



Southern Japan: Ancient Forests, Mountain Shrines & the Spirit of the Samurai 2026

13 APR – 27 APR 2026

Code: 22618

Tour Leaders **Jim Fogarty**

Fitness Level 

Level 2 - Intermediate

For people with energetic lifestyles and very good mobility

Travel through southern Japan, from historic Kyoto to the ancient cedar forests of Yakushima island. Visit mountain shrines, onsen towns, samurai villages, castles and poignant monuments to peace.

Overview

Travel with [Jim Fogarty](#) on a journey through southern Japan, from the historic city of Kyoto to Yakushima, an exquisite island of ancient cedar forests off the south coast. Jim is an award-winning landscape architect and author, and one of Australia's most knowledgeable experts on Japanese gardens. He won the award for Best Design at the 2009 World Garden Competition in Shizuoka Prefecture, and Gold and Best in Show at the 2011 Gardening World Cup Nagasaki.

- Enjoy the beauty and complexity of Japan's garden traditions, visiting exquisite stroll gardens, delicate moss gardens and precise dry gardens with immaculately raked sand.
- Stroll mountain paths that link hauntingly beautiful shrines in the hills above Kyoto.
- Visit the 'Floating Shrine', Itsukushima, on Miyajima Island, where the temple buildings and vermilion *torii* gate seem to float upon the sea.
- At the Asahi Beer Oyamazaki Villa Museum enjoy the beautiful art collection, including works by Monet, Chagall and Modigliani, within a restored Meiji-era building with an annex designed by architect Tadeo Ando.
- Explore the well-preserved villages of Kitsuki and Usuki, where Samurai houses line cobbled streets leading to the castles. Wander amongst the stone Buddhas of Usuki.
- Celebrate the importance of peace and remember the lives lost in the atomic bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
- Visit Frank Lloyd Wright's Yodoko Guest House in the hills overlooking Kobe, the only residence of his design that survives in Japan.
- In the historic mountain village Bitchu-Takahashi walk the streets once inhabited by merchants, craftsmen and samurai, and visit Rakiyuji Temple, once the residence of Korori Enshu, the great 16th-century architect and garden designer.
- Visit the home and studio of Japanese-American sculptor Isamu Noguchi, where many of his works are exhibited in a traditional Japanese garden.
- Relax in a traditional *onsen* town in the mountains, where bathing in natural hot springs soothes the mind, body and soul. Wander through the charming cobbled streets and dine on delicious traditional cuisine.
- Spend 2 days on Yakushima, an exquisite island off the southern tip of Japan. Walk amongst the ancient moss-covered cedar trees and lush, verdant foliage found on this UNESCO World Heritage Listed island.

Overnight Kyoto (2 nights) • Okayama (3 nights) • Hiroshima (2 nights) • Nagasaki (2 nights) • Kurokawa Onsen (2 nights) • Kagoshima (1 night) • Yakushima (2 nights)

Leaders



Jim Fogarty

Award-winning landscape designer and gardening media personality, with an extensive knowledge of Japanese garden design. Jim is a graduate of Burnley Horticultural College (Uni. Melb), and has led tours to Japan since 2017.

A graduate of Burnley Horticultural College (University of Melbourne), Jim won the award for Best Design at the 2009 World Garden Competition in Shizuoka Prefecture, and Gold and Best in Show at the 2011 Gardening World Cup Nagasaki. Over many years Jim has carried out his own research into Japan's most iconic gardens uncovering layers of fascinating history not widely known. He also has a passionate interest in contemporary influences of Japanese garden design.

Jim has twice presented at the Chelsea Flower Show in London as well as successfully exhibiting in the USA, Korea, Malaysia and Singapore. His many awards include a gold medal at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2011, and Gold & Best in Show at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show 2014. Jim is a past National President and Life Member of the Horticultural Media Association of Victoria. He has written for the Melbourne *Age* newspaper and was a contributor for *Burke's Backyard Magazine* in Australia. In 2006 he wrote the garden design chapter in the 42nd edition of the *Yates Garden Guide*, which continues to be republished. Jim runs a successful company in Melbourne designing residential gardens. Project sizes range from small front gardens and outdoor rooms to coastal gardens and larger estates. His work has enabled him to travel extensively throughout Asia, the USA and Europe. He has been leading ASA tours to Japan since 2017.

Combine this tour with

Cherry Blossom and the Art of the Japanese Garden 2026

26 MAR – 9 APR 2026



Itinerary

The following itinerary describes a range of gardens, museums and other sites which we plan to visit. Many are accessible to the public, but others require special permission which may only be confirmed closer to the tour's departure. The daily activities described in this itinerary may change or be rotated and/or modified in order to accommodate alterations in opening hours, flight and train schedules and confirmation of private visits. Participants will receive a final itinerary together with their tour documents prior to departure. The tour includes breakfast daily, lunches & dinner indicated in the detailed itinerary where: B =breakfast, L=lunch and D=dinner.

Kyoto - 2 nights

Day 1: Monday 13 April, Arrive Kyoto

- Tour commences at the Kyoto hotel at 10.00am
- Mirei Shigemori Garden Museum
- Kondo Museum
- Kiyomizu Dera Temple
- Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant

Meeting Point: The tour commences at 10.00am in the foyer of our Kyoto Hotel.

After a brief introductory meeting we board our coach to visit three lovely and lesser-known sites the city has to offer. We first visit the Mirei Shigemori Garden Museum, a beautiful 20th century garden surrounding a beautiful *Machi-ya* (traditional town house) from the 18th century Edo period. Within the garden Shigemori included two tea pavilions where screens open to reveal tranquil moss slopes with gravel paths, mature trees and rock configurations.

