

ETERNAL JAPAN & SOUTH KOREA

on board HERITAGE ADVENTURER

28 April - 9 May 2024



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Day 1

Sunday, April 28, 2024

Tokyo

Our Eternal Japan & South Korea journey started as we arrived from all corners of the globe to Japan's bustling capital Tokyo where we are spending our first evening. Meeting for dinner, it was a great opportunity to meet our fellow adventurers, some of the expedition team and Nobu, one of the Japanese guides who will be joining us on this voyage. We were introduced to the plans for the journey ahead before we enjoyed a delicious Japanese buffet dinner and settled in for the night.

Day 2

Monday, April 29, 2024

Tokyo to Kanazawa

Our adventure was well and truly underway this morning with a bus ride from our hotel to the Tokyo train station to board the Shinkansen bullet train, delicious bento box lunches in hand. With the train travelling at speeds over 300km per hour, we soon left the high-rise buildings of Tokyo behind and were travelling past small towns and rural farmhouses surrounded by rice paddies. The mountains around us still had

plenty of snow on them and the scenery was equally stunning and captivating. There were several stops along the way, but the 2.5 hours passed quickly, and we soon pulled into Kanazawa Station.

Our first stop was at the Omicho Markets. We had time to explore and be amazed at the array of seafood and fresh produce including some of the biggest oysters we had ever seen. Next up was the Higashi Chaya District famed for the Geisha and gold leaf products. The timber lattice buildings made us wonder what secrets they hid, and the great range of shops had some of us buying mementoes, while others enjoyed the gold leaf ice cream or a local sake. After a great afternoon exploring it was only a short ride to the port where *Heritage Adventurer* was waiting for us.

Once on board, and settled into our cabins, we had fun exploring our new home away from home. To finish the day, we had a range of safety drills and information, introductions to Expedition Leader Steve and the rest of his expedition team, and a briefing from Steve on plans for the next few days – including choices for activities to come. We had certainly earned a delicious meal, which was delivered with style and smiles by the dining room team. We could tell that we were going to be spoiled on this expedition and retired to our cabins to prepare for tomorrow's exciting adventure.



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Day 3

Tuesday, April 30, 2024

Kanazawa

We had a range of options to choose from for an action-packed day in Kanazawa. Those who selected the countryside option left first for a ride into the mountains, passing lush green forested hills, several dams, and rice fields and finally into a valley which has several well-preserved gassho-zukuri farmhouses, more than 250 years old. Ogimachi Village is the largest of these local villages and was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1995. The houses have been constructed with timber using no nails and pampas thatched roofs which must be replaced every 20 years. A tour inside one of the houses gives us an insight into the way of life of the locals and we learned how they were used for housing silkworms and gunpowder. A short walk up a hill with several flowering cherry blossoms provided a stunning view of the village below.

We enjoyed lunch at a nearby hotel among the forest which included a wonderful assortment of mostly vegetarian dishes, sake, beer, and soft drinks.

This was followed by a walk through several small villages with a local guide explaining all the historic sites along the way. During a quiet and peaceful wander through the streets past several magnificent cedar trees, we encountered a small local festival celebrating the arrival of spring, with a dancing dragon and music. What a wonderful surprise!

The rest of us chose to stay in Kanazawa to sample some more of the sights of the city. The Kenrokuen Garden delivered on its reputation as one of the top three landscape gardens in Japan – designed and crafted to produce beauty at every viewpoint. Just across the road was Kanazawa Castle Park – a landscape of stone walls and reconstructed buildings giving an impression of the feudal age. Compounding that impression was our visit to the Nagamachi Samurai District. There we explored the Nomura Samurai House with its elegant tatami mat rooms and classic courtyard garden and browsed the

displays and shelves of porcelain at the Kutani Museum. We also had a great time during a stop at the Gold Leaf Workshop.

Back on board the comforts of *Heritage Adventurer*, we were treated to a stirring display by the local Taiko drummers – with dozens of skilled performers thanking us for our visit. What a lovely farewell.

