

25 Day Itinerary

Sample Itinerary: 24-Night Central Japan & Shikoku - Off the Beaten Path

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Day 1 | Airport meeting
Transfer · Private car to hotel
Orientation
Afternoon at leisure in Tokyo
The Prince Gallery Tokyo Kioicho (2 nights) |
| Day 2 | Day at leisure in Nikko |
| Day 3 | Overnight luggage transfer: Tokyo - Matsumoto
Rail · Ticket: Shinjuku Station to Matsumoto Station
Afternoon at leisure in Matsumoto
Matsumoto Hotel Kagetsu (2 nights) |
| Day 4 | Day at leisure in Matsumoto |
| Day 5 | Transfer · Private car to Tsumago
Day at leisure in Tsumago
Fujioto Ryokan Tsumago (1 night) |
| Day 6 | Overnight luggage transfer: Tsumago to Nakatsugawa
Hike to Magome
Magome Chaya (1 night) |
| Day 7 | Hike to Nakatsugawa
Nagataki Ryokan (1 night) |

Day 8	Overnight luggage transfer: Nakatsugawa - Takayama Rail · Ticket: Nakatsugawa Station to Takayama Station Afternoon at leisure in Takayama Hotel Wood Takayama (2 nights)
Day 9	Full-day private tour of Takayama with local transport
Day 10	Full-day private tour of Shirakawago with private car Kanazawa Maki no Oto (2 nights)
Day 11	Full-day private tour of Kanazawa with local transport
Day 12	Overnight luggage transfer: Kanazawa - Kyoto Day at leisure in Kanazawa
Day 13	Rail · Ticket: Kanazawa Station to Kyoto Station Half-day private tour of Kyoto with local transport Park Hyatt Kyoto (4 nights)
Day 14	Full-day private tour of Kyoto with private car
Day 15	Day at leisure in Nara
Day 16	Activity: Tea ceremony with kimono session and traditional lunch Afternoon at leisure in Kyoto
Day 17	Overnight luggage transfer: Kyoto - Iya Rail · Ticket: Kyoto Station to Itano Station Transfer · Private car to accommodation Anraku-ji Temple (1 night)
Day 18	Day at leisure: Walking along the Shikoku Pilgrimage Route Awarakuya (1 night)
Day 19	Transfer · Private car to Iya Valley Hotel Iya Onsen (2 nights)
Day 20	Full-day private tour of Iya Valley with private car Overnight luggage transfer: Iya - Osaka
Day 21	Rail · Ticket: Oboke Station to Matsuyama Station Afternoon at leisure in Matsuyama Yamatoya Honten (2 nights)
Day 22	Full-day private tour of Matsuyama with local transport
Day 23	Rail · Ticket: Matsuyama Station to Shin-Osaka Station Half-day private tour of Osaka with local transport Conrad Osaka (2 nights)
Day 24	Day at leisure in Osaka
Day 25	Transfer · Private car to airport

Day 1

Airport meeting

After clearing immigration, you will be met by a member of staff and escorted to your private car.

Transfer · Private car to hotel

Departing
Airport

Arriving
Prince Gallery

Notes

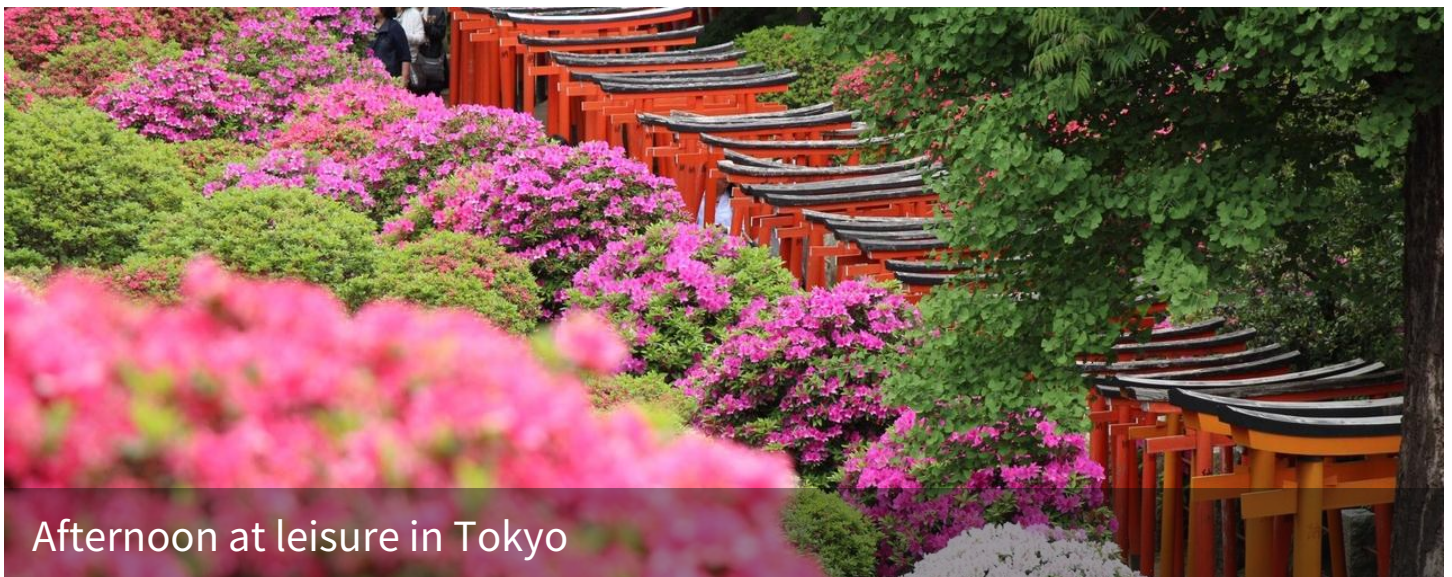
- You will be transferred to your hotel by private car.



Orientation

In order for your holiday to be as enjoyable and stress-free as possible, we have included a private and personalised orientation session, where you will be given everything you need to travel confidently in Japan.

One of our English-speaking staff members will meet you in the lobby of your hotel and will go through your itinerary with you, day by day, and answer any questions you may have. You'll also receive your "welcome pack" of additional information, such as tourist maps of each destination, suggested walking routes, and detailed information on any special activities you may have booked, as well as a Japanese phrase sheet, which should help you travel in Japan more easily!



