

Exploring the Great Rivers of Japan

Spend an active nine days exploring some of the most dynamic and scenic rivers of Japan. Our journey ends on the Yoshino and Niyodo Rivers in Shikoku.

Shikoku: Two neighbouring rivers are remarkable for their differences.

Kanto: Experience the vibrant energy empowering traditional culture and a new economy in Japan's largest river basin at Minakami.



The Yoshino River is the second longest river in Shikoku, with the highest flow rate in Japan. It winds through the Shikoku Mountains then flows straight along the Tokushima Rift Valley. The steep terrain is dotted with villages and towns that developed a unique culture, producing indigo, tobacco, sake, and tea – products that were shipped on the river to the sea. Not far away, the Niyodo River is known for its limpid blue pools and narrow gorges. On the second leg of the journey, we explore these two very different rivers, learning what makes the several regions of Shikoku distinctive.

After a positional stop in Tokyo, our journey moves on to the charming town of Minakami, where the Tone, one of Japan's great waterways, and Tokyo's major source of drinking-water, starts its descent to the nation's capital. In addition to being Japan's largest river-basin, Minakami boasts a cornucopia of attractions which belie its size and comparative anonymity, and all relate to its unparalleled bounty of water. A highly popular hot-spring resort just an hour by Bullet Train from Tokyo, its position at the gateway to the Southern Alps make Minakami not only one of Japan's most famous ski-resorts in winter, but its unquestioned river-activity mecca from spring through autumn. And, its strategic location on the historic Mikuni-Kaido trade-route, ensures that Minakami has a depth of history and culture to match its plethora of active options.

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Itinerary at a glance

Day 1: Meet at Tokushima Airport and potter around the old town of Wakimachi
 Day 2: Kayak down the Yoshino River and canyon the Sadamitsu River
 Day 3: Packraft the Iya River and walk the Iya Valley, then drive to the Niyodo River
 Day 4: Explore the Niyodo River on SUP boards
 Day 5: Try your hand at papermaking and visit a sake brewery, then fly to Tokyo
 Day 6: Bullet Train to Minakami for a Temple visits, foraged lunch, and rural cycling tour
 Day 7: Experience canyoning and SUP in the Tone River Basin
 Day 8: A second day on the rivers in the Tone Basin, this time rafting and pack-rafting
 Day 9: Bullet Train back to Tokyo

Location:	Tokushima and Kochi in Shikoku Kanto	
Main Activity:	Kayaking, canyoning, SUP	
Difficulty:	3	
Availability:	April to November	
Tour Duration:	8 Nights 9 Days	
Pax:	Minimum: 4	Maximum: 8
Price:	JPY 644,500 per person with 8 people incl. tax	
	JPY 661,000 per person with 6 people incl. tax	
	JPY 694,000 per person with 4 people incl. tax	

