Kyushu Spring Sakura Discovery Tour

Cities Covered: Fukuoka, Saga, Nagasaki, Kumamoto, Kagoshima, Miyazaki, Tsuetate & Kitakyushu

Tour Package Includes:

★ International Direct Flight from Honolulu
★ Deluxe Hotel Accommodations (based on double occupancy)
★ Circle Kyushu Island Tour
★ Discover the Beauty of the Japanese Cherry Blossom – Sakura
★ Discover Natural Landscapes and Historical Treasures in Kyushu
★ Natural Hot Springs Ryokan (2 Nights)
★ Special Meals:
  - Onsen Kaiseki
  - Japanese Yakiniku
  - Oguni Sansensomoku Soba
  - Seafood Shabu Shabu
  - Local Specialty Teishoku
  - Hotel Buffet
★ Steaming Black Sand Baths at Ibusuki Hot Springs
★ 18 Meals & Admissions as Stated
★ Castella Tasting & Jizou Pudding
★ Gratuity for Tour Guides & Drivers

Cherry blossom or Sakura has a very prominent position in Japanese culture because it symbolizes the transience of life. It is so significant that it even has its own festival, the Cherry Blossom Festival. Many Japanese celebrate with family and friends at picnics under the cherry blossom trees, which are called “Hanami” in Japanese. It is a very festive event that allows everyone to bond, have fun, and enjoy the beauty of the Sakura.

Traveling Dates:

Mar 23 – 31, 2018 (9 Days)

Price per person:

