

CHERRY BLOSSOM TOURS

JAPAN 2016

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CHERRY BLOSSOM TOURS - JAPAN

2016

YOKOSO—WELCOME

For the 2016 cherry blossom season in Japan we have put together a sequence of four two-week tours. These commence early in March and run through to the end of April and are designed to maximise the cherry blossom season as it progresses from south to north.

The attached schedules indicate the dates for cherry blossom viewing in each location. These dates are based on the flowering times from the last ten years and are a guide only. The actual dates are out of our control.

However, there are a couple of things that make chasing the blossom a little easier. Firstly, the early part of the season is when plum blossom flowers, providing an alternative offering of spectacular colours.

Secondly, the cherry blossom forecast refers specifically to the five petal bloom type, and there are many different types of cherry that flower earlier and later, extending the season.



We then travel to Kyoto for four nights, including a day trip to the World Heritage sites at Nara. Heading north from Kyoto, we visit Matsumoto castle before arriving and staying at Togura in the mountains at a traditional Japanese inn.

Returning to Tokyo on the 31st of March gives a chance to have some time at FujiQ Highland and some more time in the capital city before the end of the tour.

CHERRY BLOSSOM TOUR 2 APRIL TO 17 APRIL

The peak period for cherry blossom viewing starts in Tokyo before heading to Nagoya and then Kyoto. This affords many locations where the cherry flowers should be in full bloom and at their best.

Leaving Kyoto, we then head to Kanazawa to enjoy its gardens and castle before heading into the mountains for two nights: We will stay at a traditional Japanese inn at Togura and return to Tokyo on Friday 15th April.

LATE CHERRY BLOSSOM TOUR 16 APRIL TO 1 MAY

To capture the late part of the cherry blossom season, we travel north of Tokyo to Sendai, seeking the peak part of their local season. Then we head east into the mountains, where the blooms are also a little later than those on the east coast. We then take the train to Kyoto for three nights, to take in the unique sights that this city has to offer.

Leaving Kyoto, we take high-speed trains to north to Aomori and visit Hirosaki—one of the best spots in Japan for cherry viewing because of its thousands of trees. Finally we head to Sapporo in Hokkaido for two days of sightseeing before flying back to Tokyo.

BRIEF TOUR SUMMARIES

EARLY CHERRY TOUR 10 MARCH TO 3 APRIL

Starting in Tokyo, the tour heads north to Sendai to visit Matsushima, the Zao fox village and the Aquamarine Fukushima.

Heading to the mountain town of Nikko to visit the famous temples and shrines, and the Edo Wonderland theme park before taking a journey south to Kumano, the site of many pilgrim paths in the Kii peninsula area and its dense temperate forests.

To enjoy the early part of the cherry blossom season we head south to Kagoshima at the bottom of Kyushu (stopping at Okayama on the way). This section includes a stay on Yakushima Island and its 1,000 year old cedar trees.

PLACES, SIGHTS AND OPTIONS

TOKYO

Visit Asukusa Kaminarimon (thunder gate), Hozomon and pagoda. An array of stalls lines the entrance to this shrine.

Visit one or more of the famous neighbourhood areas of Tokyo: Shibuya and the "scramble" pedestrian crossing, Akihabara, Shinjuku, Harajuku, Yoyogi Park and Meiji Shrine.

Cherry blossom viewing at Ueno Park, the Imperial Palace or the Meguro river.



SENDAI

Visit Matsushima by ferry, one of the top three views in Japan (designated "special places of scenic beauty").

An opportunity to visit Rinno-ji temple and its Japanese garden.

Take the local train to Ogawara and stroll along the river under 1,000 cherry trees.



OKAYAMA

Visit Korakuen landscape gardens, one of the top three gardens in Japan and view the castle. Dress up as a samurai or try kimono as part of the castle entrance fee.

SAPPORO

Sightseeing in the capital of Hokkaido.

KYOTO

Visit the Inari Fushimi shrine (10,000 tori gates) a good option for sightseeing in the late afternoon.

Day trip to the world heritage site at Nara. At Nara there is both Todaiji temple with the world's largest bronze Buddha.

Cherry blossom viewing in Maruyama Park and Shiwakara Dori (one of the most beautiful streets in the Gion district)

Visit the famous "golden pavilion" Kinkakuji.

During the evening visit Kodaiji Temple. The temple complex includes a Zen garden, bamboo forest and artisan souvenir shops. It is illuminated in the evenings and provides a view of the city.

Shopping at the covered Nishiki Market, which includes a selection of local food stalls. The Isetan and Takashimaya department stores are also excellent for shopping and both have vast food halls.