Afternoon at leisure in Tokyo

Spend the afternoon recovering from your journey and perhaps head out for some relaxed sightseeing.

We suggest heading to Yanesen. North of Ueno, Nezu and Yanaka are two of Tokyo's most charmingly old-fashioned neighbourhoods and a world away from the usual hustle and bustle of the city. Along with neighbouring Sendagi they form an area referred to as Yanesen where you can experience a slower and more relaxed side of Tokyo. Strewn with small temples, craft shops, galleries and cafes, it's a great area to wander and make your own discoveries. Highlights include the historic and tranquil shrine Nezu-jinja, picturesque and historic Yanaka Cemetery, and the old-style shopping street of Yanaka Ginza.

- Unguided



The Prince Gallery Tokyo Kioicho

03-3234-1111

1-2, Kioicho, Chiyoda, Tokyo, 102-0094

〒102-8585 東京都千代区紀尾井町1-2

3:00 PM

Check-in

12:00 PM

Check-out

2 nights

Duration

Kioicho is a town embraced in luscious greenery and a rich history, where Japanese traditions and Western culture intertwine. It's here, in Tokyo's most dignified neighbourhood, that The Prince Gallery Tokyo Kioicho welcomes guests. It is a hotel that marries lush nature and artistic designs with cutting-edge functions in a sophisticated manner, accompanied by the top floor views as magnificent as paintings. The Prince Gallery Tokyo Kioicho offers a personalised environment like never before, delivering comfort that's customised to the needs of each guest in an exquisite atmosphere via the latest and seamless services.

Room Selection

Category

Deluxe King

Room Description

42 sqm. Ample natural light from oversized windows and a refined palette of gold, orange, umber, and cream underscore the space's sleek but inviting ambience. Crowned by a cream leather headboard, the plump bed invites you to take in a favourite program on the 55-inch 4K-resolution television. Deluxe King rooms boast a generous cushioned window seat, with glass side table, overlooking the city. A contemporary wood writing desk and chair provide an ideal space for work or study. Separated by glass doors and encased in grey marble, the bathroom extends the space's open atmosphere. A glass-enclosed wet room features a deep soaking bathtub as well as a rainforest shower with handheld wand and bench. Plush robes and signature Luxury Collection bath amenities elevate the experience.

- Breakfast included

Day 2



Day at leisure in Nikko

Spend the day exploring independently at leisure. Today we suggest taking the bullet train north out of Tokyo for a day trip to Nikko. We recommend a visit to the intricately carved Toshogu Shrine complex, and the Rinno-ji Temple, which dates from the eight century and houses three important Buddhist deities. The Futarasan Shrine, a Shinto place of worship also founded in the eighth century (by a Buddhist monk) is the third of Nikko's main sights.

- Unguided

Day 3

Overnight luggage transfer: Tokyo - Matsumoto

To allow you to travel comfortably your luggage will be sent from Tokyo to Matsumoto overnight. We suggest packing a small overnight bag as you will be without the bulk of your luggage for your arrival evening in Matsumoto.

Rail · Ticket: Shinjuku Station to Matsumoto Station

Departing	Arriving	Train Type
Shinjuku Station	Matsumoto Station	Limited Express Train

Notes

- Take the limited express train to Matsumoto.



Afternoon at leisure in Matsumoto

Spend the afternoon exploring independently at your leisure. Matsumoto Castle is one of Japan’s few original castles standing, and is one of only four listed as national treasures. Of these, it is the second oldest. On arrival in Matsumoto, it's a 15 minute walk from the station to the castle, or simply jump in a taxi if preferred.

Known as the “Crow Castle” due to its unusual black colour, Matsumoto Castle was built during the late 16th century. The internal gun museum and an extensive folk-lore museum are included in the 600 yen entry fee. English speaking volunteer guides are sometimes available, and well worth asking for at the entrance.

- Unguided



Matsumoto Hotel Kagetsu

0263-32-0114

4-8-9 Ote, Matsumoto-shi, Nagano 390-0874

〒390-0874 野県松本市 4 丁 8 – 9

3:00 PM

Check-in

11:00 AM

Check-out

2 nights

Duration

Established in 1887, Matsumoto Hotel Kagetsu is Matsumoto's oldest hotel. Rooms went through renovation works in April 2016, and feature classic furnishings. You'll find a 24-hour front desk, a public bath, free-use bicycles and free property-wide WiFi.

Well-appointed rooms come with both air conditioning and heating facilities. In-room conveniences include a fridge and a hairdryer.

For leisure, guests can explore the town on a bike or enjoy massage services on request. Luggage storage and laundry services are available. Porter service is available for guests staying in the annex building.

Kagetsu Hotel is a 5-minute bus ride from JR Matsumoto Station and a 5-minute walk from the historic Matsumoto Castle and Nawate Street.

