

BASIC TOUR OUTLINE

2026 CULTURE COASTLINE AND SPIRITUAL BEAUTY OF SAN'IN JAPAN (DISCOVERY)

Start: Thursday, 28 May 2026 from Tokyo (Haneda)
Finish: Tuesday, 9 June 2026 at Tottori
Duration: 13 days
Group size: 8 people
Cost estimate: AUD \$11,380 per person
Single supplement: AUD \$1,360 per person
Ref: GUI-26

TOUR OVERVIEW

Experience Japan's hidden gems on our exclusive 2026 Culture, Coastline and Spiritual Beauty of San'in Japan. The San'in region is a remote and pristine part of western Honshu facing the Sea of Japan. Discover tranquillity, unspoiled landscapes, and authentic culture in one of Japan's least-explored regions. Perfect for those seeking off-the-beaten-path adventures, this small-group journey delves into San'in's natural wonders, spiritual sites, traditional festivals, and pristine coastlines.

Highlights include visiting Izumo Taisha Grand Shrine, one of Japan's oldest and most significant Shinto shrines, and exploring the national treasure Matsue Castle. Hike Mt Daisen, one of Japan's top three sacred mountains alongside Mt. Fuji. Experience traditional Kagura performances, relax in authentic onsen hot springs, and watch skilled artisans create washi paper or forge swords and ironware. Off the coast, the Oki Islands UNESCO Geopark offers stunning geological formations, pristine beaches, and unique local cultures, perfect for eco-tourists and adventure travellers.

As one of Japan's least accessible regions, the small group tour format is an ideal way to travel this remote area. Be one of the first travellers to experience Japan's untouched treasures, which promises an unforgettable journey into Japan's lesser-known yet profoundly beautiful San'in region.

*Accommodation will be as planned below or similar.

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
1	Thu 28/5/2026	Airport meet and greet on arrival	Welcome to Japan! On arrival at Tokyo's Haneda or Narita International Airport, you will be met by a Journey to the East guide and escorted to your airport hotel.	No meals	Haneda Excel Hotel Tokyu [Standard Twin]

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
			<p>Today is an arrival day, and no group program is scheduled. Your hotel is located at Haneda Airport, given the early flight on Day 2. However, if you have time, consider a short trip into central Tokyo before the start of your 2026 Culture, Coastline and Spiritual Beauty of San'in Japan.</p> <p>*Many guests arrive a day or so early to settle in before the tour starts. Please contact us if you'd like us to arrange additional nights' accommodation in the same room as the tour or in central Tokyo.</p>		
2	Fri 29/5/2026	Guided tour of Tsuwano	<p>Begin your journey with a domestic flight from Tokyo's Haneda Airport to Hagi Iwami Airport, where the charm of rural Japan awaits. Met by your guide and minibus at the airport, you begin your exploration of the picturesque town of Tsuwano, often called "Little Kyoto," and immerse yourself in its rich history and serene beauty. Stroll down the iconic Tonomachi Street on a guided walking tour, where colourful irises bloom and graceful koi swim along peaceful canals beside white-walled samurai residences. Visit the stunning Taikodani Inari Shrine, one of Japan's top five Inari shrines, known for its vibrant red torii gates and panoramic views. Savour a traditional Japanese lunch crafted with local flavours before heading to the Sekishu Washi Centre, where you'll discover the centuries-old art of handmade Japanese paper. End your day with a tranquil stay at a charming traditional ryokan where heartfelt hospitality and the calming rhythms of the countryside promise a restful night.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Ryokan Nushiya [Japanese or Western bed room]
3	Sat 30/5/2026	Guided tour of Iwami Ginzan	<p>After a hearty breakfast at your ryokan, you head to another adventure, travelling in the comfort of a private minibus, to the historic Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine, a UNESCO World Heritage Site nestled in the lush mountains of Shimane. Discover the fascinating legacy of this once-flourishing mining town, where stone paths, charming old buildings, and serene forest trails to hear stories of Japan's Edo-era prosperity.</p> <p>In the afternoon, you visit the workshop of a local artisan who crafts traditional masks from washi paper for the dynamic Iwami Kagura dance - an art form deeply rooted in the region's culture. Continue to the nostalgic hot spring town of Yunotsu, where time seems to slow down. Enjoy a guided walking tour through the town's quiet streets, visiting a traditional public bathhouse, a local pottery studio, and the atmospheric Okidomari Port, where history lingers in the sea breeze. After a delicious local dinner, join the community at a nearby shrine to witness a live Iwami Kagura performance - a powerful, colourful spectacle of myth, music, and dance that will leave a lasting impression. Spend the night at a cozy ryokan in Yunotsu, surrounded by the warmth of tradition and hospitality.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	Kiunso [Japanese style tatami mat room with futon bedding - shared bathroom]

