

# EXPLORE!

## Cycle Japan - Shimanami Kaido and the Inland Sea

JAPAN - TRIP CODE CJH

CYCLING

### Why book this trip?

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Discover Japan's Inland Sea on two wheels along the quiet roads of Awaji and Shikoku Islands with rewarding views of impressive mountain peaks and equally beautiful seascapes. Explore some of Japan's most beautiful gardens, see its most impressive castle and delve into the history of Hiroshima.

- **Shikoku and Awajima Islands** - Point to point, off the beaten track cycle journey through rural Japan
- **Kyoto** - Japan's historic capital, filled with a remarkable collection of World Heritage sites
- **Cherry Blossom** - April departures planned to coincide with the cherry blossom season



**INCLUDED MEALS**  
Breakfast: 11  
Dinner: 4



**TRIP STAFF**  
Explore Tour  
Leader / Cycle  
guide  
Driver(s)



**TRANSPORT**  
Bus  
Bicycle  
Ferry  
Train



**ACCOMMODATION**  
11 nights standard  
hotel



**CYCLING GRADE:**  
Moderate To  
Challenging



**GROUP SIZE:**  
10 - 16

## Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

### DAY 1 - Join trip in old Imperial capital of Kyoto. Izakaya welcome dinner

This exciting journey begins in the old Imperial capital of Kyoto. Regarded by many as the country's finest city, Kyoto has been at the heart of Japanese culture and influence for over 1,000 years. One of the only major cities to survive the extensive bombing of WWII, Kyoto can boast more than 2000 temples and shrines, many set in manicured landscaped gardens, making this captivating city the cradle of all things uniquely Japanese. After checking in to our hotel, which will be our base for the next two nights, we will enjoy an included dinner with the rest of the group and our Tour Leader at an izakaya - a casual Japanese tapas-style place for drinking and eating.



**ACCOMMODATION:**  
Hotel Sunroute Kyoto (or similar)

**Grade: Standard Hotel**



**SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE**



**MEALS PROVIDED: DINNER**

### DAY 2 - Kyoto sightseeing by bike. Including Arashiyama to see the Oi River, bamboo grove and temples

Kyoto is home to an impressive 17 UNESCO World Heritage sites including 13 temples, three Shinto shrines and a 17th century castle. After breakfast we pick up our simple city bikes for the day and commence an exploration of the city on two wheels. We plan to cycle to Arashiyama district on the western outskirts to see its famed bamboo grove, the Oi River and Tenryuji temple. Later we visit Ryoanji temple and its famous rock garden, and the golden pavilion of Kinkakuji temple before returning to our hotel. We forward our main luggage to our hotel in Takamatsu in advance of tomorrow's ride on Awaji Island. You will need an overnight bag for the night on Awaji Island that will be transported while you ride.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 25 kilometres, mostly on the flat.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Sunroute Kyoto (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 3 - A train and ferry ride to Awaji Island; explore the island by bike

This morning we leave Kyoto by local train on a 1 hour journey followed by a short ferry ride to reach the island of Awaji. Upon arrival, we pick up our bikes and begin our cycle journey in earnest. Our main bags go into the support truck that will accompany us on our rides to Hiroshima, and has space for two clients. According to Japanese folklore, Awaji is the birthplace of Japan and there are many locations that are related to the legends of how the nation was born. It has also long been known for its high quality produce and used to supply the imperial court with livestock, seafood and vegetables. Nowadays the famous Kobe and Matsuzaka beef is reared here. Most visitors zip across the island on their journey between Honshu and Shikoku, but we spend the day exploring the countryside and learning about life on the island.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 60 kilometres (total accumulated ascent 300 metres).



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel & Resorts Minamiawaji (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel





SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & DINNER

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#### **DAY 4 - Boat ride via the whirlpools of Naruto to Shikoku Island. Cycle to the famous Ritsurin Gardens**

After breakfast we cycle to the nearby port of Minami Awaji to board a boat to view the famous whirlpools of Naruto. These cannot be guaranteed as they depend on the tidal flows, but when they occur they are a very impressive sight. Afterwards, we bid farewell to Awaji Island as we transfer by local bus to the island of Shikoku, meeting our bikes again in Naruto where we will start riding to make the journey to Takamatsu. On the outskirts of town we will stop to visit Ritsurin Koen - considered one of the best landscaped gardens in Japan, set in front of the wooded Mount Shiun. Our accommodation for tonight is in the port city of Takamatsu, the principal city of Shikoku.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 60 kilometres (total accumulated ascent 540 metres).



