



Kyushu Journeys

DREAM • EXPLORE • DISCOVER

Kyushu Foodie Tour

January 2023 (Chinese New Year)

For people who understand that intimacy with local cuisine is an essential part of travel. The best Japanese dishes and exclusive culinary experiences. Itinerary devised by a passionate foodie. Travel by private bus accompanied by a fun and knowledgeable English speaking tour leader.

DAY 1: MONDAY 23 JANUARY

~ OVERNIGHT IN KURUME

Meet your tour leader, bus driver and fellow travellers in Fukuoka city and hit the road. We'll start by praying for a successful trip at Fukuoka's most famous shrine. Dazaifu Tenman-gu is a lively, bustling place and you can't visit without trying the local specialty of umegae mochi. These tasty rice cakes are toasted on a metal plate for a crispy outside and are stuffed with warm, sweet, azuki bean paste. You'll notice that they're stamped with the distinctive plum blossom crest that is the symbol of Dazaifu Tenman-gu.

For lunch we'll have Kyushu's most-loved dish; ramen. We want the very best so we'll have it in Kurume city, the birthplace of ramen in Japan. There are over 100 ramen shops here but we know the local favourite. This mecca of ramen is so popular we may have to queue but it's definitely worth the wait.



After a heavy lunch of noodles there will be nothing better than a light, sweet snack. Let's go strawberry picking! You'll get the chance to try the Hakata Amaou strawberry. It's known as the 'King of Japanese strawberries' and not grown anywhere else in Japan. In fact it is so highly prized that it is illegal to export the seeds.

Before checking into our hotel we'll stop by a renowned local lacquerware workshop dating back more than a hundred years. We'll have a special tour of the workshop where traditional methods are still in use. It's a great chance to pick up an authentic quality souvenir.

Kurume city is known as the 'common man's food capital of Japan'. In addition to its passion for ramen, there are more yakitori shops here than anywhere else in Japan. Enjoy chicken, pork, beef, seafood and vegetables all barbequed over charcoal and served in a yummy sauce. Get to know your fellow travellers on the tour while enjoying one of Japan's most popular casual dining experiences.

DAY 2: TUESDAY 24 JANUARY ~ OVERNIGHT IN TSUETATE ONSEN



A saké brewery tour is an essential Japanese culinary experience. We've chosen a 200 year-old brewery with an array of prize-winning beverages. Enjoy a tour, a tasting and another chance to grab a quality souvenir to take home.

We're in Yame Prefecture now, one of Japan's most important green tea growing areas. You'll get some great photos of picturesque tea plantations in the mountains and we've arranged a truly exclusive experience. We'll visit the organic green tea farm of a certified tea Master. He'll share his knowledge and experience as we explore a variety of teas through tasting. We'll get hands-on too as we take a master-class in brewing the perfect pot of Japanese tea. You can purchase some supreme quality organic green tea directly from the farmer to enjoy at home.

We'll be staying in Tsuetate Onsen tonight. It's not on the foreigner tourist trail but is one of our very favourite natural hot-spring (onsen) towns. If you love onsen bathing, or want to try, there's no better place than Tsuetate Onsen. Feel free to spend as long as you want luxuriating in the toasty onsen baths at your hotel.

Tonight expect something special with your first kaiseki-ryōri (traditional multi-course Japanese dinner) of the trip. Each dish is meticulously prepared, exquisitely served, and based around the freshest seasonal ingredients. Expect a unique and memorable experience.



DAY 3: WEDNESDAY 25 JANUARY ~ OVERNIGHT IN BEPPU



As usual, breakfast will be served at your hotel. However today there's a bonus! We'll head out and you'll learn how to cook your own egg in the onsen steam that gushes from the deep underground vents all around town. It's such fun and tasty too.

Next we'll stretch our legs and stroll into the woods. The Japanese call it 'forest bathing' and it'll leave you feeling refreshed with all your senses stimulated. Our target is one of the purest fresh water springs in Japan. Freely take as much as you want from this crystal clear pond.

The best tofu is made in areas with the purest water. We'll visit a specialty tofu restaurant for lunch and feast on a variety of dishes made from tofu produced on site. Expect a tasty countryside lunch bursting with health.

