

Trip dates

2025

May 13 - 22
Sept 22 – Oct 01
Oct 20 - 29

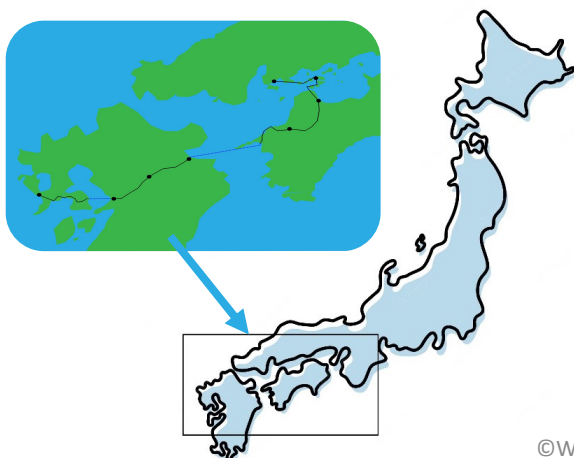
Tour price

Per person for double/twin: JPY 605,000
Single supplement + JPY 77,000 (limited to 2 spots)
*Early bird booking discount 5% - see website for details

The trip

Join us as we cycle across the beautiful islands and bridges of the inland sea, through deep river valleys in Shikoku and over the volcanic highlands of Kyushu on this epic adventure in Japan!

A fully supported road cycling tour designed to give you amazing experiences both on and off the bike. This tour offers some big days in the saddle on some of Japan's best cycling roads.



Highlights

- ✦ Traverse the islands of the Seto Inland Sea over incredible bridges and through ancient fishing villages
- ✦ Ride through stunning Shikoku over mountain passes and alongside emerald green rivers
- ✦ Ferry to Kyushu and cycle coast to coast, climbing volcanoes and crossing beautiful plateaus
- ✦ Finish an epic days cycling with a soak in a natural hot spring and an amazing meal at our great range of accommodation
- ✦ Spend a night in Kumamoto city overlooking its magnificent feudal castle
- ✦ Explore places many visitors don't see and get a genuine experience with our local guides
- ✦ Start and finish the tour in the diverse and vibrant cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Trip duration: 10 days/9 nights

Grade: Level 3/5
(Moderate to challenging)

Accommodation: 9 nights in premium Japanese and Western style accommodation



Grading: Level 3/5

This tour is graded level 3. The route is challenging at times but very rewarding. We will take on some epic climbs and descents but still have time to enjoy cultural stops on the way. Riders are able to cycle comfortably for 4-6 hours or around 80km/50miles per day. The tour is fully supported and if at any stage you feel like having a rest from cycling you will be able to ride in the support vehicle.

Important notes:

Getting to and from: You will need to arrive in Hiroshima by the afternoon of day 1 of the tour. Both Hiroshima and Nagasaki are easily accessible by air or bullet train.

Single travellers: If you are travelling alone, we will arrange for you to share accommodation with another traveller of the same gender. However, if we are not able to find you a rooming partner by 60 days prior to the trip departure date, you will be required to pay a single supplement for the trip.

Tour inclusions

- ✦ 9 nights in a variety of premium hotels and traditional high quality Japanese ryokan
- ✦ 8 amazing dinners and 9 delicious breakfasts.
- ✦ Support vehicle and full mechanical support.
- ✦ 2-3 local guides depending on group size. Min 4 max 12 guests.
- ✦ Printed maps and GPX files for each day.
- ✦ 3 Ferry trips.
- ✦ Tasty and nutritious drinks, snacks and treats to keep you fuelled for the ride.

What's not included?

- Arrival and departure airport transfers, including any bike transfers to the hotel
- All lunches (budget JPY ¥1500 per day)
- Cycle hire
- Travel insurance – Please arrange your own

Hire Bikes

We have a range of high-quality Specialized and Giant rental bikes in all sizes available for hire. Bikes come fully serviced and the rental price includes a helmet. Prices per bike for the duration of the tour:

Hybrid/Cross Bike:	¥27500
Carbon Road Bike:	¥66000
E-Bike:	¥44000



Detailed Itinerary: (Please note this itinerary is subject to adjustment)

Day 1: Meet and greet in Hiroshima

Distance 0km

Meet your guides and fellow guests in the afternoon at our hotel in Hiroshima, close to the station. (Pick-ups from station can be arranged). Afternoon debrief and bike setup. Later we head out for an evening meal where we get to know each other and eat a local speciality, Okonomiyaki – a delicious Japanese savoury pancake.

