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

2025 FALL SEA OF JAPAN, SADO ISLAND, TAKAYAMA FESTIVAL & HIROSHIMA

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12 Nights / 14 Days • 28 Meals (12 Breakfasts, 7 Lunches, 9 Dinners)

Escorted from Honolulu • Includes an English-Speaking Local Guide

October 03 – 16, 2025 • Tour Manager: Lori Lee

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 • Takayama • Shirakawago • Kanazawa • Tojinbo Awara Onsen • Amanohashidate • Kyoto • Tottori • Tamatsukuri • Izumo • Matsue • Hiroshima

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS: JR Super Express Train • Northern Culture Museum • Jet Foil Ride to Sado Island Oni Daiko (Demon Drums) Performance • Kirarium Sado • Sado Gold Mine • Kitazawa Flotation Field Tarai-bune Boat Ride • Shukunegi • Japanese Crested Ibis Conservation Centre • Pier Bandai Jigokudani Monkey Park (for Snow Monkeys) • Zenko-Ji Temple • Daio Wasabi Nojo Takayama Morning Market • Takayama Festival • Old Town and Sannomachi Street • Shirakawago Kenrokuen Garden • Eihei-ji • Tojinbo Cliff • Amanohashidate Ropeway • Kasamatsu Park Observatory Bay of Ine Cruise • Tottori Sand Dune • Izumo Taisha • Goen Yokocho • Matsue Castle Adachi Museum of Art • Peace Memorial Park • A-Bomb Museum • A-Bomb Dome Children's Memorial • Peace Bell • AEON MALL Hiroshima Fuchu

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES: Soba Noodle Making • Imayo Tsukasa Sake Brewery Tour with Tasting Gold Leaf Application • Apple Picking

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE: Shirakawago

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Day 1: Fri, Oct 03 — HONOLULU. Depart Honolulu via Japan Airlines flt #71 at 3:50 pm.

Day 2: Sat, Oct 04 — TOKYO — OMIYA. Arrive at the Haneda International Airport at 7:30 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: Sun, Oct 05 — OMIYA — NIIGATA — SADO ISLAND. After a sumptuous breakfast buffet at hotel, walk to Omiya Station. Transfer to Niigata by **JR Super Express Train**. Upon arrival on Niigata, visit 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. Enjoy lunch here. Transfer to Niigata Port. **Ride a jet foil to Sado Island**. Arrive in Sado Island and transfer to hotel in Sado. Enjoy a traditional multi-course **Kaiseki Dinner**, featuring ingredients unique to Sado Island. During dinner, watch an **Oni Daiko (Demon Drums) Performance**. Don't miss forget to try out the **onsen hot springs** — which are divided for men and women. 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, L, D)

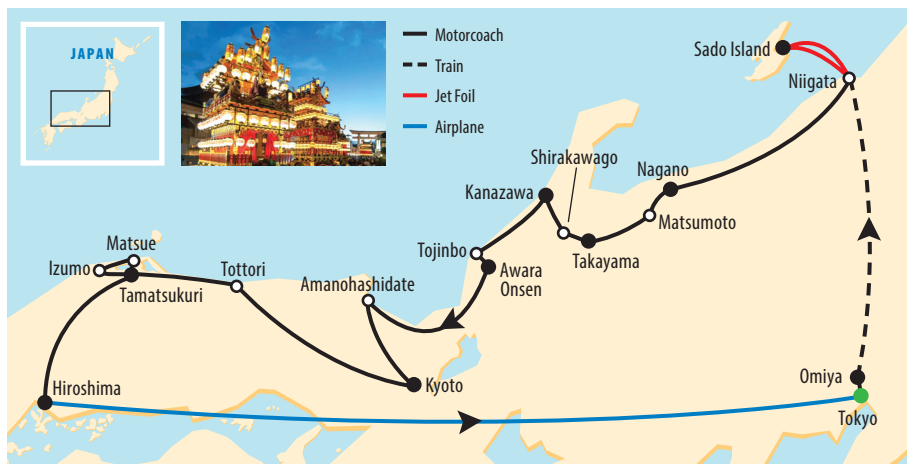
Day 4: Mon, Oct 06 — SADO ISLAND. Full day sightseeing of Sado Island by coach, including **Kirarium Sado** and the **Sado Gold Mine**. Kirarium Sado is the Sado Gold Mine Welcome Center, where you will learn everything you need to know about the gold mine. At the Sado Gold Mine, learn about the 400+ 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. Then drive by the **Kitazawa Flotation Field**. Next, learn to **make your own 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 Edo and Meiji periods, the tarai-bune tub boats, mainly operated by women, were ideal for tight turn 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 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 5: Tue, Oct 07 — SADO ISLAND — NIIGATA — NAGANO. After breakfast, take a tour of the **Japanese Crested Ibis Conservation Centre**. Take a **jet foil** to Niigata Port. Upon arrival back in Niigata, stop at **Pier Bandai**, a food market that offers a multiple of food options, including fish caught in the Sea of Japan, to vegetables and fruit directly delivered from farms, Niigata-produced rice Koshihikari, a variety of high-quality brand sake from across the prefecture, and all kinds of Niigata's specialties relating to food. Enjoy lunch on your own while here. After lunch, take a **tour of Imayo Tsukasa Sake Brewery** and **sample their tasty products**. Transfer to hotel in Nagano by coach. **HOTEL METROPOLITAN NAGANO** (1 Night) (B, D)

