

KUNISAKI TRAIL JAPAN

HIKING & CULTURAL TOUR

11 Days/10 Nights

15 - 25 November 2026

Tour Highlights

Beppu | Hiking the Kunisaki Peninsula | Autumn Colours | Ancient Temples & Shrines | Hot Springs | Cycling the Yabakei Railway | Sake Tasting | Yufuin Town



Summary

Experience the magic of autumn in Japan with a hiking and onsen adventure through Oita Prefecture! This 11-day tour takes you along the ancient Kunisaki Pilgrimage Trail, where fiery red and golden leaves blanket the forests, creating a stunning backdrop for your journey.

Discover the ancient paths of the Kunisaki Peninsula, where time seems to stand still. This pilgrimage hike is far from the tourist path, it takes you through serene forests, past centuries-old temples, and along the same trails once walked by monks seeking enlightenment. Nestled in the remote corners of Oita Prefecture, the Kunisaki Pilgrimage Trail offers a unique blend of natural beauty and cultural heritage.

Then, immerse yourself in the soothing waters of Beppu and Yufuin. Beppu is renowned for its hot spring with unique geothermal wonders, while Yufuin offers a more tranquil experience, surrounded by scenic mountains and charming boutiques.

This tour offers the perfect blend of adventure and relaxation, with daily hikes of 3-6 hours, followed by rejuvenating soaks in some of Japan's best hot springs. Stay in comfortable hotels, savour local cuisine, and experience the timeless beauty of Oita Prefecture.

Ideal for nature lovers, culture enthusiasts, and those looking to unwind. This tour is a journey into the heart and soul of Japan.

A Truly Unique Japanese Experience

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Day 1 Meet and Greet - Welcome to Oita Prefecture

Our guide will meet us at Oita airport (or port if coming from Shikoku), to transfer to our hotel in downtown Beppu. Tonight we meet join together, get to know each other and learn more about our upcoming adventure.
O/N 2nts Beppu, Hotel Amanek Beppu Yula-Re (or similar)

Day 2 (B,L) Beppu

After breakfast at the hotel, we'll begin our day with a visit to the Onsen Museum, where we'll gain insight into the area's unique volcanic landscape and hot spring culture. We'll then explore Beppu's famous 'Hells' - the colourful geothermal hot springs. Lunch will be a traditional Beppu delicacy known as 'Jigoku Mushi,' where fresh ingredients are steamed directly in the natural hot springs. In the afternoon, we'll visit a traditional bamboo craft workshop and if weather permits, we'll conclude the day with a visit to Mt. Tsurumi, where we will take in breath-taking panoramic views from the summit.

Day 3 (B,D) Bungotakada Course, T-1 hike 12kms

This morning after breakfast we will travel to the historic Kunisaki Peninsula in northern Oita Prefecture, known for its numerous ancient shrines and temples. After offering prayers for a safe and fulfilling trek, we will embark from Kumano Magaibutsu for our first hike. Along the route we'll take the time to appreciate the stunning views of Tashibu no Shou from the rocky heights of Asahi-Yuhi Kannon (sunrise-sunset Kannon), where the landscape offers a glimpse into the region's timeless beauty. Soaking up the spell-binding views and nostalgic rice fields, we continue our journey towards Mt Saiei. Today's trail concludes at Kozan-ji Temple, where we will be transferred to our onsen hotel in Kitsuki.

O/N 6 nts Kitsuki, Yamaga Onsen Kaze no Sato (or similar)



Day 4 (B,D) Bungotakada Course, T-2 hike 15kms

We depart Beppu today to continue our walk on the Kunisaki Pilgrimage. We'll pick up the trail where we left off yesterday, at the Kozan-ji Temple where we get great views of the Kunisaki Peninsula. Our path takes us from the Iwawaki-ji Temple, across the Hinotsuru-Hashi Bridge and through the quaint area of Shitta until we arrive at Fuki-ji Temple - the oldest wooden structure in Kyushu. After a break at the rest station we wind our way through oak groves and shiitake mushroom fields near Yama-jinja Shrine. Our final stretch leads us to Umi-jinja Shrine and onward to Nameshi Dam. After a day of exploration, we return to the hotel for a well-deserved dinner and rest. Onsen anyone?