After lunch we'll stop by another onsen town. It's off the foreigner tourist route but well known in Japan as home to the most carbonated onsen in the country. The Japanese flock here for the health benefits of drinking the fizzy water that gushes from springs around town. Of course you'll get a chance to try some for yourself. It's powerful stuff so your tour leader will advise the maximum recommended amount to drink.

We'll check into our hotel for a rest before heading out for one of the culinary highlights of this trip. Unless you are a seasoned Japan foodie you've probably never eaten at an authentic and exclusive Japanese counter-seated sushi restaurant. The chef is immensely knowledgeable and will explain about every dish as he serves you. You'll be astounded to hear about the intricate behind-the-scenes preparations.



DAY 4: THURSDAY 26 JANUARY ~ OVERNIGHT IN KUNISAKI PENINSULA

We'll start the day with a boat trip! Our destination is a traditional working fishing port and (if sea conditions have been favourable) we'll see that day's catch being auctioned off. You'll also enjoy probably the freshest seafood breakfast of your life.

After breakfast we'll meet up with the tour bus again and head into Kunisaki Peninsula. It's one of Kyushu's wildest and most remote areas. After a short stroll through the forest you'll come to a shiitake mushroom farm. We'll meet the farmer and he'll explain all about this much-loved Japanese delicacy. If you've never been to a shiitake farm before you'll be amazed. We should be there at just the right time for harvest so you can pick your own mushrooms to take back home (if your country's local regulations allow).



We're still in Oita Prefecture, famous for its seafood dishes. Lunch today will be the local specialty of octopus rice with fresh and seasonal side dishes. After lunch we'll visit the serene Fuki-ji temple. The main hall is perhaps the simplest and most elegant Buddhist temple found anywhere in Japan. Built in the 12th Century, it is also the oldest wooden structure in Kyushu. We've arranged a private introduction and explanation by the resident monk.

Soba noodles are a specialty of these mountainous areas (where rice cannot grow). The soba we will have for dinner is hand-made on the premises and served with locally-produced wagyu beef. As every gourmet knows, wagyu is regarded as the very best beef that money can buy. Don't forget that Kyushu (not the more famous Kobe) took all the top prizes in the most recent 'Wagyu Olympics'. The ryokan we're staying tonight has its own onsen baths so it's another chance to melt away the stresses and strains of modern life.



DAY 5: FRIDAY 27 JANUARY ~ OVERNIGHT IN FUKUOKA CITY



As an optional early-morning activity, take the rare opportunity to practice Zen meditation and chanting in ancient Fuki-ji temple. It's a unique, fascinating experience and beginners are welcome. There can be no better way to start a day.

On the way back to Fukuoka we'll stop at the charming traditional town of Hita. With a local guide we'll explore the shops and well-preserved houses of Japan as it was in the bygone days. Keep an eye open for the wonderful display of exquisite handmade dolls. On the tour we'll visit long-established soy sauce and miso shops. Pick up some renowned Japanese branded products directly from the source.

We'll stop for lunch at a specialty eel restaurant. Westerners may not have much experience with eel but it's a classic Japanese dish. The meat is tender and the sauce is delicious.

The hotel for this final night is conveniently located in the heart of Fukuoka city. Take the chance on this free and easy evening to shop, eat, and explore the nightlife of one of Japan's most vibrant cities.



DAY 6: SATURDAY 28 JANUARY

~ END OF TOUR

Breakfast at the hotel and then checkout. The tour is over but the memories remain. Thanks for trusting Kyushu Journeys for your Japan Food Tour.

Tour Price

¥320,000 (Japanese Yen) per person

This price is based on double / twin sharing. For a single traveller staying in a room alone the additional charge is ¥130,000. Contact us directly for triple sharing options.

Inclusions

Accommodation with breakfast x 5 nights

Lunch x 5

Dinner x 4

English-speaking tour leader

All transport in private tour bus

All entrance fees

Exclusions

Flights

Contact Us Now

@ letsgo@kyushujourneys.com

+81-90-8354-1194

Message us here

Schedule a chat here

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Why book a Kyushu food tour with Kyushu Journeys?