Even then the day was not done. Our guide, Hide, gave us an introduction to Etiquette in Japan before Rosemary helped us to get the most out of our time in the gardens with her talk, Spring in Japan. As she finished, the champagne flutes and nibbles appeared for the Captain's Welcome Cocktails. Captain Tomasz introduced his senior officers before we retired to the dining room to share the day's experiences with our new friends. We were starting to get the impression that this voyage was going to be packed very full of wonderful experiences!



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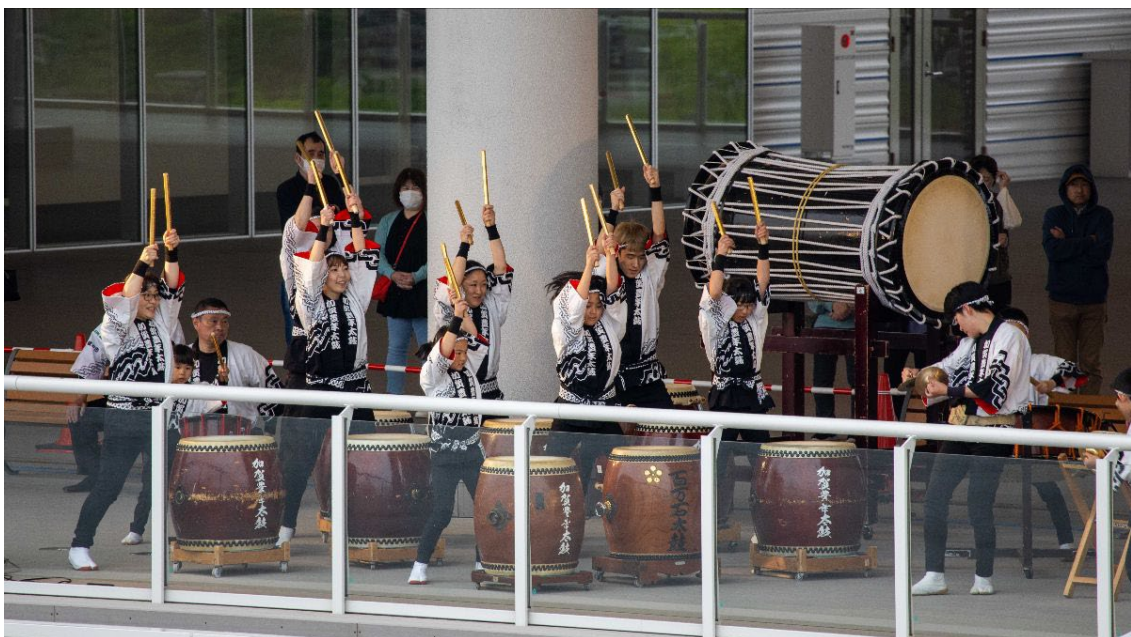
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Day 4

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Sakaminato and Matsue

We again had options to spend the day with the first group away heading into the countryside, this time to Mount Daisen. We travelled through fog until the skies cleared and the stunning mountain was revealed. Once there we chose how to best spend our time with birdwatching and visiting the ruins of many shrines.

The local guide offered some typical Japanese hospitality when an unused wedding venue was opened for us to eat our lunch with amazing views and complimentary tea and coffee.

On our return journey, we called into the Adachi Museum of Art to experience gardens as art. The Adachi has been voted the most beautiful garden in Japan for 21 years running – with good cause. It was a unique experience to look at the gardens presented in such captivating ways, and then head into the art gallery and enjoy the more traditional artworks.

The second group went directly to the Adachi Museum of Art then on to the Yuushien Garden for a full-on explosion of colour. This area is home to numerous peony growers who assemble their blooms for display. With preparations underway for the garden's famous Yuushien Peony Festival, rafts of blossoms cover the ponds, with garden beds, walking paths, and display stands all featuring the large, fragrant flowers in every hue known. None of us had ever seen anything like it.