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
4	Sun 31/5/2026	Guided tour of Izumo	<p>Begin your journey through the heart of Japanese mythology with a visit to the revered Izumo Taisha Grand Shrine - one of Japan's oldest and most sacred Shinto shrines, steeped in ancient legend and spiritual significance. Enjoy a detailed guided tour that brings to life the stories of gods and creation myths that shaped the nation's cultural heritage.</p> <p>In the afternoon, immerse yourself in the serene elegance of the Izumo Quilt Museum, set within a beautifully preserved traditional Japanese house. Marvel at the exquisite craftsmanship of local textile artists and take in the tranquil beauty of the surrounding Japanese garden. As evening falls, savour a delightful dinner at a local izakaya, where you can enjoy fresh regional produce and traditional flavours in a warm, lively atmosphere. Conclude your day with a restful stay at a comfortable hotel in Izumo.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Dormy Inn Izumo [Deluxe Twin Room]
5	Mon 1/6/2026	Guided tour of Oki Islands	<p>Days 5 and 6 take you right off the beaten path to the stunning Oki Islands - remote gems off the Shimane coast and a designated UNESCO Global Geopark. This unforgettable leg of the journey could well be the highlight of your tour. Begin with a short scenic flight from Izumo to the Oki Islands, where your adventure starts on Dōgo Island. Explore its spiritual and natural wonders with a guided tour, including visits to the revered Tamawakasumikoto Shrine and the ancient Iwakurano Chichisugi, a sacred thousand-year-old cedar tree rooted deep in local mythology. Continue to see the windswept Yana Pine Tree, dramatically clinging to the rocky coast, and admire the charm of traditional boathouses lining the quiet inlets, offering a glimpse into the island's timeless way of life. Then, board a ferry to Nishinoshima Island and witness the dramatic Kuniga Coast, where sheer cliffs like Matengai - the highest in Japan - tower over the crashing waves. Continue by ferry to peaceful Ama Town, where you'll unwind at Entō, a beautifully designed hotel offering panoramic ocean views and an immersive experience in island serenity.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	Ento [Nest 2 - Twin room]

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6	Tue 2/6/2026	Guided tour of Oki Islands	On Day 6, embark on a scenic ferry ride to Chiburijima, the smallest and perhaps most remote of the Oki Islands - a hidden treasure that offers breathtaking natural beauty and a true sense of seclusion. Enjoy a guided tour of the island, where you'll witness the striking Sekiheki, or Red Cliff, a dramatic coastal formation carved by time and tide. Along the way, take in sweeping ocean vistas, unique wildlife, and the rugged, untouched charm of one of Japan's most isolated corners. After a relaxed lunch on the island, return by ferry to your hotel in Ama Town. The afternoon is yours to experience the slow rhythm of island life - rent an e-bike and explore the coastal roads, glide across the sea on an underwater observation boat, or join the hotel staff for an interpretive tour of the UNESCO Geopark. Or simply unwind and soak in the serene view of the surrounding islands. The evening is free for you to dine at your leisure, with several welcoming local restaurants just a short stroll away.	Breakfast, Lunch	Ento [Nest 2 - Twin room]
7	Wed 3/6/2026	Guided tour of Matsue	Begin your day with a high-speed ferry journey from the Oki Islands back to mainland Shimane. Be prepared to be enchanted by Yushien Garden, a stunning example of traditional Japanese landscape design. Later, delve into the rich history of Matsue with a guided tour, exploring the majestic Matsue Castle, a designated National Treasure. Wander through atmospheric samurai houses and gain insight into the life of Lafcadio Hearn (Koizumi Yakumo) at his memorial museum. Conclude your day with a comfortable stay at a modern hotel in Matsue, savouring dinner at a local restaurant and reflecting on the day's cultural discoveries.	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Matsue Excel Hotel Tokyu [Superior Twin or Double]
8	Thu 4/6/2026	Guided tour of Oku Izumo and Unnan	Today's journey takes you deep into the mountainous heart of Oku Izumo, where Japan's legendary swordsmithing traditions were born. Travel by minibus through scenic countryside to the Oku Izumo Tatara Sword Museum, where you'll uncover the rich history of tatara iron forging - the ancient method used to craft the steel of the samurai's revered katana. After lunch, continue to the remote Sugaya Tatara Sannai site, nestled in the forested hills of Unnan. Here, walk through a beautifully preserved example of a traditional tatara furnace, and gain insight into the intense labour and precision behind this age-old craft. Return to Matsue in the late afternoon. This evening is yours to enjoy: take a serene stroll to catch the famous sunset over Lake Shinjiko - an unforgettable sight - before discovering a local restaurant for dinner at your own pace.	Breakfast, Lunch	Matsue Excel Hotel Tokyu [Superior Twin or Double]

