

“Folklore and Fortune”

TOUR OBJECTIVE

To give students a more thorough understanding of Japan’s history and the influence it has on modern Japan via a tour that traces Japan’s history from the beginning of the imperial bloodline to the end of World War II.

FOCAL POINT

What are the connections between the different eras in Japan’s history, and how do those eras still hold influence today?

IN DETAIL

This tour traces a path from Japan’s ancient past to its present via the cultural and historical significance of the places it visits. Starting in Miyazaki, the tour covers sites pertaining to Japanese mythology through the Tokugawa Period, the seeds of the Meiji Restoration, Japan’s exposure to the west, and the detonation of the A-Bomb over Nagasaki. The tour as written devotes an equal amount of time to each era to allow for focus and reflection on the importance of these places and their place in history.

Unlike the typical Japan tour, this tour focuses exclusively on Kyushu and does not visit Tokyo. This may sound like a negative, but in our experience, traveling “off the beaten path” can add a sense of uniqueness that is invaluable for student groups.

This pitch is an excellent fit for students studying:

- Japan’s feudal history
- The Meiji Restoration
- Japanese religion and folk myths
- The history of Christianity in Japan
- Contemporary Japanese history
- The difference between rural and urban Japan

ITINERARY

Day 1: Departure

We depart the USA for Japan!

Day 2: Arrival in Japan; transfer to Miyazaki Airport

Once we arrive in Japan, we transfer to Miyazaki Airport. Once we arrive, we'll be shuttled to our lodging before succumbing to jet lag.

Day 3: The Heavens and the Sea

Miyazaki is often called the spot where Japan began – and that's where we'll begin too. We begin with Aoshima Island, a gorgeous isle set off the Nichinan Coast. It was here where two of the gods met and fell in love, which is why there is a special shrine for couples right on the island. After seeing the shrine, check out the "washboard" around the island, a mysterious rock formation caused by tectonic plate movement. Then we visit Udo Shrine, a shrine in a cave where you can toss stones into the sea for luck and take in some amazing views.



Day 4: Villas and Volcanoes

After a day with the gods, we jump into the feudal period today when we arrive in Kagoshima City. Our first stop is Sengannen, the garden and villa owned by the powerful Shimadzu Clan that used to rule this area (and still own many local businesses!). You'll sip tea and learn about the role the Shimadzu leaders played during the Tokugawa era – and its aftermath. You might notice the giant volcano across the sea from Sengannen; that's our second stop! We'll sail to the island of Sakurajima, where we'll walk lava flow trails and have a little time to soak our feet in a hot spring.

Day 5: Sailing Through History

As the Shimadzu held their power, others fought... and today we revisit that time as we visit some sites from the warring states period. First up is Kumamoto Castle, built in the 1500s and the seat of power for the area. We'll weave through reconstructed and original castle buildings while also taking a little time to wander the city. Then we hop a boat and cross the sea to Shimabara. Home to the ruins of another castle, this was where some of Japan's first Christians met their end in one of the last rebellions against the Tokugawa following their domination of the country. Aside from the castle, we'll take in local art and walk along carp-filled streams before treating ourselves to a filling meal at a local ryokan.

Day 6: West Meets East

Japan did not close its doors completely when the Tokugawa showed up; no, one port remained open to just the Dutch. That port was Dejima in the city of Nagasaki, today's first stop. We'll wander the old

Dejima settlements and reconstructions while trying to picture what it must have been like to trade with Japan when you were restricted to but one single island. In 1859 the port was opened again, and foreign influence led to the other two sites on our schedule today: the gorgeous Glover Garden and the Oura Catholic Church, where some of the martyrs and lives lost at Shimabara are honored. In the evening, we'll take in the best city view around from the top of Mount Inasa.

Day 7: Old Ports and Island Forts

Our first stop today: the Chinese Temples and Chinatowns created by Chinese settlers in Nagasaki, where we'll draw some comparisons to Chinatowns back home and have some amazing Chanpon noodles. Then we hit the sea for a visit to giant symbol of Japan's industrial development: the abandoned mining island of Gunkanjima. Once prosperous (but crowded) mine on an island, the island mine was closed in 1974 and everyone moved away. Today, we visit what's left – an eerie skeleton of the lost city.



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Day 8: Tranquility and Complexity

No matter the era, rice production has always been a big part of life in Kyushu – which is why today we're stopping by some of the local rice terraces to have a look around. The ones we'll be visiting also run an art center and have an amazing café, so we'll be having some fun too! Then we venture into the biggest city in Kyushu, Fukuoka! We'll check out the port area for some dinner before calling it a night.

Day 9: Adventures in Urban Exploring

We start in the park today, where you'll have a chance to kick back, visit some shrines, and even rent a paddle boat (if you feel like it). In the afternoon, we'll move in guided groups through the Tenjin area so you can shop some of Japan's largest shopping arcades for souvenirs to bring home. At night, we'll visit a Fukuoka staple: ramen carts in the city's huge "yatai" area.

Day 10: Homeward Bound

Return home and make all your friends jealous with Japan travel stories!. ^_^