Day 5 (B,D) Bungotakada Course T-4 hike 12kms

Embark on an exhilarating day of hiking from Matama Onsen Sansuiso. The first destination on our agenda is Mt Inomure with its dramatic views and grand stone circle located on its eastern peak. After basking in the views, we descend to the Usuna area and follow the mountain road towards Michizono. Along the way we pass by Myoken-gu Shrine before reaching the Reisen-ji Temple, Jisso-in Temple and Rokusho-gu Shrine. The the more adventurous might like to consider a side trip to Mumyou-Bashi Bridge and the highest peak of Takajo. It is a 5km round trip along a narrow path which requires the use of chains to climb up. Who's up for it? Dinner tonight will be well-earned.

Day 6 (B,L,D) Cycling and Sake

After breakfast, we are off to the Yabakei area to cycle along the scenic tracks of the old Yabakei Railway, offering breathtaking views of Yabakei Gorge. Next we will visit Usa Jingu Shrine, the principal shrine among over 40,600 Hachiman Shrines across Japan. Following a local Japanese sake tasting at a nearby sake brewery, we will return to the hotel to relax before dinner.

Day 7 (B,D) Kunisaki Course K-1 hike 11km

Starting where we left off on day 5 we walk along the Ureshino-goe Ridge and enter the idyllic village of Saihouji. After a short rest, we descend into the Amida-goe to discover the ancient stone Buddha in the Ofudo Iwaya cave. Our journey continues to Sento-ji Temple and the Kyusento-ji Temple ruins to marvel at the carved Nio statues and the impressive five-tiered grave of Ninmon Bosatsu (a Buddhist monk). From here we walk to Gotsuji Fudo (a secret Buddhist training site) and head towards our final destination of Iwato-ji Temple - one of the oldest temples in the Kunisaki Peninsula. Back to the hotel where the hot baths will help wash away the day's exertions readying us for dinner.

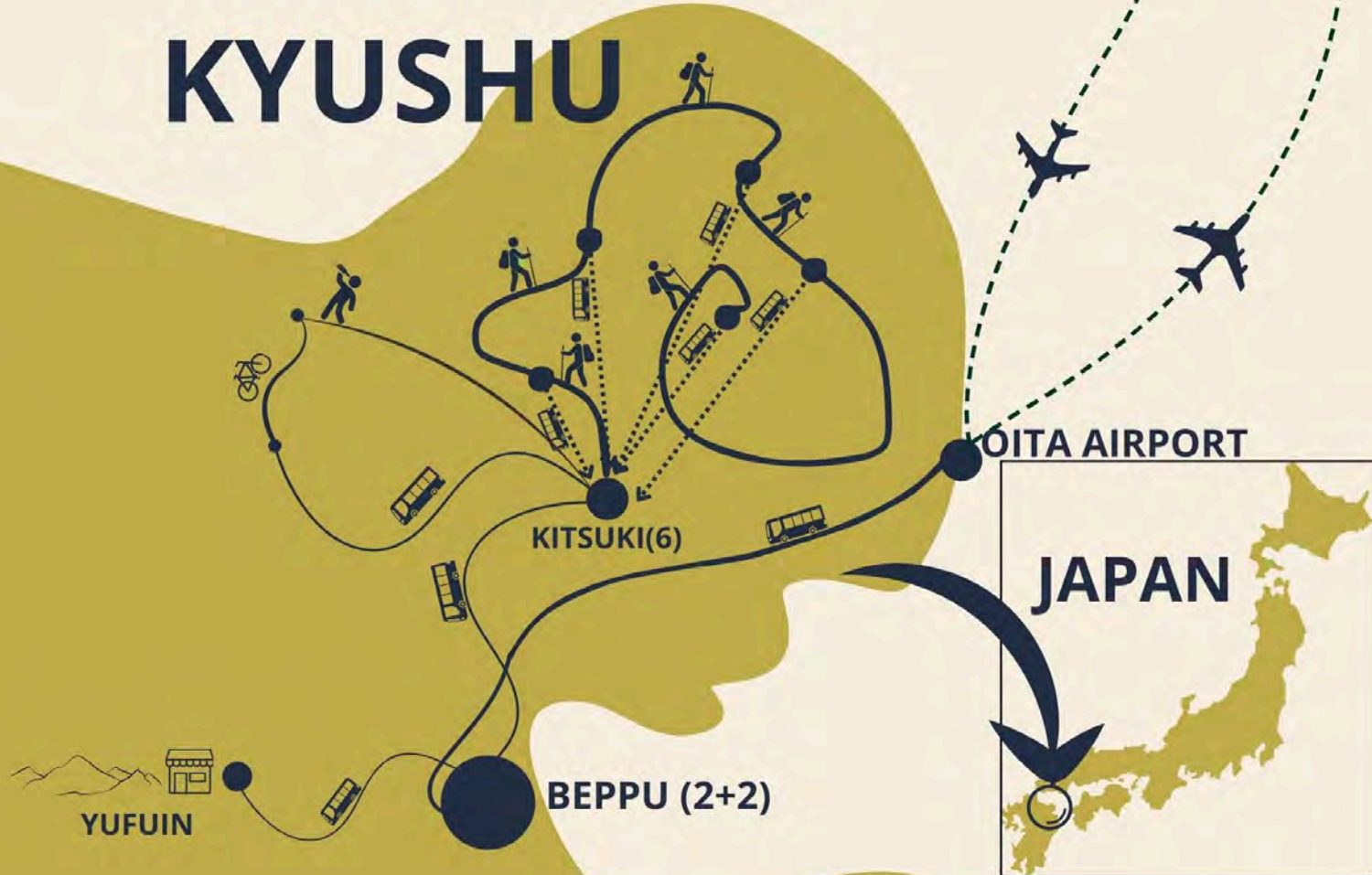
Day 8 (B,D) Kunisaki Course K-2 hike 18kms

