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# Off the Beaten Path: A Different Side of Japan

## 2025 FALL GRAND OKINAWA PLUS SNOW MONKEYS & TOKYO SHOPPING

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**9 Nights / 11 Days • 17 Meals (9 Breakfasts, 3 Lunches, 5 Dinners)**  
**Escorted from Honolulu • Includes an English-Speaking Local Guide**  
**November 14 - 24, 2025 • Tour Manager: Gordean Akiona**

**OVERVIEW:** Okinawa is home to a unique culture that differs considerably from that of mainland Japan. Until the islands were invaded by the Satsuma domain (present day Kagoshima Prefecture) in 1609, Okinawa existed as an entirely separate country from Japan, known as the Ryukyu Kingdom. After the invasion, the Ryukyu Kingdom served as a tributary state to Japan, but continued to be governed by the royal family from Shuri Castle. It was not until 1879, a few years after the Meiji Restoration, that the kingdom was abolished and incorporated into Japan as Okinawa Prefecture. The castles of Okinawa, known as "gusuku" in the Okinawan language, are among the most vivid monuments that testify to the unique cultural and historical heritage of the Ryukyu Kingdom. In the year 2000, five castles and four related sites were designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites under the collective title of "Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu."

**VISIT:** Haneda • Naha • Onna • Kitanakagusuku • Nago  
Manza • Motobu • Nakijin • Itoman • Nanjo • Tokyo • Nagano

**OKINAWA HIGHLIGHTS (5 NIGHTS):** Shuri Castle • Ryusou Ryukyu Kimono Dress-Up  
Coral Dyeing Experience • Ryukyu Mura Village • AEON MALL - RYCOM  
Awamori (Rice Liquor) Factory Tour • Churaumi Aquarium • Nakijin Castle Site  
Shisa Painting Experience • Himeyuri Peace Museum • Mabuni Hill  
Okinawa Peace Memorial Park • Okinawa World • Gyokusendo Stalactite Cave  
Habu (Snake) Museum • Glass Factory • Ryukyu Dance Performance

**NAGANO & TOKYO HIGHLIGHTS (3 NIGHTS):** LaLaport Toyosu • JR Super Express Train Ride  
Jigokudani Monkey Park • Zenkoji Temple • Toyosu Senkyaku Banrai • Asakusa Sensoji Temple  
Nakamise Shopping • Ameyoko Shopping

**UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES:** Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu

**COMPLETE PACKAGE!**

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**Day 1: Fri, Nov 14** – HONOLULU. Depart Honolulu via Japan Airlines flt #73 at 11:55 am.

**Day 2: Sat, Nov 15** – HANEDA. Arrive at the Haneda International Airport at 3:55 pm. After entry formalities, walk to your hotel connected to the airport terminal. Enjoy a buffet dinner at the hotel. HOTEL VILLA FONTAINE GRAND HANEDA AIRPORT (1 Night) (D)

**Day 3: Sun, Nov 16** – HANEDA – NAHA. After a breakfast buffet at your hotel, transfer back to the Haneda airport terminal. Depart Haneda Domestic Airport via Japan Airlines flt #915 at 11:55 am and arrive at the Naha International Airport at 2:45 pm. Begin your exploration of Okinawa with a visit to **Shuri Castle (Shurijo)**, the most important castle of the Ryukyu Kingdom, serving both as the central government office and royal residence. Although the main buildings of Shuri Castle were destroyed in a fire in October 2019, reconstruction to bring back the castle to its former glory is expected to be completed in 2026. Shurijo is the only castle in Okinawa that has been reconstructed. Only ruins remain of all the other castles. **Dress up in Ryusou Ryukyu Kimonos** for a group photo! Coral is a fundamental part of the history and culture of the Okinawan Islands. Many areas of Okinawa's main island are made of Ryukyu limestone formed by ancient coral reefs several hundred thousand years ago. Today, coral fossils are often used to create various art pieces in Okinawa. Try your hand at bringing your own art to life when you learn how to **decorate a tote bag** using a **coral dyeing** technique done only in Okinawa, **"ryuzen zome."** Transfer to the hotel. Walk to a nearby restaurant for dinner. HOTEL COLLECTIVE (1 Night) (B, D)

\*Baggage will be held at the hotel in Naha. Prepare an overnight bag for a one night stay in Manza.

