



CLASSIC

Kyushu Elements

13 Nights

Kyoto > Nagasaki > Unzen > Kumamoto > Aso > Kagoshima > Yakushima > Kyoto



Visit Dejima Island and Glover Gardens, remnants of Nagasaki's international past



Take a helicopter ride over Japan's largest volcano, Mount Aso



Soak in hot spring baths at a traditional *ryokan* inn in Unzen



Try your hand at *shodo*, Japanese calligraphy in Kumamoto



Admire Sakurajima volcano from across the bay in Kagoshima



Take a full-day tour of Yakushima Island with lunch included

IJT CLASSIC TOURS

Mid-range tours that cover Japan's classic sights or interest-specific itineraries (e.g. hiking, cultural activities, specific regions)

Style Facts

- Three-star accommodation
- En suite rooms in all locations (except at some unique traditional accommodation)
- Airport meet-and-greet and transfers
- Breakfast every day plus some lunches & dinners
- Selected entrance fees include
- Solo travellers: a single room is available throughout on payment of a mandatory supplement

Tour Overview

Kyushu is a little-visited yet highly rewarding pocket of Japan, famous throughout Japan for its steaming volcanoes, bubbling hot springs, lush rainforests and sandy beaches. Not only is its countryside some of Japan's finest, but Kyushu's cities have plenty of historic culture and cosmopolitan charm – without the crowds that Tokyo is famous for.

For centuries, Kyushu was Japan's only gateway to Asia and the rest of the world, leaving it with a legacy of European influence and architecture that survives to this day. During this time, the only contact with the outside world was through Dejima - or "exit island" - an artificial island off Nagasaki Port, where Portuguese and Dutch traders were permitted to operate.

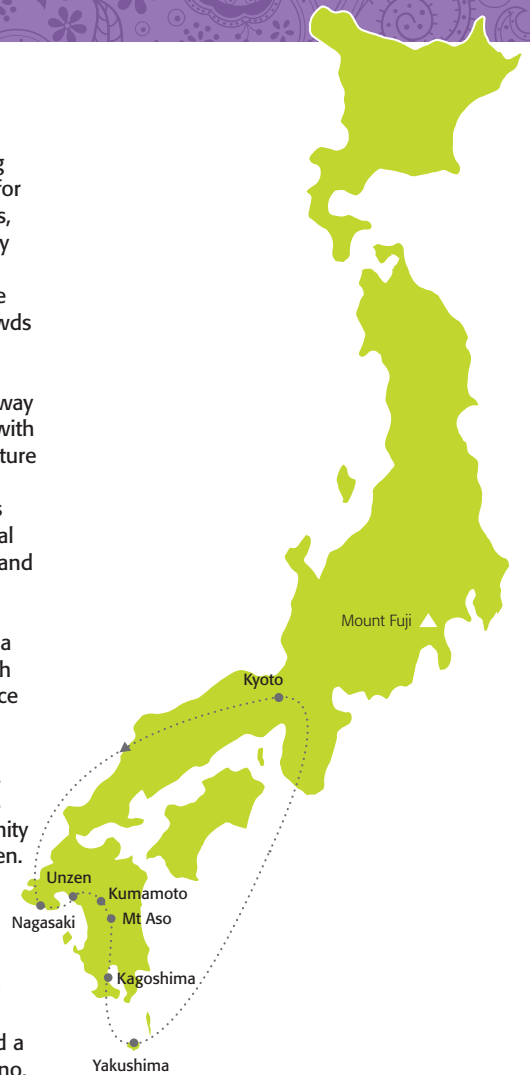
In the port city of Nagasaki you'll visit Dejima Island and Glover Garden, the latter of which is home to the oldest Western-style residence in Japan. In Unzen you'll admire Mars-like landscapes swathed in clouds of volcanic gas and soak in wonderful hot spring baths. Kumamoto city offers the chance to view its impressive feudal castle and enjoy the serenity and landscaped perfection of Suizenji Garden.

At Mount Aso, a helicopter ride will grant you a bird's eye view of the steaming crater lake (if conditions permit!), while in Kagoshima, the "Naples of Japan", you'll get to admire the volcano of Sakurajima from the city itself and from the sea, as you board a ferry across to the lower slopes of the volcano.

Next you'll move on to gorgeous Yakushima, where you'll be inspired by spectacular coastal scenery and walk with a local guide in the primeval rainforests that inspired Hayao Miyazaki's animated masterpiece, *Princess Mononoke*.

