

DISCOVER THE ISLANDS OF JAPAN

on board HERITAGE ADVENTURER

19 - 29 April 2026



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Day 1

Sunday 19th April 2026

Tokyo

As we arrived at The Westin Hotel in Tokyo, we met the Heritage Expeditions staff in the lobby, along with a few of our fellow adventurers. After we settled into our rooms, we headed out to enjoy a meal marking the start of our Discover the Islands of Japan expedition. Over a delicious and varied dinner and dessert buffet, we began getting to know one another. With our room numbers attached to our luggage tags, the evening wound down as some of us caught up on sleep after international flights, while others set out to explore the local attractions.



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Day 2

Monday 20th April 2026

Tokyo and Kanazawa

We enjoyed a fabulous breakfast, which gave us the chance to reconnect with those we met the previous evening and to meet new fellow travellers before heading out for our day in Tokyo. In warm conditions, our first stop was Tsukiji Market – far more than just a fish market. We were given free time to wander the lively aisles and explore the many fascinating stalls. With so many tempting treats on offer, many began to regret their big breakfasts, while others enthusiastically supported the local economy, particularly with the purchase of finely crafted knives.

We regrouped for the drive to the Imperial Palace East Gardens, where it was fascinating to see the area where the Emperor resides. It was also an opportunity to gain insight into the history of the Imperial Family and the Shogunate, as well as to appreciate Japan's distinctive garden and architectural design.

At 1230 hours, we arrived at Tokyo Station to begin our journey to Kanazawa. The station was buzzing with people, and we navigated the maze of corridors and

escalators following our guides. Before long, we had all made it to the platform, boarded the Shinkansen Bullet Train, and were underway.

Soon after departure, the team distributed bento boxes, providing us with a true Japanese-style lunch. Travelling at speeds of up to 300km per hour, we quickly left Tokyo's high-rise buildings behind, passing through small towns and rural farmhouses surrounded by rice paddies. Snow still capped the mountains, and the scenery was both stunning and captivating.

The 2.5-hour journey passed quickly, and we soon arrived at Kanazawa Station. From there, we transferred by coach to the port to board our beautiful new home for the adventure ahead, *Heritage Adventurer*. After settling in, we dispersed to explore our expedition vessel, then gathered for the lifeboat drill and introductory briefings. Hotel Director Andrew welcomed us aboard and introduced us to life on *Heritage Adventurer*, while Expedition Leader Steve outlined what to expect during our travels and introduced the expedition team and local Japanese guides – the experts who would help us make the most of our time in Japan. Shortly afterwards, we had our first opportunity to enjoy the delicious offerings from the galley and dining room staff.



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Day 3

Tuesday 21st April 2026

Kanazawa

At the briefing, Steve reminded us that we had selected our optional excursions for each destination. Accordingly, blue or green tickets were delivered to our room doors, indicating whether we were joining Option 1 or 2. With the process clear, we were ready to board the coaches for our first full day of activities.

Kanazawa is known for rain, and although it had been wet overnight, the morning greeted us with cool, cloudy conditions.

Those on Option 1 travelled through the city, across the countryside, and into the mountains – quite literally ‘through’ them, as we navigated a series of tunnels, some several kilometres long. At around 400 metres elevation, the village of Shirakawa-go is not especially high but is renowned for its heavy winter snowfall. Even now, there was still snow visible on the surrounding peaks.

This village remains inhabited and is preserved in a traditional ‘folk style’, with most houses featuring thick thatched roofs. It was a delight to see cherry and peach trees still in blossom at this elevation, alongside vibrant Tulips and

Daffodils. We visited the historic Kanda House, where 400 years ago paper, gunpowder, and silk were produced, before enjoying some free time to explore at our own pace. A short but scenic drive brought us to Gokayama for lunch, set in a forested location. Here, we were treated to a traditional Japanese hot-pot feast.

In the afternoon, under drier skies, we visited Suganuma Gassho-zukuri Village, another traditional 'folk style' village, though much smaller, with just 12 houses. We had the site almost entirely to ourselves while our local guide, who was born there, shared personal insights into life in this remote region.

Meanwhile, guests on Option 2 began the day with a walking exploration of the Nagamachi Samurai District. Once home to the city's elite samurai, the area features narrow streets lined with traditional wooden houses. Inside the historic Nomura family residence, we admired elegant architecture, tatami flooring, and sliding doors opening onto a serene courtyard garden complete with stone lanterns, lush plantings, and large Koi fish in the pond. We also explored the streets and browsed shops selling sweets and Kutani pottery, known for its vivid colours and intricate designs.

The group then explored the winding lanes of Omicho Market, Kanazawa's main market since 1603. It was bustling with fresh seafood, including oysters, crabs, and a variety of other local delicacies. After lunch, back on board, we visited the impressive Kanazawa Castle, set within expansive park-like grounds. Although not original, the reconstruction has been carried out using historically accurate techniques and materials. Nearby, Kenroku-en Garden – considered one of Japan's three most celebrated strolling gardens – offered a stunning display of landscape design. Dating back to the 17th century, it embodies six key attributes: spaciousness, seclusion, artifice, antiquity, water features, and magnificent views. Some of us even sampled the area's famous gold leaf ice cream.

Our final excursion of the day gave us the opportunity to try our hand at the traditional craft of gold leaf pasting. Using gold leaf produced in Kanazawa for over 400 years, we created our own personalised keepsakes to take home.

