

Day 1 – October 7 Thursday – Depart USA

Day 2 – October 8 Friday – Arrive Fukuoka

Transfer by taxi from Fukuoka Airport. Our centrally located hotel provides easy access to canal-crossed **Fukuoka**, Japan's eighth biggest city and the largest in western Japan and the island of Kyushu. Our hotel's amenities include a fitness center, spa and a location in Canal City, Fukuoka's leading shopping, dining and entertainment center. You will have time to explore on your own using suggestions provided by Esprit; hotel concierges can also assist.



Accommodations: Grand Hyatt Fukuoka
Meals included: None

Day 3 – October 9 Saturday – Fukuoka

We begin the day with some traditional sites of Fukuoka including the **Kishida Shinto Shrine** (city shrine and home base of one of Japan's great parade festivals) and the nearby **Hakata Machiya Furusato-kan Museum**, celebrating life in the city's historic merchant homes, followed by presentations about local crafts such as prized, multi-layered *Hakata-ori* weaving. Lunch today is a **cooking class of local specialties**, with the afternoon free for individual exploration in the city's parks, museums and design and craft shops. Tonight, we will have a casual welcome dinner featuring Fukuoka's most famous dish, **Hakata-style tonkotsu ramen** in hearty, pork-based broth.



Accommodations: Grand Hyatt Fukuoka
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 4 – October 10 Sunday – Fukuoka (Mojiko Day Trip)

Today we will spend the day in **Mojiko**, a beautifully preserved port town with many **buildings of the Taisho era** (1912-1926), delightful for strolling. Lunch will be **yaki-curry (baked curry rice)**, a local take on this popular Japanese comfort food, at one of Japan's growing community of **microbreweries**. We will return to Fukuoka in the afternoon and have dinner in true local style at **yatai** (open-air food stalls) lining the city's many waterways. Fukuoka has over 150 *yatai*, more than the rest of Japan combined!



Accommodations: Grand Hyatt Fukuoka
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Day 5 – October 11 Monday – Fukuoka to Karatsu via Yobuko

Bidding farewell to Fukuoka, today we head west to neighboring **Saga Prefecture**. A lovely drive along Karatsu Bay takes us to the intimate **fishing village of Yobuko**, famed for its **morning market** where local people sell their catch, produce and homemade dishes like *furikake* (flavored sprinkles for rice). From Yobuko, it is a drive of about 30 minutes to **Karatsu**, one of the prefecture’s venerable **pottery towns**. Today’s lunch will be catered by a nationally renowned **tofu shop**, followed by visits to a **pottery studio** and the meticulously crafted **hikiyama floats** used in the city’s main festival. We will spend the evening at **Yoyokaku**, a wood-built, Meiji-era *ryokan* called “one of Japan’s must-stay inns,” thanks in part to a long affiliation with the Nakazato family, keepers of Karatsu’s ceramic tradition since the 1600s.



Accommodations: Yoyokaku Ryokan
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6 – October 12 Tuesday – Karatsu to Nagasaki via Dazaifu

Our route to Nagasaki takes us through lively **Dazaifu**, early capital of Kyushu and beautifully nestled in the woods. After strolling the sprawling, photogenic grounds of Dazaifu’s **Tenman-gu Shrine**, 1,100 years old and dedicated to the Shinto god of scholarship, we will visit the futuristic **Kyushu National Museum**, whose priceless collection chronicles the region’s millennia of trade with the Asian continent. Following lunch on your own at one of many casual restaurants, we will learn to make Dazaifu’s specialty sweet, **umegae mochi**, bean-paste dumplings embossed with plum blossom designs. In the late afternoon we will arrive in Nagasaki, known for centuries for as Japan’s crossroads of eastern and western cultures. Tonight, we will enjoy a **casual dinner** by the harbor.



Accommodations: BW Hotel Premier Nagasaki
Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 7 – October 13 Wednesday – Nagasaki

Our exploration of Nagasaki begins at the **Museum of History and Culture**, covering the city’s one-of-a-kind history that inspired tales from *Madame Butterfly* to the *1,000 Autumns of Jacob de Zoet*. We then tour **Dejima**, the man-made island that served as an Edo-Period Dutch trading post and Japan’s sole point of contact with the outside world for over two centuries; it is now filled with faithfully reconstructed period buildings. Here we will have a **lesson in Nagasaki-style cuisine** and eat our creations for lunch. The afternoon takes us to **Glover Garden** to view its collection of **Meiji Period architecture** and expansive **views across Nagasaki Bay**. Fittingly, tonight’s dinner is **shippoku-ryori**, Nagasaki’s own east-meets-west version of *kaiseki* cuisine.



