

## Cycling Colourful Kyushu Island

**8 Days/ 7 Nights**  
**Departure Dates:**

**2012**  
Nov 17 - Nov 24

**2013**  
April 6 - April 13  
Nov 16 - Nov 23

If these dates don't suit your travel schedule, please **contact us** to talk about operating a private tour or customizing a tour for you or your group.

### Prices

**US\$2,900 Tour**

**US\$165 Bike Hire**

### Single Supplement

A single room may be available locally on payment of a supplement but, as some of the Japanese-style hostels are quite small, this cannot be guaranteed.

### Route Map

Click on map to enlarge



A visit to south Japan's Kyushu Island is a pure indulgence for the senses, so come prepared to experience a rich history that dates back centuries and to soak up after a day of cycling in zenlike onsen spas; visit beautiful forests, mountains and sea coasts as well as futuristic architecture and transportation; sample delicious regional cuisine and meet warmhearted and candid Kyushuites.

Let the idiosyncrasies of Japan reveal themselves as our trip takes us from the city of Kumamoto to sultry Kagoshima. We'll cycle along coastal roads where we will pass tiny harbors and fantastic rock formations, terraced rice paddies and palm trees as well as ancient temples and shrines. After seeing the incredible blue green waters you might want to stop at a beach for a dip. We discover where those old Christians have been hiding on Amakusa island. In Izumi we flush down the hearty farmer's meal with shochu, southern Kyushu's typical sweet potato brew. Further south looms Mt Sakurajima volcano; at its foot lies



Kagoshima, only separated from the ash spewing giant by narrow Kinko Bay. Magnificent views on Mt Sakurajima colour our last days, interrupted by one last soak in the unique Furusato temple onsen and a scenic climb up to Ebino Highlands. We have timed the tours to try and catch the cherry blossoms in the spring and the colourful leaves in the fall.

**You can extend your visit to Kyushu with our 7-day Kyushu's Hot Springs and Volcanoes tour.**

## Trip Profile

The cycling around Kyushu is moderately challenging with a few climbs. We ride 370 km in six cycling days on quiet roads with amazing views. There is the possibility for 150 optional extra kms, but averagely fit cyclists will have no problems.

**Suitability:** This trip is suitable for anyone with a reasonable level of fitness. This trip is not too arduous, and so riders with less experience are more than welcome, although the fitter you are the more you will enjoy it.

**Biking Conditions:** This trip is 99% along tarmac roads in good condition and there is no technical riding. The trip is fully supported; an air-conditioned bus follows us for the entire journey, so exhausted riders can skip the tougher sections if they wish.

## Biking Difficulty



(out of five)

Good quality tarmac roads with some long days and hills. No technical experience required.



**Cycling Distance**  
370 – 520 kilometres

## Cycling Days

6

## Day to Day

**B= Breakfast L= Lunch D=Dinner**

### Day 1 - Arrive in Kumamoto/Aso

Arrive Kumamoto/Aso airport from Tokyo, Osaka, or Seoul, or Kumamoto train station from Tokyo and Osaka and transfer to the city of Kumamoto. If you arrive early enough, we suggest visiting Kumamoto castle, which dates back to 1467, and is considered one of Japan's top 3 castles (三名城 *Sanmeijō*), together with Osaka and Nagoya or Suizenji garden and visit the replica of Mount Fuji. We meet for dinner and overnight at a traditional Japanese inn where the owner is a dye artist. You have the option of making your own souvenir tenugui towel.

**Nakashimaya Hostel. D**

### Day 2 - Kumamoto - Hondo

Today we enjoy the tranquility of Japan's small islands. We ride to Amakusa, the former hideaway of persecuted Christians. In the early 17th century, when the then rulers began their crackdown on Christianity many Christian converts were thrown into the boiling Unzen Hell, forcing them to escape to Amakusa. Our own private highway across the spine of Kami-Amakusa takes us above the tiny shiny cars down below on the coastal highway along Ariake Sea. We take a bicycle bridge into the island capital Hondo in time for a hearty curry and a good night sleep in an authentic minshuku (Japanese bed and breakfast).

