



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

2026 CHERRY BLOSSOMS SEA OF JAPAN, SADO ISLAND, TAKAYAMA FESTIVAL & HIROSHIMA

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12 Nights / 14 Days • 28 Meals (12 Breakfasts, 8 Lunches, 8 Dinners)

Escorted from Honolulu • Includes an English-Speaking Local Guide

April 08 – 21, 2026 • Tour Manager: Cora Kinney

OVERVIEW: One of Japan's largest islands, Sado Island has an interesting history. Its 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, Niigata, Sado Island, Nagano, Matsumoto, Takayama, Shirakawago, Kanazawa, Tojinbo, Awara, Amanohashidate, Kinosaki, Tottori, Tamatsukuri, Izumo, Matsue & Hiroshima

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS: JR Super Express Train Ride, Niigata Furusato Village, Jet Foil Ride to Sado Island, Japanese Crested Ibis Conservation Centre, Oni-Daiko (Demon Drums) Performance, Kirariumu Sado, Sado Gold Mine, Kitazawa Flotation Field, Obata Sake Brewery, Tarai-bune Boat Ride, Shukunegi, Jet Foil Ride to Niigata, Northern Culture Museum, Tsubame Sanjo Knife Factory, Jigokudani Monkey Park (for Snow Monkeys), Zenko-Ji Temple, Daio Wasabi Nojo, Takayama Morning Market, Takayama Festival, Old Town and Sannomachi Street, Shirakawago, Hashi Chaya District, Kenrokuen Garden, Eihei Temple, Tojinbo Cliff, Amanohashidate Ropeway (Cable Car), Tottori Sand Dune, AEON MALL, Izumo-Taisha, Goen Yokocho, Matsue Castle, Adachi Museum of Art, Peace Memorial Park, Peace Memorial Museum, A-Bomb Dome, Children's Memorial & AEON MALL

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES: Soba Noodle Making & Gold Leaf Application

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES: Shirakawago & A-Bomb Dome

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Day 1: Wed, Apr 08 – HONOLULU. Depart Honolulu via Japan Airlines flt #73 at 12:15 pm.

Day 2: Thur, Apr 09 – 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)

*Baggage will be carried by truck from Omiya to Nagano, skipping Sado Island. Prepare an overnight bag for two nights.

Day 3: Fri, Apr 10 – OMIYA – NIIGATA – SADO ISLAND. After a sumptuous breakfast buffet at hotel, walk to the Omiya Train Station. Take the **JR Super Express Train** to Niigata. 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. Enjoy free time here for lunch (on your own) and shopping. Transfer to Niigata Port. Ride a **jet foil** to Sado Island. Upon arrival in Sado Island, take a tour of the **Japanese Crested Ibis Conservation Centre**. Transfer to hotel. Enjoy a traditional multi-course **Kaiseki Dinner**, featuring ingredients unique to Sado Island. Enjoy an **Oni-Daiko (Demon Drums) Performance** during dinner. Don't forget to try out the **onsen hot springs** – 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. HOTEL YAHATAKAN (2 Nights) (B, D)

Day 4: Sat, Apr 11 – SADO ISLAND. After breakfast, depart on a full day sightseeing. Begin the day at **Kiririumu Sado**, the Sado Gold Mine Welcome Center, where you will learn everything you need to know about the gold mine. At 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. Take a drive by the **Kitazawa Floatation Field**. Next, learn how to make **soba noodles** and eat your delicious creation for lunch. After lunch, visit the **Obata Sake Brewery**, the brewer of the *Manosuru* brand 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. Next, 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 a Western dinner at a local restaurant before returning to the hotel. (B, L, D)

Day 5: Sun, Apr 12 – SADO ISLAND – NIIGATA – NAGANO. Take the **jet foil** from Sado Island to Niigata. Visit the **Northern Culture Museum**, where you'll have a tour of the facilities, then have lunch there. 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, visit the **Tsubame Sanjo Knife Factory** and shop for some Japanese made knives. Transfer to the hotel in Nagano for a **Kaiseki Dinner**. Relax in the **onsen** tonight. RYOKAN BIYUNOYADO (1 Night) (B, L, D)

*Baggage will be carried by truck from Nagano to Kanazawa, skipping Takayama. Prepare an overnight bag for two nights.

Day 6: Mon, Apr 13 – NAGANO – MATSUMOTO – TAKAYAMA. Start the day with a visit to the **Jigokudani Money Park (for Snow Monkeys)**. Then explore the grounds of **Zenko-ji Temple**. One of the most important and popular temples in Japan, Zenko-ji Temple was founded in the 7th century and stores the first Buddhist statue ever to be brought into Japan when Buddhism was first introduced in the 6th century. Enjoy lunch here (on your own). Stop at **Daio Wasabi Nojo**, the country's largest wasabi farm. Then, we continue on 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 the seasonal bounty of your specially prepared dinner. HOTEL ASSOCIA TAKAYAMA RESORT (2 Nights) (B, D)



Day 7: Tue, Apr 14 – TAKAYAMA. After breakfast, explore Takayama's **Morning Market**, where you can browse the market stalls for local crafts and fresh farm products. The **Takayama Festival**, which dates to the 15th century, is held on the 14th and 15th of April to pray for a good harvest. The highlight of the festival is when the 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, and are decorated with mechanical dolls that can move and dance. After lunch, explore the streets of Takayama's **Old Town**. On some streets, like **Sannomachi Street**, you can find many old homes, shops, coffee houses and sake breweries, some of which have been in business for centuries. This evening, return to the streets of Takayama to **experience the floats at night**. This evening, enjoy a buffet dinner at the hotel. (B, L, D)