NAGOYA

Several options available for Nagoya including visiting Nagoya castle, the Toyota factory and museum or the SCMaglev and Railway Park. A day trip to Hikone and Lake Biwa are also options.



PLACES, SIGHTS AND OPTIONS

HIROSHIMA

Take the ferry across to beautiful Miyajima Island and the famous "floating" tori gate and/or visit the A-dome (atomic bomb dome), Peace Park and Museum complex.



KAGOSHIMA

Visit the local volcano Sakurajima or the Chiran Peace Museum for "Kamikaze" pilots. Take a hot sand bath at Ibusuki and enjoy a soak in the hot springs.



KANAZAWA

Visit Kanazawa Castle, the famous Kenrokuen garden and the Prefectural Museum of Art.

An opportunity to stroll around the historic Higashi Chaya (geisha teahouse) District. Visit the Kanazawa Omicho fresh food market.

AOMORI

Check out Mount Osorezan (one of the most sacred Buddhist sites in Japan) or visit the extreme end of the island at Cape Oma. Travel to Hirosaki Park (2,600 cherry trees) and Hirosaki Castle.

NAGANO/TOGURA

Stay at a traditional Japanese inn including traditional breakfast and dinner meals. Soak in the ryokan's own hot spring baths

Take a day trip to the famous Jigokudani Monkey Park, returning to the ryokan for an afternoon soak in the onsen or a walk around the small town before dinner.



OSAKA

Visit Himeji Castle (one of the most famous in Japan), or take a day trip to Kobe. Attend the Osaka Sumo tournament.



NAGASAKI

Explore the city, visit the A-bomb museum, take a trip to the abandoned island of Gunkanjima, or enjoy the illuminated cherry trees at Tateyama park.