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

Day 6: Wed, Oct 08 — 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. 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 a **Kaiseki Dinner** at the hotel. **HOTEL ASSOCIA TAKAYAMA RESORT** (2 Nights) (B, D)

Day 7: Thur, April 09 — 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 9th and 10th of October 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. Enjoy the **Takayama Festival** during the day, as the floats parade through the town. After lunch (on your own), 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. Return to the hotel for dinner. After dinner, return to the streets of Takayama to **experience the floats at night**. Transfer back to the hotel. (B, D)

Day 8: Fri, Oct 10 — TAKAYAMA — SHIRAKAWAGO — KANAZAWA. This morning, continue to explore the **Takayama Festival**. Then, 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. Transfer to the hotel in Kanazawa, for an evening of leisure. **HYATT CENTRIC KANAZAWA** (1 Night) (B, L)

Day 9: Sat, Oct 11 — KANAZAWA — TOJINBO — AWARA ONSEN. 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 Onsen for dinner. Relax in the hotel's onsen after dinner. **GRANDIA HOUSEN** (1 Night) (B, L, D)

Day 10: Sun, Oct 12 — AWARA ONSEN — AMANOHASHIDATE — KYOTO. Depart Awara Onsen for Amanohashidate. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. After lunch, we 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 also get a chance to ride the **Amanohashidate Ropeway (cable car)** to view the surrounding countryside and visit the **Kasamatsu Park Observatory**. Stop at the **Bay of Ine**. The small village is unique, consisting of 230 funaya (water/boat houses). Then, take a **cruise in Ine Bay** before transferring to the hotel in Kyoto where you'll enjoy a buffet dinner tonight. Don't miss the chance to relax in the **onsens** after dinner. **MERCURE KYOTO MIYAZU RESORT & SPA** (1 Night) (B, L, D)

*Baggage will be carried by truck from Kyoto to Hiroshima, skipping Tamatsukuri. Prepare an overnight bag for two nights.

Day 11: Mon, Oct 13 — KYOTO — 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 before departing for Tamatsukuri. Enjoy a **Kaiseki Dinner** at the hotel. **HOTEL GYOKUSEN** (2 Nights) (B, L, D)

Day 12: Tue, Oct 14 — TAMATSUKURI — MATSUE — IZUMO — TAMATSUKURI. This morning, 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. Stop at **Goen Yokochi**, a small shopping district consisting of nine eateries and souvenir shops, where you will enjoy lunch (on your own). After lunch, visit **Matsue Castle**, sometimes called the "black castle" after its dark exterior. Matsue is one only a dozen original castles that have survived fires, earthquakes, and anti-feudal demolitions that had destroyed other castles from the Meiji Period. Lastly, explore the **Adachi Museum of Art**, founded in 1970 by businessman Adachi Zenko, who wanted to combine his passion for Japanese art and garden design. He hoped that viewing the gardens and artwork together would expand people's appreciation and interest in Japanese art. The museum garden has been named "best garden in Japan" each year since 2003 by the *Journal of Japanese Gardening*. While the garden cannot be entered, it can be viewed from the museum building. The museum houses a collection of nearly 1,300 twentieth century paintings and artwork that are rotated seasonally. Return to the hotel for dinner. (B, D)

Day 13: Wed, Oct 15 — TAMATSUKURI — HIROSHIMA. After breakfast, depart Tamatsukuri for Hiroshima. En route to Hiroshima, stop at a local farm to **pick some apples**. They will make a sweet treat to enjoy on the bus. After lunch, visit the **Peace Memorial Park, A-Bomb Museum, A-Bomb Dome, Children's Memorial**, and the **Peace Bell** in Hiroshima. Transfer to the hotel for an evening of leisure. **RIGHA ROYAL HOTEL HIROSHIMA** (1 Night) (B, L)

Day 14: Thur, Oct 16 — HIROSHIMA — TOKYO — HONOLULU. Last minute shopping opportunity at Hiroshima **AEON MALL Hiroshima Fuchu**. Then transfer to the Hiroshima airport. Depart Hiroshima via Japan Airlines flt #264 at 6:05 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 in Honolulu at 10:25 am the same day. Aloha and welcome home! (B)

UNESCO World Heritage Site: Shirakawago (1995).

*Fares are per person, USD based on double occupancy and include all airline taxes and fees. Airline fuels supplements, taxes and fees are subject to change and our 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" 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: 05/23/25. 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.** 042925