The Kondo Museum is housed in another *Machi-ya*, the former home of ceramic master Yuzo Kondo who became a National Living Treasure. The building now houses some of his *sometsuke* masterpieces (blue

and white wares), as well as works by his sons and grandson. Behind the gallery space is a reproduction of Kondo's studio, displaying his cherished tools.

Kiyimozu Dera Temple is located nearby, and a short walk will take us up to its terrace where views over Kyoto can be enjoyed. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the temple was founded in 780 on the site of the Otowa Waterfall which still forms an important part of the complex.

This evening we gather to enjoy a Welcome Dinner in a local restaurant. (Overnight Kyoto) D

Day 2: Tuesday 14 April, Kyoto – Kibune – Kurama – Kyoto

- Kibune to Kurama walk, including historic villages and shrines
- Myoshin-ji Temple, and Taizo-in
- Okochi Sanso Villa Garden

This morning we travel to the hills surrounding Kyoto and embark on a nature hike that will take us through the stunning mountain landscape between the historic towns of Kibune and Kumara. Along the way we pass picturesque shrines and temples tucked into the forest, and encounter the kinone-sando – the 'tree root path' where the roots of great cedar trees protrude from the ground in a display of nature's might.

North-west of Kyoto is Myoshin-ji Temple, a large complex with many sub-temples, each with their own gardens. The most famous sub-temple is Taizo-in. Here we find a rock garden designed in the 15th century by the painter Kano Motonobu, and also a beautiful pond garden from the Showa Period (1926-1989).

We conclude the day with a visit to the Okochi Sanso Villa, once the home of film actor Okochi Denjiro (1898-1962). The spacious home in the hills overlooking Kyoto is a fine example of traditional Japanese residential architecture, surrounded by a charming garden. Paths lead to a moss garden, tea house, Buddhist shrine, a small temple hall (Daijokaku) and a Meiji era Jibutso-do where Denjiro would come to meditate. Our visit concludes with a traditional Japanese sweet and cup of green tea. (Overnight Kyoto) B

Okayama - 3 nights

Day 3: Wednesday 15 April, Kyoto – Ashiya – Osaka – Okayama

- Asahi Beer Villa Oyamazaki Villa Museum
- Yodoko Guest House by Frank Lloyd Wright, Ashiya
- Shinkansen (bullet train) Osaka to Okayama

In the hills outside Kyoto is the Asahi Beer Oyamazaki Villa Museum of Art, built in the early 20th century as a British-style mountain villa for businessman Shotaro Kaga. This historic home serves as the main building of the museum. Two annexes – the Underground Jewellery box and the Dream Box – were later designed by Tadao Ando when the villa was being saved from demolition by the Asahi Beer company. The collection of artworks include fine paintings by Claude Monet, including several *Waterlilies*, ceramics by Kanjiro Kawai and a sculpture by Henry Moore. Ando's annexes serve to unite the spaces of the museum and are partly submerged and covered with greenery in order for them to maintain harmony with the surrounding mountainside.

We continue our journey to Ashiya, where we find one of the handful of remaining structures and the only surviving residence designed by Frank Lloyd Wright during his time in Japan. This was built as a Summer home for Tazaemon Yamamura, a wealthy sake brewer. Wright took advantage of the superb views the site

enjoys over the Bay of Osaka by stepping the house into the slope of the hillside, while his Japanese collaborator Arata Endo, added three tatami-mat rooms and narrow clerestory windows in the saloon that can be opened to allow cross-breezes.

After our visit we drive to Osaka station and take the shinkansen to Okayama. (Overnight Okayama) BL

Day 4: Thursday 16 April, Okayama – Takamatsu – Okayama

- Ritsurin koen Garden
- Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum

Today we drive south over the Seto Ohashi and Kita Bisanseto bridges to Shikoku Island. Here we visit Ritsurin koen garden, one of the largest and most beautiful stroll gardens in Japan. It was built during the edo period for the local feudal lords, evolving and expanding over the course of 300 years until it was opened to the public in 1875. It features six ponds and thirteen landscaped hills, with a backdrop provided by Mt Shiun. Paths lead visitors past rock arrangements, seasonal flower plantings and carefully maintained trees, all designed to create changes from one season to the next.

Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988) was an important Japanese sculptor of international renown, who also designed gardens, landscaped projects, furniture, stage sets and lighting fixtures. This afternoon we visit the Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, his former home and studio that is now an extension of the Noguchi Museum in New York (Queens). His sculptures, many unfinished and some on loan from New York, are displayed throughout the garden and studio. (Overnight Okayama) BLD

Day 5: Friday 17 April, Okayama – Bitchu-Takahashi – Okayama

- Rakiyuji Temple
- Bitchu-Takahashi historic mountain village

In the mountains overlooking Okayama is the historic Bitchu-Takahashi village, once a thriving town at the base of Matsuyama Castle. We will walk the well-preserved streets near the castle and visit the restored houses once inhabited by merchants, craftsmen and samurai.

Of particular importance is the Zen Buddhist temple Rakiyuji. This was once the residence of Korori Enshu (1579-1647), a local feudal lord, garden designer, architect and tea ceremony master. He created the dry garden we see today at Rakiyuji, using many of the elements typical of his work, particularly the use of borrowed scenery and the creation of 'island' representing a crane and turtle. (Overnight Okayama) BL

Hiroshima - 2 nights

Day 6: Saturday 18 April, Okayama – Hiroshima

- Korakuen Garden, Okayama
- Shinkansen Okayama – Hiroshima
- Hiroshima Peace Park and Memorial Museum

This morning we visit Kouraku-en, one of the 'Three Great Gardens of Japan'. This garden dates from the Edo period when the *daimyo* (feudal lord) Ikeda Tsunamasa ordered its construction in 1687. Completed in 1700, it has retained its overall appearance with only a few minor changes made over the centuries. The garden was used for entertaining guests and as a retreat for the *daimyo*.

