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

# 2026 FALL YAMAGATA & TOKYO

*Discover Yamagata — A Hidden Treasure!  
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9 Nights / 11 Days • 19 Meals (9 Breakfasts, 4 Lunches, 6 Dinners)

Escorted from Honolulu • Includes an English-Speaking Local Guide

October 24 – November 03, 2026 • Tour Manager: Cora Kinney

*Join Pali Ka'aiahue as we travel through Japan! We will be taping a few episodes of DOKO GA TV to be aired on KFVE "The Home Team"!*

### VISIT:

Omiya, Yonezawa, Kaminoyama Onsen, Sagae, Tendo, Sakata, Shonai, Tsuruoka & Tokyo

### TOUR HIGHLIGHTS:

Shinkansen Bullet Train Ride, Nitta Factory Tour, Toko Sake Brewery, Michi-no-Eki Yamagata Zao, Takahata Winery, Uesugi Museum, Uesugi Shrine, Uesugi Hojutsutai Show, Uesugi Hakushaku-tei, Benibana Museum, Cherryland Sagae, Imoni Lunch, AEON MALL Tendo, Iaido Exhibition, Mogami River Cruise, Sakata Seafood Market, Kurayashiki LUNA, Tsuruoka Silk Mirai Kan, Pino Collina, Asakusa Sensoji Temple, Nakamise Shopping, Ameyoko Shopping & Airo Kitasuna

### HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES:

Benibana (Safflower) Dyeing & Shogi Piece Painting

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\* 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-cruiseline" 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: 06/16/26. NST at its discretion, may use group and individual photos on its website, print, television, and various social media. <sup>†</sup> Early booking discount is per person. Purchase of NST's complete Air and Land Package is required. <sup>††</sup> 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. <sup>‡</sup> 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. <sup>§</sup> Wheelchair and electric scooter access outside of the USA is severely restricted.



## COMPLETE PACKAGES!

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**Day 1: Sat, Oct 24 – HONOLULU.** Depart Honolulu via Japan Airlines flt #73 at 11:15 am.

**Day 2: Sun, Oct 25 – HANEDA – OMIYA.** Arrive at the Haneda International Airport at 2:55 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)

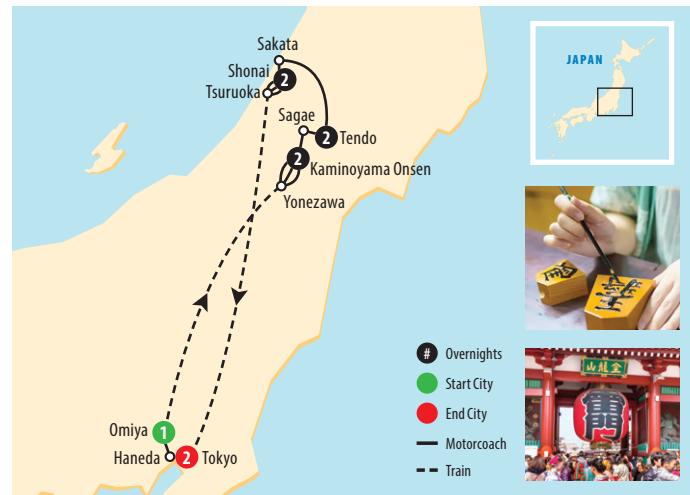
**Day 3: Mon, Oct 26 – OMIYA – YONEZAWA – KAMINOYAMA ONSEN.** After a sumptuous breakfast buffet at the hotel, walk to the nearby Omiya Station. Depart via **Shinkansen Bullet Train** to Yonezawa. Upon arrival in Yonezawa, enjoy lunch featuring **Yonezawa beef**. After lunch, take a **tour of the Nitta Factory**. Yonezawa has long cultivated a legacy as a textile town. Its origins trace back to Lord Uesugi Yozan's promotion of silk weaving. For five generations, the Nitta Family has been part of this heritage, and has been dedicated to textile craftsmanship in the city of Yonezawa. Then, visit **Toko Sake Brewery**, a historic brewery (since 1597) known for its high-quality sake using local rice and pure water. Explore the brewery's museum and shop, where you will learn about sake making, **taste different varieties**, and be able to purchase premium sake, umeshu (plum wine), koji and sake lees products, and even sake-based cosmetics. You're in for a treat! Transfer to the ryokan (traditional Japanese inn), where you'll be staying at for the next two nights. This ryokan has been elected one of the **top 10 out of "100 Best Ryokans and Hotels Chosen by Professionals"** consecutively for 40 years. The hotel offers several public **onsen hot spring** options for its guest to enjoy. The onsen, which are divided for men and women, can be enjoyed indoors or outdoors. Soak in skin-beautifying waters to your heart's content in the public onsen or in your Japanese-Western style room with its own **private semi-open-air onsen**. The high-quality service and facilities are sure to become some of your fondest memories of your visit to Japan. You'll have some leisure time to explore the grounds before dinner. NIPPON NO YADO KOYO (2 Nights) (B, L, D)

