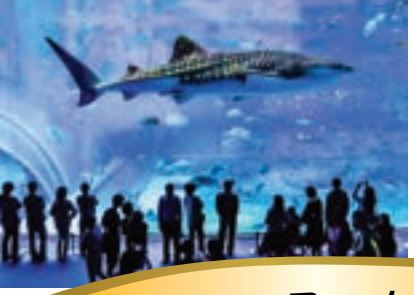

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Very unique tour itinerary! Let's explore two diverse climates & cultures in one exciting trip!

Enjoy spring blooms and cooler weather, perfect for exploring the sights! Cherry blossoms are in bloom in much of Okinawa in February, adding extra beauty to the sights and attractions of the islands. The cooler temperatures and low humidity compared to the hot Okinawan summers make it the perfect month to sightsee and explore.

12 Nights / 14 Days • 25 Meals (12 Breakfasts, 6 Lunches, 7 Dinners)
Escorted from Honolulu • Includes an English-Speaking Local Guide
January 23 – February 05, 2027 • Tour Manager: Lee Ann LaFortune

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OVERVIEW: Okinawa is home to a unique culture that differs considerably from that of mainland Japan. Until the islands were invaded 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. It was not until 1879 that the Kingdom was abolished and incorporated into Japan as the 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 2000, five castles and four related sites were designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites under a collective title.

VISIT: Haneda, Naha, Kitanakagusuku, Onna, Manza, Motobu, Nakijin, Kyoda, Nanjo, Yokohama, Kawazu, Atami & Tokyo

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS: Awamori (Rice Liquor) Factory Tour, Shuri Castle, AEON MALL Okinawa Rycom, Ryukyu Mura (Ryukyu Village), Okashigoten Onna Store, Motobu Yaedake Cherry Blossom Festival, Nakijin Castle Site, Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium, Michi-no-Eki Kyoda, Okinawa World, Gyokusendo Stalactite Cave, Habu (Snake) Museum, Kingdom Village, Glass Factory, Yokohama Chinatown, Odoriko Limited Express Train Ride, Kawazu Cherry Blossom Festival, Atami Baien Plum Festival, Atami Heiwadori Shotengai, Toyosu Senkyaku Banrai, Asakusa Sensoji Temple, Nakamise Shopping & Ameyoko Shopping

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES: Ryusou Ryukyu Kimono Dress-Up, Coral Dyeing, Local Okinawan Cooking Class, Shisa Painting & Strawberry Picking

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

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NON-STOP TRAVEL REFER-A-FRIEND REWARDS†

Day 1: Sat, Jan 23 – HONOLULU. Depart Honolulu via Japan Airlines flt #73 at 11:40 am.

Day 2: Sun, Jan 24 – HANEDA. Arrive at the Haneda International Airport at 4:05 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: Mon, Jan 25 – HANEDA – NAHA. After a buffet breakfast at your hotel, transfer back to the Haneda Airport. Enjoy a bento box at the domestic departure gate. Depart Haneda Domestic Airport via Japan Airlines flt #987 at 11:30 am and arrive at the Naha International Airport at 2:25 pm. Get introduced to Okinawa with a tour of an **awamori (rice liquor) factory**. Awamori is the signature alcoholic beverage of Okinawa and most of the Ryukyu Islands. During the tour, learn the unique process involved in making awamori. Transfer to the hotel. Walk to a nearby restaurant for dinner. HOTEL COLLECTIVE (2 Nights) (B, L, D)

Day 4: Tue, Jan 26 – NAHA. First stop this morning is **Shuri Castle**, the most important castle of the Ryukyu Kingdom, serving both as the central government office and royal residence. The main buildings of Shuri Castle were destroyed in a fire in October 2019, and has been meticulously reconstructed to bring back the castle to its former glory. It 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! Then, we head to a special hands-on **coral dyeing** activity, which is only done in Okinawa. Coral is fundamental to the history and culture of the Okinawan Islands. Many areas of Okinawa's main island are made of 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. After lunch, return to the hotel, where the remainder of the day is at your leisure. The Local Guide will have suggestions for shopping and dining nearby. (B, L)

*Baggage will be held at the hotel in Naha. Prepare an overnight bag for two nights.

