



## Shikoku Revealed

Experience the rich culture, history, and nature on offer in Shikoku with this itinerary, designed for those who want to delve deeper into this fascinating country. Commence in Osaka, the food capitol of Japan. The next day, enjoy your first destination on Shikoku, Tokushima, city which marks the beginning of the 88-temple pilgrimage around the island and is also home to the most famous dance festival in Japan. A short bus away is Kamikatsu – Japan’s first zero waste town! Venture deep into the heart of the Iya Valley, which offers great hiking routes with dramatic natural scenery before heading to Matsuyama, home to one of Japan’s oldest and most famous hot springs. Next on your trip is Kotohira, where you will explore the beautiful Konpira-san shrine. Move on to the city of Takamatsu and encounter feudal Japan in the castle and traditional gardens. For your final night in Japan head back to Osaka and fly out of Kansai Airport.

## Tokushima

Tokushima city is famed for its Awa Odori dance, the most famous dance festival in Japan during the Obon season in August. There is even a museum dedicated to this "Fools' Dance" so visitors can experience the lively dance all year round. Also, to be enjoyed in Tokushima Prefecture are the whirlpools in Naruto City, along with the temples of the Shikoku Pilgrimage Route.



## Kamikatsu

Most visitors to Japan have never heard of this little city on the island of Shikoku, but we think this will change over the coming years. The locals of this beautiful town surrounded by mountains and rivers have gotten together with the ambitious goal of making Kamikatsu Japan's first zero-waste town. This dedicated community is serious about its goal, and after seeing their recycle and re-use facilities it is clear that this goal is near. Kamikatsu is also a wonderful place to experience Japanese countryside hospitality, and you might enjoy breaking language barriers with non-verbal communication.



## Iya Valley

This secluded, mountainous valley is one of Japan's Three Hidden Valleys and offers some of the best hiking and hot springs in Shikoku. Being so remote, here many aspects of traditional Japanese life have been sheltered from the tide of modernisation. One such example are the precarious vine bridges for crossing from one side of the river to the other.



## Matsuyama

Shikoku's largest city, Matsuyama is known in Japan as the setting for Natsume Soseki's popular novel, Botchan. Matsuyama's 19th century Dogo onsen features in Soseki's novel but may be more familiar to anime fans as the inspiration for the bathhouse in Studio Ghibli's Spirited Away. Sights to see also include the well-preserved Matsuyama castle and its gardens, plus several ancient temples on the Shikoku Pilgrimage Route.



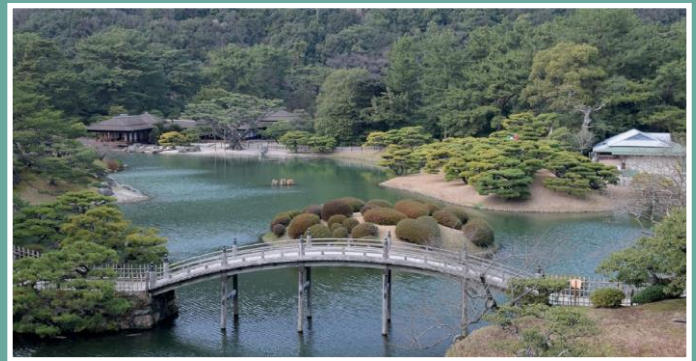
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## Kotohira

A small town in Kagawa Prefecture, Kotohira is best known for its shrine, Konpira-san, sited on the slopes of Mt Zozu. Pilgrims to Shikoku's largest and most popular shrine complex are rewarded by panoramic views of the surrounding countryside. Japan's oldest surviving kabuki theatre is also to be found in Kotohira, along with a sake museum for post-pilgrimage refreshment.

## Takamatsu

Takamatsu is a port city that looks out over the Seto Inland Sea. In feudal times, lords built Takamatsu castle, the ruins of which can be seen today, and the Ritsurin Koen landscape garden, Takamatsu's top attraction where visitors can enjoy the beauty of Japan's seasons. Takamatsu is also famed for its sanuki udon noodles and Shikoku Pilgrimage temples.



## Osaka

Known as the "kitchen of Japan", Osaka is renowned for its warm-hearted, lively locals. Osaka Castle dominates the city as the old mixes with the very modern skyline, and the aquarium is not to be missed. The city comes alive at night with endless opportunities to wine, dine and party.

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## The Itinerary

### Day 1: Arrival in Japan, Meet & Greet at Kansai International Airport (Osaka) -

Welcome to Japan! Our friendly Meet & Greet service representative will be waiting in the Arrivals lobby and holding a sign with your name on. The Meet & Greet will direct you to the express train to Osaka where you will check in to your centrally located hotel for 1 night.

### Day 2: Osaka to Tokushima

Today you will make your way to Tokushima by express bus. If you are lucky enough to visit here in August, enjoy the lively festival atmosphere that takes over the city during the Obon season, as dancers and musicians' parade through the streets showcasing Tokushima's main attraction, the 400-year-old Awa Odori dance. Even at other times of year, the dance can still be enjoyed at the Awa Odori Kaikan museum. Alternatively, you may like to visit the Awa Jurobe Yashiki Bunraku Puppet Theatre, a former samurai residence where bunraku performances can be seen daily, and Tokushima castle and museum, where you can take a stroll in the 16th century gardens. Check in to your centrally located hotel for 1 night.

### Day 3: Tokushima to Kamikatsu

After breakfast, you might want to hire a rental vehicle to drive deep into Shikoku's countryside where few foreign visitors have been before you. Kamikatsu was unknown to most Japanese as well, but it has recently gained recognition for its efforts to become Japans first zero-waste town. You will stay 2 nights in a traditional minshuku (Japanese inn). Dinner is included both nights.



