

SIGNATURE TOUR

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2025 FOOD AND CHERRY BLOSSOM TOUR OF KYUSHU, JAPAN

An exceptional 14-day culinary journey across Japan's southern island of Kyushu in spring – meet local farmers and innovative chefs, eat at Michelin restaurant and local street cart, and visit centuries-old producers of Japanese sake and premium green tea

"I had thought for me the trip would be a one-off but am now questioning whether I could repeat it, that's how much I enjoyed the whole thing."

– Alan Rogers

DURATION
14 days

THEME
Cherry Blossom Tours, Food Tours, Remote Japan Tours

GROUP SIZE
Min 2 – Max 8

TOP TOUR HIGHLIGHTS



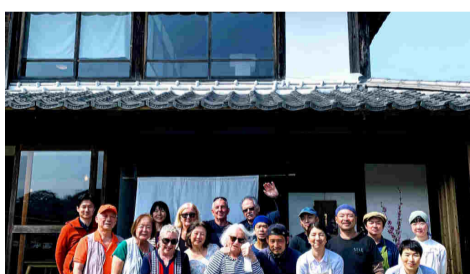
Learn the fundamentals of Japanese cuisine

A private cooking lesson at the home kitchen of a passionate chef is everybody's highlight



Experience a variety of Japanese food styles

From Michelin restaurant to street food, traditional to modern and fusion, the tour covers it all



Interact with local food producers

Priceless opportunities to visit local small producers of essential items such as soy sauce, salt and green tea



Appreciate exquisite Japanese ceramics tradition

You will visit premium ceramic regions of Karatsu, Arita and Imari



Enjoy cherry blossom in variety of setting

The tour includes Japanese gardens, castle ruins, cities and natural settings to enjoy cherry blossoms.

Be surrounded by great nature of Kyushu

From active volcano to bountiful seas, you will travel through the beautiful nature of this island.

[SEE FULL TOUR ITINERARY](#)

TOUR OVERVIEW

The 2025 Food and Cherry Blossom Tour of Kyushu is based on Japan's western island of Kyushu, fast-becoming Japan's favourite foodie destination for its variety of fresh produce and artisanal traditions. Just limited to 8 guests, this comprehensive 14-day Kyushu food tour is perfect for those keen to learn about Japan's food culture (now UNESCO-listed), as well as exploring a spectacular part of Japan away from its busy mainland centres. And all against the magical backdrop of spring-time blossoms!

This cherry blossom and food tour introduces the different styles of Japanese cuisine, from high-end haute cuisine to home-style cooking and street food. You visit generations-old traditional producers as well as fishmongers and makers of fine ceramic ware, so indispensable to the proper presentation of a Japanese meal. The tour also includes special food experiences exclusively created by Journey to the East so you can engage with local experts in person and deepen insights about Japan's food culture and local life as well. An outstanding opportunity to learn about Japan's history and culture through the lens of its food!

*Fukuoka was listed in Lonely Planet's "Best in Travel 2023" publication under the "Eat" category.

**From 2025 all our Small Group Tours will have guaranteed departure from 2 guests.

ITINERARY

[DOWNLOAD FULL ITINERARY](#)

▼ Day 1: Arrival in Fukuoka

On arrival in Fukuoka for your **2025 Food and Cherry Blossom Tour of Kyushu**, you'll be met by a Journey to the East staff member at Fukuoka's airport or main railway station and escorted to your hotel. Fukuoka is readily accessible both by rail and air from other places in Japan, but please let us know if you need help arranging a connection between your arrival port in Japan and Fukuoka, or if you'd like to book an additional night's accommodation in the same Fukuoka hotel as the tour before it starts.