**Day 4: Tue, Oct 27 – KAMINOYAMA ONSEN – YONEZAWA – KAMINOYAMA ONSEN.** After breakfast, depart Kaminoyama Onsen for Yonezawa. En route, stop at **Michi-no-Eki Yamagata Zao**, a roadside rest station, 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. Next, visit **Takahata Winery**, for a **tour** about the wine making process. The extremely popular wines are produced using grapes and other local fruits (cherries, peaches, etc) that are cultivated by local farmers. The shop offers a wide selection of limited-edition wines that can only be purchased here, as well as snacks that pair perfectly with wine. Staff with sommelier qualifications are available to answer your questions, so you will surely find your favorite wine selection here. Then, explore the **Uesugi Museum** (Denkoku-no-Mori), located on the former grounds of Yonezawa Castle. It holds valuable articles relating to the Uesugi Clan that flourished as warriors. A highlight of the museum is without a doubt the *Uesugi Rakuchu Rakugai Zubyo* (folding screen), which is a national treasure. It is said that this folding screen depicts everyday life in Kyoto and was gifted to Uesugi Kenshin by Oda Nobunaga. It depicts approximately 2,500 people, regardless of their social status. Furthermore, you can understand what it was like to be in Kyoto in those days because it also depicts animals, plants, famous places, and festivals. Usually, a replica is on display, but the original is exhibited for a limited time in the spring and fall when a special exhibition is held. Located in the adjacent Matsugasaki Park is **Uesugi Shrine** where Uesugi Kenshin, one of the most powerful warriors of the Sengoku (Warring States) Era, is enshrined. The shrine is believed to bring good luck, academic success, and thriving business thanks to Kenshin's lingering spiritual energy. Watch a special **Uesugi Hojutsutai Show**, where reenactors shoot tanegashimas, a matchlock gun introduced by the Portuguese in 1543. It was used by the samurai class and their foot soldiers, and within a few years it forever changed the way war was fought in Japan. Tonight, dinner will be served at **Uesugi Hakushaku-tei**, the former residence of Uesugi Mochinori, the 13<sup>th</sup> and last daimyo (feudal lord) of the Yonezawa domain. After dinner, return to the hotel for an evening of leisure. (B, D)

**Day 5: Wed, Oct 28 – KAMINOYAMA ONSEN – SAGAE – TENDO.** Today is full of hands-on experiences! Start the day at the **Benibana Museum** to learn about **benibana (safflower) dyeing**, the rare dyeing method that uses safflower flowers rather than bark or leaves of a tree. Safflowers have two pigments: yellow and red. The intensity of the color changes depending on how many times the cloth is dyed. The more you dye, the deeper the color. You'll have free time at **Cherryland Sagae**, the largest Michi-no-Eki in the Tohoku Region, to shop for local specialty products and enjoy lunch (on your own). Besides finding over 600 cherry-related products, you'll also find Yamagata's signature sweets and desserts, as well as a wide variety of locally produced alcoholic beverages including sake, shochu, and wine. After, you'll have the chance to **paint a shogi piece**. Shogi is the traditional Japanese strategy board game known as "Japanese chess," where the goal is to checkmate the opponent's King by capturing it. It's one of the most popular board games in Japan, and even non-chess players find it fun to play. A unique souvenir of this trip! Transfer to the hotel, where you'll have some leisure time to explore the hotel before dinner. Don't forget to try the hotel **onsens**, before or after dinner. HOHOEMI NO YADO TAKINOYU (2 Nights) (B, D)

**Day 6: Thur, Oct 29 – TENDO.** Depart the hotel for an **imoni culinary experience**. Imoni is a satoimo (Japanese taro root) and beef stew, typically enjoyed during the rice harvesting season in autumn. Imoni recipes slightly differ depending on the region which is cooking it: for example, Yamagata imoni contains beef and a shoyu base, while the imoni from the Miyagi prefecture uses beef with a miso soup base. Even the Shonai region of Yamagata has a different take on it and uses pork with a miso base. Enjoy this local dish for lunch. Then, spend some free time at **AEON MALL Tendo** before returning to the hotel for dinner. (B, L, D)