Room Selection

Category

Suite

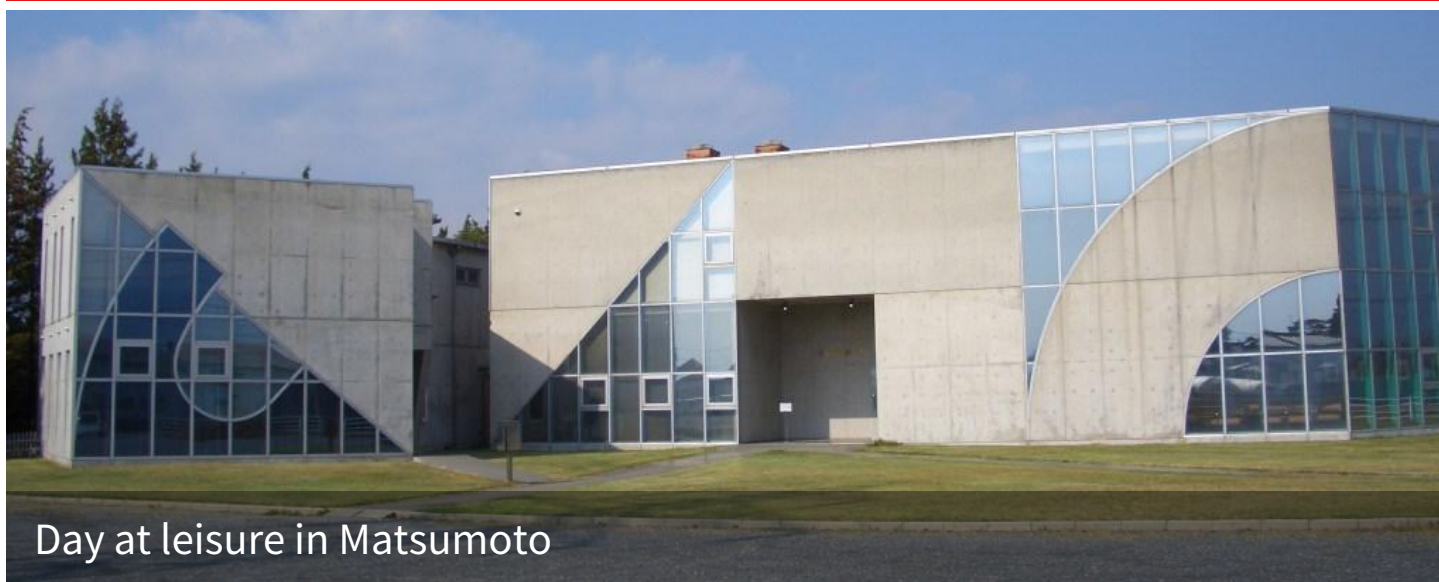
Room Description

At 50sqm, this is the largest room at Kagetsu. The neutral tones and wooden décor gives this room an understated, sophisticated feel.

Featuring 2 large Hollywood twin beds and an in-room theatre, this room is sure to help you relax after a busy day sightseeing.

- Breakfast included

Day 4



Day at leisure in Matsumoto

Today we recommend having a relaxing day with a visit to the old-fashioned streets of Nawate-dori and Nakamachi-dori, which contain a surprising mix of old and new, with shops selling ceramics, bonsai trees, and vintage kimonos next to traditional soba noodle restaurants and trendy cafes, all housed in picturesque wooden buildings.

Later, spend some time at Matsumoto's Japan Ukiyo-e Museum, which has an impressive collection of 100,000 prints - many by the masters of the technique - and though only a fraction are on display at any one time, it is well worth visiting.

- Unguided

Day 5

Transfer · Private car to Tsumago

Departing
Kagetsu Hotel

Arriving
Tsumago

Notes

- After breakfast you will be transferred to the village of Tsumago by private car.



Day at leisure in Tsumago

Drop your bags off at your accommodation and then spend the rest of the day exploring independently at leisure.

Wander the cobbled streets, and explore the old buildings, some of which are open as museums. We highly recommend a visit to the Honjin and Waki Honjin. There are several nice cafes in the charming old buildings which line the main street - though don't expect cake with your coffee, as the local speciality is gohei-mochi, a slightly sweet rice dumpling.

- Unguided

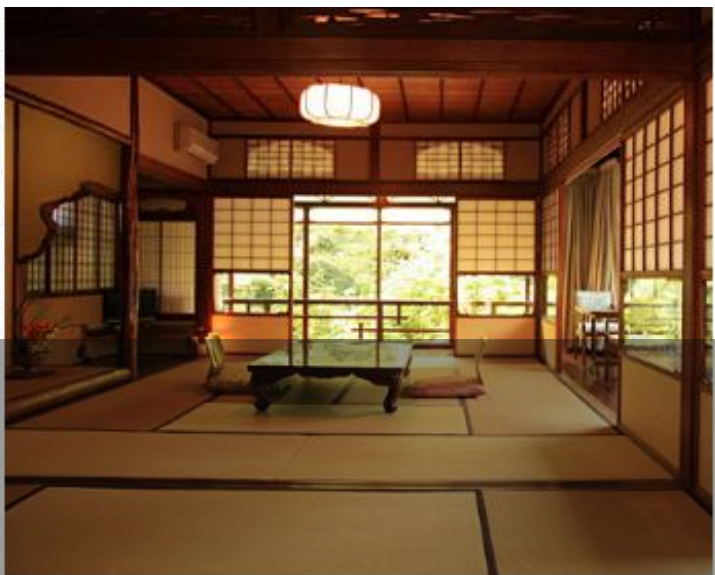


Fujioto Ryokan Tsumago

0264-57-3009

Tsumago, Nagiso-machi, Kiso-gun, Nagano 399-5302

〒399-5302 野良郡南曾町妻籠



3:00 PM

Check-in

10:00 AM

Check-out

1 night

Duration

Conveniently located on the main road in historic Tsumago, Fujioto Ryokan provides friendly service and delicious traditional meals.

The ancient wooden building and garden are magnificent. None of the rooms are en-suite, but the traditional wooden baths can be used privately. A stay at the Fujioto provides the true 'real Japan' experience!

Room Selection

Category

Traditional Japanese Room

Room Description

Enjoy the exciting experience of spending the night in a traditional *minshuku*, where you will sleep on a comfortable futon on the tatami floor. Your meals will be prepared in-house using fresh, local ingredients.

- Breakfast and dinner included
- Shared bathroom

Day 6

Overnight luggage transfer: Tsumago to Nakatsugawa

To allow you to travel comfortably your luggage will be sent from Tsumago to Nakatsugawa overnight. We suggest packing a small overnight bag as you will be without the bulk of your luggage for this evening.



Hike to Magome

After breakfast, set off to hike to Magome along the Nakasendo Way, which runs through the very centre of Japan, brushing the shoulders of the Japan Alps and winding along river valleys and over forested passes. The best preserved of the five Edo Period highways, the Nakasendo Road connected Kyoto and Tokyo. Long stretches, particularly in the more mountainous regions, remain very much as they did in the 17th century, and it is still possible to walk the route of the highway between the old and new capitals.

Of the nearly seventy post towns between Tokyo and Kyoto, the eleven in the Kiso Valley offer a glimpse of rural Japan as it once was: cobbled stretches of the old highway run between rows of traditional wooden houses in the mainly pedestrian villages, and forests cling to the steep slopes.