**Shione Inn. Ride 90 km. B L D**

### Day 3 - Hondo - Kawaura

We cycle around the circumference of Amakusa island. We take our time to spot some bottlenose dolphins, pearl farms and a visit to Oue's fine church. Believe it or not, the best is yet to come: from Tomioka to Kawaura we ride on the Sunset Line scenic road. You'll find yourself wanting to slow down even more to take in the marvellous sights, but we try to make it to our overnight at Amuri Onsen before dusk.

**Amuri Onsen. Ride 86 km. B L D**

### Day 4 - Kawaura - Izumi

We start the ride catching a ferry enjoying the morning sun on deck as Amakusa shrinks and Nagashima grows bigger. This is rural Japan and is sweet potato territory. To kill those boring island evenings, the islanders have developed a unique art of making giant statues out of straw, cans or styrofoam. We cross the Kuranoseto Bridge and our wheels are back on Kyushu mainland soil. A stretch of coastal road leads us to Izumi, home of Siberian cranes.

**Farm stay. Ride 73 km. B L D**

### Day 5 - Izumi – Kagoshima

You take the high road and I take the low road, we'll be in Kagoshima together. Hills or ocean, the choice is yours. You can tell we're nearing Kagoshima by great billows of smoke rising above the hills, then we see its source, volcanic Sakurajima Isle just beyond the city. It no longer fazes the Kagoshimans who take this for everyday fact of life, shrug and say 'it's usually not this bad'. Called 'Naples of Orient', Kagoshima naturally has sister-city relation with its Italian

namesake. We take a break to visit Iso Garden, where we can imagine the Shimazu lords and their guests sitting by the crooked creek, composing haiku before the next cup of sake came floating by. On town we can explore Amami-no-sato which offers gorgeous silks and Honbo Shochu Brewery which serves up a potent local potato brew. For satsuma-ware pottery we go shopping in Yamakataya department store. A butashiru soup fills us up again before we are tucked in at Remm Hotel.

**Remm Hotel. Ride 69 or 113 km. B L D**

#### **Day 6 - Kagoshima – Mt Sakurajima**

Sakurajima is one of the most active volcanoes in Japan with major eruptions in 1914 and 1947. It still spews ash and often has a steam cloud near the top. Sakurajima used to be an island but lava flows of the 1914 eruption plugged the channel with lava, joining Sakurajima to the mainland of Kyushu. For us coming from Kagoshima, we need to take the ferry. The ferry line is one of the most efficient you'll ever see - the ride is only 14 minutes, but the restaurants on board can serve you a bowl of udon and you can eat it in that time. We bike up to Yunohira Observatory and, wisely, the top 2/3rds is off limits to tourists to try and keep the body count down when this volcano explodes again. From the Observatory, you can see what else was done to keep the body count down - there is a massive scale engineering project to direct future lava flows away from the center of civilization and out into the ocean. We save the real highlight of Sakurajima for the end. Furusato Onsen is a combination of shrine and ocean front onsen. The hotel provides heavy duty yukata robes and everyone is clothed while bathing. A large tree holds massive rocks in its roots and you can bathe completely underneath the bizarre canopy.

**Furusato Onsen. Ride 12 or 47 km. B L D**

#### **Day 7 - Mt Sakurajima – Kirishima**

Backed by towering Sakurajima we cycle north along Kinko Bay. For those kilometer addicted there is a last detour across the Ebino Kogen Highlands. The others watch the Shimoendake volcano spectacle from a safe distance and at sea level. We visit Kirishima-jingu, a Shinto shrine known for its red highlights which seem to permeate the place.

**Kirishima Onsen. Ride 40 or 111 km. B L D**

#### **Day 8 - Kirishima - Kagoshima airport**

After a last morning soak and breakfast it is time for goodbyes, not in the least to our saddles. Some travel on and go to the train station or the airport, while others may decide to stay a day longer to hike up Ebino Kogen Highlands. Sayonara!

**B**

## **Nuts & Bolts**

**Bikes:** Because some people can't imagine going on a trip without their own beloved bicycle, we do not provide them as part of this tour. However, you are able to hire bikes locally for the price listed on the front page of this document. The bikes are well-known makes of hybrid or mountain bikes (depending on the tour) with lightweight alloy frames, light gears, v-brakes and Shimano components. You're free to bring own pedals, (rail type) seat and handlebar extensions. If you bring your own bike, please make sure it is in good mechanical order.