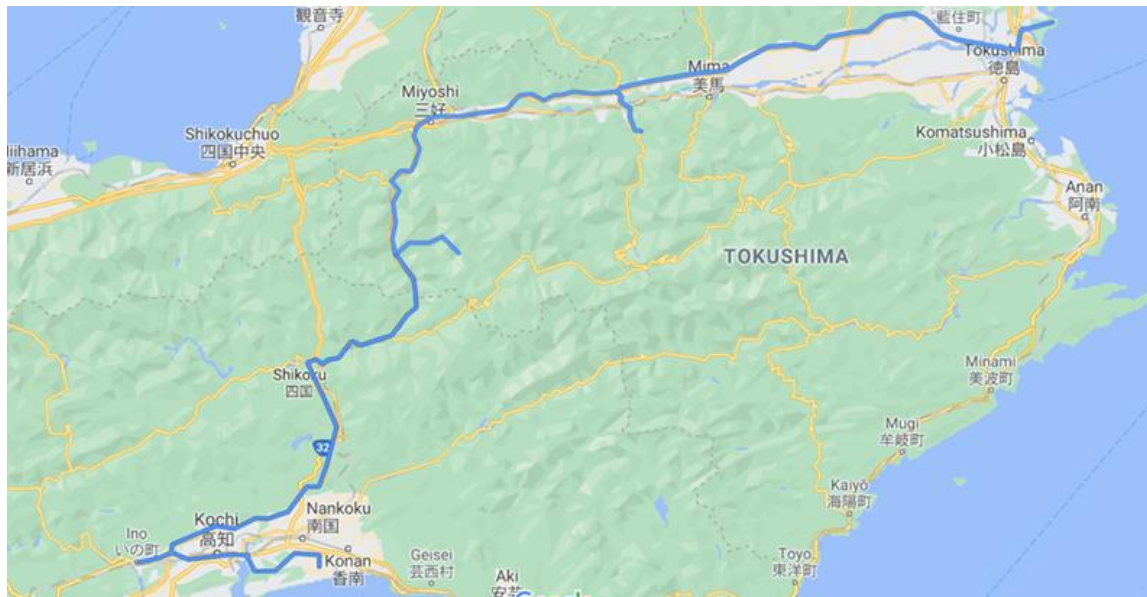
Additional JPY 95,000 for a single room

Additional JPY 5,000 for Shinkansen Green Car

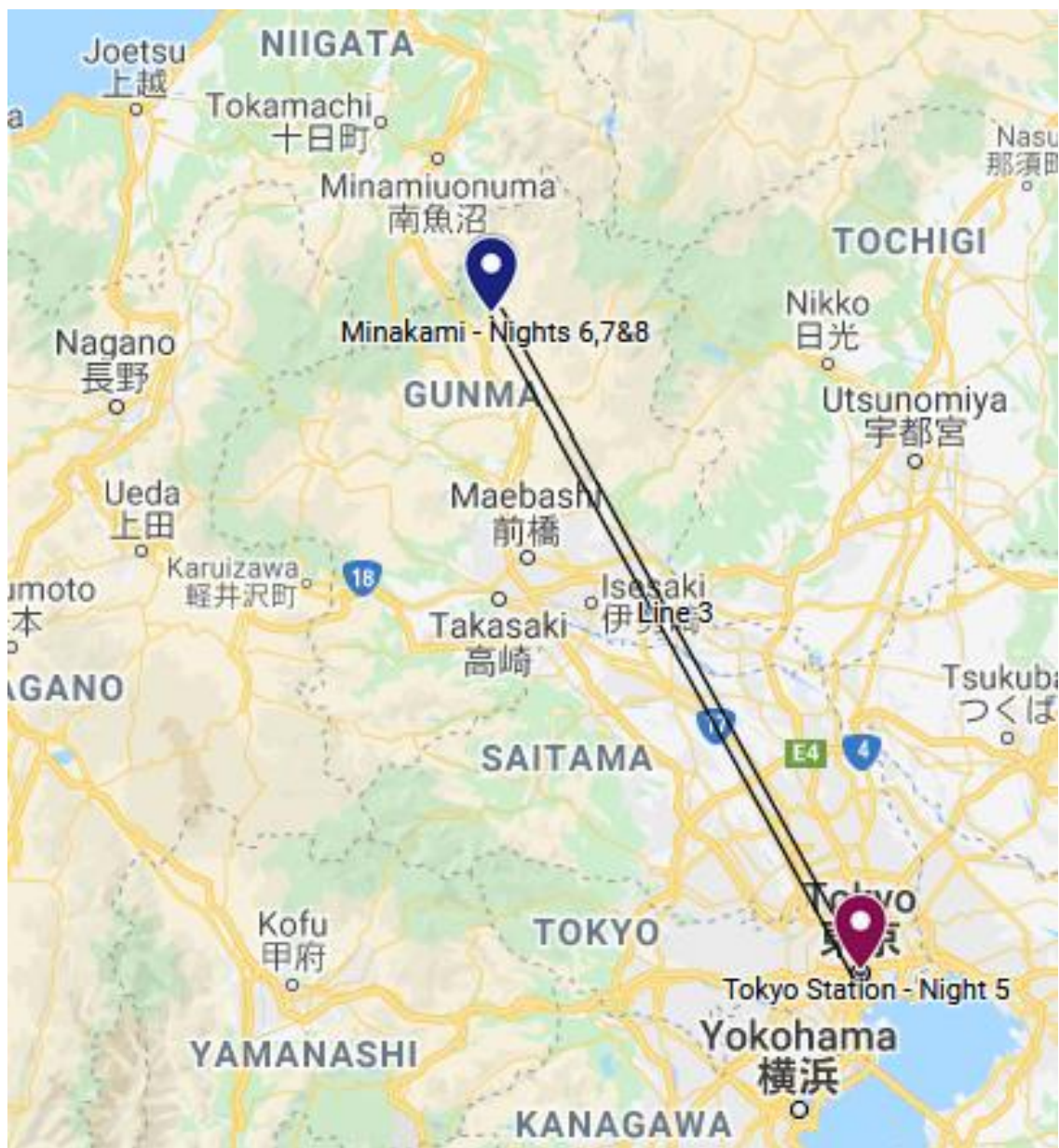
Highlights:

