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Off the Beaten Path: A Different Side of Japan

2025 SUMMER NORTHERN JAPAN ALPS

Featuring the Spectacular Snow Walls of Mt. Norikura
with Takayama, Sado Island & Niigata

Enjoy your choice of Japan Airlines' "Economy," "Premium Economy," or the affordable luxury of "Business" class service. Premium Economy class customers will begin their journey with a relaxing visit to JAL's "Sakura Lounge" and the brand new "Sakura Lounge - Hale" for Business class.

New and unique itinerary! Onsen hot springs experience with seasonal Kaiseki Dinners!

9 Nights / 11 Days • 21 Meals (9 Breakfasts, 5 Lunches, 7 Dinners)
Escorted from Honolulu • Includes English-Speaking Local Guide
Tour #1: June 07 – 17, 2025 • Tour Manager: Cora Kinney
Tour #2: June 14 – 24, 2025 • Tour Manager: Lisa McKee

OVERVIEW: Experience the Spectacular Snow Walls of Mt. Norikura in the middle of summer. Explore one of Japan's largest islands, Sado Island. It's 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 onsen hot springs to specially prepared, Kaiseki Dinners, this tour has something for everyone! Join us!

VISIT: Omiya • Minakami • Matsumoto • Mt. Norikura
Takayama • Shirakawago • Toyama • Sado Island • Niigata

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS: Takumi no Sato • Firefly Viewing • Tanigawadake Ropeway
Tanigawadake Lift • Kawaba Denen Plaza • Matsumoto City Museum of Art
Daio Wasabi Nojo • Matsumoto Castle • Nawate Shopping Street • Snow Walls of Mt. Norikura
Takayama Morning Market • Kami-Sannomachi Street • Takayama Jinya • Shirakawago
Michi-no-Eki Marine Dome Noo • Minato Marche Pier Bandai • Ferry Ride to Sado Island
Japanese Crested Ibis Conservation Centre • Oni Daiko (Demon Drums) Performance
Tarai-bune Boat Ride • Shukunegi • Sado Gold Mine • Northern Culture Museum
AEON MALL Niigata Minami • Niigata Furusato Village • Shinkansen Bullet Train Ride

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES: Soba Noodle Making • Ice Cream Making • Yukata Dress-Up
Senbei (Rice Cracker) Making • Mochi Pounding • Imayo Tsukasa Sake Brewery with Tasting

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES: Shirakawago

COMPLETE PACKAGE!
Includes Roundtrip Airfare from Honolulu,
9 Nights Hotel, 21 Meals, Tips for Local Tour
Guides and Bus Drivers, All Taxes & Fees

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Day 1: Sat – HONOLULU. Depart Honolulu via Japan Airlines flt #73 at 12:45 pm.

Day 2: Sun – TOKYO – OMIYA. 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 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)

Day 3: Mon – OMIYA – MINAKAMI. After a sumptuous breakfast buffet at hotel, start the day with a **soba making class** in the arts and craft village **Takumi no Sato**. After your soba making class, you will have free time to explore more of Takumi no Sato on your own. **Learn how to make ice cream!** A great treat on a warm summer day. Continue on to Minakami. This evening enjoy a buffet dinner featuring seasonal vegetable and Minakami specialties at your hotel. After dinner, depart the hotel to **view fireflies**. Watch as these soft bodied beetles emit light in the darkening evening. Be sure to relax in the **scenic onsen hot spring baths**. 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. GENSEN YU-NO-YADO MATSUNOI (1 Night) (B, L, D)

Day 4: Tue – MINAKAMI – MATSUMOTO. Enjoy the view of the Minakami from above when you take the **Tanigawadake Ropeway** and **Tanigawadake Lift**. Enjoy time for lunch (on your own) and shopping at the **Kawaba Denen Plaza**. This roadside station sells many regional specialties and locally made food products. After lunch, transfer to the hotel in Matsumoto. Enjoy dinner at the hotel tonight. MATSUMOTO HOTEL KAGETSU (2 Nights) (B, D)

