

Join Panda Travel in...



# 2024 Japan's Backroads & Hidden Gems: Kyushu - Honshu - Kansai Fall Foliage Tour

(GPI3I87)



Nov 10 - 19, 2024  
8 Nights/ 10 Days

*Hakata - Moji - Tsunoshima - Hagi -  
Iwakuni - Suo Oshima - Miyajima -  
Hiroshima - Himeji - Kobe - Osaka*

**\$100 OFF PER PERSON**  
when you pay with a personal check/cash

**\$4,298\***

per person-triple occupancy

**\$4,398\***

per person-double occupancy

**\$4,698\***

single occupancy

pandaonline.com

(808) 734-1961

1017 Kapahulu Ave, Honolulu, HI 96816

Cancel for any reason up  
to 65 days prior to departure  
date for a FULL REFUND!

A minimum of 16 participants is  
required for the tour to operate

# Itinerary

## Day 1: (Sun) Nov 10 – Honolulu Depart Honolulu via Hawaiian Airlines

→ Meet the Panda Travel representative 3 hrs prior to departure at the Hawaiian Airlines check-in counters.

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## Day 2: (Mon) Nov 11 – Fukuoka-Hakata Hotel Clio Court Hakata (Free Wi-Fi)

→ **6:40pm – Arrive at Fukuoka Airport.** Meet your local English speaking guide at the arrival lobby. We'll transfer to **Hotel Clio Court Hakata** for our 2-night stay. Our hotel is adjacent to the JR Hakata Station, which is just steps from many dining and shopping options. After checking in, the remainder of the evening is free.

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## Day 3: (Tue) Nov 12 – Hakata (B) Hotel Clio Court Hakata (Free Wi-Fi)

→ **Breakfast at hotel.**

→ **9:00am – Meet your guide at the hotel lobby for a full day tour around Hakata.**

→ **9:30am –** Our morning begins at the **Kushida Shrine**, said to have been founded in 757 and is one of the oldest shrines in Fukuoka. While not extensive, there are a few notable things to look out for, such as a towering ginkgo tree said to be over 1,000 years old, and some unusual Tengu masks. Walk around and enjoy [viewing the colors of fall](#).

→ **10:00am –** Close by, a visit to the **Hakata Machiya Folk Museum** to learn about the history of this ancient city. Hakata is one of Japan's oldest cities and served as a link to continental Asia in pre-modern times. Though the museum is small, it is definitely worth a visit. You can see a sample of traditional architecture and explore an exhibition hall filled with beautiful artifacts that help illuminate the fascinating history of this city.

→ **11:30am –** If you're looking for a unique souvenir from Fukuoka, look no further than one of the most beautiful representations of Japanese culture: Hakata Dolls. Known for their soft colors and intricately carved expressions, these unglazed clay dolls are masterfully crafted from 500 year old traditional techniques. Here, we'll test our skills on this **hands-on doll-coloring experience** at the **Hakata Doll Hall Shogetsudo**.

→ **1:00pm –** Now, off to **Canal City**, also known as "city within the city." This is a large shopping and entertainment complex in Fukuoka. It has numerous attractions including a canal, local & international brand name shops, a theater, game center, two hotels, and a wide variety of restaurants. If you enjoy eating ramen, you must visit the Ramen Stadium on the 5th floor. There, you will find eight ramen shops with

special noodles & soup favors from across Japan including the local specialty Hakata ramen. Enjoy free time to explore and have lunch on your own at Canal City!

→ **3:00pm – Return to hotel.** Enjoy the rest of the day at leisure.

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## Day 4: (Wed) Nov 13 – Hakata-Moji (B) Premier Hotel Mojiko (Free Wi-Fi)

→ **Breakfast at hotel.**

→ **8:30am – Meet your guide at the hotel lobby for a full day tour to Kitakyushu and Shimonoseki.**

→ **10:00am –** Start our morning at **Hibikinada Green Park**, one of Kitakyushu's most beautiful seaside parks. It offers a range of activities, including a stunning rose garden with 320 different varieties. The park is also home to Hibiki Animal World, where you can interact with around 250 kangaroos and view other fascinating animals. Don't miss the chance to see tropical reptiles, birds like channel-billed toucans, and Japan's largest rice paper butterflies in the Tropical Ecology Garden.