We then travel to Hiroshima by Shinkansen. On arrival we visit the very moving Hiroshima Peace Park, constructed on the site where the world's first atomic bomb used in war was dropped on an unsuspecting population, causing catastrophic damage to the city and an unthinkable death toll. The park is situated on what was once Hiroshima's commercial and political centre. Soon after the war it was decided that the area would not be redeveloped, but instead dedicated to a peace memorial.

The Peace Memorial Museum documents the development of the atomic bomb alongside the history of Hiroshima, and a sober narrative of the events of 6 August 1945, and the impact the event had on the lives of the city's population. The other building in the Park is the A-Bomb Dome, the iconic skeleton of the former Prefectural Industrial Promotion Hall that was one of the few buildings that was left standing after the explosion and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. At the Peace Park we also see two bridges by Isamu Noguchi called 'Tsukuru' and 'Yuku'. (Overnight Hiroshima) B

Day 7: Sunday 19 April, Hiroshima – Miyajima Island – Hiroshima

- Ferry to Miyajima Island
- Itsukushima Shrine
- Mount Misan Ropeway (time and weather permitting)
- Ferry back to Hiroshima

This morning we travel by ferry across the Onoseto Strait to Miyajima Island, a place with a long history as a holy Shinto site. On arrival we visit the Shinto Itsukushima Shrine, a National Treasure and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The earliest known shrine was dedicated in 593. In 1168, during the Heian Period, the powerful Taira no Kiyomori selected the island as the place for a family shrine. It is familiarly called the 'Floating Shrine' as at high tide the shrine and the dramatic vermilion *torii* seem to float on the water. The multiple buildings that make up the shrine (payer hall, main hall, *noh* theatre stage) are built on piers and are connected by walkways over the sea.

If time and weather permit, we will take a ropeway cable car up Mount Misen, the island's highest peak to enjoy the views over Hiroshima Bay. (Overnight Hiroshima) B

Nagasaki - 2 nights

Day 8: Monday 20 April, Hiroshima – Fukuoka – Yoshinogari – Nagasaki

- Shinkansen Hiroshima – Fukuoka
- Komyozen-ji Temple
- Yoshinogari Historical Park

This morning we travel by Shinkansen south to Fukuoka on Kyushu, Japan's southwestern island. A short drive from the town centre is Komyozen-ji Temple, a Zen temple of the Rinzaï sect, it was founded in the 12th century. It has two very beautiful gardens. The front dry garden is formed with raked pebbles surrounding 15 rocks positioned to form the Japanese character for 'light'. The rear moss garden is designed to be viewed from the temple's main building. Here, in contrast to the verdant plants, stones and pebbles are used to create an abstract representation of water and land.

We continue out of Fukuoka to the fascinating Yoshinogari Historical Park to encounter the Yayoi Period (300BC to 300AD). Here archaeologists uncovered a series of sprawling settlements, excavating pit dwellings, elevated storehouses, moats and tombs. Within the site are careful reconstructions of settlements and fortifications, along with displays of artifacts, allow visitors a glimpse into Ancient Japan.

In the late afternoon we continue south to Nagasaki. (Overnight Nagasaki) BD

Day 9: Tuesday 21 April, Nagasaki

- Atomic Bomb Museum
- Hypocentre Park and Nagasaki Peace Park
- Mihara Gardens
- Nagasaki Prefectural Art Museum
- Dejima (Dutch Island)

On 9 August, three days after the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, a B-29 bomber dropped a second bomb on Nagasaki. Cloud cover meant the pilots had limited visibility and the bomb exploded to the northwest of the city centre. As a result, the southeastern industrial and government districts were comparatively unscathed. However, 40 percent of the city was destroyed and the loss of civilian life was catastrophic. Emperor Hirohito set aside the tradition of imperial non-intervention and declared his support for the acceptance of terms of the Potsdam Declaration, and the following day the government issued its surrender.

As in Hiroshima, the hypocentre of the explosion was transformed into a place of peace and beauty. The Atomic Bomb Museum tells the story of this dark day in Nagasaki's history and its displays include many ordinary objects that were affected by the blast. Emerging from the museum, we walk through the Hypocentre Park and Nagasaki Peace Park, places of reflection that highlight the importance of peace and the resilience of the citizens.

We then visit Mihara Garden designed by world-renown designer Kazuyuki Ishihama. On a hill overlooking the city, this is a sanctuary of calm and beauty. Paths lead past ponds and garden beds planted to provide interest throughout the year, whether it is the sculptural forms of bare winter trees, delicate spring blossoms, the vibrance of summer flowers, or magnificent autumn foliage.

We continue to the Nagasaki waterfront to visit the Prefectural Art Museum, designed by Kuma Kengo and opened in 2005. It houses a fascinating and unexpected collection of Spanish art, collected by Suma Yakichiro who was a special envoy to Spain during the Second World War.

Portuguese merchants arrived in Japan in the 16th century, bringing with them new technologies, Christianity and trade. They were allowed to live in Nagasaki to develop the city and trade network. In 1634 the fan-shaped artificial island of Dejima was built to house the Europeans and control the spread of their religion, but they were expelled in 1639 following a Christian uprising. This expulsion caused an economic downturn in the city and in 1640 the Dutch merchants were forced to move from their trading centre at Hirado and move to Nagasaki. From this point the only ships allowed to come to Japan were Dutch and Chinese, and Nagasaki was the only harbour they were allowed to visit.

