

Short trip ideas for after meetings and events

Beyond Tokyo



Fukushima



About Tokyo
<https://abouttokyo.jp/>

Tokyo Tokyo Old meets New



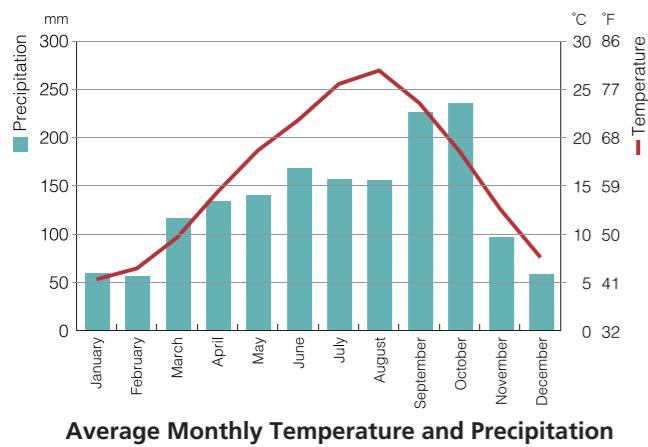
Welcome to Tokyo!

Tokyo, one of the world's largest cities, offers a uniquely eclectic mix of traditional and contemporary attractions. Please enjoy Tokyo and beyond during your stay for a conference, meeting or business.

Tokyo General Information

1. Facts

■ Climate and clothing



Spring (March-May)

There may be days in March when you need a heavy jacket, but the cold eases considerably in April and by May it can be warm enough for short sleeves during the day. Peak cherry blossom season runs from late March through early April.

Summer (June-August)

The rainy season lasts from late June through around mid-July, with frequent rain and high humidity. After the rains, July and August usher in a steady stream of midsummer heat with temperatures over 30°C, including especially hot and humid days when the temperature rises above 35°C.

Autumn (September-November)

The temperature can rise over 30°C even in September, but both temperature and humidity begin to fall gradually. The peak season for viewing fall foliage starts in mid November. It is recommended to bring a heavy jacket when you come to Tokyo in November.

Winter (December-February)

Constant low temperatures make a jacket and coat indispensable, and it occasionally snows even in the city center.

Japan Meteorological Agency
<http://www.jma.go.jp/en/yoho/319.html>

■ Money, tipping

Currency

Japan uses yen (Japanese: 円, symbol: ¥, code: JPY). Coins come in 1, 5, 10, 50, 100, and 500-yen denominations while bills come in 1,000; 2,000; 5,000; and 10,000-yen denominations. As of September 2025, the exchange rate is approx. 145 -150 yen to the US dollar and approx. 170 -175 yen to the Euro.

Credit cards

International credit cards such as American Express, Visa, Diners Club, and MasterCard can be used at most banks, hotels, inns, and stores. Although not accepted at as many locations as these cards, China UnionPay can also be used. However, some stores do not accept any credit cards, so it is a good idea to have some cash on hand.

Cash advances (ATM)

Roughly 32,000 Japan Post Bank ATMs located throughout Japan, as well as over 26,000 Seven Bank ATMs installed in 7-Eleven convenience stores, offer cash advances for credit cards issued overseas. Most 7-Eleven convenience stores are open 24/7. Logos displayed on or near the ATMs indicate which credit cards can be used.

Tipping

It is not necessary to tip for service in Japan at places such as restaurants, bars, taxis, airports and hotels. However, hotels and some restaurants indicate an additional service charge on their bills or menus, respectively.

■ Cashless payment

In accordance with government policy, cashless transactions are promoted in large stores, restaurants, and shopping malls and can be used in many independent stores.



■ Free Wi-Fi

From cafés to train stations to airports, an increasing number of locations in Tokyo offer high-speed Internet connection via free Wi-Fi. Wi-Fi logos are displayed where services are available.