- Canyon the Sadamitsu River, the cleanest river in Japan and kayak the great Yoshino River down the Tokushima Rift Valley.
- Explore the hidden valley of the Iya River on foot and by packraft.
- SUP down the clear blue waters of the Niyodo River and experience traditional riverside industries.
- Experience Japan's finest canyoning and rafting at the country's river-sports mecca, Minakami
- A culinary journey across the spectrum of Japanese cuisine born of its purest water

Shikoku route map



Kanto Route Map



Day-by-Day Itinerary

Day 1: Fly to Tokushima and potter around the old town of Wakimachi

In the morning, meet at Tokushima Airport, and drive to Wakimachi for lunch at Sairai for a lunch centered on vegetables harvested in a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage area. Wakimachi prospered as a transportation hub on the Yoshino River and developed as an indigo distribution center. Today, you can see 85 buildings dating from the Edo to the early Showa periods, built using traditional methods, with the majority from the Meiji period. Your guide provides an overview of the economic and social life of the entire Yoshino River system.

Guided walk around Wakimachi

Distance: 2.0 km | Time: 3:00

Included meals: Breakfast at your hotel
Lunch of produce from Globally Important Agricultural Heritage
Dinner of Handa noodles at Sadamitsu Yuyukan

Accommodation: Shikoku Saburo no Sato Campground



Day 2: Kayak the Yoshino River and canyon the Sadamitsu River

We drive to Sadamitsu Handa and kayak down the broad lower reaches of the Yoshino River. Your guide points out the towns along the banks and the villages high on the valley slopes, explaining how each played a part in the economy and culture of the region. After lunch, we drive up a tributary river, the Sadamitsu, and canyon down to the riverside base for tea. Then we return to the campground for a BBQ featuring tasty local chicken.

Kayaking

Time: 3:00

Canyoning

Time: 3:00

Included meals: Breakfast of bread, salad, and coffee at Sadamitsu Yuyukan
Various options for lunch
BBQ at Shikoku Saburo no Sato

Accommodation: Shikoku Saburo no Sato Campground



Day 3: Walk the Iya Valley and packraft the Iya River

We drive to the Iya Valley where the Heike clan took refuge after their crushing defeat in 1185. Here they built a bridge of vines high above the Iya river that could be cut down at a moment's notice if the enemy appeared. We packraft down the river, looking up at the villages and fields perched high on the valley sides. After lunch of local fare at a hot spring ryokan, we walk over the swaying bridge and stroll along the riverside. Then we drive to Ino on the Niyodo River. Dinner is a course meal of regional specialties with local sake at Kanpo no Yado Ino.

Packrafting

Time: 3:00

Walk

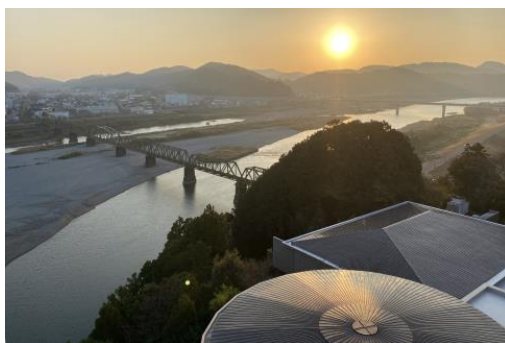
Time: 1:00

Included meals: Breakfast of bread, salad, and coffee at Sadamitsu Yuyukan

Lunch of sweetfish, konjac, and rice at Hikyo no Yu

Dinner of Kochi specialties with local sake

Accommodation: Kanpo no Yado Ino



Day 4: Explore the Niyodo River on SUP boards

After breakfast, we drive to a base on the Niyodo River where we prepare for a day of SUP. The river is famous within Japan for its clear blue waters and its multicoloured pebbles. Your guide explains the basics of SUP, then we get out on the river and explore three of the most beautiful stretches of the Niyodo. Lunch is a picnic beside the river. After a break at the hotel, we head to Uokane, a stylish new restaurant run by a fishmonger who catches sweetfish from the river with a rod.