Day 5: Wed, Jan 27 – NAHA – KITANAKAGUSUKU – ONNA – MANZA. After breakfast, we head north to Onna. En route, stop at **AEON MALL Okinawa Rycom**, Okinawa's largest shopping and entertainment complex, for shopping and lunch (on own). After lunch, continue to Onna, where you will explore the **Ryukyu Mura** (Ryukyu Village), 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, a form of folk dance that is performed during the obon festival to honor the spirits of one's ancestors. In the finale of the eisa show, visitors can join in on the dance known as kachashi. The word "kachashi" in the Okinawan dialect means "to mix," which implies the idea of sharing happiness to foster a sense of unity. Then, make a stop at the **Okashigoten Onna Store**, the perfect spot to satisfy your sweet tooth and shop for sweets from all over Okinawa! Founded in 1979, this beloved Okinawan confectionary brand is famous for its signature beni-imo (purple sweet potato) tart. If you are not a beni-imo fan, they also have sweets in other flavors, such as chocolate and kokuto (Okinawan black sugar). These are "must have" omiyage items to share with family and friends. Enjoy dinner at the hotel tonight. ANA INTERCONTINENTAL MANZA BEACH RESORT (2 Nights) (B, D)

Day 6: Thur, Jan 28 – MANZA – MOTOBU – NAKIJIN – MOTOBU – KYODA – MANZA. After an incredible breakfast buffet, depart Manza for Motobu. Attend the **MOTOBU YAEDAKE CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL** and walk under a canopy of pink cherry blossoms. With the cherry blossom season in Okinawa typically lasting between mid-January and early-February, you'll be one of the first to see cherry blossoms in Japan! Next, visit the ruins of **Nakijin Castle** and learn about the history of Okinawa. The castle, a former residence of the Ryukyu Kingdom governor during the 14th century, is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site. After lunch, visit the **Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium**, one of the largest and most renowned aquariums in the world. Located within the Ocean Expo Park – a large, multi-attraction recreational complex – the aquarium is widely considered best in Japan. A highlight of the aquarium is the massive Kuroshio Sea Tank, one of the largest tanks in the world, that houses whale sharks. On the way back to Naha, stop at the roadside **Michi-no-Eki Kyoda** for a chance to stretch your legs and get a little shopping done as well. Not only do they provide a clean and convenient rest stop, but you will find an array of farmer-direct merchandise along with other omiyage items. Kyoda offers a wide variety of specialties from the 12 municipalities in the northern region of Okinawa, including hard-to-find products from remote islands such as Iheya Island and Izena Island. Return to the hotel for dinner. The remainder of the evening is at your leisure. (B, L, D)

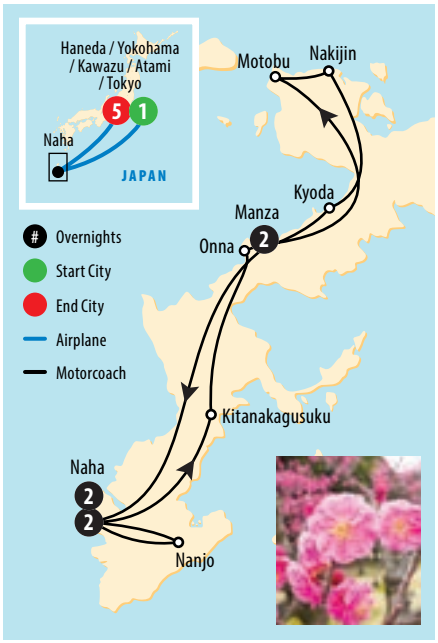
Day 7: Fri, Jan 29 – MANZA – NAHA. The foundation of every culture is rooted in the food that its people eat. Learn about the Okinawan culture as you take a **cooking class for Okinawan cuisine**. Enjoy your tasty creations for lunch. After, let your creative side loose when you **paint a Shisa**, a traditional Okinawan cultural artifact and decoration. Shisas are believed to offer protection from evil, with the left shisa traditionally having a closed mouth to keep good spirits in, and the open mouthed shisa on the right wards off evil spirits. Pairs of shisa can often be seen on rooftops or flanking the gates to houses. Great souvenirs of this trip! Transfer to the hotel in Naha for an evening of leisure. HOTEL COLLECTIVE (2 Nights) (B, L)