Bookending your tour will be stays in Kyoto, the "City of Ten Thousand Temples". Here, lush bamboo groves, golden temples, ancient palaces, hilltop shrines and a traditional geisha district are just some of the treasures in store.

Kyushu Elements is the perfect tour for those who want to discover Japanese culture in a stunning location away from the crowds – or for returning visitors who have seen Honshu's famous sights and are ready to venture further afield.



Day by day

Many of our customers choose to arrive a day or two early to get over jet-lag and get the most out of the tour. Whatever the case, we will be happy to make arrangements to suit your needs

Day 1 Kyoto (D)

Welcome to Japan! On arrival at one of Osaka's Airports you will be met by your driver and make the transfer to your hotel in Kyoto, where your tour leader will be waiting to meet you in the lobby. If you arrive early, you may wish to head to the food market area of Nishiki, or stroll along the Kamogawa River. Later in the evening you will have an orientation meeting with your group, followed by an included evening meal to help you get to

know your travelling companions – not to mention providing you with a great introduction to Japanese food and etiquette.

Day 2 Kyoto (B)

On day two you will take a tour of Kyoto with your tour leader. As Japan's imperial capital from 794 until 1868, Kyoto is an incredible repository of cultural and historical treasures – including a staggering 17 World Heritage Sites. In fact, during World War II, Kyoto's cultural importance was considered so significant that it escaped bombing entirely, leaving many of its original buildings intact. Your tour leader will take the group on a tour of Kyoto using public transport and introduce you to a few of their favourite locations. You can stroll along the Philosophers' Path or perhaps gaze at Ginkakuji's resplendent Silver Pavilion to name a few highlights.

Day 3 Nagasaki (B)

This morning we will jump aboard Japan's famous bullet train, or shinkansen. The bullet train is an exciting experience in itself – reaching top speeds of up to 320 kph (200 mph) on some sections of track. Sit back, relax, enjoy the countryside views, and in no time you will be on Kyushu Island.

We then take a further comfortable railway journey on the stylish Kamome limited express, which winds its way through lush green fields and along the coast to Nagasaki – an enchanting ride. Although it has a richer, far more significant history, Nagasaki is most famous outside Japan as the second city ever to have been targeted with an atomic bomb. After arriving at your hotel, why not head out on the tram to ground zero for a sobering visit to the Peace Memorial Park.

Tonight, you may like to join your tour leader for a meal whether it be for seafood or one of the other local specialties: *champon* noodles.

Day 4 Nagasaki (B)

Today's focus will be on Nagasaki's deeper reaching history. Most interestingly, perhaps, this hilly city with its breathtaking harbour views served as the only point of contact between Japan and the outside world during the country's long *sakoku* period of isolation. Only Portuguese and, later, Dutch traders were allowed to live and trade on tiny Dejima ("exit island"), created just metres from the shores of the city.

Today you'll have plenty of time to roam the island museum, enjoy the sea breezes of the invigorating Seaside Park, then head uphill to nearby Glover Gardens. The latter is home to a superb collection of some of Japan's oldest Western-style buildings and residences, set amongst gorgeous gardens with commanding views over the harbour and city. Make sure you sample the Portuguese-introduced *castella* cake on the way up!

Day 5 Unzen (B, D)

Today we'll board a bus for a lovely ride along the coast and up winding mountain roads from Nagasaki to Unzen hot spring town in the Unzen-Amakusa National Park. The area is known for its Mars-like landscapes, billowing clouds of sulphurous gases and bubbling hot springs – also known as "hell valleys". This afternoon you're free to explore the surrounding area or follow the tour leader who will be visiting some of their favourite spots. Take a walk around the area and ascend Fugendake Peak, a volcano which last erupted

in 1991, when its lava dome collapsed sending pyroclastic material flying down the valleys below.

Tonight, you'll be served a delicious included dinner comprising numerous dishes of seasonal produce and local specialities. Unzen is a renowned hot spring area, so no stay here would be complete without a nice, long soak in the inn's onsen bath before bed tonight.

Day 6 Kumamoto (B)

After a Japanese-style breakfast you'll continue your journey by bus and ferry to Kumamoto, another of Kyushu's exciting cities. Kumamoto is home to one of the few remaining original samurai castles in Japan and Suizenji Garden, a beautiful landscape garden featuring a miniature Mount Fuji and representations of all the stations on the old Tokaido Highway trade route.