Our day concludes with a walk around Dejima, where the restoration of the European buildings is underway. Although the land between the island and the city has been reclaimed, there are plans to return this to being an island. (Overnight Nagasaki) B

Korakawa Onsen - 2 nights

Day 10: Wednesday 22 April, Nagasaki – Kurokawa Onsen

- Ferry Across the Ariake Sea (Taira to Nagatsu)

- Afternoon at leisure at Kurokawa Onsen

Today we depart Nagasaki and travel to the heart of Kyushu to the mountain village Kurokawa Onsen. This is one of Japan's most attractive hot spring towns, where the traditional atmosphere of a mountain retreat has been preserved. Cobbled laneways meander through the village, lined with public *onsen* (hot spring bath houses), shops, café and shrines.

The afternoon is at leisure to enjoy the village and, if you wish, partake in a soothing hot bath. (Overnight Kurokawa Onsen) BD

Day 11: Thursday 23 April, Kurokawa Onsen – Kitsuki – Usuki – Kurokawa Onsen

- Kitsuki historic village, including Kitsuki Castle and Samurai Houses
- Usuki historic village, including Samurai Houses
- Stone Buddhas, Usuki

On the east coast of Kyushu we find two fascinating villages steeped in history with well-preserved samurai districts. At Kitsuki we find a rare example of two samurai districts to the north and south, with a narrow commercial district between and the castle at the eastern end. The town's historic character is preserved by ensuring modern 'distractions' such as powerlines do not impinge on the vista. Several of the Samurai Residences have been restored and now serve as museums.

Stone alleyways also lead through Usuki, principally the Nioza Historical Road, lined with temples, houses and little shops. The main place of interest is a little out of town – the Usuki Stone Buddhas. Designated as National Treasures in a country where Buddha statues are more commonly made of wood or metal, these statue date to the late Heian Period (794-1185). The 61 statues, some retaining their painted decoration, are carved into a cliff-face and set in four clusters linked by a path. (Overnight Kurokawa Onsen) BD

Kagoshima - 1 night

Day 12: Friday 24 April, Kurokawa Onsen – Aso Kuju National Park – Kumamoto – Kagoshima

- Scenic Drive through Mount Aso National Park
- Suizenji Jojuen
- Shinkansen Kumamoto to Kagoshima
- Chiran Peace Museum

This morning we drive through the beautiful Mount Aso National Park to Kumamoto. On the eastern side of the town is Suizenji Jojuen, a charming Edo period stroll garden built around a pond. A striking feature of the garden is the conical artificial mountain that evokes Mount Fuji.

We then travel to the very southern end of Kyushu. Before we embark on the last stage of our journey south we will visit the beautifully presented and poignant Chiran Peace Museum. Located on the Satsuma Peninsula, this was once the Chiran airbase which served as the departure point for kamikaze sorties in the final months of World War Two. The kamikaze are one of the most potent symbols of the war in Japan – young men with patriotic valour who were asked to sacrifice their lives to destroy the enemy. They were celebrated as cherry blossoms – a brief, fleeting existence marked by exquisite beauty. The buttons on the kamikaze uniforms were embossed with a blossom. (Overnight Kagoshima) BD

Yakushima - 2 nights

Day 13: Saturday 25 April, Kagoshima – Yakushima

- Early morning ferry Kagoshima to Yakushima Island
- Coach tour around Yakushima Island, visiting waterfalls, beaches, villages and shrines

This morning we travel by ferry to Yakushima, an island famed for its towering mountains, lush vegetation and ancient forests of Japanese cedar. The island is home to hundreds of endemic flowers, shrubs and trees, and is a spawning ground for loggerhead turtles. In 1993 it was declared a World Heritage Site of Natural Beauty.

Archaeologists have found traces of human habitation of the island that can be traced back 6000 years, and the island is mentioned in records from the 8th century. Yakushima was heavily logged during the Edo period, a time when a great number of castles, temples and monuments were built throughout the country, and the valuable lumber industry was established under the control of the powerful Shimazu clan. Fishing and agriculture were other important industries for the islanders.

We will follow the 100km long coastal road around the island. We visit waterfalls, beaches, villages and shrines, such as the Yahazudake Shrine on Cape Yahazu, with a red torii gate marking the entrance to a vast cave, believed to be the home of the gods of fishing and marriage. (Overnight Yakushima) BLD

Day 14: Sunday 26 April, Yakushima

- Morning program of walking the island trails to explore the ancient cedar forests
- Afternoon at leisure on Yakushima Island

This morning we take a guided walk into the forest to encounter the ancient Yakusugi (Japanese cedar) trees. The most accessible place to visit these moss-covered giants is along the boardwalks and walking trails of a nature park called Yakusugi Land. In addition to the spectacular plant life, the forests are also home to Japanese macaques, Sika deer, Tanuki (Japanese raccoons) and Japanese weasels.

The afternoon is at leisure to relax after the morning walk. This evening we gather for a farewell dinner at the hotel. (Overnight Yakushima) BLD

Day 15: Monday 27 April, Depart Yakushima

- Tour ends in Yakushima

The tour ends in Yakushima. After a leisurely morning we transfer to the airport at 10.00am for the flight to Fukuoka, from where there are regular flights to Tokyo. B

Accommodation

All hotels are rated 3-star to 5-star locally. Several are conveniently situated near the main train station to facilitate our journeys by Shinkansen (bullet train). These areas are dynamic hubs with many cafes, restaurants, convenience stores and shopping centres. All rooms have en suite bathroom.

