museum**. After lunch, explore the grounds of **Zenkoji Temple**. One of the most important and popular temples in Japan, Zenkoji Temple was founded in the 7th century and stores the first Buddhist statue ever to be brought into Japan when Buddhism was first introduced in the 6th century. Then transfer to the hotel in Nagano. Relax in the **onsen** tonight. **RYOKAN BIYUNOYADO** (1 Night) (B, L, D)

*Baggage will be carried by truck from Nagano to Kanazawa, skipping Takayama. Prepare an overnight bag for 2 nights.

Day 6: Thur, Apr 13 – NAGANO – MATSUMOTO – TAKAYAMA. Start the day with a visit to the **Jigokudani Money Park** (for Snow Monkeys). Stop at **Daio Wasabi Nojo**, the country's largest wasabi farm. Then, we continue on to Takayama. Located amongst the Japan Alps, it is known as "Little Kyoto" for its preserved



historical structures. It was cut off from the rest of Japan for most of its history and thus has maintained a very unique and traditional atmosphere. This evening relax with a restful soak in the **onsen (hot springs)**. Enjoy the seasonal bounty of your specially prepared dinner. **TOKYU STAY HIDA-TAKAYAMA MUSUBI NO YU** (2 Nights) (B, D)

Day 7: Fri, Apr 14 – TAKAYAMA. After breakfast, explore Takayama's **Morning Market**, where you can browse the market stalls for local crafts and fresh farm products. The **Takayama Festival**, which dates to the 15th century, is held on the 14th and 15th of April to pray for a good harvest. The highlight of the festival is when the colorful dashi (floats) are led through the streets amid cheers and drums. These ornate floats are decorated with intricate wood carvings and beautiful metal work, and are decorated with mechanical dolls that can move and dance. After lunch, explore the streets of Takayama's **Old Town**. On some streets, like **Sannomachi Street**, you can find many old homes, shops, coffee houses, and sake breweries, some of which have been in business for centuries. This evening, return to the streets of Takayama to experience the floats at night. Dinner this evening will be at the hotel. (B, L, D)

Day 8: Sat, Apr 15 – TAKAYAMA – SHIRAKAWAGO – KANAZAWA. After breakfast, visit **Shirakawago**, a World UNESCO World Heritage Site, home to several dozen well preserved gasho-zukuri farmhouses, some of which are more than 250 years old. Take a tour of **Wada House**, the largest farmhouse in town. After lunch, take in the view from the **Shiroyama Viewpoint**, which is located north of the village center and offers nice views of Shirakawago and its farmhouses. Transfer to the hotel in Kanazawa. **ANA CROWNE PLAZA KANAZAWA** (1 Night) (B, L)

*Baggage will be carried by truck from Kanazawa to Tamatsukuri, skipping Awara and Kinosaki. Prepare an overnight bag for 2 nights.

Day 9: Sun, Apr 16 – KANAZAWA – TOJINBO – AWARA. After breakfast, explore **Kenrokuen Garden**, one of Japan's "three most beautiful landscaped gardens." Learn the process of **gold leaf application** and try it yourself on chopsticks that you'll get to take home as a souvenir of this trip. After lunch, visit **Eiheiji**, "The Temple of Eternal Peace," one of the two head temples of Soto Zen. Founded by Zen Master Dogen in 1244, where he devoted himself to training his followers in the perfection of Zen practice in every action of daily life. Dogen Zenji's authentic Zen has been scrupulously observed and passed down by his successors. There are still over one hundred monks devote themselves wholeheartedly to his practice of shikantaza ("single-minded sitting"). Lastly, visit **Tojinbo Cliff** before transferring to the hotel in Awara for dinner. **HOTEL RIVERGE AKEBONO** (1 Night) (B, L, D)

Day 10: Mon, Apr 17 – AWARA – AMANOHASHIDATE – KINOSAKI. Enroute to Kinosaki, stop at **Amanohashidate**, a pine covered sandbar that spans the mouth of Miyazu Bay in the scenic, coastal region of northern Kyoto Prefecture. Viewed from the mountains at either end

of the bay, the Amanohashidate Sandbar (which roughly translates to "bridge in heaven") looks like a pathway between heaven and earth. The scene has been admired for centuries and is ranked among Japan's three most scenic views. Transfer to the hotel in Kinosaki. The remainder of the day is free to explore the area. Or **relax in the onsens** before dinner. **NISHIMURAYA HOTEL SHOGETSU-TEI** (1 Night) (B, L, D)

Day 11: Tue, Apr 18 – KINOSAKI – TOTTORI – TAMATSUKURI. Start the day with a stop at the **Tottori Sand Dunes**, the largest sand dunes in Japan. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. Stop at an **AEON Mall** before arriving at the hotel in Tamatsukuri. **HOTEL GYOKUSEN** (2 Nights) (B, L)

Day 12: Wed, Apr 19 – TAMATSUKURI – IZUMO – MATSUE – TAMATSUKURI. This morning, you will visit **Izumo Taisha**, one of Japan's most important shrines. There are no records of exactly when Izumo Taisha was built, but it is often considered the oldest shrine in Japan, being already in existence in the early 700s as revealed by the nation's oldest chronicles. Located within the shrine is **Goen Yokocho**, a small shopping district consisting of 9 eateries and souvenir shops, where you will enjoy lunch (on your own). Next visit the **Matsue Vogel Park**, an aviary park that houses four aviaries holding tropical birds – mostly toucans, turacos, hornbills, and ibises. The park is also home to various birds from around the world, including rare and exotic birds. There are also a number of waterfowl to be found in the aquatic birds aviary. Vogel Park also boasts one of the largest greenhouses in the world, residence to various flowers of which most are found in bloom year-round. Drive by **Matsue Castle**, before returning to the hotel for dinner. (B, D)

Day 13: Thur, Apr 20 – TAMATSUKURI – IWAKUNI – SUO OSHIMA – HIROSHIMA. Visit the **Kintaikyō Bridge**, Iwakuni's most distinguished landmark and a subject of admiration for hundreds of years. The elegant wooden bridge makes five bold arches onto massive stone pillars as it crosses over the Nishiki River. Explore the **Museum of Japanese Emigration to Hawaii**, located on Suo Oshima Island. The former Fukumoto house was restored and converted into the Museum. Since 1995 the town of Suooshima-cho having sent a lot of emigrants to countries overseas began to put together a collection of various data and materials related to emigration to Hawai'i in order to inform present and future generations of their ancestors' past. Transfer to the hotel in Hiroshima. **HOTEL GRANVIA HIROSHIMA** (1 Night) (B, L)

Day 14: Fri, Apr 21 – HIROSHIMA – TOKYO – HONOLULU. Last minute shopping opportunity at Hiroshima **AEON Mall**. Then transfer to Hiroshima airport. Depart Hiroshima and arrive in Tokyo. Depart Tokyo and arrive Honolulu the same day. Aloha and Welcome Home! (B)

UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Shirakawago (1995).