ACCOMMODATION:  
Tokyu Rei Takamatsu (or similar)



**Grade: Standard Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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#### **DAY 5 - Rolling coastal cycle ride to Kanonji with great vistas of Japan's Seto Inland Sea**

Referred to as the Aegean of the East by 19th century explorers, Japan's Inland Sea is the huge protected body of water lying between the main islands of Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu. Surrounded by important cities and used as a major trading route, the Inland Sea has often played an important part in the history of Japan. We start our coastal cycle ride in Takamatsu but quickly leave the city behind as we ride on less developed roads with great seascape vistas. Aside from a decent climb 10 kilometres in, the day is spent on small rolling hills and a couple minor climbs in the final 20 kilometres. Finally we reach our destination in the coastal town of Kanonji.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 66 kilometres (total accumulated ascent 350 metres).





ACCOMMODATION:  
Kanonji Grand Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & DINNER

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### DAY 6 - A longer day in the saddle discovering Shikoku Island's interior and fishing towns

We start our longest cycle ride of the trip early today as we make our way to Imabari. Shikoku was considered remote and isolated for centuries, synonymous with natural beauty and the pursuit of spiritual perfection and accessible only by boat. Modern day pilgrims are drawn to the 88 Sacred Temples of Shikoku. The island was connected to the rest of Japan by impressive bridge systems in the past 30 years but it is still relatively unvisited by foreign tourists. We encounter a number of ports and fishing towns on our route but the scenery is varied as around half of today's ride is spent inland. Although we summit a 160 metre hill today, the gradient is gentle. Finally we reach the modern port town of Imabari where we spend the night.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 99 kilometres (total accumulated ascent 420 metres).



ACCOMMODATION:  
Imabari Kokusai Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 7 - Shimanami cycle way - Japan's most famous ride with majestic views

Today we leave the island of Shikoku behind and traverse the Inland Sea on a beautifully scenic ride across a series of bridges that leap-frog six islands back to the mainland of Honshu. Constructed in 1999, the Shimanami Kaido means 'island, wave and sea route' and is the most famous cycle ride in Japan. There

are some steep ascents to reach the soaring bridges that give majestic views of the many small islands and high quality roads throughout make for a smooth and enjoyable ride. The cycle path is generally adjacent to the highway on the bridge sections then once on the islands it deviates from the highway but shares the road with local traffic. Our final destination is our hotel in the town of Onomichi.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 76 kilometres (total accumulated ascent 420 metres).



**ACCOMMODATION:**

Onomichi Kokusai Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Standard Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 8 - Beautiful seaside ride on the Sazanami cycle way**

Today's cycle route is not as well-known as the Shimanami Kaido but it has all the appeal and is not nearly as popular. Starting out from Onomichi, the seaside route we take, known as the Sazanami Kaido, is a cycle way on Japan's mainland and closer to the many islands dotting the inland sea. Our cycle ride today finally reaches the ship building port city of Kure where we spend the night.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 82 kilometres (total accumulated ascent 240 metres).



**ACCOMMODATION:**

Clayton Bay Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Standard Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 9 - Cycle on peaceful islands in Hiroshima Bay

On our final day of cycling, we explore three very quiet islands in Hiroshima bay, again little visited by foreign tourists. The lack of traffic makes for a great last ride. We cycle firstly from Kure, across Kurahashi, Nomi and finally to the tip of Eta Island where we bid farewell to our bikes and continue on to central Hiroshima by way of a short ferry ride.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 70 kilometres (total accumulated ascent 320 metres).



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Sunroute Hiroshima (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 10 - Visit Hiroshima Peace Park and museum on foot. Public ferry to sacred Miyajima Island

Today we have a thought-provoking visit to Hiroshima Peace Park and later to the island of Miyajima by public transport. The target of the first atomic bomb to be used in wartime, Hiroshima was completely destroyed on 6th August 1945. Since then it has literally risen from the ashes, and is now a thriving, friendly city. In the Peace Memorial Park, the well-presented museum sits on the hypocentre of the 1945 A-bomb. Whilst serving as poignant reminders of the nuclear holocaust, their over-whelming message is of hope that such horrors will never reoccur. Later today we take a public ferry to Miyajima - a holy island known for its ancient temples and forests that offers a nice contrast to the city. We forward our main luggage to our hotel in Osaka in advance of tomorrow's train ride.

No cycling today.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Sunroute Hiroshima (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 11 - Train ride to Osaka via Himeji Castle and beautiful Japanese gardens. Night out in Osaka**

We leave Hiroshima by train this morning on our journey to Osaka. After around one hour we leave the train at Himeji to visit Japan's most impressive feudal castle - a UNESCO World Heritage site. We will also visit the beautiful Japanese garden here in Himeji. We continue on to Osaka by train (1 hr) for a final afternoon of sightseeing and a great celebratory evening meal in Japan's second largest city to mark the end of our journey.

