

TIMELESS JAPAN - CULTURAL TREASURES & ANCIENT WONDERS 2027

Join us for this comprehensive exploration of Japan which is a marvellous balance of ancient castles, serenely beautiful gardens, opulent temples and shrines combined with beautiful natural landscapes. Like all well planned itineraries we have included some of the best known highlights, but equally will also take you to some places where relatively few foreign tourists set foot. So many of Japan's treasures are accessible from the coast and our twelve night cruise allows you to immerse yourself in the myth and mystique of these ancient lands whilst returning each evening to the peace and comfort of the all-suite MS Island Sky. During our voyage we will be able to see a variety of cultures, natural wonders and architectural styles. Amongst the many highlights will be our visit to Kyoto including the breathtaking Golden Pavilion, and the beautiful iconic gardens of Ritsurin and Koraku-en, both of which date back to the Edo Period. We will also discover the shrines and pagodas of Miyajima and the 17th century Matsue Castle, one of only a dozen original castles in Japan. For the natural world enthusiasts we will visit the Mount Fuji National Park and see the ancient pilgrimage trails at Kumano and, for those who prefer a historical perspective, we will visit the Peace Memorial at Hiroshima and South Korea's World Heritage Site of Gyeongju with its abundance of archaeological sites. All of this will be achieved with great ease in the company of just over 100 fellow, like-minded passengers. In addition, helping us understand all we will see and experience will be our expert Guest Speaker and Japanese guides who will sail with us on board the MS Island Sky and will add immeasurably to your enjoyment and understanding of this captivating country.



ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Tokyo, Japan

Fly today by scheduled flight to Tokyo.

Day 2 Tokyo

Arrive this afternoon and transfer to our hotel for an overnight stay. The remainder of the day and evening are at leisure.

Day 3 Tokyo to Yokohama

Today your morning is at leisure to relax or explore Tokyo. In the afternoon we will transfer to Yokohama and embark on the MS Island Sky. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner this evening as we set sail.

Day 4 Shimizu for Mount Fuji



With a commanding view of Mount Fuji, the Port of Shimizu is considered one of the most beautiful harbours in Japan. Our day will be spent learning more about this iconic symbol of Japan. At the Mount Fuji World Heritage Centre we will see exhibits revealing how the mountain formed and the way humans have interacted with it through the ages before enjoying the views from the observation deck. See the Fujisan Sengen shrine, originally built over 1,000 years ago to worship the spirits of Mount Fuji and provide spiritual offerings to reduce the number of volcanic eruptions. Later we visit the Nihondaira Outlook located in a national park with panoramic views of Suraga Bay and Mount Fuji. Take the aerial ropeway up the mountain to the Kunozan Toshogu shrine dedicated to Tokugawa Ieyasu who is credited with bringing peace to Japan in the 17th century after a long period of civil war.

Day 5 Kumano

From our berth in Shingu we explore the southern part of the Kii Peninsula, known since ancient times as Kumano, which was famous as a hiding place for gods and spirits of the departed. Since then, people have come to worship at the Three Grand Shrines of Kumano and the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage routes were designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2004. Today we will visit Nachi Taisha which sits alongside the 6th century Buddhist temple Seigantoji and afterwards we can see some of the trails of the pilgrimage routes before ending at the Nachi no Taki waterfall which at 133 metres is the largest single-tiered waterfall in Japan.

Day 6 Takamatsu

Arrive this morning in Takamatsu, located on Shikoki Island on the northern shores of the Seto Inland Sea. This morning we visit the small town of Kinashi which has a rich history of producing bonsai for 250 years. We will explore the town, visit a Bonsai nursery and make our way to Ritsurin Garden, recognised as one of the most beautiful in Japan and built by feudal lords in the early Edo Period. With a backdrop against the wooded Mount Shiun, we will wander along the paths of this historic landscape garden dotted with ponds, historic trees and pavilions. Enjoy an afternoon at leisure exploring Takamatsu town. We will be moored overnight for anyone wanting to go ashore for or after dinner.

Day 7 Koraku-en & Kurashiki

From the port of Uno-Ko we will visit one of Japan's most famed gardens, Koraku-en, which translates as "Garden of pleasure after". This 17th century formal garden has 28 acres of walking trails, ponds, plum and cherry trees. After a Japanese lunch in a local restaurant, we will continue to Kurashiki where we explore the old merchant quarter and its fine 17th century wooden warehouses painted white with traditional black tiles, along a canal framed with weeping willows and filled with koi. There is also a chance to visit the Ohara Museum of Art which includes rare works by Matisse, Picasso and Renoir as well as collections from Japan's Mingei movement including ceramics by Hamada Shoji.

