

SAMURAI TOURS

*Adventures in Discovering Traditional Japan*

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# Best of Kyushu




# Tour Overview

Kyushu is Japan's third largest island, located southwest of the main island Honshu. An early center of Japanese civilization, Kyushu offers many historic treasures.With its mild climate, tranquil gardens, famous hot springs, historic castles, beautiful countryside, and warm-hearted people, Kyushu offers a dramatic experience that will create travel memories for a lifetime.

## 📍 Destinations

*Osaka, Beppu Onsen, Usuki, Takachiho, Miyazaki, Kirishima Onsen, Sakurajima, Kagoshima, Aso-san, Kumamoto, Unzen Onsen, Shimabara Peninsula, Nagasaki*

DetailItineraryMapPhotosReviews

# Tour Details

Kyushu, the third largest and southern-most island of Japan, was at one time the most important gateway into Japan for foreigners. But at the same time, according to Japanese legend, it was from Kyushu that the first Japanese emperor, Kimmu, began his campaign to unify Japan. Kyushu is therefore considered to be the cradle of the Japanese civilization. With its grumbling volcanoes,

steaming hot springs and rugged mountains along with its relaxed and uncomplicated atmosphere, Kyushu is not to be missed.

Visit Takachiho, steeped in Japanese mythology. Visit Udo Shrine, said to be the birthplace of Emperor Jimmu, the first emperor of Japan born more than 2,000 yeas ago. Bathe in some of Japan’s oldest, most famous and largest onsen. Discover Sakurajima, one of Japan’s most active volcanoes. You will visit some of Japan’s best gardens, and tour Nagasaki, once the only gateway to Japan for foreigners, and much, much more.

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# Destinations



## Beppu

*Beppu Hells, Onsen Steam Cooking Dinner*



## Usuki

*Usuki Stone Buddhas*



## Takachiho

*Yokugura Dance, Takachiho Gorge, Amano Iwato Shrine*



## Aoshima Island

*Aoshima Island*



## Udo Shrine

*Udo Shrine*



## Kirishima

*Kirishima Shrine, Kirishima Onsen*

## Sakurajima



*Sakurajima*



## Kagoshima

*Shiroyama, Senganen Garden*



## Mount Aso

*Mount Aso, Volcano Science Museum*



## Kumamoto

*Kumamoto Castle, Suizenji Garden*



## Shimabara Peninsula

*Shimabara Castle, Mount Unzen, Unzen Onsen*



## Nagasaki

*Dejima*

# Itinerary

## Day 1 Arrive in Osaka

You will be staying overnight in the city of Osaka. You will be met at Osaka's Kansai Airport or Osaka's Itami Airport, and escorted to the hotel in Osaka. We will leave a message for you at the hotel informing you of the meeting time for the next day. If you would prefer to arrive in Tokyo, contact us for the details. No meals included.

Travel: TBD; Walking: Light

## Day 2 Travel to Beppu Onsen, Beppu Onsen - Shiraike Hell, Oniyama Hell, Kamado Hell, Umi Hell, Oniishibozu Hell, Onsen Steam Cooking Dinner

After breakfast we will take a short bus ride to Beppu. Beppu is one of the largest and most popular onsen in Japan. Beppu is also known for the many different foods the locals cook using the onsen waters. After dropping off our luggage at the hotel, we will tour some of the more popular "hells" in Beppu. There are many of these located around Beppu, proof of the thermal activity in the Beppu area. We will even have an opportunity to sample the food cooked in the onsen water such as eggs, corn, potatoes, etc. Before leaving in the morning, you will prepare your main luggage to be sent to Takachiho. You will travel to Beppu and Takachiho with an overnight bag only. Breakfast at the hotel and dinner at a local restaurant is included.

**Travel: 3 1/2 Hours; Walking: Heavy**

## Day 3 Free Day in Beppu

Today is a free day to enjoy Beppu Onsen. Breakfast at the hotel included. .

