

PEARLS OF THE PACIFIC: EXPLORING THE PHILIPPINES AND JAPAN

Start in Manila and sail north through the Philippine archipelago -- colonial towns, remote island groups and coastlines that see few expedition ships. Cross open water into Japan and enter a different world: the Ryukyu Islands have their own culture, their own architecture and a pace that sets them apart from the mainland. Work up the southwestern coast through fishing villages and castle towns, and end in Hiroshima.



ITINERARY

Day 1. Manila

Arrive in Manila today. The capital of the Philippines is a teeming, sprawling metropolis. Its flaws are no match for its creative, exciting energy, which infused everything from its art to food. There's so much to see and do here: the city's museums, Fort Santiago, San Agustin Church and the Chinese Cemetery are some of the highlights. Intramuros - the old Spanish walled town at the heart of the city - is unmissable. Explore if timings allow and be sure to sample some Filipino cuisine in all its bold sour, sweet and tangy glory. Alternatively, head straight to your home for the next several days. After a seamless check-in, settle into your cabin or stateroom and take time to explore your ship's luxurious facilities



Day 2. Quezon Island, Hundred Islands

Hundred Islands National Park in the Lingayen Gulf of the Philippines has 124 islands known for their unique mushroom shapes, formed from ancient seabeds influenced by shifting sea levels. Conservation efforts like giant clam replanting aim to protect the marine environment, once traversed by Spanish galleons. Governor's Island has a deck with a statue of St. Joseph and is the jump point for the 546m island-to-island zipline

Day 3. Salomague Harbour (Vigan)

The Philippines' best preserved colonial town, the UNESCO-listed 16th century Vigan City lies an hour south of Salomague port. Vigan's unique fusion architecture blending Philippine, Chinese and European elements has "no parallel in East and Southeast Asia" per UNESCO. Cobblestoned Calle Crisologo is the lively main street of the Mestizo district, with its broad promenade (malecon), horse-drawn carriages and rustic mansions

Day 4. Day at sea

Sea days are rarely dull. Take the time to sit back and let the world go by. The ship's observation decks provide stunning views of the passing ocean. A day at sea gives you the opportunity to mingle with other passengers and share your experiences of this incredible trip or head to our library which is stocked full of reference books. Get an expert's view in one of our on-board lectures or perhaps perfect your photography skills with invaluable advice from our onboard professional photographers

Day 5. Miyakojima, Miyakojima Island

Miyakojima, Okinawa Prefecture's fourth largest island, is almost entirely ringed by a vibrant fringing coral reef, which protects its celebrated coastlines and provides a paradise for marine life. The island's jewel is Yonaha-Maehama Beach, a 7km stretch of pristine white sand, consistently ranked among Japan's finest. Its calm, clear waters are perfect for swimming and watersports. On the opposite side of the island in the southeast, Yoshino Beach attracts snorkellers with colourful fish and an equally magnificent coral reef.

Day 6. Zamami Island, Kerama National Park

Zamami is one of the Kerama Islands, a small island group lying around 40 kilometers west of Okinawa. The Keramas were designated a national park in 2014, recognized for exceptionally clear waters shaped by weak currents and minimal agricultural runoff. This protected seascape is ideal for snorkeling, with good chances of encountering sea turtles, while on shore, birdwatchers can look for both local and migratory species. The village of Zamami, on the island's north coast, is small enough to walk in an hour, with a local history museum and a ridge trail that opens onto views of the surrounding island chain.

Day 7. Naha, Okinawa Island

Naha is the capital of the Okinawa prefecture, part of an archipelago of more than 160 islands that formed part of the independent Ryukyu Kingdom, ruled by monarchs from the 1400s, until it became part of Japan in 1879. Ryukyu attractions include Shuri Castle, once home to Ryukyu royalty, and Naminouegu shrine. This seaside city also offers one of Japan's best museums - the Okinawa Prefectural Museum & Art Museum

Day 8. Amami Oshima Island, Naze



Dreamy beaches, mangroves and cerulean seas make up the Amami Islands. The largest, Amami Oshima, was part of the Ryukyu Kingdom before brief US control after WWII. The Tanaka Isson Memorial Museum in Amami Park displays works by the late painter who lived here. Pristine beaches like Tomori have colourful marine life, while in the south, rivers weave round the Mangrove Primeval Forest, and rugged cliffs and giant pebbles hug the Honohoshi Coast.

Day 9. Kagoshima

Kagoshima, on the southwest tip of Japan's Kyushu Island, is home to several glassmakers and potteries where artisans specialise in making Satsuma pottery and delicately cut Kiriko glassware. This city is a mix of classic Japanese architecture, modern high-rises and a spattering of Art Deco buildings. Observation points around the city provide dramatic views of Mount Sakurajima, an active volcano on a nearby island that regularly smokes.

Day 10. Uwajima

Uwajima, a bustling coastal city, is anchored by the elegant Uwajima Castle, one of twelve Edo-period survivors, with spectacular cityscapes for hikers ascending to its keep. The Tensha-en Garden is a tranquil space with bamboo groves, towering culms and seasonal blooms. In the nearby village of Uchiko, the Old Quarter's streets are lined with well-preserved wooden houses and merchant buildings, frozen in time from the 18th and 19th centuries.

Day 11. Hiroshima

Hiroshima is a city of peace and resilience. The Hiroshima Peace Park and Museum, designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, vividly portrays the aftermath of the atomic bombing. Designed by Kenz Tange and inaugurated in 1955, the museum serves as a global symbol of peace, featuring a solemn cenotaph bearing the victims' names and the Flame of Peace, lit in 1964. The Genbaku Dome stands as the sole original structure left at the blast site.

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



YOUR SHIP: MINERVA

YOUR SHIP: **Minerva**

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

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surroundings.

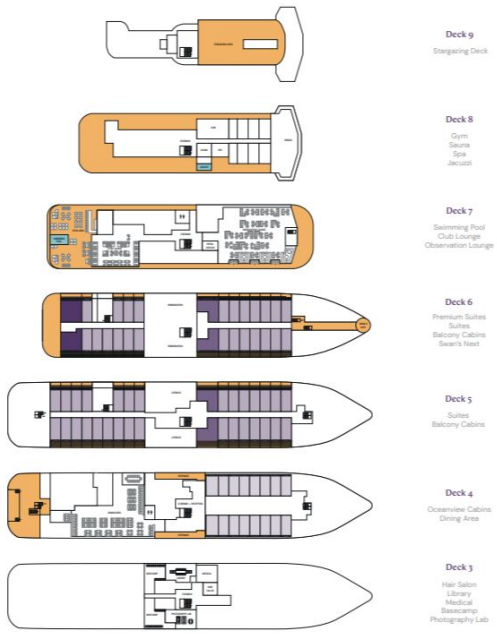
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