



The Small Cruise Ship Collection

www.small-cruise-ships.com

small-cruise-ships.com

info@small-cruise-ships.com

EXPEDITION TO THE KITAMAE ROUTE

Set sail with PONANT and discover the Empire of the Rising Sun, its many traditions and emblematic sites. From Otaru, you will set off on an 12-day cruise in the footsteps of the mid-18th-century Japanese merchants, who travelled the Kitamae maritime route to Osaka every year. First of all, you will visit the north of the island of Honshu and, more specifically, the charming city of Sakata. Long known as a prosperous town in the western part of the Tohoku region, it will captivate you with its folkloric atmosphere, with authentic and traditional architecture, still retaining the scents, flavours and certain traditions of the time of Kitamae. You will then sail to the small island of Sado, renowned for its magnificent coastline, wild landscapes and rich history, which blends maritime and artistic traditions with vestiges of the gold rush. After a port of call in Wajima, renowned for its ancestral arts and crafts, you will discover the small towns of unparalleled charm that lie along the shores of Kyoto prefecture. Ine with its old-world authenticity, Miyazu with its enchanting bay: they offer a unique and stunning experience. This charming voyage will then take you along the Uradome Coast, a coastal estuary and major geological site in the Sanin Kaigan National Park. You will be captivated by the scenery: white sandy beaches, shallow caves and jagged cliffs, sculpted by the winds and currents of the Sea of Japan. Then, the port of call in Tottori will seem like the unexpected interlude of your cruise. With good reason, since this ancient, fortified town is home to Japan's largest sand dunes. Bright sunshine, ochre dunes edged by the Sea of Japan, camels with a captivating gait... Here, in this majestic landscape where wind waves rise to caress the sand giants, time seems to

stand still. Then you will sail to South Korea, a small peninsula that juts out into the Sea of Japan, and discover Busan, South Korea's second city. A place of great contrasts, Busan offers a spectacular view over its port, as well as over the ancient district of Chalgachi. Back in Japan, you will set off to discover picturesque Shimonoseki, the westernmost town on the island of Honshu opposite the Kanmon Straits, an emblematic passageway on the Kitamae maritime route. Here, you will stroll along the steep alleyways of the town's emblematic fish market. It is a city of history: for example, the peace treaty ending the First Sino-Japanese war was signed here at the end of the 19th century. After a trip aboard one of our zodiac inflatables, in the picturesque fishing villages of Shimokamagari and Mitarai, you will head to Onomichi, a charming coastal town surrounded by green hills and home to a large number of temples and emblematic shrines, including the Senk-ji, Saikoku-ji, and J do-ji temples. Then, you will visit Tomonoura, known for its gentle way of life and its craggy landscapes, which inspired the artist Hayao Miyazaki for the animated film Ponyo. You will disembark in Osaka, a modern, forward-looking city, in the heart of the Japanese

The Small Cruise
Ship Collection
www.small-cruise-ships.com

01432 507 280 (within UK)

info@small-cruise-ships.com | small-cruise-ships.com

The Small Cruise Ship Collection

www.small-cruise-ships.com

small-cruise-ships.com

info@small-cruise-ships.com



During your journey at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This journey without a port of call will also be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, depending on the activities offered, or to do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. As for lovers of the open sea, they will be able to visit the ship's upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine species. A truly enchanted interlude, combining comfort, rest and entertainment.

Day 3 SAKATA

Nestling on the shores of the Sea of Japan, in the Tohoku region in the north of the island of Honshu, Sakata will enchant you with its folkloric atmosphere and its authentic and traditional architecture. This emblematic city has retained the scents, flavours and certain traditions of the time of Kitamae, a shipping route along which Japanese merchants travelled in the 18th century, extending from Otaru to Osaka. The succession of Sankyo warehouses where rice was once stored stand as a testament to that time and are now the symbols of a strong industrial heritage.

Day 4 SADO

archipelago.