 Fukuoka (The Blossom Hakata Premier or similar)

 No meals

▼ Day 2: Fukuoka



After an orientation with your guide, your tour of **Fukuoka** starts with a walking tour of atmospheric **Hakata**, justifiably famous across Japan for its "**Hakata ramen**". You stop at a typical **Hakata ramen restaurant** for lunch to find out why the locals are so serious about their noodles. Along the way you visit the lively old shopping arcade selling traditional kitchenware such as **Japanese knives** and **dashi stock**. In the afternoon, you stroll through **Ohori Park**, once the moat of Fukuoka Castle in feudal times, to enjoy the lovely view of **cherry blossoms** and lake.

Tonight you enjoy a **welcome dinner** at a **Michelin-starred Japanese restaurant**, celebrated for its exquisite multi-course banquet of seasonal foods served in a traditional setting – the perfect start to a Japanese food tour!

 Fukuoka (The Blossom Hakata Premier or similar)

 Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

▼ Day 3: Cooking lesson & Dazaifu





Today starts with one of the **special immersive experiences** exclusively created by Journey to the East for our guests. You'll be welcomed into the **kitchen studio** of a professional chef in her own renovated traditional house and be introduced to the **main concepts of Japanese cuisine**, before rolling up your sleeves and preparing some tasty dishes under her guidance. With an equal emphasis on fun and serious learning, we hope this **private cooking class** will have you confidently recreating the delicious dishes at home!

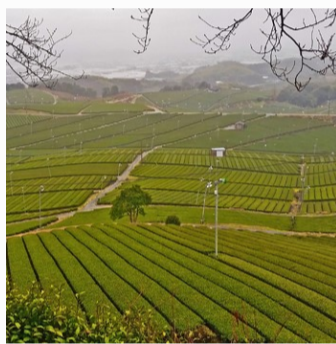
You later journey on to the neighbouring town of **Dazaifu** and visit Dazaifu's magnificent **Tenmangu Shrine** which commemorates the life of a famous 9th century Kyoto scholar, later deified as the god of literature and scholarship. The shrine's grounds are planted with over 6,000 plum trees, the favourite tree of the scholar.

Back in Fukuoka, we enjoy a unique slice of local life at the city's legendary **yatai**. These mobile carts set up in the evening and only accommodate 10 people. The convivial atmosphere, shared conversation and delicious food cooked right in front of you make for an **unmissable Hakata food experience!**

 **Fukuoka (The Blossom Hakata Premier or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 4: Yame



Kyushu's **Yame** district is one of Japan's leading tea-producing areas and today you visit a **tea producer** by private transport to learn about the different grades and varieties of Japanese green tea. From a mountain-top lookout, we'll view the brilliant green of the **rolling tea fields** below and take some photogenic snaps. Your next stop is **Kyushu's oldest tea merchant**, established in 1865. A real highlight, you enjoy a cup of **gyokuro tea** (Japan's highest tea grade) prepared by the current fourteenth-generation owner.

Then it's on to learn about another famous Japanese beverage with a visit to an award-winning local **sake brewer**. You'll have a private tour of the production facilities followed by a **sake tasting** where you can chat freely with staff about the brewing process and different sake styles.

Tonight you have a free evening to explore the endless food delights of Fukuoka. Chat to your guide if you need any recommendations.

 **Fukuoka (The Blossom Hakata Premier or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch**

▼ Day 5: Itoshima



Your destination today is the coastal town of **Itoshima**, fast becoming a foodie haven. Here you visit an old family-owned **soy sauce brewery** as well as a **salt extraction farm** to learn how these fundamental ingredients are made using traditional methods.

As part of a **special experience** exclusively created for Journey to the East guests, you visit a small **vegetable farm** and the **local farmers' market** to see the range of produce grown in this fertile part of Kyushu. We've asked some local growers and chefs to prepare a **special private lunch** for our group using the best produce in season. They join us for lunch, offering an invaluable opportunity to connect in person and gain direct insights into their work and local life.

In the late afternoon you head to the pretty castle town of **Karatsu**. After a full day, relax into the Japanese aesthetic of your **ryokan hotel** with its sea views and enjoy a delicious **kaiseki banquet** of fresh local seafood served on a series of decorative ceramic plates. A quintessential Japan experience!

