



Itinerary

15 Day Expedition Cruise Through The Heart Of Japan

***IMPORTANT NOTE:** Any extra nights, optional tours or other amendments, will not be visible on this itinerary.

Day 1: Depart Tokyo, Japan

Today, make your own way by taxi to the new Tokyo Harumi Terminal. Please arrive by 4:00pm to board your ship, the MS Coral Geographer.

Once onboard, you'll have time to settle into your stateroom and explore the ship's facilities. In the evening, the Expedition Team will give you a briefing on the journey ahead and what to expect in the coming days.

We set sail this afternoon towards the beautiful Sea of Japan – your adventure has officially begun!

MEALS: Dinner

OVERNIGHT: MS Coral Geographer

Day 2: Shimizu, Japan

Today we arrive in the picturesque port town of **Shimizu**, one of Japan's most scenic harbours. On a clear day, you'll be treated to breathtaking views of **Mount Fuji** rising majestically over Suruga Bay. This region is not only known for its natural beauty but also for its deep cultural connections to Japan's most iconic mountain.

Our first stop is the Mount Fuji World Heritage Centre, where you'll learn all about the spiritual, cultural, and geological significance of Mount Fuji. The centre features a modern exhibition space with interactive displays and a viewing deck that offers stunning panoramic views of the surrounding landscape. It's a great opportunity to understand why Mount Fuji is so important to the Japanese people and how it earned its status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Afterwards, we'll travel to one of Shizuoka Prefecture's famous tea plantations, an area renowned for producing some of Japan's best green tea. Here, you'll join a guided walk through the peaceful tea fields, with gentle slopes and slightly uneven ground. As you stroll among the rows of tea plants, your local guide will explain the history and traditions of Japanese tea-making. You'll also get to enjoy a tasting session, sampling fresh tea while taking in the beautiful rural views.

Today's activities involve a relaxed pace with some walking, and transport will be provided by coach with a round trip of approximately two hours. It's a gentle and enriching day filled with local flavours, culture, and iconic scenery.

BERTH TYPE: Dock

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: MS Coral Geographer

Day 3: Shingu, Japan

Today, you'll explore the Kii Peninsula, a region that has been a centre of Japanese spirituality for over 1,000 years. This area is home to the ancient Kumano Kodo pilgrimage routes, where Buddhism and Shinto beliefs come together in the mountains and valleys. You'll have two excursion options to choose from, each offering a unique way to experience the cultural and natural beauty of the region.

Option 1: Walk the Daimonzaka Trail

If you're a keen walker, this is a fantastic way to follow in the footsteps of traditional pilgrims. You'll travel by coach to the start of the Daimonzaka trail, a beautiful cobblestone path shaded by towering cedar trees. The walk leads uphill to the impressive Nachi Taisha Shrine and Seiganto-ji Temple, both perched above the forest. At the top, you'll be rewarded with stunning views of Nachi Falls, Japan's tallest single-drop waterfall.

- **Activity Level:** Moderate to difficult (Over 300 steps on a steady incline with uneven cobblestones)
- **Travel Time:** Approx. 40 minutes return by coach
- **Notes:**
 - Shorter walking options are available – speak to the team onboard if have any concerns.
 - A reasonable level of fitness is required.

Option 2: Temples and Dorokyo Gorge by Coach

For a more relaxed experience, enjoy a guided coach tour to two of Kumano's most sacred temples. Your local guide will explain the unique blend of Buddhism and Shinto that defines this region. You'll also visit Dorokyo Gorge, famous for its striking rock formations and beautiful scenery—perfect for photography.

- **Activity Level:** Low to moderate (Guests will need to manage around 50 stairs at the temples)
- **Travel Time:** Approx. 2 hours return by coach

- **Notes:**

- A comfortable and cultural option with light walking
- Ideal for those who prefer a gentler pace

Whether you choose to walk the ancient pilgrimage path or explore by coach, today offers a deep and memorable insight into Japan's spiritual heritage.

BERTH TYPE: Dock

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: MS Coral Geographer

Day 4: Kobe Port – Explore Osaka or Kyoto, Japan

Today you'll have the opportunity to explore one of Japan's two iconic cities – vibrant Osaka or cultural Kyoto. Each city offers a unique experience, and both options include a full-day guided excursion with comfortable coach travel to and from the ship.