We returned to *Heritage Adventurer* and set off for our next destination. After some time to refresh, we gathered in the lounge for the Captain's Welcome Cocktails, where we met Captain Sergiy and the heads of department who would be looking after us throughout the voyage. The evening concluded with a special Captain's

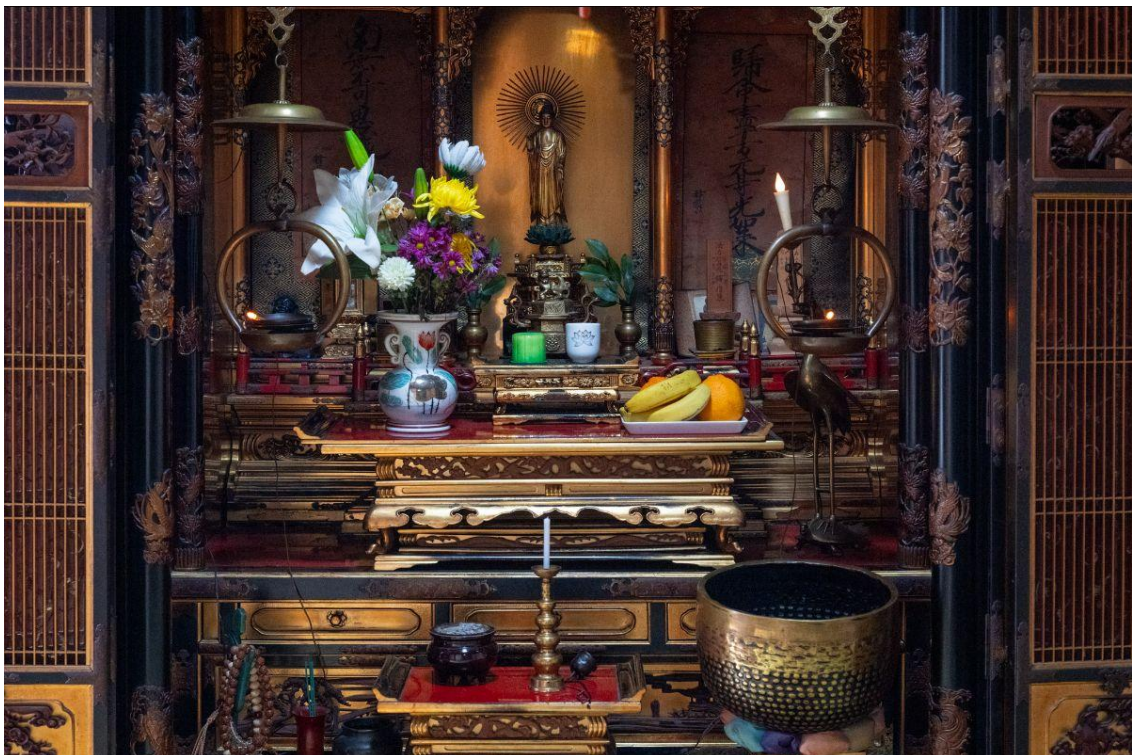
Welcome Dinner, thoughtfully prepared by the galley team – a wonderful end to an excellent day and a promising start to the journey ahead.



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Day 4

Wednesday 22nd April 2026

Sakaiminato/Matsue

The 'motion of the ocean' gave us a gentle ride south along the west coast before *Heritage Adventurer* berthed at the wharf in the port city of Sakaiminato. From here, we set out to explore the region around Matsue under cool, cloudy skies.

From the expedition vessel, guests on Option 1 could see Mount Daisen in the distance. It gradually grew larger as we drove through the city, across rural landscapes, and into the forested foothills of the mountain.

On arrival, we met our three local guides and divided into shorter and longer walking groups. Both followed winding paths through Beech forest and impressive Japanese Cedar, passing shrines, temples and numerous small statues adorned with knitted red caps – a tribute to Jizo Bodhisattva, protector of the souls of children who died in infancy.

This Buddhist monastery complex was once home to more than 3,000 soldier-monks. Along the way, we visited the over 1000-year-old Daisenji Temple and continued up to Ogamiyama Shrine. The climb involved many steps, but the reward was the beauty of the wooden architecture and the serene atmosphere at the top.

After our hike, we were ready for a well-earned lunch. We arrived at a stunning venue set up like a wedding reception, where doors opened to reveal an array of meats and seafood. We were treated to a delicious barbecue feast in a picturesque setting, sampling everything from salads and scallops to steak and fresh fruit. Many happily returned for seconds – and even thirds.

The drive back, passing *Heritage Adventurer* and continuing on to the coastal village of Mihonoseki, provided a chance for a recharge. Those who stayed awake enjoyed the winding seaside road, spotting Cormorants, Grebes and even a couple of dolphins near the shore.

Mihonoseki, a quiet fishing village and the original Sakaiminato, offered a step back in time. Here we visited a large Shinto shrine dedicated to the Kami (Shinto gods) associated with seafaring and fishing. With guidance from our local guides, we performed traditional cleansing rituals before making wishes at the shrine.

We then wandered through narrow cobbled streets lined with traditional wooden houses, with some sampling the local soy-sauce flavoured ice cream from a nearby factory. A small red bridge leading to a shrine and stone lantern by the water provided a picturesque photo opportunity. From the harbour, we could even look back across the bay to the summit of Mount Daisen, where we had stood earlier that day.

Those on Option 2 began with a visit to the Adachi Museum of Art, which opened in 1970. Its most distinctive feature is the way its windows frame breathtaking Japanese garden landscapes as living works of art. The Adachi gardens, comprising six distinct designs, have been ranked Japan's most beautiful garden for 22 consecutive years. Inside, the museum also houses an impressive collection of Japanese prints and pottery collected by Adachi over his lifetime.

A short walk brought us to the Yasugi-bushi Engeikan, a small theatre where we sat on low but comfortable cushions to enjoy a humorous performance. A highlight was the participation of several guests in a lively and comical pantomime. Lunch followed, offering another exploration of Japanese cuisine, with a variety of flavourings to enhance rice and rich broth dishes.