Though many of the Kiso Valley post towns are accessible on foot, walking between the charmingly outdated towns of Tsumago and Magome in particular is a popular way to get a feel for the old highway. The track is well sign-posted and leads through farmland and forest, with original ishidatami cobbles.

- Unguided
- The hike is around 10km and will take about 3 hours



Magome Chaya

0573-69-2038

4296 Magome, Nakatsugawa, Gifu 508-0502, Japan

〒508-0502 岐阜中津川市籠4 2 9 6

3:00 PM

Check-in

10:00 PM

Check-out

1 night

Duration

This is a cosy family-run traditional Japanese inn in the middle of the old post town of Magome. All the rooms at Magome Chaya are Japanese-style, and all bathing and toilet facilities are shared among the guests. The building was originally built in the 18th century and the present owners have been running the inn for 3 generations. Fresh, local cuisine is served in the inn's dining area and guests can relax in the wooden tubs after a long day's hike.

Room Selection

Category

Japanese-Style Room

Room Description

Surround yourself with history as you dream from your futon in this charming traditional room. Your meals will be made at the ryokan using delicious local ingredients.

- Breakfast and dinner included
- Shared bathroom

Day 7



Hike to Nakatsugawa

Today you will continue your journey towards Nakatsugawa, a small city at the end of the Kiso Valley. Nakatsugawa borders Oi post town, now known as modern day Ena city. Leaving the Kiso valley behind you, the landscape gradually changes into gently rolling hills and rice fields.

In Nakatsugawa you can visit the Naegi Castle Ruins or perhaps the Nakasendo Highway Historical Museum to learn about the history of these postal towns.

In Ena, you can visit the excellent Hiroshige Print Museum, where you can see a wonderful collection of Hiroshige's ukiyo-e prints.

- Unguided
- The approximate walking distance to Nakatsugawa is 10km and the hike will take around 3 hours



Nagataki Ryokan

0573-65-3133

1649 Komanba, Nakatsugawa, Gifu 508-0011, Japan

〒508-0011 岐阜中津川市駒場1649

3:00 PM

Check-in

10:00 AM

Check-out

1 night

Duration

This charming inn comprises of 8 traditional private buildings, for ultimate privacy and relaxation. Each building is a traditional cottage-style, some including a Japanese fire place or tea room. In 1957, the Emperor Prince Akihito stayed at this very inn, and other writers and artist have descended on this beautiful ryokan in the past.

Make use of the indoor public bath and also the outdoor public bath, from where you can enjoy greenery and fresh air. There is also a traditional tea room and a stone monument dedicated to the poets Wakayama Bokusui and Takahama Kyoshi, who wrote about birds in the area.

The food served here is prepared depending on the season, with only the freshest produce used.

Room Selection

Category

Momiji

Room Description

This private cottage consists of 3 rooms, totalling over 25sqm. This cottage features a traditional Japanese fire place, and the design inside is completely traditional. Tatami mats, wooden beams and Japanese décor make this accommodation an authentic Japanese experience

- Breakfast and dinner included

Day 8

Overnight luggage transfer: Nakatsugawa - Takayama

To allow you to travel comfortably your luggage will be sent from Nakatsugawa to Takayama overnight. We suggest packing a small overnight bag as you will be without the bulk of your luggage for your arrival evening in Takayama.

Rail · Ticket: Nakatsugawa Station to Takayama Station

Departing

Nakatsugawa Station

Arriving

Takayama Station

Train Type

Limited Express & Local
Line Trains

Notes

- Please make your own way to the station this morning.



Spend your arrival afternoon exploring at leisure. We suggest visiting the Hida Folk Village open-air museum.

See over 30 traditional houses from the Hida region, the mountainous district of Gifu Prefecture around Takayama. The houses were built during the Edo Period (1603 - 1867) and were relocated from their original locations to create the museum in 1971. In a village-like atmosphere, the museum features buildings such as the former village head's house, logging huts, storehouses and a number of gassho-zukuri farmhouses.

Afterwards, perhaps head to the Hida Takayama Crafts Experience Centre and enjoy a workshop on local crafts such as sarubobo dolls (a popular local doll), wind chimes and ceramic cups.

- Unguided



Hotel Wood Takayama

0577-62-8888

80-2, Kamininomachi, Takayama, Gifu 506-0845, Japan

80-2, 上之町 市 岐阜 506-0845

3:00 PM

Check-in

10:00 AM

Check-out

2 nights

Duration

The Hotel Wood is a wooden structure hotel that incorporates our concept of ZEN to enable you to experience mindfulness and relaxation. We harmonise Japanese and local Takayama culture to provide exceptional trips for guests.

It is located in the idyllic center of the old township of Takayama. During Takayama's spring festival, parade floats pass right in front of the hotel. At night, guests can enjoy a quiet evening about town unhindered by city noise. And a five-minute walk to the morning market offers pleasant exchanges with the local folk.

Room Selection

Category

Deluxe Room

Room Description

Featuring twin beds on a raised tatami mat platform, this room is spacious and modern (33-35sqm). Enjoy the rainfall shower head and the locally crafted chairs where you can take a moment to relax.

- Breakfast included



Full-day private tour of Takayama with local transport

Accompanied by your guide, spend the day exploring Takayama. Start early at the vibrant morning markets, which have an interesting mix of crafts and produce for sale, and make a great place to try local foods, people-watch, and shop for souvenirs.

There are two markets to visit; the Jinya-mae Market in front of the Takayama Jinya and the Miya-gawa Market on the east bank of Miya River, between Kaji-bashi bridge and Yayoi-bashi bridge.

The latter is more attractive and larger, but both have farmer's stalls with local vegetables, old women selling pickles, and an interesting assortment of local handicrafts.

Head on to Teramachi, the temple district, which is home to over a dozen temples and shrines; exploring the buildings and precincts, and the pleasant walk between them is a good way to get to know one of Takayama's important districts.

Start the afternoon at Takayama Jinya, before visiting the San-machi Suji area of wooden merchant houses, many of which are now museums. The old town is full of sake breweries, which can be identified by the cedar balls hanging outside.

End the day with a visit to the Yatai Kaikan, where the huge, majestic and ornate floats used in the famous Takayama Festival are stored when not in use. Some of the floats date back to the 17th Century and are decorated with intricate carvings of gilded wood, and detailed metal-work, rich design, similar in style to art from Kyoto during the Momoyama period, and blended with elements from the early Edo period. Detailed carving, lacquering and beautiful decorative metal-works is found not only on the outside of the floats, but inside as well, under the roof and behind the panels, where the work is amazingly detailed.

