



off the Beaten Path: *A Different Side of Japan*

2025 CHERRY BLOSSOMS TAKAYAMA SPRING FESTIVAL

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Onsen hot springs experiences in Takayama and Hakone! Travel from Osaka to Tokyo!

8 Nights / 10 Days • 19 Meals (8 Breakfasts, 5 Lunches & 6 Dinners)
Escorted from Honolulu • Includes English-Speaking Local Guide
April 10 – 19, 2025 • Tour Manager: Wendy Iwasaki

OVERVIEW: The Takayama Festival is ranked 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 onsen hot springs to specially prepared Kaiseki Dinners, this tour has something for everyone! Join us!

VISIT: Kansai • Nara • Uji • Kyoto • Kanazawa
Shirakawago • Takayama • Mt. Fuji • Hakone • Tokyo

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS: Todaiji Temple • Nara Deer Park • Byodoin Temple
Fushimi Inari Shrine • Kiyomizu Temple • Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion)
Stroll Through the Gion Geisha District • JR Limited Express Train Ride • Shirakawago
Shiroyama Viewpoint • Myozenji Temple • Takayama Festival Evening and Daytime Floats
Takayama Morning Market • Kami-Sannomachi (Old Town) • Mt. Fuji • Owakudani
Hakone Ropeway • Lake Ashi Cruise • Asakusa Sensoji Temple • Nakamise Shopping
Ameyoko Shopping

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES: Traditional Japanese Tea Ceremony
Surikomi Yuzen (Brush Dyed Yuzen) Table Mat Dyeing
Hakone Yosegi-Zaiku Coaster Making • Sushi Making

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES: Todaiji Temple • Byodoin Temple
Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion) • Kiyomizu Temple • Shirakawago • Mt. Fuji

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Day 1: Thur, Apr 10 — HONOLULU. Depart Honolulu via Japan Airlines flt #73 at 12:15 pm.

Day 2: Fri, Apr 11 — TOKYO — KANSAI. Arrive at the Haneda International Airport at 3:55 pm. After entry formalities, depart Haneda Domestic Airport via Japan Airlines flt #229 at 8:55 pm and arrive at the Kansai International Airport at 10:10 pm. Walk to your hotel which is a short covered walk from the airport. Dinner has been arranged at the hotel. **HOTEL NIKKO KANSAI AIRPORT (1 Night) (D)**

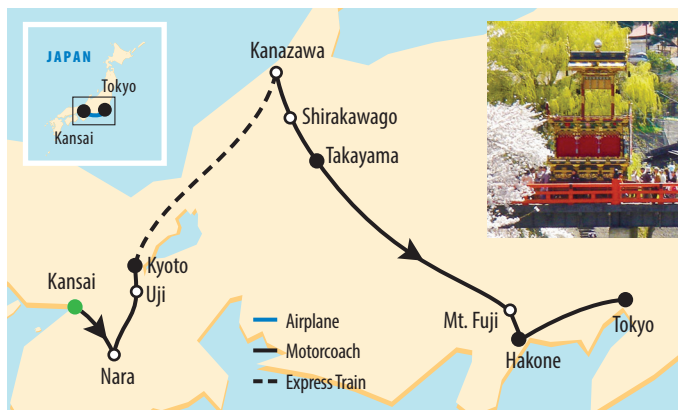
Day 3: Sat, Apr 12 — KANSAI — NARA — UJI — KYOTO. In the morning we will travel to Nara, the oldest capital city of Japan. Visit **Todaiji Temple**, the largest wooden building in Japan. The largest bronze statue of Buddha at 16.3 meters high and the surrounding **Nara Deer Park** is inhabited by **over 1,000 Shika Deer**. After lunch, we proceed to Uji where we will 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. On our way to Kyoto, we will visit the stunning vermilion colored **Fushimi Inari Shrine**, whose four kilometer long tunnel of scarlet torii gates was featured in the film *Memoirs of a Geisha*. Enjoy a buffet dinner at the hotel. **MIYAKO HOTEL KYOTO HACHIOJ (2 Nights) (B, L, D)**

Day 4: Sun, Apr 13 — KYOTO. Today we continue our tour of Kyoto, once the capital of Japan and still considered its cultural center. Begin the morning with visit to **Kiyomizu Temple** (literally "Pure Water Temple"), one of the most celebrated temples of Japan. It was founded in 780 on the site of the Otowa Waterfall. Then experience a **traditional Japanese tea ceremony**. After lunch, visit the famous **Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion)**, a Zen Temple whose top two floors are completely covered in gold leaf. Formally known as Rokuonji, the temple was the retirement villa of the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu. Today's hands-on experience is **surikomi yuzen (brush dyed yuzen)**, which is one of Kyoto's traditional craft Kyo-Yuzen Dyeing techniques. Since the patterns are dyed by placing a paper stencil over a piece of fabric, such as a table mat you can make an authentic piece, even if this is your first time. Your very own original work will be a perfect memento for yourself or a gift for someone. Lastly, take a stroll through **Gion**, the old **Geisha Quarter**. Return to the hotel for an evening of leisure. The Local Guide will have suggestions on various dining and shopping opportunities nearby. (B, L)

*Baggage will be sent from Kyoto to Hakone — one per person — skipping Takayama. Prepare an overnight bag for two nights.