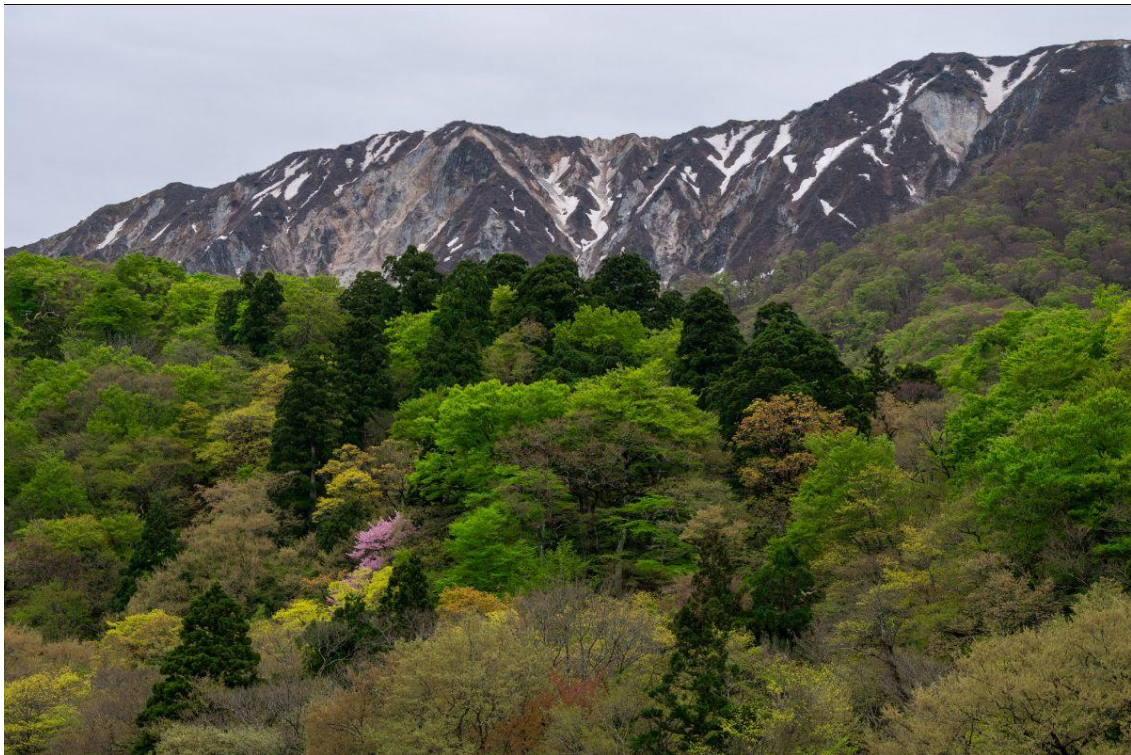
At Matsue Castle, one of only twelve original castles remaining in Japan, we climbed many stairs to the top. The effort was rewarded with panoramic views and a deeper appreciation of the strength and design of these historic fortifications.

In the late afternoon, both groups reunited at Yuushien Gardens. Our visit began with a selection of superb sushi accompanied by green tea or coffee, after which we had time to explore the gardens at our leisure. The delicate red bridge, moss-covered banks, carefully raked zen dry rock spaces, and misty pond created a scene of quiet beauty. We wandered along twisting paths and across stepping stones, searching for the perfect vantage point to capture the garden's harmony and design.

Back on board, we prepared for the following day's Zodiac operations before gathering at the Bistro and aft deck for a special barbecue dinner, expertly prepared by the galley team – a relaxed and fitting end to another memorable day.



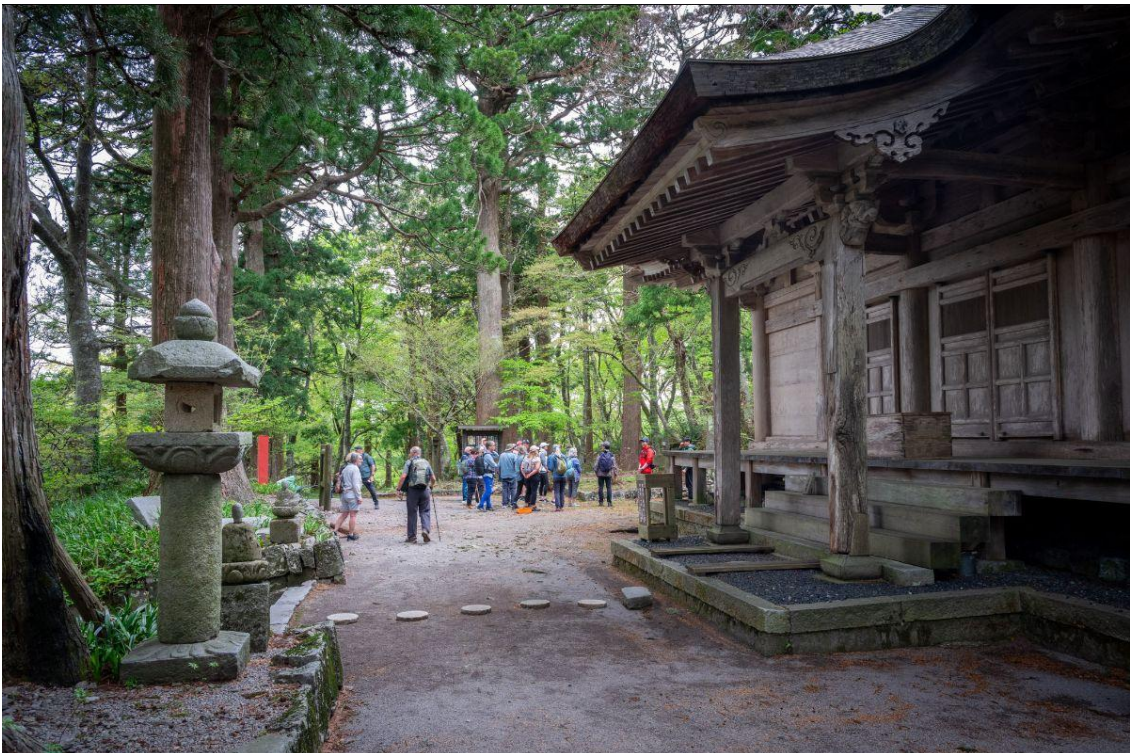
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Day 5

Thursday 23rd April 2026

Hagi

At Hagi, the wet weather of Japan's west coast finally caught up with us. Although we enjoyed a 'dry' Zodiac landing (no wading ashore required), umbrellas and rain gear quickly became essential for our excursions.

Some of us ventured through the town and into the surrounding rice paddies, passing abandoned houses before climbing onto the limestone plateau to visit Akiyoshido Cave – one of Japan's largest and most impressive cave systems. Entering via a 'time tunnel' that blended theme park-style art with nature, we soon emerged into the vast underground world. The scale of the cavern became clear as we joined the main river flowing through it. Many of the cave's highlights were thoughtfully illuminated, with English commentary enhancing the experience. As the cave narrowed, we encountered terraces of creamy white limestone filled with still water, reflecting the delicate formations above. At the exit, we faced a delightful dilemma: choosing from more than 100 flavours of ice cream.

