

### *Living with Water in Japan (2)*

#### *Water, the Fountain of Japanese Life - Tokyo to Kyushu 11 days*



The town of Minakami, in the Tone River basin, is the source of Tokyo's major drinking-water supply. It boasts a cornucopia of attractions which all relate to its unparalleled bounty of water. A highly popular hot-spring resort, its position at the gateway to the Southern Alps make Minakami both a famous ski-resort & Japan's unquestioned river-activity mecca. And, its location on the historic Mikuni-Kaido trade-road, ensures its culture matches its plethora of active options. The mountains & marshlands of Oze are one of Japan's largest high moors. For almost half of the year, the area is cut-off by snow, but spring & summer are graced by alpine flowers and plants. This is a place where you can truly feel the blessings & life-giving properties of water. Bandai Asahi, Japan's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest Nat'l Park, includes the volcanic mountain range of Mt. Azuma & Mt. Adatara, and its dynamic landscape is testament to the power of seismic activity. And, of course, one aspect of Japanese life that goes hand-in-hand with vulcanicity is *onsen* hot-springs bathing! Our final destination is the Aso Geopark located in the north parts of Kumamoto, Kyushu. In 2013, Kumamoto was awarded with the UN's prize, "Water of Life". This is largely thanks to the presence of Aso which is home to Japan's largest active volcano. This unique environment has given birth to a plentiful water system that supports the lives of more than 5 million people around Kyushu. Together we will explore the huge volcanic caldera, vast grasslands, hidden valleys, and pastoral mountain villages of Aso, in this last chapter of the journey.

This tour focuses on "water" such as rivers, lakes and hot springs in Japan, and the theme of coexistence with nature that underlies the local culture and stories woven by the water.

### Highlights:

- Experience Japan's finest canyoning & rafting at the country's river-sports mecca
- Enjoy some of Japan's finest hikes at one of its best kept secrets, Oze National Park
- Explore the rugged beauty of Bandai Asahi, Japan's second largest National Park
- Discover the 'origin of onsen' – the source of three different hot-springs – and deepen your understanding of Japan's onsen culture.
- Experience 'extreme onsen' – bathe in a natural hot-spring river behind Mt. Adatara.
- Canoeing experience at Lake Hibara while admiring the beautiful mountain scenery.
- Visit the Aso Geopark and explore the dynamic nature of the surrounding area.
- Cycle through rural mountain villages and interact with local population.
- Experience an authentic and interactive farm-to-table lunch.

### Location:

Minakami is 75 minutes north-west of Tokyo by Bullet Train, with a glorious northern alpine backdrop. Its neighbour, Oze National Park, is one of Japan's largest marshlands, & a mecca for hikers & nature-lovers. The Bandai-Asahi National Park covers a vast area from Yamagata in the west to the Azuma mountain range, Mt. Bandai & Lake Inawashiro. Is famed for its dynamic views of volcanic landscapes, brilliantly coloured lakes & plethora of healing hot springs! The Aso area of Kumamoto prefecture is distinguished by a massive caldera formed through volcanic activity and offers dynamic landscapes. What makes this area unique is that people have cultivated and live inside of the still active volcanic caldera.

**Main Activity:** Walking (some trekking), cultural and food-based experience

**Difficulty:** 3

**Tour Dates:** May - October

**Pax:** Minimum 4                      Maximum 8

**Price (per pax):** JPY 775,000 per person for 4-5+0 paying passengers (in half-twin room)  
 JPY 680,000 per person for 6-7+0 paying passengers (in half-twin room)  
 JPY 595,000 per person for 8-9+0 paying passengers (in half-twin room)  
 JPY 100,000 as single-use supplement

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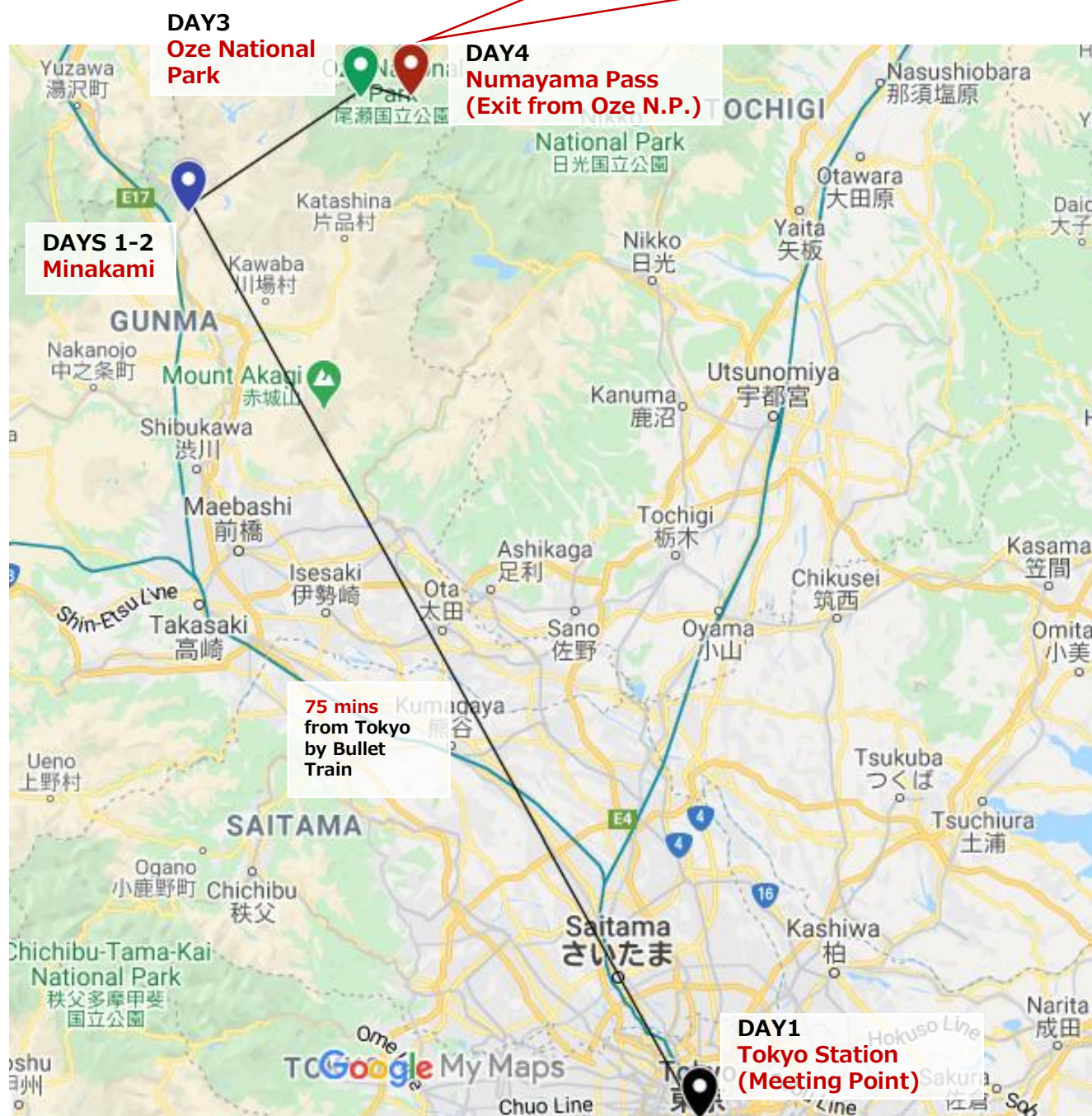
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[Reservation & Cancellation policy](#)



