

TravelUn in conjunction with The Hidden Japan presents

JAPAN'S UNDISCOVERED NORTHERN TREASURES

Autumn Leaves Private Escorted Tour
13 days | Departing 28th October 2023
Priced from AUD\$8,699^ pp twin share
Maximum Tour Size: 8

Single Supplement from AUD \$1,099



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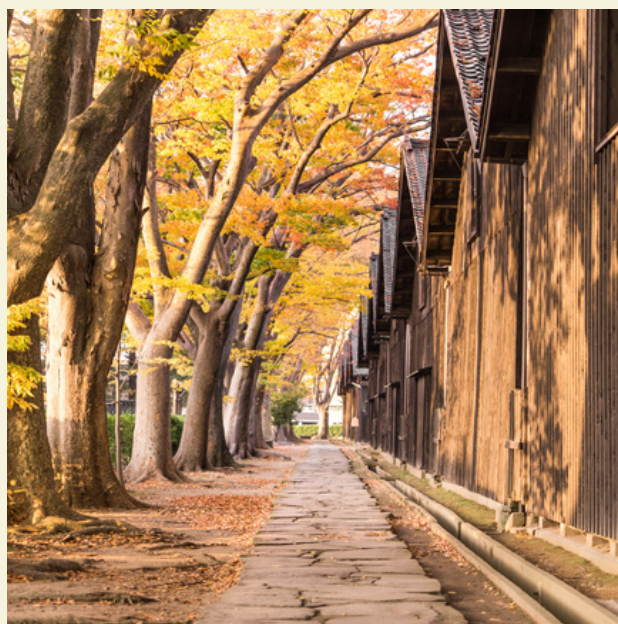
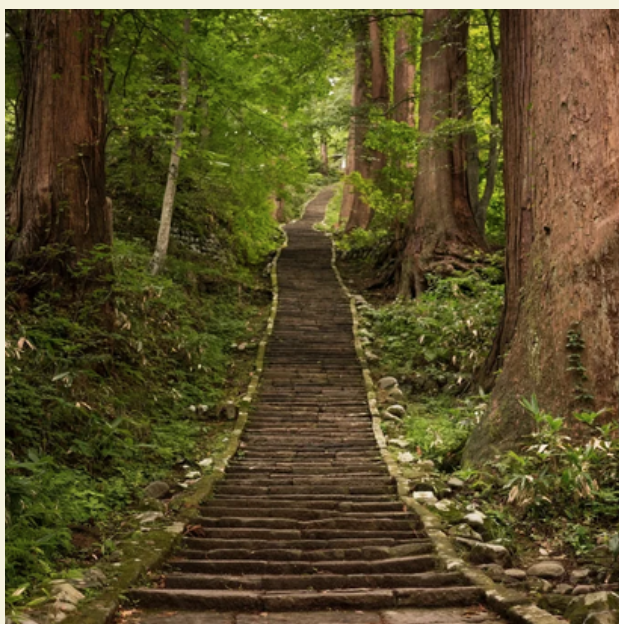
DISCOVER JAPAN'S TOHOKU REGION IN AUTUMN 2023

13 day private escorted tour

Departing 28 October 2023, from AUD\$8,699[^]pp twin share

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Surrounded by the pristine mountains of North-eastern Japan, and another world away from the bustling metropolis of Tokyo, is the captivating region of Japan known as Tohoku. Somewhat of a “hidden gem” and sometimes overlooked by travellers, this untouched region in the north of Japan offers dramatic autumnal landscapes, ancient traditions, unique arts and culture, and delicious cuisine. Join Kerry Dickson, Owner Operator of TravelUn, on this private escorted tour into the heart of Tohoku where you will enjoy diverse experiences such as learning the ancient arts of the samurai from a Japanese sword master, hiking the spiritual Mt. Haguro in the sacred Dewa Sanzan mountains, working alongside a master craftsperson in one of Japan's major centres of craftsmanship, and spending the night in a traditional farmer's home in the rural countryside which has been recognized as Japan's first UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy. This tour is simply perfect for those truly seeking off-the-beaten-path travel, culturally-rich experiences and a moderately active adventure for their next journey to Japan.