**Travel: TBD; Walking: TBD**

## Day 4 Travel to Usuki; Usuki Samurai District, Usuki Stone Buddhas, Travel to Takachiho; Yokugura Dance Performance

After breakfast, we will travel to Usuki. We will begin our visit to Usuki at the Samurai District. Usuki's samurai district retains the flavor of an old castle town with their stone paved alleys lined by traditional houses. Next, we will visit the Usuki stone buddhas. These are statues of Buddha, carved into the rock cliffs. It is unknown who and why they were created, as well as when they were created. Later in the day, we will travel to Takachiho. After dinner, we will enjoy a demonstration of the local Yokugura dance. These dances are reenactments of the local mythology in which the Sun Goddess hides herself and brings darkness to the world. The other gods create a way to coax her out of the cave, bringing light back to the world. Breakfast and dinner at the hotel and lunch at a local restaurant are included.

**Travel: 4 Hours; Walking: Medium**

## Day 5 Takachiho - Takachiho Gorge, Amano Iwate Shrine; Miyazaki - Aoshima

In the morning, we will visit the Takachiho Gorge and Amano Iwato Shrine. The Takachiho Gorge is a narrow chasm cut through the rock by the Gokase River. The sheer cliffs lining the gorge are made of volcanic basalt columns. Halfway along the gorge is the 55-foot high Minainotaki waterfall cascading down to the river below. There are two ways to enjoy the gorge and the waterfall. The

first perspective is from a paved path that follows the edge of the gorge. The cave where Amaterasu hid herself is on the grounds of the Amano Iwato Shrine. However, it is too sacred to be seen. We can, instead, visit the cave where the other gods met to plan how to coax her out of her hiding place. After lunch, we will travel to the city of Miyazaki. With one of the warmest climates on the main islands of Japan, resorts, beaches and sports facilities, Miyazaki used to be the top honeymoon spot and a popular destination with domestic travelers until the 1980s. Here, we will visit the island of Aoshima. Aoshima Island is a small, beautiful island just off of the coast of the resort beaches south of Miyazaki City. Aoshima is connected to the mainland by a bridge and is ringed by white beaches surrounding a subtropical jungle at the island's center. It is a 1.5 kilometer walk around Aoshima's beaches with a number of canvas stands selling souvenirs along the way. At the center of the island is Aoshima Jinja, a colorful shrine set back in the jungle that is said to bring luck to married couples. We will overnight in Miyazaki. Breakfast and dinner at the hotel are included.

**Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Heavy**

## Day 6 Udo Shrine, Kirishima Shrine, Kirishima Onsen

After breakfast, we will first visit Udo Shrine, located on the Nichinan Coast south of Miyazaki City. The shrine is dedicated to Yamasachihiko, the father of Emperor Jimmu, the mythical first emperor of Japan. This brightly painted shrine is set in a cave on the side of a cliff overlooking the ocean. Next, we will travel to Kirishima Shrine. It was in this area that the god Ninigi no Mikoto, grandson of the sun goddess Amaterasu, is said to have descended from heaven to rule over the earth. Ninigi no Mikoto landed on nearby Mt. Takachiho-no-mine bringing with him the three imperial regalia: the sword, the mirror and the gem. He eventually married a local princess, becoming mortal in the process, and established the lineage of Japanese emperors. We will then travel to Kirishima Onsen, where we will be staying overnight. Kirishima Onsen lies on the lower slopes of the Kirishima Mountains with a distant view over Kagoshima Bay and Sakurajima. It is one of Japan's leading hot spring resorts with high quality, sulfuric hot spring waters. Breakfast at the hotel and dinner at the ryokan included.

**Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Medium**

## Day 7 Sakurajima, Kagoshima

After breakfast, we will travel to Sakurajima. Sakurajima is one of Japan's most active volcanoes and the symbol of Kagoshima. The volcano smokes constantly, and minor eruptions often take place multiple times per day. Located in the middle of Kagoshima Bay, Sakurajima is the area's most prominent geographic feature. While on the island, we will visit a couple of observation spots where you will get up-close view of the volcano. We will also walk along an ocean-side trail winding through the lava fields from the volcano. We will take the ferry to Kagoshima where we will be staying overnight. Breakfast at the hotel included.