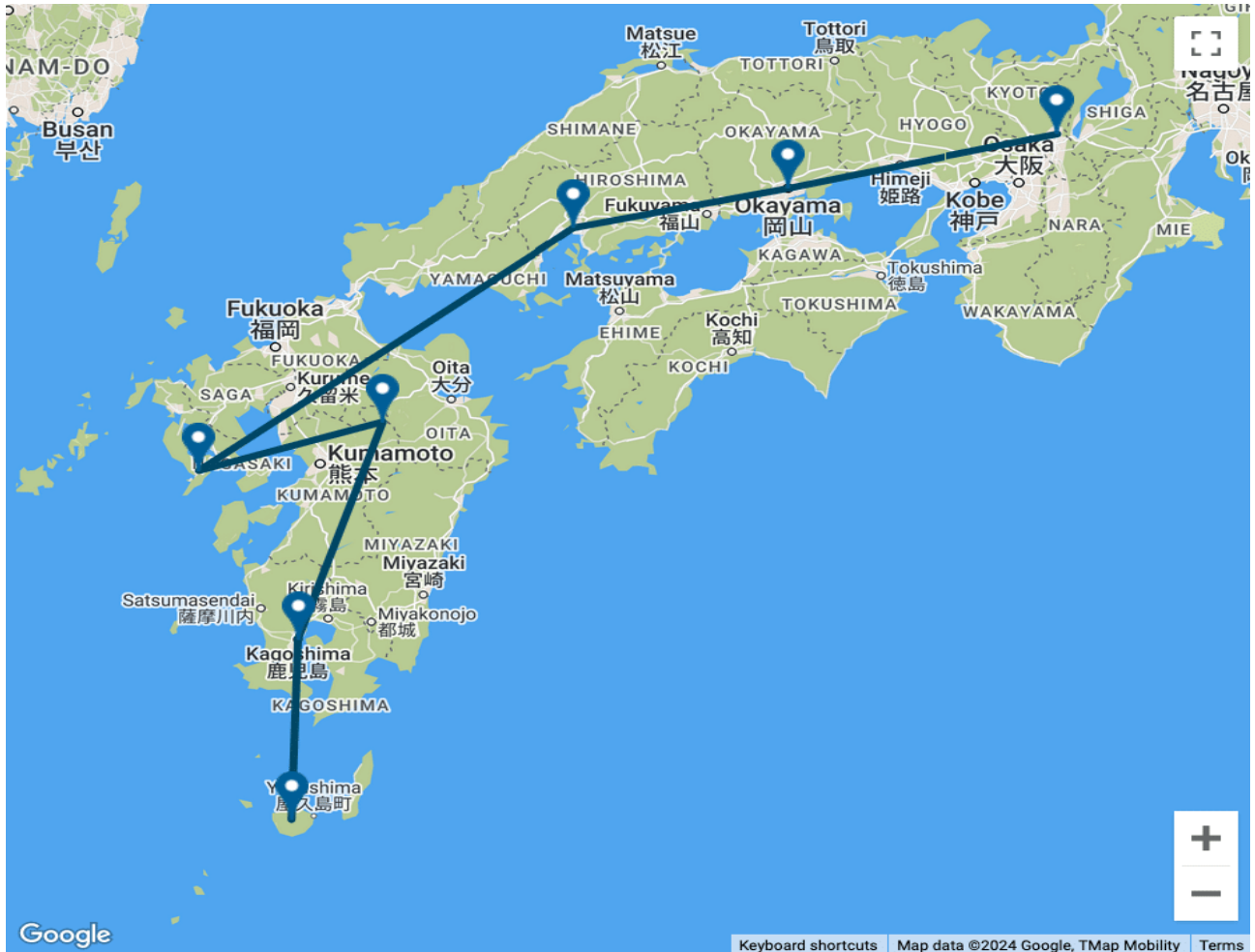
- Kyoto (2 nights): 4-star [Mitsui Garden Hotel Kyoto Shijo](#) – located in central Kyoto, conveniently located near eateries and Karasuma-dori, Kyoto's main shopping street.
- Okayama (3 nights): 3-star Mitsui Garden Hotel Okayama – a business hotel located close to the train station.
- Hiroshima (2 nights): 4-star [Hotel Granvia Hiroshima](#) – a modern, comfortable hotel linked to the train station.
- Nagasaki (2 nights): 5-star [Nagasaki Marriott Hotel](#) – a brand new hotel in central Nagasaki
- Kurokawa Onsen (2 nights): 3-star [Yukyo no Hibiki Yusai](#) – inspired by traditional onsen inns but with modern Japanese aesthetics. The spacious rooms have terraces overlooking a mountain stream, and the hotel offers seven different onsen baths.
- Kagoshima (1 night): 4-star [Daiwa Roynet Kagoshima Premier Hotel](#) – a modern business hotel in the city centre, a short drive from the ferry terminal.
- Yakushima (2 nights): 4-star [Yakushima Iwawaki Hotel](#) – a modern hotel complex located on the southside of the island, with sea views from the terraces and restaurants.

Note: Hotels are subject to change. In this instance a hotel of similar standard will be provided.

Single Supplement

Payment of this supplement will ensure accommodation in a room for single occupancy throughout the tour. The number of rooms available for single occupancy is extremely limited, especially in Kurokawa Onsen. People wishing to take a Single Supplement are therefore advised to book well in advance.

Tour Map



Tour Price & Inclusions

AUD \$14,980.00 Land Content Only – Early Bird Special: Book before 30 June 2025

AUD \$15,380.00 Land Content Only

AUD \$1780.00 Single Supplement

Tour Price (Land Content Only) includes:

- Accommodation in twin-share rooms with private facilities in hotels generally of 3-star or 4-star standard (5-star in Nagasaki)
- Buffet or served breakfast, lunches & evening meals as indicated in the itinerary where: B =breakfast, L=lunch & D=dinner
- Drinks at welcome and farewell meals. Other meals may not have drinks included
- Transportation by air-conditioned coach and rail as outlined in the itinerary
- Porterage of one piece of luggage per person at hotels (not at airports or train stations)
- Lecture and site-visit program
- Entrance fees to all sites
- Use of audio headsets during site visits
- Tour notes
- Tips for the coach driver, local guides and restaurants for included meals.