Option 1: Explore Osaka – Japan's Food Capital

Get a taste of modern Japan with a day exploring lively Osaka, known for its amazing street food and exciting city atmosphere. On this guided tour, you'll visit Dotonbori Street, famous for its bright lights, canals, and energetic vibe. You'll stroll through the popular Kuromon Market, known for fresh seafood, snacks, and sweets. The day finishes with panoramic views of the city from the Umeda Sky Building's observation deck.

- **Activity Level:** Moderate (You'll need to walk unassisted for 30 minutes to 1 hour at a time, including some stairs and gentle slopes)
- **Travel Time:** Approx. 2–3 hours return by coach
- **Note:** Traffic may be heavy in and around the city.

Option 2: Discover Traditional Kyoto

Step back in time with a visit to Kyoto, once the imperial capital of Japan. Today's guided tour includes visits to some of the city's most famous landmarks – traditional Buddhist temples, Shinto shrines, and beautiful gardens. You'll also experience the sights, sounds, and flavours of Nishiki Market, a popular local street market known for its variety of food and cultural charm.

- **Activity Level:** Moderate (Walking unassisted for up to 1 hour, including stairs and low inclines)
- **Travel Time:** Approx. 2–3 hours return by coach
- **Note:** Travel times can vary due to city traffic.

Whether you choose the bustling energy of Osaka or the serene traditions of Kyoto, today is sure to be a highlight of your journey through Japan.

BERTH TYPE: Dock

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: MS Coral Geographer

Day 5: Tokushima, Japan

Today we arrive in Tokushima, located on the north-west tip of Shikoku Island. This coastal city is best known for its famous Awa Odori Festival, a vibrant celebration of traditional Japanese dance held every August. While we're visiting outside the festival period, there's still plenty to enjoy, with a mix of natural wonders, art, and cultural history.

We begin the day with a visit to the Naruto Whirlpools, a fascinating natural phenomenon created by fast-moving tidal currents. Enjoy a short, scenic walk to the viewing platform, where you can safely take in the swirling waters and sweeping coastal views.

Next, we head to the Otsuka Museum of Art, home to hundreds of impressive artworks, including full-scale replicas of world-famous pieces like the Sistine Chapel. It's a fantastic chance to appreciate global masterpieces in a Japanese setting.

If you're interested in traditional Japanese architecture and spiritual history, you'll have the option to join a gentle walk along the Shikoku Henro Pilgrimage Trail. This peaceful path connects two scenic temples linked to the early days of Buddhism in Japan. The trail is mostly flat, with some cobblestone sections, and each temple includes about 30 stairs to access the interior.

Later, back onboard the Coral Geographer, there will be a special opportunity to sample locally produced whisky. A regional expert will join us to share insights into the production process and unique flavours of the area's distilleries.

- **Activity Level:**

- **Whirlpools & Museum:** Easy to moderate (30 minutes walking, includes stairs and light inclines)

- **Pilgrimage Walk:** Easy to moderate (flat trail with 30 stairs at each temple)

- **Travel Time:** Approx. 1 hour return by coach for both excursions

BERTH TYPE: Dock

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: MS Coral Geographer

Day 6: Shodoshima, Japan

Today we visit Shodoshima, which translates to "small bean island"—a name that reflects its long tradition of soybean farming and soy sauce production. Known as one of Japan's key food heritage sites, this island offers a unique blend of local flavours, natural beauty, and cultural experiences.

Your day begins with a guided walking tour through the island's historic Soy Sauce District, where soy sauce has been produced for over 400 years. You'll visit traditional breweries, meet local producers, and learn how this essential Japanese condiment is made. The tour also includes a hands-on demonstration of how Somen noodles—another island specialty—are created. The walk takes place on cobblestone streets and includes standing for about 30 minutes in a room without air-conditioning.

For those who are more active and want to explore the island's natural side, there is an optional guided walk through the Kankakei Gorge. This scenic hike takes you along rugged volcanic formations, offering breathtaking views of cliffs, peaks, and valleys. The walk is downhill over varied terrain and requires a good level of fitness. After the hike, enjoy a relaxing return ride on the ropeway cable cars, with sweeping views of the gorge and coastline.

- **Activity Level:**

- **Soy Sauce District Tour:** Moderate (cobble streets, standing for approx. 30 minutes in a non-air-conditioned space)

- **Kankakei Gorge Walk:** High (1 hour downhill walk over uneven ground, requires good fitness)

- **Travel Time:** Approx. 1 hour return by coach

Whether you're discovering centuries-old food traditions or hiking through volcanic landscapes, today offers a wonderful taste of island life in rural Japan.