Other excursions included a visit to the Yoshika Taibi Memorial Museum and workshop. Here, we learned how Hagi-ware (or Hagi yaki) pottery was introduced from Korea and later elevated from everyday use to fine art by Yoshika Taibi, the founder of the studio. We admired his remarkable works in the museum and watched skilled artisans shaping clay at their wheels. Naturally, many of us couldn't resist browsing – and supporting the local economy – in the shop.

We also explored the ruins of Hagi Castle, where the Mori Clan ruled from 1604. Walking among the moats and stone foundations where the keep once stood, it was easy to imagine life here 400 years ago. With its remnant gardens and old teahouse, the site offered a peaceful and evocative stroll.

Nearby, the Samurai district revealed another layer of history. Once home to warriors serving the local Daimyo (feudal lord), it now preserves the atmosphere of the Edo Period. We visited the Kikuya Residence, a traditional home belonging to a wealthy merchant closely connected to the ruling clan. Filled with artefacts and surrounded by a serene garden, it offered a fascinating glimpse of what life was like for a close friend and supporter of the Daimyo at the time.

Our final stop was Tokoji Temple, an impressive Buddhist site and the resting place of the odd-numbered generations of the Mori dynasty. The grounds are lined with

more than 500 stone lanterns, which are candle-lit twice a year during the equinoxes – surely a spectacular sight.

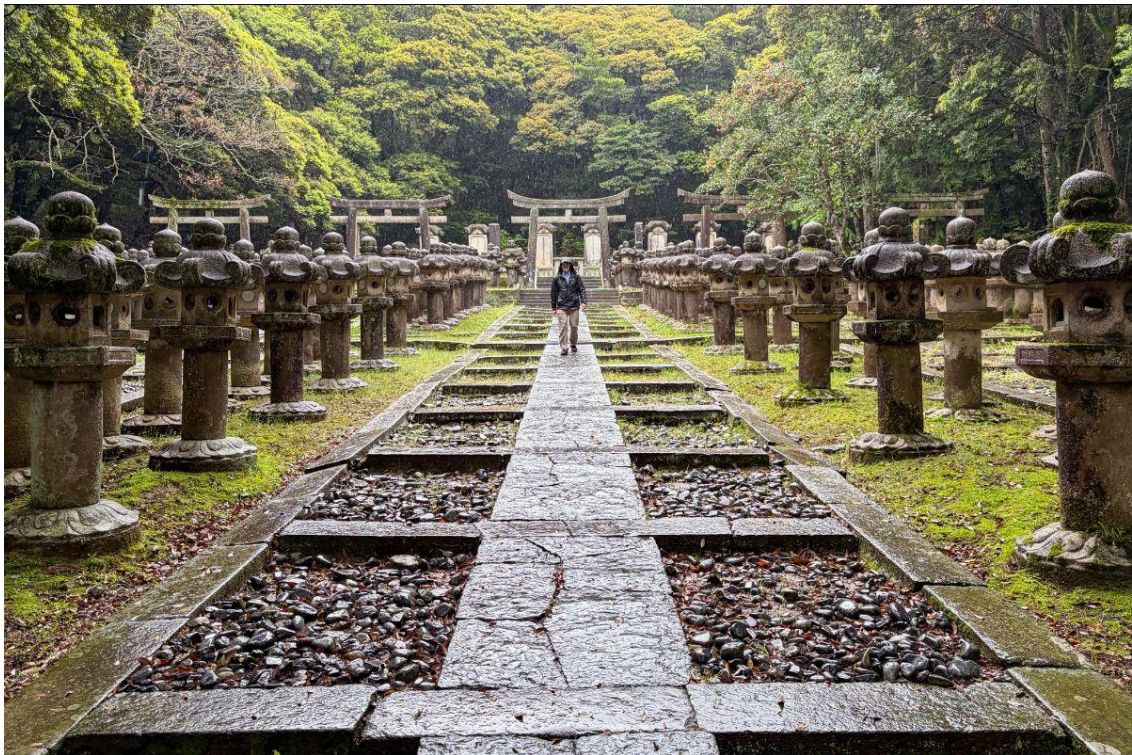
A final Zodiac ride brought us back to *Heritage Adventurer*, where we cleared immigration and officially departed Japan. Setting into the rhythm of life on board, we gathered for the daily recap and briefing, drinks in hand and curiosity piqued, before enjoying another delectable meal. Next stop: South Korea.