### Day 4: Kamikatsu

If you are feeling energetic, we recommend you start the day with a hike in the hillsides to see traditional rice terraces and local temples. On a misty morning you might feel as if you've entered a Japanese landscape painting. The countryside is yours to enjoy as you like, but make sure you stop by the towns impressive recycling facilities.

### Day 5: Iya Valley

After checking out, head to wonderful Iya Valley in the heart of Shikoku. The area's most famous attraction are the kazura-bashi, or vine bridges, that cross from one side of the valley to the other. In this secluded region of countryside, you can gain a sense of traditional rural life with a visit to Ochiai Hamlet's old farmhouses. Check in to your ryokan (with private hot spring) for 2 nights. Dinner is included tonight.

### Day 6: Iya Valley

Today venture out on a hike up Mount Tsurugi, the second highest mountain on Shikoku, and enjoy panoramic views of the surrounding mountains. Mount Tsurugi is considered sacred by followers of the Japanese folk religion Shugendo.

You may also like to take a short drive to see the Oboke and Koboke gorges, one of Japan's top outdoor destinations, offering dramatic scenery, boat trips and river rafting. Return to your ryokan, where dinner is again included tonight.

### Day 7: Iya Valley to Matsuyama

Today's destination is the city of Matsuyama, on the western side of Shikoku. See the sights of the city from aboard the Botchan miniature steam train. The train terminates at Dogo Onsen, one of the oldest hot springs in Japan. After taking a soak, visit Isaniwa Shrine, which is just a short walk away. The shrine buildings are considered Important Cultural Properties, and the warrior Empress Jingu is enshrined here. Check into your hotel here for two nights.

### Day 8: Matsuyama

Enjoy one more day at leisure in Matsuyama. Other sites of interest include several impressive temples on the 88 Temple Pilgrimage Route, including Joruri-ji, founded in the 8th century, and Sairin-ji, with its tranquil stream and koi pond.



**Day 9: Matsuyama to Kotohira**

Check out of your hotel after breakfast and take the train to Kotohira, where you will stay tonight. Make the pilgrimage to Shikoku's most popular shrine, Konpira-san. You will encounter beautiful shrine buildings and museums as you climb the steps to the Inner Shrine. Take a quick rest at one of the many viewpoints along the way and enjoy a bird's-eye view of Kotohira town and the surrounding countryside. Kotohira's Kanamaruza kabuki theatre, a designated Important Cultural Property built in 1835, is also worth visiting. Check in here for one night.

**Day 10: Kotohira to Takamatsu**

Enjoy your day at leisure in Kotohira. Later this afternoon travel by train to Takamatsu. Take a stroll in the beautiful Ritsurin Park, a landscape garden built for the lords of the region in feudal times. Now listed as a Japanese National Treasure, the gardens also include a Folk Craft Museum, restaurant and three Tea Houses, where visitors can enjoy a tea ceremony. Check in here for two nights.

**Day 11: Takamatsu**

Whilst in Takamatsu we suggest a visit to Shikoku Mura, an open-air museum situated near Takamatsu. Here you will find many preserved traditional buildings relocated from all over Shikoku Island. The ruins of Takamatsu's Castle, in Tamamo Park, and the Yakuri-ji and Yashima-ji temples are also worth seeing. Sample the local delicacy, sanuki udon noodles, in one of the city's numerous restaurants.

**Day 12: Takamatsu to Osaka**

Depart Shikoku and travel back to Osaka, where you will stay tonight. Spend the day enjoying the sights of Osaka including the lively Dotonbori district for shopping, eating and entertainment. On your final night Japan, sample some of the Kansai region's culinary specialities, such as okonomiyaki and takoyaki.

**Day 13: Return Home – Kansai International Airport**

Transfer to Kansai International Airport (Osaka) for your flight home.

**Price Includes:**

- 8 nights' accommodation in a Twin/Double room at 3\* or 4\* hotels in Osaka, Tokushima, Matsuyama, Kotohira, and Takamatsu on a bed & breakfast basis
- 2 nights' accommodation in Japanese ryokan (Japanese inn) in Iya Valley, breakfast and **dinner** included
- 2 nights' accommodation in a traditional minshuku (Family inn) in Kamikatsu including delicious local **dinners** and breakfast
- Airport transfers to and from Osaka by Express Train
- Express Bus tickets from Osaka to Tokushima
- Train tickets from Matsuyama to Kotohira, from Kotohira to Takamatsu, and Takamatsu to Osaka.
- Meet & Greet service on arrival at Kansai International Airport (Osaka)
- Detailed Japan Journeys Information Pack including detailed train schedules, maps, & brochures
- Personalised Japan Journeys App to help manage your documents
- All Japanese sales taxes and service charge
- Full financial protection via Japan Journeys' membership of the Travel Trust Association through which your monies are held in a Trust Account until you return home (under Membership No. U3078), see: <http://www.traveltrust.co.uk>

**Not Included In Price:**

- International airfare
- Meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Entrance fees
- Taxi, subway, train, and bus fees not mentioned above
- Rental vehicle hire
- Travel Insurance

All price estimates are based on current rates of exchange and are subject to availability.

**3\* Accommodation**  
*from £1,625.00 per person*

**Based on a Twin/Double room occupancy**

**3\* Single Room Supplement**  
*from £275.00*

**4\* Accommodation**  
*from £2,195.00 per person*

**Based on a Twin/Double room occupancy**

**4\* Single Room Supplement**  
*from £400.00*

**5\* Accommodation**  
*On request*

To make a booking, a deposit of £250 per person is required. The balance of the price of the trip must be made 12 weeks prior to departure.