TOKYO FREE Wi-Fi
Free Wi-Fi Guide <http://www.wifi-tokyo.jp/>



■ Electricity

Voltage in Japan is 100 V, while frequency varies by location: 50 Hz in eastern Japan including Tokyo and 60Hz in western Japan. A 2-flat-pin type socket is used.

■ Smoking

In Tokyo, smoking is prohibited indoors at restaurants, drinking establishments, accommodations and other facilities used by many people, and only permitted in dedicated smoking rooms inside buildings (effective from April 2020). Smoking is also prohibited outdoors – on the streets and in parks in some areas of Tokyo. Please smoke in designated areas only.

■ Language

Japanese is the official language of Japan and English is widely spoken in Tokyo. Information desks at various facilities are often staffed with people who can speak English.

■ Visa

Japan has a visa waiver agreement with 71 countries and regions, under which delegates can enter the country for a short-term stay simply with their valid passport. (as of April 8, 2024)

For more information, please visit the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan:

https://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/visa/short/novisa.html

2. Getting There & Exploring the City

■ Transportation / Airport

A well-developed transportation network allows easy and convenient movement in and around the city, so you can come and go almost anywhere just by trains, subways or buses.

Average Time to Key Destinations from Airports



Short Trip Ideas for after Meetings and Events: Fukushima



About Fukushima

Fukushima is the third biggest prefecture in Japan. The prefecture is located in Tohoku, which is the northern region of Japan's main island. Mountain ranges separate Fukushima into 3 areas: **Aizu** (historic area to the west), **Nakadori** (central transport hub of the prefecture) and **Hamadori** (eastern area overlooking the ocean).

Getting from Tokyo to Fukushima

- Tokyo Station ➔ Fukushima Station: **1 h 30 min** (via JR Tohoku Shinkansen)
- Tokyo Station ➔ Koriyama Station: **1 h 20 min** (via JR Tohoku Shinkansen)
- Tokyo Station ➔ Iwaki Station: **2 h 30 min** (via the JR Joban Line's Hitachi-Tokiwa Ltd. Express Service)

Short Trip Ideas



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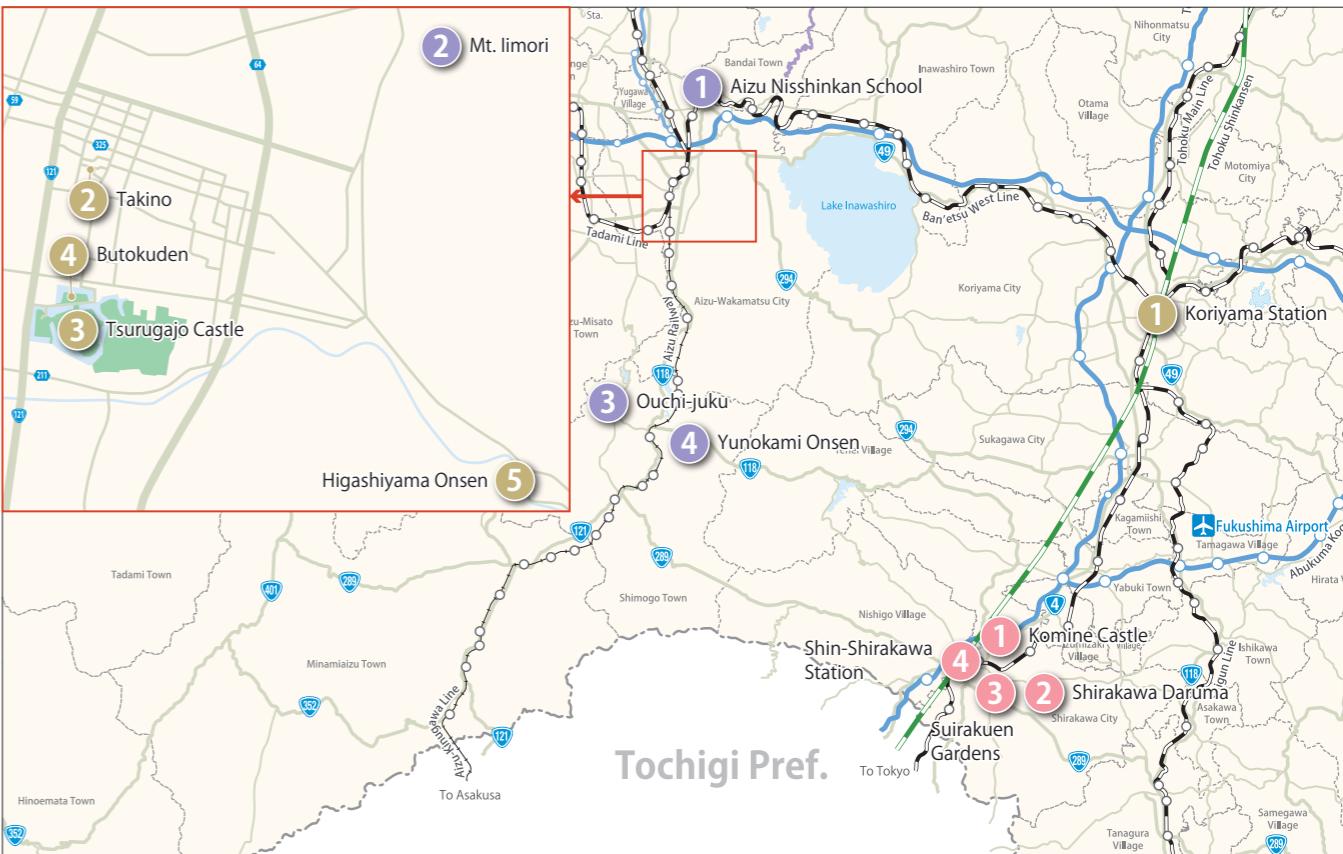