 **Yobuko (Taiboukaku or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**



▼ Day 6: Yobuko & Karatsu



Start the day with an authentic **Japanese-style breakfast** – a filling and nutritious feast of grilled fish, miso soup, steamed rice and pickles.

Nicely fortified, you head to **Yobuko morning market**, one of Japan's oldest morning markets. Here you can see fishers and stall-owners hawking all kinds of seafood, including the **dried local squid** for which Yobuko is famous.

This region is also known for its **ceramic-making traditions**, and after lunch we visit a kiln producing some of Karatsu's fine pottery. In Japan, the serving dish is regarded as integral part of the culinary experience as the food itself and a deserving focus for any food tour of Japan.

You stop by **Kagamiyama Park** to take in fine views of the Sea of Genkai framed by pretty **cherry blossoms**.

Tonight's dinner is **Japanese wagyu-beef** grilled ever so perfectly on a hot plate, teppanyaki-style!

 **Yobuko (Taiboukaku or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 7: Arita & Imari



Today you delve deeper into Japan's ceramic traditions and travel by private vehicle to Kyushu's two other famous pottery towns – **Arita** and **Imari**. Along with Karatsu, porcelain from these towns became highly prized both within Japan and Europe over the centuries, and remains sought after by collectors and restaurateurs alike.

You tour a **ceramics museum** and a **pottery village and kiln** to see artisans at work creating the elaborately coloured Arita-ware and the classic blue-and-white Imari-ware.

After an inspiring day learning about the world of Japanese ceramics, you travel on to the ever-picturesque harbour city of **Nagasaki**. The dinner tonight is a unique regional cuisine of Nagasaki called Shippoku Cuisine. Shippoku has been developed as a fusion of Japanese, Chinese and European (mainly Dutch) food reflecting its historical encounters with outside world.

 **Nagasaki (Hotel New Nagasaki or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 8: Nagasaki



Nagasaki was the only part of Japan open to the world during Japan's closed-door period in the 17th and 18th centuries, visited by Asian and European traders and missionaries. This heritage is still evident today in the city's architecture, culture and cuisine which reflects its cosmopolitan past.

Today you explore this fascinating city using the city's iconic streetcar, starting with a visit to the **Peace Park and Atomic Bomb Museum** which marks the events of that fateful day in August 1945. You will then visit **Dejima**, an open-air museum to learn Nagasaki's historic role. A lunch stop to sample popular Japanese curry completes the morning tour.

You have the afternoon and evening free to explore vibrant Nagasaki. Perhaps catch a ropeway up Mt Inasa for spectacular views of the harbour at night – allegedly one of the world's best!

 **Nagasaki (Hotel New Nagasaki or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch**

▼ Day 9: Nagasaki & Unzen



Your tour of Nagasaki continues this morning. You step into the past with a stroll through **Glover Garden** where the former residences of Japan's first European settlers are located. You also make a stop at **Oura Catholic Church**, Japan's oldest wooden church built by French missionaries. For lunch today we'll try another popular Nagasaki staple – **champon noodles**.

In the afternoon it's on to the **Shimabara Peninsula**, a historic and geographically unique part of Kyushu. Your destination is the onsen town of **Unzen**, located in spectacular **Unzen-Amakusa National Park** prized for its volcanic landscapes. Here you'll stay at one of the town's **onsen hotels** where you can enjoy its rejuvenating mineral baths after a full day of travel.

 **Unzen (Unzen Kyushu Hotel or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 10: Unzen & Shimabara



The day begins with a walk to **Unzen's bubbling jigoku**, or boiling hot springs. You then journey by private vehicle through picturesque **Nita-Toge Pass** where on a clear day you get spectacular views across the bay to our next destination – **Kumamoto**. You continue on to visit **Shimabara Castle** and admire its forest of **cherry blossoms**, and former **samurai residences**. You will also stop to see the buried houses at **Mt. Unzen Eruption Preservation Park**, which vividly captures the eruption of Mt Unzen in 1991. Later you board a **ferry** to Kumamoto.