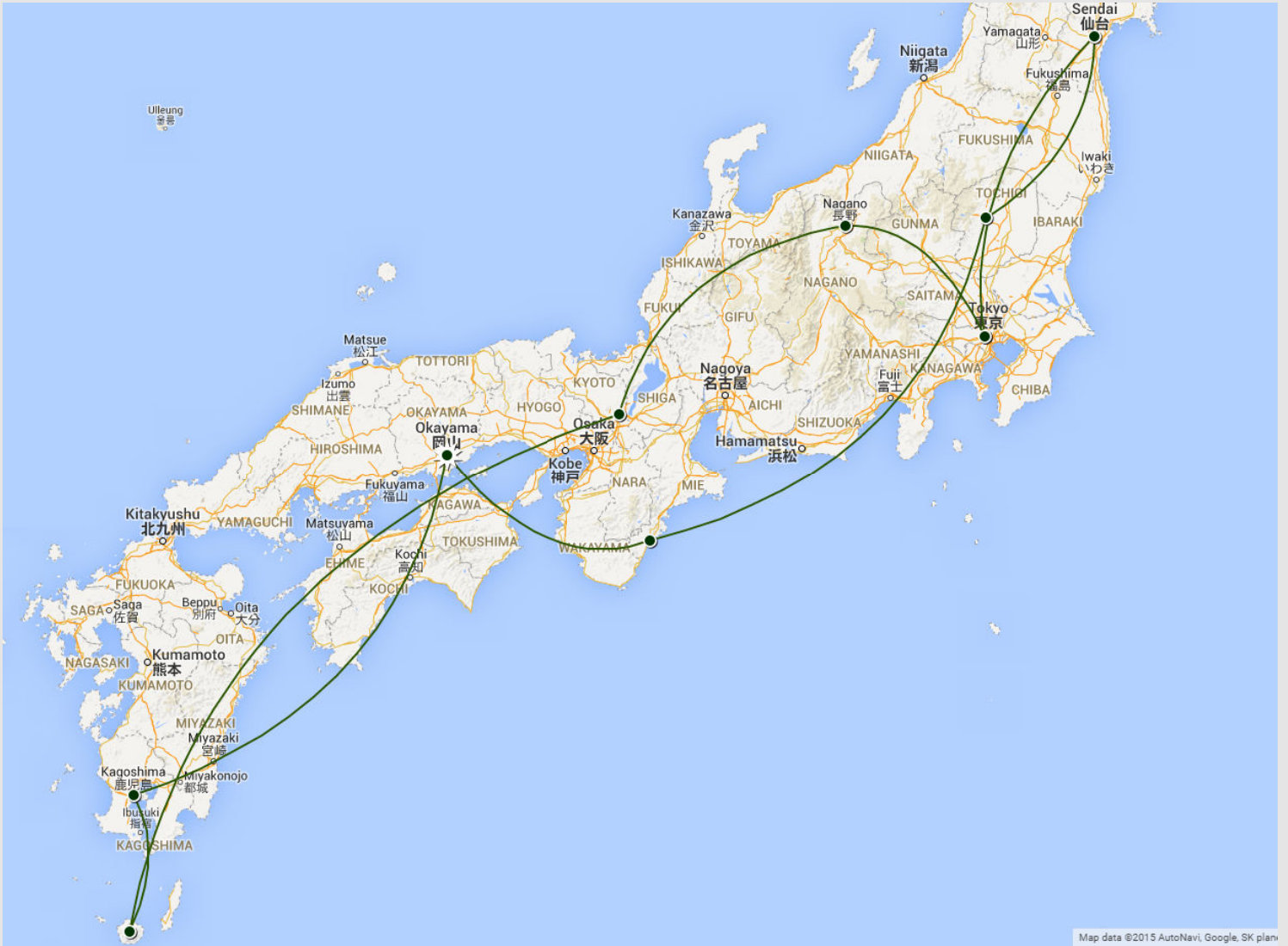
EARLY CHERRY TOUR 10 MARCH TO 3 APRIL

Estimated pricing JPY590,000 (per person, 21 to 24 days depending on tour arrival/departure dates)

Accommodation Dates	Location	Highlights	Cherry forecast First bloom and full Bloom
Thursday 10th March to Sunday 13th March	Tokyo	Akihabara, Ikebukero, Shinjuku (Golden Gai), Ghibli Museum	23 March / 31 March
Monday 14th March to Tuesday 15th March	Sendai	Visit Matsushima, Zao fox village, Aquamarine Fukushima	25 March / 4 April
Wednesday 16th March to Thursday 17th March	Nikko	Visit the shrines and temples of Nikko and Edo Wonderland	23 March / 3 April
Friday 18th March and Saturday 19th March	Kumano Koda	Explore pilgrim paths and visit grand shrines of Kumano	
Sunday 20th March	Okayama	Visit to Okayama Castle	25 March / 4 April
Sunday 20th March to Tuesday 22nd March	Kagoshima	Ibusuki hot sand baths, Sakurajima volcano, Kirishima National Park and/or Chiran Peace Museum	23 March / 3 April
Wednesday 23rd March and Thursday 24th March	Yakushima	Visit the ancient forests and 1,000 year old trees.	
Friday 25th March to Monday 28th March	Kyoto	Fushimi Inari shrine, Nara day trip to Todaiji temple, Kinkakuji golden pavilion, Kodaiji temple and gardens	25 March / 4 April
Tuesday 29th March to Wednesday 30th March	Nagano/Togura	Traditional Japanese Inn and dining with onsen Visit to Jigokudani Monkey Park.	10 April / 15 April
Thursday 31st March to	Tokyo	Visit to FujiQ, Shinjuku, Ueno Park and free time.	23 March / 31 March

