

HIKING & CULTURAL TOUR

KYUSHU, JAPAN

UNVEILING HIDDEN WONDERS



WHEN:

16 - 26
March 2024

WHERE:

Kyushu Island - Kyoto
Japan

WHAT:

11-Day/10 Night
Hiking, & Cultural Tour



Introduction

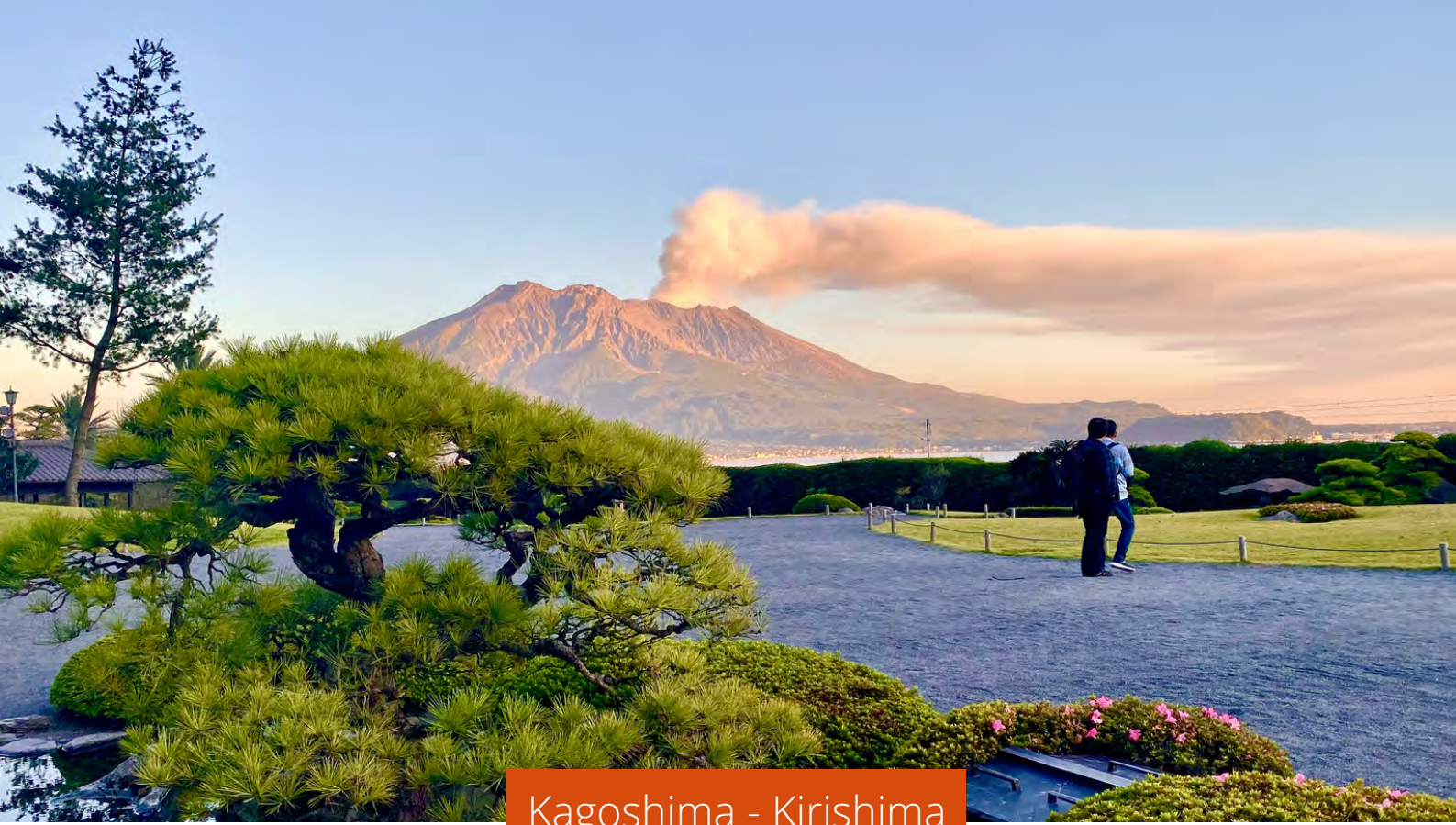
This 11-day Japanese hiking and cultural tour is a wonderful opportunity to not just visit Japan, but to get well and truly off the beaten track. We will spend most of this tour on Kyushu (Koo-Shoo), the most southern of the four main islands of Japan. Rarely promoted to the English-speaking world, this island is new territory for the majority of Japan's visitors.