→ **12:30pm –** Next, a stop at **Tanga Market**, beloved by locals and opened in the early Taisho Period. It is known as the "Kitchen of the Kitakyushu area" and offers a wide variety of fresh foods, prepared foods, meats, dried foods, confectionery, tea, and liquor from various vendors. The area exudes a nostalgic Showa Retro atmosphere, reminiscent of the post-war period of high economic growth, which attracts many tourists. Take some free time here to explore, shop, and enjoy lunch at your leisure.

→ **2:15pm –** This afternoon, we'll visit the **TOTO Museum**, a leading manufacturer of bathroom fixtures. Here, we will learn more about the company's legacy and witness how they are shaping the future of bathrooms.

→ **4:00pm – Arrive at Premier Hotel Mojiko**, a beautiful property located on the Moji waterfront with stunning views overlooking the Kanmon Strait across the sea to Shimonoseki. After checking in, meet our guide for a walking tour of the area, where she will point out a variety of shopping and dining options. The local specialty dish to try is grilled curry rice.

Despite being a small and quaint town, Mojiko has a rich history as an international trading port dating back to 1889. The Mojiko Retro district is a restored reproduction of a bygone era. Besides a variety of preserved buildings, make sure to visit the iconic Mojiko Station and the former Moji Mitsui Club, a two-story wooden building constructed in the half-timber style that once served as a lodge. Built in 1921, this building hosted famous guests like Albert Einstein.

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## Day 5: (Thu) Nov 14 – Moji-Tsunoshima-Hagi (B/D)

Hagi Kanko Hotel, Honkan (Free Wi-Fi) - [Enjoy onsen](#)

→ **Breakfast at hotel.**

→ **8:30am – Meet your guide at the hotel lobby for a full day tour for Tsunoshima and Hagi.** This morning, we'll drive by the **Kanmon Bridge**, a suspension bridge linking the islands of Kyushu and Honshu over the Shimonoseki Strait. It was the first major island bridge in Japan. When it was opened in 1973, it was the longest bridge in all of Asia.

→ **10:00am** – Now, drive over the **Tsunoshima Bridge** and enjoy the amazing views from both sides. This 1,780-meter-long bridge harmonizes with the blue Amagase sea, forming a picturesque landscape. It's a famous photo spot and an ideal destination for a scenic drive. Experience the thrill of crossing the open water on this bridge.

→ **11:30am** – Our first stop today is the breathtaking **Motonosumi-Inari Shrine**. This secluded shrine in Yamaguchi boasts 123 torii gates, lining a footpath along the coast. Walking this path brings good luck in fishing, business, travel, and pregnancy. The story behind the shrine is that in 1955, a local resident of Nagato received a divine message from a fox spirit. He was instructed to build a shrine on the picturesque cliffs where he used to go fishing. When asked about the origin of the Motonosumi-Inari Shrine, this is the story that locals tell. One unique feature of this shrine is its offertory box, located on top of the first torii gate. Visitors can throw coins at the box. If your coin goes in, your wish may come true.

→ **1:15pm** – From here, a stop at a **Michino-Eki Senza Kitchen** (roadside area) where you can do a little shopping and enjoy lunch on your own.

→ This afternoon, we'll head to **Hagi**, a former castle town on the serene Sea of Japan coast in Yamaguchi. It was the capital of the powerful Mori Clan during the feudal age. Hagi is famous for its well-preserved castle town and its exquisite Hagi-yaki Pottery, which is considered among Japan's finest. The town retains its centuries-old appearance and features beautiful old samurai and merchant residences open to the public.

→ **3:30pm** – Once in Hagi, we'll embark on a 40-minute **sightseeing cruise** that begins at the Shizukibashi Bridge. The cruise will take us along the canal near the Hagi Castle Ruins and into the mainstream of the Hashimotogawa River before returning. During this tour, you'll have the opportunity to see the residences once occupied by samurai in the Horiuchi and Hiyakono Preservation Districts.

→ **5:00pm** – **Arrive at Hagi Kanko Hotel, followed by a Japanese-style dinner at 6pm.** This onsen property offers Japanese-style rooms and is situated in the Hagi Onsen-kyo district. After dinner, enjoy the hot springs with breathtaking

sea views.

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## Day 6: (Fri) Nov 15 – Hagi-Iwakuni (B/D)

Iwakuni Kokusai Kanko Hotel (Free Wi-Fi) - [Enjoy onsen](#)

→ **Breakfast at hotel.**

→ **8:30am – Meet your guide at the hotel lobby for a full day tour to Iwakuni.**

→ **9:30am** – This morning, we'll visit **Akiyoshi Cave**, designated as a Special Natural Monument. It is a remarkable natural wonder and one of the largest limestone caves in Asia. Inside, you'll discover an underground world adorned with stunning stalactites, stalagmites, and intricate limestone formations. This cave is not only a geological marvel but also a popular tourist destination, providing a unique opportunity to explore the hidden depths of the Earth's ancient geological history.

