

BASIC TOUR OUTLINE

2026 FOOD TOUR OF KYUSHU JAPAN IN AUTUMN (SIGNATURE)

START: (Refer to website for date) from Fukuoka

FINISH: at Fukuoka

DURATION: 13 days

PRICE: AUD \$10,840 per person

GROUP size: 8 people

SINGLE SUPP: AUD \$2,230 per person

REF: GFA-26

TOUR OVERVIEW

2026 Food Tour of Kyushu - A Culturally Immersive Culinary Journey in Autumn

Explore Japan through its flavours on our multi-day food tour of Kyushu, a fully guided, small-group journey designed for culturally curious travellers who value depth, connection, and exceptional cuisine. Set during Kyushu's peak autumn foliage, this tour takes you beyond the busy mainland to discover the island's relaxed pace, rich traditions, and vibrant food culture.

Savour a curated variety of traditional and modern Japanese meals, from seasonal kaiseki and hearty local dishes to fresh market seafood - all thoughtfully selected to reflect the region's heritage. Meet local chefs, artisans, and producers, and stay in boutique accommodations that offer comfort with character.

Perfect for those seeking a food tour in regional Japan, this tour offers authentic experiences shaped by Kyushu's multicultural influences and framed by its brilliant autumn scenery.

The journey begins and ends on Kyushu Island for a seamless experience. If it's your first time in Japan, we recommend extending your stay - our team at Journey to the East can tailor a private itinerary to suit your interests.

Please note: As this tour is designed to highlight a wide range of Japanese cuisine, we are unable to adjust menus for dietary restrictions or allergies.

*Accommodation will be as planned below or similar.

DAY	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
1	Airport meet and greet on arrival	Fukuoka, often called Japan's "River City," is a vibrant blend of tradition and modernity, and the perfect starting point for your autumn culinary journey through Kyushu. As one of Japan's most liveable cities, Fukuoka is renowned for its dynamic food scene, warm hospitality, and easy access via its international airport and JR Hakata Station, served by the Shinkansen (bullet train). Upon arrival - whether by air or rail - you'll be warmly greeted by your Journey to the East	No meals	The Gate Hotel Fukuoka [Essential Double/Hollywood Twin]

DAY	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
		<p>guide and escorted to your hotel, where you can settle in and begin to soak up the local atmosphere.</p> <p>If you'd like to arrive a day or two early to unwind and adjust before the tour officially begins, we'll be happy to arrange additional nights in the same hotel room (subject to availability).</p> <p>After a restful night, you'll be ready to begin your immersive 2026 Kyushu Food Tour - an unforgettable exploration of regional flavours, stories, and traditions at the heart of Japan's southern island.</p>		
2	Guided tour of Fukuoka	<p>Your culinary journey begins in Fukuoka, a city with over 2,000 years of rich history and a deep-rooted food culture shaped by centuries of trade with Asia. As Kyushu's vibrant gateway, Fukuoka offers a fascinating blend of ancient traditions and contemporary urban life.</p> <p>This morning, set out on a guided walking tour of the old Hakata district, where you'll discover the city's cultural foundations. Visit the Hakata Folk Museum to learn about traditional industries and admire the intricate art of Hakata-ori, a silk weaving craft unique to the region and still practised today.</p> <p>For lunch, dive into Fukuoka's most iconic dish - Hakata ramen. You'll not only taste its deep, umami-rich pork broth and springy noodles, but also gain insight into why ramen culture is taken so seriously here.</p> <p>In the afternoon, explore the stylish Tenjin district. Beneath its sleek, modern exterior lies a hidden world of long-established food shops and specialty stores - where dashi, artisan kitchen tools, and culinary tradition endure in tucked-away arcades.</p> <p>This evening, celebrate the start of your Food Tour of Kyushu, Japan, in Autumn with a welcome dinner at a Michelin-starred Japanese restaurant. Enjoy a beautifully presented multi-course meal that reflects the seasonal bounty and culinary refinement of Kyushu - a memorable introduction to the flavours and hospitality that await you throughout your journey.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	The Gate Hotel Fukuoka [Essential Double/Hollywood Twin]