EARLY CHERRY TOUR 10 MARCH TO 3 APRIL

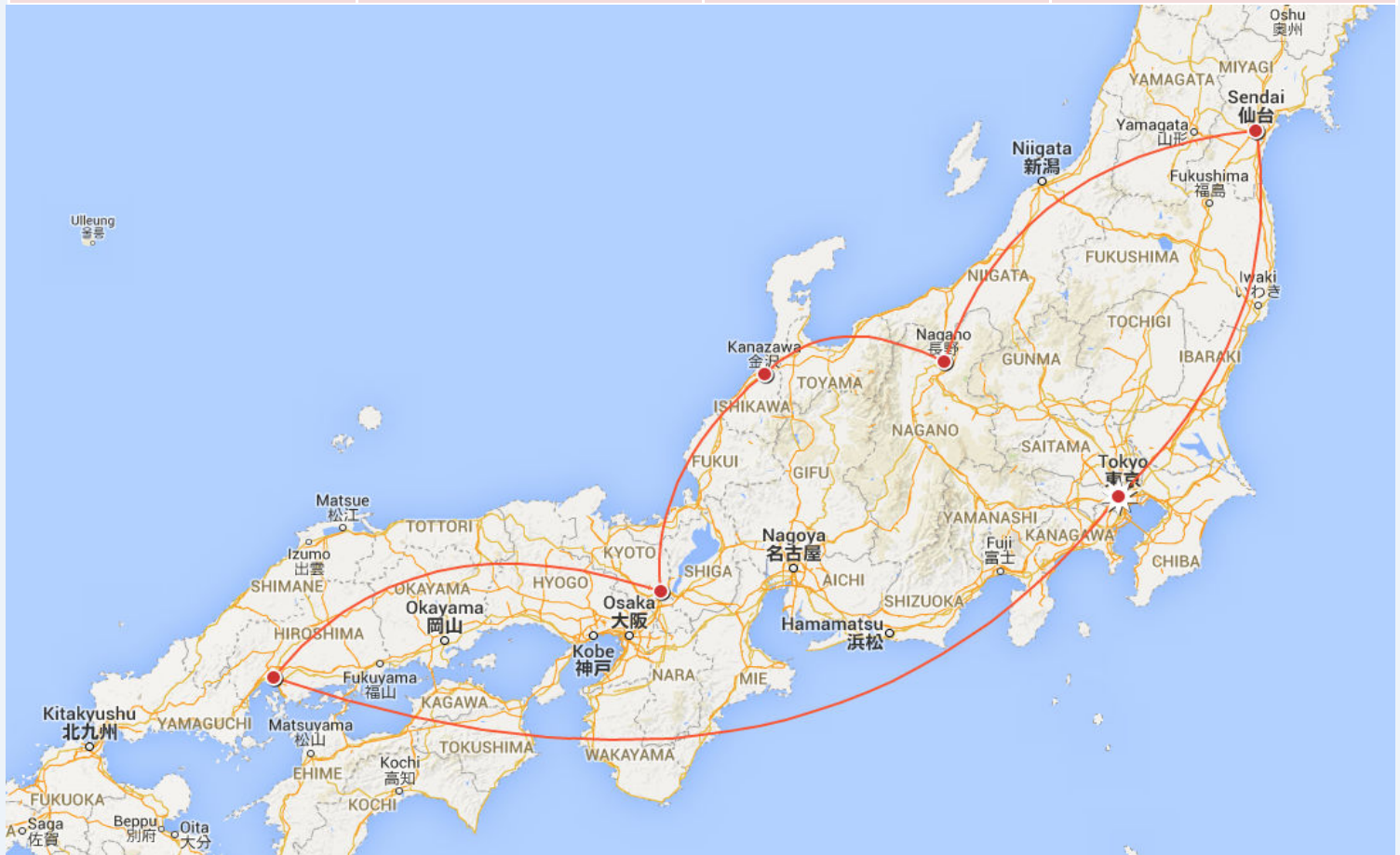
Tour Route



CHERRY BLOSSOM TOUR 2 APRIL TO 17 APRIL [SORRY—FULLY BOOKED]

Estimated pricing JPY490,000 (per person, 16 days, 15 nights)

Accommodation Dates	Location	Highlights	Cherry forecast First bloom and full Bloom
Saturday 2nd April and Sunday 3rd April	Tokyo	Shibuya crossing, Asukusa temple, Harajuku Meiji shrine and Yoyogi Park	23 March / 31 March
Monday 4th April and Tuesday 5th April	Hiroshima	Miyajima and Peace Park	25 March / 4 April
Wednesday 6th April to Friday 8th April	Kyoto	Nara day trip to Todaiji temple. Cherry blossom viewing around the city	25 March / 4 April
Saturday 9th April and Sunday 10th April	Kanazawa	Famous Kenrokuen gardens and Kanazawa Castle	3 April / 9 April
Monday 11th April and Tuesday 12th April	Nagano/Togura	Traditional Japanese Inn and dining with onsen Visit to Jigokudani Monkey Park.	10 April / 15 April
Wednesday 13th April and Thursday 14th April	Sendai	Visit Matsushima—one of the top three views of Japan. Cherry blossom at Ogasawara with 1000 cherry trees	10 April / 15 April
Friday 15th April and Saturday 16th April	Tokyo	Akihabara, Shinjuku or free time	23 March / 31 March



LATE CHERRY BLOSSOM TOUR 16 APRIL TO 1 MAY

Estimated pricing JPY440,000 (per person, 16 days, 15 nights)

Accommodation Dates	Location	Highlights	Cherry forecast
Saturday 16th April and Sunday 17th April	Tokyo	Shibuya crossing, Asukusa temple, Harajuku Meiji shrine and Yoyogi Park	23 March / 31 March
Monday 18th April and Wednesday 20th April	Kyoto	Fushimi Inari shrine, Nara day trip to Todaiji temple, Kinkakuji golden pavilion, Kodaiji temple and gardens	25 March / 4 April
Thursday 21st April and Friday 22nd April	Nagano/Togura	Traditional Japanese Inn and dining with onsen Visit to Jigokudani Monkey Park.	10 April / 15 April
Saturday 23rd April and Sunday 24th April	Sendai	Visit Matsushima—one of the top three views of Japan. Cherry blossom at Ogawara with 1000 cherry trees	10 April / 15 April
Monday 25th April and	Aomori	Hirosaki Park (2,600 trees) and Hirosaki Castle	25 April / 29 April
Wednesday 27th April and Thursday 28th April	Sapporo	City sightseeing	4 May / 8 May
Friday 29th April and	Osaka	Side trip to Himeji Castle or Hiroshima	23 March / 31 March