BERTH TYPE: At anchor (transfer ashore via Xplorer tender)

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: MS Coral Geographer

Day 7: Hiroshima & Miyajima, Japan

Today is a meaningful and memorable day as we visit two iconic locations—Hiroshima and the nearby island of Miyajima, each offering a unique insight into Japan's history and culture.

Our first stop is Hiroshima, a city that carries a powerful story. In 1945, it became the first city in the world to experience an atomic bombing. Today, Hiroshima stands as a symbol of peace and resilience. You'll have the option to join a guided tour of the Peace Memorial Park, A-Bomb Dome, and museum, where you'll learn about the tragic events of the past and the city's inspiring recovery. Alternatively, you can enjoy free time to explore Hiroshima at your own pace, visit local shops, or enjoy lunch in the city.

Later, we visit the sacred island of Miyajima, home to the world-famous Itsukushima Shrine. This Shinto shrine, with its striking red torii gate appearing to float on the sea, is one of Japan's most iconic landmarks. The shrine is both a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a National Treasure. You'll have time to walk around the island, either with a guide or on your own, and take in the beautiful surroundings. Keep an eye out for the friendly deer that freely roam the island!

- **Activity Level:** Moderate (Walking and standing for 30 minutes to 1 hour at a time, over flat concrete and some cobblestone paths)
- **Travel Time:** Approx. 1 hour return by coach
- **Note:** Access to Miyajima Island is by **Xplorer tender** from the ship

Today combines moving history with scenic beauty and spiritual heritage, offering something for every traveller.

BERTH TYPE: Hiroshima: Dock

BERTH TYPE: Miyajima: At anchor (transfer ashore via Xplorer tender)

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: MS Coral Geographer

Day 8: Matsuyama, Japan

Today you'll explore Matsuyama, a city known for its deep cultural roots and its unique blend of ancient traditions and modern inspiration. From historic castles to famous bathhouses, this city offers an authentic look at Japanese heritage.

We begin with a visit to Matsuyama Castle, one of Japan's twelve remaining original castles, built in the early 1600s. You'll have the choice to either take a cable car or walk up the hill to the castle. The walk is short but steep and does require a good level of fitness. Once at the top, enjoy spectacular views of the city and take time to walk through the well-preserved castle buildings that showcase old Japanese castle architecture.

After the castle, we'll stroll through the charming streets of Matsuyama, lined with traditional ryokan inns, shops, and stalls selling local snacks and delicacies. It's a great chance to pick up a souvenir or simply enjoy the relaxed pace of this historic town.

For those interested in Japanese bathing culture, there's an optional visit to D?go Onsen, one of Japan's oldest and most famous hot springs. This beautiful bathhouse inspired the magical setting in Studio Ghibli's Spirited Away. Advance booking is required, so please let us know early if you'd like to join this experience.

- **Activity Level:** Moderate (You'll need to walk and stand for 30 minutes to 1 hour at a time. The walk to the castle is steep but short.)
- **Travel Time:** Approx. 1 hour return by coach

Whether you're exploring historic landmarks, soaking in a cultural bathhouse, or wandering peaceful laneways, Matsuyama offers a wonderful mix of the old and new.

BERTH TYPE: Dock

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: MS Coral Geographer

Day 9: Karatsu, Japan

Today we visit Karatsu, a historic port town on the northwest coast of Kyushu. The name itself reflects the town's role in ancient trade, with "kara" meaning China and "tsu" meaning port. This quiet seaside town offers a unique mix of cultural heritage, natural beauty, and community-led conservation.

We begin with a visit to the Karatsu Castle Museum, located within the beautifully restored Karatsu Castle. Inside, you'll explore exhibits that explain the town's rich history and its role as a gateway for trade and cultural exchange. Take the elevator or stairs to the top of the castle keep for panoramic views over the bay, coastline, and town below — a perfect photo opportunity.

Next, we head to the Forest of Environmental Arts, a community project that has transformed the woodlands on the hillsides of Sakureyama into peaceful walking trails. These pathways are designed to help restore the forest while inviting visitors to enjoy nature. Depending on the season, you may be treated to beautiful autumn colours and changing scenery as you walk.

- **Activity Level:** Easy to moderate (Walking and standing for 30 minutes to 1 hour. Castle can be accessed by elevator or stairs.)
- **Travel Time:** Approx. 1.5 hours return by coach

Karatsu offers a peaceful day of history, scenic views, and gentle walks through forested hills, making it a charming stop on your journey through Japan.