- Guided
- Transport: Local transport

Day 10



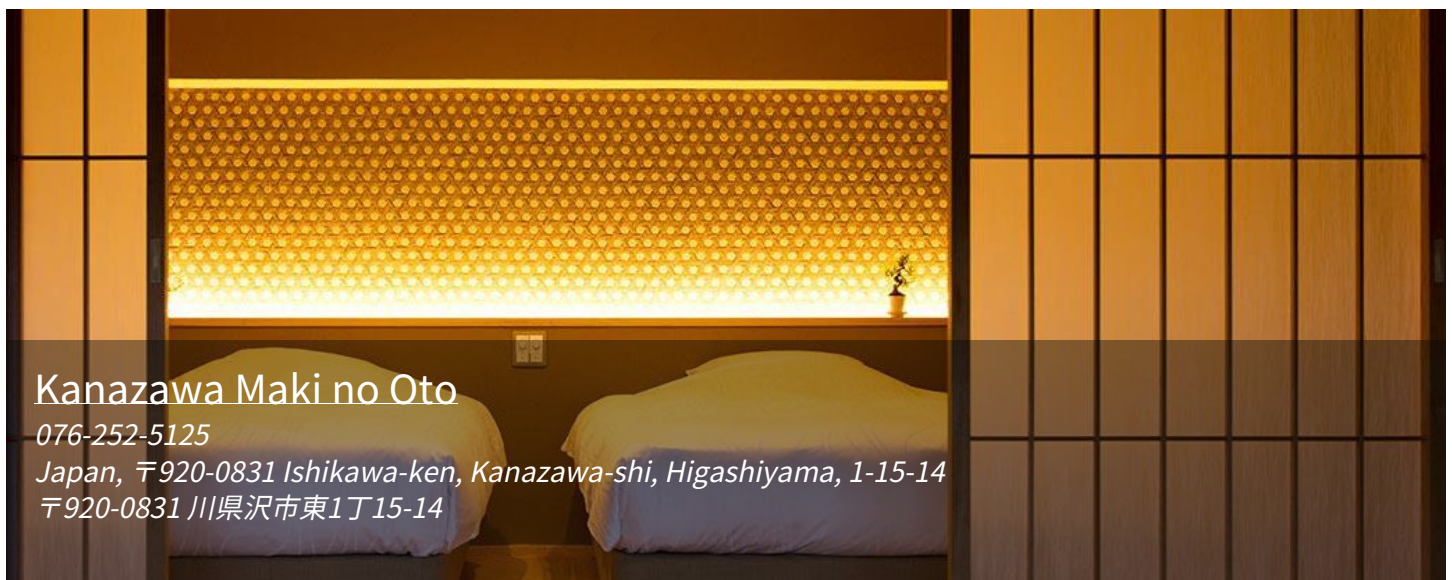
Full-day private tour of Shirakawago with private car

This morning leave Takayama for Kanazawa.

En route, enjoy a trip to visit the beautifully preserved area of Shirakawa-go, famous for steeply thatched gassho-zukuri houses. The largest village in the area is Ogimachi, which has a good look-out over the town. Many of the houses are open to the public as museums.

Depending on how much time you would like to spend in Shirakawago, you may have some time available for sightseeing upon arrival in Kanazawa. Your guide will be able to let you know what options are available and will be able to show you around some local highlights.

- Guided
- Transport: Private car



Kanazawa Maki no Oto

076-252-5125

Japan, 〒920-0831 Ishikawa-ken, Kanazawa-shi, Higashiyama, 1-15-14

〒920-0831 川県沢市東1丁15-14

3:00 PM

Check-in

11:00 AM

Check-out

2 nights

Duration

Opened in 2017, this tiny but charming ryokan hotel has but four rooms: a Japanese style room and a Western style room in both the main building and the brand new annex. Located in the Higashi Chaya Gai geisha district, a stay here puts you right in the heart of Kanazawa.

Room Selection

Category

Nishi

Room Description

This modern Japanese room belongs in the main building and is 50sqm. The gorgeous Japanese design combined with modern amenities is the perfect combination. Enjoy the comfortable twin beds, and spend time relaxing in the tatami room. You can divide the sleeping and living area with a traditional shoji sliding screen door.

- Breakfast included

Day 11



Enjoy a full day tour of Kanazawa by private car. Start with a visit to the well-preserved samurai district of Nagamachi, where many of the houses are now museums giving a glimpse into Kanazawa's feudal past.

Continue on to Higashi Chaya-gai, one of Japan's best preserved geisha districts, and the old wooden buildings are a wonderful place to feel transported back centuries. Some of the traditional buildings are open as museums, and it is also here that you can visit the gold-leaf workshop which produces so much of Kanazawa's most famous product.

Visit the covered arcade of the Omicho Ichiba Markets - the heart of Kanazawa's impressive food culture and an excellent spot for lunching, snacking, or people watching.

Later, visit Teramachi, a collection of temples, the most famous of which is the Ninja Temple, which we are happy to make you a reservation to join the guided tours of. Nearby, the Kutani Kosen Gama Kiln still makes highly decorated functional pottery, and you can visit the workshop and see how the traditional ceramics are made here.

- Guided
- Transport: Local transport

Day 12

Overnight luggage transfer: Kanazawa - Kyoto

To allow you to travel comfortably your luggage will be sent from Kanazawa to Kyoto overnight. We suggest packing a small overnight bag as you will be without the bulk of your luggage for your last evening in Kanazawa.



Day at leisure in Kanazawa

Spend the day exploring at leisure.

Kenroku-en is one of Japan's most beautiful gardens, and today we suggest spending several hours exploring the grounds, which are full of blossoming flowers, ancient trees, and impressive landscaping. We highly recommend visiting the elegant Seison-kaku Villa in the park while you are there. When you've seen enough nature, visit the Kanazawa Castle Park, where you can explore the recently reconstructed buildings of what was one of Japan's largest castles.