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3	Cooking lesson and guided tour of Dazaifu	<p>Today offers a deep dive into both the flavours and spirit of Japan. Your morning begins with an intimate cooking lesson at a chef's private studio, located in a beautifully restored traditional home on the outskirts of Fukuoka. Guided by a passionate culinary expert, you'll learn to prepare authentic Japanese dishes using seasonal ingredients - and gain skills and recipes you can take home to recreate the tastes of Kyushu in your kitchen.</p> <p>In the afternoon, travel to the historic town of Dazaifu, once a political and cultural hub of ancient Kyushu. Visit the revered Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine, dedicated to the deified poet-scholar Sugawara no Michizane. Surrounded by plum trees and rich with atmosphere, the shrine is a place of deep cultural and spiritual significance.</p> <p>Just nearby is the Kyushu National Museum, where your guide will offer insight into Japan's complex history and its long-standing cultural exchanges with other parts of Asia - an enriching perspective that adds depth to your food journey.</p> <p>This evening, experience Fukuoka's beloved street food culture at a yatai - a traditional food stall that sets up along the streets each night. These cozy carts serve freshly grilled specialties in a warm, convivial setting with only ten seats. It's the perfect way to mingle with locals, share stories, and taste another authentic side of Hakata's culinary life.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	The Gate Hotel Fukuoka [Essential Double/Hollywood Twin]

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4	Guided tour of Itoshima and transfer to Yobuko	<p>This morning, you'll set off to Itoshima - a stunning rural region just outside Fukuoka that's quickly earning a reputation as one of Japan's emerging foodie destinations. Framed by mountains and the sea, Itoshima is home to passionate producers, pristine natural resources, and a vibrant farm-to-table culture.</p> <p>Today is filled with exclusive, behind-the-scenes experiences curated especially for Journey to the East guests. Begin with a visit to a fourth-generation soy sauce brewery, where time-honoured fermentation techniques meet uncompromising craftsmanship. You'll learn about the delicate balance of flavour and time that defines truly artisanal soy sauce - an essential ingredient at the heart of Japanese cuisine.</p> <p>Next, explore a traditional sea salt farm where mineral-rich seawater is slowly evaporated over wood fires in a process that hasn't changed for centuries. The result is a pure, flavourful salt prized by chefs across Japan and overseas.</p> <p>Between visits, stop by a bustling local farmers' market to see the region's seasonal produce at its freshest - and to meet the people who grow it. This is a chance to connect with Kyushu's agricultural roots and discover how its culinary identity is grounded in freshness and locality.</p> <p>Lunch today is a true highlight: a private meal prepared just for our group by local chefs using regional ingredients. As part of the experience, you'll join a short onigiri (Japanese rice ball) making lesson, learning traditional techniques and the cultural meaning behind this humble yet beloved comfort food.</p> <p>In the late afternoon, travel to the quaint fishing village of Yobuko, where you'll check in to a charming boutique ryokan (traditional Japanese inn) perched by the Sea of Genkai. Unwind in your tatami-mat room, thoughtfully decorated in Japanese style, and soak in a serene public bath with panoramic ocean views.</p> <p>This evening, enjoy a beautifully presented kaiseki dinner showcasing the bounty of the sea - featuring ultra-fresh squid, shellfish, and other delicacies caught just offshore.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Taiboukaku [Japanese & Western style room]