$ 3,388
Incl: Tax & Fuel Charge
Single Supp: $ 750
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<tr>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Honolulu – Fukuoka</th>
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<tr>
<td>We begin our journey by boarding an international flight to <strong>Fukuoka, Kyushu</strong>, Japan's third largest and southernmost of the four main islands. Meals and snacks will be served on the plane.</td>
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<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Fukuoka</th>
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<td>Upon our arrival at Fukuoka International Airport, we will meet with an Air and Sea Travel representative who will escort us to our hotel. Fukuoka is the capital city of Fukuoka Prefecture and is situated on the southern end of Kyushu Island. Fukuoka was ranked as the 12th most livable city in May 2012 for its green spaces in a metropolitan setting.</td>
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<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Fukuoka – Saga (B, L, D)</th>
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<td>After breakfast, we will go to <strong>Tenjin Underground Shopping Area</strong>, the largest underground shopping area in Kyushu, stretching about 600 meters from north to south in the downtown area. There are 12 avenues with 150 shops of fashion, gourmet cuisine, books and more. 19th century European-style flagstone floors and arabesque-design ceilings decorate the underground space and create a stylish and comfortable atmosphere. Then we will proceed to <strong>Dazaifu Tenmangū</strong>, a Shinto shrine built over the grave of Michizane Sugawara, respected by the Japanese as the Tenman-Tenjin (the deified spirit of Michizane), or the God of literature or calligraphy. The shrine is also known for its 6,600 ume (Asian plum) trees including 167 varieties. One of the trees, known as Tobiume, stands directly to the right of the main hall. Legend has it that after Michizane was exiled from Kyoto, he yearned so much for this tree that it uprooted itself and flew to Dazaifu Tenman-gū. This is the most popular shrine in Kyushu on New Year’s Day. We then travel west to enjoy a series of scenic views in Saga Prefecture, the northwest part of the island of Kyushu with a long history of rice farming culture. Our first stop is <strong>Niji No Matsubara</strong> (Rainbow Pine Grove), a grove featuring over a million old black pine trees stretching 1 km wide and 5 km long along Genkai-Nada seaside road. The forest was originally planted by the feudal Lord Terasawa as a counter-measure against the strong winds and tides in Karatsu Bay. Saga has been a major manufacturing source of ceramics for centuries with Imari-yaki and Arita-yaki as the most famous and distinctive. Enjoy a stroll through <strong>Imari Okawachi-yama</strong> – a small ceramic mountain village in the city of Imari. Its secretive nature reached such a degree that it became known as the “<strong>Village of Secret Kilns</strong>”. A <strong>Welcome Dinner</strong> is arranged for tonight.</td>
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<th>Day 4</th>
<th>Saga – Nagasaki – Kumamoto (B, L)</th>
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<td>This morning, we will continue our journey to <strong>Nagasaki</strong> Prefecture. Our first stop is the <strong>Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum</strong>, a remembrance site of the second atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945 at 11:02:35 am. Next to the museum is the <strong>Nagasaki National Peace Memorial Hall</strong> for the Atomic Bomb Victims, built in 2003 as a place to remember and pray for those killed in the atomic bombing. Then we will proceed to the Shimabara Peninsula which was created by merging the western half of the former province of Hizen with the island provinces of Tsushima and Iki. As we drive along the <strong>Chijiwa Coast</strong>, we will get to taste <strong>Castella</strong>, a very popular Japanese sponge cake in Nagasaki. <strong>Shimabara Castle</strong> (Shimabara-jo), also known as Moritake Castle and Takaki Castle, is a Japanese castle located in Shimabara, Nagasaki prefecture. In 2006, the Shimabara Castle was listed one of the 100 Fine Castles of Japan by the Japan Castle Foundation. Afterwards, we will continue our journey by boarding a <strong>Ferry</strong> from <strong>Shimabara Pier</strong> and cross the Ariake Sea to <strong>Kumamoto</strong>. Kumamoto means &quot;origin of the bear&quot;, and its nickname is Hi No Kuni (fire country), because of the nearby giant volcano (Mt. Aso) and Mori no Miyako (capital of the forest).</td>
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<th>Day 5</th>
<th>Kumamoto – Kagoshima (B, L, D)</th>
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<td>After breakfast, we will go south to <strong>Kagoshima</strong>. Our first stop is <strong>Chiran Bukeyashiki (Samurai Residences and Gardens)</strong>, a preserved samurai district with houses and gardens that date back about 250 years. Afterwards, we will proceed to <strong>Chiran Peace Museum for Kamikaze Pilots</strong>, a former airbase that served as the departure point for hundreds of Special Attack or kamikaze sorties launched in the final months of World War II. The museum preserves and collects valuable documents of these pilots who rammed enemy ships by crashing their planes into them. Later, we proceed to <strong>Lake Ikeda</strong>, the largest lake on Kyushu Island, known to tourists as the location of the false sightings of a monster named Issie. Finally, we'll transfer to the southernmost tip of the Satsuma Peninsula, Ibusuki, a coastal town best known for its “<strong>Suna Mushi</strong>” onsens (<strong>Steaming Black Sand Baths</strong>) to experience being covered in warm black volcanic sand. Tonight, enjoy a dinner in the hot spring hotel.</td>
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**Ibusuki Hot Spring** is famous for its natural Suna Mushi hot springs, a type of natural hot springs where bathers are covered with sand. These Suna Mushi hot springs are the only sand hot springs in Japan that utilize the many hot springs that naturally gush out along the coast. Bathers lie along the seashore and are covered in sand warmed by geothermal heat. After staying covered in this heated sand for a while, bathers will perspire. Recently, Suna Mushi hot springs have become quite popular with women due to the similar effects of sauna from these sand hot springs.

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### Day 6  
**Kagoshima – Miyazaki**  
(B, L, D)

Today’s highlight is **Senganen Garden**, also known as **Isoteien**, a Japanese style landscape garden located on the coastline north of downtown Kagoshima. The garden cleverly borrows scenery from Sakurajima and Kagoshima Bay, harmonizing with the landscapes inside the garden to become one of the most striking features of Senganen. The garden has been used as a filming location for the well-known Japanese TV drama, **Princess Atsu**. After the garden tour, lunch will be served. **Mt. Sakurajima** is the symbol of Kagoshima. It is one of the world’s greatest active volcanoes at 1,117 meters tall and 50km round. Today, we will have a chance to see this mountain if the weather permits. Then we will drive to **Miyazaki** Prefecture, located on the eastern coast of the island of Kyushu, surrounded by the Pacific Ocean. Next, we’ll visit the **Udo-lingu Shinto Shrine**, which is dedicated to Yamasachihiko, the father of emperor Jimmu, the first mythical emperor of Japan. The shrine is famous for its unique construction. With a cave on a coastal cliff, it features a terrace overlooking the ocean outside the cave. After all our travels for the day, we will transfer to our hotel.