No cycling today.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Cross Hotel Osaka (or similar)



**Grade: Standard Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & DINNER

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### **DAY 12 - Trip ends in Osaka**

The tour ends this morning after breakfast in Osaka.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## **Trip information**

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## Country information

### Japan

#### Climate

Japan's climate is mostly temperate, with five distinct seasons. Summer is from June to September with temperatures reaching 30°C, although it can vary from warm to very hot. After mid-July. July and August can be humid. Spring and Autumn are mild throughout Japan. Winter, October to April, is cold with snowfall. The main rainy season is June. Japan can be prone to short, tropical cyclones in August to October. October November although cooler is a great time to see the Autumn colours.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+9	2 Pin Flat	Buddhism, Christian and Shinto	Japanese

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## Budgeting and packing

### Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Kyoto - Arashiyama boat trip GBP 8

Kyoto - Arashiyama Wild Monkey Park GBP 3

### Clothing

#### Clothing

When cycling: quick drying cycle tops, padded cycle shorts, lightweight wind and water proof jacket and warmer breathable layers where local conditions require.

General: Pack essentially for hot or mild weather depending on the time of the year. Please note that each accommodation provides yukatas (pyjamas), soap, shampoo, conditioner, towels, tooth brushes, and often disposable razors as well.

### Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover.

Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

### Luggage

20kg

## Luggage: On tour

We recommend you bring a daypack (big enough to carry what you need for a few days) and one main piece of luggage (total allowance: 44lb/20kg) which will be transported between hotels while you cycle. We will forward the main pieces of luggage on day 3 to the hotel in Takamatsu, and you will see it again on day 4 when we arrive at the hotel. Again we will forward the main luggage on day 10 to the hotel in Osaka, and you will see it again on day 11 when we arrive at the hotel.

## Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. It is a legal requirement in Japan to wear a helmet that meets current safety criteria. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn.

Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. There is no vehicle support on day 2 so you would need to cycle with your rucksack or put your bag in the small basket on the front of the bikes. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

## Tipping

### Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

### Local crew

Tipping is not a part of everyday life in Japan and is therefore entirely voluntary. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour. Accordingly you should allow £5 per person

## Japan

### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£8	£15-20	£4	£1.00 - 2.00

### Foreign Exchange

Local currency	Recommended Currency For Exchange
Yen.	It is preferable to take money in Yen or traveller's cheques.

### **Where To Exchange**

Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

### **ATM Availability**

All post offices have international ATMs. Some other ATMs do not accept Western bank/credit cards. Your tour leader will advise you locally.

### **Credit Card Acceptance**

In major restaurants and stores.

### **Travellers Cheques**

It should be noted that outside of the major cities it is difficult to change traveller's cheques. Where available it takes 30-45 minutes, the best places to exchange them is at the airport on arrival.

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## **Transport, Accommodation & Meals**

### **Transport Information**

Bus, Bicycle, Ferry, Train

### **Accommodation notes**

Standard - Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service. The accommodation we use on this tour doesn't have bars, gardens or swimming pools. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

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## **Essential Information**

### **FCO Advice**

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

### **Under 18 immigration guidance**

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

### **Price Guarantee**

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

## Visa and Passport Information

Japan: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

## Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

## Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

### Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

### Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

## Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your

responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

## **Flight information**

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them here.

### **Flight Information**

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### **Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore**

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport. On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## **Japan**

### **Vaccinations**

Nothing compulsory. We recommend protection against typhoid, tetanus, infectious hepatitis and polio. The use or possession of Vicks inhalers and some other common prescription and over-the-counter medicines (e.g. for allergies and sinus problems or even certain mild painkillers, such as those containing certain levels of codeine) are banned under Japan's strictly enforced anti-stimulant drugs law. Customs officials may not be sympathetic if you claim ignorance about these medicines. If in any doubt about customs procedures for such items, you should check with the nearest Japanese Embassy before visiting Japan. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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## **Cycling information**

## DAILY DISTANCES

Day 2		25km
Day 3		60km
Day 4		60km
Day 5		66km
Day 6		99km
Day 7		76km
Day 8		82km
Day 9		70km

### General cycling information

On this tour we cycle approximately 540 km over eight days (an average of 67 km per day). We travel mainly on quiet country roads and along some cycle paths (15%). We will encounter more traffic in the urban areas. The terrain is generally undulating. A support vehicle (with room for two passengers) accompanies the rides throughout the tour and carries the luggage, except for the city bike tour in Kyoto. We have graded the route as moderate to challenging.

### Bike included

16 gear Orbea Avan, Cinelli Experience 105/11S road bike with flat handle bars or similar. Simple local bike in Kyoto.

### Bike information

Your included bike is a 16 gear Orbea Avan, Cinelli Experience 105/11S road bike fitted with flat handle bars or equivalent and will be the correct frame size for your height. If you prefer an 8 gear Orbea hybrid bike please request at time of booking. A water bottle holder is included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A support vehicle (with room for two passengers) carries our luggage and accompanies the rides throughout the tour except on day 2. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. A simple local style bike is provided in Kyoto. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

### Cycling grade

ModerateToChallenging



**AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS**