

BASIC TOUR OUTLINE

2027 FOOD AND CHERRY BLOSSOM TOUR OF KYUSHU JAPAN (SIGNATURE)

Start: Thursday, 25 March 2027 from Fukuoka

Finish: Wednesday, 7 April 2027 at Fukuoka

Duration: 14 days

Group size: 8 people

Cost estimate: AUD \$11,600 per person

Single supplement: AUD \$2,130 per person

Ref: GFK-27

TOUR OVERVIEW

The 2027 Food & Cherry Blossom Tour of Kyushu invites you to experience Japan's western island at its most enchanting - bursting with spring colour and rich culinary tradition. Fast emerging as one of Japan's most celebrated gourmet regions, Kyushu is renowned for its pristine produce, time-honoured food artisans, and relaxed pace of life. Limited to just 8 guests, this thoughtfully curated 14-day journey is ideal for travellers who appreciate fine food, cultural depth, and travelling unhurried.

Far from the bustle of Japan's major centres, you'll explore charming towns, scenic landscapes, and historic culinary heartlands - each framed by the soft pink beauty of cherry blossom season. Along the way, you will enjoy an inspiring range of Japanese cuisine, from elegant multi-course kaiseki dining to an experience at a Michelin-star restaurant, as well as hearty home-style dishes and lively street-food favourites.

Your journey also opens doors to generations-old producers and skilled makers of Kyushu's renowned ceramic ware - an essential part of Japanese food presentation and an art form in its own right. These encounters offer meaningful insight into the traditions that shape Japan's food culture.

Please note: As this tour has been carefully designed to showcase a wide variety of traditional and modern Japanese meals, menus cannot be altered to suit individual dietary requirements, including allergies.

*Accommodation will be as planned below or similar.

| DAY | DATE | PLAN | DETAILS | MEALS | ACCOMODATION |
|-----|------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Thu 25/3/2027 | Airport meet and greet on arrival | <p>On arrival in Fukuoka for the 2027 Food and Cherry Blossom Tour of Kyushu, Japan, you'll be warmly welcomed by a Journey to the East staff member at either Fukuoka Airport or the main railway station and escorted to your hotel.</p> <p>Fukuoka is easily accessible by both rail and air from other parts of Japan. If you would like assistance arranging a connection from your arrival port to Fukuoka or wish to book an extra night at your hotel, our team will be delighted to help ensure your journey begins smoothly and comfortably.</p> | No meals | The Gate Hotel Fukuoka [Essential Double/Twin] |
| 2 | Fri 26/3/2027 | Guided tour of Fukuoka | <p>After a morning orientation with your guide, begin a walking tour of Hakata, Fukuoka's historic heart and one of Japan's most vibrant port districts. Hakata has long been celebrated for its rich culture, traditional crafts, and, of course, its world-famous Hakata ramen - thin, firm noodles in a rich pork-bone broth.</p> <p>Stop at a classic Hakata ramen restaurant for lunch and discover firsthand why locals are so passionate about their noodles. Along the way, wander through the lively old shopping arcade, where traditional kitchenware - from finely crafted Japanese knives to dashi stock - offers a glimpse into daily culinary life in Kyushu.</p> <p>In the evening, enjoy a welcome dinner at a Michelin-starred Japanese restaurant, renowned for its exquisite multi-course banquet of seasonal dishes served in a beautifully traditional setting - the perfect introduction to the flavours and artistry of Japanese cuisine.</p> | Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner | The Gate Hotel Fukuoka [Essential Double/Twin] |

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| 3 | Sat 27/3/2027 | Cooking lesson and guided tour of Dazaifu | <p>Today, enjoy one of the exclusive immersive experiences created by Journey to the East. Step into the kitchen studio of a professional chef in her beautifully renovated traditional home, where you'll be introduced to the core principles of Japanese cuisine. Roll up your sleeves and prepare a selection of dishes under her guidance - an experience designed to be both fun and educational, leaving you confident to recreate these flavours at home.</p> <p>Next, travel to the neighbouring town of Dazaifu to visit the magnificent Tenmangu Shrine, dedicated to the 9th-century scholar revered as the god of literature and learning. The shrine's elegant architecture and serene grounds provide a fascinating insight into Japan's cultural heritage.</p> <p>Return to Fukuoka in the evening for a taste of authentic local life at the city's legendary Yatai food stalls. These intimate mobile carts, seating just a handful of guests, offer a convivial atmosphere where conversation flows as freely as the food is cooked - an unforgettable Hakata street food experience that perfectly complements your culinary journey through Kyushu.</p> | Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner | The Gate Hotel Fukuoka [Essential Double/Twin] |
| 4 | Sun 28/3/2027 | Guided tour of Yame | <p>Today, you venture to Kyushu's Yame district, one of Japan's most celebrated tea-producing regions. Travel by private transport to a local tea producer to learn about the different grades and varieties of Japanese green tea, and enjoy a stunning mountain-top view of the rolling emerald tea fields, perfect for photography and quiet reflection. Next, visit Kyushu's oldest tea merchant, established in 1865, where an expert prepares a cup of gyokuro, Japan's finest tea - a true highlight for tea enthusiasts.</p> <p>After lunch, discover another iconic Japanese beverage with a visit to an award-winning local sake brewery. Enjoy a private tour of the production facilities, followed by a sake tasting and an opportunity to speak directly with the brewers about their techniques and styles.</p> <p>Return to Fukuoka for a free evening to explore the city's renowned culinary scene. Your guide is on hand with recommendations for an authentic taste of local delights.</p> | Breakfast, Lunch | The Gate Hotel Fukuoka [Essential Double/Twin] |

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| 5 | Mon 29/3/2027 | Guided tour of Itoshima | <p>Today, you travel to the scenic coastal town of Itoshima, a rising hotspot for food lovers. Explore a historic family-owned soy sauce brewery and a traditional salt farm, discovering how these essential Japanese ingredients are crafted using time-honoured methods.</p> <p>Visit the vibrant local farmers' market, where seasonal produce showcases the fertility of Kyushu's land. Enjoy a special private lunch prepared by local chefs using the finest ingredients, including a hands-on onigiri (Japanese rice ball) making lesson - a rare opportunity to connect with the chefs and gain personal insights into local culinary life.</p> <p>In the late afternoon, journey to the charming castle town of Karatsu. Unwind in the serene Japanese aesthetic of your ryokan hotel, overlooking the sea, and indulge in a kaiseki banquet of fresh local seafood, beautifully presented on traditional ceramics - a truly quintessential Japanese experience.</p> | Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner | Taiboukaku [Japanese & Western style room] |
| 6 | Tue 30/3/2027 | Guided tour of Yobuko and Karatsu | <p>Begin the day with an authentic Japanese breakfast, featuring grilled fish, miso soup, steamed rice, and seasonal pickles - a nourishing start to your day.</p> <p>Travel to the historic Yobuko Morning Market, one of Japan's oldest markets, where fishers and vendors display a dazzling array of seafood, including the region's famous dried squid, offering a vivid glimpse into local culinary traditions.</p> <p>Next, explore Karatsu's renowned ceramic heritage with a visit to a local kiln. In Japan, the artistry of the serving dish is as important as the food itself, making this a highlight for any Japanese food and culture tour.</p> <p>After a leisurely lunch at a charming local restaurant, enjoy a scenic stroll at Kagamiyama Park, where the Sea of Genkai provides a stunning backdrop to cherry blossoms in full bloom - a perfect combination of nature, culture, and cuisine.</p> | Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner | Taiboukaku [Japanese & Western style room] |

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| 7 | Wed 31/3/2027 | Guided tour of Arita and Imari | <p>Today, you explore Kyushu's celebrated ceramic towns of Arita and Imari, travelling by private vehicle from Karatsu. These towns, along with Karatsu, have produced porcelain that was highly prized both in Japan and Europe for centuries, and continues to be sought after by collectors, chefs, and restaurateurs worldwide.</p> <p>In Arita, discover the intricately coloured Arita-ware, known for its delicate hand-painted designs and refined porcelain craftsmanship. In Imari, witness artisans creating the classic blue-and-white Imari-ware, renowned for its bold patterns and timeless elegance. Visit a ceramics museum, a traditional pottery village, and an active kiln to see master potters at work. Lunch is a special treat, served in authentic Arita porcelain, allowing you to experience firsthand the artistry that elevates Japanese cuisine.</p> <p>After an inspiring day immersed in Japanese ceramic traditions, continue to the picturesque harbour city of Nagasaki, where you can enjoy a relaxing free evening to wander, dine, or simply soak in the city's atmosphere.</p> | Breakfast, Lunch | Nagasaki Marriott Hotel [Double/Twin] |
| 8 | Thu 1/4/2027 | Guided tour of Nagasaki | <p>Nagasaki was the only part of Japan open to foreign trade during the 17th and 18th centuries, attracting Asian and European merchants and missionaries. This cosmopolitan heritage is still evident today in the city's architecture, culture, and cuisine.</p> <p>Explore Nagasaki by the city's iconic streetcar, beginning with visits to the Peace Park and Atomic Bomb Museum, solemn reminders of the events of August 1945. Continue to Dejima, an open-air museum showcasing Nagasaki's historic role as Japan's window to the world.</p> <p>After a free afternoon, experience a unique Nagasaki culinary tradition with dinner featuring Shippoku cuisine, a historic fusion of Japanese, Chinese, and European (primarily Dutch) flavours - reflecting the city's rich history of cultural exchange and trade.</p> | Breakfast, Dinner | Nagasaki Marriott Hotel [Double/Twin] |