Tour Price (Land Content Only) does not include:

- International Airfare: Australia-Kyoto, Yakushima-Australia
- Personal spending money
- Airport-hotel transfers
- Luggage in excess of 20kg (44lbs)
- Travel insurance.



Fitness Criteria & Practical Information

Fitness Level



Level 2 - Intermediate

For people with energetic lifestyles and very good mobility

You must be able to:

- manage at least five to six hours of physical activity per day with ease.
- walk at a regular to moderate pace up to 5-7km per day on flat or undulating terrain; some stretches include steeper slopes or several flights of stairs (eg at temple complexes). Walking excursions include mountain trails outside Kyoto and Okayama, and through sub-tropical forests in Yakushima.
- keep up with the group at all times.
- stand for one to two hours during visits to galleries and museums without the need to sit.
- board/alight coaches, trains and ferries with steep steps unassisted. The program includes rail travel between Osaka and Okayama (Day 3), Okayama and Hiroshima (Day 6), Hiroshima and Fukuoka (Day 8) and Kumamoto and Kagoshima (Day 12).

Fitness Levels

Please also view the fitness criteria required for our tours, graded from Level 1 to Level 3, at www.asatours.com.au/fitness-level/

All ASA tours are active programs suitable for people with a good level of mental and physical fitness and good mobility. They are not suitable for people who lack stamina, have difficulty walking at the group's pace or who have mobility issues. An unavoidable aspect of every tour is the need to manage walking, stair-climbing and standing for long periods of time.

It is a condition of travel that all participants agree to accept ASA's directions in relation to their suitability to participate in activities undertaken on the tour, and that ASA retains the sole discretion to direct a tour

participant to refrain from a particular activity on part of the tour. Before enrolling on an ASA tour please read the fitness requirements carefully.

Overnight Bags & Luggage Transfer

This tour involves four journeys on Japan's high-speed bullet trains. Larger suitcases are not permitted on these trains; the group's main luggage will therefore be transferred by truck to the hotel.

Booking Conditions

ASA RESERVATION APPLICATION FORM

Please complete the ASA RESERVATION APPLICATION and send it to Australians Studying Abroad together with your non-refundable deposit of AUD \$1000.00 per person payable to Australians Studying Abroad.



Reservation Application

TOUR NAME _____
TOUR DATES _____

Please complete **one application, per person in block letters and sign**. Parental signature is required for participants under 18 years of age. Please mail this form with the appropriate deposit to: **P.O. Box 8285, ARMADALE, VICTORIA, 3143**. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation.

Applicant Details (as in passport)

TITLE Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐ Miss ☐ Dr ☐ Other _____
FIRST NAME _____ Preferred FIRST NAME _____
MIDDLE NAME _____ SURNAME _____
POSTAL ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ COUNTRY _____ POSTCODE _____
TEL. (AH) () _____ TEL. (BH) () _____ Mobile Tel: _____
EMAIL address _____
Date of birth ____ / ____ / ____ GENDER Male ☐ Female ☐

Passport Number _____ Expiry date ____ / ____ / ____ Nationality _____
☐ Colour copy of my current valid passport enclosed ☐ I'm renewing my passport ☐ ASA has a colour copy of my current passport

Covid Certificate ☐ A copy of my current international certificate enclosed

Travel Plans

☐ I plan to leave Australia before the tour commences. Planned departure date ____ / ____ / ____
☐ I will be arranging my airfare independently and taking the Land Content Only option.

Tour Accommodation (rooming preferences)

I/we would like: ☐ a twin-bedded room ☐ a double-bedded room ☐ a room for sole occupancy
I am travelling: ☐ on my own ☐ with a friend/family member Travel Companion _____

Meals

☐ I do not have any specific dietary requests

Please **X** the box if you **CAN NOT** eat any of the following:

☐ fish ☐ poultry ☐ red meat ☐ dairy products
☐ eggs ☐ pork ☐ nuts
☐ Other _____

Allergies: Refer to the Medical Information

Correspondence

Your preferred method of correspondence ☐ Postal Mail ☐ Email Address _____

Emergency Contact Details

Note: this person **MUST** be available by telephone and be present in Australia for the duration of your tour with ASA

Name _____ Relationship to Traveller _____
Address _____
TEL. (AH) () _____ TEL. (BH) () _____ Mobile Tel: _____
EMAIL address _____

The purpose of seeking this information is to assist ASA to determine, where necessary, whether ASA is able to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your specific needs and whether your health and safety (or that of your fellow travellers) is likely to be compromised given your choice of tour. It will also assist you and ASA if you fall ill or have an accident whilst travelling.

- ASA reserves the right to decline your Reservation Application if this Medical Information section is not completed properly and may reject or cancel your reservation, or terminate your participation on any tour, if ASA subsequently learns that you have failed to make full and proper disclosure.
- ASA is committed to protecting the privacy of your personal information. ASA's privacy policy is available for viewing at www.asatours.com.au
- If ASA has any concerns about the information you have provided, it will contact you to request clarification before considering your Application.
- ASA requires you to consider carefully your limitations in light of ASA's Physical Endurance Star Rating System in ASA's Brochure and Itinerary when choosing your tour.
- If you are not likely to satisfy ASA's Participation Criteria (see below), ASA, in its sole discretion, may reject your Reservation Application.
- It is a condition of your tour that you agree to accept the directions of ASA's Tour Leaders in relation to your suitability to participate in activities planned on tour.
- ASA reserves the right to cancel your participation on a tour if your behaviour is in ASA's opinion causing undue distress or damage to any person or their property.
- If your participation is discontinued during a tour, ASA will assist by arranging your onward travel (if required) at your own cost, but you will not be refunded for forfeited parts of the tour.
- ASA tour groups are not accompanied by a medical practitioner. ASA recommends that you see your doctor for advice about your specific needs while overseas. You may also wish to contact a travel and vaccination clinic for advice. www.traveldoctor.com.au tel: 1300 658 444; www.travelvax.com.au tel: 1300 360 164.
- Travel insurers require you to declare all existing medical conditions.
- Please carry a complete list of medications with you during the ASA tour. Include **generic names** of each medication (consult your local pharmacy for information).