→ **12:45pm** – **Arrive at Iwakuni Kokusai Kanko Hotel** to drop off our luggages.

→ **1:00pm** – Here we are at **Kintaikyo Bridge**, Iwakuni's most famous landmark that has been admired for hundreds of years. The bridge's five high arches were originally constructed without the use of nails and are made from Japanese cypress, chestnut, and oak. The original bridge was unfortunately destroyed by a typhoon in 1950, but was reconstructed three years later, following the original design. While the current bridge was built with nails, they are made of tatara iron, historically used for forging swords. This bridge is ranked one of Japan's three great bridges and is recognized as a site of scenic beauty, earning a two-star rating in the 2013 Michelin Green Guide to Japan. In the fall, the trees in **Kikko Park** alongside the bridge display a vibrant array of colors, creating a striking scene. Walk around this picturesque spot for [viewing fall foliage](#) and enjoy lunch on your own.

→ **3:15pm** – Now, let's make our way to the **Iwakuni Castle Ropeway** and **Iwakuni Castle**. Iwakuni Castle, constructed in 1608 at the start of the Edo Period, stands atop the 200-meter-high Mt. Shiroyama. This location was chosen for its natural defensive features. With a natural moat surrounding about half of the castle, it stands four stories tall and offers a captivating view of the city.

→ **5:15pm** – **Return to hotel, followed by a Japanese-style dinner at 6pm.** This onsen hotel features public indoor and outdoor hot spring baths.

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**Day 7: (Sat) Nov 16 – Iwakuni-Suo Oshima-Miyajima-Hiroshima (B)**

ANA Crowne Plaza Hotel Hiroshima (Free Wi-Fi)

→ **Breakfast at hotel.**

→ **8:30am – Meet your guide at the hotel lobby for the full day tour to Hiroshima.**

→ **9:30am** – Our morning begins at the **Museum of Japanese Emigration to Hawaii**, which was opened on February 8th, 1999, in commemoration of the arrival of the first group of Japanese immigrants to Hawaii in 1885. Explore the hardships, contributions, and cultural interactions of these immigrants through artifacts and records in the restored Fukumoto house.

→ **From here, drive to Miyajimaguchi.**

→ **11:55am** – Once here, we'll take a short 10-min. **ferry ride to Miyajima**, also known as the "Island of Gods" and one of the most gorgeous destinations in Japan. You may recognize it from its vermilion Torii Gate (shrine gate) of Itsukushima-jinja, which appears to float on the waves at high tide.

→ **12:30pm** – After the Miyajima ferry ride, we'll walk along **Omote-Sando**, the main street that leads to **Itsukushima Shrine**, a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of Japan's most unique shrines. The shrine is dedicated to the god that protects from sea disasters and wars. Most noteworthy are its Torii Gate and the Shaden (shrine pavilion), which are both submerged under the sea at full tide. At low tide, the water recedes completely and it's possible to walk out to the gate. Fall time at Miyajima island is a beautiful season to enjoy **viewing the fall foliage**. Enjoy lunch on your own and souvenir shopping along the way for items like Shamoji (a rice scoop), or sample Hiroshima delicacies like Momiji manju (buns shaped like maple leaves and filled with a bean-jam filling).

→ **3:55pm – Return to Miyajimaguchi ferry port by ferry, our bus will take us to Hiroshima.**

→ **5:00pm – Arrive at ANA Crowne Plaza Hotel Hiroshima.** Our hotel is located near a variety of restaurants and shops. Enjoy the evening at leisure.

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**Day 8: (Sun) Nov 17 – Hiroshima-Himeji (B)**

Hotel Nikko Himeji (Free Wi-Fi)

→ **Please pack an overnight carry-on bag for 1 night. A courier service will deliver your luggage(s) (2 pieces per person) from Hiroshima to Osaka.**

→ **Breakfast at hotel.**

→ **8:30am – Meet your guide at the lobby for a full day**

**tour to Himeji.**

→ **9:00am** – Our morning begins with a visit to the **Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum/ Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park/A-Bomb Dome**. After WWII, Japanese architect Kenzo Tange spearheaded the design of this park to commemorate the lives lost on August 6, 1945. The A-Bomb Dome, the only remaining structure in the area from the first atomic bomb, was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996.