Day 8: Wed, Apr 15 – TAKAYAMA – SHIRAKAWAGO – KANAZAWA. After breakfast, 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. After lunch, explore the **Higashi Chaya District**. Chaya ("teahouse") is an exclusive type of restaurant where guests were entertained by geisha, who performed song and dance. Transfer to the hotel in Kanazawa. Our Local Tour Guide will have many suggestions for dinner tonight. HYATT CENTRIC KANAZAWA (1 Night) (B, L)

Day 9: Thur, Apr 16 – KANAZAWA – TOJINBO – AWARA. After breakfast, learn the process of **gold leaf application** and try it yourself on chopsticks that you'll get to take home as a souvenir of this trip. Next, explore **Kenrokuen Garden**, one of Japan's "three most beautiful landscaped gardens." After lunch, visit **Eiheiji**, "The Temple of Eternal Peace," one of the two head temples of Soto Zen. Founded by Zen Master Dogen in 1244, where he devoted himself to training his followers in the perfection of Zen practice in every action of daily life. Dogen Zenji's authentic Zen has been scrupulously observed and passed down by his successors. There are still over one hundred monks devote themselves wholeheartedly to his practice of shikantaza ("single-minded sitting"). Lastly, visit **Tojinbo Cliff** before transferring to the hotel in Awara for a **Kaiseki Dinner**. Relax in the hotel's **onsen** after dinner. HOTEL GRANDIA HOUSEN (1 Night) (B, L, D)

*Baggage will be carried by truck from Awara to Tamatsukuri, skipping Miyazu. Prepare an overnight bag for one night.

Day 10: Fri, Apr 17 – AWARA – AMANOHASHIDATE – KINOSAKI. After breakfast, depart on a leisurely motorcoach ride to Amanohashidate. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. After lunch, visit **Amanohashidate**, one of the three most scenic places in Japan along with Matsushima Bay near Sendai and Miyajima Island. The coast line is a long sandbar. You'll get a chance to ride the **Amanohashidate Ropeway (Cable Car)** to view the surrounding countryside and visit the **Kasamatsu Park Observatory**. Transfer to the hotel in Miyazu, where you'll enjoy another **Kaiseki Dinner** tonight. Don't miss the chance to relax in the **onsens** after dinner. NISHIMURAYA HOTEL SHOGETSUTAI (1 Night) (B, L, D)

Day 11: Sat, Apr 18 – KINOSAKI – TOTTORI – TAMATSUKURI. Start the day with a stop at the **Tottori Sand Dunes**, the largest sand dunes in Japan. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. Stop at an **AEON MALL** before arriving at the hotel in Tamatsukuri for an evening of leisure. HOTEL GYOKUSEN (2 Nights) (B, L)

Day 12: Sun, Apr 19 – TAMATSUKURI – IZUMO – MATSUE – TAMATSUKURI. This morning, you will visit **Izumo-Taisha**, one of Japan's most important shrines. There are no records of exactly when Izumo-Taisha was built, but it is often considered the oldest shrine in Japan, being already in existence in the early 700s as revealed by the nation's oldest chronicles. Located within the shrine is **Goen Yokochi**, a small shopping district consisting of nine eateries and souvenir shops, where you will enjoy lunch (on your own). After lunch, visit the quaint **Matsue Castle**. Next, explore the **Adachi Museum of Art**. Founded by Adachi Zenko in 1980 as a way of combining his passions for Japanese art and garden design. He hoped that viewing the gardens and artwork together would expand peoples' appreciation and interest in Japanese art. The Adachi Museum of Art is best known for its award winning garden. It has been named the best garden in Japan annually since 2003 by the *Journal of Japanese Gardening*. The garden can be enjoyed at any time of the year and shows a different character depending on the season. It can only be viewed from the museum building. In addition to the gardens, the Adachi Museum of Art also houses a collection of nearly 1,300 twentieth century paintings and artworks which are rotated seasonally. There is also a permanent exhibit of paintings by Yokoyama Taikan, as well as a ceramics exhibit. Return to the hotel for your last **Kaiseki Dinner**. (B, D)

Day 13: Mon, Apr 20 – TAMATSUKURI – HIROSHIMA. Depart Tamatsukuri for Hiroshima. En route, stop for lunch. After lunch, visit the **Peace Memorial Park, Peace Memorial Museum, A-Bomb Dome**, and **Children's Memorial**. Transfer to the hotel in Hiroshima. Our Local Tour Guide will have many suggestions for dinner tonight. HOTEL GRANVIA HIROSHIMA (1 Night) (B, L)

Day 14: Tue, Apr 21 – HIROSHIMA – HANEDA – HONOLULU. Last minute shopping opportunity at a Hiroshima **AEON MALL**. Enjoy lunch here (on your own). Then transfer to the Hiroshima airport. Depart Hiroshima Airport via Japan Airlines flt #264 at 6:00 pm and arrive at the Haneda Domestic Airport at 7:30 pm. Depart the Haneda International Airport via Japan Airlines flt #72 at 9:55 pm and arrive Honolulu at 10:20 am the same day. Aloha and welcome home! (B)

UNESCO World Heritage Site: Shirakawago (1995), A-Bomb Dome (1996).

*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-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" 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: 11/26/25. 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