End the day with a visit to The 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, which contrasts impressively with Kanazawa's traditional feel, but the art housed there - and the frequently rotating exhibits - make it a must-see for those interested in contemporary art and culture

- Unguided

Day 13

Rail · Ticket: Kanazawa Station to Kyoto Station

Departing
Kanazawa Station

Arriving
Kyoto Station

Train Type
Limited Express Train

Notes

- Make your way to the station this morning where you will board a limited express train bound for Kyoto.



Half-day private tour of Kyoto with local transport

Accompanied by your guide, begin your afternoon at Kiyomizu temple, which looks out over the city from the hillside. From there, continue down the slope, past Kodai-ji temple to Yasaka-jinja Shrine and into Maruyama Park. Finish your tour in Gion where you can often catch a glimpse of Kyoto's apprentice Geisha on their way to their evening appointments.

- Guided
- Transport: Local transport



Park Hyatt Kyoto

075-531-1234

360 Kodaiji Masuyacho, Higashiyama-ku, Kyoto-shi 605-0826

〒605 - 0826 京都府京都市東区台寺栞屋町360

3:00 PM

Check-in

12:00 PM

Check-out

4 nights

Duration

Park Hyatt Kyoto combines the distinctive culture of Japan's ancient capital of high art and soul with the elegance of the Park Hyatt brand. In harmony with iconic landmarks and temples, spiritual gardens and nature's four seasons, Park Hyatt Kyoto's hillside retreat is an architectural gem, designed as the quintessential guesthouse illuminated by the mist and the moon, offering a unique blend of modern heritage and hospitality.

Ideally located next to Kodai-ji Temple surrounded by UNESCO World Heritage sites the hotel will be walking distance from Kiyomizu-dera temple and will boast views of Kyoto City and the Yasaka Pagoda.

The hotel features a Signature Teppan Restaurant, a Bar, Café and Tea Lounge. Also features a fitness centre.

Room Selection

Category

1 King Bed View Premium

Room Description

The Premium View Room is a luxurious hillside retreat of 68 square meters with exquisite views of famed Yasaka Pagoda, Kyoto's urban expanse and the dramatic sunset. The interior of this spacious guest room is subtle and inviting, following a design concept inspired by the mountains. Fragrant tamo wood and local materials anchor time-old tradition in a modern space. Offering one king bed, a working area and a day bed provide greater relaxation, residential comfort and the warm feeling of home in the hills of Higashiyama.

- Breakfast included

Day 14



Full-day private tour of Kyoto with private car

Start the day by visiting some of the iconic sights in the North West of the city. See the stunning Golden Pavilion and Ryoan-ji Zen Garden before visiting the nearby Ninna-ji Temple, which houses one of Kyoto's loveliest gardens.

Spend the afternoon exploring Arashiyama, an area in the West of the city. The famous bridge here has been depicted for centuries in woodblock paintings. The area has an old-timey atmosphere, and is a popular spot for kimono wearing in the Spring and Autumn.

The area is also famous for its bamboo grove, located right by the stunning UNESCO Tenryu-ji Temple. It is here that you can see the picture-postcard view of the green towers of bamboo swaying in the breeze.

- Guided
- Transport: Private car

Day 15



Day at leisure in Nara

Spend the day exploring independently at leisure. We suggest visiting Nara - a great place to escape from modern Japan. See the impressive giant bronze Buddha - Japan's largest - housed in the famous all-wood Todai-ji temple. Then enjoy a walk through Nara-koen Park, which is home to very friendly local deer who will follow you hoping for tasty treats! The Kasuga Taisha Shrine, which dates from Nara's time as the capital of Japan, is also located in the park and is well worth a visit.

On your way back into Kyoto you might like to stop off at the famous Fushimi Inari shrine, known for its thousands of red torii gates leading up the hillside. A visit here is the perfect way to work up an appetite for Kyoto's wonderful cuisine!

- Unguided

Day 16



Activity: Tea ceremony with kimono session and traditional lunch

Make your way to a traditional machiya townhouse, where you will first have a tour of the machiya before being dressed in kimono for your Tea Ceremony, perhaps the most enigmatic of the traditional arts. This will be followed by a light, Kyoto style lunch.

- Unguided
- Approx. 2 hrs duration

- Light lunch included



Afternoon at leisure in Kyoto

Spend the afternoon exploring independently at leisure. We suggest a visit to nearby Nishiki Market, a long, narrow covered street packed with shops selling local specialities which is sometimes referred to as Kyoto's kitchen. Barrels of fresh and pickled vegetables spill out into the street, and the air is fragrant with the savoury smell of grilling *sembei* crackers and steaming fish dumplings. Many of the shops offer free samples, and the Nishiki Market is a wonderful way to stock up on very Japanese picnic supplies for lunch.

Next, we recommend heading to Nishijin Textile Centre, where you can learn about the fascinating process behind the manufacturing of the kimono. In addition, there are daily kimono shows, displaying the beauty and potential of this beautiful garment.

Perhaps finish your day with a visit to the UNESCO Site of Nijo Castle, former home of the Tokugawa Shogun. On exploring the beautifully decorated interior, you can walk on the 'nightingale floors', so-called because the design of the floorboards causes them to squeak when stepped upon - almost like a chirp. End your visit with a stroll around the lush gardens.

- Unguided

Day 17

Overnight luggage transfer: Kyoto - Iya

To allow you to travel comfortably your luggage will be sent from Kyoto - Iya overnight. We suggest packing a small overnight bag as you will be without the bulk of your luggage for the next 2 nights.

Rail · Ticket: Kyoto Station to Itano Station

Departing
Kyoto Station

Arriving
Itano Station

Train Type
Japan Rail Shinkansen,
Local Line & Limited
Express Train

Notes

- Make your way to the station this morning ready to board your train.
- Change trains at Okayama and Takamatsu Stations.

Transfer · Private car to accommodation

Departing
Itano Station

Arriving
Anraku-ji Temple

Notes

- On arrival you will be met and transferred to your accommodation by private car.



Anraku-ji Temple

Japan, 〒771-1311 Tokushima, Itano District, Kamiita, Hikino, 寺ノ北 8
〒771-1311 徳島県板野郡上板町引野 寺ノ北 8

1 night

Duration

This is an exciting opportunity to spend the night at a real temple. Known as 'shukubo' this experience allows you to explore the temple in much more depth than would usually be possible.