**Bike Repairs:** Basic spares and tools are carried by the guide and on the support vehicle, though we cannot guarantee having spares for every conceivable problem. Carrying a basic tool kit, a spare tube and a pump while

### **How to Book**

Fill out our online **booking form** to reserve your adventure. Places are limited so it is essential that you secure your place as early as possible.

riding is recommended.

**Safety:** Wearing a helmet is compulsory on this biking adventures and if you choose not to wear one you will be asked to sign a liability waiver. Your guide is trained in first aid and emergency rescue, but to a large degree you must be responsible for your own safety while riding. It is therefore compulsory that you take out travel insurance that will cover you for a mountain biking tour.

**Support:** We will be supported by air-conditioned vehicle that have been specially modified for cycle tours. The vehicle follow us the whole time and are always available for tired cyclists. It is very easy to get bikes on and off, so you can rest when you are tired and cycle whenever you feel like it.

**Guides:** You will be led by a local English-speaking guide and if the group is 8 people or more we will add another guide to the tour. All our guides are well informed in the history, culture and religions of the area where you are biking and are skilled at passing that knowledge on to you. Your guide is also medically trained and an experienced cyclist, able to handle most minor repairs en route.

### Uniquely SpiceRoads

We live in Asia and have thoroughly researched the routes to assure that you see the best scenery and ride the best terrain, be it on road or dirt.

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We have carefully chosen accommodation that is the best available for the location and offer a good mix, from home stays to luxurious lodges, on our tours.

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We love Asian cuisine, well-known for its use of fresh ingredients, and will make sure you get to sample lots of it.

## The Nitty Gritty

**Arriving and Departing:** This tour begins in Kumamoto and ends in Kagoshima, Japan. Both cities are accessible by plane and train from Tokyo. International and domestic flights to and from the start and finish points are not included in the tour price. Please contact us for advice before arranging flights for the best arrival and departure times.

**Passports and Visas:** All nationalities require a valid passport and up to 62 countries have reciprocal visa exemption arrangements allowing nationals from those countries to enter Japan without a visa. Depending on the country, you are allowed to stay in Japan for a certain period of time, which can range from 90 days to six months.

**Health:** No vaccinations are needed.

**Weather:** Japan has a diverse climate. There are four seasons: from April to June is spring. The rainy season is from middle of June to the middle of July. July through end of September can be hot and humid temperatures in the big cities can go as high as 35 degrees Celsius.

**Food:** Meals are included as per the itinerary where B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner. Most meals will be Japanese seafood; a typical breakfast would include rice, a piece of grilled fish, miso soup. We always carry some granola and Muesli with us for those in need. Dinners will include lots of different seafood - some cooked, some raw. Any special dietary requirements can also be catered for as well. Please let us know at the time of booking.

**Drink:** Keeping you completely hydrated is a job we take very seriously. Cold water, some energy-restoring local fruit and soft drinks are included in the tour price while riding. Soft drinks and other beverages during meals are not included. Beer is freely available everywhere in Japan, but is NOT included in the price.

**Extra Expenses:** We recommend that you tuck away a few extra dollars, perhaps US\$30 a day for incidentals. Tipping is not customary in Japan. Guides

have received and accepted tips on a voluntary basis.

### **Subject to Change**

**In remote destinations abnormal conditions can prevail at any time, and all adventurous holidays can therefore be subject to unexpected change.**

**Although our guides will do their best to adhere to the original itinerary and cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes; in order to enjoy our tour you should be prepared to be flexible when necessary.**

**Money:** The currency in Japan is the yen (¥) and is pronounced as 'en', with no 'y' sound. Though ATMs are everywhere in Japan, it is not always easy to use them as most only work with Japan-issued bank cards and credit cards. The exception is Japan's post office ATMs which accept cards that belong to the following international networks: Visa, Plus, MasterCard, Maestro, Cirrus American Express and Diners Club cards. In addition to postal ATMs, you will find a few international ATMs in big cities and at the major airports. International cards also work in Citibank Japan ATMs.

*The information in this document is given in good faith, and covers the average range of conditions likely to be found on this trip. Where differences exist in the information between this and previous information, this document is the correct version.*