**Travel: 2 1/2 Hours; Walking: Heavy**

## Day 8 Kagoshima - Shiroyama, Senganen Garden

We will start the day at Shiroyama. With an elevation of 107 meters, Shirohama formerly served as the site of a castle fortification, which led to its name. Shiroyama literally means "castle mountain" in Japanese. The castle's former grounds at the base of the mountain now serve as the site of the Reimeikan Museum. The park is most famous for its Shiroyama Observatory with spectacular views over downtown Kagoshima, Kagoshima Bay and Sakurajima.Nes, we will visit Senganen. Senganen Garden, is a Japanese-style landscape garden along the coast north of downtown Kagoshima. One of the garden's most striking features is its use of Sakurajima and Kagoshima Bay as borrowed scenery. Senganen was constructed in 1658 by the local Shimazu Clan, one of the

most powerful feudal clans during the Edo Period (1603-1868). The Shimazu ruled the Satsuma domain (present day Kagoshima) for almost 700 years until the end of the feudal age in 1868. They continued to be influential into the modern era as some of the earliest adopters of Western technology. Breakfast at the hotel, lunch and dinner at a local restaurant.

**Travel: 1 Hour; Walking: Heavy**

## Day 9 Asosan, Kumamoto

After breakfast, we will travel to Aso-san. Mount Aso is an active volcano in the center of Kyushu which most recently erupted in 2021 and 2016. Aso's ancient caldera ranks among the world's largest, with a diameter of up to 25 kilometers and a circumference of over 100 kilometers. In the center of the caldera stand the mountain's active volcanic peaks. Breakfast at the hotel, and lunch at a local restaurant.

**Travel: 4 1/2 Hours; Walking: Medium**

PLEASE NOTE: the crater area is often partially and sometimes completely closed off to visitors due to poisonous volcanic gases, bad weather or the risk of volcanic activity. So, make sure to check the volcano's current state before traveling there. Even when the area around the summit is open, gases can be intense, and people with respiratory problems should refrain from approaching the crater. If the crater is inaccessible, we will visit the Volcano Museum and Aso Shrine.

## Day 10 Kumamoto - Kumamoto Castle, Suizenji Garden

Today, we will be visiting the city of Kumamoto. The capital of Kumamoto Prefecture, Kumamoto is a major city on Kyushu's west coast with a population of around 750,000. The city is most famous for its castle, which is one of Japan's largest and most complete. The city was hit by strong earthquakes in 2016. We will be starting at Kumamoto Castle. Kumamoto Castle is one of the most impressive castles in Japan. With large castle grounds and a variety of buildings, Kumamoto Castle offers its visitors one of the most complete castle experiences in Japan. However, the castle grounds suffered widespread damage in the earthquakes of April 2016, and repair works will continue for many years. Only a few of Kumamoto Castle's structures have survived the post-feudal era intact. The castle keep and most other buildings are modern reconstructions, but the reconstructions are mostly of a high quality. Next we will visit Suizenji Garden. Suizenji Garden is a spacious, Japanese style landscape garden in Kumamoto, best enjoyed by strolling along a circular path. It was built by the ruling local lords, the Hosokawa family, in the 17th century. The garden reproduces the 53 post stations of the Tokaido, the important road, which connected Edo (today's Tokyo) with Kyoto during the Edo Period (1603 – 1868), in miniature form, including a small representation of Mount Fuji.Breakfast at the hotel is included.

**Travel: 1 Hour; Walking: Heavy**

## Day 11 Unzen-san and Unzen Ropewary

We will take the ferry to Shimabara Peninsula. Here we will visit Mt Unzen. But first we will visit the Shimabara Castle. Shimabara Castle, is a white walled castle built during the early Edo Period as the seat of the local feudal lord. The castle was the extravagant centerpiece of the feudal domain and was far larger than those found in domains of similar status. The heavy taxation that was imposed to pay for its construction, together with the religious persecution of local Christians, were major factors that led up to the Shimabara Rebellion (1637-1638). Next, we will travel to Mount Unzen. Mount Unzenis an active volcano at the center of the Shimabara Peninsula, which has erupted several times in the last few hundred years with deadly results. The most recent eruption occurred from 1990-1995 when pyroclastic flows (superheated volcanic gases) and mudslides raced down the mountain. We will take a ropeway with views all the way to Kumamoto on a clear day. We will finish the day by traveling to Unzen Onsen. Breakfast at the hotel and

dinner at the ryokan is included.

**Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Heavy**

### Day 12 Unzen Onsen and Nagasaki

After breakfast, we will tour Unznen Onsen. Unzen Onsen is a hot spring resort town near the peak of Mount Unzen. Not too far from Nagasaki, the area originally developed as a temple town that in its prime was large enough to be compared to Koyasan. In the Meiji Period, the town became one of Japan's first tourist resorts popular among foreigners, and a hint of Western influence can still be seen about town. The resort is surrounded on several sides by hot spring fields. Also known as hells (jigoku), these barren rocky areas are littered with billowing steam vents and gushing hot springs from which milky, acidic and sulfurous water bubbles straight up out of the ground. The hells were once used to execute rebels after the failed Shimabara Rebellion. In the afternoon, we will travel to Nagasaki. Before checking into the hotel, we will visit Dejima. Dejima was a man-made island in the port of Nagasaki, constructed in 1636 to segregate Portuguese residents from the Japanese population and control their missionary activities. A few years later, the Portuguese were expelled from Japan, and the Dutch Trading Station, formerly located in Hirado, was moved to Dejima. The Dutch were restricted to Dejima during Japan's two centuries of isolation as the only remaining Westerners allowed in the country. Breakfast at the ryokan and dinner at a local restaurant included.

**Travel: 1 1/2 Hours; Walking: Heavy**

### Day 13 Free Day in Nagasaki

Today is a free day in Nagasaki. Breakfast at the hotel is included.

**Travel: N/A; Walking: TBD**

### Day 14 Travel to Osaka

Today we will return to Osaka. In the evening, we will enjoy an okonomiyaki dinner at a local restaurant. Breakfast at the hotel and dinner at a local restaurant.

**Travel: 5 Hours; Walking: Light**

### Day 15 Return Home

You will take a train to Osaka's Kansai Airport to fly home. If you would prefer to fly out of Tokyo, please let us know. Breakfast at the hotel included.

**Travel: 1 Hour; Walking: Light**

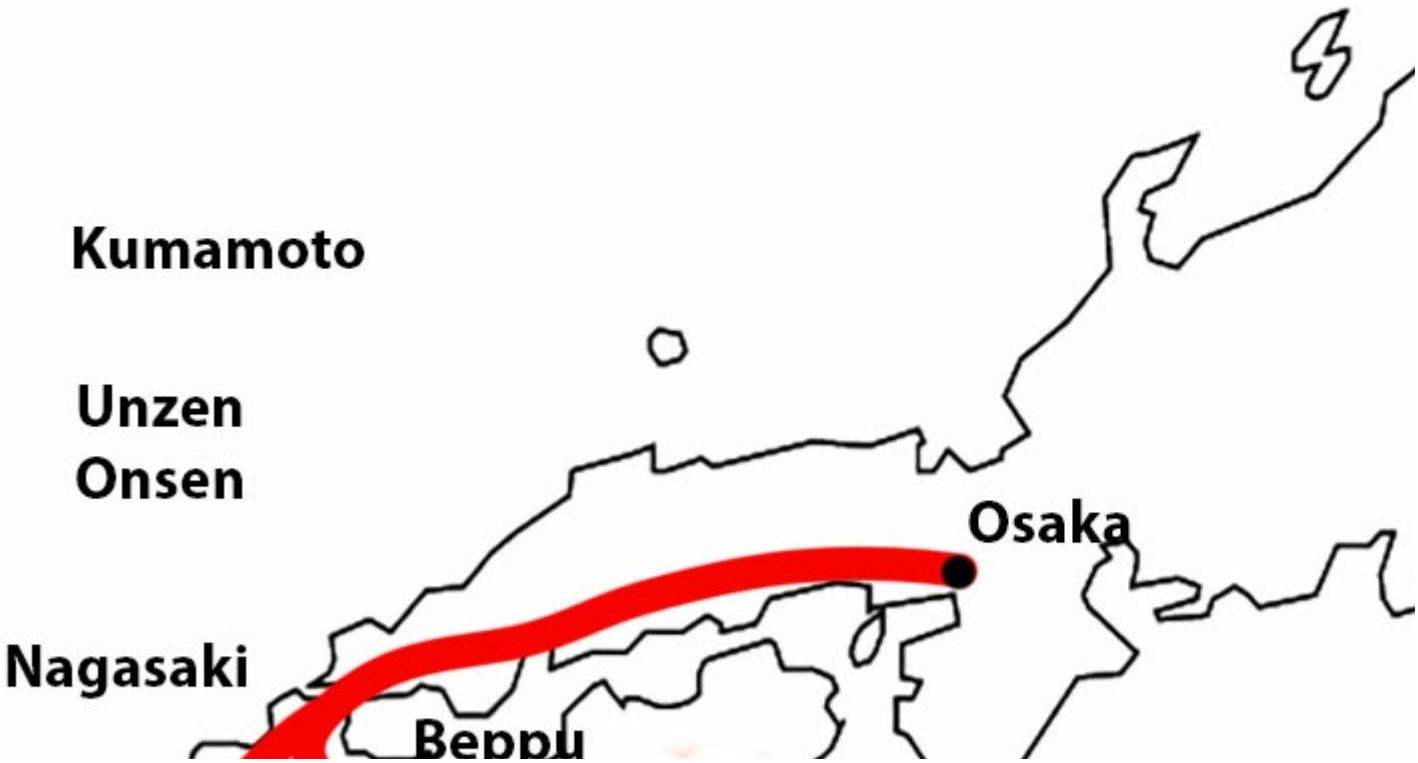
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## 🕮Dates and Prices

