

JAPAN AND KOREA CRUISE: CULTURAL SHORES AND NORTHERN LANDSCAPES

Continue north from Hiroshima along the Sea of Japan coast -- a quieter, less-travelled side of the country, where castle towns, fishing villages and hot spring ports follow one after another. Cross to Busan for a day in Korea, then return to Japan and keep moving north: through sake-brewing towns, lacquerware villages and the island of Sado, once a place of exile, before reaching Hokkaido in the final days.



ITINERARY

Day 1. Hiroshima

Hiroshima is a city of quiet strength, where modern life sits beside places of remembrance. It is also a gateway to nearby sacred landscapes, with calm coastal scenery and a strong sense of local tradition. It is an opening that sets a thoughtful tone for the voyage

Day 2. Beppu

Beppu is best known for Jigoku Meguri ("Boiling Hells") - seven vivid geothermal springs too hot for bathing but offering stunning colours, bubbling mud and soaring steam. Nearby, Mount Takasaki's 1,500 wild Japanese macaques can be seen up close at Takasakiyama Monkey Park. A short trip away, Usuki features 60 stone-carved Buddhist statues in peaceful park grounds with feudal castle ruins and 1,000 cherry trees

Day 2. Cruising Kanmon Strait



Sailing through the Kanmon Strait is challenging with strong currents and an S-shaped bend. One of the world's busiest shipping lanes, the strait cuts a dramatic 38 km (24 mi) channel, narrowing to 700 m (0.4 mi) at its tightest point. The graceful Kanmon Bridge, a 1,068-m (3,504-ft) suspension bridge, spans the waterway between Honshu and Kyushu. Shimonoseki overlooks the strait from Honshu, while Moji district stands watch from Kyushu

Day 3. Karatsu

A castle town on the northern coast of Kyushu, where a 16th-century fortress sits on a pine-covered promontory above the bay. Karatsu is one of Japan's principal centres of ceramic production -- Karatsu ware has supplied tea ceremony vessels since the late Muromachi period, and working kilns still operate on the town's outskirts. The beach of Niji-no-Matsubara, a coastal pine forest stretching several kilometres along the shore, has been considered one of Japan's three most scenic pine groves for centuries

Day 4. Busan

Busan is a port city with beaches, hills, and a busy harbour energy. It blends memorial sites and modern neighbourhoods with markets that still feel local and direct. Compared to Japan's smaller ports, it is louder, bigger, and more urban

Day 5. Sakaiminato

Sakaiminato has the feel of a working coastal town, shaped by seafood, folklore, and a slower pace. Nearby landscapes shift quickly from shoreline to forested mountains, with gardens and museum spaces that match the region's quiet aesthetic. It is a softer, more intimate stop after Busan

Day 6. Ine

A fishing village on the northern coast of the Tango Peninsula, where around 230 funaya -- traditional boathouses built directly over the water -- line the inner shore of a near-circular bay. Residents moor their boats on the ground floor and live above. The village has changed little in two centuries and carries national preservation status. Approached from the sea, the funaya present an unbroken wooden facade at the waterline -- one of the most distinctive streetscapes in Japan

Days 6-7. Maizuru

Maizuru carries naval history and a clear link to the Meiji era, with brick warehouses and a harbour built for strategy. The wider region opens into classic Kyoto area scenery, where refined culture, temples, and historic districts are within reach. It is a day that balances port history with inland elegance

Day 8. Wajima

Wajima, a port town on the northern Noto Peninsula, is famed for its Wajima-nuri lacquerware, which is renowned for its durability and displayed at the Museum of Lacquer Art. The thousand-year-old daily Asaichi (Morning) Market is the primary hub, buzzing with locals selling fresh seafood, produce and the distinctive lacquerware. Nearby, Kiriko Hall displays huge illuminated festival floats, some 15 metres tall, used in summer celebrations

Show less

Day 9. Ogi, Sado Island

Sado, Japan's sixth largest island, has a quaint port at Ogi known for tarai-bune, traditional wooden boats. The island is also famous for its world-renowned taiko drummers, continuing a rich cultural tradition. Once a place of exile for artists and



academics, Sado now draws visitors to its rugged coasts, hidden beaches and lush terrain for outdoor activities

Day 10. Sakata

Sakata, a port city on the Mogami river, thrived on rice and safflower trade. The traditional 1893 Sankyo Rice Storehouses, shaded by zelkova trees, are now a cultural hub with shops. The city's quiet streets feature preserved, wealthy Edo-era homes, including the Honma Museum of Art with fine art and gardens. South of the river, The Ken Domon Museum honours the famed photographer's powerful work, including images of Hiroshima survivors

Day 11. Hakodate

The city of Hakodate in Hokkaido is Japan's northernmost island and is well-known for its seafood, for sale daily at the morning market. Mount Hakodate, reached by gondola, watches over the bustling city. While the area is rich in hot springs, it is best known for the famous snow monkeys who bathe in the hot springs of Yunokawa Onsen at the Hakodate City Tropical Botanical Garden

Day 12. Otaru

An important port on Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island, Otaru retains original architecture. Restored warehouses along its canal, lined with Victorian street lamps, house restaurants and boutiques selling sake, music boxes and renowned Otaru glass. Rooted in the herring industry, the town's trading history is evident from Hokkaido's first railway line terminal to the Herring Mansion on the outskirts, once owned by wealthy herring fishermen

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



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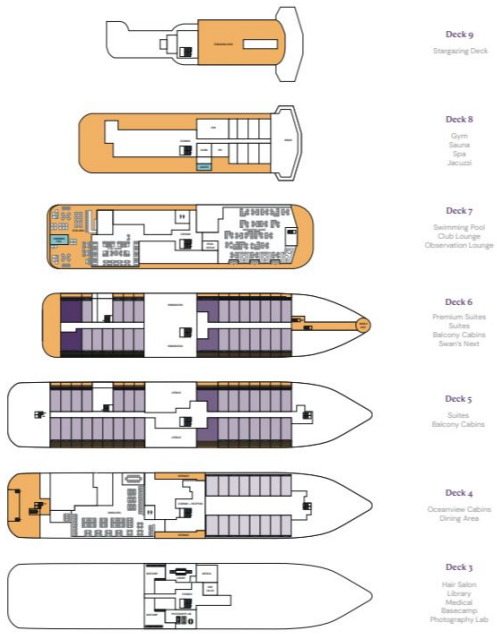
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