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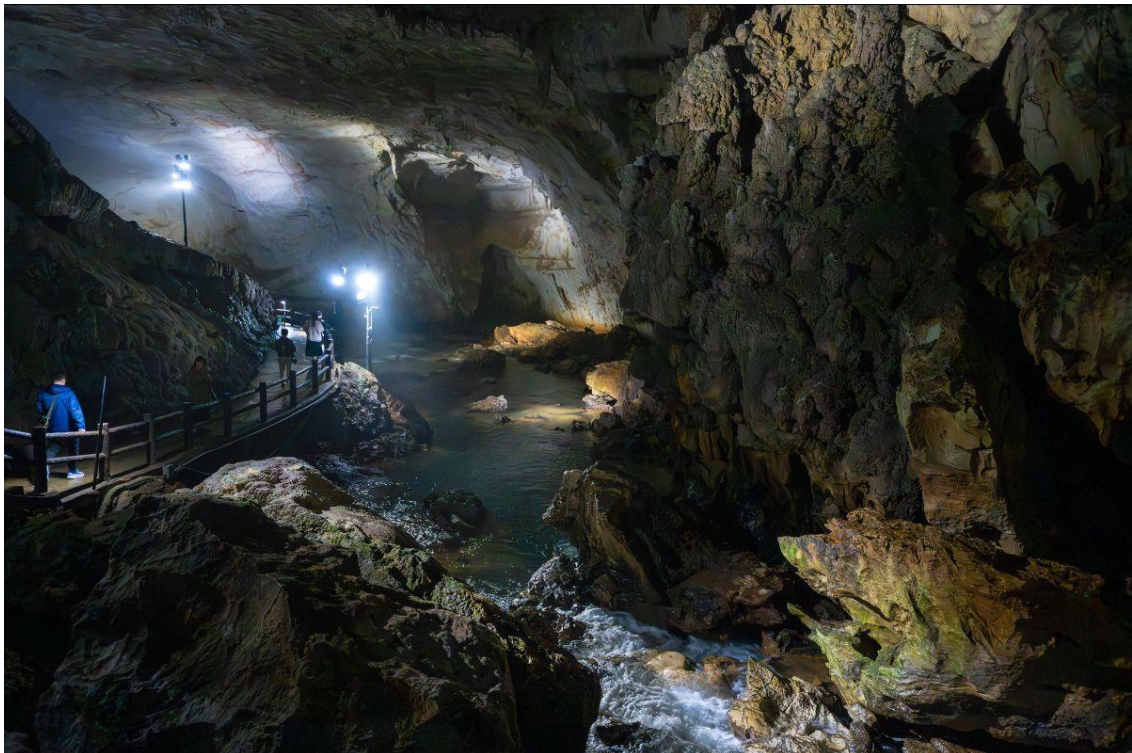
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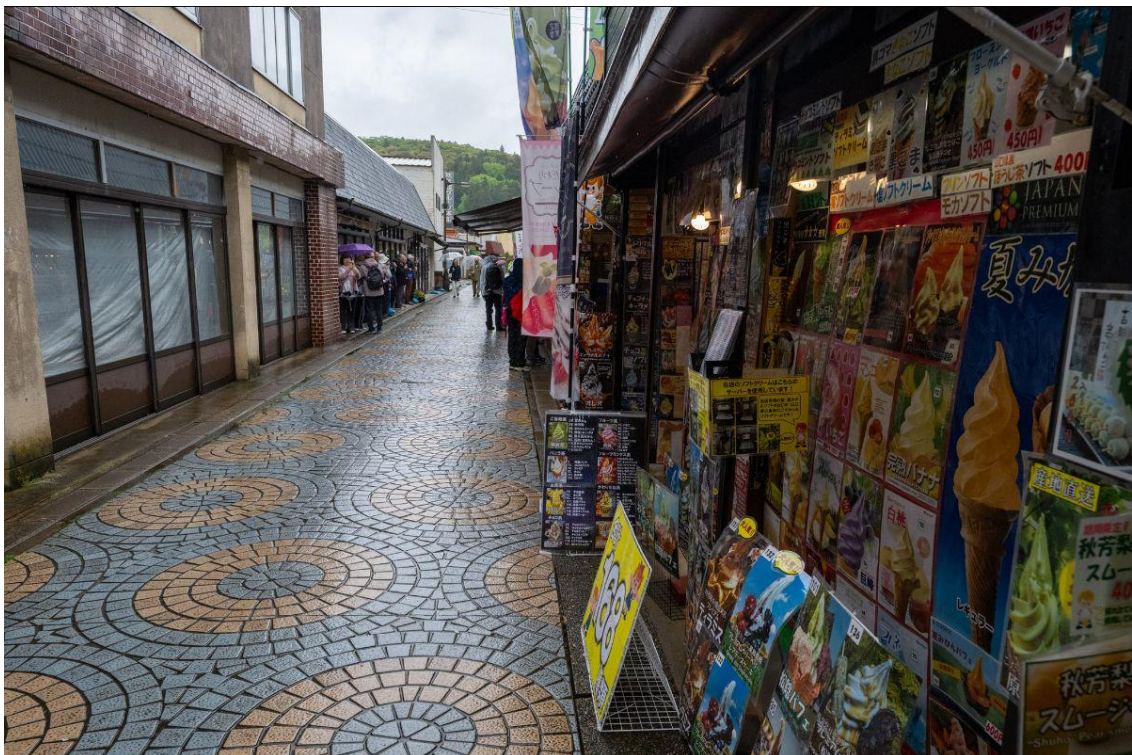
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Day 6

Friday 24th April 2026

Busan, South Korea

Our transit across the Sea of Japan proved a little lively, but we were rewarded with a calm, sunlit arrival into a busy port – conditions that held beautifully throughout the day.

Today's excursions offered a variety of overlapping highlights, beginning with a visit to Haedong Yonggungsa Temple. Bustling with visitors, the site was alive with colour and energy. The walking trail was lined with little shrines, Buddhas, and stone statues, including a row of Zodiac animals and even a pair of golden pigs said to bring good luck. A steep staircase led us to the temple bridge – symbolic of the passage from the everyday world to a sacred place. A sign proclaimed it 'The Most Beautiful Temple in Korea', and it was hard to disagree. Set against the rugged coastline, with ornately carved buildings and vibrant lanterns celebrating Buddha's Birthday, the scene was truly striking.

At the 100-storey Sky Building, BUSAN X the SKY, a high-speed elevator whisked us to the top. The animated display during the ascent added a playful touch, while the

panoramic views from above were nothing short of spectacular. Some took the opportunity to enjoy a coffee at the world's highest Starbucks.

A more reflective experience followed at the United Nations Memorial Cemetery, the only UN cemetery in the world. Here, we honoured the contributions of the 22 nations that supported South Korea during the Korean War. The peaceful grounds served as a moving tribute to thousands of young men from countries including Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the USA, and other nations, who made the ultimate sacrifice.

In contrast, Gamcheon Culture Village offered a vibrant burst of creativity. Once a hillside slum, it has been transformed into a colourful and eclectic neighbourhood filled with souvenir shops, craft galleries, cafes and food stalls. We wandered along terraces and stairways, discovering brightly painted walls, whimsical art installations, and countless hidden details. Many of us enjoyed browsing the handmade goods and soaking up the lively atmosphere.

For something a little different, we took a ride on the Songdo Bay Cable Car. Suspended in an eight-seater cable car, some with a glass floor, we glided across to a nearby island. Below us, sculptures of whales and dolphins appeared in the sea. On the far side, walking trails wound along the coast, passing a swing bridge, playground, shops and cafés. On the return journey, some discovered they could connect to the cable car's Bluetooth speaker, adding a personal soundtrack to the experience.

At Taejongdae Park, set on a scenic peninsula, we had the option to explore a loop trail on foot or take a mini train around the park. Whether walking or riding, the area offered a relaxing way to take in the coastal scenery.

For those who chose to have lunch ashore, our culinary journey continued with Korean flavours – rice, vegetables, and a delicious seafood pancake/pizza.

Back on board, we gathered in the lounge for the evening's programme, followed by another excellent dinner. Afterwards, there was an opportunity to sharpen our photography skills with Daniel, rounding off a full and memorable day.