| Dates | Price (land only) / Single Supplement (All prices are per Person) | Status |
|---|---|---|

| Dates | Price (land only) / Single Supplement (All prices are per Person) | Status |
|---|---|---|
| May 2, 2027 - May 16, 2027 | $7,118.33/ $782.80 | Available |
| Oct 31, 2027 - Nov 14, 2027 | $7,118.33/ $782.80 | Available |

## 🗺Map






# Inclusions

Local, licensed, English-speaking, Japanese guides
**Travel insurance from Travel Guard**, one of the world's largest travel insurance providers, will be provided to everyone from the United States. All others will receive a $100 per person credit and will be responsible for obtaining their own travel insurance in their own home country. (The insurance provided by Samurai Tours will cover the land portion only. Insurance to cover airfare and other additional expenses is the tour member's responsibility.)

Exact coverage dependent on state

For residents of the following states please click here for your available plan. FL, KS, MN, MO, MT, NY, and WA
For all other states and the District of Columbia click here
**Travel Insurance Surcharge:** Depending on your age at the time the travel insurance is purchased, you may be subject to the following surcharge for your travel insurance. Travel insurance surcharges will be due at the same time as your tour deposits. (the surcharge itself is not insured)

Up to 69 – $0
70-74 – $175
75-79 – $375
80-84 – $700
85+ – $1,175
**Travel Insurance Opt-Out:** If you would prefer to opt out of the travel insurance, please note this at the time of registration. You will receive a $100 credit per person, which will be reflected on your invoice. In the event that you would need to cancel your tour, cancellation penalties may apply. See the Terms and Conditions page for the Cancellation Fees Schedule.

Meeting service at Osaka's Kansai Airport, Osaka's Itami Airport, or Shin Osaka station and

transfer to the hotel in Osaka

The meeting service will meet you at the airport and provide you a transfer to the hotel in Osaka

Sending service to the Shin Osaka train station.

The sending service will escort you to the Shin Osaka train station and make sure you board the correct train. The sending service will not accompany you to the airport.
Reserved seat tickets on the train to Osaka's Kansai Airport (If you will be returning home from one of the Tokyo airports, please contact us for details about returning to Tokyo.)

*For those requiring meeting or sending services on other than the scheduled arrival/departure dates, there will be a $100 fee for the meeting service from the airport into Tokyo or the sending service to the Kyoto train station.)*

Lodging for 14 nights in Japanese-style hotels or ryokans and western style hotels

Meals

Japanese-style or Western-style breakfast every morning (Please Note: Some ryokans offer Japanese breakfasts only.)
3 Japanese-style or western style lunches
8 Japanese-style or Western-style dinners

The appropriate amount of free time to allow you to explore and discover your own personal Japan.
All transportation costs when traveling with the group. (Transportation costs during scheduled free times are the tour member's responsibility.)
Admission fees to the destinations and activities (Itinerary specifics subject to change)
Electronic version of itinerary
Sayonara dinner at the end of the tour
Baggage transfer from Osaka to Takachoho (one bag only)
Baggage transfer from Kagoshima to Unzen Onsen (one bag only)
Baggage transfer from Unzen Onsen to Osaka (one bag only)

Each tour member receives an electronic copy of our tour handbook. This handbook is full of tips and suggestions taken from our Japan travel experiences that allow you to better plan and prepare for your trip, and therefore enjoy your trip even more. The tips and suggestions included cover everything from how to save while exchanging money, what to pack, some basic Japanese-language tips, general etiquette do's-and-don'ts, ryokan customs, etc.