Hope Tourism
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Experience the Samurai Spirit

Did you know, the samurai defeat at the Battle of Aizu in Fukushima marked the end of the samurai era? Learn about Fukushima's history, try your hand at martial arts studied by samurai, and get a taste for life during the samurai era.

This itinerary is designed for groups traveling via charter bus. Those not traveling as part of a group should rent a car or use public transportation to follow this suggested itinerary. Renting a car in particular for the 3rd day of the tour is recommended.

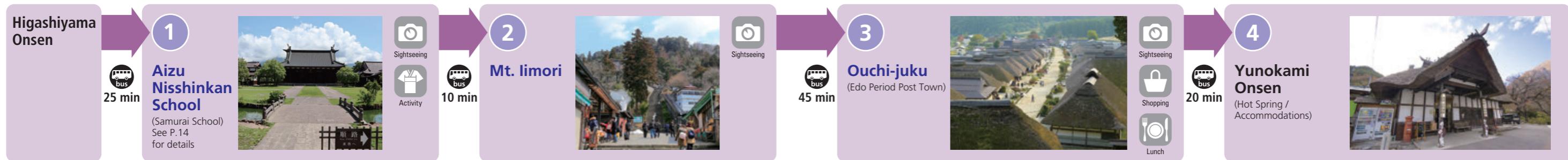


Suggested Itinerary

DAY 1



DAY 2



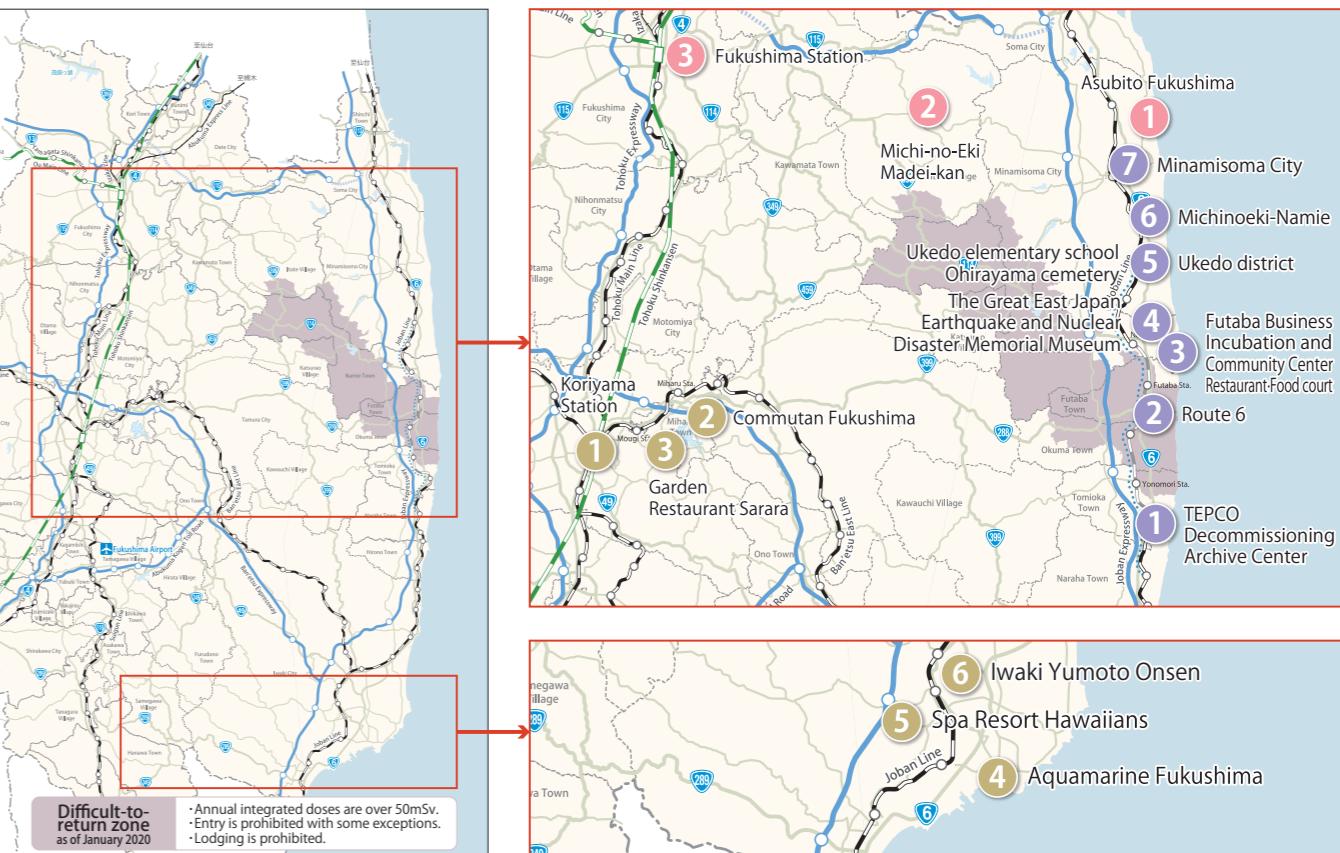
DAY 3



Hope Tourism in Fukushima

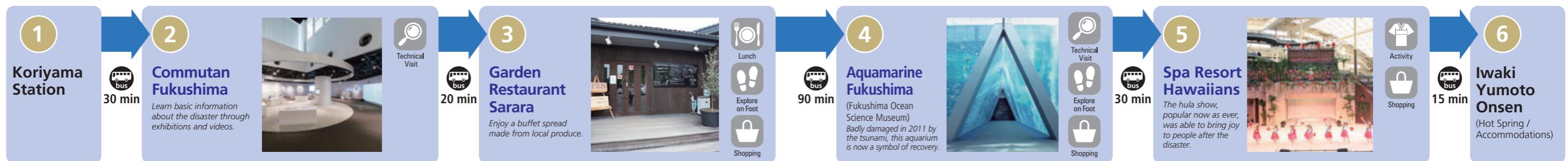
An in-depth study tour of Fukushima Prefecture – the only place in the world to have experienced an earthquake, tsunami, nuclear disaster, and the consequent reputational damage all at once. Learn about the reconstruction efforts to date, and the challenges that are yet to come (interpreting guide needed).