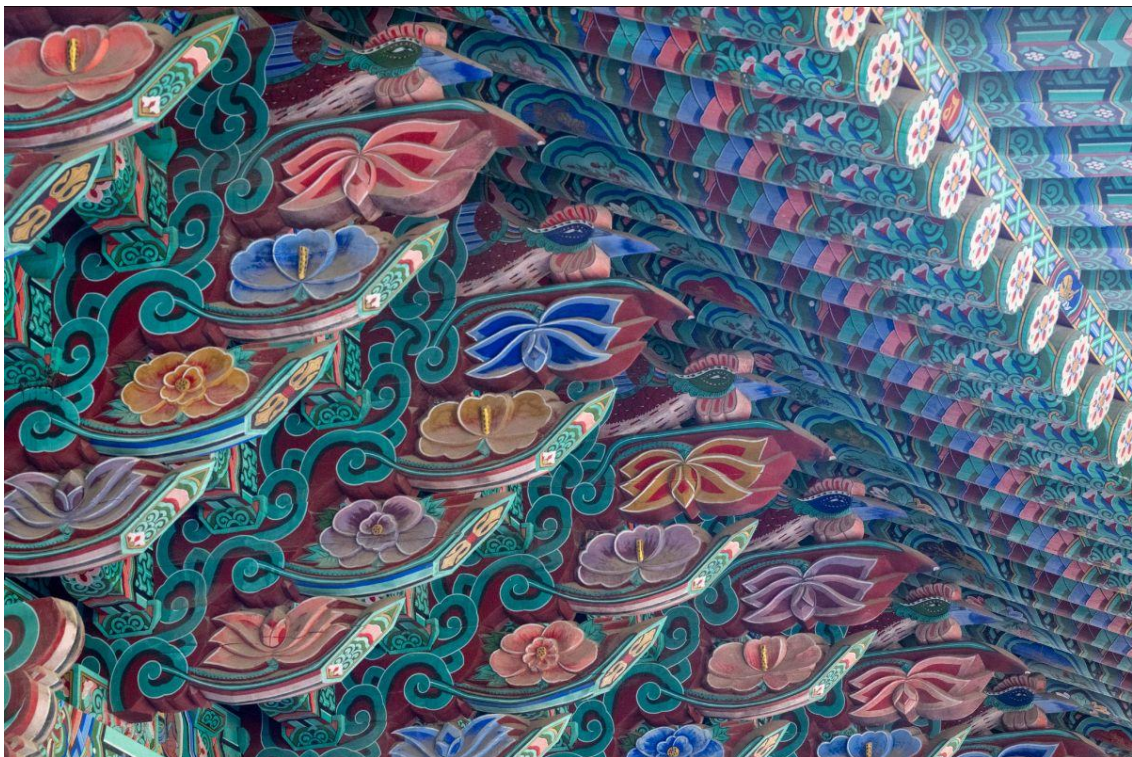
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Day 7

Saturday 25th April 2026

Sasebo/Nagasaki, Japan

Our return transit across the Sea of Japan was noticeably smoother, and Japan welcomed us back with a warm, sunny day. Immigration formalities were completed on board before we disembarked and boarded our coaches for the day's excursions.

Those on Option 1 travelled through the city of Saesbo and across lush, rolling hills en route to Nagasaki. Our first stop was the Atomic Bomb Museum, which powerfully conveyed the devastating impact of the bomb dropped at 11:02am on 9 August 1945. The exhibits brought home the scale of destruction and the lasting effects of radiation on both the city and its people – consequences still felt today. From there, we took a short walk to the Peace Park, a moving sculpture garden where artworks from around the world express a shared commitment to peace and a hope for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

After a short drive, we enjoyed a delicious bento box lunch at the Crowne Hotel. We then wandered at our leisure along a charming cobblestone street lined with

small shops, making our way towards the Glover Garden. Along the way, a series of escalators carried us to the garden's higher levels, where sweeping views of the harbour and city awaited. The historic homes here are among the oldest Western-style buildings still standing in Japan. As Celtic music drifted through the air, we strolled among beautifully maintained gardens and encountered tributes to 'Madame Butterfly'.

Guests on Option 2 began on the other side of the city at the historic Yamashita House. Built by a wealthy Edo-period sake brewer, this elegant guesthouse once hosted the local Daimyo during his journeys to Edo (modern-day Tokyo) to visit the Shogun. Travelling with a retinue of up to 150 people, these visits must have been an impressive spectacle. The house offered a glimpse into refined hospitality, with luxurious furnishings and a small but inquisitive courtyard. For many of us, the highlight was sampling the sake brewed on-site; several found a favourite to bring home.

We then continued to the Kujukushima Observatory. 'Kujuku' means 99 in Japan, a poetic way of suggesting 'uncountable', a fitting description for the scattered islands stretching across the bay. The panoramic views were breathtaking.

After lunch, back on board, we crossed town once more to visit Mikawachi, a renowned centre for traditional pottery. It was here in the 1500s that Korean potters discovered the ideal limestone for producing fine porcelain. At the local museum, we learned about the rich history before setting out on foot through the village. Moving from workshop to kiln, we were warmly welcomed by artisans and their families, who shared their craft through demonstrations and conversation. The artistry was exceptional, but the quiet charm of the unspoiled village was equally memorable.

Returning to *Heritage Adventurer*, we were treated to a delightful farewell performance by the Sasebo Sound Club, the local Brass Band. Their lively medley, including 'Anchors Aweigh', provided a fitting send-off as the Captain guided our expedition vessel out to sea. We gathered for the evening recap and briefing, followed by a special Japanese dinner. Tommy's after-dinner talk on Japanese Folklore left us reflecting on the day and wondering if this had been the highlight of the voyage so far.