→ **11:15am** – Experience the vibrant **autumn colors** at this 400-year-old **Shukkeien Garden**, designated as a National Place of Scenic Beauty in Japan. This picturesque garden features diverse landscapes, a serene pond surrounded by islets and streams, and the iconic Rainbow Bridge.

→ **12:30pm** – Here we are at **Hiroshima Station**. Grab lunch on your own and take some time to explore and shop.

→ **2:03pm** – Now, enjoy a short **bullet train ride** from Hiroshima Station to Himeji station.

→ **2:58pm – Welcome to Himeji**, a charming seaside city located on the western edge of the Kansai region. This picturesque destination is best known for its magnificent castle, which has stood strong and remained unscathed by wars and earthquakes throughout the centuries.

→ **3:30pm** – From here, we'll visit the **Nadagiku Sake Brewery**, considered one of the best breweries in Himeji. After the brewery tour, enjoy sake tasting and time in the gift shop. Some of the sake sold here is not available anywhere else.

→ **4:45pm – Arrive at Hotel Nikko Himeji**, conveniently located next to Himeji JR Station and a short walk from Miyuki dori, a covered shopping arcade. Enjoy the rest of the evening at your leisure.

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**Day 9: (Mon) Nov 18 – Himeji-Kobe-Osaka (B/L)**

Hotel Monterey Grasmere Osaka (Free Wi-Fi)

→ **Breakfast at hotel.**

→ **9:00am – Meet your guide at the hotel lobby for a full day of touring as we head to Osaka.**

→ **9:30am** – We start with a visit to **Himeji Castle**, one of the last surviving feudal castles. Known as "White Heron Castle" for its unique white exterior, it resembles a bird in flight. Himeji Castle consists of 83 buildings and is adjacent to the beautiful **Koko-en Garden**. This well-preserved garden, built in the architectural style of the Edo period (1603-1867), is famous for its **fall foliage** and features nine different gardens, including the Garden of Bamboo and the Tea Ceremony Garden. Himeji Castle is considered a national treasure of Japan and a UNESCO World Heritage site, highlighting the beauty of Japan's four seasons.

→ **1:30pm** – Once we are in Kobe, we'll enjoy **Kobe beef lunch at a local restaurant**. Kobe beef is a highly regarded culinary delicacy, sourced from Wagyu cattle raised in Kobe, Japan. These cattle are pampered with sake massages and a diet that includes beer, resulting in exceptionally tender, marbled, and flavorful meat.

→ **3:00pm** – We're now at the **Sannomiya Center Gai Shopping Street**, a large shopping arcade offering a wide variety of retail and food outlets.

→ **5:00pm** – **Arrive at Hotel Monterey Grasmere Osaka**. Welcome to Osaka, Japan's third-largest city and the capital of commerce with a bustling street life in its arcades, markets, and byways. Osaka's citizens speak the Kansai dialect and are known for their outgoing nature, as well as for their abiding love of delicious street food. Our hotel is located just a few mins' walk to Osaka's most famous entertainment districts. Enjoy the evening of shopping and dining on your own.

→ **1:00pm** – **Meet your guide at the hotel lobby** as we head to the brand new **LaLaport Kadoma/Mitsui Outlet Park Osaka Kadoma**. This shopping complex, which opened in April 2023, is the first shopping complex in Japan to combine these malls under one roof.

→ **5:30pm** – **Arrive at Kansai International Airport and begin our check-in process for the flight home.**