This is a "strolling" style garden, so please enjoy an amble through its fabulous grounds, landscaped around a central pond. Kumamoto is also famous for its *tonkotsu* ramen noodles, so try to slurp up a bowl at some point during your stay here!

Day 7 Aso Kujo National Park (B, L, D)

Heading easterly out of Kumamoto, our private coach will take you into the lush, green volcanic caldera of Mount Aso, where you will be spending two nights at a lovely Japanese-style inn. The journey itself is thoroughly enjoyable, with beautiful views of the passing scenery as you travel deep into the heart of this volcanic complex. We've arranged a local guide to lead a walk taking in waterfalls, rice paddies and stunning mountain vistas. After working up a healthy appetite it will be time for a home cooked lunch followed by *shodo*, a Japanese calligraphy experience.

This evening you will have a chance to relax in your inn's onsen hot spring baths before another fabulous *kaiseki* multi-course traditional feast at your accommodation.

Day 8 Aso (B, D)

Today is a day to explore the natural marvel of Mount Aso. Your tour leader and knowledgeable local driver will take you around the park by private coach. Mount Aso is the largest volcano in Japan and one of the largest volcanic complexes in the world. Its last eruption, taking place around 90,000 years ago, scattered ash and debris over the whole of Kyushu, providing it with abundant fertility.

Today's highlight is an included helicopter flight over the caldera allowing for a bird's eye view of this stunning volcanic landscape (weather permitting). The day's excursions will also include a cable car ride up to view the caldera lake of Peak from its crater rim, which may be visible but might equally be obscured by clouds of gases, a visit to the local volcanic museum and a stop off at a local café for lunch. You may be able to complete a short hike up nearby Kijimadake peak, taking a picnic if the weather is fine. The scenery around this area is spectacular, so don't forget to bring your camera. Dinner will be included again this evening at your *ryokan*.

Day 9 Kagoshima (B)

Today you'll travel to Kagoshima, Japan's southernmost major city, sometimes known as "the Naples of Japan" for its similar climate, palm tree-lined streets, hot-tempered inhabitants and smouldering Sakurajima – Japan's Vesuvius. The

afternoon will be free for you to begin exploring the city at your own pace, and your tour leader will have plenty of great suggestions as to how to spend your time. Your stay tonight is at a conveniently located Western-style hotel, with a wealth of restaurants and shops nearby.

Day 10 Kagoshima (B)

You will be joined by a local guide who will be able to show you some of Kagoshima's superb attractions, as well as give you extensive background information on the area. Some highlights of today might include the fantastic Meiji Restoration Museum, where the history of Japan's dismantling of the samurai class is told through animatronic displays; the beautiful Shosenji Senganen Gardens; and the Shiroyama viewpoint, from where you'll enjoy fabulous views across the city with Sakurajima volcano in the distance.

Day 11 Yakushima (B, D)

Today, it's out into the deep blue on a high-speed Jetfoil ferry for the journey from Kagoshima to Yakushima. The mountainous subtropical island is renowned for its deep forests of towering, thousand-year-old Japanese cedar trees (*sugi*), gorgeous coastline, and population of macaque monkeys and *shika* deer.

After a minibus transfer to your luxurious hotel, you'll be able to enjoy the sea air and fabulous views from your room, or step out for a stroll to explore the area. Tonight, you'll be treated to a delicious meal at your accommodation, and don't forget to take a dip in those hot spring baths.

Day 12 Yakushima (B, L, D)

Today includes a full tour of Yakushima by private mini-bus with your tour leader and an expert local guide. Some highlights include a two-hour walk through Yakusugi Land (a nature park full of ancient cedar trees), and some of the island's beautiful waterfalls and beaches.

Please be aware that the Yakusugi Land nature trail weaves through the forest on a mixture of paved and unpaved track and raised boardwalk with timber steps. With the high precipitation levels on the island, the trail may be slippery in places, so have good footwear. A lunch will also be included as part of the tour, and your tour leader and local guide will be sure to find a beautiful spot to enjoy a picnic.

Tonight you will return to your hotel for another delicious meal, followed by a chance for one more soak in the natural hot spring baths.

Day 13 Kyoto (B)

Enjoy a chopstick making workshop before a day of travel. This journey requires a high-speed Jetfoil back to Kyushu, then a bullet train ride back to Kyoto for one final night on Japan's main island of Honshu. This will be a chance for you to toast the end of a great trip and to say farewell to your group, with an optional final-night meal at one of the city's superb restaurants.