After lunch, we visited Matsue Castle – one of the few original castles remaining in Japan. It was built in the early 1600s and has been faithfully restored. The strong compact form and the displays of defences in the interior made it clear why it survived. The views over the town from the top were worth the climb. The old castle moat is the setting for 'moat boat' rides. We cruised along the course ducking as the roof was lowered under the low bridges.

We left port to another delightful farewell – this time from a singing troupe, before a quick Zodiac briefing to prepare for tomorrow's transfer. With another busy day to discuss, many laughs and conversations filled the dining room and lounge, before we settled in for the night.



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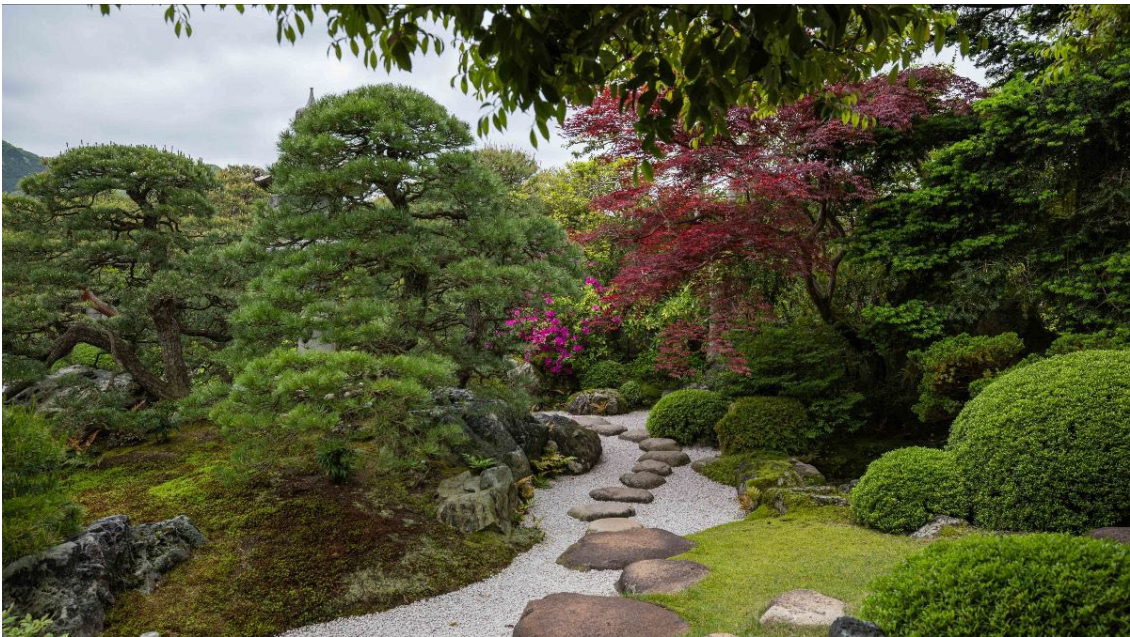
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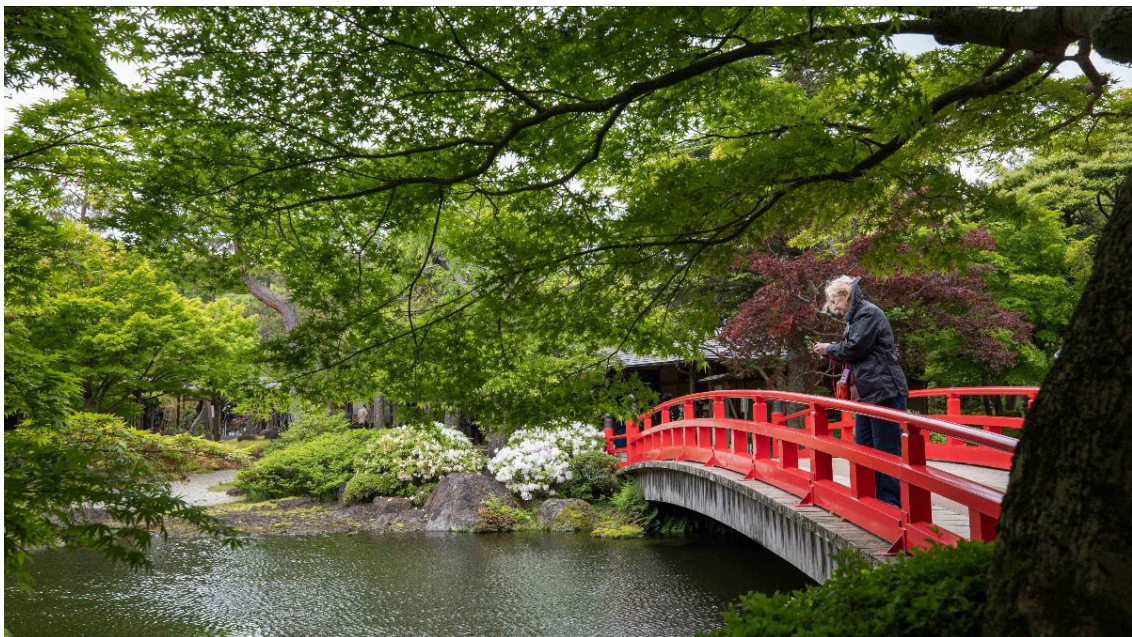
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Day 5