ITINERARY

Day 1 OTARU, HOKKAIDO

Boasting an outstanding setting of natural beauty, bordered by the Sea of Japan on one side and Mt Tengu on the other, Otaru is a lively harbour town. This old industrial capital has kept from its past glory buildings in 19th century brick as well as its canals, formerly the main means of transportation. They give this Japanese town a striking appearance, especially when covered in snow. Magnificent vistas abound - it's up to you to put them in order of preference. Shukutsu Observatory, overlooking out over the vast Bay of Ishikari, is just one of them.

Day 2 AT SEA

The Small Cruise Ship Collection
www.small-cruise-ships.com

01432 507 280 (within UK)

info@small-cruise-ships.com | small-cruise-ships.com



The Small Cruise Ship Collection

www.small-cruise-ships.com

small-cruise-ships.com

info@small-cruise-ships.com

Day 6 INE & MIYAZU

A small stretch of land nestling in the Sea of Japan, Sado Island is one of Japan's unsuspected gems. Here, off the coast of the city of Niigata, time seems to stand still. The traditional wooden houses coexist with a unique natural environment offering a wonderful mix of quiet beaches with crystal-clear water, craggy coastline, wild moors, and splendid rice terraces. Before the Edo Period, political opponents were exiled on this island. Renowned for its gold mines, active until 1989, Sado distinguishes itself by preserving a cultural heritage with fabulous attractions. Noh theatre is a perfect example. The oldest traditional performing art in Japan, combining dance-drama and pantomime, Noh theatre holds a special place in the history of Sado. The island is world-renowned for this art form.

Day 5 WAJIMA

Let yourself fall under the spell of Wajima, a city of rich diversity, lying to the north of the Noto Peninsula. Off the coast of the Ishikawa Prefecture, the charming little town unfolds before you, with its craggy coastline and its splendid hillside tea plantations. As soon as you arrive, wander through the alleyways of its mythical morning market, one of the three largest in Japan. In the market, you will be able to taste some of the town's specialities, such as seafood or the traditional rice crackers called shio-senbei. Renowned around the whole country for the quality of its arts and crafts, Wajima stands out for its ancestral know-how. Here, they excel in the production of lacquerware, are famous for making the huge Kiroko lanterns used during the Kiroko Matsuri Festival, and are distinguished for their suzu-style pottery designs.

In the north of the Kyoto prefecture, along the Sea of Japan and anchored in the Bay of Ine, this small fishing village nestling between lush green mountains and emerald waters is considered to be one of Japan's most beautiful villages. Calm and picturesque, Ine has successfully preserved its authenticity of yesteryear, as evidenced by the Funaya, these traditional wooden dwellings built above the water to house fishermen and store their small boats. Ine will take you on a beguiling voyage into the 18th century, to the epoch of Edo and the Kitamae trade route. In Kyoto Prefecture, along the coast of the Sea of Japan, lies the charming city of Miyazu. As you explore this interesting blend of lush nature and rich heritage, you will be captivated by the numerous places of worship that dot the town, such as the Manai Shrine and Nariai-ji Temple. You will also discover one of the "Three Views of Japan", the country's most beautiful panoramas: Amanohashidate, a sand bar covered with 8,000 pine trees, lying between the Asokai Inland Sea and Miyazu Bay. It is known as the "bridge to heaven" and legend has it that this sand bank is a ladder that fell out of the sky and was once used by the gods Izanagi and Izanami to ascend into the clouds.

Day 7 URADOME COAST & TOTTORI

The Uradome Coast, a picturesque coastal estuary on the Sea of Japan, along the Tottori Prefecture coastline, is as surprising as it is fascinating. This major site of the UNESCO-designated San'in Kaigan Geopark will captivate you with its geological diversity, featuring white sandy beaches, shallow grottos, natural



The Small Cruise Ship Collection

www.small-cruise-ships.com

small-cruise-ships.com

info@small-cruise-ships.com

sea walls and protruding cliffs sculpted by the winds and marine erosion. Its emerald waters, which are home to rare marine biodiversity, are also perfect for nautical activities such as snorkelling, diving or kayaking. On the San-in coast, Tottori, the Japanese island of Honshu's northernmost city, offers tranquillity and a change of scenery. Lined with lush forests containing mountain sanctuaries long considered to have been the homes of the gods, Tottori has retained its authenticity of yesteryear. A symbol of Japan off the beaten track, this city in the eponymous region promises to be a surprising interlude on your cruise. With good reason, since this ancient fortified city with vestiges of its past is home to the largest sand dunes in Japan. Bright sunshine, golden dunes edged by the Sea of Japan, camels with a captivating gait... Here, in this majestic landscape where wind waves rise to caress the sand giants, time seems to stand still.