Included meals: Choice of Japanese or Western-style breakfast at the hotel
Box lunch of local specialties
Dinner featuring sweetfish with local sake at Uokane
Accommodation: Kanpo no Yado Ino

SUP

Time: 5:00 – 6:00



Day 5: Papermaking and sake tasting

The mulberry trees and glue-bearing vines that grow along the Niyodo River are essential for making traditional paper, a material of great importance in Japanese life. We drive to the Ino Paper Museum to learn about the steps required to turn these plants into high quality paper, and we visit an atelier to try our hand at making some washi paper by the traditional method. After lunch, we visit Kameizumi Brewery, whose name means 'the spring that never dries up', where the master brewer takes us on a tour of the facilities and serves tastings of the brewery's extensive lineup.

Papermaking

Time: 3:00

Sake brewery

Time: 1:00

After leaving the brewery, we cross the bridge over the mouth of the Niyodo River, a popular surfing spot, and head to Kochi Ryoma Airport for the flight to Tokyo.

On arrival at Haneda Airport, transfer to the Metropolitan Marunouchi Hotel, adjacent to the Nihonbashi (northern) Entrance to Tokyo Station

Included meals: Choice of Japanese or Western-style breakfast at the hotel
Lunch at a local restaurant, Frypan
Dinner at an Izakaya Tavern under Tokyo Station

Accommodation: Metropolitan Marunouchi Hotel, Tokyo



Day 6: Bullet Train to Minakami, temple visit, foraged lunch, and cycle-tour

Start the day with a short walk across Tokyo Station, the world's fourth busiest railway terminus (the top 3 are in other areas of Tokyo!), and observe some of the almost one million people who pass through the station daily navigating the morning rush-hour.

On arrival in Minakami, we'll head straight to Kichijo-ji Temple, where the Head Monk will offer a larger-than-life welcome, suitably accompanied by warm green tea and a seasonal Japanese cake. After learning about the Temple's inherent relationship with water, and the nearby source of the Tone River, we move on to neighboring Nagai Brewery, a 135-year-old brewery boasting its own spring water and encircled by rice fields. Remembering yesterday's visit to Kochi's Kameizumi Brewery, see whether you can taste the difference in both the water, and the sake it becomes here in Minakami.

Temple Visit (Time: 1:00)

Next, to the charming, restored settlement of Takumi-no-Sato, where one of the old residences is now home to 'Takumi-no-Sato Shokudo', a warm and simple country restaurant offering local fare foraged that morning and then cooked by the owner-chef. Then, time to work off some calories with a bike-ride thru the lush, surrounding countryside. Discover the charm of hidden shrines; the striking stillness, softly punctuated by colors of nature, which highlights so much of rural Japan; and, most memorably, the warmth of local people, as we stop en route to visit local houses and chat with their residents. An energetic, yet inherently relaxing afternoon!

Bicycle tour (Time: 2:00)

Arriving at our Ryokan in late afternoon, first an opportunity to stroll on the old Mikuni-Kaido trade route, on which it stands. Then, a slow-food Japanese dinner featuring locally harvested vegetables, and meat from surrounding Gunma Prefecture, while enjoying anecdotes related by the head of the 140-year-old ryokan's owner-family.

Included meals: Choice of Japanese or Western-style breakfast at the hotel
Foraged lunch at a restaurant in a converted traditional building
Japanese dinner at the ryokan, while enjoying the owner's local tales
Accommodation: Hoshi Onsen Chojukan Ryokan



Day 7: Canyoning and SUP in the Tone River Basin

Breakfast at a historical ryokan is one of the most authentic experiences Japan can offer. Here, change is a measured and often slow process, sometimes frustratingly so, but in the context of culture and food, maintaining traditions is more vital now than ever, and our ryokan is a perfect example of the value and charm of traditional practices.

This morning we move to Minakami's centre-stage, the basin of rivers feeding into the Tone. These are the venue for the final 2 days of the tour, which starts with canyoning. Of course, canyoning is not a traditional Japanese pastime. But, like skiing, Japan's unique climate and geography offer, in places, an ideal environment for the river sports now so popular around the World. Minakami was the cradle where canyoning and rafting in Japan were born 25 years ago, and remains its unrivalled mecca, offering venues for all levels of difficulty, each with its own breathtaking natural landscape.

Canyoning Experience (Time: 3:00)

On a day spent mainly in a wetsuit, the ideal lunch is a casual re-energiser ahead of an afternoon SUP! The riverside canteen offers maximum time-efficiency and refreshment.

SUP is the newest river sport in Japan, but as with others, Minakami is an ideal venue, allowing boarders the chance to see its natural beauty from a unique angle.

SUP Experience (Time: 3:00)

This evening, a pre-dinner opportunity to try your hand at soba-noodle-making, under the tuition and watchful eye of a veteran soba chef. After expending energy making noodles, what better than a plate of the chef's finest soba, accompanied by a few of your own, to put an exclamation mark on a high-energy day!