## Route map – Days 01-04

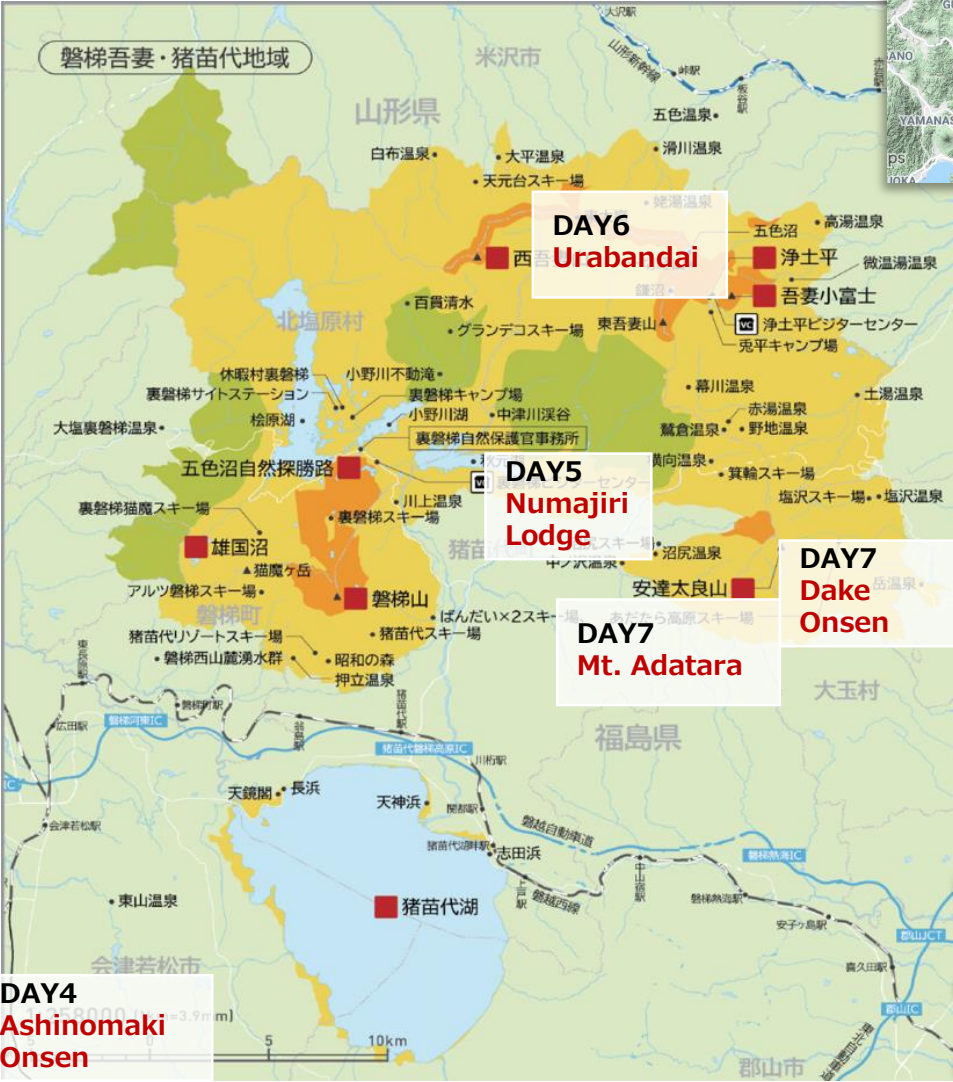
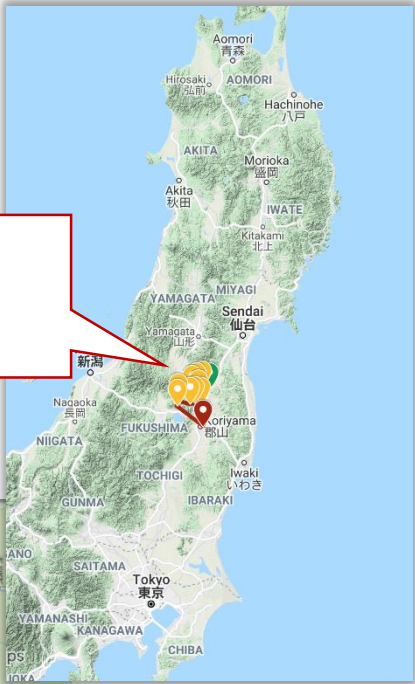
On Day 04, after arrival at the Numayama Pass Exit from Oze National Park, the group will drive 100 kms north-east by coach (duration 2 hours) to reach Ashinomaki Onsen, where the Route Map for Days 04-08 (on the next page) starts