Dinner tonight is at an **Italian-style restaurant**, where the Italy-trained chef is well-known for his efforts to preserve heritage Kumamoto vegetables. The Japanese influence on "Italian food" is a foodies treat.

 **Kumamoto (Hotel Nikko Kumamoto or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 11: Kumamoto



This morning's guided tour of Kumamoto focuses on one of Japan's most well-known castles. Originally built in 1607, **Kumamoto Castle** was damaged by the 2016 earthquake and still undergoing repair. However it remains a remarkable feudal complex with massive stone walls and it's fascinating to witness the different stages of restoration. The manicured grounds that surround this spectacular icon also offer some of Japan's best **cherry-blossom trees**. You will also visit **Suizenji Garden**, built for the powerful clan who once ruled the castle and region.

You have the rest of the day to explore Kumamoto at your leisure. You may like to soak up Kumamoto's feudal heritage by visiting a former samurai residence or browsing its great selection of modern shops. The city also offers a good selection of restaurants – with international and Japanese options. Perhaps try one of its izakaya Japanese-style pubs and enjoy some good local sake?

 **Kumamoto (Hotel Nikko Kumamoto or similar)**

 **Breakfast**

▼ Day 12: Mt Aso and Yufuin





You set out today by private vehicle for the delightful **onsen town** of **Yufuin**, passing through one of Kyushu's most picturesque landscapes – the volcanic caldera of **Mt Aso**. On the way you journey through an impressive avenue of **cherry blossom trees**.

Before arriving at Yufuin, you are in for another special treat. You will see **the performance of taiko** or Japanese drum at an open-air theater in the great Kuju region.

Stretch your legs on arrival in Yufuin with a guided walking tour. Located in a lush river basin surrounded by mountains, Yufuin's scenic **rural walking paths** and riverbanks lined with cherry trees make for an idyllic afternoon's activity.

Tonight you stay in a lovely boutique **ryokan** surrounded by a forested garden. Take a dip in one of its onsen baths, be calmed by its stylish interiors and enjoy the contemporary styling of its kaiseki cuisine.

 **Yufuin (Yufuin Tamanoyu or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 13: Fukuoka



Enjoy a relaxed start to the morning by exploring some of Yufuin's attractive craft shops and galleries, stopping by one of its charming cafes, or doing a leisurely circuit of scenic Lake Kinrinko.

Then it's time to return to **Fukuoka** by private vehicle for your last night of the tour and **farewell dinner**. Relive your best memories of your Kyushu food experiences at one of Fukuoka's **finest sushi restaurants**, serving up the freshest of fresh Kyushu seafood!