## Exclusions

International airfare is NOT included.
A printed itinerary is not included
Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks and desserts are NOT included

# Add-On Tours

Our tours and tour itineraries are the best, but as the saying goes, “you can’t make everyone happy all of the time”. There may a specific destination or a specific experience you may want to include in your visit to Japan that may not be included your tour. Choose from our Add On tours to include your interests and make your Japan tour even better.

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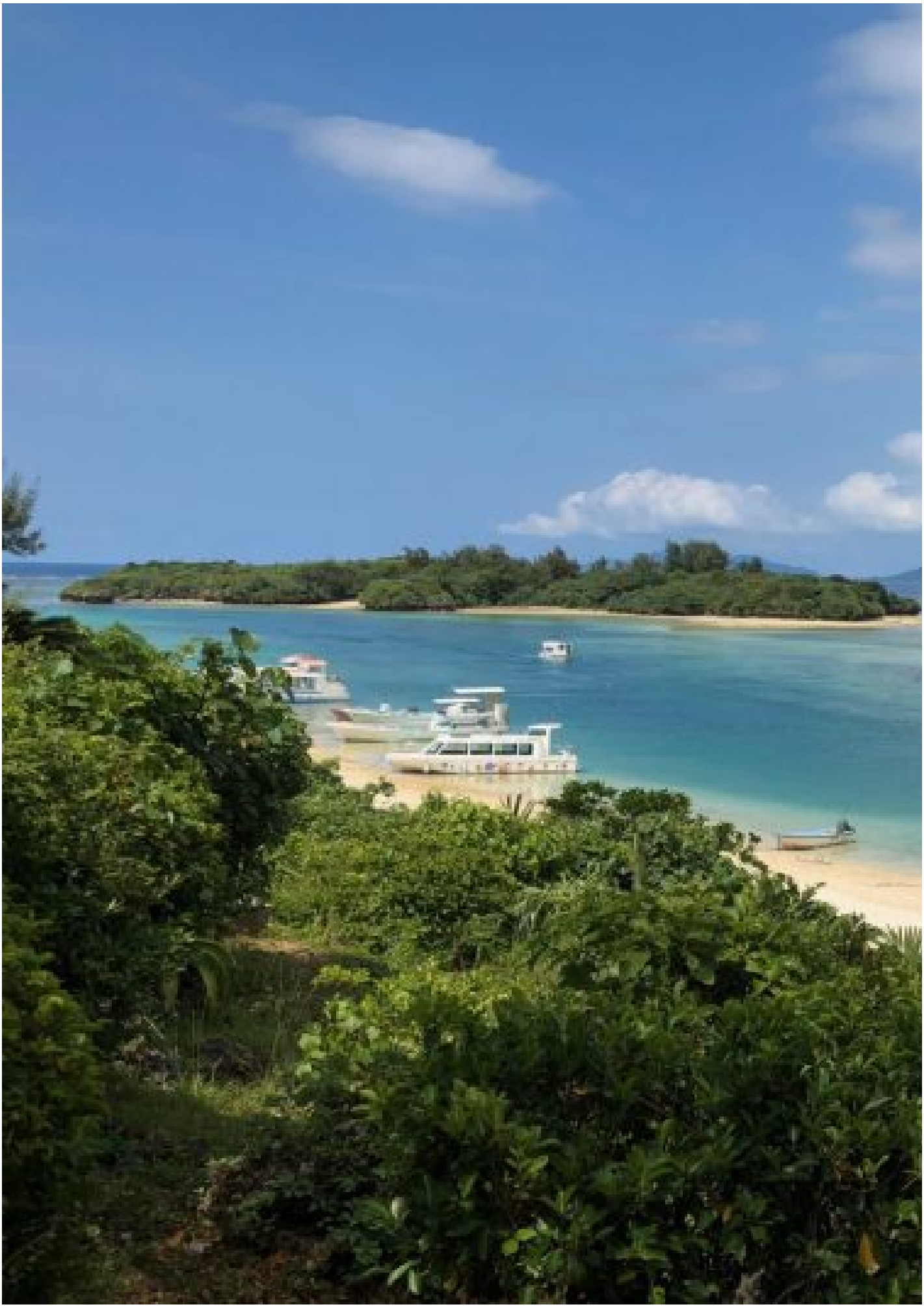