Thursday, May 2, 2024

Hagi

For our day in Hagi, we split into groups with different itineraries. However, the first step of the journey for everyone was a Zodiac cruise from *Heritage Adventurer* to the shore – the first Zodiac experience for several of us.

We boarded coaches for a busy day visiting a variety of iconic destinations, including the Akiyoshidai Plateau and Cave, a limestone area with a spectacular cave full of rock formations and a rushing river, and the 100 flavours of ice cream in the shops at the cave's exit. Next was the Yoshika Taibi Museum and workshop to see examples of the finest Hagi pottery from the past, potters at the wheel and today's finished products. Then to the Kikiyu family house, the well-preserved residence and garden of a wealthy merchant in the Samurai District with a variety of artefacts from the Edo period. We marvelled at the ruins of Hagi Castle, which for 250 years was the stronghold of the Mori family and, based on the ruins, was an impressive fortress. We then explored the Tokoji Temple, just around the corner from the castle ruins and holding the graves of half of the leaders of the Mori family with more than 500 stone lanterns erected by their descendants.

The remarkable variety of activities, and the routes taken to arrive in the various paces, gave us a great understanding of this delightful small city.

We arrived back on board to clear customs out of Japan and to hear Rosemary's talk on The Treasures of South Korea. The forecast for the crossing of the Japan Sea was quite good, so we celebrated the completion of the first Japanese section of the voyage and toasted to discoveries to come.



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Day 6

Friday, May 3, 2024

Ulsan, South Korea

The view from the port showed that Ulsan, South Korea is 'Hyundai City' with huge wind turbine blades and thousands of pieces of heavy equipment awaiting export.

We drove through the busy industrial area and past many clusters of high-rise apartment buildings into the forested mountains. Our first stop was at the Bulguksa Buddhist Temple and Art Gallery. The temple

complex is large with several plazas and pavilions housing statues of the Buddha in various incarnations. Originally built in the 8th century but destroyed, it has been faithfully restored with detailed paintings and decorative motifs throughout. As a special treat, the ground staff were in the process of filling the plaza spaces with multiple racks of colourful paper lanterns to honour the Buddha's birthday. Many lanterns had paper tags with wishes and prayers from the petitioners.

We had a fantastic selection at the lunchtime buffet before travelling to Tumuli Park to visit the tombs of the Kingdom of the Heavenly Horse. These awe-inspiring burial mounds for the rulers of the Silla Kingdom date from the 5th or 6th century. We entered the one tomb that had been excavated and saw the burial chamber with replicas of the golden crowns and artefacts that were unearthed.