Meals included: D

Day 2: Island hopping – Hiroshima to Ikuchi Island.

Distance: upto 65km/400m

We start our adventure with a short drive out of the city to Kure where we begin our ride onto the Tobishima Kaido, a network of bridges crossing the small islands of the Seto Inland Sea. Here we cycle on magical coastal roads through small fishing villages where you feel you have travelled back in time. We stop in at historic Mitarai for lunch and a walk around the old town and later on take a look around Oyamazumi shrine, famous for its unique collection of samurai swords. Today is a fantastic ride and a great way to start the tour. We finish the day on Ikuchi island with a sunset view and a glass of local sake at our lovely accommodation.

Meals included: B,D

Day 3: Over the bridges: The Shimanami Kaido

Distance: upto 73km/600m

The Shimanami Kaido has become world famous in the cycling world and for good reason. The bridges we ride across today are all unique feats of engineering offering superb views of the inland sea and islands. Challenge yourself with a climb up Mt Kiro – a short but steep climb upto an observation deck, with 360-degree views you'll be glad you did it! After having morning coffee with a view, we head over Kurushima bridge, a 4km suspension bridge before we ride onto the shores of Shikoku island, the smallest of the 4 main islands of Japan and famous for its 88-temple pilgrimage. Stopping in at one of the 88 temples enroute, we make our way to our accommodation. Here you can relax in the natural hot spring on the roof and enjoy the views of the mountains and sea before enjoying another fantastic meal.

Meals included: B,D

Day 4: Into the mountains : The UFO Line

Distance: upto 113km/1450m

The UFO line climbs western Japan's biggest mountain, Mt Ishizuchi and is one of Shikoku's most scenic roads with views across the ranges to the pacific coast. Epic climb and descent followed by lunch in the beautiful Omogo gorge. Then more riding through emerald green river valleys finishing the days ride in Uchiko town, a hidden gem in Shikoku with its traditional feel and preservation district, this is as authentic as it gets. We finish the day with a great meal at the local German restaurant – you weren't expecting that were you!

For those who enjoy big days in the saddle you will love this ride with its long climbs, flowy descents and awesome views! For those riders who find the distance/elevation gain off putting we have a variety of ways to shorten the ride, to allow you to cycle a distance that is comfortable for you and still have an awesome day!

Meals included: B,D

Day 5: A rest day in Uchiko

Distance: upto 45km (optional)

In Uchiko, we stay in a number of traditional houses within the historic district that have been refurbished into modern Japanese-style accommodation. Here you can feel at home away from home enjoying the great local atmosphere and exploring the lovely area.

We have some great optional activities for you to choose from today including a scenic local ride and a visit to a historic paper mill producing beautiful Japanese washi paper. Whether you choose to relax and unwind or partake in one or more of the optional activities, we guarantee you'll have a great day.

In the evening we'll re-group for a sake tasting and an evening meal at a local 'Izakaya' – a Japanese style pub...

Meals included: B, D

Day 6: Uchiko to Beppu

Distance: upto 50km/300m

Today is a connecting day as we journey from Shikoku to Kyushu, the southernmost of the main islands. With an easy and scenic cycle followed by a beautiful ferry ride it's a very enjoyable day. As we bid farewell to Uchiko, we cycle through picturesque farmland to the Hiji river, which guides us to the coast. Continuing southward, we arrive at the port town of Yawatahama. Surrounded by mountains adorned with terraced orange orchards, Yawatahama provides a splendid backdrop as we set sail across the inland sea to Beppu. Renowned for its abundance of hot springs, steamy Beppu is a great place to finish the day with a soak in the hotel's onsen and prepare yourself for a couple of big days to come!