This itinerary is designed for groups traveling via charter bus. Those not traveling as part of a group should rent a car or use public transportation to follow this suggested itinerary.

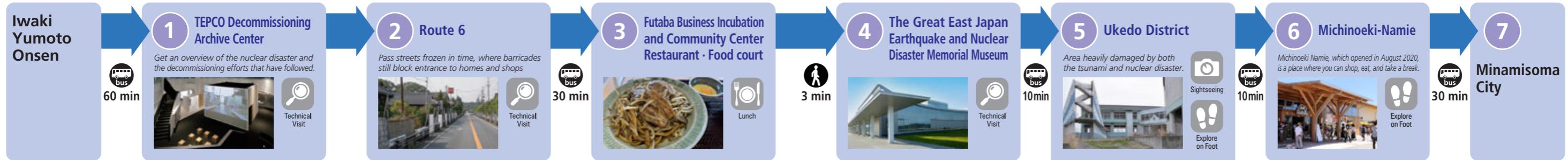


Suggested Itinerary

DAY 1



DAY 2



DAY 3

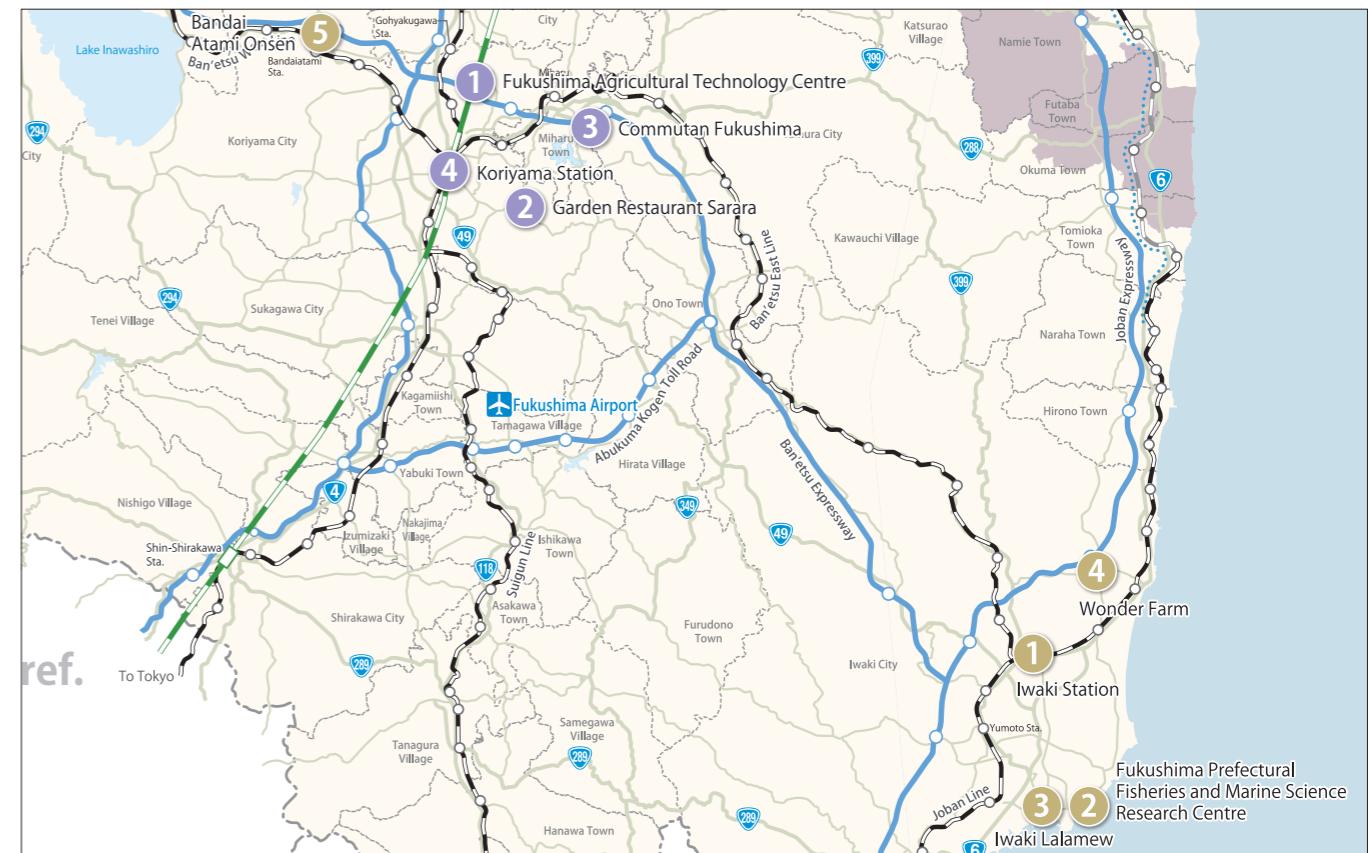


Food and Reconstruction

Learn about research and reconstruction efforts conducted by the departments of agriculture and fisheries, following the nuclear disaster of March 2011. You can also learn about the various food-related initiatives employed by Fukushima Prefecture to guarantee the safety of locally-produced food (interpreting guide needed).

This itinerary is designed for groups traveling via charter bus. Those not traveling as part of a group should rent a car to follow this suggested itinerary. Please note that Fukushima Prefectural Fisheries and Marine Science Research Centre and Fukushima Agricultural Technology Centre must be visited as part of a group tour.

Suggested Itinerary



DAY 1



DAY 2



Interviews with people in Fukushima

Aizu's Samurai Spirit

During the Edo Period, the Tokugawa shogunate ruled Japan from Edo, the former Tokyo. In Fukushima lived the Aizu Clan, who were trusted deeply by the Tokugawa rulers. During the Boshin Civil War 150 years ago, the Aizu samurai fought loyally for the Tokugawa Shogunate.



■ Aizu & the samurai code

Were they simply fighting out of obligation towards Tokugawa? Some say their resilience came from samurai spirit.

Takahiro Iwasawa from Nisshinkan School talks about Aizu's samurai spirit. For Iwasawa, the samurai spirit of the Aizu people during the Boshin War is rooted in the education received at schools like Nisshinkan.

