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Okinawa

October 26 - November 4, 2017

Please contact for price

Land package includes:

- Ground transportation as indicated by itinerary
- Admission as indicated by itinerary
- Daily Breakfast and Dinners
- Hotel Accommodations
- Tour Escort

October 26, 2017 **Day One** **Thursday** **Hawaii to mainland Japan**

A morning flight takes us to mainland Japan.

October 27, 2017 **Day Two** **Friday** **mainland Japan to Okinawa**

We arrive in the afternoon and pass through customs and immigrations before connecting to our flight to Okinawa. Upon arrival we will drive to our hotel in Okinawa City.

October 28, 2017 **Day Three** **Saturday** **Naha (B/D)**

After a long couple of days traveling, our first day will be free to recover from jetlag. In the morning we will do some shopping at a wholesale market. You will find items ranging from Okinawan Konbu to awamori to Okinawan cookies. If you are looking for Okinawan musical instruments, we can visit the factories as well.

In the afternoon we will head to Naha to visit Kokusai and Heiwa Dori, as well as the Okinawa Prefectural Museum. **Heiwa Dori** is a shopping arcade along **Kokusai Dori**, where you can find all kinds of souvenirs from t-shirts to key chains. For fresh seafood, the open market here sells everything from lobsters to fish that you can buy and then have cooked in a restaurant above the market.

To close the day, we will visit the **Okinawan Prefectural Museum**. The latest home to this museum was specially designed to resemble an Okinawan castle. The museum showcases Okinawa's natural history along with its geography, flora, and fauna while also highlighting the Okinawan culture from the Ryukyu Kingdom era through the American Occupation.

October 29, 2017 **Day Four** **Sunday** **Shuri (B/D)**

We return south to explore the rich heritage of the Ryukyu Kingdom Era. **Shuri Castle** was the capital of the Ryukyu Kingdom from 1492 until 1872. The castle was destroyed during World War II, but it has been rebuilt and is now open to the public. The red castle showcases various aspects of castle life from the castle's audience chamber where the business of the kingdom was carried out to portions of the private residence for the king and his family. Its most famous structure is **Shureinomon**, where we will take a group photo. Archaeological work continues, as does efforts to fully restore the entire castle grounds.

From there we will walk down to **Ryusen**, a Bingata factory. **Bingata** is one of three indigenous types of cloth found in Okinawa. It is noted for its elaborate hand painted designs. Ryusen is also noted for its patented coral tie-dye designed fabrics.

For lunch (on own) we return to Kokusai and Heiwa Dori. On our way back to the hotel we will go to one of Okinawa's largest **100 yen stores**.

October 30, 2017 **Day Five** **Monday** **Gyokusendo and Nanbu Senseki (B/D)**

Today we will visit Japan's second largest subterranean cave network. **Gyokusendo's** network of caves is just over three miles long with just a half mile open to the public. Atop the cave is **Okinawa World**, where we will see exhibits on Ryukyuan Glass making, fabric made from sugar cane, a museum on Shisa from Okinawa and the rest of Asia, and more. The glass made here is noted for its distinctive cracking pattern and is made into not just cups and vases, but smaller trinkets to large lamps. There is also an alcohol bottling display that is noted for its habu or snake sake. We will also have a chance to see one of Okinawa's most entertaining dance styles, **Eisa**.

Our next stop will be the **Okinawa Prefectural Peace Museum** and the **Cornerstone of Peace**. The museum details the events during the Battle of Okinawa and the subsequent American Occupation. It has exhibits that recreate conditions during the battle, as well as testimonials from survivors. Next to the museum is the Cornerstone of Peace, Okinawa's version of the Vietnam Memorial. The layout of the memorial is based on the rising sun on the day the battle began. The walls radiate from an eternal flame from Hiroshima. The names of all the fallen during the battle are inscribed on the walls including not just the Okinawan fallen, but the Japanese and American as well.