To see the actual golden items, we made a short trip to the Gyeongju National Museum. There the beautiful items were displayed along with many other historic remains from that kingdom. Especially impressive was the huge bronze Bell of King Seongdeok the Great.

After a hot and exciting day, it seemed like a walk in the park would be a good way to finish. So, we travelled back to Ulsan to the Taehwagang River Bamboo Forest. The gardens along the river were in full use by the locals and held many flower beds in addition to the remarkable bamboo.

We had a small taste of rush hour before returning to the comforts of *Heritage Adventurer* to relax and cool off. As we were in the lounge for recap and briefing, we pulled away from the dock and made the transit across the busy harbour in the setting sun. With yet another exciting day to discuss, the dining room was abuzz.



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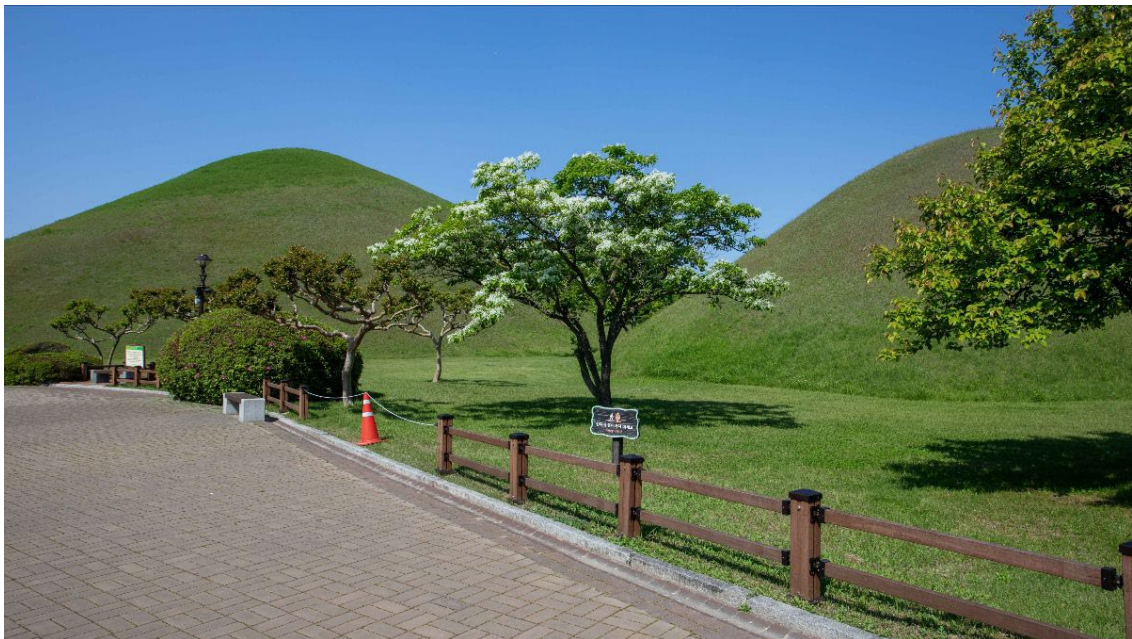
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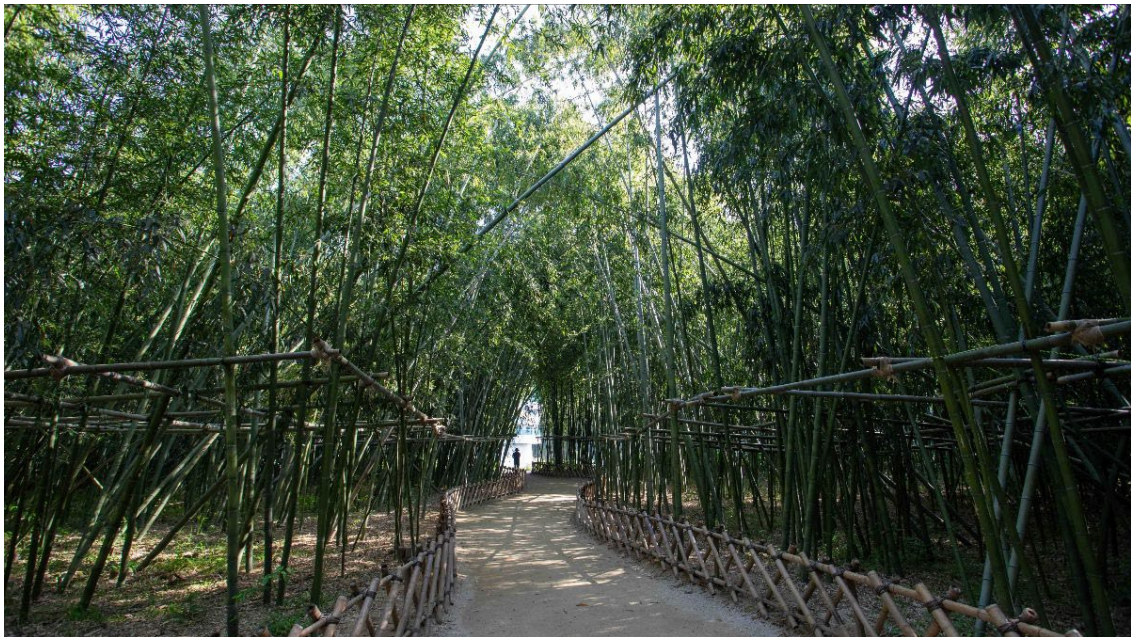
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Day 7