Please mark **X** in the YES or NO box to every question below and provide details where necessary:

Participation Criteria

To participate in an ASA tour, you must be reasonably fit, in good health and able to participate in all activities without assistance from Tour Leaders or other tour members. **You must also be fully vaccinated against Covid-19.** If you require assistance, a fit and able travel companion must undertake to accompany and assist you with all tasks for the duration of the whole tour. The responsibility of the Tour Leader is to ensure that the larger group enjoys a relaxing and informative journey, and he or she cannot be relied upon to provide ongoing individual assistance to any one guest.

- | | YES | NO |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Can you walk and stand unassisted for at least 2-3 hours a day in hot, humid conditions? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Can you walk unassisted on and over uneven surfaces? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Can you climb at least 3 flights of stairs and/or walk up and down steep slopes unassisted? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Can you walk at a steady pace and no less than 1km every 15 - 20 minutes unassisted? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Can you organise, manage and carry your own luggage? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Can you follow and remember tour instructions and meet punctually at designated times and places? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Can you administer your own medication? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. You do NOT have impaired vision or hearing which may impact your capacity to participate on this tour? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Mobility and Fitness

As many of ASA's international sites do not provide access to wheelchairs or similar mobility aids, we regret that ASA tours are not suitable for people who require the use of a walking frame, wheeled walker, wheelchair or motorised scooter.

1. Do you suffer from any medical conditions that may compromise your mobility and/or fitness to participate on this program? YES NO ☐ ☐
- If yes, please specify

If yes, how will you manage this on tour?

Allergies and/or Food Intolerances

ASA will make reasonable endeavours to organise meals to suit you, provided that you give ASA adequate notice of your specific dietary requirements or allergies. You may be required to research dietary alternatives, as not all destinations may be able to offer suitable food substitutes.

1. Do you have any food allergies or intolerances? YES NO ☐ ☐
- If yes, please specify

2. Have you ever had an anaphylactic reaction to anything? ☐ ☐
- If yes, please specify

Do you carry an epipen? ☐ ☐

3. Do you have any other allergies or reactions to anything, including medical drugs? ☐ ☐
- If yes, please specify

Existing Medical Conditions

You alone are responsible for managing any existing medical conditions, your medication and any medical equipment that you may need when on your tour. Please plan for contingencies and take extra medication, dietary supplements and/or fully charged batteries for medical equipment if your health and safety depends on these. You should take into consideration that power sources at some destinations may be unavailable, inadequate, inconvenient or unreliable.

1. Have you any significant medical conditions that may impact your capacity to complete this tour? YES NO ☐ ☐
- If yes, please specify

If yes, how will you manage this on tour?

2. Do you require some form of powered medical aid, such as a CPAP machine? ☐ ☐

These machines may not be operable on certain international flights, modes of transport, in remote or other areas with inadequate or unreliable power sources without a fully charged independent long life battery or batteries.

Diabetics: You may be travelling and sightseeing for many hours at a time. Insulin dependent diabetics must carry extra supplies of insulin (as this medication cannot be obtained in some destinations), regulators, applicators, storage and refrigeration equipment, as well as any necessary supplements. Accommodation may not provide refrigerators in rooms.

3. Are you diabetic? ☐ ☐
- Are you insulin dependent? ☐ ☐
4. Do you suffer from travel sickness? ☐ ☐
- Remember to use an appropriate medication while on tour.

Declaration

I declare that: I have read and understood the ASA Tour Itinerary, Reservation Application and Booking Conditions. I am aware of ASA's terms as relating to refunds, cancellations, responsibility and liability. I understand that ASA relies upon this declaration when considering this Application. I accept the inherent dangers, risks and uncertainties in travel and those beyond ASA's control and understand they may occur before or during any tour. I have made full and complete disclosure and have not knowingly withheld any medical information about myself from ASA. I have completed this Reservation Application honestly and accurately. I warrant that I am able to participate independently in all activities described by ASA in the itinerary without assistance from any person.

I will advise ASA in writing if any aspect of my fitness and or health conditions change materially at any time before my departure date. I understand and accept that the itinerary, accommodation and lecturers scheduled for this tour may change.

I agree and consent that ASA may give my personal information in this Reservation Application to tour service providers and relevant authorities as required by law, but only for the purpose of making bookings with and engaging services associated with the tour. I understand that if I do not consent to the use of my personal information for this purpose, ASA will decline my Reservation Application.

In consideration of ASA's acceptance of my Reservation Application, I irrevocably release and indemnify ASA from all claims that I, or any other party, may have against ASA its employees, invitees, agents and contractors, however arising in respect of any loss, damage, injury, death or expense incurred in the course of booking, preparing for, travelling to, on and from or cancelling any tour.