Source: Google My Maps

# Route map – Days 04-08

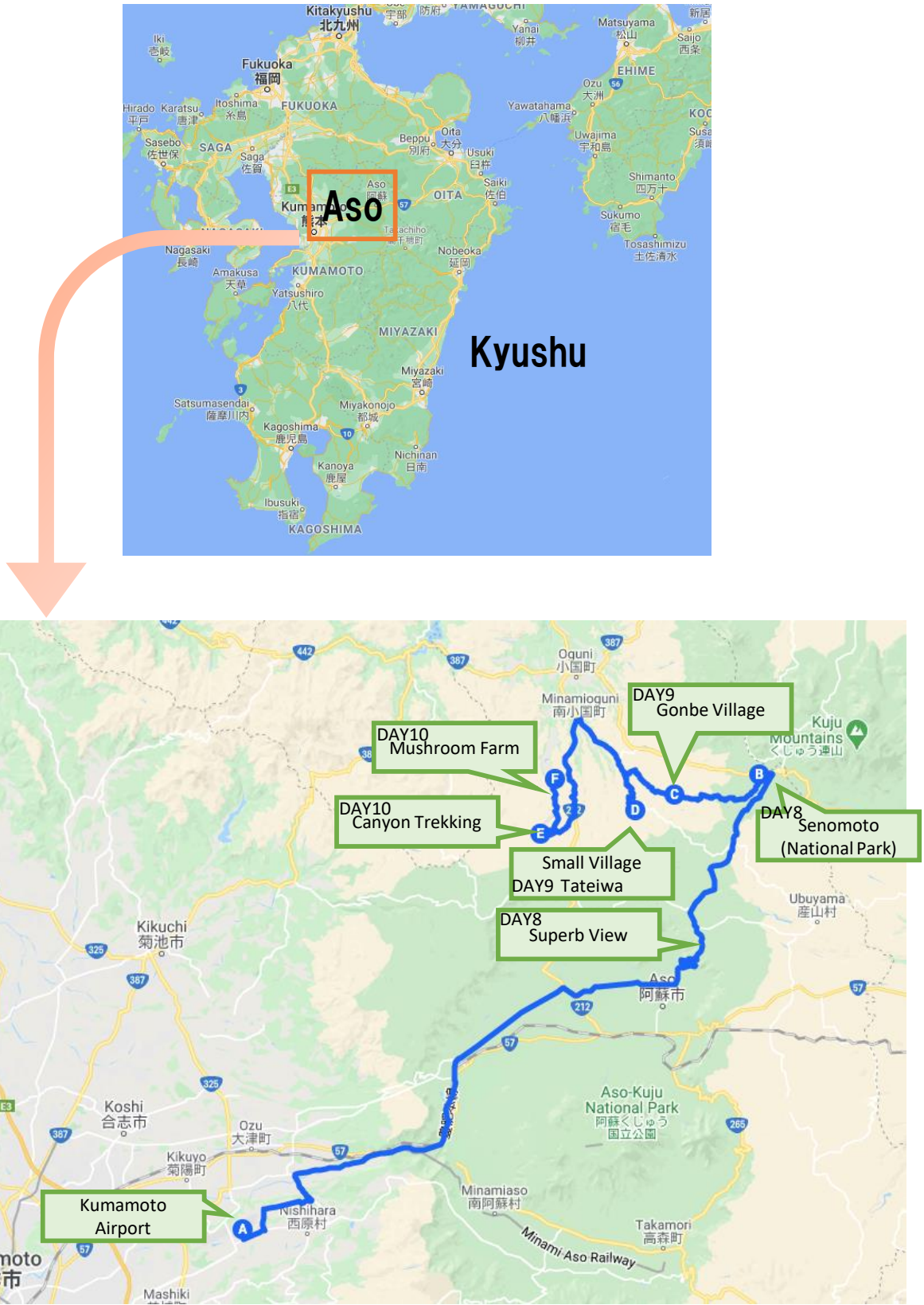
Route start/end points  
easy access from Tokyo  
(90 mins)



Source: Google My Maps



# Route map – Days 08-11



# Day-by-day Itinerary

## Day 1 – Tokyo to Minakami

Gathering at Tokyo Station, you'll board a Bullet Train. On arrival in Minakami, head straight to Kichijoji Temple, where the Head Monk will offer a larger-than-life welcome, suitably accompanied by warm green tea & a seasonal Japanese cake. After learning about the Temple's inherent relationship with water, and the nearby source of the Tone River, move on to Nagai Brewery, to discover the importance of water-quality in the making of Japan's most famous tippie, Sake, at a Brewery surrounded by rice fields with its own spring water on site .

Next, head west across Minakami 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 & simple country restaurant offering local fare foraged that morning and then cooked by the owner-chef.

After lunch, work off some calories with a bicycle ride thru the lush, expansive countryside around the Takumi-no-Sato Settlement. An energetic, yet inherently relaxing afternoon!

Our first dinner will be a riverside barbecue featuring local produce, and an opportunity to meet with some locals, and learn more about their lifestyle in this unique corner of Tokyo.



### <Schedule>

Tokyo to Minakami (Jomo Kogen Station): 75 min by Bullet Train

Station to Kichijoji Temple: 30 min drive

Stay at Temple & Sakle Brewery about 90 mins

Nagai Brewery to Takumi no Sato: 30 min drive

Lunch: 1 hour

Cycle Tour: 2 hours

Transfer to Riverside Oasis (overnight): 30 mins

**Accommodation:** : Riverside Oasis Camp / Waterfront Tents for 2 people

Shared Tent / Shower, Communal Bath & Toilet – 20 metres away in Main Buildings

**Included meals:** Dinner(Barbecue-style)、breakfast



## Day 2– River Activities in Minakami

Canyoning is certainly not a traditional Japanese pastime. However, like ski-ing, 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 & rafting in Japan were born 25 years ago, and continues to be its unquestioned mecca, offering venues encompassing all levels of difficulty, each with its own breathtaking natural landscape. This morning (or afternoon, as weather dictates) enjoy as much, or little, canyoning as you want!

Lunch is a casual energy replenisher at our base by the River.

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. Rafting in larger boats of 6-8, get to know companions, see the natural beauty of Minakami from a unique angle, & create adrenaline-packed memories.

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



### <Schedule>

Canyoning: 3 hours

Lunch: 1 hour

Pack-Rafting: 3 hours

Dinner (incl. transfers & soba-making): 2.5 hours

**Accommodation:** : Riverside Oasis Camp / Waterfront Tents for 2 people

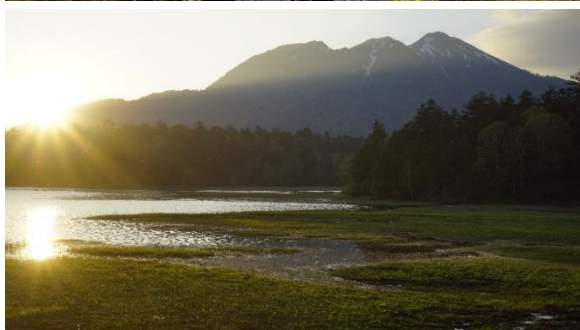
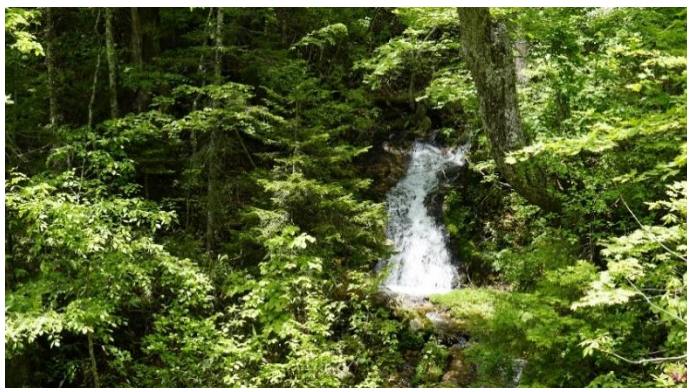
Shared Tent / Shower, Communal Bath & Toilet – 20 metres away in Main Buildings

**Included meals:** Dinner(Soba Noodles incl. making experience)、breakfast

## Day 3– Minakami – Oze National Park

Your final hours in Minakami will be spent exploring the upper areas of the town which welcome so many skiers in winter. Sticking to the gentlest inclines, ride through the stunning natural beauty which, while just an hour by train, feels a world away from Tokyo and its 15 million inhabitants. Again, your journey will be punctuated by stops to encounter locals and interact with them, their traditions and culture.