Day 14 Tour Ends (B)

It's time to pack your bags and make your way by included shared shuttle bus from your hotel to one of Osaka Airports for the flight home.

Our tours aim to be as flexible as possible, so there is no set-in-stone itinerary for each day. You will be provided on the ground with Day-by-Day sheets and the tour leader will outline what they are going to do each day in detail. If you would like to break away from the group and do something different, they will be available to offer advice, and help you plan your day.

What's included

- ✔ Your comprehensive InsideJapan Info-Pack
- ✔ Airport transfers by shared shuttle bus
- ✔ 14-day Japan Rail Pass
- ✔ Full-time services of your InsideJapan tour leader
- ✔ 13 nights' accommodation
- ✔ Breakfast every day, two lunches and six evening meals
- ✔ All transport between destinations
- ✔ Entrance to Shiratani Unsuiyoku nature park and Yakusugi Land on Yakushima
- ✔ Entrance to Dejima, Glover Gardens and the Peace Park and Museum in Nagasaki
- ✔ Entrance to Suizenji Garden in Kumamoto
- ✔ Exploration of the Aso area with a private bus and entrance fees included
- ✔ Full-day private guide service in Kagoshima
- ✔ 2 Day transport pass in Kagoshima
- ✔ Full-day private guide service in Yakushima (including a private bus)
- ✔ Luggage forwarding from Kyoto to Unzen, Unzen to Aso & Kagoshima to Kyoto
- ✔ Shared portable Wi-Fi access throughout trip

NOT Included

- ✘ International flights
- ✘ Any extra local transportation (subways, buses, taxis), unless otherwise specified
- ✘ Entrance fees including those for museums, temples & shrines, unless otherwise specified
- ✘ Baggage handling & luggage forwarding unless otherwise specified

Sample Accommodation

Please note that accommodation is subject to change. Final details of the accommodation will be included in your Info-Pack, which will be sent out approximately four weeks before departure. If you'd like to know more, please speak to your travel consultant.

Royal Park Hotel, The Kyoto, Kyoto

Opened in Autumn 2011, the Royal Park Hotel is a modern, stylish hotel in a great location in central Kyoto. Rooms are Western-style, en suite and generally quite generously sized. The hotel has its own restaurant (with meals made using seasonal produce), bar and bakery-café as well as a useful concierge service. All rooms also feature free Wi-Fi internet and there is a coin laundry and massage service should you have need of either. The hotel is conveniently located just a short walk from both City Hall (Shiyakusho) Station and Sanjo Station (about 15 minutes by taxi from JR Kyoto Station), making this a great base for a very comfortable and convenient stay in Kyoto. Breakfast is a generous and varied Western-style buffet.

The Hotel Nagasaki BW Premier Collection, Nagasaki

The Hotel Nagasaki BW Premier Collection is a high-quality Western-style hotel in a great location just a short walk from Nagasaki station.

The hotel features modern, well-sized rooms, all with good views of the city. A number of good restaurants are available, as well as a café/bakery and a bar. A plush lobby and rooftop garden set off this hotel nicely - a considerable step up from most European and American Best Westerns!

Unzen Miyazaki Ryokan, Unzen

In the hot spring town of Unzen you'll be staying at the Unzen Miyazaki Ryokan, a Japanese-style hotel that has been in operation since 1929. The Miyazaki Ryokan prides itself on its hospitality and operates a policy where one member of staff will take care of you throughout your stay, from check-in to check-out.

The highlight of any stay in Unzen is undoubtedly the hot spring baths which are reputed to have therapeutic properties, and the Miyazaki Ryokan has several to choose from, including gender-separated outdoor pools, and a family bath that can be reserved free of charge for private use. Both meals will be Japanese cuisine, and dinner will be a kaiseki course with plenty of fresh seasonal ingredients from the mountains and the sea. Other facilities at the ryokan include a delightful Japanese garden, the largest in Unzen; a shop with various local souvenirs; and a relaxation salon where you can treat yourself to a massage.

Mitsui Garden Hotel Kumamoto, Kumamoto

The modern Mitsui Garden Hotel occupies a great spot at the centre of Kumamoto. Rooms are modern and en suite and the hotel has a very spacious lobby area.

The buffet breakfast is a real treat here and the hotel also has a handy coin laundry service available.