I release and indemnify ASA with respect to:

1. Every general risk to which I or my personal belongings may be exposed in the course of preparing for, travelling to, on or from any ASA tour;
2. Every special risk, in particular medical risks, to which I may be exposed in the course of preparing for, travelling to, on or from any ASA tour arising from, including, but not limited to:
 - a. intermittent power cycles and/or the temporary or permanent loss of power (beware CPAP or any other medical machine users);
 - b. dietary, food or other allergies (ASA cannot guarantee that traces of items to which you are allergic are not present in food or drink you are served, medication you are administered or other substances with which you may come into contact);
 - c. any event or situation that may compromise the administration of necessary medication or my health, safety and wellbeing generally; and
 - d. any event or happening beyond ASA's control
3. All claims arising as a result of my or ASA's cancellation or termination of any tour, part of a tour or of my continued participation on a tour for any reason (subject to ASA's refund conditions below).

Limitation of Liability

ASA is not a carrier, event or tourist attraction host, accommodation or dining service provider. All bookings made and tickets or coupons issued by ASA for transport, event, accommodation, dining and the like are issued as an agent for various service providers and are subject to the terms and conditions and limitations of liability imposed by each service provider. ASA is not responsible for their products, services, terms and conditions. If a service provider cancels or does not deliver the product or service for which you have contracted, and does not give a refund, your remedy lies with the service provider, not ASA.

ASA will not be liable for any claim (e.g. sickness, injury, death, damage or loss) arising from any change, delay, detention, breakdown, border closures, cancellation, failure, accident, act, omission or negligence of any tour service provider or authority however caused (contingencies). You must take out such travel insurance as is available against such contingencies.

ASA's liability in respect of any tour cancelled or changed will be limited to the partial refund of amounts you have paid, less an administration fee of \$500 and other costs and charges of third party service providers. No compensation will be payable to you by ASA where ASA cancels or changes a tour, or any part of a tour.

ASA reserves the sole discretion to cancel any tour or to modify itineraries in any way it considers appropriate and in the best interests of health, safety and wellbeing of tour participants. Tour costs may be revised, subject to unexpected price increases or exchange rate fluctuations.

Booking Conditions

DEPOSITS

A non-refundable deposit of \$1000.00 AUD per person is required to reserve a place on an ASA tour.

CANCELLATION FEES

If you cancel your booking the following charges apply:

More than 75 days before departure: your initial deposit of \$1000.00 is non-refundable.**

75-31 days prior 50% of total amount due

30-0 days prior 100% of total amount due

**\$500.00 of this amount (ie 50% of your deposit) may be credited to another ASA tour departing within 12 months of the original tour you booked. We regret, in this case early-bird discounts will not apply.

We take the day on which you cancel as being that on which we receive written confirmation of cancellation.

UNUSED PORTIONS OF THE TOUR

We regret that refunds will not be given for any unused portions or services of the tour, such as meals, entry fees, accommodation, flights or transfers.

WILL THE TOUR PRICE OR ITINERARY CHANGE?

If the number of participants on a tour is significantly less than budgeted, or if there is a significant change in exchange rates ASA reserves the right to amend the advertised price. We shall, however, do all in our power to maintain the published price. Occasionally circumstances beyond the control of ASA make it necessary to change airline, hotel or to make amendments to itineraries. We will inform you of any changes in due course.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

ASA requires all participants to obtain comprehensive travel insurance. A copy of your travel insurance certificate and the **reverse charge** emergency contact phone number must be received by ASA no later than 75 days prior to the commencement of the tour.

FINAL PAYMENT

The balance of the tour price will be due 75 days prior to the tour commencement date.

PLEASE READ THE ABOVE CAREFULLY, PRINT AND SIGN BELOW

☐ I accept the conditions on this booking form ☐ I have read the information about the physical requirements of the tour in the detailed itinerary and confirm that I am able to meet these requirements

Applicant's Signature

Print Full Name

Dated

Tour / Course Name _____

Name of Traveller 1 _____

Name of Traveller 2 _____

I have enclosed a payment to the value of \$ _____ (including CC or bank fee if applicable) for this tour

The above amount is payable for:

- ☐ Intention to Travel ☐ Tour Deposit
- ☐ Balance of Payment ☐ Upgrade from Intention to Travel to a Deposit
- ☐ Travel Insurance ☐ Other (eg. Airfares, Accommodation) _____

International Payments

Welcome to our international travellers! If you are making a payment and do not have an Australian bank account/credit card, we can only accept payment as follows:

- via credit card with the applicable fee - the credit card company/bank will set the exchange rate
- via bank transfer; please give your surname and tour code (eg. Smith 21705) as a reference and ask your bank to allow for all charges.

Bank cheques or personal cheques will not be accepted.

By Cheque (accept Australian cheques only)

Please make cheques payable to *Australians Studying Abroad*

Direct Deposit or Internet Banking

You will need to:

1. Provide your bank with ASA's bank details (see below) and the amount you wish to transfer OR make a direct deposit through any ANZ branch
2. Include any fees levied by the banks
3. Provide a reference number (Mobile or last name recommended).
4. Complete section below, including confirmation no. (given when transaction completed).

Australians Studying Abroad bank details

Bank ANZ
Branch 420 St Kilda Road, Melbourne Vic
Swift Code ANZBAU3M
BSB 013-423
Account No 3472-32759

Bank confirmation No. _____

Reference used: Mobile or last name recommended
_____Date Money Transferred

Credit Card Payment

Credit card fees apply: Mastercard, Visa & American Express 2%

Please debit my: ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ American Express

I authorise ASA to debit my credit card for the amount due plus the applicable fee as above

Credit Card Number _____

Expiry Date _____ Security Code (CVC) _____

Bank the Card is linked to (eg. NAB or ANZ) _____

Cardholders Name _____

Cardholders Billing Address _____

Postcode _____

State _____ Country _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Cardholders Signature _____