Wasting as little time as possible, nourished by a bento-box lunch, you will head for Oze, and in early afternoon arrive at Hatomachi, the western entrance to the Oze National Park, a superb natural expanse open only to walkers. Disembarking your coach, it's backpacks on for an energetic 20k afternoon walk through the Park,. The first hour will be spent heading north to reach the Ozegahara Marshlands, where we turn east into the heart of the Park. Not only is the scenery wonderful & air crisply refreshing, but even the infrastructure in the Park, two simple elevated wooden walkways along which hikers travel, is an intrinsically Japanese solution to the question of how to protect the Park's environment while making it an enjoyable place to hike. After checking-in, enjoy a highlight of hiking in Oze – sunset over the western mountains,



### <Schedule>

Coach to Cycling departure point: 30 minutes

Cycling: 2 hours

Lunch & Transfer to Oze: 2 hours

Hiking: Hatoyama to Miharashi = 3.5 hours

Dinner 1 hour

**Accommodation:** : Riverside Oasis Camp / Waterfront Tents for 2 people

Shared Tent / Shower, Communal Bath & Toilet – 20 metres away in Main Buildings

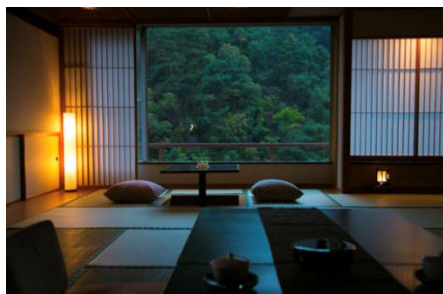
**Included meals:** Dinner(at lodge)、 breakfast



### Day 4 – Oze to Ashinomaki Onsen

Your earliest start of the tour, rising with the sun, and walking just under 3 hours to reach another highlight of the Park, picturesque Ozenuma Pond, where we'll break for an early Bento-Box lunch, before a 90 min. walk, the last part ascending, to leave Oze via the Numayama Pass.

After meeting at Numayama-toge, your first stop is the charming village of Ouchi-juku, an ancient post-town. The lines of traditional buildings and houses with thatched rooms have earned the town national recognition as an important cultural property, and will make you feel as though you've travelled back in time to the Edo period.



#### <Schedule>

Hiking: Miharashi to Ozenuma Pond = 3 hours / Ozenuma Pond – Numayama Pass = 1.5 hours  
 Numayama-toge to Ouchi-juku: 120 min drive  
 Stay at Ouchi-juku about 60 min  
 Ouchi-juku to Ashinomaki Onsen: 20 min drive

**Accommodation:** : Okawaso Onsen Hostel (Ashinomaki Onsen)

Shared room, Japanese/Western (ensuite) | Onsen baths

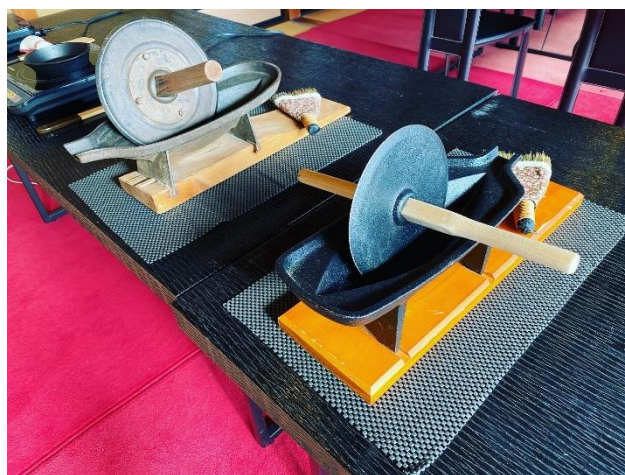
**Included meals:** Dinner(Kaiseki style)、breakfast



### Day 5 – Recovery with Japanese herbal tea at ‘Oyakuen’

‘Oyakuen’ is an ancient herb garden built by the Aizu feudal lords to save the local people from the plague during the Muromachi period. Currently, it is open to the public as a garden, but the original medicinal plant specimen garden remains from that time. About 400 species of herbs (including about 200 varieties unique to Aizu) are cultivated here.

Today you’ll enjoy a unique recovery experience at ‘Shimizu Yakusoten’, which was founded in 1946, by grating and roasting medicinal herbs using traditional methods to make your own recovery herbal tea!



#### <Schedule>

Okawaso Hotel to Oyakuen: 30 min drive

Stay at Oyakuen about 60 min

Oyakuen to Numajiri: 60 min drive



### Day 5 – Extreme Onsen!

Heading to Numajiri hot springs, you'll first hike along a trail looking down at a brilliantly blue-white river. This is no ordinary river, but a river sourced by Numajiri Motoyu, said to be Japan's most plentiful hot-spring with over 13400 litres of water gushing out of the ground every minute! Not far from the source, visitors can take off their hiking boots and socks and enjoy a relaxing foot spa, surrounded by the dramatic natural scenery. Those feeling extra brave are welcome to jump in further (bathing suits allowed)!



Enjoy the beautiful Numajiri-Kogen Lodge, a newly refurbished lodge that used to belong to Fukushima native Junko Tabei, the first woman to summit Mt. Everest! The lodge has also historically hosted Sir Edmund Hillary. Indulge in a delicious course meal made with locally sourced ingredients and relax in the cozy lounge after a day of extremes!



**Activity:** Hiking Extreme onsen | Time – 2.5 hours | Elevation – 1300m

**Difficulty:** 2

**Accommodation:** Numajiri Kogen Lodge | shared room, Western style | ensuite with shared hot spring baths

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### Day 6 – Explore the volcanic lakes of Urabandai

In the morning, enjoy a canoeing experience at Lake Hibara while admiring the surrounding beautiful mountain scenery. Be awed at both the beauty and ferocity of nature as you enjoy the magnificent relationship between volcano and water. Lunch will be a tasty meal of local chicken and potatoes cooked in a Dutch oven.