Kyushu has so much to offer, so join us to discover it before the rest of the World does! We'll learn much about their culture; Japan is a nation of many contrasts. Understand more about their seemingly reserved social rules, yet feel completely comfortable sitting naked in an onsen (shared hot spring bath) together. Learn the social etiquette around meals, greetings, temples, and meal time.

Let's get back to nature, join us for some hiking and shinrin-yoku (forest bathing), as we take five separate day hikes around Kyushu with local hiking guides. A luxury which as an English-speaking visitor is most difficult to arrange as we are going far off the beaten track.

Appreciate their religion, and see how their Shinto faith and the introduction of Buddhism have not caused conflict but instead integrated into a shared faith of harmony and understanding.

We finish our time visiting Hiroshima and finally Kyoto. We will arrive in the city as the cherry blossoms are in their magnificent glory to round off what will be an amazing adventure.



Kagoshima - Kirishima

Day 1: 16 March 2024

Meet and Greet - Welcome to Kyushu こんにちは Konnichiwa! Hello!

You've landed in Kagoshima, on the island of Kyushu, the most southern of the four main islands of Japan. Kyushu known as a land of volcanoes, natural hot springs, and ancient mythology.

We'll start our tour with a meet and greet with your Australian host and Japanese guide at the airport at midday. From the airport we head to the very stylish Sengan-en gardens. If you love Japanese garden styles, then this is the place for you. Take time to soak in the serenity and imagine what it would be like if our gardens at home were this perfectly manicured.

From the gardens enjoy the views over the bay to Sakurajima Volcano. This iconic volcano is one of Japan's most active and is often shrouded in a veil of volcanic smoke. It's a unique sight so we'll do our best to arrange a display. No promises though!

From here we'll take the drive to Kirishima. According to Japanese mythology, the god Ninigi no Mikoto descended to Earth at Mt. Takachiho, Kirishima and thrust his three-pronged spear into the mountaintop, bringing peace to the land. Seems like a great place to rest for the night!

O/N Kirishima 2 night Active Resorts (or similar)

Day 2: 17 March 2024

Kirishima (B&D) Hike: 5.1km, 540m elevation

Kirishima has a network of hiking trails that can take you to the roof of Kyushu. We won't be taking the highest peak (1,700m) however, today is the day to channel your inner mountain goat. We're hiking up Mount Takachiho-no-mine, it's only about a 3-hour jaunt (2 hours up and 1 hour down) give or take – practically a walk in the (volcanic) park.

Later, we'll visit the Kirishima Open Air Museum with its world-class collection of modern sculptures in, as the name suggests, an outdoor setting, because art and nature are like vegemite and toast (or sushi and wasabi).

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Takachiho - Nagayu

Day 3: 18 March 2024

Takachiho (B&D) 3km

Pack your sense of adventure – we're off to Takachiho!

We'll be stopping along the way at Kyusendo Cave: where Mother Nature went Picasso with limestone. Stalactites hang like rock bling. It's like Earth's secret art studio – complete with mood lighting. Exploring here means you're not just a tourist; you're a caving art critic!

We'll have time for a short stroll at Takachiho Gorge before dinner. Then we've got a date at a Kagura Japanese Traditional Play. It's like Shakespeare, but with more fan twirling and face masks. Like Shakespeare you may struggle to understand what is going on, but audience watching is as much fun as the play itself.

O/N Takachiko 2 nights Sollest Takachiho (or similar)

Day 4: 19 March 2024

Takachiho Loop (B&D) Hike: 12km 524m elevation gain

Takachiho Walking Course: 12.3 km, 524m elevation gain loop walk, of scenic awesomeness. With a stop along the way at a shrine to give your thanks or say your prayers, but don't worry, your guide's got you covered, so you can concentrate on not tripping over your own enthusiasm. After a day of walking, reward yourself with a cozy hotel hangout.

Day 5: 20 March 2024

Takachiho to Nagayu (B&D) Hike: 12km 390m elevation gain

Mount Sobo, here we come!