Day 8 BUSAN

With around four million inhabitants, Busan is the second largest metropolis on South Korea, after Seoul. This dynamic harbour city, located in the south-east, surrounded by the warm waters of the Sea of Japan, benefits from a mild, pleasant climate. You'll find delightful simply to stroll around the lively streets and explore the city's outstanding cultural heritage of art galleries, museums, and Buddhist sites, such as the Haedong Yonggungsa temple, which elegantly sits on the waterfront. Rich too in magnificent beaches and superlative natural landscapes, Busan's peaceful atmosphere will win you over, as will its inhabitants, whom you'll have the pleasure of meeting.

Day 9 CROSSING THE KANMON STRAITS & SHIMONOSEKI

Sailing in the Kanmon Straits, between the Japanese islands of Honshu and Kyushu, promises an unforgettable experience. During the crossing of this emblematic maritime passage linking the Sea of Japan to the Seto Inland Sea, fall under the spell of this traditional Japan, with its charming picturesque fishing ports and its shrines built in the heart of enchanting nature, between verdant hilly peaks and captivating granite cliffs. On the western tip of the island of Honshu, between the Seas of Japan and Seto, Shimonoseki stands facing the Kanmon Straits. Often considered as a crossing point to reach the island of Kyushu or the Korean coastlines, this discreet but no less historic port town has a unique heritage, a result of 700 years of samurai rule. In this city of modern appearance, which was the theatre of many battles and legendary duels, an irresistible essence of the past prevails. Enjoy strolling the alleyways of its emblematic traditional market, famous for its stands of fugu (pufferfish).

Day 10 SHIMOKAMAGARI & MITARAI & CROSSING THE KURUSHIMA STRAITS

The island of Shimokamagari stretches into the heart of the Seto Inland Sea, off the coast of the town of Kure, in the Hiroshima prefecture. A historical city during the feudal period, the island was the theatre of major diplomatic missions for the future and the Empire's trade relationships, notably with repeated visits from mainly Korean, but also Chinese and Dutch, emissaries. Registered since 2017 on the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme, documentary heritage of these encounters is conserved in the Shotoen Garden, one of the emblems of this lush islet. A magnificent Japanese garden with perfectly kept

The Small Cruise
Ship Collection
www.small-cruise-ships.com

01432 507 280 (within UK)

info@small-cruise-ships.com | small-cruise-ships.com



The Small Cruise Ship Collection

www.small-cruise-ships.com

small-cruise-ships.com

info@small-cruise-ships.com

grounds, interspersed with raked pebbles and surrounded with majestic trees, it is home to a Rantokaku Museum complex, consisting of four exhibition rooms tracing the island's naval history. A charming fishing village nestling in the east of Osaki Shimojima Island, on the edge of the Seto Inland Sea, Mitarai is appreciated for its traditional charm and authentic character. A trip back in time to the Edo Period, where the hustle and bustle of modern cities is replaced by the gentle sound of fishing boats. Thanks to its 19th century wooden dwellings lining the small, narrow streets, its great causeway, its centuries-old sanctuaries and its gangi stairs, a stone structure giving on to the sea, the old town was classed as a Preservation District by the Japanese state in 1994. Between the islands of Honshu and Shikoku, in the very heart of the emblematic Seto Inland Sea, the Kurushima Strait will unveil a traditional and picturesque Japan. This 4-kilometre (2.5-mile) maritime route, with swift currents, will give you the opportunity to discover certain great feats of engineering, such as the mythical Kurushima Kaiky Bridge. This colossal construction is the first triple bridge and the longest set of suspension bridges in the world, with a total length of 4,105 metres (almost 13,500 feet) In the footsteps of the Japanese traders from the middle of the 18th century, fall under the spell of the charming picturesque fishing ports that line this historic maritime route.

