

Japan- Kyoto to Shikoku

Tour Organiser: Martin Jamieson

Wednesday 13th to Thursday 28th October 2027

Japan continues to be a prime destination for cycle tourists, many of whom return again and again. It is a wonderful introduction to the Far East with amazingly polite people and with so much well preserved history. The scenery is stunning with mountains, terraced rice paddies, lakes, fishing villages, temples, and castles. We will visit traditional Japanese Hotels with natural hot water Onsen and much more. Apart from the three main islands there are many smaller islands each with their own unique character. The island of Shikoku lies to the south of the largest island of Honshu and to the east of the island of Kyushu, reached by ferries and bridges across smaller islands to the mainland. Shikoku contains 88 temples which are the subject of a 'Shikoku Pilgrimage'. Our trip finishes in Onomichi, Hiroshima, after the spectacular cycling on the Shimanami Highways and designated cycling paths.

Itinerary

Wednesday 13th October 2027 Travel to Kyoto

At 5pm in the hotel meet everyone, get introduced to the guides for the next two weeks, and then have dinner.

- No cycling
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (D)

Thursday 14th October 2027 Kyoto

We leave the busy city streets behind and ride along quiet roads to the scenic Katsura River cycling path. Continue to Arashiyama, famous for its bamboo grove, beautiful river and mountain scenery, and visit Tenryu-ji, renowned for its exquisite Japanese garden. We will then visit Ryoan-ji, a historic Zen temple famous for its iconic rock garden. After taking time to enjoy the tranquility of these beautiful temples, we will cycle back to the hotel along the Kamo River, a favorite gathering place for Kyoto residents.

- Route distance: 33.0km
- Route altitude gain: 300m
- Accommodation: Hotel

- Meals: (B, D)

Friday 15th October 2027 Kyoto to Nara

Starting from the centre of Kyoto we head west past the aquarium arriving at the Katsura River. Heading south we follow the east bank along cyclepaths for 18km until we cross the Kizu River and follow it for another 15km sticking mostly to cyclepaths. Having entered Nara the one climb of the day at 70 metres takes us to our overnight stop in a hotel near the station. Nara was Japan's capital more than 1,300 years ago. We finish our ride in central Nara, where you can explore several important Buddhist temples, including Todaiji Temple (built in the style of the Chinese Tang Dynasty) and famous for its enormous Great Buddha statue.

- Route distance: 53.0km
- Route altitude gain: 300m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B)

Saturday 16th October 2027 Nara to Tokushima

After approximately five hours of travel by train and bus from Nara, we arrive in Tokushima in the afternoon. We recommend visiting Tokushima Castle Park, strolling along the Shinmachi River, or experiencing the famous traditional dances Awa Odori Kaikan. Our hotel is located near Tokushima Station, surrounded by a wide variety of local restaurants. This evening, you will be free to choose where you would like to dine and enjoy exploring Tokushima's local cuisine at your own pace

- No cycling
- Accommodation: Ryokan
- Meals: (B)

Sunday 17th October 2027 Tokushima to Hiwasa

Our ride follows the tranquil Naka River through the peaceful countryside of Tokushima before reaching the coastal town of Anan. Here, the Pacific Ocean is influenced by the warm Kuroshio Current, creating clear blue waters and a rich marine environment. The quiet coastline is home to abundant marine life, including loggerhead sea turtles that return each summer to lay their eggs. We stop in Hiwasa for lunch and visit Yakuo-ji Temple, the 23rd temple of the 88-temple pilgrimage route, where pilgrims come to pray for protection from evil. You might not see the name Hiwasa on the maps as it has now merged with Minami.

