



# SHIKOKU JAPAN

HIKING, BIKING & CULTURAL TOUR

Contact us for dates

## Tour Highlights

Korakuen Gardens | Kurishiki Canals | Autumn Colours | Shimanami Cycle Trail |  
Matsuyama Castle | 88 Temple Pilgrimage | Ozu Town | Hot Springs  
Ancient Temples & Shrines | Washi Paper Factory | Sake Tasting |





## Summary

This 8-day tour takes you along ancient paths, where centuries-old temples and castles stand alongside modern marvels like the stunning bridges of the Shimanami Kaido. Immerse yourself in breathtaking landscapes, rich history, and vibrant cultures while enjoying a hiking, biking and cultural adventure through Okayama and Ehime Prefectures, where tradition, nature, and relaxation come together.

Cycle the iconic Shimanami Kaido, a breathtaking route that links the islands of the Seto Inland Sea with spectacular views and impressive bridges. Hike sections of the historic Shikoku 88 Temple Pilgrimage, embracing both spiritual reflection and the natural beauty of Japan's landscapes. Wander through charming towns like Kurashiki and Ozu, where timeless traditions blend with tranquil canals, revealing the rich cultural heritage of each region.

Unwind in soothing onsen, savour exquisite local cuisine, and step back in time as you explore ancient castles, sacred temples, and traditional villages. This tour seamlessly weaves outdoor adventure, cultural discovery, and serene relaxation into an unforgettable journey through Japan's timeless allure.

### **A Truly Unique Japanese Experience**

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## Day 1 Meet and Greet - Welcome to Japan

Upon arrival in Osaka, we will be met at the airport and transfer as a group to our hotel. This evening, unwind at the hotel or take a late stroll through the vibrant streets to experience Osaka's lively night scape. Don't stay out too late, you will need a good night's rest—your adventure begins soon!

O/N 1nt Osaka 3-4 star hotel

## Day 2 (B,D) Okayama and Kurashiki

It's time to brave the Japanese train system with our trusty guide, to transfer to Okayama, where we will visit the serene Korakuen Gardens, one of Japan's top three gardens. Stroll through its beautiful landscapes, ponds, and tea houses, before heading to Okayama Castle to admire its striking black exterior and panoramic views. Afterward, we travel to Kurashiki - a charming town, known for its preserved Edo-period district. We will have the rest of the afternoon to explore the picturesque canals, white-walled warehouses, and traditional buildings.

ON 2 nts Kurashiki 3-4 star hotel

## Day 3 (B,D) Kurashiki

Discover more of Kurashiki with a guided tour of the Bikan Historical Area, where we will wander through picturesque canals, preserved merchant houses, and charming streets lined with traditional buildings. Experience a peaceful canal boat ride, a highlight of the area that offers a unique perspective of the town's historical charm. After the tour, the rest of the day is free to explore at your own pace, allowing you to discover more hidden gems of this enchanting town. You may like to participate in an optional (additional cost \$130pp) Ikebana experience guided by an Ikebana master.

## Day 4 (B,D) Shimanami Cycle Trail

Today, it's time to get the adrenaline flowing! After a hearty breakfast, we head off to Onomichi, where we'll be fitted with our e-bikes and receive a safety briefing, for an exciting day on the Shimanami Cycle Trail. Stretching 70km and spanning 6 bridges, this iconic trail through the Ehime prefecture offers jaw-dropping views at every turn. As we cycle along coastal paths and inland routes, we'll pass through charming villages and be treated to stunning vistas of the Seto Inland Sea. The ride promises to be as scenic as it is exhilarating, with lush landscapes and sparkling waters surrounding us. After a rewarding day of cycling, we'll settle into our accommodation and unwind. For those feeling adventurous, a rejuvenating onsen experience awaits, the perfect way to soak away the day's exertions and relax our muscles in the tranquil warmth of the hot springs.