BERTH TYPE: Dock

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: MS Coral Geographer

Day 10: Tsushima, Japan

Today we visit Tsushima, a remote and scenic island located about halfway between mainland Japan and South Korea. Due to its location, Tsushima has long been seen as a border territory and has played an important role in trade and diplomacy between Japan, Korea, and China. Its isolation has also helped preserve its natural beauty, with lush forests, peaceful temples, and quiet trails waiting to be explored.

You'll have two main excursion options to choose from, along with a shared visit to one of the island's most significant spiritual sites.

Option 1: Mt Shimizu Hike

This option is perfect for adventurous travellers who enjoy hiking. You'll follow a challenging trail up to the summit of Mt Shimizu, winding through forest paths and the ancient stone walls of an old castle. The trail is uneven in places, with some cobblestones and exposed tree roots. Once at the top, you'll be rewarded

with breathtaking views of the island and the blue ocean stretching into the distance.

- **Activity Level:** Moderate to difficult (Uphill walk over uneven ground, cobblestones, and tree roots)

Option 2: Local Museum Visit

Enjoy a relaxed visit to the Tsushima Local Museum, where you'll learn about the island's role in international trade from as far back as the 14th century. The exhibits include artefacts from Japan, Korea, and China, offering fascinating insights into the island's cultural significance.

- **Activity Level:** Easy (Minimal walking, mostly indoors)

All Guests: Bansho-in Temple Walk

Regardless of your chosen option, all guests will visit the peaceful Bansho-in Temple, an important spiritual site on the island. You'll have time to explore the temple grounds, which are known for their winding stone staircase and tranquil forest setting. Guests who wish to visit the ancient burial grounds, once used by the Lords of Tsushima, can climb an additional 130 steep and uneven steps beyond the main temple.

- **Activity Level:** Moderate (Some cobblestone stairs to the main temple. Graveyard access involves a steep staircase.)
- **Travel Time:** Approx. 1 hour return by coach
- **Note:** Today, the vessel will also complete exit clearance from Japan in preparation for crossing to South Korea.

BERTH TYPE: Dock

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: MS Coral Geographer

Day 11: Jeju, South Korea

Today we arrive at Jeju Island, located just off the coast of South Korea. Known for its dramatic landscapes and volcanic history, Jeju offers a day filled with natural beauty, cultural experiences, and local flavours.

Our adventure begins with a visit to the Manjanggul Lava Tubes, one of the most impressive lava tube systems in the world. This underground cave network, formed by ancient volcanic eruptions, is a UNESCO Global Geopark and is famous for its unusual rock formations and tunnel-like passages. A short guided walk will take you into part of the cave system to learn about how these tubes were formed and why they're so special.

Next, you'll have the option to take a guided hike up Seongsan Sunrise Peak, an extinct volcanic crater offering stunning views over the island and ocean. The hike is steep in sections and takes about 30–45

minutes, but there are also plenty of viewing platforms and seating areas around the base for those who prefer a gentler experience. You're welcome to explore at your own pace.

No visit to South Korea is complete without sampling the local cuisine, and today you'll enjoy a traditional Korean-style lunch. Expect dishes like beef and vegetable rice bowls or a tasty Korean BBQ — flavours that are as memorable as the views.

- **Activity Level:** Moderate (Walking and standing for 30 minutes to 1 hour. The peak hike is optional but requires good fitness.)
- **Travel Time:** Approx. 4 hours return by coach, including several scenic stops
- **Note:** Today we enter and exit South Korea, so border formalities will be completed.

BERTH TYPE: Dock

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: MS Coral Geographer

Day 12: Sasebo, Japan

Today we return to Japan and arrive in the coastal city of Sasebo, located in Nagasaki Prefecture. Known for its rich maritime history, scenic coastline, and traditional crafts, Sasebo offers a relaxed and cultural day ashore. Guests can choose between two different excursions, each offering a unique insight into the region's heritage.

Option 1: Discover Arita – The Home of Japanese Porcelain

Step back in time with a visit to Arita, the historic town where Japan's first fine porcelain — known as Arita-yaki — was produced over 400 years ago. Meet local artisans and learn how this world-renowned pottery is still made using traditional methods. After the demonstration, you'll have time to wander through the quaint town streets, many of which are creatively decorated with colourful pottery shards and displays.