Meals included: B,D

Day 7: Beppu to Aso

Distance: upto 110km/2000m

Today's ride is an epic journey and it's one that many Japanese road cyclists have on their bucket lists. For those who prefer not to tackle the entire route, we have some great options available.

We start with a short drive to get us out of the city streets and then follow a little known but awesome route over the hill to charming Yufuin town. Morning coffee with a view and continue our ride upto the Kuju plateau where we stop for a farmhouse lunch before taking on the Makinoto pass, a 12km climb taking us to our high point of the day. From here it's downhill all the way (almost) into the awe inspiring Aso caldera, one of the planets largest volcanic craters. Our night will be spent in another fantastic Ryokan.

Meals included: B,D

Day 8: Aso to Kumamoto

Distance: upto 72km/1500m

Starting from our lodging we have a 10km warm up on the flat before embarking on the ascent of Mt Aso, a 12km climb to the top where we stop for a tea or coffee at the fantastic Aso café, enjoying the views of the steaming volcano. From here it's a long and sweeping descent down to lunch. For some this may be enough riding for the day and a good point to jump into the van. For those who are keen for more, we ride over the Jizo pass on Kennys road, named after multi-world GP motorbike champ Kenny Roberts as it was his favourite road in Japan!

We finish the day in Kumamoto city at our accommodation overlooking the magnificent Kumamoto castle. From here it's a short walk into the old town where you will find plenty of great restaurants. Dinner is at your own discretion tonight, but if you are inclined feel free to join us for a shared meal at a local restaurant.

Meals included: B

Day 9: Kumamoto to Nagasaki

Distance: 28km/400m or 41km/1100m

Our final day of tour starts with a short ferry crossing to the Nagasaki peninsula. The bay here is dominated by Mt Unzen, a formidable looking volcano that rises 1500m out of the sea. For the keen climbers in the group, we'll make our last big climb of the tour, scaling the mountain to reach the Unzen onsen town. Meanwhile, for the rest of us we'll journey up by vehicle, briefly exploring the 'Unzen hells', where steam emanates from the ground. Following this we'll meet our hill climbers and embark on a collective ride of the Nitta Pass loop – a fantastic road that loops around the mountain, offering incredible views of the peninsula and bay.

From here we ride a terrific descent through terraced rice fields and ancient villages before finishing up our ride with a locally made picnic on the beach. From here it's a short drive into Nagasaki where you'll have some time to take a look around before we meet up for celebratory drinks and our final meal of the tour.

Meals included: B,D

Day 10: Farewell Sayonara!

Distance: 0km

Today's breakfast is at our hotel and from here it's time to say farewell. Your guides will be around all morning to help with any logistical issues.

Meals included: B

FAQ: Here are some common questions we get asked.

How do I get to and from the start and finish of this tour? Where should I fly into?

Hiroshima airport (HIJ) is the closest to the start of the trip. Flying into Osaka Kansai (KIX) or Fukuoka (FUK) are also good options. Hiroshima is on the Shinkansen (bullet train) line and as such I easily accessible by train. At the end of the trip our hotel is located next the the Nagasaki station where you can connect to any major city in Japan. Alternatively Nagasaki airport (NGS) has regular domestic flights to most major cities in Japan.

What kind of bikes do you hire?

We have a great range of rental options available including carbon road bikes, hybrid/cross bikes and E-bikes. Our carbon road bikes are Specialized Aethos and Tarmac; beautiful lightweight and comfortable bikes with compact gearing for the hills, 28mm tyres and disc brakes. We have 2 models of electric bike; Specialized Vado or Giant Escape RE+. Comfortable, well integrated and great battery life, these bikes work great if you are looking for some support on the hills. Our hybrid bikes are Giant RX Disc or Specialized Sirrus. These bikes are light, comfortable with plenty of gears for the hills. All rental bikes include a helmet, 2 bottle cages and optional small handlebar bag for carrying accessories.

If I bring my own bike, how can I get it to the start of the tour?