Day 8: Sat, Jan 30 – NAHA – NANJO – NAHA. Another full day of exploring is ahead! Start the day with a visit to **Okinawa World**, a theme park about Okinawan culture. The park's main attractions are a massive natural cave, craft village, and **habu (snake) museum**. With a total length of 5km, **Gyokusendo Cave** is the longest of the many caves in the south of Okinawa Island and the second longest cave in the entire country. Approximately 850m of the cave is open to the public and features spectacular stalactites and stalagmites. The **Kingdom Village** is a nice replica of a traditional Okinawan village with workshops showcasing various traditional Okinawan crafts, such as weaving, dyeing, paper making, pottery, sugar cane processing, the making of music instruments, and glass blowing. Colorful **Ryukyu glass** is one of those must have souvenirs when visiting Okinawa. Enjoy a buffet lunch while here. Return to Naha. This evening, enjoy dinner at a local restaurant. (B, L, D)

Day 9: Sun, Jan 31 – NAHA – HANEDA – YOKOHAMA. Depart Naha Airport via Japan Airlines flt #904 at 11:25 am. Arrive at the Haneda Domestic Airport at 1:35 pm. Transfer by motorcoach to the **Yokohama Chinatown**, where dinner has been arranged, along with free time for exploring on your own. Arrive at the hotel for an evening of leisure. YOKOHAMA BAY SHERATON HOTEL & TOWERS (1 Night) (B, D)

Day 10: Mon, Feb 01 – YOKOHAMA – KAWAZU – ATAMI. After breakfast walk to Yokohama Train Station where we will board an **Odoriko Limited Express Train** to Kawazu on the beautiful Izu Peninsula. As soon as you step off the train in Kawazu you are greeted by the aromas of freshly roasted corn, grilled chicken and squid from the nearby food stalls. Enjoy a day at the **KAWAZU CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL**. The pink of the Kawazu cherry blossoms and the yellow of the field mustard creates a vivid and fantastic contrast of colors. Next, board the **Odoriko Limited Express Train** to Atami. Enjoy dinner at the hotel. Tonight, enjoy a relaxing soak in the healing waters of the hotel's **onsen hot springs**. Don't miss out! The onsens, which are divided for men and women, can be enjoyed indoors or outdoors. The high-quality service and facilities are sure to become some of your fondest memories of your visit to Japan. ATAMI KORAKUEN HOTEL (1 Night) (B, D)

Day 11: Tue, Feb 02 – ATAMI – TOKYO. Begin the day at the Atami Baien (Plum Garden), which opened in 1886 and is the home to some of Japan's earliest blooming plum tree varieties. The annual **ATAMI PLUM BLOSSOM FESTIVAL** showcases approximately 500 plum trees, blooming from the palest of pinks to the boldest of blush. During the festival, special foot baths are installed in the garden and souvenir shops are opened. After lunch, **pick strawberries**. Enjoy eating the "fruits of your labor" fresh and sweet dessert. How sweet! Have you ever visited a shotengai before? "Shotengai" refers to a covered shopping arcade or shopping street that is typically closed to traffic. Take time to explore the approximately 50 shops that make up **Atami Heiwadori Shotengai**. Heiwadori is a great street for snacking on treats



like kamaboko (a type of fishcake), satsuma-age (fried fishcakes), and senbei (rice crackers). It's also known for onsen manju, one of Atami's most popular souvenirs. These sweet buns, which are usually filled with bean paste, are traditionally cooked in onsen steam, hence the name. Arrive at the hotel for an evening of leisure. Located in the center of the Shinjuku area, home to a hub of shopping and restaurants in Tokyo, there are numerous options for dining and shopping nearby. KEIO PLAZA HOTEL TOKYO (3 Nights) (B, L)

Day 12: Wed, Feb 03 – TOKYO. Day at leisure. The perfect day to relax and/or visit with family and friends. Your Local Guide will be available to assist as needed. (B)

Day 13: Thur, Feb 04 – TOKYO. Another full day at leisure. Enjoy the various shopping and dining available in the bustling Shinjuku area. Your Local Guide will be available to assist as needed. (B)

Day 14: Fri, Feb 05 – TOKYO – HANEDA – HONOLULU. After breakfast, depart the hotel for a day of shopping!!! Begin at **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 8th floor and relax at the foot bath garden, which is free of charge to all visitors. **Asakusa** is 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 7th 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. Then 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 street 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 Haneda International Airport via Japan Airlines flt #72 at 9:55 pm and arrive Honolulu at 9:40 am the same day. Aloha and welcome home! (B)

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