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

# 2025 CHERRY BLOSSOMS GRAND NIIGATA, SADO ISLAND PLUS TOKYO SHOPPING

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9 Nights / 11 Days • 20 Meals (9 Breakfasts, 4 Lunches, 7 Dinners)  
Escorted from Honolulu • Includes an English-Speaking Local Guide  
April 11 – 21, 2025 • Tour Manager: Wally Mau

**HIDDEN GEMS OF JAPAN:** There's more to Japan than the well-known destinations of Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka. After all, with over 43 prefectures, there are surely TONS of other hidden gems out there that will be worth your while! In fact, there is one stunning place that's yet to be discovered by foreign tourists, and that's a visit to Niigata Prefecture facing the Sea of Japan.

**VISIT:** Omiya • Niigata • Sado Island • Tokyo

**TOUR HIGHLIGHTS:** JR Super Express Train Ride • Takada Castle Sakura Festival Knife Factory Tour • Shirone Grape Garden • Yahiko Park • Yahiko Shrine Yahiko Ropeway • Jet Foil Ride to Sado Island • Japanese Crested Ibis Conservation Centre Oni Daiko (Demon Drums) Performance • Sado Gold Mine • Tarai-Bune (Bathtub) Boat Ride Shukunegi • Minato Marche Pier Bandai • Geiko Dinner • Niigata Saito Villa Northern Culture Museum • Asakusa Sensoji Temple • Nakamise Shopping Ameyoko Shopping

**HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES:** Strawberry Picking • Obata Sake Brewery Tour and Tasting Soba Noodle Making • Imayo Tsukasa Sake Brewery Tour and Tasting • Mochi Pounding Senbei (Rice Cracker) Making • Sushi Making

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**DON'T MISS A THING!!**  
**WHISPER** — Wireless Tour Guide System!  
English narration directly to your ear!

**Non-Stop Travel Sado Island  
& Niigata Exclusives!**

**ONI DAIKO** — Demon Drums Performance!  
**KAISEKI DINNER** — With Geiko (Geisha) Performance!

**COMPLETE PACKAGE!**

Includes Roundtrip Airfare from Honolulu, 9 Nights Hotel, 20 Meals, Tips for Local Tour Guides and Bus Drivers, All Taxes & Fees

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**Day 1: Fri, Apr 11** – HONOLULU. Depart Honolulu via Japan Airlines flt #73 at 12:15 pm.

**Day 2: Sat, Apr 12** – TOKYO. Arrive at the Haneda International Airport at 3:55 pm. 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 five 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)

**Day 3: Sun, Apr 13** – OMIYA – NIIGATA. After a sumptuous breakfast buffet at the hotel, walk to the Omiya Train Station. Take the **JR Super Express Train** to Niigata. Upon arrival in Niigata, travel to Takada Castle. With 4,000+ cherry blossom trees, the **Takada Castle Sakura Festival** is one of the top five flower festivals in the world. Take a **tour of a knife factory**, before transferring to the hotel. Soak in the **onsen hot springs** before or after your multi-course **Kaiseki Dinner**. HOTEL OYANAGI (2 Nights) (B, D)

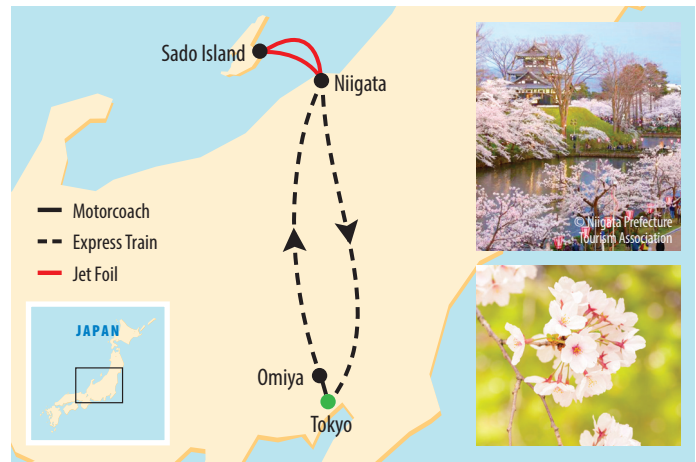
**Day 4: Mon, Apr 14** – NIIGATA. Begin the day at **Shirone Grape Garden**, where you will have the chance to **pick some fresh strawberries**. After lunch, it's now time for what you've all been waiting for! **Yahiko Park** is ablaze with cherry blossoms! You've never seen anything like it! Also visit **Yahiko Shrine**. Take it all in from the amazing vantage point of the **Yahiko Ropeway!** Return to the hotel for dinner. (B, L, D)

\*Baggage will be carried by truck from Hotel Oyanagi in Niigata to the Hotel Nikko Niigata, skipping Sado Island. Prepare an overnight bag for two nights.