You will sleep on comfortable futons and will be treated to some delicious 'shojin ryori', which is Buddhist vegan cuisine.

- Breakfast and dinner included



Day at leisure: Walking along the Shikoku Pilgrimage Route

After breakfast, set out on some of the sacred Shikoku Pilgrimage Route that this area is famed for.

On this part of the route you will come across a number of temples that run along the pilgrimage route, starting with Juraku-ji temple and ending at Fuji-dera temple.

*The approximate walking distance is 23Km.

- Unguided



Awarakuya

0883-25-3699

178 Kawashimacho Kawashima, Yoshinogawa, Tokushima 779-3301, Japan

〒779-3301 徳島県吉野川市川島町川島178

1 night

Duration

This small inn is the perfect stop on your Shikoku travels. It is cosy and warm yet stylish, and features some lovely garden. Make use of the bar and enjoy the freshly cooked meals using local ingredients!

Room Selection

Category

Japanese Room

Room Description

Stay in a traditional room surrounded by sliding doors and rest on futons laid out on the tatami floor.

- Shared bathroom
- Breakfast and dinner included

Day 19

Transfer · Private car to Iya Valley

Departing

Awarakuya

Arriving

Iya Valley

Notes

- After breakfast you will be transferred by private car to your next destination.
- On arrival spend the rest of the day relaxing at your onsen accommodation.



Hotel Iya Onsen

0883-75-2311

Japan, 〒778-0165 Tokushima Prefecture, Miyoshi, 池町松尾松本367-28

3:00 PM

Check-in

11:00 AM

Check-out

2 nights

Duration

This ryokan hotel is located in the Northern part of Shikoku in Iya Valley. A unique feature of Hotel Iya Valley is the cable car which will take guests to the rotenburo (open-air bath) at the bottom of the valley. It takes about five minutes to descend the 170 meters drop. Along the way one can enjoy a panoramic view of the valley.

The open-air baths, one for men and one for women, have been constructed along the Iya river. They are rich with hot spring water which is cloudy with minerals which bubble straight from a source deep in the earth.

Traditional breakfast and dinner is served at the restaurant of the hotel, but for an extra fee guests can enjoy their meals in the privacy of their rooms.

Room Selection

Category

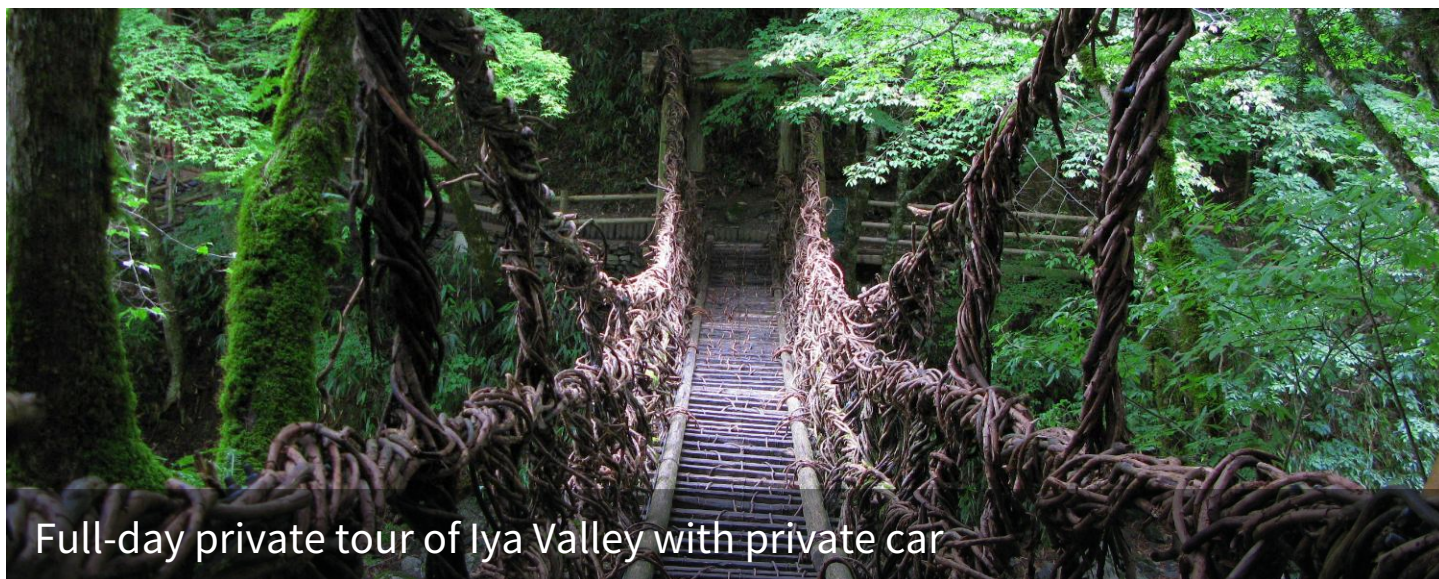
Guest Room with Open-Air Bath

Room Description

This stunning Japanese room complete with tatami and traditional decor comes complete with a terrace for stargazing, and an open air bath to relax outside in.

- Breakfast and dinner included

Day 20



13 bridges once spanned the valley, but only three survive today. Iya Kazurabashi (祖かずら橋), the largest and most popular of the remaining bridges, stretches 45 meters across the Iya River at the centre of the valley, and gives visitors an unsettling view of the water 14 meters below the open slats of the span. The bridge, which is rebuilt every three years, is anchored to tall cedar trees at both ends and has steel cables hidden within the vines for safety. The bridge can be crossed in one direction only.

Continue on to visit Oboke Gorge and neighbouring Koboake Gorge. These are narrow, steep sided gorges near the entrance to the Iya Valley and popularly combined with a visit there. Cut by the swirling rapids of the Yoshino River, their names mean "big dangerous steps" and "small dangerous steps" as their jagged, rocky walls can be perilous to navigate.

The gorges are one of the leading outdoor destinations in Japan, and are known for their beautiful natural scenery and for the variety of outdoor attractions, such as white-water rafting and canyoning, that can be enjoyed on the river.