O/N 1 nt Omishima Island 3-4 star hotel or ryokan

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## Day 5 (B,D) Shimanami Cycle Trail

It is an early start today as we get back on the trail for the final leg of our cycling adventure, taking in the last section of the Shimanami Cycle Trail and crossing the Kurushima Kaikyo Bridge, one of the longest suspension bridges in the world. Before reaching the bridge, we'll make a scenic detour to the Kiro-san Observation Park. Trust us, you'll be grateful for those e-bikes as we pedal up to this stunning vantage point, where panoramic views of the sea and islands await. After completing the ride, we'll treat ourselves to a well-deserved late lunch before hopping into the van for the drive to Matsuyama. Tonight you might like to indulge in a relaxing bath at the famous Dogo Onsen, one of Japan's oldest and most celebrated hot springs.

O/N 3 nts Matsuyama 3-4 star hotel

## Day 6 (B,D) Matsuyama

After a delicious breakfast, we'll begin the day with a visit to Matsuyama Castle, one of Japan's twelve surviving original castles, dating back to the early 17th century. Perched high on Mount Katsuyama, the castle offers stunning panoramic views of Matsuyama City and the sparkling Seto Inland Sea. Known for its well-preserved main keep, extensive stone walls, and historic interiors, the castle offers a fascinating glimpse into Japan's feudal past. This afternoon, we'll head to a local, family-run sake brewery, where traditional brewing methods are still practiced. Learn about the meticulous sake-making process and enjoy tastings, deepening your understanding of Ehime's sake culture. Before dinner, take some time to explore Dogo Shopping Street, where you can pick up unique regional gifts and sample the local cuisine, making for a perfect end to a day filled with history, culture, and flavours.

## Day 7 (B,D) Shikoku 88 Temple Pilgrimage

After breakfast, we head inland to explore the scenic walk between Temple 44 (Daisho-in) and Temple 45 (Ishite-ji), just one section of the 88 Temple Pilgrimage. We traverse through lush forests along tranquil mountain paths, passing traditional stone markers and quiet shrines, each with its own spiritual significance. The trail winds through small rural villages, where time seems to slow down, and you can catch glimpses of local life. The path is gently undulating, providing occasional views of the surrounding mountains and valleys. After our hike, we'll transfer to the ancient town of Ozu, with a fascinating stop along the way at the Uchiko washi paper studio. Here, we'll be given a guided tour of the factory to learn about the traditional process of making washi paper, an art form that has been passed down for generations. It is then onto Ozu to enjoy a very special stay at the Nipponia Hotel Ozu, a scattered hotel occupying renovated houses, taking advantage of the decor of the mansion era, and oozing nostalgia.

O/N 1 nt Ozu 'Featured Stay' Nipponia Hotel

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## Day 8 (B) Ozu (option to Beppu)

After a traditional breakfast, we'll check out of the Nipponia Hotel Ozu and set off on a guided walking tour of Ozu. Ozu has undergone a recent revitalisation effort, aiming to breathe new life into this charming old town while preserving its authentic atmosphere. As we explore its narrow streets and traditional buildings, you'll see how the town blends the old and new, with an emphasis on sustainability and community-based initiatives. We will visit the stunning Garyu Sanso, a villa built during the Taisho period, set amid beautifully landscaped gardens that exemplify classic Japanese aesthetics. Next we'll visit Ozu Castle, a beautifully reconstructed landmark offering panoramic views of the town and surrounding countryside. After soaking in the history and culture of Ozu, you can choose to finish the tour here (we can assist with onward arrangements) or travel by ferry onto Beppu. Let us help you book a few nights to explore this area or join onto our Kunisaki Pilgrimage Trail tour to extend your adventure.

## The Details

### PRICE INCLUDES

- Small-Group Escorted Tour - Min 6 - Max 12
- Australian Host
- Professional English speaking local guides
- 6 nights hotel & traditional onsen guest house accom + 1 night featured stay
- Meals as per itinerary: 7 breakfasts & 6 dinners (drinks at own expense)
- Arrival, departure & group private transfers
- All activities mentioned

### PRICE EXCLUDES:

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

### COST PER PERSON

- Price on application