In the afternoon, enjoy a change of pace with a relaxing walk and a spot of ‘forest therapy’ at the ‘five-coloured lakes’ of Goshikinuma behind Mt. Bandai. These lakes were created by the eruption of Bandai in 1888 with the unique composition of minerals in the water giving them brilliant, almost unnaturally blue hues!



**Activity:** Canoeing Hibara lake | Time- 1,5hours

Hiking Goshikinuma | Time – 2.5 hours | 4km

**Difficulty:** 2

**Accommodation:** Hanakanzashi Onsen Hostel | shared room, Japanese style |  
ensuite shower . shared hot spring baths

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner(Kaiseki style)



## Day 7 – Become an ‘onsen guardian’ for the day on Mt. Adatara

Mt. Adatara, known fondly as ‘nipple mountain’ by the locals due to its shape, is one of Japan’s ‘100 Famous Mountains’ and a popular spot for viewing the colourful Autumn foliage. An active volcano, Mt. Adatara is home to several springs that source the baths of various hot-spring villages at its foot, including Dake Onsen. The highlight of today’s hike is not just the panoramic view from the top, but the journey itself and your unique guide: a local ‘Yumori’.

### *The ‘Yumori’: Onsen guardians*

Have you ever stopped to wonder how it is possible for the mineral-rich hot spring water to continuously flow into the baths of Japanese ryokan inns? At Dake Onsen, the source of the spring is located some 8km deep into the forests of Mt. Adatara. The spring water is so rich in minerals that the pipes from the source of the spring need to be maintained weekly, releasing the build up of sulphur and minerals. A team of local men are entrusted with this laborious task, hiking to the onsen source every week – sometimes multiple times - even in the height of winter! It is upon the shoulders of the ‘Yumori’ (literally meaning protector of hot spring) that the health of the hot-springs and the livelihood of the town depend.

On the way to the peak of Mt. Adatara, your Yumori guide will show you to the source of the spring and share stories of their experience protecting it. The level of appreciation you’ll have for your relaxing bath at the end of this hike will be second-to-none!

### Dinner

Spend the evening hopping between various local restaurants – including a counter-bar owned by another of the Yumori - just a stone’s throw from your accommodation at Dake Onsen.



**Activity:** Trekking: Mt. Adatara | Elevation – 1718m | Time – 8 hours

**Difficulty:** 3

**Accommodation:** Hanakanzashi Onsen Hostel | shared room, Japanese style | ensuite shower . shared hot spring baths

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### Day 8 – Move to Koriyama station

After breakfast, transfer to Koriyama station by private car (50min).

You will arrive at Kumamoto airport and meet up with your Kyushu guide around 15:00. After a short introduction we will board our transportation to head towards Aso. On the bus you will be briefed about the area and the upcoming days.

We will make a quick stop at Mt. Tawara's lookout post to get an overview of the Aso area and grab some nice pictures of the scenery before continuing on towards our lodging for the night. Our hotel is a traditional Japanese onsen (hot spring) inn.

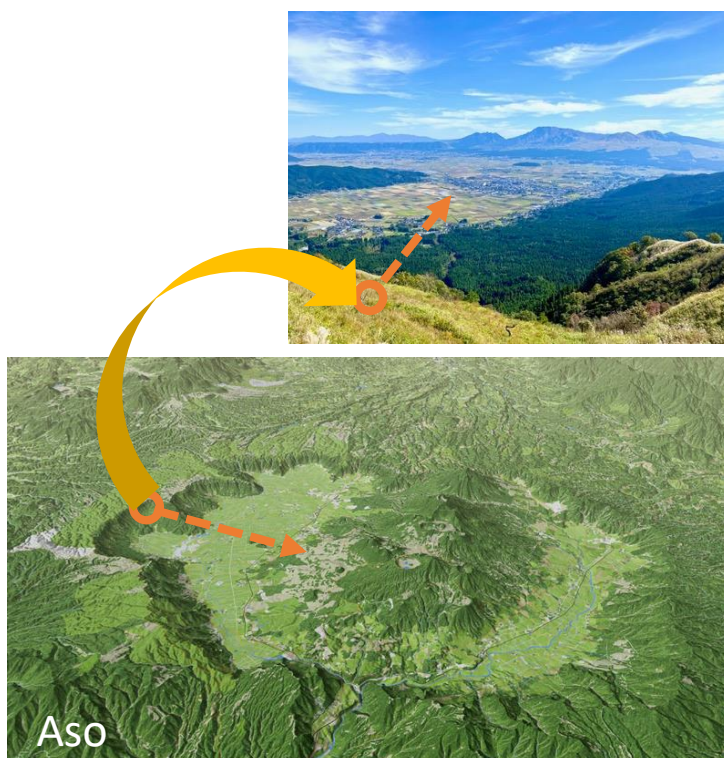
Arrival at our accommodation, Senomoto Kogen Hotel, is estimated around 16:00 o'clock. After checking in, there will be time to visit the onsen and freshen up before dinner. The guide will be available for instructions about bathing in the onsen if necessary. Dinner will be had at the accommodation from 18:00.

**Activity:** Transportation

**Difficulty:** 0

**Accommodation:** Senomoto Kogen Hotel | Private room, Japanese style | Ensuite, shared hot spring baths

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner(Kaiseki style)





## Day 9 – Mountain village cycling & farm-to-table experience

On our third day, we will mount our bikes and enjoy a lighter course to prepare us for the tours climax at day 4. But to start of the day, we will enjoy a refreshing outdoor yoga while looking out over Aso's vast pasturelands.

When breakfast finishes we will finally saddle up and head out around 08:30. In all directions around us, the world-class pastureland scenery of Aso stretches out and in the far distance we can see the volcano towering with its impressive shape. Going downhill through forests and villages we will arrive at our first destination, Gonbe Village.

### Lunch

Lunch will be an authentic and interactive farm-to-table experience hosted by locals who will introduce a true Japanese lunch, the way that they would eat it themselves. Enjoy a relaxing time in the atmospheric setting with our lovely hosts!

We will set out again around 13:00 to keep exploring the rural landscapes and villages. As we keep going we will stop by the small village Tateiwa that consists of only 13 households. Here we can find a natural spring that produces 380 tons of water each day and supplies drinking water to almost all of Minamioguni town. After exploring the small village on foot we will keep riding down through forests, rice fields, and mountain villages until we reach the farmers' market of Minamioguni town. Here we will have a quick break and drop of the bicycles before heading back to the hotel by car.