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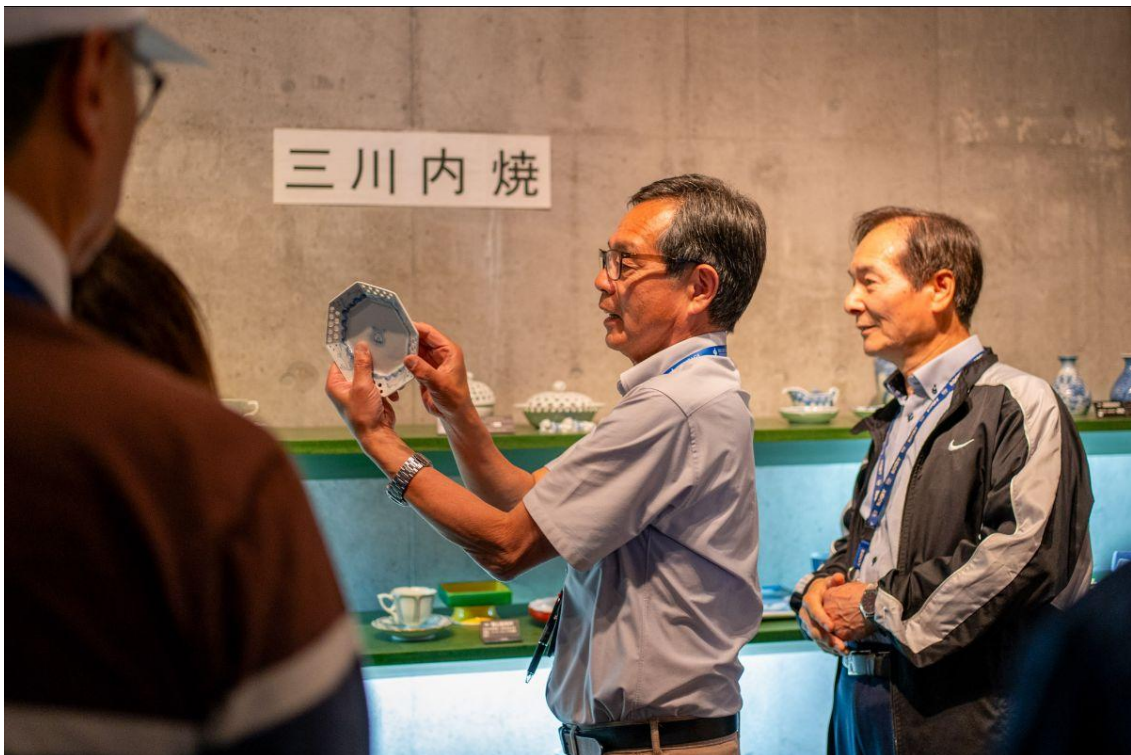
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Day 8

Sunday 26 April 2026

Yakushima

Yakushima Island is known as the wettest place in Japan, so it came as no surprise that we were greeted by a light drizzle on arrival. We had been forewarned that this morning's walks, whether long or short, would involve a variety of terrain. Some of us opted for a relaxing morning aboard, while others geared up with rain jackets and umbrellas, ready for adventure.

Those heading ashore boarded coaches for a shared destination. The drive began along the rugged coastline, passing through small villages and towns, before turning inland towards the mountains and the UNESCO World Heritage area. The road soon narrowed into a winding ascent. Along the way, we were delighted to spot a troop of Japanese Macaques, grooming and socialising, with mothers tending to their young.

Arriving at Yakusugi Land, we set off on walking circuits of varying lengths. Much of the track consisted of boardwalks and steps, though longer routes required adventuring over rugged terrain. Trails wound up and down valley sides, crossing

rushing streams and revealing the island's distinctive granite rock – so different from Japan's more typical volcanic landscape.

The forest itself was a rich tapestry of diverse plant life, but the true stars were the Sugi trees. Often referred to as Japanese Cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica*), these trees dominate the landscape. While many were logged over centuries for timber and shingles, some ancient giants have endured. The oldest Yakusugi are thought to be over 5,000 years old, and we encountered several that had already stood for more than 1,200 years – silent witnesses to centuries of history.

Some of us also visited the Yakusugi Museum, where we gained deeper insight into both the natural environment and human history of the island. The building itself, constructed from local timber, was a beautiful example of the material's enduring appeal.

Returning to *Heritage Adventurer*, we were welcomed by a well-earned lunch and yet another delightful farewell performance – this time by a local elementary school brass band. The day continued with a High Tea on the High Seas, followed by a special introduction to the Japanese tea ceremony and a kimono demonstration. Tina, together with our Japanese guide, Yoshi-san, explained the history and meaning behind the ritual, carefully walking us through the intricate layers of robes and obi belts, each carrying its own cultural significance. After dinner, the evening's education programme continued with John's engaging talk on 'The Life of a Geisha', bringing the day to a thoughtful and culturally rich close.



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Day 9

Monday 27th April 2026

Uwajima

On our early morning approach to Uwajima, we were greeted by a flotilla of fishing boats, their crews waving flags in a warm welcome. A small group set off for the Yusumizugaura Terraced Fields, winding along the coast through a maze of inlets, bays and fishing villages. From below, the 80-metre climb up the stone terraces looked daunting, but most of us made it to the top.

Historically, these terraces were built from earth and used for buckwheat farming. Over time, dry-stone walls replaced the soil, and around 60 years ago, potatoes became the primary crop. Today, only a remnant of the once far more extensive fields remains. Harvesting was underway, and we met local farmers – many of them older residents - carefully digging their crop by hand. From the top, the views over fish farms, the bay, and distant mountains were spectacular. At the base, we were rewarded with simple but delicious tastings of potato crisps and steamed potatoes with butter and salt.

After lunch, we continued to Yakushidani Gorge for a beautiful forest walk among

mature cedar trees. The trail wound alongside a clear mountain stream, crossing waterfalls and bridges in a constantly changing landscape. At times challenging, the walk was nonetheless magical – perhaps one of the most memorable forest experiences of the voyage. At the trailhead, we enjoyed a uniquely Japanese treat: flowing noodles, caught with chopsticks from a stream of running water, before returning to *Heritage Adventurer* for a well-earned rest.

Meanwhile, others explored a range of local sites throughout the day. At the Doi Pearl Company, guests witnessed the intricate process of cultured pearl production. The second and third generation family business provided a hands-on demonstration, with the highlight for many being the moment a pearl was carefully extracted from an oyster. The industry remains deeply connected to the local community, from oyster cultivation through to the creation of beautiful jewellery – much of which tempted us in the shop.

For those who climbed to Uwajima Castle, the ascent began gently through the forest before giving way to steep, twisting stone staircases built as part of the original defences. Those who reached the top agreed the effort was worthwhile, rewarded with views of one of Japan's 12 remaining original castles. As we descended, Black Kites circled overhead in impressive aerial displays.