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5	Guided tour of Karatsu	<p>Begin your day with a traditional Japanese-style breakfast - an elegant and nourishing spread of grilled fish, miso soup, rice, and pickles.</p> <p>Your first stop this morning is the renowned Yobuko Morning Market, one of Japan's three traditional morning markets. As you stroll through the streets, you'll witness the rhythms of daily life in a remote fishing village. Local vendors offer fresh and dried seafood - most notably squid, a prized specialty of the region. It's a wonderful opportunity to connect with local food culture at its source.</p> <p>Next, you'll transfer to the seaside town of Karatsu, celebrated for its rich pottery heritage. Begin your exploration at the beautifully preserved Former Takatori Residence, a stately 19th-century villa that offers a glimpse into the refined lifestyle of a Meiji-era coal baron. The villa's elegant wooden architecture, serene gardens, and tatami rooms are a testament to traditional Japanese design.</p> <p>Then, visit one of the most respected Karatsu-yaki pottery studios in the region. This fifth-generation kiln continues to produce pottery using traditional techniques, including the use of a historic climbing kiln. You'll have the rare chance to see a master potter at work and to learn why Karatsu ware has long been admired by tea ceremony practitioners and collectors for its understated beauty and wabi-sabi aesthetic.</p> <p>This evening, enjoy a delightful change of pace with dinner at a cozy local pizzeria. Tucked away in the quiet townscape, this tiny restaurant serves up wood-fired pizzas made with care and creativity - a perfect and satisfying contrast to the Japanese meals of the previous days, while still embracing the spirit of local hospitality.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	Taiboukaku [Japanese & Western style room]

DAY	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
6	Guided tour of Arita and Imari	<p>Today is a visual and sensory feast, beginning with a journey into the refined world of Kyushu's celebrated porcelain traditions. You'll visit select kilns in Arita and Imari, two historic towns renowned for their exquisite ceramic artistry. Arita-yaki is known for its vivid, multi-coloured designs and fine detail, while Imari-yaki typically features elegant blue-and-white patterns, echoing centuries-old Chinese and Korean influences.</p> <p>More than just beautiful objects, these ceramics have long played an essential role in the Japanese dining experience, where the presentation of food is considered just as important as its taste.</p> <p>Lunch is enjoyed at a charming local café, where seasonal Kyushu fare is served on traditional Arita porcelain.</p> <p>In the afternoon, you'll journey onward to Nagasaki, a city with a rich, multicultural legacy. During Japan's period of isolation in the 17th and 18th centuries, Nagasaki remained the sole gateway to the outside world. Here, Portuguese, Dutch, Chinese, and Southeast Asian influences blended into the architecture, cuisine, and spiritual culture - creating a unique cultural tapestry you'll begin to sense as you arrive.</p> <p>Before dinner, enjoy a scenic drive to Inasayama Outlook, where you can take in one of Japan's most breathtaking night views - a glittering panorama of Nagasaki's harbour and hillside cityscape.</p> <p>Tonight's dinner is a highlight: savour premium Wagyu beef prepared Teppanyaki-style by skilled chefs, right before your eyes.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Nagasaki Marriott Hotel [Standard Twin Room]

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7	Guided tour of Nagasaki	<p>This morning, you'll begin with a powerful and reflective visit to the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum. Through personal stories, photographs, and artifacts, the museum offers a moving account of the events of August 9, 1945, and a broader message of peace and resilience that continues to resonate today.</p> <p>Next, step further back in time with a visit to Dejima, the former man-made island built in 1636 to isolate Portuguese residents and limit foreign influence during Japan's era of national seclusion. Though no longer an island due to land reclamation, Dejima has been partially restored, and several of its original or reconstructed historical buildings are open to the public. As you explore the site, you'll gain a deeper understanding of Japan's early encounters with the West and the role Nagasaki played as a cultural and commercial gateway.</p> <p>Lunch is a comforting plate of Japanese curry served in Dejima - a beloved dish with foreign roots, much like Nagasaki itself.</p> <p>The afternoon and evening are yours to explore Nagasaki at your own pace. Whether you choose to visit its many historic temples, stroll through its peaceful gardens, or simply relax in one of its charming cafés, this is a wonderful opportunity to absorb the city's unique blend of international influences and deep Japanese heritage.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch	Nagasaki Marriott Hotel [Standard Twin Room]
8	Guided tour of Nagasaki and Unzen	<p>Today's theme is Japan's deep relationship with the sea. Nagasaki Prefecture, with its extensive coastline and rich fishing grounds, boasts one of the largest catches in Japan - and a centuries-old maritime culture that continues to evolve.</p> <p>This morning, you'll visit a local fish farm to learn how sustainable aquaculture is practised in Japan. Discover how traditional wisdom and modern innovations are working together to ensure the future of fishing - protecting both marine biodiversity and local livelihoods. This exclusive, behind-the-scenes visit offers a unique perspective on Japan's commitment to sustainability in one of its most important food industries.</p> <p>For lunch, enjoy one of Nagasaki's most iconic comfort foods - champon noodles. This hearty, Chinese-influenced dish features a rich pork and seafood broth, topped with fresh vegetables and noodles, and perfectly captures the multicultural spirit of the region.</p> <p>In the afternoon, journey to the Shimabara Peninsula, a geographically stunning and historically rich region shaped by volcanic activity. Your destination is the picturesque hot spring town of Unzen, nestled in Unzen-Amakusa National Park, where steam vents, jagged peaks, and forested slopes create a striking natural landscape.</p> <p>Tonight, you'll stay at a stylish onsen hotel offering spacious rooms, modern comforts, and rejuvenating hot spring baths drawn from Unzen's mineral-rich geothermal waters. After a full day of travel and discovery, relax in the hotel's onsen while enjoying panoramic views of the mountains, followed by a satisfying dinner showcasing regional flavours.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Unzen Kyushu Hotel [Western style room]