Because we're Kyushu's biggest fans! Our company is owned and managed by a Kyushu local (Moo) and she's a devoted foodie. This tour is her passion-project. Kyushu is known throughout Japan for its exceptional cuisine and Moo wants to spread the word worldwide. We are a fully registered Japanese travel agent with all legal protections in place.

What kind of food can I expect on this tour?

This tour doesn't focus on expensive 'gourmet' restaurants or celebrity chefs. You can find those places on your own using Trip Advisor. Instead you'll get the chance to eat like the locals eat. Each restaurant on this tour has been carefully chosen to highlight the tastiest Kyushu cuisine and you'll explore a wide variety of quality local dishes. If you have any dietary restriction please ask us about alternatives before booking your tour.

What kind of accommodation will I stay?

You will stay in a mix of clean and comfortable city hotels and traditional Japanese ryokan inns. In the city hotels you will be sleeping in western beds. In the Japanese ryokan inns you will be sleeping in western beds or traditional Japanese-style futon beds on tatami mat flooring. If you have any difficulty sleeping on a futon please ask us about alternatives before booking your tour.

What is 'onsen' bathing?

An onsen is a bathing pool using water from natural hot-springs. It's a wonderful pleasure with many health benefits. As nudity is required, onsen bathing is usually sex-segregated with males in one public bath and females in a different public bath. If you feel uncomfortable you can skip this activity. Feel free to contact us with any questions you have about onsen bathing.

How will I travel around?

Comfortable private bus throughout the tour.

How many people can join this tour?

We want this to be a small group intimate tour. Maximum participants will be 12 pax.

Can you run a private tour?

Yes we can. We have several options for couples or private groups of family or friends.

Is this tour suitable for seniors?

Definitely. You will be travelling by private tour bus and accompanied at all times by an English-speaking tour leader. There are no long hikes on this tour but of course you will need to walk around the attractions. There will be some non-paved paths and steps to climb (especially in shrines or temples). It will be no problem if you prefer to skip any activity and wait for the group on the bus or in a seated area.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Anything else I need to pay?

From your own pocket you need to pay for dinner on the final evening. You also need to pay for any alcohol and in-room hotel charges (phone calls, room service etc). Tipping is not required in Japan so it is your choice if you want to show appreciation to your tour leader and/or driver if you receive exceptional service.

How do I secure my booking?

Due to current travel uncertainty caused by coronavirus we are currently accepting reservations (waiting list) on this tour without any payment required. If your name is on the waiting list we will contact you when the tour is confirmed. Those already on the waiting list will be given first priority for booking. At that time if you want to confirm your place on the tour you will be required to pay 20% deposit. The 80% balance should be paid 60 days before the tour begins.

What are the cancellation charges?

After payment of deposit: 20% cancellation charge (forfeit of deposit) || 60 ~ 46 days before the tour begins: 30% cancellation charge || 45 ~ 31 days before the tour begins: 40% cancellation charge || 30 ~ 16 days before the tour begins: 60% cancellation charge || 15 ~ 8 days before the tour begins: 80% cancellation charge || 7 days or later before the tour begins: 100% cancellation charge.

We suggest you take out travel insurance to protect yourself in case you need to cancel for any unexpected reason.

What about coronavirus cancellation?

If we are forced to cancel the tour due to a closure of the borders by the Japanese government we will issue a refund of any monies you have paid.

What's the next step?

Contact us with any questions or to inform us how many people are interested to join this tour. We'll get back to you with everything you need to know.

Is this tour suitable for children?

This is an adult tour with no activities for children. We welcome all participants aged 12 years or older. If you book a private tour children of any age can join.

Contact Us Now

@ letsgo@kyushujourneys.com

+81-90-8354-1194

Message us here

Schedule a chat here

What did previous tour participants say?

"Thank you so much first for a lovely tour and for taking great care of us - thumbs up to Kyushu Journeys, Simon & especially you!!!

Eunice Kwan ★★★★★

"Thanks for taking good care of us for the past few days. We really enjoy this trip a lot. Good work!

Woon Mui Gek ★★★★★

"Thank you very much for a wonderful and memorable tour. I thoroughly enjoyed the lovely sights, the gourmet meals and the onsen. Huge thanks to Kyushu Journeys!"

Esther Kwan-Leong ★★★★★

Happy previous tour members

Note: all photos in this brochure are places you can expect to visit on this tour.