We will arrive at the hotel around 17:00 where we will have a short break before dinner.

**Activity:** Cycling 22 km. 3 hours. / Farm-to-Table lunch 2,5 hours

**Difficulty:** 2

**Accommodation:** Shizu-no-Yado Ryokan | shared room, Japanese style | ensuite shower. shared hot spring baths

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner (Local Izakaya)



### Day 10 –

After having breakfast, we will depart from the hotel at 8:00. We will keep traveling with our bikes as we head towards the beautiful Mazeno Valley. This area is usually restricted and only open to the public twice a year. Today we will have it all to ourselves! Here we will enjoy a light and playful 1km canyon trekking, This is a perfect way to get up close and personal with Aso's crystal clear water. The canyon trekking is estimated to finish at noon.

### Lunch

Lunch will be had outside and consist of a Japanese style lunch box prepared by the hotel. For special dietary requests, consult with us as you book the tour.

After our canyon trek is finished and our stomachs are filled, we mount our bicycles once more. This time we will visit a mushroom farmer that specializes in growing "Shiitake" mushrooms on natural wood. Today, less than 10% of all shiitake produced in Japan are grown this way. This young mushroom farmer is only 26 years old but a father of four and has inherited his family business as the third in his line. He utilizes the plentiful water of Aso as a resource to produce Shiitake mushroom, which usually is harvested in spring and autumn, throughout the year. Enjoy the flavorful taste of freshly picked mushrooms, grilled on a charcoal brazier!

Finally we will go for the last spurt of the trip. Cycling through the pastoral Nakabaru and Akababa area as we head back towards our accommodation. Have a quick break and refresh in the onsen before we head out to enjoy regional cuisine for our last feast of the trip.

**Activity:** Cycling 27 km. 3 hours. / Canyon Trekking 1 km. 2 hours.

**Difficulty:** 2

**Accommodation:** Shizu-no-Yado Ryokan | shared room, Japanese style | ensuite shower. shared hot spring baths

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner (Local restaurant)





### **Day 11 – Transfer to Kumamoto Airport/Fukuoka Airport, farewells**

The final day will be a simple day with a relaxing morning, transfer to the airport and farewells.

We will check out from the hotel at 10:00 and the transportation leaves at 10:30, so make sure to be prepared. The estimated time of arrival at the airport is 12:30 (might vary slightly depending on the destination). Your guide will see you through all the way to the airport where we will say our heartfelt farewells. Thank you for taking part in our tour and we hope to see you soon again!

**Activity:** Transportation

**Difficulty:** 0

**Included meals:** Breakfast

### Accommodations :

Date:	Location:	Type:	Room:	Spa:
Days 1 & 2	Minakamii	Waterfront Tents	Shared tent /shower, bath & toilet in Main Building (20 metres away)	
Day 3	Miharashi Oze Nat'l Park	Mountain Lodge	Shared room /shower, bath & toilet	
Day 4	Ashinomaki Onsen	Onsen hostel	Shared room with ensuite /shared hot spring baths	Onsen spa
Day 5	Numajiri Lodge	Onsen lodge	Shared room with ensuite /shared hot spring baths	Onsen spa
Days 6 & 7	Dake Onsen	Onsen hostel	Shared room with ensuite /shared hot spring baths	Onsen spa
Days 8	Kurokawa Onsen	Onsen hotel	Private room with ensuite /shared hot spring baths	Onsen spa
Days 9 & 10	Manganji Onsen	Onsen inn	Shared room with ensuite /shared hot spring baths	Onsen spa



# Meals

## Breakfast & Dinner

Whilst all breakfast meals will be served at each accommodation site, dinners will feature a variety of different meal types – from traditional ‘kaiseki’ Japanese cuisine to interactive ‘bar-hopping’ style experiences where you will eat and drink like (and with) the locals!

Fukushima is also well known for its high-quality sake and there will be plenty of opportunities for sake-lovers to sample the finest!

There will be many opportunities to utilize your chopstick skills, but western-style eating utensils will also be made available upon request.

## Lunch

Much of the daytime activities on this tour will see you spend lunchtime in the mountains! On days that will be spent trekking in the mountains and away from shops and restaurants, typical ‘obento’ style lunchboxes or ‘onigiri’ rice-balls will be provided for guests.

### \*Dietary requirements\*

Most meals can be adjusted to suit differing dietary requirements upon prior request.

# What’s included

- 7 nights accommodation
- 7 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 7 dinners
- All transport and transfers as listed in itinerary
- Some snacks and refreshments
- Travel insurance ([details](#))
- English speaking guides / interpretation

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## Not included

- Airfares and transport to/from start and end points.
- Personal expenses
- Alcoholic beverages with meals (unless stated otherwise).

# What we provide & What to bring

## We provide

- Emergency first-aid kit
- Emergency drinking water and food supplies
- Emergency shelter equipment
- All equipment for activities (bicycles, rafts, SUP, canyoning equipment)
- Cycling helmets for cycling activities (sizes are limited)
- Wetsuits (heights 150-200 cms/weights 40-100 kgs), helmets (sizes are limited), life- jackets and water shoes (up to size 28) for water activities

*N.B. Guests with size needs outside those shown above are requested to advise details in good advance*

## What to bring

### *Essentials*

- Multiple changes of clothing that are appropriate for trekking (items that are easy to move in, quick-drying, easy to layer.)
- Trekking/hiking boots (mid- to high-cut)
- Waterproof shoes (shoes you don't mind getting wet)
- Rain/weather-proof layers (jacket and pants)
- Fleece or down jacket
- Thermal layers (top and bottom)
- Gloves/beanies/neck-warmers etc. to keep you warm
- Spare changes of socks
- (For watersports) Sports Sandals with a heel strap
- (For watersports) Swimwear
- Refillable water-bottle/hydration system (2L)
- Sun-hat, sunglasses and sunscreen
- Portable toilet and other necessary toiletries
- Quick-dry hand towel
- High-energy snacks/provisions (can be purchased on location)
- Head-torch
- Personal medications
- Hiking backpack with capacity to fit above items / rain-cover for backpack
- Passport
- Some cash in Japanese yen. (Some countryside areas do not accept credit-cards. There will be opportunity to withdraw cash at ATMs at convenience stores/post-office on route.)

### *Recommended*

- Walking poles
- Hiking/sports leggings and gloves
- Power bank and charger for mobile phone
- Camera



## About us

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 & 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..

## Guide in Minakami & Oze

During her 15 years as a licensed guide, Kazuko has travelled to almost every corner of Japan and experienced ... most everything! As shown here, Kazuko is 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 and geographical features of Minakami & Oze are a particular favourite.



