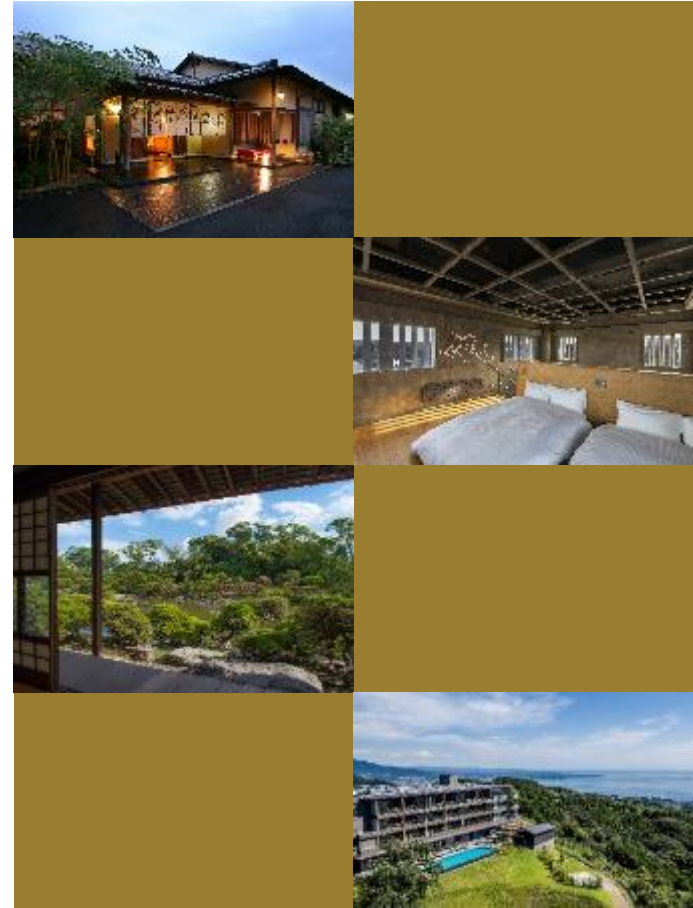


Course #1

SAGA/NAGASAKI/OITA/FUKUOKA

4 Nights 5 Days



SAGA/NAGASAKI/OITA/FUKUOKA 4 Nights 5 Days

DAY 1



FUKUOKA⇒IMARI⇒URESHINO⇒TAKEO

DAY 2



HIRADO⇒DAZAIFU⇒OKAWA⇒YANAGAWA



TAKEO⇒HIRADO

DAY 4



YANAGAWA⇒KOKONOE⇒BEPPU

DAY 5



BEPPU⇒KITSUKI⇒OITA Airport

ROUTE MAP

DAY 1 FUKUOKA – IMARI – URESHINO - TAKEO



Arrive at Fukuoka Airport via Singapore or other international airport.



Leave Fukuoka Airport by private vehicle and head to the secluded pottery village of Okawachiyama. The journey takes around 90 minutes.

The mountain here was once tightly controlled by the Nabeshima clan, which oversaw the hanyo, or clan kilns, that created unusually high-quality porcelain. Surrounded by mountains on three sides that evoke the steep mountain landscapes of classic ink wash paintings, the village is also known as “the village of secret kilns.”

At the Nabeshima Clan Kiln Park there are fine reproductions of a checkpoint that once protected the pottery-making secrets and a potters house, as well as remains of so-called ascending kilns. Proceed along the mountain path to find historical heritage, such as the ruins of old kilns, and various porcelain objects. The peaceful village streets blend harmoniously with the surrounding nature.



Lined with brick chimneys and pottery studios, Okawachiyama oozes 300 years of history and tradition and is the best place to appreciate Koimari ceramics, which European royalty and high society once found irresistible.



From Okawachiyama, head to Ureshino Onsen to taste onsen yudofu, a hot tofu dish. After lunch, set out for Ureshino’s celebrated tea fields for a tea ceremony with a difference. Join a local farmer for tea on one of the so-called “tea spaces,” spectacular raised platforms that stand high over the tea fields. Relish the taste of tea in this blissful space and appreciate the local saying that suggests a cup of tea is worth planning a trip for.



End the day at Mifuneyama Rakuen, where nature and gardens are beautifully interwoven. Your accommodation for the night is Onyado Chikurintei, which received Michelin’s highest rating of Five Red Pavilions in its 2014 guide. Here, enjoy a kaiseki dinner made with the highest quality ingredients.

Accommodation: Onyado Chikurintei
<https://www.chikurintei.jp/>



OKAWACHIYAMA



ONSEN TOFU



Tea Experience



MIFUNEYAMA RAKUEN



ONYADO CHIKURINTEI



DAY 2 TAKEO – HIRADO



Travel by private vehicle to Hirado, a journey of about an hour, for a day of adventure in and around the village of Kasuga and Mount Yasuman, which are part of the World Heritage Hidden Christian Sites of Nagasaki and Amakusa Region. With a specialist guide to explain the history and culture of the area, trek across 536-meter-high Mt. Yasuman, which was once revered at Hirado shrines as a sacred mountain.



During the trek enjoy a bento boxed lunch made with local sustainable ingredients such as rice and abalone while gazing out over Kasuga's rice terraces, which have been designated as an important cultural landscape.

In the afternoon, jump on an e-bike and cycle along the scenic Sunset Way on nearby Ikitsuki Island, located within Saikai National Park. From the lighthouse at the tip of the islands enjoy stunning views of the island-studded cobalt-blue sea.



UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE The Hidden Christian Sites in Nagasaki Region



Saikai NATIONAL PARK



HIRADO CASTLE STAY



Later, leave for Hirado Castle by private vehicle for an extraordinary accommodation experience. Tonight you stay in Hirado Castle's Kaiju Yagura turret, Japan's first permanent "Castle Stay." For dinner, enjoy a novel full-course meal in the privacy of your own room.



Accommodation: Hirado Castle
<https://www.castlestay.jp/>



Photo by Jimmy Cahrssen



Photo by Jimmy Cahrssen



DAY 3 HIRADO – DAZAIFU – OKAWA – YANAGAWA



Travel to Dazaifu by private vehicle, a journey of about two hours, and spend time at Dazaifu Tenmangu, a popular shrine that is associated with the deity for learning.

The shrine grounds are home to some designated natural monuments such as hirohachisha, camphor and plum trees, as well as Japanese irises, so there is something to enjoy in every season.



DAZAIFU TENMANGU SHRINE



Leave the shrine by private vehicle and head to Yanagawa, a one-hour drive away. Here, board a traditional donko punt for a celebrated Kawakudari boat trip along the many canals that weave through the city. Savour the unique riverside atmosphere, whatever the season. With the boatman's skillful use of the punt, the boat glides slowly down the canals, each of which is a beautiful combination of water and greenery. Float down the canals aboard a donko punt and relish the tranquil atmosphere.



YANAGAWA RIVER CRUISE



Stop to lunch on a Yanagawa specialty, eel steamed in a bamboo steamer. Steamed beef is available as an option. Enjoy the elegance of the moment, floating downstream aboard a donko boat.



EEL SEIROMUSHI



In the afternoon, learn how to make Okawa kumiko, an intricate woodcraft technique that uses no nails or hardware. Okawa kumiko has been incorporated into the interior of the luxury sleeper compartments of the Seven Stars in Kyushu train, which was voted number one in the train category in 2021 by readers of the influential US travel magazine Condé Nast Traveler.



OKAWA KUMIKO Making Experience

Continue on to Vinegar Brewery Shobunsu, which has been fermenting vinegar using the same fermenting bacteria since its founding in 1711. As you tour this fascinating place, be sure to look inside the 4,000-litre vats and large traditional jars containing black vinegar.



VINEGAR BREWERY SHOUBUNSU




Accommodation for the night is at Ohana, the former residence of the Tachibana lords. The guestrooms overlook Shoto-en, a traditional Japanese garden that makes up a small part of the sweeping grounds, which measure over 23,000 square metres. The rooms also offer superb views of the residence's Japanese- and Western-style buildings, which are nationally designated important cultural properties



Accommodation: Ohana
<https://ohana.co.jp/pages/stay>




DAY 4 YANAGAWA – KOKONOE – BEPPU

 Head to Kokonoe by private vehicle, a journey of about 90 minutes, and visit Kokonoe “Yume” Otsurihashi, the highest walkway suspension bridge in Japan. The view from the bridge, which is 173 meters high and 390 meters long, is spectacular. The vista includes Shindo-no-Taki, one of Japan's top 100 waterfalls, and Kyusuikei, a gorge popular in early summer and autumn for its foliage.




KOKONOE Suspension Bridge

 Leave Kokonoe by private vehicle and head to Beppu, about an hour's drive away. For lunch, enjoy the local specialty of jigokumushi. This healthy dish uses no cooking oil and contains vegetables, seafood, meat and eggs that are all cooked with hot spring steam. The taste is enhanced by the cooking method, which helps lock in the umami and nutrition of the ingredients.

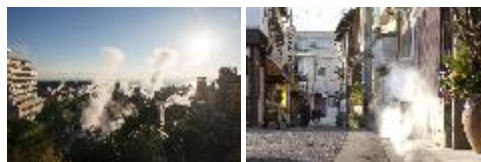


JIGOKUMUSHI

 In the afternoon, visit the mysterious cobalt blue Umi Jigoku (“sea hell”) and Japan's oldest “natural hell,” a red thermal mud lake known as Chi-no-Ike Jigoku (“blood pond hell”). Enjoy the magnificent scenery of Beppu, which boasts the largest number of hot springs in the world.




Sea Hell/Blood Pond Hell



KANNAWA Town Walk

Afterwards, head to the Kannawa area, which was ranked second only to Mt. Fuji as a landscape in Japan to be preserved for the 21st century. Accompanied by a local guide, enjoy a stroll through streets where the traditional culture of hot springs as curatives still thrives. There are many remarkable things to see, such as steam billowing out of every crack in the road and a unique device that lowers the temperature of hot spring water.

 Surrounded by sea and mountains, the world-class hot spring city of Beppu is your host for the night. Accommodation is at the sublime ANA Intercontinental Beppu Resort & Spa, where contemporary and luxury are fused to create an unprecedented guest experience that you will never forget.



Accommodation: ANA InterContinental Beppu Resort & Spa
<https://anaicbeppu.com/>

DAY 5 BEPPU – KITSUKI – OITA AIRPORT



Travel by private vehicle to Kitsuki, a drive of some 40 minutes. Don a kimono and stroll around the beautiful castle town of Kitsuki. Enjoy the many sights, such as Edo-era mansions, samurai residences, earthen walls and stone-paved slopes.



KITSUKI CASTLE & CASTLE TOWN



For lunch, head to a restaurant at the foot of Kitsuki Castle that has been in business for over 300 years. The restaurant's specialty of Ureshino sea bream chazuke has been enjoyed for centuries. Feast on fresh sea bream marinated in sesame sauce, the recipe of which has been handed down through the generations, and served on rice sprinkled with Kitsuki green tea.



Travel the 20 minutes to Oita Airport by private vehicle and return to Australia via Haneda Airport.



TAI CHAZUKE