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DISCOVER JAPAN'S TOHOKU REGION IN AUTUMN 2023



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TravelUn Private Escorted Tour Exclusives

You will enjoy exclusive access to special moments not available to the ordinary traveller with our maximum group size of 8 travellers and our unique and unforgettable cultural experiences in conjunction with The Hidden Japan

- Venture into offbeat parts of Tokyo by bike and explore the twisting backstreets, riverside bike paths and bustling activity of Tokyo's west side.
- Tour Matsushima Bay, recognized as one of the iconic Three Views of Japan thanks to its hundreds small pine-clad islets and famous Zen temples.
- Learn traditional Japanese "laido" sword art from an laido master who is a custodian of this 450-year-old art tradition.
- Stay at a traditional Japanese "ryokan" inn, where you will have the opportunity to soak in a hot spring and enjoy the finest local cuisine.
- Explore the ancient cedar forests and sacred shrines of Mt. Haguro, which is part of the "Dewa Sanzan" trinity of three holy mountains in Northern Japan.
- Experience the rural farm life of Japan through a homestay experience in Tsuruoka, Japan's only UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy.
- Visit a major craft centre in the Japan where we are invited into the factories of famous producers of metalwork and copperware and see the artisans at work.

Package Inclusions



Daily breakfast, 8 lunches, 8 dinners



12 nights accommodation in 3* hotels, ryokan and farmstay (some with shared facilities)



Airport meet and greet service in Tokyo and shared transfer to hotel



All transportation including bullet train rides and local transfers

Activity Level

Easy-----Moderate-----Active-----Advanced



DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

Day 1 Tokyo



© TCVB

Welcome to Tokyo, the world's largest metropolis and bustling economic and cultural hub of Japan. Upon arrival in Tokyo, you will be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel by shared shuttle service, then free to spend the rest of your day at your leisure. Depending on your arrival time, you may have free time to explore some of Tokyo's exciting districts and neighbourhoods and discover the endless chances for fine dining, entertainment and nightlife at every turn.

This morning, we join our local Tokyo resident and explore one of Tokyo's lesser known neighbourhoods by "mamachari" cruiser style bicycle. With its undiscovered moments around every corner, this eclectic part of Tokyo is away from the tourist hotspots and ideal for exploring the city like a local: on two wheels. Our private group tour takes you on a captivating local jaunt through the twisting backstreets and riverside paths, and we will enjoy a 'salaryman' style lunch from a popular neighbourhood restaurant. You will have the afternoon to explore Tokyo at your leisure, before joining our group in the evening for an exquisite welcome group dinner of the finest Japanese cuisine.

Day 2 Tokyo



© DIG Tours Tokyo

Day 3 Sendai



© The Hidden Japan

It's time to head north and today we take the Shinkansen "bullet train" to Sendai, the largest city of Tohoku. Home to a rich samurai history, rugged scenery, fabulous cuisine and local produce, Sendai is a treasure trove of unique experiences. Take the afternoon to independently explore Sendai at your leisure, participating in a local craft or cultural experience if you like, such as kokeshi doll painting or kamaboko grilling. In the evening, we will feast on a multi-course kaiseki dinner at the Historic Shokeikaku Villa, an impressive former residence of one of Sendai's most famous samurai lords.



DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

Just north of Sendai lies Matsushima Bay, recognized as one of the iconic Three Views of Japan thanks to its hundreds of pine-clad islets. After a tour and tasting session at an internationally famous sake brewery near the bay's southern shore, hop on a sightseeing cruise to reach Matsushima's charming seaside historical district. Here, enjoy lunch and take in Matsushima's elegant temples. One such highlight is Zuigan-ji, a temple known for its stone meditation caves outside and gold-leaf adorned paintings within. Upon returning to Sendai you will have the rest of the evening to explore at leisure.

Day 4 Matsushima



© JNTO

Day 5 Murayama



© The Hidden Japan

Today is your opportunity to clear your mind and embody the way of the martial artist. We journey to Murayama City – the birthplace of traditional Japanese sword art "laido". Here we will learn the 450 year-old practice of traditional kata martial arts from a 21st-century samurai master. You will experience Zen in motion and have the opportunity through this training to become one with the universe - simultaneously nothing and everything. In the evening our group will experience traditional Japanese izakaya (drinking and eating establishments) frequented by locals. You'll be hosted by friendly bar owners who will offer an array of specialty local cuisine and locally brewed sake. Kanpai!

Today is a free day to further explore Yamagata. You may choose to experience the tranquility of Yamadera, one of the most scenic and celebrated temples in all of Tohoku that is built into a steep cliff face. Your ascent to the temple is made by climbing one thousand steps on a stone path lined with statues and lanterns. Or you may choose to visit the small artisan town of Hirashimizu, where you can experience making your own pottery and tasting the best local sake in Yamagata with the option to ship your pieces home when they are finished. You may also choose to take it slow today with some food workshops making tofu, sushi, or imoni wagyu stew with local chefs. The opportunities for exploration on this free day are endless.