**Day 7: Fri, Oct 30 – TENDO – SAKATA – SHONAI.** During the Sengoku and early Edo Eras, most people believed that a katana's only purpose was to hurt others. However, new ideas developed through iaido which focused on spiritual



training, improving skills, and personal growth. This "way" ("do") of the "warrior" ("bushi") has come to be called "bushido" ("way of the warrior"), a philosophy that attracted attention from both Japan and overseas. Iaido is a foundation of Japanese warrior philosophy and training. Iaido is the technique of quickly drawing and responding to attacks with a katana. Learn the traditional art of drawing, cutting, and sheathing the katana in fluid motions, focusing on mental discipline, self-development, posture, and concentration through solo katas (forms) at an **iaido exhibition**. Then take a **scenic cruise down the Mogami River** on a traditional, hand-rowed boat, as the boatmen serenade you as they carefully navigate the waters. Enjoy a seasonal deluxe bento lunch onboard as you view the surrounding mountainside decked out in fall colors. Explore the **Sakata Seafood Market**, where incredibly fresh fish and seafood are available. Many shops sell ready-to-eat sashimi and nigiri sushi – or can easily prepare any freshly caught fish and seafood into sashimi for you. Transfer to the hotel, Suiden Terrace, in Shonai. Designed by the world-famous architect Shigeru Ban, the hotel was designed to blend into the rice fields and surrounding landscape, giving its guests a calm and peaceful experience. Explore the hotel and its facilities – from its many lavish **onsens** and sauna, to a gym, bar and lounge, library with fantastic views, and shop with specialty products from the area – you will surely enjoy a relaxing stay. Enjoy a Western course dinner at the hotel. SUIDEN TERRACE (2 Nights) (B, L, D)

**Day 8: Sat, Oct 31 – SHONAI – TSURUOKA – SHONAI.** After a morning of leisure, depart for **Kurayashiki LUNA**, a restaurant that specializes in local Yamagata beef, Shonai seafood, Shonai vegetables, and of course the Yamagata brand of rice, *Tsuyahime*. Savor all the seasonal bounties of the area in this 170-year-old sake brewery storehouse turned restaurant. Return to the hotel after lunch, where the remainder of the day is at your leisure. Dinner will be served at the hotel. (B, L, D)

**Day 9: Sun, Nov 01 – SHONAI – TSURUOKA – TOKYO.** Spend the last day in the Yamagata Prefecture learning about and shopping for two of Tsuruoka's local products: silk and locally made wine. Tsuruoka is one of leading silk producing areas in Japan and the only places in Japan where all processes of the silk production (from sericulture to the creation of the silk product) can be carried out in the same region. At **Tsuruoka Silk Mirai Kan**, you will learn about the approximately 3,000 samurai from the Shonai Domain, who traded their katanas for hoes in 1872, and cleared and cultivated wasteland, building one of the largest silkworm farms in Japan. The gift shop carries a wide range of products – from ties and scarves, to hats and bags. **Pino Collina** offers a wide selection of wine, including their own brand of brewed wine, a wide variety of non-alcoholic wines, along with original products including wine pudding and wine jam – all of which make great souvenirs. Next, relax on the leisurely drive to Niigata Station. Depart via **Shinkansen Bullet Train** for Tokyo Station. Upon arrival in Tokyo, transfer to the hotel, where the remainder of the evening is at your leisure. The hotel is surrounded by numerous dining and shopping opportunities. KEIO PLAZA HOTEL TOKYO (2 Nights) (B)

**Day 10: Mon, Nov 02 – TOKYO.** Day at leisure. Enjoy shopping and dining in the bustling Shinjuku area. Your Local Guide will be available to assist as needed. Perfect day to relax and/or visit family and friends in Tokyo. (B)

**Day 11: Tue, Nov 03 – TOKYO – HANEDA – HONOLULU.** After breakfast, depart the hotel for a full day of shopping! Begin the day at **Asakusa**, in 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 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. Finally, visit **Ario Kitasuna**, a shopping center with over 100 specialty shops. This includes CAN★DO, a 100 yen store, and Halos Garden – an amusement center for the whole family featuring the latest gaming machines, hands-on sweet making, a large ball pit, and more! You'll have ample time to shop before departing for the airport. 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)