Accommodations: BW Hotel Premier Nagasaki
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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ESPRIT TRAVEL & TOURS

Day 8 – October 14 Thursday – Nagasaki

Today we will concentrate on the **atomic bombing sites** on Nagasaki's north side, learn how this city came to be chosen for the bombing at the last minute, visit the museum and sites of the destruction and meet with a *hibakusha* (survivor) to hear a **first-hand account** of that fateful day. After **lunch of local specialties**, we continue to **Suwa-jinja**, the city's most storied Shinto shrine, to receive a blessing through **kagura**, ritual dance accompanied by ancient music and chanting. While the rest of the day is at leisure, you may wish to join your tour leader for a **cable car ride up Mt. Inasa**. The spectacular nighttime views across the city and bay have been rated among the top three in the world, alongside Hong Kong and Monaco.



Accommodations: BW Hotel Premier Nagasaki
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 9 – October 15 Friday – Nagasaki (Shimabara Peninsula Day Trip)

Today we will visit the **Shimabara Peninsula**, southeast of Nagasaki, known for its landscape of geothermal mountains, hot springs and splendid views of the Ariake Sea. Our visits include Japan's longest **hot-spring foot bath**, lunch where we will choose our own **ingredients steamed over natural hot springs**, and an optional **short hike in Unzen National Park**, among the steam vents called *jigoku* ('hells' in Japanese), which have a stark beauty and a unique role in the region's history. Back in Nagasaki, a **banquet dinner in Chinatown** pays tribute to the city's Chinese community.



Accommodations: BW Hotel Premier Nagasaki
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 10 – October 16 Saturday – Nagasaki to Hiroshima via Miyamima

Today we will ship our large suitcases to onward destinations in order to travel by train with carry-on luggage. *Bento* lunch boxes (a Japanese travel tradition) will be provided for you to enjoy en route. Express, *Shinkansen* (bullet) and local trains speed us to **Hiroshima Prefecture**, home of the island of **Miyajima** and the famous **Itsukushima Shrine**, whose recently restored *torii* gate seems to float on the water. After time exploring the island, we will head to central Hiroshima and our modern, conveniently located hotel, with many nearby options for Japanese and international cuisine for tonight's dinner on your own.



Accommodations: Sheraton Grand Hotel Hiroshima
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

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Day 11 - October 17 Sunday - Hiroshima

Today we will tour central Hiroshima with a special focus on its **Peace Park**, featuring many moving memorials and the recently renovated and expanded **Peace Memorial Museum**, before our **farewell dinner** including local specialties.



Accommodations: Sheraton Hiroshima
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12 - October 18 Monday - End of Main Tour

Following breakfast in our hotel, guests not continuing on the tour extension will receive detailed instructions to reach the airport for individually arranged flights from Hiroshima or Osaka (Kansai International, KIX) Airports. Important: flights from Osaka Kansai should be scheduled after 4:00pm to allow ample time for airport transfers.

Guests continuing on the extension will depart after breakfast; please refer to the separate itinerary.

Meal included: Breakfast

Note: Actual visits and events will be finalized approximately 30 days prior to departure to allow for the inclusion of special exhibitions, visits and events, and are dependent on the schedules of our Japanese colleagues. A final itinerary will be sent to you about two weeks prior to tour departure. The itinerary is subject to change at any time.

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Benesse Art Site Extension

Day 12 – October 18 Monday – Hiroshima to Teshima and Naoshima Islands

After breakfast, we will journey by *Shinkansen*, coach and ferry to Japan’s premier destination for contemporary art, **Benesse Art Site**, on the Inland Sea. We begin on rural **Teshima Island** to experience the **Teshima Yokoo House** and **Teshima Art Museum** and enjoy a quiet lunch at a local restaurant. In mid-afternoon, another ferry ride takes us to neighboring **Naoshima Island**. We will have time to explore the outdoor sculpture park around our lodgings, **Benesse House Park Hotel**. This **Tadao Ando-designed hotel** houses numerous art pieces and is located right along the island’s edge. Each room has its own installed art for you to enjoy while you are in residence. Dinner this evening will be at the hotel’s **Terrace Restaurant**, a fusion of French cuisine using local ingredients.



Accommodations: Benesse House Park Hotel
Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 13 – October 19 Tuesday – Naoshima Island

Following breakfast at our inn, this morning we’ll explore some of Naoshima’s installations and museums, including the **Chichu Museum** and the **Lee Ufan Museum**. After lunch at a local restaurant, we will spend the afternoon exploring the **Art House Project**, in which older homes and businesses have been turned into installations by leading artists. Our **farewell dinner** will be at **Issen Restaurant** at the **Benesse House Museum**, offering a contemporary interpretation of *kaiseki* served on an array of artistic functional ware from kilns all over Japan. After dinner, we will have the opportunity to take in the Benesse House Museum after hours.



Accommodations: Benesse House Park Hotel
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 14 – October 20 Wednesday – End of Extension

After breakfast at our hotel, transfer by ferry, bus and train for individually arranged return flights from Osaka (Kansai International Airport, KIX). Important: Flights should be scheduled for after 4:00pm to allow ample time for airport transfers.

Meal included: breakfast

Note: Actual visits and events will be finalized approximately 30 days prior to departure to allow for the inclusion of special exhibitions, visits and events, and are dependent on the schedules of our Japanese colleagues. A final itinerary will be sent to you about two weeks prior to tour departure. The itinerary is subject to change at any time.

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