## About us

Inoutbound Sendai Matsushima Inc. is a local DMC and tour operator based in Sendai City, the gateway to the greater Tohoku region of northern Japan. With a focus on the Miyagi area, we work closely with local businesses and key-people throughout Tohoku to create and curate unique experience programs and customised itineraries for visitors from all around Japan and the world. Our friendly team of experts can provide bilingual guiding services, consultation for independent travelers and agents, as well as on-the-ground tour operation for familiarisation, special interest and incentive trips. We pride ourselves on leading our guests off-the-beaten-path for authentic local experience that will stay with them for a lifetime.

### SUSTAINABLE TOURISM:

At Inoutbound Sendai Matsushima we believe that responsible tourism should always leave minimal impact on the environment and maximum positive impact on the local community. We strive to support local business by working with family-run hotels, restaurants and local guides, and ensure our activities contribute positively to the protection and promotion of local culture and tradition.

### GUIDES

#### MITSUMASA GOTO (MITSU)

(Advanced First-aid Responder Course 2020)



Mitsu is a Miyagi local, born and raised, and between back-packing and working in the travel & PR industry for more than 20 years, he's travelled overseas well over 30 times. As well as embracing his love of the outdoors, Mitsu is one of Tohoku's biggest foodies and can follow his nose to the best local eateries across the region! Mitsu is well on his way to completing the entire length of the 'Michinoku Coastal Trail' (1000km) by the 10th anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami disaster in March 2021.

#### QUINLAN FARIS (Q)

(Nature Experience Activity Leader 2020)



Hailing from Madison, Wisconsin, Quinlan's journey brought him to Japan 20 years ago after a 10-month spell in China. After 10 years in Tokyo, during which he took multiple back-packing trips to India and Nepal, he moved north to Iwate. You'll most likely find him up a local volcano hiking up a storm, brewing some coffee, or foraging for wild vegetables to feed his Airbnb guests / entertain his YouTube subscribers (GoNorth Japan).



## About us

SMO Minamioguni (SMO) is a company in the Aso area of Kumamoto that operates a small tour business called "Satoyama Journey." Our goal is to bring small groups of visitors on a unique journey into life in the Japanese countryside by introducing satoyama-culture, the Japanese way of living in harmony with the native woodlands and mountains. Furthermore, we also pride ourselves on being a local company. At SMO, we work with a complete perspective on community development, including everything from operating the farmers' market to supporting local entrepreneurship. We might be a comparatively new contender on the market, but our goals and aspiration knows no limits!

## Guides

### ▶ Through-guide Max Wall

Mr. Max is born in Sweden but live and work as a certified interpretation guide in Japan. He is a versatile person who, in addition to guiding, also manage relations with providers, develop new content, write articles, and work with the local community. Apart from having passed the highest level of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test, he is certified as a social worker and in basic first aid. Max's goal is to revitalize the area and preserve local culture through responsible tourism.



### ▶ WakuWakuOFFICE AsoBeTai

Cycling guide for day 4 and canyon trekking guide. Mr. Yoshifumi Usui, previously part of Kumamoto's helicopter-based firefighting squad and the first team leader of the Aso mountain rescue team. He started AsoBeTai when he retired in 2015 and provides adventure activities including everything from trekking to climbing and bicycling. Furthermore, he also worked in the community as a volunteer for 30 years and works extra as a teacher of "self-rescue".

# Information and Requirements

## **Dietary Restrictions**

We understand that food and eating are one of the most important (if not THE most important) aspects of travelling to a new destination! As such, we like to make sure that no stomach is left behind, regardless of dietary needs. Whilst some of the more remote locations may require flexibility from guests, we will do our best to cater to all dietary needs where possible. Please be sure to inform us of any allergies or dietary requirements at the time of booking to allow us to make appropriate arrangements.

## **Emergency Response Plan**

Whilst we're focused on showing you a fun and memorable time in Tohoku, the safety and wellbeing of our guests is our utmost priority! All our guides are trained emergency first-aid responders and will carry an emergency first-aid kit at all times throughout the tour. In each location, activities will be carried out under the direct guidance of locals who have years of experience hiking and trekking in the relevant mountain ranges.

Please note that in the event of unsafe or unfavourable weather conditions, the content of outdoor activities may be forced to change to ensure the safety of all guests and guides. In such cases, outdoor activity will be substituted with alternative sight-seeing activities. For your own safety and that of fellow guests, please listen and cooperate with the instruction of the guides throughout the tour.

## **Weather Conditions**

September is a very pleasant time to visit the Tohoku region. With the height of summer behind, daytime temperatures tend to vary between 18 – 25 °C with about 70% humidity. However, the weather is known to be changeable and typically several degrees cooler in more mountainous areas. We advise all guests to come prepared with adequate sun protection as well as protective layers for cooler/wet-weather. Please consult the 'what to bring' list to make sure you are prepared for all likely conditions.

Whilst the peak of Autumn foliage tends to be in late October/early November, it is possible that some slight changes of colour can be seen at higher altitudes in September.



# Reservation & Cancellation Policy

## Reservation

Customers interested in signing up for the tour should submit the required information to the Company along with a deposit in the amount indicated in the pertinent web information or brochure. For operational reasons, the Customer may be required to furnish the required information using a prescribed form or screen. The deposit shall be applied towards payment for travel. The Tour Participation Agreement between the Customer and the Company shall become legally binding upon agreement by the Company to enter into the Tour Participation Agreement with the Customer and receipt of the deposit.

## Payment Methods

Payment for the tour must be made by the thirteenth (13th) day prior to the day preceding the tour commencement date. Customers submitting tour participation requests subsequent to the thirteenth (13th) day prior to the day preceding the tour commencement date must pay for the tour prior to the tour commencement date and in no case later than the deadline for payment specified by the Company or its Sales Location. If the Customer is a cardholder of a credit card issued by a partner credit card company, the Company, with the consent of the Customer, may charge payment for the tour (including the deposit and any items identified as Additional Charges) as well as any applicable cancellation fees and/or other charges under Article 14, additional charges under Article 10 and any traveler substitution fees under Article 13 to said credit card without obtaining the signature of the Customer even in the absence of an agreement between the Customer and the Company regarding Credit Card Payment Authorization under Article 24 below. In such case, unless otherwise requested by the Customer, the Card Transaction Date shall be the date on which said consent is given by the Customer.