**Day 5: Tue, Apr 15** – NIIGATA – SADO ISLAND. Transfer to Niigata Port. Take a **jet foil** to Sado Island. Upon arrival in Sado, take a tour of the **Japanese Crested Ibis Conservation Centre**. Next, visit the **Obata Sake Brewery** for a **tour and tasting**. Transfer to the hotel. A special **Kaiseki Dinner** will be served at your hotel accompanied by an authentic **Oni Daiko (Demon Drums) Performance**. Don't forget to try out the **onsen hot springs** – which are divided for men and women – allow you to enjoy the onsen 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 6: Wed, Apr 16** – SADO ISLAND. Full day sightseeing of Sado Island by coach, starting with a tour of the **Sado Gold Mine**. **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 centimeters. 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 dinner at a local restaurant. (B, L, D)

**Day 7: Thur, Apr 17** – SADO ISLAND – NIIGATA. Take the **jet foil** from Sado Island to Niigata. Next, explore **Minato Marche Pier Bandai**, a food market that offers a multiple of food options, including fish caught in Japan Sea, to vegetables and fruit directly delivered from farms, to Niigata-produced Koshihikari rice, to a variety of high-quality brand sake from across the prefecture, all kinds of Niigata's specialties relating to food are here. Enjoy lunch (on your own) here. After lunch, visit the **Imayo Tsukasa Sake Brewery** and learn about sake, how it is made, and taste a few of their products. You're in for treat this evening!! Along with dinner, we are entertained by an authentic **Geiko**. Dancing, singing and playing fun games. HOTEL NIKKO NIIGATA (2 Nights) (B, D)



**Day 8: Fri, Apr 18** – NIIGATA. Take a tour of **Niigata Saito Villa**. Built by a wealthy merchant, Saito Kijuro, in 1918, the villa was carefully constructed to provide the best view of the Japanese garden. Next, explore the **Northern Culture Museum**, where you'll have lunch and **learn how to pound mochi**. Originally serving as a mansion of Ito Bunkichi, who lived in the Edo Period (1603–1868) and was one of the greatest landowners in Japan, nowadays, the museum houses calligraphy and ceramics, lacquer ware and documents related to Ito's family history. You can also visit the garden; it is a "walking" garden with a big pond. After lunch, you'll **learn how to make senbei (rice cracker)**. Return to the hotel for a chance to rest and refresh before going to a restaurant for dinner. (B, L, D)

**Day 9: Sat, Apr 19** – NIIGATA – TOKYO. After breakfast, depart Niigata and travel to Tokyo via **JR Super Express Train**. Transfer from Tokyo Station to your hotel. Enjoy some time at leisure to explore the area around your hotel on your own before dinner. GRAND NIKKO TOKYO DAIBA (2 Nights) (B, D)

**Day 10: Sun, Apr 20** – 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 11: Mon, Apr 21** – TOKYO – HONOLULU. Begin the day with a hands-on **sushi making class**, which will yield your delicious lunch. After lunch, visit to **Asakusa**, 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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. Visit **Ameyoko**, a busy market street along the Yamanote Line tracks between Okachimachi and Ueno Stations. Transfer to the airport for your flight home. Depart the Haneda International Airport via Japan Airlines flt #72 at 9:55 pm and arrive in Honolulu at 10:25 am the same day. Aloha and welcome home! (B, L)

\* 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](http://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 line" 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: 12/02/24. NST at its discretion, may use group and individual photos on its website, print, television, and various social media. Cherry blossoms are subject to weather conditions and are NOT guaranteed. † Early booking discount is per person. Purchase of NST's complete air and land package is required. †† 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.**