We're hiking through the Okue Mountain range to find the Pac-Man rock – chomping down a 12 km hike for that insta worthy shot. It's a beautiful hike through lovely forest with a local hiking guide. This is not the hike to try alone, it's way too remote, so don't worry we're almost guaranteed to have the trail to ourselves, so a perfect place for Shinrin-yoku (forest bathing).

Then, it's off to Nagayu: where relaxation rules and stress gets lost as you soak your cares away in an onsen. Hot springs bubble like a prosecco on steroids. If relaxation were a sport, Nagayu would win gold medals.

Unwind here, and you'll leave with a high degree of Zen!

O/N Nagayu 2 nights Kur Park Nagayu (or similar)



Nagayu - Kyoto

Day 6: 21 March 2024

Nagayu (B&D) Hike: 12km, 100m elevation

Nagayu, meet Bungo Ono. We're exploring the Taketa Castle town with a Kyushu Olle Okubungo course (12km, 100m elevation). We hope by now the spring flowers are beginning to show their beauty as the cherry blossom season is about to commence.

Day 7: 22 March 2024

Nagayu - Beppu (B&D)

We've been on the go, non-stop from the moment we arrived, so today is our easy day.

In Beppu, we'll visit the Onsen Museum and Beppu Umi Jigoku - a cobalt blue natural hot spring. And yes, you will experience the mystical Onsen Steam. It's like bathing in magic potion. The afternoon is free but join us for a casual dinner.

O/N Beppu 2 nights Hotels and Resorts (or similar)

Day 8: 23 March 2024

Beppu (B&D) Hike: 11km 300m elevation

The Kunisaki Peninsula is our destination today taking part in the Kunisaki Hantou Minemichi Long Trail. This is a 150km through hike over 10 sections, today we will do section K1 and leave the rest for next time - every trip has to have a sequel!

This through hike is not unlike the Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage Trek, but unknown (yet) by the Western world. I can almost guarantee we are going where none of your hiking friends have ever been. There's major bragging rights in this trip!

Day 9: 24 March 2024

Beppu - Hiroshima - Kyoto (B&L)

All aboard the Shinkansen express! First stop: Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park and Atomic Bomb Museum. If you have watched the recently released movie, Oppenheimer, this day will certainly bring the reality of the movie to life.

Lunchtime brings the savory treat of Okonomiyaki, which translates to 'cooked as you like it' a somewhat fancy vegetable fritter, with that Japanese je ne sais quoi. We're really mixing up our nationalities now! Finally, we'll catch a bullet train to Kyoto, our home for the next couple of nights.

O/N Kyoto 2 nights Daiwa Roynet Kyoto Station (or similar)



Kyoto

Day 10: 25 March 2024

Kyoto (B)

Kyoto, we're here to see your highlights. Our guide will lead us through Kiyomizu Temple (UNESCO World Heritage Buddhist temple), Gion Street (where geishas often roam), Fushimi Inari Shrine, (the bucket-ticking tourism sight), a Sake Brewery (yes, you can sample), and Sanju Sangendo Temple with it's 1001 statues of Kannon, the goddess of mercy (we may not have time for you to count them all, you'll just have to take our word for it!) . It's like a history and spirituality treasure hunt.

Day 11: 26 March 2024

Kyoto (B)

It's been a blast, but all good things must come to an end. Enjoy a leisurely morning before we whisk you off to Osaka international airport, if you're leaving with the group today.

Until we meet again, wakare (farewell) fearless adventurer! Want to see more? Ask us about the option of Nakasendo Trail add-on option.

The Details:

PRICE INCLUDES

- Small-Group - Min 10 - Max 15
- Australian host, Suzanne Holden
- English-speaking knowledgeable local guides
- 10 nights good quality (3-4 Star) accommodation
- Most meals: 10B, 1L & 8D
- Bullet train tickets Beppu-Fukuoka-Hiroshima-Kyoto
- Luggage transfer during train trip
- All transportation, daily tours as mentioned

PRICE EXCLUDES:

- Flights & visas
- Travel Insurance (compulsory)
- Tipping for guide & driver 500yen/person/day
- Meals not mentioned on itinerary
- All expenses of a personal nature

ADDITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS OFFERED:

- Booking flights
- Travel insurance
- Pre or post tour travel

COST PER PERSON

- Twin or double share: \$7,495/person
- Single supplement: \$1,195/person (own room throughout)