Day 5: Mon, Apr 14 — KYOTO — KANAZAWA — SHIRAKAWAGO — TAKAYAMA. After breakfast, take a **JR Limited Express Train** to Kanazawa located on the shores of the Sea of Japan. Enjoy lunch in Kanazawa before we head out to **Shirakawago**. Ogimachi is the largest village and main attraction of Shirakawago. The village is home to several dozen well preserved gasho-zukuri farmhouses, some of which are more than 250 years old. The **Shiroyama Viewpoint** is north of the village center and offers nice views of Ogimachi and its farmhouses. **Myozenji Temple**, which is unique for its thatched roof rather than the typical tiled roof seen on most temples, is connected to the Myozenji-ke farmhouse next door where the priest of the temple lives. Then, we continue on to **Takayama**, where a festival that dates to the 15th century will be heating up. 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. After dinner, walk into town to experience the **Takayama Festival at night**. This festival is held on the 14th and 15th of April to pray for a good harvest. The highlight of the festival is in the evening when 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. **TOKYU STAY HIDA-TAKAYAMA MUSUBI NO YU (2 Nights) (B, L, D)**

Day 6: Tue, Apr 15 — TAKAYAMA. After breakfast we will continue sightseeing in Takayama, which includes the **Morning Market**. You can browse the market stalls for local crafts and fresh farm products. Takayama's Old Town has been beautifully preserved, with many buildings and whole streets of houses dating from the Edo Period (1600–1868). Enjoy the **Takayama Festival during the day**, as the floats parade through the town. After lunch (on your own), explore the **Kami-Sannomachi (Old Town) Area**, you can find many old homes, shops, coffee houses, and



sake breweries, some of which have been in business for centuries. The remainder of the afternoon is at your leisure. Return to the hotel for dinner. (B, D)

Day 7: Wed, Apr 16 — TAKAYAMA — MT. FUJI — HAKONE. We now make way to **Mt. Fuji** — we will ascend to the **5th station** (weather permitting) at an elevation of 7,500 feet above sea level. Continue to Hakone. Again, enjoy a relaxing soak in an **onsen hot springs** before this evening's buffet dinner. **HAKONE HOTEL KOWAKIEN (1 Night) (B, L, D)**

Day 8: Thur, Apr 17 — HAKONE — TOKYO. This morning, visit **Owakudani** ("Great Boiling Valley"), the source of the onsen hot spring waters of Hakone. Then take the **Hakone Ropeway** and view the surrounding countryside. Enjoy a **boat ride** on the beautiful **Lake Ashi**. After lunch, try your hand at **Hakone Yosegi-Zaiku**, inlaid and mosaic woodwork unique to this area. Then, proceed to Tokyo. This evening, a special izakaya dinner has been planned. **GRAND NIKKO TOKYO DAIBA (2 Nights) (B, D)**

Day 9: Fri, Apr 18 — TOKYO. Day at leisure. Perfect day to relax and/or visit with family and friends in Tokyo. Your Local Guide will be available to assist as needed. (B)

Day 10: Sat, Apr 19 — TOKYO — HONOLULU. After a sumptuous buffet breakfast embark on a full day of discovery! Today's highlight will be a hands-on **sushi making class**, which will yield your delicious lunch. After lunch, visit **Asakusa** in the center of Tokyo's shitamachi (literally "low city"), one of Tokyo's districts, where an atmosphere of the Tokyo of past decades survives. Asakusa's main attraction is **Sensoji**, a very popular Buddhist temple, built in the 7th century. The temple is approached via the **Nakamise**, a shopping street that has been providing temple visitors with a variety of traditional local snacks and tourist souvenirs for centuries. Next, begin exploring **Ameyoko**, a busy market street along the Yamanote Line tracks between Okachimachi and Ueno Stations. The name "Ameyoko" is a short form for "Ameya Yokocho" ("candy store alley"), as candies were traditionally sold there. Today, various products such as clothes, bags, cosmetics, fresh fish, dried food, and spices are sold along Ameyoko. Depart Haneda International Airport via Japan Airlines flt #74 at 9:05 pm and arrive Honolulu at 9:35 am the same day. Aloha and welcome home! (B, L)

UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Todaiji Temple (1998), Byodoin Temple (1994), Kinkakuji Temple (1994), Kiyomizu Temple (1994), Shirakawago (1995), Mt. Fuji (2013).

* 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: 11/27/24. NST at its discretion, may use group and individual photos on its website, print, television, and various social media. † Early booking discount is per person. Purchase of NST's complete Air and Land Package is required. Cherry blossoms are subject to weather conditions and are NOT guaranteed. †† Earn rewards every time you refer a friend. For each "new-to-NST" customer you refer, both you and your referral can receive a \$25 discount off your next NST escorted group. **Special Assistance:** You must notify NST, at time of reservation, of any disability requiring special attention. NST reserves the right to cancel your booking or terminate your vacation if your special needs or disabilities are not suitable for the vacation or if you are not traveling with a companion who will provide all the assistance you require. **Wheelchair and electric scooter access outside of the USA is severely restricted.**