"Nisshinkan was founded to enable the Aizu Clan to flourish, through raising future generations of samurai. A broad-ranging curriculum spanning literary and military study enabled Nisshinkan to produce countless talented individuals, leading to its reputation as the best clan school in Japan."

We often think of samurai solely as warriors, but, as Iwasawa explains, "Samurai did fight. But they also set examples for those around them about how to behave towards others."

The Ju no Okite Code was integral to Aizu Clan education. It consists of 7 promises, and 1 proverb: "Naranu koto ha naranu mono desu" ("what is wrong, must not be done"). This proverb sheds light on the determination of samurai during the Boshin War. Aside from academic subjects, students studied combat-related activities, including horsemanship, gunmanship, and martial arts like kendo and kyudo (Japanese archery).

"Martial arts gave students a deep understanding of etiquette and courtesy, which is essential to samurai culture. Practice always begins and finishes with a bow, to show gratitude for the opportunity to practice."

■ Experience real samurai history

Iwasawa teaches visitors the basics of kyudo at Nisshinkan, and asks that visitors start and finish the experience with a bow.



"The kyudo experience isn't just shooting arrows; it's trying what samurai actually studied."

Nisshinkan visitors can be sure their Japanese culture experiences are authentic: "Whether it's kyudo, tea ceremony, or zazen meditation, visitors can have fun while being taught by experienced teachers."