Day 8 Hiroshima & Miyajima

Arrive this morning in Hiroshima for our visit to the compelling Peace Memorial Park. The park is dotted with memorials, including the Cenotaph which contains the names of all the known victims of the Atomic bomb and the permanently lit "Flame of Peace". Just outside the park, the Atomic Bomb Dome is a haunting reminder of the destructive forces that were unleashed on the city being one of the few original buildings to survive. In the museum we will see photos, videos and victim's



personal effects relating to the bomb. Over lunch we sail to Miyajima. Considered one of Japan's top scenic wonders, Miyajima provides a picture postcard vista of the scarlet Torii gate, the giant camphor wood gates at the entrance to the Shinto Shrine. We will use the vessel's Zodiacs to go ashore and explore the Itsukushima Jinja Shrine, founded in the 6th century and dedicated to three sea goddesses.

Day 9 Kitakyushu

Today we arrive into the city of Kitakyushu, located on the island of Kyushu. Here we will visit Kokura Castle, which was originally built in 1602 but rebuilt in 1959 and is surrounded by a beautiful Japanese Garden. From here we will stop at the Moji Port retro area. It is home to a number of historic buildings from the 19th century. The port was designated a special trade port due to its proximity to China and flourished with financial institutions and merchant companies. The architecture is a mix including Western style buildings which always come as a bit of a surprise. There will also be the chance to visit the TOTO Museum which showcases the companies' products, the most famous being its electronic toilets which are hard to miss when visiting Japan, and Japan's passion and drive for electronics.

Day 10 Hagi

Hagi was a minor fishing port until Mori Terumoto fortified it in 1604 and it was Mori Samurai that helped spark off the anti-Tokugawa revolt in the mid-19th century. Today it is better known for its traditional pottery making traditions. This morning we will explore the Teramachi District with its temples and shrines, the Jokamachi District, where we find the old samurai houses and also take time to explore Hagi Castle, Shizuki Park and Tokoji Temple. Return to the vessel for lunch and this afternoon is free to relax or perhaps travel to the outskirts of the city to visit the Yoshika Taibi Memorial Museum. The museum is dedicated to a large collection of Hagiyaki pottery which was highly prized in the Edo Period as wares for tea ceremonies.

Day 11 Ulsan, South Korea

Crossing over to South Korea we embark on a full day excursion to magnificent Gyeongju, a World Heritage Site, which is often described as the world's finest open-air museum embracing ancient Korean history and Buddhist culture. As the ancient capital of the Shilla Dynasty, Gyeongju cultural heritage dates back to the first millennium. Today, as we stroll through some of the hundreds of excavated monuments, temples, tombs and pagodas, there will be time to explore the National Museum with its exceptional collection of finely worked gold jewellery, metal weapons and distinctive pottery. At lunchtime, we will sample Korean delicacies and enjoy a cultural performance of traditional dance.

Day 12 Matsue, Japan

From the port of Sakaiminato we visit Matsue, the 'town of water,' which nestles between a scenic lake and a large lagoon. We will visit the cultural attractions of the town including the 17th century Matsue Castle before enjoying a boat ride on the local canals. After lunch on board maybe spend the afternoon at leisure or visit the Adachi Museum of Art which is set in a beautiful natural environment and well known for both its superb Japanese gardens and its collection of contemporary Japanese paintings, comprising approximately 1,500 of the country's most highly regarded paintings produced after the Meiji period.

Day 13 Kyoto

From our berth in Maizuru, we drive inland to Kyoto, Japan's former historic capital and Emperor's home for nearly 1,000



years. Our full day tour begins with a visit to the bamboo forest before continuing to the World Heritage Site of Tenryu-ji Temple, ranked first amongst the city's five great Zen Temples. After lunch we continue to the Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion), which was built as a retirement villa for the Shogun and converted into a Buddhist Temple after his death. Built on the edge of a tranquil pond with the second and third stories covered in gold leaf we can walk through the peaceful gardens and marvel at the reflection in the still waters. Alternatively, spend the morning at the quaint fishing village of Ine, famous for its "funaya" boat houses which line the bay. Enjoy a walk through the village and a boat tour in the bay for the picturesque views from the sea.

Day 14 Kanazawa

Kanazawa is a thriving centre of the arts, long known for its lacquer ware, outstanding collectable pottery of the Kutani style, gold leaf workmanship, delicate hand painting of silk for kimonos and Noh theatre dramas. The narrow and winding cobblestone streets have a quaint photogenic charm with old fashioned streetlamps and wooden lattice windows hiding elegant restaurants and craft galleries. Around each bend is a traditional house, museum, art gallery, craft shop, historic samurai residence and even a geisha house to explore. The fascinating open-air market displays a vast variety of items from flowers to fish and local handicrafts. Next to the Kanazawa Castle ruins, we will visit one of Japan's premier highlights, the famed Kenroku-en Garden, ranked among the country's top three gardens.

Day 15 Kanazawa to Tokyo

Disembark this morning and take the bullet train to Tokyo. On arrival we enjoy an afternoon city tour including the Meiji shrine and Sensoji Temple before we transfer to our hotel for an overnight stay. The evening is free to explore further at your own pace.

Day 16 Tokyo to London

After breakfast in the hotel we transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London.



