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

2027 FALL OKINAWA NAHA ROPE FESTIVAL

Experience one of Okinawa's most exciting cultural celebrations!

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9 Nights / 11 Days • 17 Meals (9 Breakfasts, 3 Lunches, 5 Dinners)
Escorted from Honolulu • Includes an English-Speaking Local Guide
October 03 – 13, 2027

NAHA ROPE FESTIVAL: Held over three days, the festival is Okinawa's largest cultural celebration and a vibrant expression of yuimaaru, the spirit of community cooperation. At the heart of the festival is the Naha Great Tug-of-War, a centuries-old tradition involving the world's largest rice-straw rope at approximately 656 feet long and weighing about 41.5 tons. Around 280,000 visitors attend each year, with approximately 15,000 taking part in the tug-of-war, which can last up to 30 minutes as participants strive to move the rope. Afterward, pieces of the rope are cut away and kept as lucky charms believed to bring good health and prosperity.

VISIT: Haneda, Naha, Itoman, Onna, Motobu, Nakijin, Kitanakagusuku & Nanjo

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS: Umibudo Factory, Shuri Castle, Ryukyu Mura, Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium, Nakijin Castle, AEON MALL Okinawa Rycom, Naha Rope Festival, Himeyuri Peace Museum, Mabuni Hill (Okinawa Peace Memorial Park), Okinawa World (Gyokusendo Cave, Ryukyu Kingdom Castle Town, Habu Museum Park) & Ryukyu Dance Performance

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES: Ryusou Ryukyu Kimono Dress-Up, Coral Dyeing, Okinawan Sweets Making & Shisa Painting

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

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WHISPER: WIRELESS TOUR GUIDE SYSTEM — Don't miss a thing! English narration directly to your ear!

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Day 1: Sun, Oct 03 – HONOLULU. Depart Honolulu via All Nippon Airways flt #185 at 1:55 pm.

Day 2: Mon, Oct 04 – HANEDA. Arrive at Haneda International Airport at 5:25 pm. After entry formalities, walk to your hotel connected to the airport terminal and enjoy a dinner there. HOTEL VILLA FONTAINE GRAND HANEDA AIRPORT (1 Night) (D)

Day 3: Tue, Oct 05 – HANEDA – NAHA. After a breakfast buffet, transfer back to the airport. Enjoy a bento box at the domestic departure gate. Depart Haneda Domestic Airport via All Nippon Airways flt #469 at 10:20 am and arrive at Naha Domestic Airport at 1:05 pm. Upon arrival, begin your exploration of Okinawa with a visit to an **umibudo factory**. Often called sea grapes or green caviar, umibudo is a tropical green algae native to Okinawa and celebrated as a local delicacy. Enjoy some free time to relax or explore the area around the hotel before walking to a nearby restaurant for dinner. HOTEL COLLECTIVE (2 Nights) (B, L, D)

Day 4: Wed, Oct 06 – NAHA. Begin the day with a visit to **Shuri Castle** (Shurijo), the most important stronghold of the former Ryukyu Kingdom. Once serving as both the kingdom's administrative center and royal residence, Shuri Castle is the only one in Okinawa to have been reconstructed. While here, **dress up in Ryusou Ryukyu kimonos** for a group photo. Then, enjoy a unique hands-on experience: **coral dyeing**! Coral has long played an important role in Okinawa's history and culture, and much of the island's main landmass is made of Ryukyu limestone formed by ancient coral reefs hundreds of thousands of years ago. Today, coral fossils are used to create a variety of artworks. Create a unique tote bag using this distinctive Okinawan dyeing technique. Then, head to a local restaurant for lunch before returning to the hotel, where the remainder of the day is at your leisure. The Local Guide will be available to assist as needed. (B, L)

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

Day 5: Thur, Oct 07 – NAHA – ONNA. Today, head north to Onna and spend the morning at **Ryukyu Mura**, a small theme park dedicated to Okinawan culture, designed as a recreated village from the time of the Ryukyu Kingdom. The highlight of Ryukyu Mura is the eisa show, a form of folk dance that is performed to honor the spirits of one's ancestors. Enjoy lunch here (on your own). Afterward, take part in a hands-on **Okinawan sweets making** class and create a delicious treat. Continue to your home for the next two nights: a quiet resort nestled on a hillside between the sea and the forest, where you'll enjoy dinner. BLISSTIA SUITES & RESORT OKINAWA ONNASON (2 Nights) (B, D)