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| 9 | Fri 2/4/2027 | Guided tour of Nagasaki and Unzen | <p>Today's focus is on Nagasaki's rich fisheries. Visit a local fish farm to learn how Japan maintains its seafood industry sustainably, gaining insight into the practices that support both the local economy and the environment.</p> <p>For lunch, enjoy Champon noodles, a beloved Nagasaki specialty combining fresh seafood, vegetables, and noodles in a hearty, flavourful broth.</p> <p>In the afternoon, journey to the Shimabara Peninsula, a historic and geologically unique region of Kyushu. Your destination is the onsen town of Unzen, nestled within the breathtaking Unzen-Amakusa National Park, famous for its volcanic landscapes. Check in to one of Unzen's onsen hotels and relax in its rejuvenating mineral baths - an ideal way to unwind after a day of travel and exploration.</p> | Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner | Unzen Kyushu Hotel [Terrace Premier Double/Twin] |
| 10 | Sat 3/4/2027 | Guided tour of Unzen and Shimabara | <p>Begin the day with a stroll to Unzen's bubbling jigoku, or "hells," where geothermal hot springs create a dramatic landscape unique to the region. Travel by private vehicle along the scenic Nita-Toge Pass, offering spectacular views across the bay toward Kumamoto on clear days.</p> <p>Explore Shimabara Castle, surrounded by a forest of cherry blossoms, and visit the area's former samurai residences. Stop at the Mt Unzen Eruption Preservation Park to see the buried houses, a vivid reminder of the 1991 eruption. Later, board a ferry to Kumamoto, enjoying the coastal scenery along the way.</p> <p>Dinner tonight is at a charming Italian-style restaurant, where an Italian-trained chef creatively showcases heritage Kumamoto vegetables with a Japanese twist - a treat for food enthusiasts and a perfect introduction to the region's innovative culinary scene.</p> | Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner | Hotel Nikko Kumamoto [Western style room] |

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| 11 | Sun 4/4/2027 | Guided tour of Kumamoto | <p>This morning, enjoy a guided tour of Kumamoto Castle, one of Japan's most iconic castles. Originally built in 1607, the castle suffered damage during the 2016 earthquake and is still undergoing restoration, offering a fascinating glimpse into Japan's preservation efforts. The castle's massive stone walls and beautifully manicured grounds are home to some of Japan's most spectacular cherry blossom trees.</p> <p>Next, visit Suizenji Japanese Garden, created for the powerful clan that once ruled Kumamoto. Its carefully designed landscapes reflect centuries of Japanese horticultural artistry.</p> <p>The afternoon is free to explore Kumamoto at your own pace. Browse its selection of modern shops, or enjoy a meal at one of the city's many restaurants - ranging from traditional Japanese to international cuisine. For an authentic local experience, consider visiting an izakaya, where you can sample regional sake and soak in the lively atmosphere.</p> | Breakfast | Hotel Nikko Kumamoto [Western style room] |
| 12 | Mon 5/4/2027 | Guided tour of Mt Aso | <p>Today, you travel through one of Kyushu's most spectacular landscapes: the volcanic caldera of Mt Aso. Stop at scenic vantage points to appreciate the vast scale of the caldera and witness the dramatic, ever-changing nature of this active volcano.</p> <p>Experience a taste of Japan's emerging winemaking scene with a visit to a local vineyard, sampling wines crafted from Kyushu-grown grapes - a delightful introduction to this growing industry.</p> <p>Tonight, unwind at a charming boutique onsen hotel nestled in nature. Relax in the mineral-rich hot spring baths, breathing in the crisp air and enjoying the serenity of the surroundings - an experience that perfectly showcases why onsen bathing is a cherished Japanese tradition.</p> | Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner | Spa Greenness [Standard Twin Room] |
| 13 | Tue 6/4/2027 | Transfer to and guided tour of Fukuoka | <p>Enjoy a relaxed morning before travelling back to Fukuoka by private vehicle for your final night of the tour. On the way, stop at a large kitchenware store to pick up any special utensils or culinary souvenirs to bring a taste of Japan home with you.</p> <p>Tonight, celebrate the end of your journey with a farewell sushi dinner at one of Fukuoka's finest restaurants. Savour the freshest Kyushu seafood and reflect on the highlights of your Kyushu food and cultural adventure, from traditional markets and Michelin-star dining to hands-on cooking experiences.</p> | Breakfast, Dinner | The Gate Hotel Fukuoka [Essential Double/Twin] |

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| 14 | Wed 7/4/2027 | Departure | <p>After breakfast and hotel check-out, your 2027 Food and Cherry Blossom Tour of Kyushu concludes.</p> <p>You may take a domestic flight from Fukuoka or travel by Shinkansen (bullet train) to the international airports in Osaka or Tokyo. For those wishing to extend their stay in Japan, our team of Japan travel experts can help design a personal post-tour itinerary, allowing you to explore another region at your own pace.</p> | Breakfast | |
| Inclusions for Group Tour | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 13 nights' accommodation (including traditional Japanese inns) ■ All breakfasts, 9 lunches and 9 dinners ■ Airport meet & greet on arrival ■ Hotel transfer by public transport on arrival ■ All local transport (train, bus and private minivans) ■ Private transfer to the airport at departure ■ Expert English-speaking tour guides (locally licensed) ■ Cultural activities and entry fees are included in the itinerary | | |
| Exclusions for Group Tour | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ International and domestic airfare (unless otherwise stated) ■ Travel insurance ■ 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) | | |