Saturday, May 4, 2024

Masan, South Korea

This morning, we arrived at the port of Masan for our second day exploring South Korea. It was a beautiful sunny day as we drove inland passing many houses and huge fields of onions. It took one hour to reach our first destination, the Theme Park of The Tripitaka Koreana, which is not really a theme park but a cinematic museum showing the history and process of building the Tripitaka, the oldest intact version of Buddhist script carved onto 81,258 wooden printing blocks.

We then drove a short distance further up into the hills and into the Gayasan National Park with stunning views of the mountains around us. There we arrived at an opulent hotel with chandeliers and gold plates which stood out in this serene environment. We enjoyed a delicious Korean lunch, including many plates of vegetables and seafood prepared in different ways with spicy dipping sauces and a traditional cold cinnamon tea.

We boarded the coaches and continued up the mountain, where the road narrowed and the overhanging forest blocked the sun. A beautiful river flowed below us with many massive rocks inscribed with ancient Chinese script. This took us to the Haeinsa Temple - one of South Korea's three most famous temples - beautifully carved and painted, much like the Bulguksa Temple yesterday. Many beautiful lanterns hung in blocks of mass colour. These are a special feature during the week leading up to Buddha's birthday, which was beginning to approach. Climbing several steps took us to the back of the temple where the Tripitaka is stored in specifically controlled conditions to stop its deterioration. It has been here for more than 750 years. Seeing these blocks gave us a sense of the scale of this amazing masterpiece, which took 16 years to create.

Back on board *Heritage Adventurer* there was time to relax and admire the scenery as we sailed away from Korea and Cathy gave a very helpful and inspiring presentation on Photography Composition. We finished the day with a delicious Japanese-inspired menu including sushi, ramen, panko prawns, chicken teriyaki and green tea sponge dessert. A fantastic way to end the day, as we started our return to Japan.



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Day 8

Sunday, May 5, 2024

Shimonoseki, Japan

It was a leisurely start to the morning as we were out on the decks watching *Heritage Adventurer* threading her way through the busy traffic and many islands leading into Kanmon Strait between Honshu and Kyushu Islands. We arrived dockside in Shimonoseki in the late morning and passed through immigration formalities to re-enter Japan.

Once cleared, we walked along the shore to a busy shopping mall and the Karato Fish Market. A huge variety of food was available including the local delicacy of pufferfish, for those brave enough to try it – pufferfish being deadly if not prepared by Takumi-level chefs.