We will then go to the **Princess Lilies Monument and Museum**. In Japanese it is known as Himeyuri no tou, which marks the final hiding place of the student nurses who were forced into service during the Battle of Okinawa. Nearly a hundred students died in the closing days of the war. The museum shines a light on their experience holding artifacts, survivor accounts, cave recreations, and more.

Our last stop will be **Higa Shuzo**, an awamori brewery. Awamori is Okinawa's indigenous liquor that is made from Thai rice and Okinawan koji. It is known for being high in alcohol content, as well as being very smooth to drink. Here we will see a video on how it is made as well try some of their goods for those over 21.

October 31, 2017

Day Six

Tuesday

Culture Day (B/D)

Today we will be taking a more hands on approach to the Okinawan culture. The Shisa Dog is an icon synonymous with Okinawa. We will take a one hour class to decorate a shisa. Then we will have a short cooking class to learn how to make an Okinawan dish. After the classes you are free until 7:00 pm when dinner will be served. If you require assistance with meeting your family, please let us know.

November 1, 2017

Day Seven

Wednesday

Kijoka and Nago (B/D)

Our day will be spent traveling to the northern part of Okinawa. Our first stop will be to **Kijoka** to visit the **Bashofu Hall**. This indigenous handmade fabric is made from the trunk of a banana tree. It was popular for being durable and comfortable to wear in Okinawa's hot weather. During the twentieth century, it was replaced by more modern fabrics and was almost forgotten. Thanks to the efforts of Toshiko Taira, the art of Bashofu was rescued and today is still being made at this facility. Here we will learn how the fabric is made and turned into clothes and other items like purses and bookmarks.

We will then go to **Nago**, Hilo's sister city where we will have a chance to have **Okinawan soba** for lunch (on own). We will also visit the famous **Orion Beer Factory**, where we will view its facilities and then sample their products. Orion is Okinawa's local beer and was built in Nago for the quality of its water. Afterwards we will stroll over to the **Nago City Museum**. Here we can take a step back in time to see life in Okinawa before World War Two, as well as the natural life in this area.

November 2, 2017

Day Eight

Thursday

Motobu (B/D)

Today we head north for the Motobu Peninsula. Here we will be spending the day at the **Ocean Expo Memorial Park**. Originally built for the 1975 World Expo, it is today home to several attractions. The most famous attraction is **Churaumi Aquarium**, Asia's largest aquarium. It is noted for its four floors of tanks, including its largest tank which holds three adult whale sharks. There are also exhibits on turtles and manatees and if time permits you may see a dolphin show.

Another attraction we will visit is the **Native Okinawan Village**. This collection of pre-World War II homes offers a look into Okinawan village life in the pre-modern era. They provide examples of the different social classes that existed at the time, as well as several community buildings that served the entire village.

The last attraction we will visit on this site is the **Tropical Dream Center**. Here we can see over 80,000 varieties of orchids, in addition to various fruit plants that are found in Okinawa. Time permitting you may go up the tower that provides a view of the surrounding area and Ie Island.

Our final stop of the day will be to **Goya Park**. Goya or bittermelon is one of Okinawa's most famous vegetables and featured in one of its famous dishes, champuru. This facility is a processing plant that makes various goya products from goya tea to goya beer snacks. There is also a hydroponics display, which shows how goya can be grown out of soil, along with other hydroponically grown plants from tomatoes to papaya.

November 3, 2017 **Day Nine** **Friday** **Henza Island (B/D)**

Before we head home we will do a little more shopping at the wholesale market. If you did not have a chance to pick up omiyage or missed a chance to get something last time, here is your opportunity. We will also enjoy a short trip to Henza Island to visit **Nuchimasu Salt Factory**. They are in the Guinness Book of World Records for producing salt with the most minerals using their unique salt manufacturing methods. To get there we will cross **Kaichudoro**, a road that is so close to the ocean that it feels like you are gliding along the water.

Tonight we will have our farewell dinner.

November 4, 2017 **Day Ten** **Saturday** **Return Home (B)**

We leave the hotel at noon to catch our late afternoon flight back to mainland Japan. From there an evening flight will take us back to Hawaii.