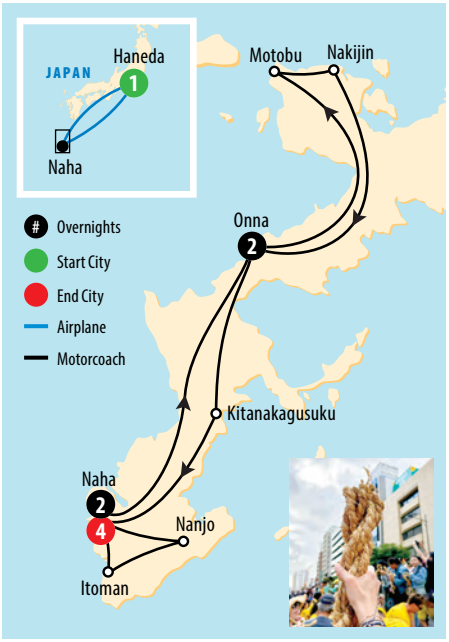
Day 6: Fri, Oct 08 – ONNA – MOTOBU – NAKIJIN – ONNA. After breakfast, enjoy a visit to the **Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium**, one of the largest and most renowned aquariums in the world. Located within the Ocean Expo Park, a large, multi-attraction complex, it is widely considered Japan's best aquarium. A highlight of the aquarium is the massive Kuroshio Sea Tank, one of the largest in the world. The tank takes its name from the warm Kuroshio current which plays a large part in the variety of Okinawa's marine life. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before visiting the ruins of **Nakijin Castle**. The castle was a former residence of the Ryukyu Kingdom governor during the 14th century and is a designated UNESCO World Heritage site. Return to the hotel for dinner. (B, L, D)

Day 7: Sat, Oct 09 – ONNA – KITANAKAGUSUKU – NAHA. Start the day with a chance to let your creative side loose as you **paint a shisa**, a traditional Ryukyuan cultural artifact and decoration. Often seen in pairs and resembling a cross between a lion and a dog, shisa are from Okinawan mythology, and are believed to protect from some evils. People place pairs of shisa on their rooftops or flanking gates to their houses. The left shisa traditionally having a closed mouth, while the right one an open mouth. The open mouthed shisa wards off evil spirits, while the closed mouthed shisa keeps good spirits in. Then, stop at **AEON MALL Okinawa Rycom** for shopping and lunch (on own). Continue to Naha and check in to your hotel. HOTEL COLLECTIVE (4 Nights) (B)

Note: The bus cannot access the front of the hotel during the Naha Rope Festival and will stop at the nearest road to the hotel.

Day 8: Sun, Oct 10 – NAHA. Join the **Naha Rope Festival** and enjoy its lively celebrations at your leisure! An intersection in downtown Naha will be closed to vehicular traffic as more than 280,000 people are expected to gather and watch the world's largest tug-of-war. Approximately 15,000 participants will take part in this spirited display of strength, determination, and cooperation. Afterward, participants and spectators can cut pieces from the rope to keep as lucky charms or souvenirs. The Local Guide will be available to assist as needed. (B)

Day 9: Mon, Oct 11 – NAHA – ITOMAN – NANJO – NAHA. After breakfast, visit two important World War II memorials. At the **Himeyuri Peace Museum**, learn about the experiences of Okinawan civilians and the female high school students who served in army field hospitals during the Battle of Okinawa, many of whom lost their lives. Survivor testimonies offer firsthand accounts of the horrors they endured. Continue to **Mabuni Hill** on the **Okinawa Peace Memorial Park** complex, where the Battle of Okinawa ended. Created to commemorate the nearly 250,000 people who died, the park features the Cornerstone of Peace, inscribed with the names of approximately 200,000 civilians and Japanese and foreign soldiers. Its monuments honor the dead and encourage reflection and learning. Then, spend the afternoon at **Okinawa World**, a cultural theme park featuring a spectacular natural cave, a traditional craft village, and a habu (snake) museum. **Gyokusendo Cave** is the longest of southern Okinawa's many caves and the second longest in Japan, with approximately half a mile open to visitors. Admire its impressive stalactites and stalagmites before exploring **Ryukyu Kingdom Castle Town**, a replica of a traditional Ryukyu village where local artisans demonstrate crafts such as weaving, dyeing, sugarcane processing, Ryukyu glassblowing, and more. Many workshops offer hands-on activities, and the colorful Ryukyu glassware makes a memorable souvenir. You can also visit **Habu Museum Park**, home to venomous habu snakes and live demonstrations. Enjoy free time here for lunch (on your own). Tonight, savor an Okinawan dinner at a



local restaurant accompanied by a traditional **Ryukyu dance performance**. (B, D)

Day 10: Tue, Oct 12 –NAHA. Enjoy a full day at leisure to relax, visit with family and friends, or explore Naha's vibrant shopping scene. Stroll along Kokusai-dori, the main shopping street in Naha, browse Heiwa-dori shopping arcade, or the nearby Don Quijote, open daily until 3:00 am! Your Local Guide will be available to assist as needed. (B)

Day 11: Wed, Oct 13 – NAHA – HANEDA – HONOLULU. After breakfast, the morning is free at your leisure until it is time to head to the airport. Depart Naha Domestic Airport via All Nippon Airways flt #966 at 12:45 pm and arrive at Haneda Domestic Airport at 3:10 pm. Depart Haneda International Airport via All Nippon Airways flt #186 at 10:00 pm and arrive in Honolulu at 9:50 am the same day. Aloha and welcome home! (B)

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

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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. 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 guarantees 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. Tour highlights and activities are subject to change. Seasonal highlights and activities, such as cherry blossoms and fall foliage, are subject to weather and/or other conditions and is NOT guaranteed. **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: 05/26/27. 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.** JI7717 100526

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