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### Day 7  
**Miyazaki – Kumamoto – Tsuetate**  
(B, L, D)

This morning, we’ll visit **Takachiho Gorge** (Takachiho-kyo), a V-shaped ravine formed by the erosion of the Aso lava plateau by the Gokase River. The sheer cliffs lining the gorge are made of slow-forming volcanic basalt columns that resemble scales of a dragon where the stone twisted and flowed as it formed. **Mount Aso** is the largest active volcano in Japan, and is among the largest in the world. It stands in Aso Kujū National Park in Kumamoto Prefecture, on the island of Kyushu. Its peak is 1592 m above sea level. Mt. Aso has a fairly large caldera (25 km north-south and 18 km east-west) with a circumference of around 120 km (75 mi), although sources vary on the exact distance. Then, we will visit **Mt. Aso Volcano Museum** OR **Yoshomei Museum**. Tonight, we will stay at our **Onsen Resort** in **Tsuetate**, the largest outdoor hot spring in Kyushu. Dinner will be served in our hotel.

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### Day 8  
**Tsuetate – Kitakyushu**  
(B, L, D)

After enjoying breakfast, we will visit **Onsen Town**, the most popular onsen for Japanese females. We can feel the small old town atmosphere as we walk along the streets to buy local snacks and souvenirs. Then we will drive to Kitakyushu, the northernmost part of Kyushu Island. Upon arrival, we will see the **Kanmonkyo Bridge**, a suspension bridge connecting Honshu and Kyushu Islands, with Shimonoseki in the Yamaguchi Prefecture on the Honshu side and Kitakyushu on the Kyushu side. The bridge crosses the Kanmon Straits and is the 34th longest suspension bridge in the world and was once the longest bridge in Japan. We will move to the city of **Kitakyushu**, which is midway between Tokyo and Shanghai. A **Farewell Dinner** is arranged for tonight.

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### Day 9  
**Kitakyushu – Fukuoka – Honolulu**  
(B)

Today, we’ll enjoy last minute shopping at **Canal City Hakata**, a large shopping and entertainment complex located in Fukuoka Prefecture that calls itself a "city within the city". In the afternoon, we will transfer to the airport for our return flight home, ending our fantastic journey in Japan.

*We wish you a safe journey and many wonderful memories to share with family and friends!* ☺

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**B: Breakfast | L: Lunch | D: Dinner**
Within 70 days before departure, the cancellation fee will be as follows:

- **69-31 days** prior departure, 50% of the total price plus any other service fee caused from the cancellation;
- **30 days** prior to departure or withdrawing during the tour shall be regarded as willingly giving up all rights concerned, 100% of the total price, and request for other services as a substitute shall not be accepted.

We strongly recommend purchasing travel insurance when you make a reservation.

**Payment Policy:**

**CHECK OR CASH PAYMENT ONLY.** A deposit of $350 per person is required at the time of application. The payment of balance is due **70 days prior to departure.** In the event balance of payment is not made within the required time period, Air and Sea Travel Center reserves the right to cancel reservations and charge a cancellation fee. Written notice is required for any cancellation. $ 350 deposit is non-refundable if you cancel after **December 15th, 2017.**

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**Remarks:**

- Fares are per person, USD based on double occupancy and include all airline taxes and fees
- Deluxe hotel accommodations (based on double occupancy)
- Escorted tour with a minimum of 20 passengers
- Local English speaking tour guide service
- All transfers and sightseeing by air conditioned coach
- Refer to “General Condition of Air & Sea”
- We reserve the right to modify the itinerary to ensure smooth operation.
- Tips and gratuities are included
- Tour price is subject to change according to any airfare increase, increase in government taxes, additional fuel charges and fluctuation of the rate of exchange between U.S. and foreign currency
- Tour price includes fuel surcharge & government taxes and fees. The tour price shown is current at time of listing and pricing on **July 08th, 2017**