- Route distance: 67.0km
- Route altitude gain: 403m
- Accommodation: Traditional Guest House
- Meals: (B, D)

Monday 18th October 2027 Hiwasa to Muroto

We follow the beautiful coastline throughout the day, with many opportunities to encounter pilgrims walking along this traditional pilgrimage route. The vegetation is sub-tropical and you might see wild banana trees. The climbing comes early today as we head down the coast, with an undulating ride over the first 20km, however there are some lovely views. From Mugi the ride stays closer to sea level and we pass through Shihohara before hugging the coast through to our hotel close to Muroto Cape. There are a number of tunnels today from 100 – 300 metres in length. Our destination is Cape Muroto, where we visit Hotsumisaki-ji Temple, the 24th temple of the Shikoku 88-temple pilgrimage. There is also a beautiful walking trail along the coast near our accommodation.

- Route distance: 81.0km
- Route altitude gain: 614m
- Accommodation: Ryokan
- Meals: (B, D)

Tuesday 19th October 2027 Muroto to Kochi

Along the way, we visit Shinshoji Temple, the 25th temple of the Shikoku 88-temple pilgrimage, and explore the historic townscape of Kiragawa, where many traditional buildings with stone walls and tiled roofs have been beautifully preserved. Thanks to their typhoon-resistant architecture, these historic buildings have survived in remarkably good condition. During the final 15 kilometres into Kochi, we enjoy riding along a dedicated cycling path built on a former railway line.

- Route distance: 85.0km
- Route altitude gain: 296m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Wednesday 20th October 2027 Rest Day in Kochi

Our hotel is located in the heart of Kochi, within walking distance of Kochi Castle, a famous 400-year-old wooden castle, Hirome Market, where many local restaurants come together, and the covered shopping arcades in the city center. A beautiful botanical garden is also accessible by bus in around 30 minutes and is well worth a visit. Enjoy a full day exploring Kochi, a lively and vibrant regional Japanese city with a relaxed local atmosphere.

- No cycling
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B)

Thursday 21st October 2027 Kochi to Matsubagawa Onsen

Leaving Kochi, we cycle along the coast to Susaki, then turning inland we follow the Shinjo River upstream, and gradually climb to a 450-metre mountain pass, the main challenge of

the day. From the pass, we follow the Kудару River and then the Shimanto River, enjoying a long, gradual descent to our accommodation in Matsubagawa, a peaceful mountain village where a riverside onsen awaits us.

- Route distance: 88.0km
- Route altitude gain: 698m
- Accommodation: Ryokan
- Meals: (B, D)

Friday 22nd October 2027 Shimanto river

After a short morning ride, we visit Iwamotoji Temple, the 37th temple of the Shikoku 88-temple pilgrimage. The temple is famous for its beautiful ceiling paintings. We then spend the rest of the day cycling along the Shimanto River, renowned as one of Japan's last pristine rivers. Flowing freely from its source to the ocean without dam, the river preserves a beautiful natural landscape along its entire course. We finish the day at our hotel, which enjoys beautiful views of the river

- Route distance: 82.0km
- Route altitude gain: 455m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Saturday 23rd October 2027 Shimanto to Cape Ashizuri

This morning, we continue to cycle along the picturesque Shimanto Rivers. The river is famous for its distinctive chinkabashi bridges, which are designed with no guard rails because it reduces resistance to floodwaters and helps prevent the bridges from being washed away - shame about the pedestrians though. Do take care. We then follow the coastline through Ashizuri-Uwakai National Park before reaching Cape Ashizuri, the southernmost point of Shikoku, where we visit Kongofukuji Temple, the 38th temple of the Shikoku 88-temple pilgrimage.