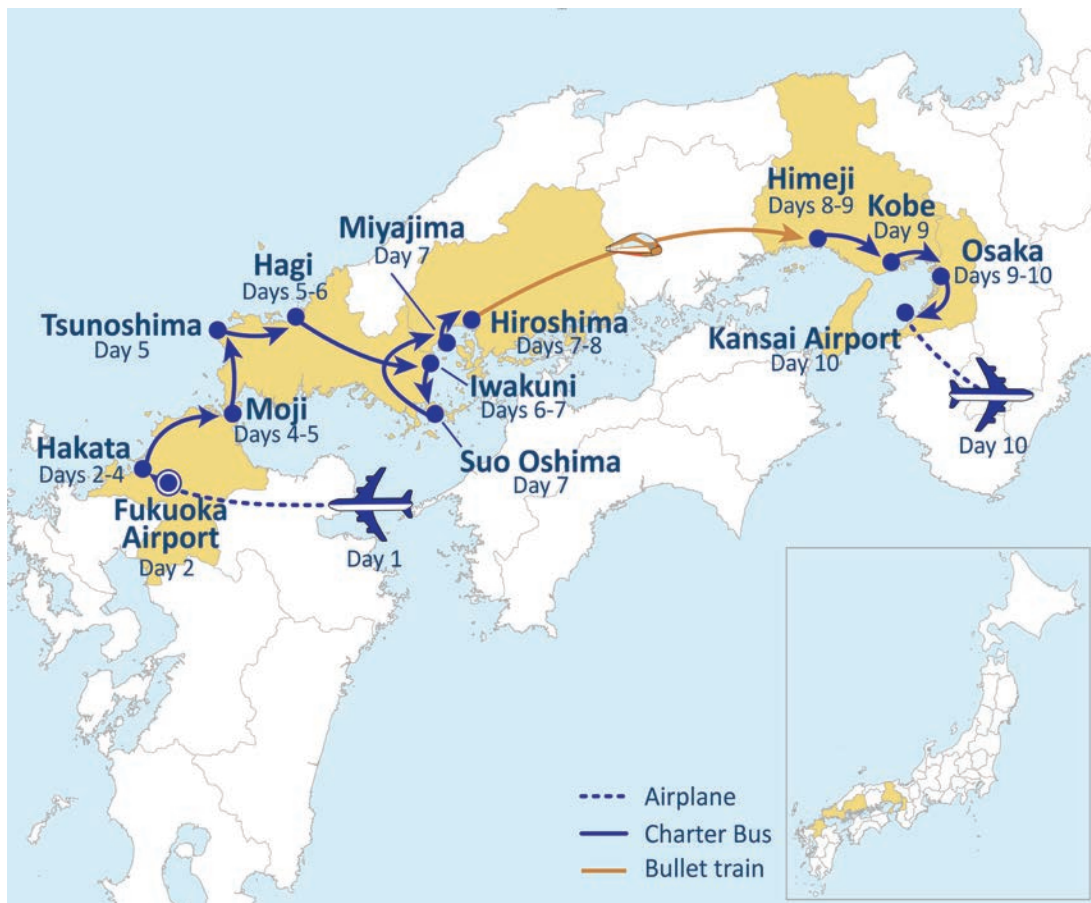
→ **Depart from Kansai via Hawaiian Airlines.**

→ **Arrive in Honolulu (same day).**

Thank you for traveling with us! 

#### Day 10: (Tue) Nov 19 – Osaka-Kansai-Honolulu (B)

→ **After breakfast**, enjoy free time to explore Osaka on your own. We've arranged a 1pm late checkout for our rooms, allowing you to rest, shop, and repack at your convenience.



# Need to Know...



## Payment Policy

- » Reserve with **\$75 per person deposit. Refundable up to 65 days prior to departure date, September 6, 2024.**
- » **Final payment due by September 18, 2024. Package is non-refundable after this date.**

## \* Fares and Fees (Priced in USD)

- » Are subject to change in light of fuel supplements, taxes, and differences in costs.
- » Air ticket fare is guaranteed, but taxes, fees, and fuel surcharges are subject to change until tickets are issued, approximately 53 days out.
- » We reserve the right to make changes to the itinerary with or without notice.



## Special Assistance

- » You must inform us of any disability/impairment that requires special attention at the time of your making the reservation.
- » We reserve the right to cancel the reservation(s) if the disability/impairment is unsuitable for the tour.
- » You are also responsible for any costs and/or accommodations related to your disability/impairment, such as providing your own travel companion.



## Travel Insurance

- » We highly recommend the purchase of trip insurance. Please ask our representatives for more information.



## Travel Documents

- » A valid passport is required for all U.S. citizens and must be valid and not expire at least 6 months from the return tour date.
- » Non-U.S. passport holders must check with the Japanese Consulate to see if a visa is required.



## Land Tour Operator & Costs

- » Land Tour Operator is Nippon Travel Agency.
- » Land Tour costs are based on current currency conversion rates, which are subject to change.



## Other remarks

- » Not Included in the tour: Gratuities for local English speaking guide; additional baggage fee charges from the airlines; alcohol and soft drinks with meals.
- » A minimum of 16 participants are required for the tour to operate.
- » You are expected to abide by domestic and international government and accommodation policies related to health, safety, and welfare.