YOUR SHIP: ISLAND SKY

YOUR SHIP: **Island Sky**

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

With a maximum passenger capacity of only 116, a vessel of her size is capable of carrying many more but instead the MS Island Sky has the benefit of unusually large suites, luxuriously appointed public areas and spacious outside decks. There is a high ratio of crew to passengers- the friendly crew of 75 crew and Scandinavian captains are experienced mariners, having been in service aboard large 2000 plus passenger vessels and who now prefer a less frantic life aboard a small ship. If, like them and us, you prefer a more peaceful life at sea, you will find the MS Island Sky the perfect ship. When choosing the vessel for your next voyage of discovery, you can select a ship with endless entertainment and impersonal service or come with us where peace, high quality service and attention to detail are the order of the day. We promise there will be no organised entertainment, fancy dress, deck games or any of the usual big ship experiences. The atmosphere on board is more akin to a private yacht or country hotel. A little music in the lounge or bar after dinner, guest speakers, informative port briefings from our cruise director and of course good food which may be enjoyed leisurely in the attractive dining room. After a day ashore you will return to the comfort and peace of a well run and exceedingly comfortable ship. Your Suite Onboard there are 57 exceptionally spacious and well designed suites. All feature a sitting room area and some have private balconies. The feeling of luxury is enhanced by the wood panelling and brass, which predominates throughout the vessel conveying the atmosphere of a private yacht. The passenger accommodation is arranged over five decks and all suites have outside views. Each affords considerable comfort with en-suite bathroom featuring marble-topped vanity unit with sink and walk-in shower, large wardrobes, dressing table with large mirror and stool and excellent storage. There is a mini-fridge, flat screen television with inbuilt DVD player which can also play CDs and a telephone in each suite. Bottled water, towelling dressing gowns and slippers are also provided for your comfort. Other facilities include a programmable electronic safe, hairdryer, assorted toiletries and individually controlled air-conditioning and heating. The suites on each deck have their own colour theme. Soft hues and blended tones enhance the traditional maritime style making the passenger accommodation an inviting and relaxing place to be. Your Space The spacious and finely decorated public rooms include a large lounge where daily briefings and talks will be provided throughout the voyage and an elegant bar where a pianist plays periodically throughout the day. The bar also features a 24-hour tea and coffee station. The onboard library is the perfect place to relax with a book and is stocked with reference books pertaining to the places the vessel is visiting along with a selection of games and two computers with internet access. Daily newspapers and magazines are also placed in the library depending on local availability. There is

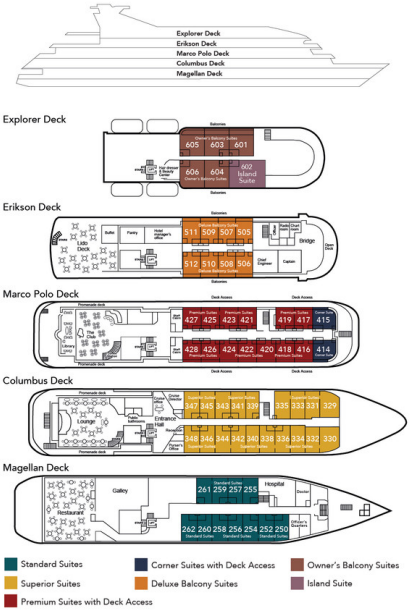
also WI-FI access throughout the vessel. Outside there is a rear sun deck where meals are served in warm weather under shade, a bar and comfortable deck furniture for sun bathing or relaxing with a book. On the top deck there is a Jacuzzi and further observation and sun deck. There is also a small hairdressers on board with appointments made on request. Your Dining Another benefit of a small ship is the quality of the cuisine. With only one sitting and a maximum of just over 100 passengers, the galley is able to provide delicious meals. Where possible and when it meets his high standards, the chef will obtain local produce in markets or buy the catch of the day from a passing fishing boat. Such purchases enhance the well stocked larders and bring a local touch to the



varied menus.



INSIDE YOUR SHIP



Columbus Deck Superior Single



Columbus Deck Superior Suite



Erikson Deck Deluxe Balcony Suite



Explorer Deck Island Suite



Explorer Deck Owner's Balcony Suite



Magellan Deck Standard Single



Magellan Deck Standard Suite



Marco Polo Deck Corner Suite





Marco Polo Deck Premium Suite





PRICING

28-May-2027 to 12-Jun-2027

Marco Polo Deck Corner Suite	£11995 GBP pp
Explorer Deck Island Suite	£14495 GBP pp
Magellan Deck Standard Suite	£10995 GBP pp
Columbus Deck Superior Suite	£11395 GBP pp
Marco Polo Deck Premium Suite	£11695 GBP pp
Magellan Deck Standard Single	£12995 GBP pp
Erikson Deck Deluxe Balcony Suite	£13295 GBP pp
Columbus Deck Superior Single	£13395 GBP pp
Explorer Deck Owner's Balcony Suite	£13795 GBP pp