- Route distance: 94.0km
- Route altitude gain: 848m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Sunday 24th October 2027 Cape Ashizuri - Rest Day

Our hotel is located by the ocean, and you can find some walking trails on the beach. Don't miss the iconic Cape Ashizuri Lighthouse, which stands proudly at the southernmost point of Shikoku. The views from the lighthouse are spectacular, especially during sunrise or sunset. Our hotel also has an on-site onsen (hot spring), where you can relax and enjoy a peaceful day. Cape Ashizuri is located at the southernmost tip of Shikoku, where you can actually see the curvature of the earth with its 270-degree view. We pass the Tatsukushi and

Minokoshi coasts tomorrow, but it will be quite a full day, so I might cycle there today so I can spend some time there and maybe get to the coral reefs

- No cycling
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Monday 25th October 2027 Cape Ashizuri to Ainan

We continue through Ashizuri-Uwakai National Park before heading inland along a delightful country road. As we enter Ehime Prefecture, the landscape changes once again, offering a different perspective of the calm Pacific Ocean. Ainan is home to many fishing ports and is famous for its fresh seafood. Tonight, you can look forward to a delicious dinner featuring locally caught seafood.

- Route distance: 94.0km
- Route altitude gain: 939m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Tuesday 26th October 2027 Ainan to Omishima

We rest our legs this morning while travelling to Imabari by van, and have lunch at a seaside restaurant with stunning views of the Seto Inland Sea. The route connecting Imabari with Onomichi on the main island of Honshu is known as Shimanami-Kaido (highway above the sea). The designated cycling paths and bridges have made the area a cycling Mecca of Japan, attracting a number of cycle tourists from other regions of Japan. Today we cycle across two islands and end up in the third island Omishima in the heart of Seto Inland Sea.

- Route distance: 54.0km
- Route altitude gain: 539m
- Accommodation: Ryokan
- Meals: (B, D)

Wednesday 27th October 2027 Omishima to Onomichi

Today we cycle across three more islands before finally reaching Onomichi on the mainland of Honshu. Before leaving Omishima, we visit Oyamazumi Shrine, which enshrines the gods of the sea and mountains. For those interested in samurai culture, the neighbouring museum displays Japanese swords registered as National Treasures. We spend the day surrounded by the sea and islands, admiring the bridges connecting the islands and the purpose-built cycling routes that have made the Shimanami Kaido one of Japan's most famous cycling destinations

- Route distance: 74.0km
- Route altitude gain: 818m

- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Thursday 28th October 2027 End of Tour Onomichi to Tokyo

The tour finishes after breakfast in Onomichi, a scenic port town that has flourished as a centre of maritime trade for centuries. The railway station is within walking distance, making it convenient for your onward journey. To Kansai airport 3 hours by train, To Kyoto, Osaka 2 hours by train. I hope you enjoyed Japan.

- No cycling
- Accommodation: none
- Meals: (B)

Dates and Prices

Cost

- Land only price: £4400

Payment Schedule

A deposit of £500 per person is payable upon booking, an interim payment of £2000 by 1st February 2027 with the final balance of £1,900 per person to be paid by 7th July 2027.

Price includes:

- All Accommodation for 15 nights (10 in hotels, 4 in Ryokan and 1 Guest House) - on a twin share basis (single occupancy available supplement £400)
- Breakfast x 15
- Dinner x 12
- Snacks and refreshments
- Bicycles (Road or Hybrid) - E-bike requires a supplement £200
- Spare parts and mechanic services
- English speaking guide
- Support vehicle with seats and bike rack

Price does not include:

- Single occupancy supplement £400
- E-bike supplement £200
- Drinks and alcohol
- Any other meals and refreshments
- Gratuities
- Travel to and from the tour (no flights included)

Cancellations

Written Notice Received	Cancellation Charge
Before 01/02/2027	Deposit £500
Before 07/07/2027	Deposit and Interim Payment £2,500
From 07/07/2027	Full Payment £4,400 and full amount of any supplements

The price of £4400 (land only) is based on a minimum number of 9 people taking part in the holiday and is calculated at a rate of JPY 0.0046 to £1 Sterling (based on exchange rates published Google on Sunday 30th August 2026; please note Booking Conditions). If there are insufficient bookings by Monday 01st February 2027, we will contact you and return all monies paid.

Holiday Information

Grade and Area covered by the holiday

This Holiday is classed as a grade 5. It is suitable for most recreational cyclists and experienced cyclists.