Overnight is ... over the river! In state-of-the-art Waterfront Tents at Riverside Oasis

Included meals: Japanese-style breakfast at the hotel
Casual lunch at the Riverside Canteen between AM and PM activities
Dinner of Minakami's famed soba noodles, and a chance to make some

Accommodation: Riverside Oasis – Waterfront Tents



Day 8: A second day in the Tone Basin, this time Rafting and Pack-rafting

Few activities capture the raw power of rivers more vividly than rafting, and Minakami, with its northern backdrop of alpine peaks and peaceful verdant rural surroundings presents a perfect environment to experience and enjoy it. This morning offers an opportunity to see a different face of the Tone River, this time its scale and force as it completes its descent from the Minakami's northern mountains onto the Kanto Plain. The natural whitewater makes larger-boat full-scale Rafting the perfect way to experience nature, get to know companions, even let off a little steam, and create adrenaline-packed memories.

Rafting Experience (Time: 3:00)

This afternoon, a chance to put the skills polished during the combined large-boat rafting this morning to use on a more personal level, in the newer style of Pack-Rafting.

Pack-Rafting Experience (Time: 3:00)

On our final evening, the food focus will again be strongly on local ingredients, but this evening the environment will be closer-to-nature, in the form of a riverside barbecue, a great way to enjoy the incredible flavors of local fare, and to enjoy the company of and get to know some of the locals involved in the arrangements for our tour.

Overnight is again at the Riverside Oasis

Included meals: Western-style breakfast at the hotel
Casual lunch at the Riverside Canteen between AM and PM activities
Barbecue Dinner featuring local produce on the riverside

Accommodation: Riverside Oasis – Waterfront Tents



Day 9: Bullet Train back to Tokyo

After breakfast in the Riverside Canteen, transfer to Minakami's Jomo-Kogen Bullet Train Station for the 75-minute journey back to Tokyo Station, where the tour disbands before lunchtime (there are 1-2 trains every hour, so this morning's schedule can be adjusted to meet the optimum arrival time at Tokyo Station).

Accommodation

- Nights 1 – 2: Shikoku Saburo no Sato Campground, cottage with bath and toilet
Western-style room (2 beds + futon).
Free Wi-Fi and coin laundry
- Nights 3 - 4: Kanpo no Yado Ino, twin room with bath and toilet
Free Wi-Fi and coin laundry
- Night 5: Marunouchi Metropolitan Hotel, Tokyo, twin room with bath and toilet
Free Wi-Fi
- Night 6: Hoshi Onsen Chojukan, Japanese room with bath and toilet
Free Wi-Fi
- Nights 7 - 8: Riverside Oasis, Waterfront Tents for 2 people – toilets, shower and communal bathing facilities in the Main Complex 20 metres away
Free Wi-Fi and coin laundry

What's included

- All road transport during the trip.
- A professional tour guide for the duration of the trip, and qualified, experienced activity guides.
- All accommodation and meals.
- All activity equipment.
- Airfare from Kochi to Haneda
- Rail fares Tokyo-Minakami (Jomo-Kogen)-Tokyo

We provide and What to bring

We provide

For water activities:

- Kayak and SUP
- Helmet
- Life jacket
- Wetsuit
- Water shoes (up to size 28)

What to bring

For water activities and walking:

- Shoes suitable for light hiking
- Sports sandals with a heel strap
- Swimwear
- Rainwear
- Water bottle
- Sunscreen, sunglasses
- Knapsack or rucksack

Nice to have:

- A compact, waterproof camera with a robust strap. This could be a smartphone with a suitable case.
- A map app that works in Japan.

About us

Shikoku Tours

Shikoku Tours was established with the goal of introducing adventurous people to the wonders of the smallest of Japan's main islands, and to help preserve its unique heritage and culture. We work closely with local stakeholders to craft tours that satisfy our international customers while contributing to regional economies.

We're constantly learning, from our partners and friends in Shikoku, and from the feedback that we receive from our customers. Our website is the most comprehensive library of Shikoku travel content, reflecting our decade-long effort to document and promote the island we call home.

ShikokuTours.com

The J Team DMC

The J Team was Japan's first specialist Inbound Destination Management Company,. Alchemizing out-of-the-box thinking, an engaging and energetic Team of hands-on coordinators, and a lovingly developed and unrivalled country-wide network of partners representing every element of Japanese culture, we consistently create unique activities, experiences, and stories, far beyond our two physical Tokyo and Kyoto offices, in every corner of the jewel-box that is Japan.