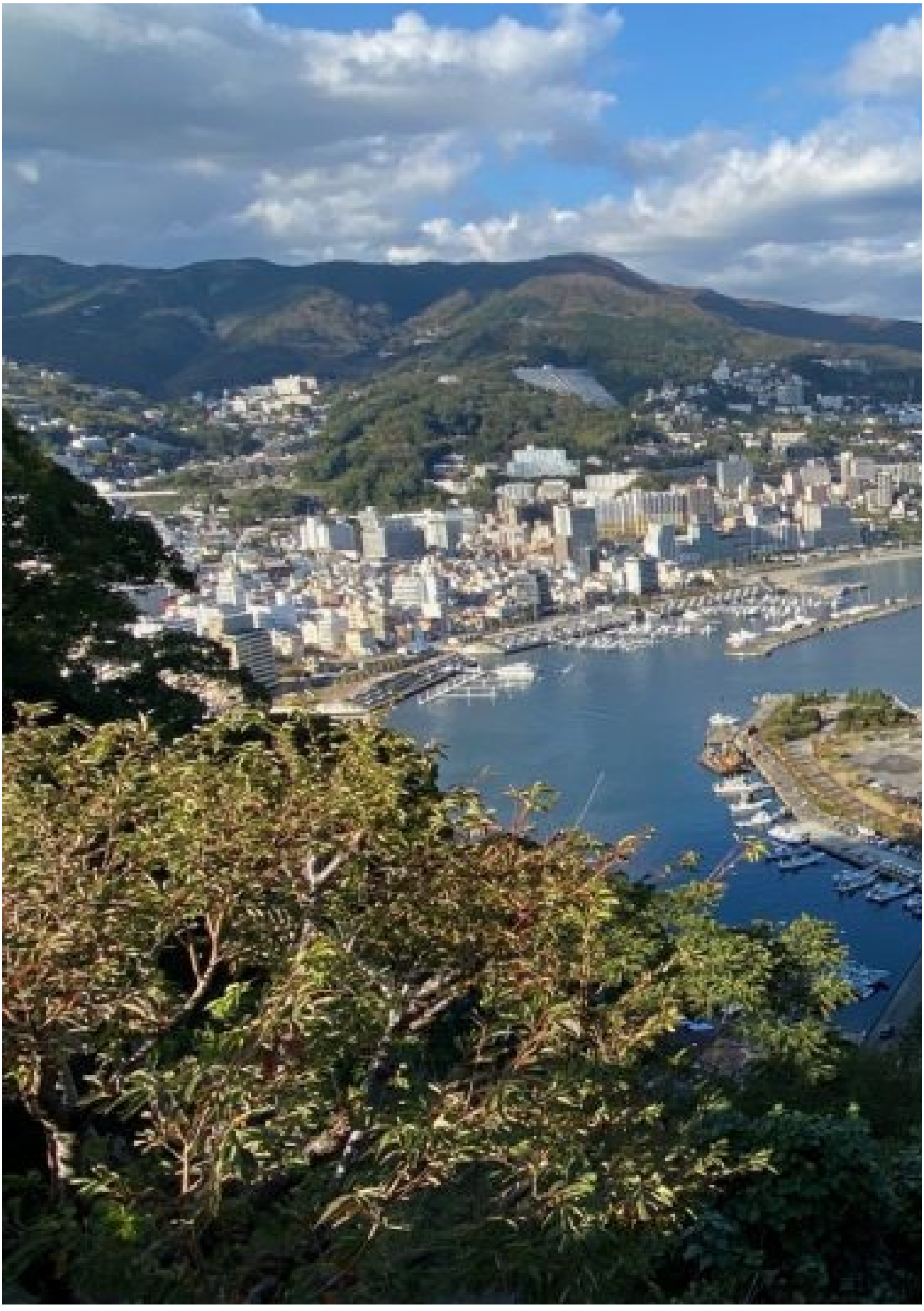







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