Day 6 Yamagata



© The Hidden Japan



DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

Day 7 Ginzan Onsen



© The Hidden Japan

Today we travel back in time and head north to Ginzan Onsen which is a picture-perfect hot spring town famous for its wooden hot spring inns which are illuminated at night by gas street lamps. Of all the breathtaking sights of the deep north of Japan, it could be argued that this is one of the most beautiful. Our stay in Ginzan Onsen is spent at a traditional Japanese "ryokan" inn, where you will have the opportunity to soak in a hot spring and enjoy the finest local cuisine. You may enjoy a hike to the old silver mine in the forests and the option to dress into Japanese yukata robes to take photos along this town's traditional streets.

After our stay in the mountains, we will head towards the coastal region of Yamagata known as Shonai by cutting through the vast mountains of this region. Along the way we will transfer to a ferry station where we will glide down the Mogami River through a valley in splendid Fall colors if we are lucky, while enjoying traditional folk music in a river boat. Transfer to the port city of Sakata where we will enjoy a live traditional performance by geisha performers in a teahouse before enjoying the sights of Yamagata's scenic port city. Visit highlights like the Sanko Soko Museum, kasafuku doll displays, and Sakata's famous ramen.

Day 8 Shonai



© The Hidden Japan

Day 9 Mt. Haguro



© The Hidden Japan

It's time to take in the fresh mountain air with our expedition to Mt. Haguro, one of the three holy mountains of the Dewa Sanzan. Mt. Haguro is the start of a sacred pilgrimage known as the Journey of Rebirth – traveling through the present, past, and future. The ascent of Mount Haguro involves a stunning walk up 2446 stone steps, through a towering cedar forest, lined with temples and shrines. It's also home to the oldest five-storied Pagoda in all of Tohoku. Enjoy the silence and serenity of Dewa Sanzan and understand why it has drawn in pilgrims for centuries.



DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

Tsuruoka City has been recognized as Japan's first UNESCO Creative of Gastronomy, and today we will experience the rural life of Japan with our overnight farmstay. After checking in to the farmer's residence, you will have free time to explore the village around the farms before enjoying a beautifully arranged dinner featuring the farmer's home made cuisine. The courses vary throughout the year as they utilize the freshest ingredients from the region. The next morning a local guide will accompany you with the farmers as you see how the farmers harvest their crops, and you will join them to harvest some of your own by hand.

Day 10 Tsuruoka



© The Hidden Japan

Day 11 Niigata



© Edge of Niigata

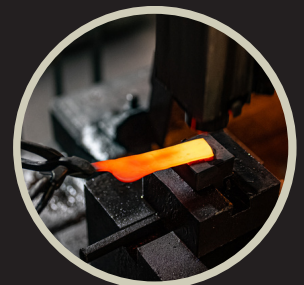
Heading south takes us to the major port city of Niigata, which is one of the largest cities along the coast of the Sea of Japan.

In the 1800s, Niigata thrived as a port city and ships from all over the world came here to trade. In the afternoon we will take a historical walking tour through the old port town area, where we will explore the unique harmony of Western and Japanese cultures that developed in Niigata in the 1800s.

Niigata is famous for the superb quality of its rice, so during your free time in the evening, you will be able to sample some of the freshest sushi and sashimi and finest sake in Japan.

Niigata is widely recognised as one of Japan's major art centres, and a region which is keeping traditions alive with its thriving and distinct artisan culture. The area has many famous producers who invite us into their factories, and today we will have the opportunity to see artisans at work, which may include copperwear producers or knife makers. We will also visit the Tsubamesanjo Regional Products Store which has an impressive collection of local products numbering over 10,000. In the evening, it's time to join your tour group for our final evening in Japan, as we enjoy our farewell dinner at one of Niigata's finest dining establishments.

Day 12 Niigata



© The Hidden Japan



DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

Day 13 Departure



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It's time to farewell Tohoku as we take the bullet train back to Tokyo and say "sayonara" to our tour group, before heading to the airport for your flight home. For those wishing to extend their time in Tohoku or explore other parts of Japan, we can arrange your additional independent touring throughout all of Japan including pilgrimage hiking routes, idyllic beach resorts, the famous art islands of Naoshima and Teshima, rustic Edo period towns, remote hot spring resorts, major urban centres, or other communities rich in history, culture, and fine arts.



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Booking Terms and Conditions

^Advertised price is per person, twin share, land only and excludes airfares and other personal expenses not included in the package price. Secure your booking today with 30% deposit, with final payment due 120 days prior to departure. Fees apply for payments made by credit card. Once you have paid a deposit, your booking is subject to cancellation / amendment fees.

We reserve the capacity to change the itinerary of a tour in response to events such as cancellation of scheduled transport services, changing political situations, weather conditions, natural disasters. Such decisions are made at the decision of TravelUn and our Travel Suppliers. We will endeavour to include all the features of the tour originally proposed, or similar alternatives. Your agreement to our booking conditions indicates that you accept the need to adapt itineraries when deemed necessary by TravelUn.

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