Following lunch ashore or on board *Heritage Adventurer*, we set off on our tour of Shimonoseki. Our first stop was at the Shiranoe Botanical Garden. The floral displays were just beginning to emerge due to the early season, but we enjoyed the beautiful scenery and walked to the lookout point through the lovely landscape. The stop at Kokura Castle showed how this impressive citadel had been rebuilt in 1959 and was enlivened by the many characters dressed in period costumes. The locals had a chance to cosplay as costumes were available for hire, so there were young samurai everywhere. The final stop was at the top of the hill at Hinoyama Park where another scenic walk led to expansive views of the Sea of Japan and onward into the Seto Inland Sea.

We hadn't been back on board for long before Kay announced a barbeque dinner was available on the Aft Deck. As it had been all day, the weather was cool and breezy, so we rugged up and enjoyed the alfresco dining as the sun set on the fantastic view around us.

In a switch from the usual routine, the recap and briefing followed dinner - along with the next of Rosemary's presentations: My Japanese Journey. To finish off an amazing day in Shimonoseki and given our nearby berth close to the market and shopping area, we enjoyed an excursion to experience Golden Week, alongside local families engaging in their evening entertainments.



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Day 9

Monday, May 6, 2024

Uwajima

After a voyage filled with fantastic weather, grey clouds greeted us as we approached Uwajima. We managed to hold off the rain through the morning, but the afternoon demonstrated Japan's famously variable weather. This meant that our two groups had somewhat different experiences with each of the four destinations being seen in both conditions.

The stunning sites of Tenshaen Garden and Uwajima Castle were visible from *Heritage Adventurer*, so it was a short journey in. The castle is, like Matsue, one of the 12 original, not rebuilt, castles in Japan, and it is a thing of beauty. We walked up the hill following a gently winding path and enjoyed a spectacular view of the castle from the plateau at the top. Moving into the interior allowed us to view the staunch structure dating back to the beginning of the Edo Period in 1601. This would clearly have been a tough nut to crack.

Tenshaen Garden dates from the end of the Edo Period as it was built in 1866. It has a direct connection with the castle as it was built by the seventh feudal lord of the Date clan. The name means "a place where a greater power allows us to enjoy our life" and it's packed with classical features. The promenade around the pond gave ever-changing views across to the misty mountains. The structures, including wisteria arches, gave stunning shape and texture. For those who were there in the rain the circles of ripples from the rain added another element of serenity to the pond. It was an absolute delight.

For the other half of the day, we drove along winding coastal roads to the outer reaches of Uwajima. The scenery was beautiful as we passed inlets with cultivated pearl and fish farms. The region is also famous for its mandarin oranges and the Yuzumizugaura Terrace Field, and the terraced walls, which were put in after the Second World War. We were met by the locals and shown around the terraced areas. We walked to the top of the fields where we enjoyed spectacular views across the bay.

After a delicious potato tasting, which was a bowl of handmade crisps and a baked potato each, we visited a pearl farm and learned the fascinating process of cultivation and harvesting of the pearls. After which we checked out the shops, where there were so many gorgeous pieces of jewellery that some of us couldn't resist a purchase.

Back on board *Heritage Adventurer*, and in preparation for our visit to Hiroshima, Hide-san shared the story of Sadako Sasaki and taught us how to fold origami cranes. We got busy preparing our offering in memory of this brave girl and to support the city's quest for peace in the world.

After another full day of unique adventures, back on board *Heritage Adventurer* we had plenty to talk about in the evening.



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Day 10

Tuesday, May 7, 2024

Hiroshima and Miyajima

Our final Zodiac shuttle of the voyage was to the stunning Miyajima Island – literally meaning Shrine Island. We were there to visit Itsukushima Shrine and its famous ‘floating’ torii gate. We made our landing at high tide with stunning reflections of the gate and the sea flowing under the shrine itself. The shrine was our first destination, but there was much more to see. Up the hill, we walked to the many pavilions of the Daisho-in temple. The bell rang regularly over the hillside walk of 500 small Buddhas with red caps - who guide small children who die too young to know the way to the afterlife.