**Day 4: Mon, Nov 17** – NAHA – ONNA – KITANAKAGUSUKU – NAGO – MANZA. After breakfast, we head north to Onna Village and spend the morning at **Ryukyu Mura**, a small theme park about Okinawan culture in the form of a recreated village from the times of the Ryukyu Kingdom. The highlight of the village is the eisa show. Eisa, a form of folk dance originating in the Okinawa Islands, that is performed by the young people of each community during the bon festival to honor the spirits of their ancestors. In the finale of the eisa show, visitors can join in on the dance known as kachashi. The term "kachashi" is a word from the Okinawan dialect and means "to mix." It implies the idea of sharing happiness, which fosters a sense of unity that transcends borders and language barriers. Then stop at **AEON MALL – RYCOM** for shopping and lunch (on your own). Next we visit an **awamori (rice liquor) factory**. Awamori is the signature alcoholic beverage of Okinawa and most of the Ryukyu Islands. Learn the unique process involved in making awamori. Enjoy dinner at the hotel tonight. ANA INTERCONTINENTAL MANZA BEACH RESORT (1 Night) (B, D)

**Day 5: Tue, Nov 18** – MANZA – MOTOBU – NAKIJIN – NAHA. After an incredible breakfast buffet, enjoy a visit to the **Churaumi Aquarium**, widely considered Japan's best aquarium. It is the main attraction of the Ocean Expo Park on the former grounds of the 1975 International Ocean Expo. The aquarium was completely redesigned and reopened in 2002. The highlight of a visit to the Churaumi Aquarium is the massive Kuroshio Tank, one of the largest in the world. The tank takes its name from the warm Kuroshio current which plays a large part in the variety of Okinawa's marine life. Next, visit the ruins of **Nakijin Castle**. Learn about the history of Okinawa. The castle – a former residence of the Ryukyu Kingdom governor during the 14<sup>th</sup> century – is a designated UNESCO World Heritage site. Let your creative side loose when you **paint a shisa**, a traditional Ryukyuan cultural artifact and decoration. Often seen in pairs and resemble a cross between a lion and a dog, shisa are from Okinawan mythology, and are believed to protect from some evils. People place pairs of shisa on their rooftops or flanking gates to their houses, with the left shisa traditionally has a closed mouth, the right one an open mouth. The open mouth shisa traditionally wards off evil spirits, while the closed mouth shisa keeps good spirits in. Transfer to the hotel in Naha. HOTEL COLLECTIVE (3 Nights) (B, L)

**Day 6: Wed, Nov 19** – NAHA. Full day at leisure. Your Local Guide will be available to assist as needed. Perfect day to relax and/or visit with family and friends in Okinawa. Don't miss the out on the numerous shopping opportunities on Kokusai-dori – including the Heiwa-dori covered shopping arcade or the Don Quijote that is open until 3:00 am every day! (B)