We will be cycling mainly on the coast of Shikoku with transfers by train to and from the start. We use a minibus twice for transfers to enable us to focus on the nicest bits. The area is very remote, but you will be surprised at the number of herders and farmers that we will see.

The terrain is variable. Much is rural and along the coast or rivers, but we also visit Kyoto, Nara and Kochi

Travel

The tour starts in Kyoto and finishes in Onomichi. Accommodation is booked close to the train station in both cases, and there is a direct train from the airport

Travel to the start and from the finish is not included in this holiday. It is very important that you note that neither your Tour Organiser nor Bikexplore are responsible for you in any way until the appointed time at the designated meeting point. Should you fail to arrive at the appointed time for whatever reason, we will not be responsible for any additional expenses you may incur in order to meet up with the tour group. Before finalising travel arrangements, you should ensure that the tour is definitely going ahead.

Should there be insufficient bookings or pandemic travel restrictions are re-imposed, we reserve the right to cancel the tour at any time. It is therefore recommended that you book fully flexible and refundable transport and accommodation or wait until you have been told



the tour will go ahead. In the event of the tour being cancelled we will not be responsible for any losses incurred outside what you pay us.

Communication

During the booking process and up until close to the departure date all communication will be by email, but close to the departure date there will be a WhatsApp group. This will be used during the tour for communication and sharing of photographs

Accommodation

The maximum number of participants will be 14 including the Tour Organiser

We will stay in a variety of accommodation, mostly hotels but also four RYOKAN and one Guest House. We choose Ryokan (traditional Japanese inn) to get an experience of Japan, and to support local tourism. Ryokan is a traditional Japanese-style inn often run by family and in many cases it has Onsen (natural hot springs) on site. You will sleep on a futon on the tatami floor in a Ryokan. There are a few things to remember before staying there:

- Traditional Japanese rooms do not have a bed, instead, it has Futon mat on "Tatami"

straw weaving floor to sleep on.

- Most of the accommodations provide "Yukata" traditional night robe, you can wear it to

hot spring and restaurants on site. You don't have to carry your night clothing as much if you enjoy Yukata.

- Three of the four Ryokan provide nice public Onsen hot spring to share. At one Ryokan and the one Guest House the rooms do not have their own shower and bath. The public onsen has a washing place where you

can wash yourself.

- One Ryokan and the Guest House does not have toilets in each room. They have a public toilet on site

Prices are based on two people sharing a room.

When booking with a partner to share please specify twin or double beds, if a choice is available

A single room is available for a supplement.

Meals, Health and Diet

MEALS - 15 breakfasts and 12 evening meals are included. Where there are more places to choose from in the towns of Kyoto, Nara and Kochi dinner is not included.





HEALTH - Please remember to pack any medications that you need to take regularly. Please check the current Foreign Office advice for Japan: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/japan>, and sign on for email updates.

Diet - Check that you have informed the Tour Organiser of any dietary requirements in your Booking Form, and also remind them at the start of the tour

Cycles and Equipment

You are welcome to take your own bike at your own expense, but hybrid and road bikes are available at no extra charge and in very good condition, maintained by the team on the tour. Please bring your own water bottle. It is recommended that you bring your own helmet and saddle along with pedals if you use SPD's or similar. Several weeks before the tour the team will want to know which type of bike you need, your height and/or frame size required and if you will be bringing your own saddle and pedals. Please note, though, that neither Martin Jamieson nor Bikexplore accept any liability for participants using hire bikes. You are entirely responsible for the safety and suitability and maintenance of the bike you ride. Cycle hire is not part of your holiday contract.

Rides and Rest Days

The holiday is for 16 days and has 3 rest days (days 4, 8 and 12).

This is a moving on holiday staying in a different location most nights

Most of each cycling day may be spent cycling. People will be expected to ride at their own pace and often in loose groups, at around 15-20kph on the flat, slower up hills. We shall leave after breakfast, stopping for a mid morning snack, then lunch where the group will meet up. After lunch there may be an afternoon stop if this is needed before finishing the day.