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9	Fri 5/6/2026	Guided tour of Daisen	Begin your day with a visit to the Shoji Ueda Museum of Photography, dedicated to one of Japan's most celebrated photographers, known for his surreal compositions and deep connection to the Tottori landscape. Next, immerse yourself in the vibrant beauty of Tottori Hanakairo Flower Park, one of Japan's largest flower gardens, where seasonal blooms create a living tapestry against the backdrop of Mount Daisen. In the afternoon, ascend to the majestic slopes of Mt. Daisen, one of Japan's most sacred peaks and a centre of ancient nature worship. Here, you'll experience the quiet spirituality of Daisenji Temple, where a guided meditation invites reflection amid towering cedars and mountain air. Tonight, stay in the Mount Daisen area, where the serene views and spiritual energy of this sacred mountain offer a peaceful close to the day.	Breakfast, Dinner	Mercure Tottori Daisen Resort & Spa [Standard Twin Room]
10	Sat 6/6/2026	Guided tour of Kurayoshi	This morning, discover the intricate beauty of local craftsmanship as you explore two traditional art forms unique to the region. First, admire Kote-e - plaster relief art created with a trowel - an expressive blend of sculpture and architecture. Then visit Kanzaki Temple in Kotoura Town, where masterful woodcarvings showcase generations of artisanal skill in breathtaking detail. In the afternoon, stroll the nostalgic streets of Kurayoshi with a guided tour through its charming white-walled storehouses and red-tiled roofs, offering a glimpse into Edo-period life. Afterwards, venture to Mitokusan, a sacred mountain known for its dramatic landscapes and the awe-inspiring Nageiredo Hall, a temple built impossibly into the cliffs. This spiritual site offers a profound connection to nature and ancient mountain worship. Your day concludes in the historic hot spring town of Misasa Onsen, where traditional ryokan hospitality awaits. Relax in a tatami room, savour an exquisite kaiseki dinner, and soak in the healing waters of the onsen - a soothing finale to a culturally rich day.	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Mansuirou [Japanese style room with tatami mat]
11	Sun 7/6/2026	Guided tour of Tottori	Today, you arrive at your final destination - Tottori, home to Japan's most iconic desert-like landscape. Begin at the Tottori Sand Dunes, the region's top attraction, where vast, undulating dunes meet the Sea of Japan. Visit the information centre to learn about the fascinating geological forces that shaped this natural wonder, then marvel at the incredible sand sculptures at the Tottori Sand Museum, where artistry and nature collide. After lunch at a seaside restaurant with views of the coast, head to your final accommodation: Ooe Valley Stay, a beautifully repurposed former primary school nestled in the countryside. Created by a visionary local agricultural company, this unique retreat celebrates harmony between people and nature. Savour farm-to-table meals prepared with fresh local produce, and take part in optional hands-on activities that offer a gentle grounding close to your journey through rural Japan.	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Ooe Valley Stay [Standard Twin]

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
12	Mon 8/6/2026	Tottori and free afternoon	<p>On the final day of your journey, head into the peaceful mountains of Chizu Town for a revitalising forest walk - an opportunity to breathe deeply, connect with nature, and soak in the calming energy of the ancient woods. For lunch, enjoy a memorable meal at Mitakien, a rustic country restaurant famed for its traditional farm-to-table cuisine, served in a serene thatched-roof setting. The afternoon is yours to enjoy at your own pace: hop on a bicycle to explore the countryside, take a leisurely walk, try your hand at plant dyeing, relax with afternoon tea at a cozy café, or shop for handcrafted sweets and local treats. As the sun sets, gather for a heartfelt "Farewell Japan" dinner with your fellow travellers - sharing stories, laughter, and reflections on the unforgettable memories you've made together.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Ooe Valley Stay [Standard Twin]
13	Tue 9/6/2026	Departure	<p>This morning, you check out of your hotel after breakfast, and your 2026 Culture, Coastline and Spiritual Beauty of San'in Japan concludes.</p> <p>You can take a domestic flight from nearby Tottori Airport to Haneda (Tokyo) for your connecting flight. Alternatively, Tottori is close to other popular destinations of western Japan, such as Okayama, Hiroshima, Kobe, Himeji or Kyoto and Osaka if you would like to linger in Japan a little longer. Please talk to one of our friendly travel consultants; we would be delighted to plan your personal post-tour extension to show you a different part of Japan.</p> <p>Note: The cost of your transfer to your departure airport is not included in this tour, as we found many guests choose to travel further to other parts of Japan. However, we would be happy to arrange your transfer to your next destination or your departing airport.</p>	Breakfast	
Inclusions for Group Tour		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 12 nights' accommodation (including traditional Japanese inns) ■ All breakfasts ■ 8 lunches ■ 9 dinners ■ Airport meet & greet on arrival ■ Transfer to the hotel at Haneda Airport ■ All local transport (domestic flights, ferries and private minibus & minivans) ■ Expert English-speaking tour guides (locally licensed) ■ Cultural activities and entry fees are included in the itinerary 			

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		Exclusions for Group Tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ International and domestic airfare (unless otherwise stated) ■ Travel insurance ■ Transfer on the last day ■ Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages (except the 1st drink at each meal) ■ Tips and gratuities ■ Transport during free time ■ Personal expenses (laundry, coin-locker, internet, telephone etc.) ■ Visa (if required) 		