



## The Small Cruise Ship Collection

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## THE BEST OF JAPAN - FROM OSAKA TO BUSAN LUXURY CRUISE

Ponant invites you on a timeless journey around the fascinating and surprising Empire of the Rising Sun, where unbridled modernism and ancestral traditions form a delightful blend, where the history of the samurai rubs shoulders with the delicateness of the geisha, and where the aromas of the tea plantations intermingle with the fragrances of cherry blossom. In the legendary city of Osaka, embark on this unique 9-day cruise aboard Le Soleal to discover this unrivalled cultural heritage. Throughout your journey, you will benefit from an excursion included per person per port of call, to choose from a selection offered by PONANT. During this cruise, explore the picturesque city of Chiran and its ancestral history from Kagoshima, discover the cultural heritage of Nagasaki, or admire the Itsukushima Shrine from the island of Miyajima. The diversity of experiences on offer promises you intense and varied moments (to discover the full range of excursions, go to the itinerary tab). On the Seto Inland Sea, Le Soleal will head west. At the foot of a tropical forest burgeoning with life, Tamano stands proudly in the middle of this enchanting environment. Last port of call of your journey, it still bears the traces of traditional Japanese life in the 18th century, as the particular architecture of the town demonstrates. The jagged coastlines of the captivating Miyajima Island, also known as Itsukushima, come into view, and the vermilion Torii of the emblematic Shinto Shrine of Itsukushima, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, unfolds before you in a lush forest setting. Time here seems stuck in the feudal era: the frenetic energy and modernity of the large Japanese metropolises make way for striking serenity and tranquillity, and hundreds of deer wander between its spiritual and architectural treasures. Hiroshima does

not seek to elicit strong emotions. Opposite the Inland Sea, only the Hiroshima Peace Memorial bears witness to past events in the city known as a "City of Peace". It is resolutely future looking and you will be able to appreciate its modern and cosmopolitan atmosphere, the hustle and bustle of its lively streets and the tranquillity of its natural settings, such as the splendid Shukkei-en, the city's historic gardens. Off the southern tip of the island of Kyushu, Yakushima, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, comes into view. Providing an unspoilt natural setting for endemic species such as the Yakushima monkey and deer, the island is home to an exceptional natural environment featuring forests of ancient cedars, bewitching waterfalls, and majestic peaks. Further south, Nagasaki remains in the world's imagination as the symbol of nuclear horror. Fortunately, in the same way as Hiroshima, the city has become one of the archipelago's most peaceful towns as well as one of its most attractive. The warm and cosmopolitan city unveils its many riches throughout its narrow streets: the Oura Catholic Church and its gardens, the Suwa Shrine, the sumptuous Buddhist temples... For a grand finale, your cruise will end in South Korea's second largest city. A city of contrasts, Busan offers spectacular views of its port and the old

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### Day 2 Tamano

Located on the island of Honshu, hugging the banks of the Seto Inland Sea, Tamano is a popular destination thanks to its sun-drenched climate. Upon arrival, marvel at the way in which the city has been built along the coast at the foot of a deep, dark forest. In the area surrounding Tamano, stroll down the streets of Kurashiki, known as the 'white-walled city' in a nod to the pretty façades of the houses that line the streets of this ancient Edo-period trading town. Another major regional attraction is the Seto Ohashi bridge. Its 12.5 kilometres make it the world's longest double-decker bridge.

### Day 3 Miyajima Island & Hiroshima

At the heart of the Inland Sea, Miyajima, the "island sanctuary" will reveal its treasures. In the background you will see the Shinto Grand Sanctuary, whose entrance is guarded by a magnificent vermilion "Torii". Considered to be one of the most beautiful sites in the Japanese islands, you will be transported by the unique character and the serenity of this sacred site.

Visiting Hiroshima is a moving experience. The town spreads along Honshu Island, along the inside coasts of Seto. While firmly focused on the future, Hiroshima doesn't forget its past, and a visit to the Peace Memorial Park and Genbaku Dome is a must. You'll enjoy the city's modern, cosmopolitan atmosphere and effervescent nightlife just as much as the peaceful stillness of its natural parkland areas such as splendid Shukkei-en, the town's historic garden.

Chalgachi district.

### ITINERARY

#### Day 1 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 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.





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### Day 4 Beppu, Oita

A favourite destination for the Japanese, Beppu is now famous throughout the Japanese archipelago thanks to its onsen - volcanic hot springs in which people immerse themselves to relax with family or friends. From Beppu, you will set off to discover a lush, peaceful valley in which sit 60 majestic stone Buddhas carved out of the cliff face between the 12th and 14th centuries. Exuding a soothing air of serenity, the Mangetsuji site seems to have drifted off to sleep in the heart of a dense bamboo forest surrounded by rice fields. Recognised as a National Treasure of Japan, this set of sacred sculptures offers travellers a unique, wonderful experience.

### Day 5 Miyazaki

The cradle of Japanese mythology, Miyazaki is a hidden treasure on the southern coast of Kyushu. Known for its climate, its golden beaches and its spectacular rocky formations, it is an invitation to exploration and contemplation. In the heart of the city, the Miyazaki-jing Shinto shrine stands majestically, surrounded by ancient forests and peaceful gardens, in which an atmosphere of serenity reigns. Make the most of the authenticity of this city with fascinating local culture and, during the visit of the Miyazaki Shrine, fall under the spell of the kagura, a dance and song performance by the shrine's priests and helpers.

### Day 6 Kagoshima

The seaside city of Kagoshima, at the south of Kyushu Island, is

best known for Sakurajima, an active volcano that faces Kinko Bay. A visit to this busy metropolis will remind you just how much the volcano is part of the inhabitants' everyday life: in the wake of the almost daily eruptions, a delicate layer of ash settles on everything. The top of a buried torii (traditional Japanese gate) measuring three metres that was 'swallowed up' by a giant lava flow in 1914 can still be seen. The power of nature will send a shiver down your spine.

### Day 7 Yakushima

A splendid sub-tropical, mountainous island listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage site, Yakushima is one of the most beautiful islands in the Japanese archipelago. Its extensive yakusugi forest contains some of Japan's oldest living trees - cedars that are over 1000 metres tall and up to 7,000 years old. The Senpiro and Toroki waterfalls, each one several dozens of metres high, are equally impressive. A feast for the eyes.

### Day 8 Nagasaki

Located on the north-west coast of Kyushu, Nagasaki will impress you by its rich heritage. Despite the destruction in 1945, you can visit several ancient sites, including the beautiful 19th-century Catholic Church of Oura and its garden, the sanctuary of Suwa Shrine or several Buddhist temples. A visit to the Atomic Bomb Museum gives you insight into the extent of the damage caused by the nuclear attack. Close by, a walk in the Memorial Peace Park leads you to a collection of objets d'art offered as a gift from Japan to the world.



#### Day 9 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.

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

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**YOUR SHIP:** Le Soleal

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**LENGTH:**

**PASSENGER CAPACITY:**

**BUILT/REFURBISHED:**

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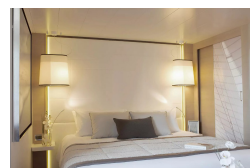
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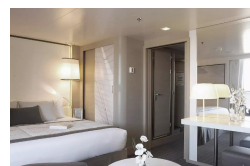
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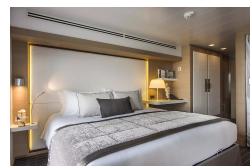
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