 **Fukuoka (The Blossom Hakata Premier)**

 **Breakfast, Dinner**

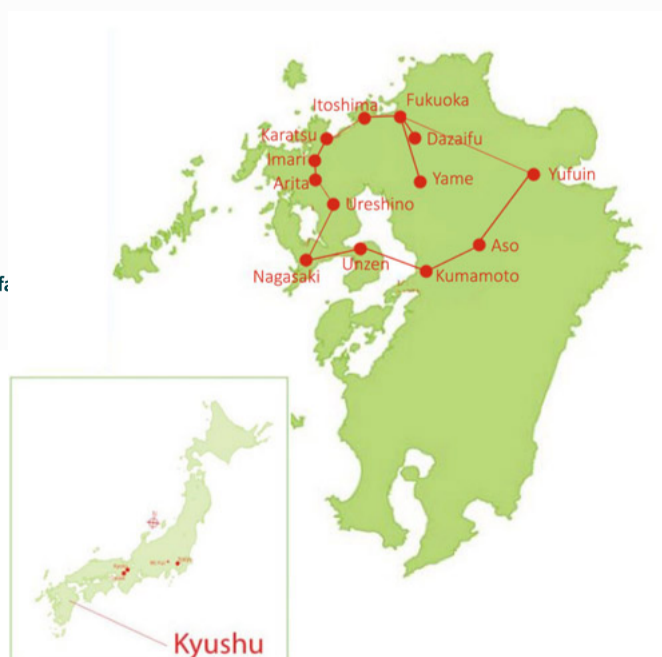
▼ Day 14: Goodbye in Fukuoka

You check out of your hotel after breakfast and your **2025 Food and Cherry Blossom Tour of Kyushu** concludes.

You can take a domestic flight from Fukuoka or return by shinkansen bullet-train to the international airports in Osaka or Tokyo. If you'd like to linger in Japan a little longer, we would be delighted to plan your personal post-tour extension to show you a different part of Japan. Please see our **Model Extension Itineraries** on Private Tour page for inspiration.

Note: The cost of an escorted transfer to your departure airport is not included in our Small Group Tours as we found many guests choose to stay in Japan a bit longer. However, we would be happy to arrange your transfer to your next destination or your departing airport. Please see our FAQ for more details.

 **Breakfast**



DATES & PRICES

2025 Food and Cherry Blossom Tour of Kyushu, Japan

TOUR CODE	STARTS	DEPARTS FROM	AVAILABLE PLACES [?]	CURRENCY	PP TWIN SHARE	SINGLE SUPPLEMENT [?]		
GFK-25	Mar 23, 2025	Fukuoka	Available	AUD\$	9,650	2,650	ASK A QUESTION	BOOK NOW
GFK-25a	Mar 30, 2025	Fukuoka	Available	AUD\$	9,650	2,650	ASK A QUESTION	BOOK NOW

Choose a different currency at the very top right of the page.



INCLUSIONS

Each guest is personally looked after with one-on-one interactions with our hand-picked, expert tour guides. As part of your investment, this tour includes:

- ✓ First-class wisdom and higher standard of individual care and attention
- ✓ 13 nights' accommodation (including traditional Japanese inns)
- ✓ All breakfasts
- ✓ 10 lunches (2 free choice lunches)
- ✓ 9 dinners (3 free choice dinners)
- ✓ Airport meet & greet on arrival
- ✓ Hotel transfer by public transport on arrival
- ✓ All local transport (train, bus and private minivans)
- ✓ Pre-loaded transport IC card
- ✓ Expert English speaking tour guides (locally licensed)
- ✓ Cultural activities and entry fees included in itinerary
- ✓ Luggage transfers (1 piece per person)

DISCLAIMER: Unless otherwise stated, this tour does not include the costs of international and domestic airfares, transfers on the last day, travel insurance, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, transport during free time, personal expenses (laundry, internet, telephone, coin lockers etc.) and Visa (if required).

Yatai food cart in Hakata (Fukuoka)

WHO THIS JAPAN TOUR IS FOR...

This is a perfect tour for people who:

- ▶ Want to visit **Kyushu**, away from the major tourist destinations of Japan at **cherry blossom** time



- ▶ Wish to deepen the knowledge of Japanese food while enjoying the sightseeing and cultural experiences
- ▶ Enjoy the guidance of **professional tour guides** as well as some **free time**
- ▶ Like extra small group tours **designed with healthy 55+** travelers in mind
- ▶ **Interact with locals** through the use of public transport and small local operators
- ▶ Experience a **variety in style**, and typically 4 star **boutique accommodation** with private bathroom

REVIEWS



We have travelled with JTTE on two occasions and felt we had ben im culture. At all times they were efficient, informative, and helpful. Both and interesting and the guides were amazing. I would highly recom



Trip date: March 2023

Robert Steele - NSW Australia

Have a question about this tour? Get in touch with our staff directly.

[CONTACT US](#)

INFORMATION

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