If your bike is in a bag or box, you can take it on the train services in Japan, including the bullet train (shinkansen). There is also a convenient courier service, allowing you to ship your bike to and from the airports of your arrival and departure. This service is specifically accessible from Tokyo (Narita and Haneda) and Osaka Kansai airports. By utilizing this service, you can travel without your bike and likewise, if you're planning to extend your stay in Japan post-tour, but you do need to allow at least 2-3 working days for your bike to arrive. The approximate cost for this service is JPY 10,000 or \$75 USD for a one-way shipment. Should you be interested in using this service, let us know and we'll provide you with more details.

What is Japanese style accommodation?

In Japanese-style accommodation, commonly known as 'Ryokan,' you can expect to encounter tatami flooring in the rooms. Tatami is a traditional woven mat often found in Japanese bedrooms. The sleeping arrangement typically includes comfortable futon mattresses placed on the floor. Ryokan typically have a shared spa or onsen which you are free to use. Additionally, you'll be provided with a Yukata, a traditional dressing gown, which you can opt to wear during dinner and breakfast.

What is an onsen?

'Onsen' refers to natural hot springs, typically in the context of a public spa. Some of the regions we traverse on this tour are famous for onsen and many of the places we stay have one that you can use. In Japan bathing is ingrained into the culture and a can be a real highlight of a trip here, especially a cycling one. Public baths are segregated by gender and swimsuits are not worn. For those who aren't keen, all our accommodation options have a private shower.



Will we get chance to explore Hiroshima and Nagasaki on this itinerary?

There is some time but not a lot. We would recommend allowing a day either side of the itinerary to properly explore these two fantastic cities. Both the peace parks and atomic bomb museums are incredibly moving and well worth visiting, and from the world famous torii gate of Miyajima in Hiroshima to Nagasaki's Glover Gardens and Chinatown there is plenty to see and do.

How are the roads for cycling?

The roads we ride on this tour are great cycling roads. Quiet, very few cars and silky-smooth bitumen. The climbs are generally a pleasant gradient of 5-6% and the corners are built in a way that the downhill is super fun. A standard road or gravel bike works well for this trip. Road/gravel/E-Bikes with 25-40mm tyres and are all suitable for this tour. For road bikes we recommend having compact gearing with a low gear for the long climbs.

Japan drives on the left and drivers are incredibly courteous to cyclists.

I'm worried about the climbing. What are the options?

The climbs on this tour are very well graded, often shady and very little traffic. Of course, we want to encourage you to ride as much as possible, but it is always an option to jump in the van. We want you to ride at your own pace without any pressure and once the guides have assessed your ability, they'll be able to advise on any sections to skip or get you up the road with a head start. E-bikes can also be a great option.

I'm not a cyclist but my partner is. Can I join the tour?

Yes of course! While this is a cycling tour it's still a fantastic trip even without the riding. The great thing about Japan is there is always a beautiful shrine or temple to explore, a local market to peruse or a short hike to do. There will also be opportunity on some days to check into the hotel early and unwind in the spa.

What kind of food do we eat on tour?

Japanese cuisine has an incredible variety of fish, meat and vegetarian dishes and there is opportunity to sample many different kinds on this trip. At the hotels we stay at, dinner and breakfast are often buffet style. This is great because it allows you to try lots of different dishes and avoid the ones you don't like.

What is the best time of year to visit?

We run this tour in both the spring and autumn. Both seasons are extremely beautiful and perfect for cycling. Expect cooler temps in early April, especially up in the mountains. Average day time temps between 16 – 20 degrees Celsius (60 – 68F). In May and October/November it is a little warmer with temps often in the mid 20's (68-75F). To decide which season is best we suggest you come multiple times and let us what you think! We love cycling here all year round.

Yokoso! Welcome to We Ride Japan!

We Ride Japan was founded by Will and Tamie Turner in 2023. After meeting in Japan in 2005 they spent 2 years travelling the world on bicycles before settling in New Zealand. In 2020 they returned to Japan to embark on a new adventure. Through their work and life experiences in both the cycle and tourism industries, and their current work in regional tourism development in Japan, Will and Tami offer professional well-planned and unique itineraries. Our goal is to give our guests once in a lifetime experiences in the country we love. Small groups, local guides and the spirit of adventure is what we're all about.

Thanks for your interest! We look forward to hosting you!