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9	Guided tour of Unzen and Shimabara	<p>Begin your day with a guided walk through Unzen Jigoku - "Unzen Hell." This otherworldly geothermal area, with its billowing steam vents, bubbling mud pools, and sulphuric springs, has long been associated with both natural wonder and spiritual contemplation. Your guide will share stories of its unique geology and historical significance, including its role in early Christian persecution during Japan's feudal era.</p> <p>Next, take the scenic Unzen Ropeway to the slopes of Mount Unzen, where panoramic views of the Ariake Sea and surrounding peaks unfold beneath you.</p> <p>Then, descend to the coastal city of Shimabara to explore Shimabara Castle, a striking white five-storied fortress perched on a hilltop. Inside, discover the legacy of Kyushu's early samurai clans and the powerful story of the Shimabara Rebellion - a 17th-century Christian uprising that reshaped Japanese history. The castle grounds also offer lovely views of the city and the surrounding landscapes.</p> <p>In the late afternoon, board a short 30-minute ferry across the Ariake Sea to Kumamoto City, offering a peaceful change of pace and a fresh perspective on Kyushu's diverse geography.</p> <p>Tonight, enjoy another memorable dining experience at the restaurant of a renowned local chef, known across Japan for his innovative, visually stunning cuisine. At his Japanese-Italian fusion restaurant, you'll experience a thoughtfully crafted menu that showcases Akaushi (red Wagyu) beef, fresh seafood from the Amakusa Peninsula, and rare heritage vegetables unique to the Kumamoto region.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Hotel Nikko Kumamoto [Western style room]