All of this is underpinned by an uncompromising level of professional service, attention to detail, and risk management attainable only through the years of successful on-site experience which have earned The J Team its reputation as Japan's leading specialist DMC.

thejteam.jp

Guides

Ushio Takeshi – Kayak guide

Takeshi is originally from Hyogo. From his early youth, he's been involved in fishing, cycling, kayaking, hiking – basically all outdoor activities, and he's pursued this interest all over Japan and in some thirty countries around the world. Today he's a Nishi-Awa tourist area community development manager, and representative of the Tsurugi Local Guides Association.

He leads rafting and canoeing trips on the Yoshino, Shimanto, and Niyodo Rivers, kayaking on the Seto Inland Sea, and trekking and snowshoeing in the Tsurugi mountain area.



Hiromichi Sasaki – SUP guide

Hiromichi, nicknamed Rangi, was originally from Tokyo, but he became the first professional Japanese lifeguard in New Zealand, and today, he speaks perfect NZ English.

Based on the Niyodo River in Kochi at his company SUGGOI Sports, he maintains contacts with water and MTB adventure professionals worldwide.



We look forward to seeing you Shikoku!

Kazuko Watanabe –

Through guide (Tokyo-Minakami-Tokyo)

During her 15 years as a licensed guide, Kazuko has travelled to almost every corner of Japan and experienced ... most everything! As shown right, Kazuko is always hands-on, and willing to give anything a try in her desire to allow all of her guests to experience the full spectrum of Japanese culture to the maximum.

And, having recently gained certification as a qualified Geo-guide, the stunning landscapes, mountains, and river valleys of Minakami are a particular favourite.



Information and Requirements

Dietary Restrictions

We may be able to accommodate allergies to specific foods, but we're unable to accommodate vegans and vegetarians on this tour. Please note that uncooked fish is a major element of Shikoku eating and it features in many of the planned meals. It's a taste that most people acquire very quickly.

Emergency Response Plan

The tour activities are conducted in areas with road access and cell phone reception. Support vehicles are also on hand. The guides are trained to handle rescue and emergency medical situations, and they can respond to any equipment issues that may occur.

Information about you required in advance

Please provide us with the following information when you book.

- Nationality, passport number, date of birth
- Height, weight
- Emergency contact information
- Chronic conditions, medications taken, allergies, dietary restrictions, etc.

Reservation and Cancellation Policy

Payment Methods

We will send a booking confirmation by email with an invoice for full payment by 30 days before the start of the tour. If we do not receive the payment by the due date, the booking will be cancelled. We accept payment by all major credit cards and by TransferWise.

Cancellation

If you must cancel, please let us know by email. In case of cancellation, the following fees apply.

- 20 days before the day of the start of the tour: 20% of the total fee
- 7 days before the day of the start of the tour: 30% of the total fee
- The day before the day of the start of the tour: 40% of the total fee
- The day of the start of the tour: 50% of the total fee
- After the start of the tour or no-show without notice: 100% of the total fee

Disclaimer

Shikoku Tours reserves the right to cancel or change the itinerary of a tour. In the event of the tour being cancelled due to exceptional or unavoidable circumstances, we will refund all your costs. Shikoku Tours is not responsible for compensating any additional costs such as flights.

Our liability, and compensation for damages

In the performance of the travel contract, we will compensate you for any damage caused to you intentionally, or due to a mistake by us or our agents. However, you must notify us of the damage within two years from the day after the damage occurs.

Regarding damage to baggage, if you notify us within 14 days from the day after the damage occurs, we will pay compensation with a limit of JPY 150,000 per traveller (except in cases of damage caused intentionally or due to serious negligence by us).

We are not liable for compensation if you suffer damage due to the following reasons.

- i. Damage caused by natural disasters, wars, riots, government decrees, fires, and suspension of accommodation services
- ii. Food poisoning
- iii. Damage caused by your own wilfulness or negligence
- iv. Damage due to other reasons beyond our control or of our agents

Tour Operator / Contact

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Please address enquiries to Rod Walters, CEO.

Partner Companies

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Contact: Geraint Holt, Owner and Managing Director

E-mail: misterg@thejteam.jp

Waku Waku House Matba

Local guides of Shikoku. [Website](#)

Forest Adventure

Forest adventure course and rafting. [Website](#)

Trip

River guides of Shikoku. [Website](#)

Canyons

River activities in Minakami. [Website](#)