While greatly respected, samurai education had a darker side. During the Boshin War, a group of teenage samurai belonging to a brigade called the Byakkotai tragically took their own lives on Mt. Iimori.

Iwasawa explains, "These 19 boys, who chose their fate upon seeing their castle in flames, were students at Nisshinkan."

This event, and the sense of honor that led to it, was tragic. However, Iwasawa believes we have much to learn from certain aspects of samurai spirit, even today.

■ Passing on the legacy

"Samurai spirit teaches us how to live lives full of consideration for others, that positively influence those around us."

In fact, a modified version of the Ju no Okite Code is taught to current-day Aizu students. As Iwasawa puts it, "The samurai spirit of thoughtfulness and integrity lives on in new generations."

Nisshinkan, faithfully reconstructed in the 1980s, is the only remaining complete clan school facility in Japan.

It continues to be an important symbol for the Aizu people, and should not be missed during your trip. Experience the Aizu samurai spirit yourself at this incredible place.



Takahiro Iwasawa,
Nisshinkan School

Hope Tourism

March 11 2011 was the day of the Great East Japan Earthquake. Fukushima Prefecture is the only place in the world to experience an earthquake, tsunami, nuclear disaster, and subsequent reputational damage, all at the same time. Despite this, Fukushima Prefecture is full of people looking forward, holding onto hope, and fighting for a bright future, regardless of the hardships they face.



■ What is Hope Tourism?

Hope Tourism is a project started in Fukushima Prefecture, which runs educational trips allowing participants to reflect on learning from the disaster and overcoming challenges in the face of adversity. This is achieved through its participants seeing the current state of Fukushima with their own eyes, and meeting people working tirelessly for a bright future.

William McMichael of Fukushima University, who is involved in the project and in training interpreting guides, spoke to us about Hope Tourism.

"The year after the disaster, I started inviting students from abroad to Fukushima University as part of a fieldwork program (Fukushima Ambassador Program). Students would visit various areas in the prefecture and interact with local people.

Program participants always return home as Fukushima fans. This is true of Hope Tourism participants too. Ignorance breeds misunderstanding, but knowledge allows understanding and connection."

■ The 3 pillars of Hope Tourism

Hope Tourism has 3 main pillars: "Seeing," "Listening," and "Reflection."

"Scenes of broken buildings, streets abandoned during evacuation orders, and piles of huge, black bags leave deep impressions on visitors. But seeing these shocking aspects of Fukushima allows visitors to fully understand and reflect on the strength of its people when listening to their stories."

The nuclear disaster has led to prolonged reconstruction work in Fukushima. Some areas have remained unchanged since March 11 2011, whereas confident steps towards reconstruction are being taken in many other areas.

Tour participants can see firsthand the real situation in Fukushima, something not always accurately conveyed on television or online.

"The most important thing is talking to local people; listening to their stories and learning about what motivates them. Just visiting these areas alone doesn't afford you the ability to uncover the stories that live here."

This act of connecting visitors with people involved in local reconstruction efforts is at the heart of Hope Tourism.

McMichael continues, "I think 'Expressing & Connecting' can be added as the 4th pillar of Hope Tourism – a pillar of hope." Participants discover hope in the places they visit, and, in turn, local people feel hope through their interactions with participants.

■ Participating in a Hope Tourism tour

Hope Tourism has organized school trips, staff training tours, area observation tours, and more, to fit the needs of participants. "Science and Engineering, Radiology, Psychology, Sociology... no matter your academic background, there is much to learn from the people of Fukushima Prefecture."

Lastly, McMichael smiles and says, "Fukushima Prefecture is home to the story of the Akabeko; a cow that brings good fortune in times of need. When tour participants come and see Fukushima with their own eyes, learn from local people, and share what they learn with those close to them, they will become a beacon of hope for the people of Fukushima, like the story of the Akabeko cow."



Prof. William McMichael,
Fukushima University



*Please note, it is necessary to book appointments with local guest speakers in advance.

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All information in this booklet is as of August 2025 unless otherwise stated.