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10	Guided tour of Kumamoto	<p>Your day begins with a visit to Kumamoto Castle, the city's iconic landmark and one of Japan's three premier castles. Originally constructed in 1607, the castle is famed for its formidable stone walls and elegant architecture. Severely damaged by the 2016 earthquake, the castle is now undergoing a careful and ambitious restoration. As a visitor, you'll have a unique opportunity to witness the preservation of a national treasure in progress - an inspiring blend of history, resilience, and craftsmanship.</p> <p>Just a short distance away is the peaceful Suizenji Jojuen Garden, a beautifully landscaped Japanese garden originally built in the 17th century. Designed to represent the Tokaido - Japan's old travel route between Tokyo and Kyoto - the garden features a miniature Mount Fuji, traditional tea houses, and a calming pond, all arranged with exquisite attention to seasonal harmony.</p> <p>The afternoon and evening are yours to enjoy at your own pace. Kumamoto is an excellent city for relaxed exploration, boutique shopping, and culinary adventures. From traditional local dishes to stylish cafés and contemporary western-style dining, there's something to suit every taste.</p> <p>For a truly local experience, consider dining at an izakaya, a casual Japanese eatery where you can sample a variety of small plates. Your guide will be on hand to offer recommendations and help you make the most of your free time.</p>	Breakfast	Hotel Nikko Kumamoto [Western style room]
11	Guided tour of Mt Aso	<p>Today, your journey takes you through one of Kyushu's most dramatic and awe-inspiring landscapes - the vast volcanic caldera of Mount Aso. As you travel across this geologically active region, your guide will stop at select vantage points where you can take in the sheer scale of the caldera, gaze into steaming vents, and witness the powerful forces that have shaped Kyushu's terrain.</p> <p>In the afternoon, enjoy a unique opportunity to explore one of Japan's emerging culinary frontiers: local winemaking. Although relatively new to the Japanese agricultural scene, Kyushu's volcanic soil and varying climates are proving ideal for cultivating grapes. You'll visit a boutique winery where you can taste a selection of locally produced wines and learn how Japan's wine culture is evolving - infused with both European influence and Japanese precision.</p> <p>Tonight, unwind in a charming boutique onsen hotel, tucked into the peaceful countryside. Surrounded by pristine nature, this elegant yet relaxed retreat invites you to soak in mineral-rich outdoor hot spring baths and breathe in the fresh mountain air. As the sun sets, you'll begin to understand why onsen bathing is not just a leisure activity but a beloved part of Japanese life and wellbeing.</p> <p>Dinner this evening is a beautifully crafted Japanese-French fusion meal, blending the refinement of French technique with the seasonality and subtlety of Japanese ingredients.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Spa Greenness [Standard Twin Room]

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12	Guided tour of Yame	<p>Today, your journey leads to one of Japan's premier green tea regions - the Yame district, famed for producing some of the country's highest quality teas. Surrounded by rolling hills and pristine air, this is a place where time slows and craftsmanship thrives.</p> <p>You'll be welcomed by a fourteenth-generation tea merchant at a historic family-run tea shop. With deep reverence for tradition, your host will guide you through the subtle differences between Japan's many green tea varieties. You'll learn the delicate art of brewing gyokuro, an exceptional, shade-grown tea known for its deep umami flavour and elegant aroma.</p> <p>Later, shift from tea to another of Japan's iconic beverages - sake. At a local brewery, enjoy a behind-the-scenes tour with knowledgeable brewery staff who will walk you through the entire sake-making process, from rice polishing to fermentation. You'll have the chance to ask questions, explore the tools and techniques involved, and of course, sample several varieties of freshly brewed sake.</p> <p>As the day draws to a close, return to Fukuoka for a fitting finale to your 2026 Autumn Food Tour of Kyushu, Japan. Tonight's farewell dinner is an exquisite sushi banquet, prepared with precision and artistry by a master chef. More than just a meal, this final dinner is a celebration of everything you've experienced on your journey - Kyushu's culinary diversity, deep-rooted traditions, innovative spirit, and unforgettable hospitality.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	The Gate Hotel Fukuoka [Essential Double/Hollywood Twin]
13	Departure	<p>This morning, after a final breakfast, you'll check out of your hotel as your 2026 Autumn Food Tour of Kyushu, Japan, comes to a close. With unforgettable memories of regional flavours, cultural encounters, and scenic landscapes, you'll take with you the true taste and spirit of Japan's southern island.</p> <p>From here, you may choose to depart via Fukuoka Airport or return to Tokyo or Osaka by domestic flight or shinkansen to connect with your international flight. Your airport/station transfer will be individually arranged.</p> <p>But your adventure doesn't have to end here. If you'd like to explore more of Japan - be it the serene countryside, vibrant cities, or hidden gems - we would be delighted to craft a personalised post-tour extension just for you. Feel free to speak with our friendly team to begin planning the next chapter of your Japanese journey.</p>	Breakfast	

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	Inclusions for Group Tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 12 nights' accommodation (including traditional Japanese inns) ■ All breakfasts ■ 9 lunches and 9 dinners ■ Exclusive activity access ■ Airport/station meet & greet on arrival ■ Hotel transfer by public transport on arrival ■ All local transport (train, bus and private minivans) ■ Airport/station transfer on departure ■ Expert English speaking tour guides (locally licensed) ■ Cultural activities and entry fees included in 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) 		