It is expected that you may want to stop for photographs, look at the view or explore and this is okay. You are on holiday.

Inevitably, you might consider parts of the route hilly, but there is a vehicle to carry luggage and provide support.

It is essential to get out on your bike and do some 50-mile/80 km rides before the tour starts.

There may be steep descents too, so you should be able to negotiate these safely.

Please note it may not always be possible to follow the itinerary exactly due to the weather etc, as things do not always go as planned. In these circumstances, you will be advised of alternative arrangements.





The Organiser will not always be at the front of the group but may be anywhere within it, as circumstances require, so you will need to be aware of the route and likely stopping places each day.

A local cycling guide will cycle with us.

Weather, Clothing and Culture

WEATHER - The average daily maximum temperature is 24 degrees and 16degrees at night, with 93 mm of rain (although that is the average for the month and the second half of the month should have less than the first half).

CLOTHING Clothing, suitable for a wide range of temperatures is needed. Waterproofs/windproofs will be needed. Sun cream, lip balm and sunglasses are recommended along with insect repellent and bite cream.

Culture– please check current Foreign Office advice for Japan

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/japan>

Maps and Guides

I usually like to buy a road atlas, as I find that the scale often suits quite well for cycling. I ordered one called Japan a Bilingual Atlas.

Guides are something that people have different tastes as to style. I have Shikoku Travel Guide by Geissler Tederich and The Do's and Don'ts of Japan - Culture Quest Books

Travel Insurance and Vaccination

For UK nationals traveling abroad, travel insurance is essential. Please check if your insurer has requirements for cyclists e.g. wearing a helmet.

There are no mandatory vaccinations for Japan, just the recommendation to have common vaccinations up to date. Key boosters include tetanus, diphtheria, polio, and the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine. You should contact your doctor at least 3 months prior to travel to obtain vaccinations and boosters. The latest advice for travelers is at <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/japan/health>

Passport Visas and monies

UK passport holders visiting for up to 90 days can get a visa on arrival. You just need a valid British citizen passport valid for the length of your stay, proof of an onward or return flight ticket, and evidence of sufficient funds.

Holders of non-UK passports are advised to check whether they require a visa.

A mix of cash for small purchases and credit cards is recommended. You might get a better exchange rate at ATMs in Japan. Almost all of the evening meals are included, so you might not need to spend a lot in Japan.





Cycling in Japan - laws and customs

Red Tickets - strict rules prohibit cycling while under the influence of alcohol or using a smart phone

Blue Ticket penalties for infractions and on the spot fines apply to 113 cycling offenses including:

Infraction	Fine
Two people riding on the same bike	¥3,000
Two cyclists riding side-by-side	¥3,000
Obstructing emergency vehicles, such as an ambulance or fire truck	¥3,000
Cycling without properly functioning brakes	¥5,000
Disregarding stop signs	¥5,000
Listening to music while cycling	¥5,000
Holding an umbrella while cycling	¥5,000
Cycling without a bike light	¥5,000
Cycling through a red light	¥6,000
Cycling against the flow of traffic	¥6,000
Cycling on the sidewalk (except where permitted)	¥6,000
Crossing railroad tracks while the railroad crossing guard is down	¥7,000
Using a phone while cycling	¥12,000

Tour Organiser Contact Details

Tour Organiser - Martin Jamieson

I have organized tours for over 12 years, usually planning the route, booking the hotels, and organising luggage transfer myself. For this tour we have a long term working partnership with a Japanese firm.

I like to cycle for the social company, scenery and food. I have enjoyed organising a series of tours where most people come back year after year, and it creates a club-like atmosphere. Originally I ran one tour a year but I am now retired and enjoy being able to organise more tours each year. Any queries please contact me at mdjamieson@hotmail.co.uk

