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Kyushu

March 8 - 20, 2018

Please contact for price

Land Package price includes:

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

March 8, 2018 **Day One** **Thursday** **Honolulu to Mainland Japan**

A late morning flight will take us from Honolulu to Mainland Japan.

March 9, 2018 **Day Two** **Friday** **Mainland Japan to Fukuoka**

We arrive in mainland Japan, where we will undergo immigrations and customs formalities before we catch our next flight to Fukuoka. After we arrive in Fukuoka, we will head directly to our hotel.

March 10, 2018 **Day Three** **Saturday** **Fukuoka to Beppu**

Our tour begins as we journey to the eastern part of the island. When we arrive in **Beppu** we will see **Jigoku-meguri** or the Circuit of Hells. They are a series of ponds with naturally boiling water and mud in various colors. It ranges from the azure blue Umi Jigoku to the red Kamado Jigoku. The day comes to a close with a visit to the **Beppu City Traditional Bamboo Crafts Center** that highlights how the many varieties of bamboo are cultivated along with the amazing uses that have been found for this versatile plant. There is also an exhibit on some of the work of bamboo master, Shono Shounsai, who was designated a living national treasure in 1967.

March 11, 2018 **Day Four** **Tuesday** **Usuki Excursion**

Today we head to **Usuki** to see a set of stone statues of Buddha. Fifty nine images were restored from the Heian and Kamakura eras and were designated national treasures. Stone imagery is rare and to find them in the quantity and quality found here is exceptional. For lunch we will have **Seki Aji**, which is a delicacy of the area. From there we head to **Mt. Takasaki** and their wild monkeys, famous for taking advantage of the local hot water springs. A special enclosure has been built where you can see the monkeys being fed.

March 12, 2018 **Day Five** **Wednesday** **Beppu to Takachiho**

We leave relaxing Beppu for Takachiho. To get there, we will drive along the scenic Yamanami Highway. Our first stop will be **Amanoiwato Jinja**. Kyushu is considered to be the birthplace of Japan and Miyazaki specifically is known as the birth place and home of the gods. As such there are many tales surrounding Amaterasu in the area. This shrine guards a cave where the goddess hid plunging the world into darkness until she could be coaxed out.

From there we will explore **Takachiho Gorge**, an area that has cliffs that are nearly 300 feet tall and the Gokase River running through it. After we have stretched our legs, we will go to the hotel to check-in. In the evening we will go to a local shrine to see **Takachiho Yokagura Dances**. This style of dance is traditionally held after the harvests to celebrate a bountiful crop.

March 13, 2018

Day Six

Thursday

Takachiho to Kagoshima

We head for Kagoshima and along the way we will ride the **Mt. Aso Ropeway** to the summit of Mt. Aso, weather permitting. Mount Aso is the largest active volcano in Japan. For lunch, we will eat **Takamori Dengaku**, a local dish featuring local fish and vegetables cooked on skewers and seasoned with miso that has been aged a minimum of three years.

March 14, 2018

Day Seven

Friday

Ibusuki and Chiran Excursion

Ibusuki sand baths are the major attraction for Ibusuki. The sand bath treatment's highlight is a relaxing sunbath in warm sand on the beach, which you will have a chance to experience today. Ibusuki has over 800 hot spring water sources, giving it a near tropical humidity. In addition to the natural attractions, Ibusuki is also noted for its black ceramics. We will also visit the **Peace Museum for Kamikaze Pilots**, a memorial to the 1026 pilots who flew from Chiran during World War II on their one way missions. Then we will take in a few well preserved **samurai homes and gardens**. These homes reflect the original owners' tastes and sensibilities. For our last stop we will visit a **local shochu factory**. Shochu is Kyushu's signature drink, being a distilled alcoholic beverage instead of being brewed like sake.

March 15, 2018

Day Eight

Thursday

Kagoshima to Kumamoto

In the morning we will visit **Senganen**, a garden created by the Shimazu clan in 1658. The garden faces Sakurajima and was designed to make it appear as though Sakurajima and Kinko Bay were part of the garden itself. From the garden we will then go to **Sakurajima**, weather permitting. On rainy days and eruption days, travel is limited. Sakurajima is a volcanic island and possesses the most active volcanos in Japan. It is noted for its Daikon which grows quite large, nearly a foot in a diameter.

When we are finished, we will then continue on to Kumamoto.

March 16, 2018

Day Nine

Friday

Kumamoto

Today, we will stop at **Kumamoto Castle**, the Hosokawa castle that withstood a siege by Saigo Takamori at the beginning of the Meiji period. The Hosokawa clan ruled over Kumamoto for two hundred years. Following the 2016 earthquake the castle grounds have been closed to the public due to the extensive damage, but we are able to see the exterior as repair work continues. We will then stroll through **Suizenji-koen**, a park built by the Hosokawa clan that took over 80 years to construct. Its design recreates scenes from the road from Tokyo to Kyoto. **Miyamoto Musashi**, one of Japan's most famous samurai, spent his last years in Kumamoto. We will visit the cave, **Reigando**, where he lived for two years writing his seminal work, *The Book of Five Rings*.

March 17, 2018

Day Ten

Saturday

Kumamoto to Nagasaki

Our destination today is Nagasaki, where we will visit the **Glover House**, home to Thomas Glover, a Scotsman who came to Nagasaki just as Japan's doors re-opened to the world. He was an enterprising gentleman who founded a coal mining company as well as a brewery, which would become known as Kirin Beer. His home is said to have inspired the author of the book for the opera, Madame Butterfly.

From there we will visit the **Atomic Bomb Museum and Peace Park**. Nagasaki is one of Japan's most international cities and a visit to **Dejima**, Japan's original Dutch Village, will show us why. In 1638, all foreigners except the Dutch were expelled from Japan. In 1641, the Dutch were ordered to contain their presence to a man-made island known as Dejima. Today, the little island is no more as the city of Nagasaki filled in the water around the island. But the original boundaries were marked and several buildings were preserved for historical posterity.

March 18, 2018

Day Eleven

Sunday

Nagasaki to Fukuoka

We leave Nagasaki for Fukuoka today. Along the way we will go for a cruise amongst the **Kujuku islands**, a grouping of over 200 small islands that are part of the **Saikai National Park**.

We will visit **Arita**, home of some of Japan's finest porcelain. Usually known as Imari porcelain because Imari served as the port from which Arita's porcelain was shipped around Japan, it was here that Korean porcelain makers settled at the end of the 16th century to found Japan's porcelain industry.

March 19, 2018

Day Twelve

Monday

Fukuoka

Our first stop is at Daizaifu where we will visit Dazaifu Tenmangu and the Kyushu National Museum. **Dazaifu Tenmangu** is dedicated to Sugawara Michizane, an imperial scholar unfairly exiled from Kyoto in the 9th century. Also known as Tenjin, he is the guardian of scholars, and is regularly called upon by earnest students preparing for exams. The **Kyushu National Museum** opened in 2005 and focuses not just on Japan's natural history all the way back to pre-historic times, but also Japan's relationship with neighboring countries.

March 20, 2018

Day Thirteen

Tuesday

Fukuoka to Honolulu

The day is free to relax and do any last minute packing or shopping. We return to Hawaii on an afternoon flight to Mainland Japan before catching our flight back in Honolulu. We will arrive in Honolulu on the morning of the day we left. Upon arrival we must pass through immigration and clear customs.