Today you will also visit the quaint Chiiori thatched farmhouses between 13:00 - 14:00. ****The area around Chiiori becomes very dangerous in snowy weather so this part of the tour will be changed depending on weather conditions.****

- Guided
- Transport: Private car

Overnight luggage transfer: Iya - Osaka

To allow you to travel comfortably your luggage will be sent from Iya to Osaka overnight. We suggest packing a small overnight bag as you will be without the bulk of your luggage for your stay in Matsuyama.

Day 21

Rail · Ticket: Oboke Station to Matsuyama Station

Departing
Oboke Station

Arriving
Matsuyama Station

Train Type
Local Line & Limited
Express Trains

Notes

- The hotel will provide a shuttle to the station ready for you to board your train to Matsuyama.



Afternoon at leisure in Matsuyama

Spend the afternoon exploring independently at leisure. We suggest visiting the famous Dogo Onsen. This charismatic bath house was built in 1894 during the Meiji Period. Its wooden interior is a maze of stairways, passages and rooms, usually bustling with activity by staff and guests. Dogo Onsen Honkan is said to have served as inspiration for the award-winning animated film "Spirited Away" by Miyazaki's Studio Ghibli. The onsen was often frequented by Natsume Soseki - arguably one of Japan's most famous authors.

- Unguided



Yamatoya Honten

089-935-8880

20-8 Dogoyunomachi, Matsuyama, Ehime 790-0842, Japan

〒790-0842 愛媛県松市道後湯之町20-8

3:00 PM

Check-in

10:00 AM

Check-out

2 nights

Duration

Yamatoya Honten is a long-established Japanese-style inn founded in 1868, located right next to the symbol of this spa town, the Dogo Onsen Honkan bathhouse. Renewed and reborn in 1996, we welcome our guests with a contemporary approach to hospitality while preserving the traditions unique to a customary inn.

All of our Japanese-style rooms are based on the tea ceremony room, using the techniques of Japanese traditional architecture. The refined simplicity, without ornate decorations, encapsulates exquisite craftsmanship. The walls are finished with Juraku mud, using fine soil collected solely from around the Nishijin area in Kyoto.

Enjoy the stunning public baths at this accommodation, and indulge yourself in the freshly prepared meals, crafted using the finest local ingredients.

Room Selection

Category

Japanese-style Suite with Double Bed

Room Description

Our Japanese-style Suites have a 13 tatami-mat room plus a 7 tatami-mat anteroom (840 sq ft/78 sq m area in total), an enclosed veranda, alcoves, a cypress bathtub, and more. The rooms are well-appointed with the finest fittings, from a low table and chairs to flower arrangements, furnishings and bedding. Immerse yourself in luxurious comfort.

- Breakfast and dinner included

Day 22



Full-day private tour of Matsuyama with local transport

This morning you will be met by your guide and taken to Matsuyama Castle, constructed between 1602 and 1628 and one of Japan's twelve "original castles", i.e. castles which have survived since the post-feudal era since 1868 and are intact. It is located on Mount Katsuyama, a steep hill in the city centre that provides visitors with a bird's eye view of Matsuyama and the Seto Inland Sea. Also you will spend some time in Ninomaru Gardens.

- Guided
- Transport: Local transport

Rail · Ticket: Matsuyama Station to Shin-Osaka Station

Departing
Matsuyama Station

Arriving
Shin-Osaka Station

Train Type
Limited Express Train &
Japan Rail Shinkansen

Notes

- Make your way to the station this morning ready to board your train.



Half-day private tour of Osaka with local transport

With your guide, head to Dotonbori, Osaka's famous food, shopping and entertainment district.

This is the perfect place to grab any last minute souvenirs and also get your hands on some of the street food you've heard about! Your guide can help you try some of Osaka's specialties of Takoyaki and Okonomiyaki.

Whilst there, make sure to get a snap with the bright neon Glico Man sign!

- Guided
- Transport: Local transport



Conrad Osaka

06-6222-0111

3-2-4 Nakanoshima Kita-ku, Osaka 530-005

〒530-005 阪市北区中之島 3-2-4

3:00 PM

Check-in

12:00 PM

Check-out

2 nights

Duration

Conrad Osaka is located in the West tower of the Nakanoshima Festival complex which also houses an art museum a concert hall and a plethora of shopping and dining options. Nested from 33rd to 40th floor Conrad Osaka offers magnificent city views with stylish design and easy access for both business and leisure guests.

Room Selection

Category

Premium View Room

Room Description

Decorated in a modern style with a nod to traditional Japanese design elements, this spacious guest room boasts stunning city and river views through floor-to-ceiling windows on a high floor.

Discover the latest technology including a 49-inch TV, Bluetooth speaker, an espresso machine and multi-language alarm clock.

Stay comfortable with the black-out curtains, inviting king bed, bathrobe and bath slippers. Refresh in the elegant five-point bathroom, with double vanities, bathtub and separate shower. Extra amenities include complimentary mineral water and newspaper. Sleeps up to 3 adults or 2 adults and 1 child.

Premium view room exclusively offers breath taking view from 200m above the ground. Rooms in the north side take in panoramic views overlooking beautiful rivers and mountains between city buildings, urban scenery including iconic spots of Osaka and historical buildings can be seen under the skyline from the rooms in the south side.

- Breakfast included

Day 24



Day at leisure in Osaka

Spend the day exploring Osaka at leisure.

Start by strolling around Osaka's Kita area, where we recommend seeing the city from above by visiting the observatory at the Shin Umeda City Building, and below, in the underground shopping malls and arcades.

From here, visit Osaka Castle: the imposing castle structure spans five stories on the outside and eight stories on the inside, and is built on a tall stone foundation. Equally attractive are the expansive grounds.

Following this, stop off at Shitennoji, one of Japan's oldest temples and the first ever to be built by the state. Nearby you'll find the Gokuraku-jodo Garden, designed based on descriptions of the Western Paradise of the Amida Buddha. The temple complex offers many items of historical interest. Visit the treasure house which displays paintings, scriptures and other valuable belongings of the temple in periodic, themed exhibitions.

- Unguided

Day 25

Transfer · Private car to airport

Departing
Conrad Osaka

Arriving
Kansai International Airport

Notes

- You will be transferred to the airport by private car in good time for your flight home.