Starting at the Iwato-ji Temple, we set off through the lush forest to the traditional grounds of the Chohei-ji Temple. As we cross the the Gaide-Bashi Bridge we gain picturesque views of the Gaide River and surrounding forest. Heading west we walk along the craggy valley of Iwato Yaba with its dramatic rock formations and steep slopes. Heading into the mountains we reach an old trail to follow to the remains of the village of Kuzuhara, inhabited until 1955. Our hike today ends at Monjusen-ji Temple where the Ligularia Japonica grows in abundance. They flower prolifically in June. Sadly we are arriving a little too late to witness the spectacle. Tonight we enjoy our last night in Kitsuki.

Day 9 (B, D) Kunisaki Course K-6 hike 12kms

Our last day of hiking starts amongst the hills of Baien no Sato. Passing through the Asaku Valley we stop at the Morota-san-jinja Shrine, nestled among ancient trees and wooded hills. We pass through the unpaved Hashimizu forest pass and climb to the peak of Mt Fugato. After our descent through the autumn leaves of the mountain ridge we finish up at Futago-ji Temple. It is back to the bright lights of Beppu tonight to relax in our hotel or seek out a meal amongst the many local restaurants. where hot baths and another delicious evening meal awaits.

KYUSHU



Day 10 (B) Yufuin

This morning there is an optional hike on Mt Yufu (or not, if you need to rest your bones) but you won't want to miss exploring the charming streets of Yufuin Town and Lake Kinrin. With unique shops and many opportunities to pick up tasty treats and Japanese trinkets, time to wander this pretty town is a must. If this is not for you, you might like to sit lakeside and enjoy the passing parade of visitors at this popular spot. We return to Beppu in the afternoon where the rest of the day is at leisure. You might like to take the short walk to the promenade and (city) beach, or duck into one of the department stores to pick up last minute Japanese souvenirs. Or, maybe the nearby boutique brewery is calling your name.

Day 11 (B) Departure day

After breakfast we'll transfer to Oita airport for the journey home.

The Details

PRICE INCLUDES

- Small-Group Escorted Tour - Min 6 - Max 14
- Australian Host
- Professional English speaking local guides
- 10 nights hotel & traditional onsen guest house accom
- Meals as per itinerary: 10 breakfasts, 2 lunches & 8 dinners (drinks at own expense)
- Arrival, departure & group private transfers
- Cycle tour and Sake Brewery tour

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

- Twin or double share: \$6,590/person
- Single supp: \$1,450/person (own room)

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