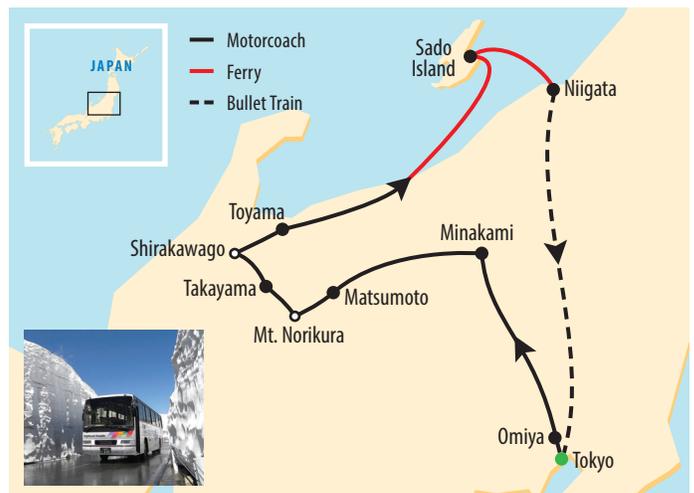
Day 5: Wed – MATSUMOTO. Start the day with a visit to the **Matsumoto City Museum of Art**. Next, visit **Daio Wasabi Nojo**, the country's largest wasabi farm, for lunch (on your own). After lunch, visit **Matsumoto Castle**, one of Japan's premier historic castles. Also known as "Crow Castle" due to its black exterior, Matsumoto Castle is unique for having both a secondary donjon and a turret adjoined to its main keep. While there, you'll have the chance to **dress-up in yukata**, unlined cotton summer kimono that are worn in casual settings. Before returning to the hotel for the evening, stop at **Nawate Shopping Street**, a frog-themed shopping street. The 200 meter long street is lined with around 50 shops that vary from antique dealers, dagashi candy stores, and stylish bakeries, to designer boutiques. Return to the hotel for a **Kaiseki Dinner**. (B, D)

Day 6: Thur – MATSUMOTO – MT. NORIKURA – TAKAYAMA. Travel to **Mt. Norikura**. At 3,026 meters in height, it's the third highest peak in the Northern Japan Alps. Feel dwarfed by the spectacular 10 meter tall **snow walls** near the top of Mt. Norikura. Although it's June, the temperature will still be cold enough to keep the walls frozen – make sure to bring some warm clothes if you plan on getting off the bus to take pictures. After lunch, travel 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. Enjoy dinner at the hotel. TOKYU STAY HOTEL HIDA TAKAYAMA MUSUBI NO YU (1 Night) (B, L, D)

Day 7: Fri – TAKAYAMA – SHIRAKAWAGO – TOYAMA. After breakfast, explore **Takayama's Morning Market**, where you can browse the market stalls for local crafts and fresh farm products. Then take a stroll around **Kami-Sannomachi Street** (old town), before visiting the **Takayama Jinya**, a former government outpost. After lunch, visit **Shirakawago**, a World UNESCO World Heritage Site, home to several dozen well preserved gassho-zukuri farmhouses – some of which are more than 250 years old. Depart Shirakawago for Toyama. ANA CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL TOYAMA (1 Night) (B, L, D)

*Baggage will be sent from Toyama to Niigata, skipping Sado Island. Prepare an overnight bag for one night.

Day 8: Sat – TOYAMA – SADO ISLAND. After breakfast, depart Toyama. Stop at roadside stand **Michi-no-Eki Marine Dome Noo**. Not only do they provide a clean and convenient rest stop, local farmers and fisherman sell their products at rock-bottom prices. 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. Transfer to Niigata Port. Ride a **jet foil** to **Sado Island**. Upon arrival in Sado, take a tour of the **Japanese Crested Ibis Conservation Centre** before transferring 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 onsens (before or after dinner). HOTEL YAHATAKAN (1 Night) (B, D)

Day 9: Sun – SADO ISLAND – NIIGATA. Start the day with 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. Next, 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. After lunch, take a tour of the **Sado Gold Mine**. Transfer to Ryotsu port and take a **ferry back to Niigata**. Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant. HOTEL NIKKO NIIGATA (2 Nights) (B, L, D)

Day 10: Mon – NIIGATA. Start the day with a **senbei (rice cracker) making class** at Senbei Okoku. Then take a tour the **Northern Culture Museum**, which 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. Don't forget to view the beautiful garden with its large pond. While there, learn how to pound mochi before having lunch. Spend some free time at the **AEON MALL Niigata Minami** before returning to the hotel for an evening of leisure. Our local Tour Guide will have suggestions for dinner tonight. (B, L)

Day 11: Tue – NIIGATA – TOKYO – HONOLULU. Take a tour of the **Niigata Furusato Village**, where there are shops selling Niigata specialties, restaurants serving local cuisine, a Niigata sightseeing information area and a corner providing Niigata historical and cultural information to visitors. Transfer to the Niigata Station. Take a **Shinkansen Bullet Train** to Tokyo. Transfer to the Haneda International Airport. Depart Tokyo via Japan Airlines flt #72 at 9:55 pm and arrive in Honolulu at 10:40 am on the same day. Aloha and welcome home! (B)

UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Shirakawago (1995).

*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: Tour #1: 01/28/25 • Tour #2: 02/04/25. 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.** 092024