Sozankyo, Mount Aso

This is a beautiful traditional ryokan consisting of three wooden buildings. Sozankyo has natural hot spring water for your relaxation and enjoyment (the baths are same sex only). There are 2 hot spring baths at Sozankyo - a Japanese orange bath and a milk bath both of which are highly beneficial for both skin and muscle ailments. Delicious, seasonal meals are served throughout the year and the owners of Sozankyo are particularly proud of their tofu dishes. Rooms have attached toilets but bathing facilities are shared.

Remm Kagoshima, Kagoshima

Remm Kagoshima offers modern accommodation in the heart of Kagoshima. Rooms are compact but are well designed and have everything you need for a comfortable stay including wireless internet throughout and selected BBC channels.

Conveniently located below the hotel is a Tully's coffee shop and within the hotel is the buffet restaurant Mino-Hachi.

Yakushima JR Hotel, Yakushima

This is one of the best hotels on Yakushima, commanding a great position above the coast. All the rooms boast stunning views of the mountains and the sea. The rooms are Western-style with huge windows and en suite facilities. The hotel has large hot spring baths to enjoy and these also have great views out to sea.

Important Tour Information

Fitness

Even when not using public transport, sightseeing in Japan often involves walking between sights, climbing up steps in temples and being 'on the go' for much of the day. To enjoy any of our Small Group Tours you should be of moderate fitness, able to walk and climb stairs without difficulty and able to maintain a pace that is comfortable for the majority of the group.

Dietary Requirements

There are a number of meals included on all our tours. Please let us know in advance if you have any special dietary requirements and we will try to ensure that all included meals meet these needs.

In addition, please note that dietary requirements (such as vegetarianism, gluten-free diets and even some allergies) are very uncommon in Japan so meals for those with specific requirements may be simpler and less varied.

On this tour you'll stay at a number of Japanese style accommodation, you will be served a traditional dinner, as well as a Japanese breakfast in the morning.

En Suite / Shared Facilities

Culturally, communal bathing is common practice in Japan. Please note that in some traditional accommodations fully private en suite facilities may not be available. We will do our best to secure rooms on tour with private toilet and sink however some accommodations are not able to offer private bathing facilities. Shared facilities (when included) will always be separated by gender.

Policy on single rooms

Single rooms are guaranteed at all night stops on this tour through payment of a mandatory single supplement.

Double Rooms

Please note that in Japan, twin rooms are very much the norm, and there are far fewer double rooms available. Please understand that we will not be able to offer a double in every hotel on this tour.

A double grade does not guarantee double rooms throughout.

Your tour leader

Our tours are led on the ground by a fluent English speaker, now a resident of Japan and fable to speak in Japanese. They are there to ensure that you get the most out of your trip and that the whole adventure goes smoothly. The tour leader travels with the group and stays at the same hotels and *ryokan*, so please feel free to ask for help or advice at any time.

Your tour leader is not a guide so may not know every historical detail of every shrine, temple or palace, yet they are available pretty much all day every day and will even be happy to accompany tour members out at night on occasion!

Please note that the tour leader reserves the right to deny participation in an activity if they feel that it is in the safety or best interest of you and/or any other members of the group (e.g. for any Mount Fuji climb, proper hiking gear and a reasonable level of fitness are required - both being generally

assessed by the tour leader. Similarly, dangerous weather conditions may lead to cancellation of such an activity.)

Luggage

We highly recommend that to make your stay more enjoyable you pack reasonably light. Large suitcases will be an inconvenience to you as you will have to carry your bags for short distances at times and some stations do not have escalators or elevators/lifts.

For ease of transit, we will be forwarding your luggage on three occasions and you will be without your main bag for 2 nights in Nagasaki, 1 night in Kumamoto and 2 nights in Yakushima.

You will need a small overnight bag (e.g. backpack) for use when we forward our main bags to the next location.

Transport on tour

Please note that most transfers are by public transport making use of Japan's first-rate transport network. This tour uses a mixture of trains, taxis, public buses and boats, cable car, helicopter, as well as private coaches for some transfers and sightseeing.

International Flights

This tour starts and finishes in Kyoto for arrivals and departures at Osaka, Kansai or Itami airports. Please note that the included meet-and-greet and airport transfer to the first hotel is ONLY available from these two airports.

Check-in

Upon arrival you will probably be tired after a long international flight. Please note that rooms at the Kyoto hotel are only available **from 3pm**.

Hotels in Japan operate strict check-in policies. If you have an early arrival you can either book an extra night for any-time check-in, or the hotel will be happy to securely store your luggage for you whilst you go for a drink or explore the local area.