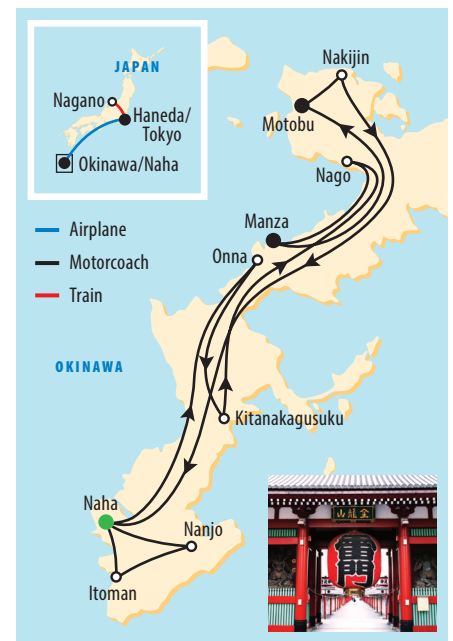
**Day 7: Thur, Nov 20** – NAHA – ITOMAN – NANJO – NAHA. After breakfast, we will visit two WWII memorial sites. Begin by exploring the **Himeyuri Peace Museum**, which details what the Okinawan people experienced – from the atrocities of war, to their struggles during American occupation, and the difficulties they faced with the switching of government powers in the post-war years. The museum also commemorates the fate of the female high school students that had worked in the army field hospitals under horrendous conditions – many of which did not survive the war. Testimonials of the few survivors of the Battle of Okinawa are exhibited here – offering detailed recollections of their painful experiences. Next is the **Okinawa Peace Memorial Park**, situated on **Mabuni Hill**, the site where the Battle of Okinawa ended, was created to mourn the loss of close to a quarter of a million people. One of the key features of the park is the Cornerstone of Peace inscribed with the names of some 200,000 individuals, including civilians and Japanese and foreign soldiers, who lost their lives in the Battle of Okinawa. The concept of the stone monuments is to remember those who died and to pray for them, to share lessons learned from war and to provide a place for meditation and learning. Spend the afternoon exploring **Okinawa World**, a theme park about Okinawan culture. The park's main attractions are a **massive natural cave**, a **craft village**, and a **habu (snake) museum**. With a total length of five kilometers, **Gyokusendo Cave** is the longest of the many caves in the south of Okinawa Island and the second longest cave in the entire country. 850 meters of the cave are open to the public and feature spectacular stalactites and stalagmites. The Kingdom Village is a nice replica of a traditional Ryukyu village with workshops introducing the various traditional Okinawan crafts, such as weaving, dyeing, paper making, pottery, sugar cane processing, the making of music instruments, and the more recently introduced glass blowing. Colorful **Ryukyu glass** is one of those must-have souvenirs when visiting Okinawa. Taking a tour of the work shop allows visitors to see how the craftsmen create their art. Hands-on experiences are offered at many of the workshops. This evening enjoy dinner at a local restaurant with a **Ryukyu Dance Performance** included. (B, L, D)

**Day 8: Fri, Nov 21** – NAHA – TOKYO. Depart Naha Airport via Japan Airlines flt #902 at 10:10 am and arrive at Haneda Domestic Airport at 12:25 pm. En route to the hotel, a stop will be made at **LaLaport Toyosu**, a mall located on Tokyo Bay that has 180 shops, including UNIQLO, 100 yen shop, THE DAISO, and more. This evening enjoy a buffet dinner at the hotel. KEIO PLAZA HOTEL TOKYO (3 Nights) (B, D)

**Day 9: Sat, Nov 22** – TOKYO – NAGANO – TOKYO. After breakfast, motorcoach transfer to Tokyo Train Station and board the **JR Super Express Train** to Nagano. Receive a bento lunch upon arrival in Nagano. Transfer by motorcoach to the **Jigokudani Monkey Park** for the unique experience of seeing wild monkeys bathing in a natural hot spring. The park is inhabited by Japanese Macaques, which are also known as Snow Monkeys. The park has one man-made pool around which the monkeys gather. Then travel to **Zenkoji Temple**, one of the most important and popular temples in Japan. Return to Tokyo via **JR Super Express Train**. The remainder of the evening is at your leisure. The Local Guide will have many suggestions for dinner and shopping. (B, L)

**Day 10: Sun, Nov 23** – TOKYO. Day at leisure. Enjoy shopping and dining in the bustling Shinjuku Area. 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, Nov 24** – TOKYO – HONOLULU. After breakfast, embark on a full day of discovery! Begin the day exploring **Toyosu Senkyaku**



**Banrai**, a shopping complex that recreates an Edo period neighborhood. Toyosu Senkyaku Banrai offers fresh food from the neighboring Toyosu Market and serves to showcase the best foods in Tokyo. Enjoy time for shopping and lunch (on your own), exploring the offerings at the numerous stalls. If you get tired, head up to the 8<sup>th</sup> floor and relax at the foot bath garden – which is free of charge to all visitors. Then head to **Asakusa**, the center of Tokyo's shitamachi (literally "low city") 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. Next visit **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. Alternatively, "ame" also stands for "America," because a lot of American products used to be available there when the streets was the site of a black market in the years following WWII. Today, various products such as clothes, bags, cosmetics, fresh fish, dried food, and spices are sold along Ameyoko. Transfer to the Haneda Airport for the flight home. Depart the Haneda International Airport via Japan Airlines flt #74 at 9:00 pm and arrive in Honolulu at 9:00 am the same day. Aloha and welcome home! (B)

**UNESCO World Heritage Sites:** Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu (2000).

\* 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" 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" cruise or 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: 07/07/25. 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. †† 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.** 021325

