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

# 2026 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, 2026 • Tour Managers: Darren Upchurch & Johanna Bugarin**

**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, Yahiko Park, Yahiko Shrine, Yahiko Ropeway, Knife Factory Tour, Michi-no-Eki, Jet Foil Ride to Sado Island, Japanese Crested Ibis Conservation Centre, Oni-Daiko (Demon Drums) Performance, Kirariumu Sado, Kitazawa Flotation Plant, Sado Gold Mine, Tarai-Bune Boat Ride, Shukunegi, Pier Bandai, Niigata Furusato Village, Geiko Dinner, Niigata Saito Villa, Northern Culture Museum, AEON MALL, Asakusa Sensoji Temple, Nakamise Shopping & Ameyoko Shopping

**HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES:** Strawberry Picking, Obata Sake Brewery Tour and Tasting, Soba Noodle Making, Mochi Pounding, Senbei (Rice Cracker) Making & Sushi Making Class

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**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 Motorcoach Drivers, All Taxes & Fees

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

**Day 2: Sun, Apr 12** — HANEDA — 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 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: Mon, 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 trees, the Takada Castle Sakura Festival is one of the top five flower festivals in the world. Continue the day of cherry blossom sighting. **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**! Transfer to the hotel. Soak in the **onsen hot spring** before or after your multi-course **Kaiseki Dinner**. **HOTEL OYANAGI** (2 Nights) (B, D)

**Day 4: Tue, Apr 14** — NIIGATA. Begin the day at a local farm, where you will have the chance to **pick some fresh strawberries**. After lunch, take a tour of a **knife factory**, and see how these kitchen essentials are made. Stop at a roadside **Michi-no-Eki** for a little shopping time. Not only do they provide a clean and convenient rest stop, with quick and tasty food, but you will also find an array of farmer-direct merchandise along with other omiyage items. Return to the hotel for a **Kaiseki 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.

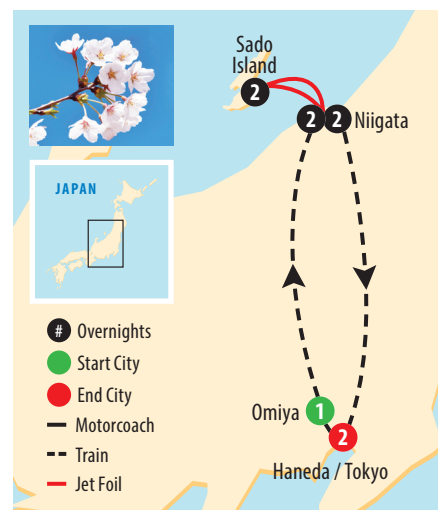
**Day 5: Wed, Apr 15** — NIIGATA — SADO ISLAND. Transfer to Niigata Port. Take a **jet foil** to Sado Island. Upon arrival in Sado, take a tour of the **Japanese Crested Ibis Conservation Centre**. Next, visit the **Obata Sake Brewery** for a **tour and tasting**. Obata Sake Brewery is the brewer of the **Manotsumu** brand of sake. Established in 1892, this brewery has won the gold prize a total of ten times at the nation's most respected National New Sake Awards. It was also honored three times with a prestigious gold medal in the sake category at the world's largest wine competition held in London, the International Wine Challenge (in 2004, 2007, and 2015). This is your chance to purchase some of these prize winning sakes for your own collection. 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 onsens 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: Thur, Apr 16** — SADO ISLAND. After breakfast, depart on a full day sightseeing. Begin the day at **Kirariumu Sado**, the Sado Gold Mine Welcome Center, where you will learn everything you

need to know about the gold mine. Take a drive by the **Kitazawa Flotation Plant**, before transferring to the **Sado Gold Mine**, to learn about the 400+ year history of the largest gold mine in Japan. Full-size dolls and robots provide accurate representation of the historic workings of the mine in the Edo period. In the museum, you can try to lift a pure gold bar, with a value of over 100 million yen, out of a clear box. Many have tried, but few have succeeded. Next, **learn how to make 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 the Edo and Meiji periods, the tarai-bune tub boats, mainly operated by women, were ideal for tight turns 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 local restaurant before returning to the hotel. (B, L, D)

**Day 7: Fri, Apr 17** — SADO ISLAND — NIIGATA. Take the **jet foil** from Sado Island to Niigata. Explore **Pier Bandai**, a food market that offers multiple of food options, including fish caught in the Sea of Japan, to vegetables and fruit directly delivered from farms, Niigata-produced koshihikari rice, a variety of high-quality brand sake from across the Prefecture, and all kinds of Niigata's specialties relating to food. You'll have free time here to enjoy lunch (on your own). The **Niigata Furusato Village** is a culture and tourism facility providing tourist information related to Niigata Prefecture and introducing various local products. The facility provides tourist information, and it also sells specialty products of Niigata, including local sake, rice, and fresh fish. 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: Sat, 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, take a tour of 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**. It's not as easy as it looks. After lunch, you'll **learn how to make senbei (rice cracker)**. Spend free time at an **AEON MALL**. Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant before returning to the hotel for the evening. (B, L, D)



**Day 9: Sun, 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 a buffet dinner. **GRAND NIKKO TOKYO DAIBA** (2 Nights) (B, D)

**Day 10: Mon, 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: Tue, Apr 21** — TOKYO — HANEDA — 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 #74 at 9:05 pm and arrive in Honolulu at 9:30 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" 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: 12/02/25. 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.** 072325