Day 11 ONOMICHI & TOMONOURA

Anchored on the northern shores of the Seto Inland Sea, in the Hiroshima prefecture, the historical city of Onomichi extends from the main island of Honshu to certain neighbouring islands, linked by the bridges of the Shimanami Kaido motorway. Before

becoming this peaceful town with its charming, sloping little streets, Onomichi established itself in the 7th century as a nerve centre of the rice trade for the entire Japanese archipelago. Although its activity is diminished today, the port remains at the centre of the town's culture. Onomichi now stands out for its exceptional heritage. With good reason, since it can boast over twenty temples and shrines, saved from the bombing of the Second World War. Among them are Senk-ji, offering an outstanding panoramic view over the whole town, Saikoku-ji and its three-storied pagoda, and J do-ji and its emblematic eleven-faced statue of the goddess Guanyin. Anchored to the south-eastern end of the Nunakama Peninsula, facing the calm and clear waters of the Seto Inland Sea, Tomonoura is a destination particularly appreciated for its authentic and old-fashioned atmosphere that gives it an incomparable charm. In the past used as a port where boats would moor while waiting for a favourable wind, the charming and picturesque village now serves to inspire many filmmakers and artists. With good reason, since its craggy landscapes, its cherry trees in blossom, its gentle way of life, its traditional wooden houses and its port, preserved since the Edo era, notably enabled the artist Hayao Miyazaki to make the animated film Ponyo.

Day 12 OSAKA

Like its big sister Tokyo, Osaka is the product of ancestral traditions and amazing technological innovations. And despite its size, its location on the Pacific Ocean give it a sense of serenity. The main historic landmark is the 16th century Osaka Castle, which stands proud in the midst of majestic skyscrapers. The lively streets of Dotomburi and the bizarre Shinsekai district

The Small Cruise
Ship Collection
www.small-cruise-ships.com

01432 507 280 (within UK)

info@small-cruise-ships.com | small-cruise-ships.com



attract thousands of locals and visitors. A multitude of restaurants offer menus full of regional specialities: takoyaki, made with octopus, and other succulent dishes such as kushikatsu kebabs.

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

The Small Cruise Ship Collection

www.small-cruise-ships.com

small-cruise-ships.com

info@small-cruise-ships.com

YOUR SHIP: LE SOLEAL

YOUR SHIP: Le Soleal

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

Luxury Small Ship A sleek silhouette, a welcoming intimate atmosphere, and the same philosophy that has made her sister ships, L'Austral, Lyrial and Le Boreal, such a success. This magnificent yacht of only 132 staterooms and suites, all with balconies, has contemporary decor inspired by the luxury yachting world, with fluid lines and a modern colour scheme combining natural wood with shades of grey and white. White Corian counters in the lobby contrast with the warmth of leather to recall a boat's hull, while the central sculpture of enamelled pieces takes its inspiration from the sea. In the lounge bar, the carpet picks up a tennis stripe theme symbolising a certain idea of cruising, one synonymous with French elegance and a chic seaside spirit. Wheelchairs 3 specially adapted wheelchair cabins (Deck 3 = Superior cabin no. 307, no balcony, Deck 4 = Prestige Cabin no. 407 - with balcony and Deck 5 = Prestige Cabin no 509, with balcony) and lifts to all decks/areas. Read about our recent Ponant cruise to Antarctica Please click the following links to read more about Ponant and the other Ponant cruise ships.



The Small Cruise Ship Collection

www.small-cruise-ships.com

small-cruise-ships.com

info@small-cruise-ships.com

INSIDE YOUR SHIP



The Small Cruise Ship Collection
www.small-cruise-ships.com

01432 507 280 (within UK)

info@small-cruise-ships.com | small-cruise-ships.com



The Small Cruise Ship Collection

www.small-cruise-ships.com

small-cruise-ships.com

info@small-cruise-ships.com

PRICING

ADDITIONAL CHARGES:

Port Taxes and Fees 810 AUD pp