- **Activity Level:** Low to moderate (Walking and standing for up to 1 hour)
- **Travel Time:** Approx. 1 hour return by coach

Option 2: Sake Brewery Visit & Tasting

Join a guided visit to a historic sake brewery that has been producing traditional Japanese rice wine since the mid-1800s. You'll be welcomed by the owners and craftspeople, who will take you through the brewing process. At the end of the tour, enjoy a tasting session featuring some of their most popular sake varieties.

- **Activity Level:** Low to moderate (Light walking and standing throughout the tour)

- **Travel Time:** Approx. 1 hour return by coach

- **Note:** Today the ship, crew, and guests will re-enter Japan, and all necessary customs and immigration clearances will be completed.

Today offers a relaxed and enjoyable cultural experience—whether you're learning about centuries-old porcelain craftsmanship or sampling locally brewed sake in a peaceful countryside setting.

BERTH TYPE: Dock

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: MS Coral Geographer

Day 13: Aokata & Nakadori – Goto Islands, Japan

Today we visit the beautiful Goto Islands, a remote and scenic group of islands off the coast of Kyushu. These islands are made up of five main landmasses, with Nakadori being the second largest. Rich in natural beauty and history, the Goto Islands offer a fascinating glimpse into Japan's past.

During the Edo period, when foreign religions were banned, many persecuted Christians fled to this remote region. They continued to practise their faith in secret until the ban was lifted in the 1870s. We'll visit Kashiragashima Village, a peaceful and historically significant site, to learn more about these "Hidden Christians" and how they kept their beliefs alive in isolation.

For those who enjoy walking, there is also an optional guided hike through the forested areas of the island. The trail weaves through a unique combination of subtropical and subalpine forest and along the island's scenic beachfront. It's a wonderful way to enjoy the natural environment and coastal views.

- **Activity Level:** Moderate (Guests must be able to walk and stand for 30 minutes to 1 hour. The hike involves uneven forest ground and may be slippery if it has rained.)
- **Travel Time:** Approx. 2 hours return by coach

Today offers a mix of cultural discovery and natural beauty—perfect for those interested in Japan's hidden history and peaceful island landscapes.

BERTH TYPE: Dock

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: MS Coral Geographer

Day 14: Fukue – Goto Islands, Japan

Today we explore Fukue Island, the largest of the Goto Islands. Known for its rolling hills and rugged coastline, Fukue's dramatic landscape was shaped by lava flows from the eruption of Mt Onidake. Whether you're up for a hike or prefer a relaxed cultural activity, today offers two great ways to experience the island.

Option 1: Scenic Hike around Mt Onidake

For those looking for a more active experience, join a longer guided hike around the crater of Mt Onidake. This trail offers breathtaking views across the Sea of Japan and the island's unique lava-formed coastline. It's a fantastic way to take in Fukue's natural beauty and enjoy some fresh air and exercise.

- **Activity Level:** Moderate (Requires good mobility; walking and standing for up to 1 hour)

Option 2: Viewpoint Walk & Baramon Kite Flying

If you prefer a gentler pace, take a short walk to a scenic viewpoint on Mt Onidake, where you'll still enjoy impressive views of the island. Afterwards, you'll have the chance to fly a handmade Baramon kite, crafted by local artisans. These colourful kites are a symbol of Fukue's cultural heritage and provide a fun and interactive way to connect with the local community.

- **Activity Level:** Easy to moderate (Light walking with the opportunity to participate in kite flying)
- **Travel Time:** Approx. 1 hour return by coach

Whether you hike the crater or fly a traditional kite, your visit to Fukue offers a perfect final taste of the Goto Islands' natural and cultural charm.

BERTH TYPE: Dock

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: MS Coral Geographer

Day 15: Arrive Fukuoka, Japan

This morning, we arrive in the vibrant city of Fukuoka, marking the end of our unforgettable journey. After breakfast, you'll disembark Coral Geographer at 8:30am, saying goodbye to the crew and your fellow travellers.

Although the voyage ends here, your adventure doesn't have to! Fukuoka is known for its excellent shopping, delicious local food, and easy access to nearby nature. Whether you're heading straight to the airport or planning to explore a little longer, this lively city has plenty to offer.

Thank you for joining us—we hope you leave with lasting memories and a deeper appreciation for the culture, history, and natural beauty of Japan and South Korea.

BERTH TYPE: Dock

MEALS: Breakfast