## Cancellation

- If the Customer cancels travel for personal reasons subsequent to the formation of a legally binding Tour Participation Agreement, the Customer shall be required to pay the cancellation fees indicated in the pertinent web information or brochure and the relevant tour participant[s] shall be required to pay any cost differential associated with any change in the number of travelers occupying any guestrooms.
- The Customer shall also be liable for payment of the prescribed cancellation fees in the event of cancellation by the Customer due to the Customer's inability to obtain financing due to any cause not attributable to the Company.
- If the Customer fails to make payment of the Tour Price by the deadline, the Company shall deem the Customer to have terminated the Tour Participation Agreement as of the day following said payment deadline and an amount equal to the applicable cancellation fee shall be charged and payable by the Customer to the Company.
- Any modification to the departure date or any partial modification to the itinerary (including but not limited to transportation and accommodations) made by the

Customer for the Customer's own personal reasons shall be deemed a cancellation of the Customer's participation in the overall tour and shall subject the Customer to the payment of the prescribed cancellation fees:

- Cancelled more than 21 days prior to departure: Zero fees.
- Cancelled between 20 and 8 days prior to departure: 20% of the Tour Price.
- Cancelled between 7 days and 48 hours prior to departure: 30% of the Tour Price.
- Cancelled between 48 and 24 hours prior to departure :40% of the Tour Price.
- Cancelled within 24 hours of departure: 50% of the Tour Price.
- Cancelled on the day of departure: 100% of the Tour Price.
- **\*No refunds will be given after the tour has commenced.\***

### **Disclaimer**

#### ***Assumption of risk and safety declaration***

Travellers are advised that all activities are undertaken entirely at their own risk and they must behave in a fit and proper manner at all times in accordance with JTB Corp. guidelines. All adventure tours and outdoor activities carry inherent risks and JTB Corp. nor its partners do not assume any responsibility for accidents that are caused by its customers or caused by factors outside of human control.

With the purchase of your trip you acknowledge that:

- By its very nature, adventure travel, hiking are more challenging and demanding with a significantly higher level of risk, and involve potential exposure to injury and possibly death.

- Additional dangers and risks associated with adventure travel may include difficult and dangerous terrain; high altitude; extremes of weather, including sudden and unexpected changes; political instability; remoteness from normal medical services and from communications; and evacuation difficulties in the event of illness or injury.
- You must follow our guide's instructions and use any safety equipment provided at all times. For the above reasons you accept the inherent and increased dangers and risks associated with the proposed adventure and the accompanying risk of injury, death or property damage or loss.

### ***Responsibilities of the Company***

- (1) The Company shall be responsible for compensating the Customer for any losses incurred by the Customer as a result of any willful or negligent act on the part of the Company or any agent performing travel arrangement services on behalf of the Company in connection with performance under the Tour Participation Agreement. However, said responsibility shall only apply in those instances in which notice is received by the Company within two (2) years from the day following the occurrence of any such loss.
- (1) As a general rule, the Company shall assume no responsibility under Paragraph (1) above if the Customer incurs any loss due to the following causes (this non-exhaustive list is presented here for illustrative purposes):
  - Natural disaster, war, rioting and/or any modification to the tour itinerary or tour cancellation resulting therefrom
  - Losses resulting from accidents or fires involving any provider of transportation, accommodations or other travel services
  - Suspension of service by any provider of transportation, accommodations or other travel services and/or any modification of the tour itinerary or tour cancellation resulting therefrom
  - Government order, quarantine due to communicable disease and/or any modification to the tour itinerary or tour cancellation resulting therefrom
  - Accidents occurring during free activity time
  - Food poisoning
  - Theft
  - Delays, suspension of service, schedule changes or rerouting by any transportation provider or any modifications to the tour itinerary or any curtailment of stay at the destination resulting therefrom.



- 3) Notwithstanding the provisions regarding the deadline for furnishing notice of loss to the Company set forth in Paragraph (1) above, the Company shall only furnish compensation for losses involving baggage under said Paragraph (1) if notice is received by the Company within fourteen (14) days from the day following the occurrence of said loss. Irrespective of the amount of said damages, the maximum amount of compensation to be furnished by the Company for losses involving baggage shall be limited to 150,000 yen per person (except in instances involving any willful or grossly negligent act on the part of the Company).

### ***Special Compensation***

- (1) Irrespective of whether or not any liability is incurred by the Company pursuant to Paragraph (1) of the preceding ①, the Company shall pay the Customer a Death Indemnity (15,000,000 yen), Permanent Disability Indemnity (up to a maximum of 15,000,000 yen), Inpatient Solatium (20,000 yen – 200,000 yen) or Outpatient Solatium (10,000 yen – 50,000 yen) for certain damages sustained to life or limb if the Customer suffers any sudden and unforeseen accident while participating in an agent-organized tour and an indemnity for losses involving baggage (up to a maximum of 100,000 yen per piece or pair and up to a maximum of 150,000 yen per agent-organized tour participant) in accordance with the Special Compensation Rules set forth in the Company's General Terms and Conditions.
- (2) Notwithstanding the provisions set forth in the preceding Paragraph (1), losses occurring on a day during which no travel services that constitute part of the Company-organized tour are furnished shall not be considered as having occurred during the Customer's participation in the tour as long as said day is explicitly indicated in the pertinent web information or brochure as a day on which no travel services are to be furnished.
- (3) The Company shall not pay any indemnity or solatium under Paragraph (1) above for any losses incurred by the Customer during participation in an agent-organized tour if said losses result from a willful act or drunk driving by the Customer, illness or similar such cause, or as a result of any accident occurring during any dangerous activity, including but not limited to mountain climbing (involving the use of mountain climbing gear such as ice axes, climbing irons, ropes and/or hammers), luge riding, bobsled riding, skydiving, hang gliding, flying aboard any ultralight aircraft (powered hang gliders, microlight aircraft, etc.) and/or gyroplaning during free activity time if such activity is not included in the agent-organized tour.

The foregoing exception shall not apply in the event that said activity is included in the agent-organized tour itinerary.

- (4) The Company shall not pay any indemnification for losses in connection with any items identified as excluded from indemnification in the Company's General Terms and Conditions, including but not limited to cash, securities, credit cards, vouchers, airline tickets, passports, driver's licenses, visas, certificates of deposit, certificates of savings (including passbooks and ATM cards), data or any similar such items, and contact lenses.
- (5) If the Company is subject to an obligation to pay any indemnification under Paragraph (1) above as well as an obligation to pay any compensation for losses as described under the preceding Article 19, the Company shall be deemed to have performed its obligation to pay both said indemnification and said compensation to the extent of the amount paid by the Company in performance of either of these two obligations.

### Tour Operator / Contact



**The J Team Co. Ltd.**

*(Tokyo Metropolitan Government Authorised Travel Service Operator No. 20055)*

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Registered DMO (Japan) : 20065

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