The town itself was very pleasant and had plenty of retail and food options with the oysters proving quite popular. Roaming the streets alongside us were the charming resident deer population.

Back on board for lunch, *Heritage Adventurer* made the short transit to the port of Hiroshima. From there, we headed to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. This area has been set aside to commemorate the dropping of the atomic bomb at 8:15 am on August 6, 1945. The people of Hiroshima have made it their mission to ensure that the world does not forget the horrors of nuclear war and symbolises their quest for world peace. The museum gives a stark depiction of those horrors and the suffering of the victims. The surrounding park contains the cenotaph, the eternal flame, the A-bomb Dome, and the monument to Sadako Sasaki – the young girl whose death started the tradition of delivering origami paper cranes to the city as a peace offering. Despite the sombre subject, the park and city’s message of peace shines through.

It turned out that the hotel team had done a bit of shopping at Miyajima while we were away. Shortly after re-boarding we were called to the pool deck for oysters and sake. The oysters had been

purchased straight off the oyster boat and hand-shucked by Head Chef Gunther. If you enjoy the taste of raw oysters, then you know that they are delicious!

This day of contrasts and surprises finished with a chance to meet for a drink and to discuss our voyage so far, hear the recap and briefing, check out the shop, and enjoy some more superb food and service from the galley and dining room teams.



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Day 11

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

Uno

We berthed at the Port of Uno to access Okayama and Kurashiki. The coach journeys were different from previous ports of call. Instead of a quick transit from the city and into the countryside, we were in developed areas for almost the entire journey. There were a few rice paddies, but the view out of the coach windows was mostly shopping centres, industrial areas, residential housing and business districts. In Japan, these blend together so it was a good chance to get a glimpse of the daily lives of the locals.

The Okayama Korakuen Garden is rated as one of the three finest feudal period gardens in Japan – along with the Kanazawa's Kenrokuen Garden. Despite this shared reputation, the two gardens are remarkably different. Our walk around the pond at Korakuen was through open lawns with a viewpoint on the hill, and many stream crossings on unique bridges or stepping stones. Each tree was individually shaped to complement the landscape, and the Okayama Castle was visible from many sections. An aviary of endangered Red Crowned Cranes is kept on the grounds, and the cranes fly over the garden on special occasions.

We had our lunch at a hotel in Kurashiki – bento boxes with a traditional dish in each compartment. Kurashiki is the location of the Bikan Historical Quarter which is the home of the Ohara Museum of Art. The prosperous area along the river is lined with well-preserved storehouses and residences from the Edo Period. Strolling the circuit with the river boats and swans for company gave a real feeling of having travelled back in time.

Ohara Art Museum was one of the first repositories for Western art in Japan. It has an excellent collection of both classic and modern art, Western and Japanese. The collection has been displayed to highlight the cross-cultural influences, with excellent signage in English.

We arrived back on board *Heritage Adventurer* and set sail through the Seto Inland Sea. With a gorgeous sunset (in the Land of the Rising Sun), the Captain's Farewell Cocktails gave us the chance to thank all the teams that have made this voyage such a pleasure. Cathy provided the exclamation mark on the voyage with her fantastic slideshow. It seemed only a short time ago that we met in Tokyo, but looking back at all the adventures and activities, we could see that we had experienced a lot on our journey. Dinner was loud and long as we all recounted the fabulous memories we made on our Eternal Japan & South Korea voyage.



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Day 12

Thursday, May 9, 2024

Osaka

It was a sad farewell as the luggage was moved to the passageway, one final breakfast together enjoyed, and contact information exchanged. Time then for a final walk down the gangway and one last wave to the Expedition Team as we headed off on new adventures, secure in the knowledge that this expedition, and our time together on board *Heritage Adventurer*, will linger in our memories for a long time.



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