At the historic district of Unomachi, we were welcomed by locals in traditional kimonos, who guided us through this beautifully preserved Edo-period town. The streets are lined with former feudal buildings, many now serving as small museums. These included a restored schoolhouse complete with a teacher, and the Uwa Folk Historical Museum, showcasing cultural and everyday artefacts from both historic and modern times.

Our journey through the region's history continued at the impressive Ehime Prefectural Museum. Exhibits traced the story of the area from the prehistoric Jōmon period to the modern day. Upstairs, carefully curated rooms displayed artefacts, documents, dioramas, and reconstructions spanning key historical eras, while the ground floor showcased the vibrant cultural life of the region through festival costumes, masks, floats and lanterns.

As we departed, we gathered on deck for a flag-waving farewell to match our arrival. The evening recap and briefing were as engaging as ever, followed by a satisfying dinner. Afterwards, Tina shared her reflections on the 'Essence of Japanese Gardens'.



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Day 10

Tuesday 28th April 2026

Uno Ko

As we approached the port of Uno Ko, the soft light of dawn painted the eastern sky like a Japanese watercolour, promising a fine day for our final shore excursion of the voyage. By breakfast time, we were secured alongside the wharf, and there was a palpable sense of excitement for the day ahead.

Guests in the Option 1 group set out first for Koraku-en Garden, originally established by the Daimyo during the Edo Period. Renowned as one of Japan's 'Three Gardens', it is a classic strolling garden designed around a large central pond. It was easy to see why it holds such acclaim, with its charming bridges, Koi fish, and turtles, and quiet corners perfect for reflection. A highlight for many was the aviary housing Japan's iconic Red-crowned Cranes.

Nearby, Okayama Castle – known as the 'Crow Castle' for its striking black exterior – stood elegantly beside the river. Compared with other castles on our journey, it features more modern conveniences, including a lift between the first and fourth floors, allowing guests who prefer to avoid steep stairs to enjoy the upper levels

and take in sweeping views. The stone ramparts, built in the late 16th century, along with defensive ports for dropping stone or firing weapons, served as a reminder of how formidable it once was.

Gold leaf ornaments glistened in the sunlight, adding a touch of splendour to the historic structure. From there, we travelled across the city to the historic district of Kurashiki. After a traditional bento box lunch at a local restaurant, we joined residents for a leisurely stroll along the canals, where white-walled kura (former storehouses) now house shops selling crafts, artworks, and local delicacies.

Flat-bottomed boats drifted quietly along the waterways, poled by boatmen, while Koi swam beneath. One section of the town even specialised in all things denim – including, surprisingly, denim-coloured ice cream. The Ohara Museum of Art, Japan's first museum dedicated to Western art, proved a major highlight for many. Its collection of renowned masterpieces did not disappoint. As the afternoon heat intensified, shaded benches and ice cream provided welcome relief. The return drive to the port was smooth and offered a relaxed pause after a full and rewarding day.

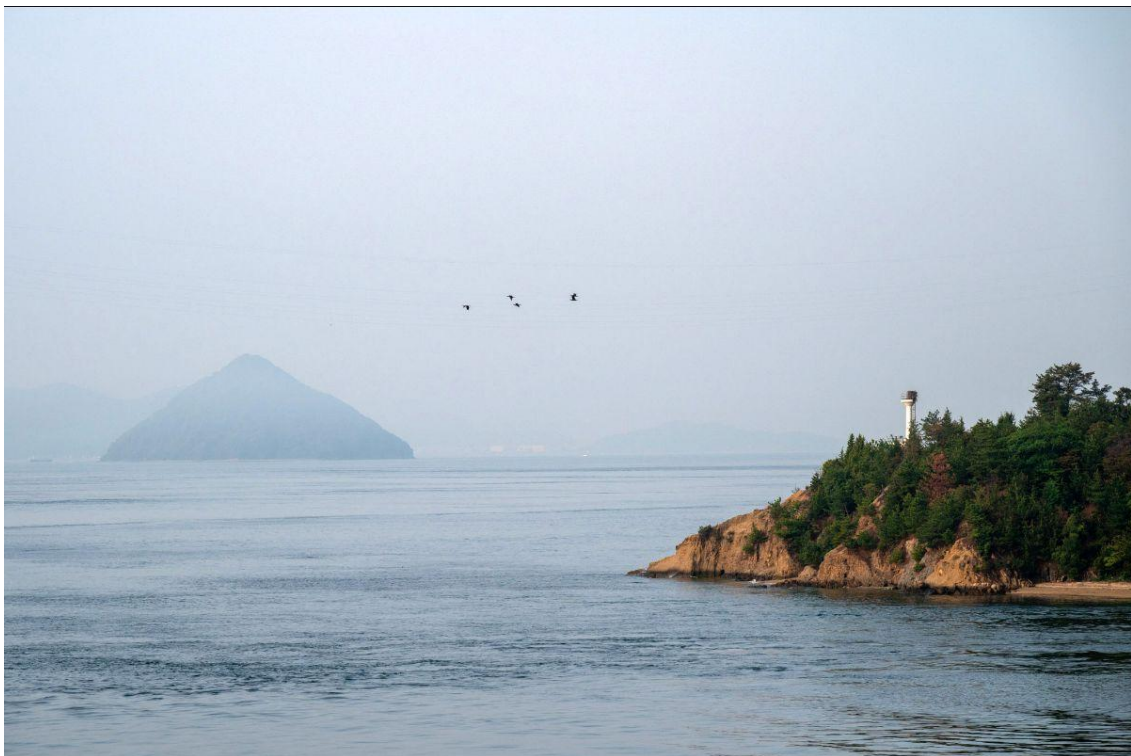
For guests on Option 2, the day began with a stroll through a nearby park, passing striking sculptures of rainbow fish created from marine debris collected along local beaches. We then boarded the ferry for a cruise across to Naoshima Island, enjoying fine views of *Heritage Adventurer* from the water. Known as a centre for contemporary art, Naoshima offered a very different experience.

With maps in hand, we explored the Art House Project - a collection of installations housed within restored traditional buildings that had once fallen into disrepair. These now serve as unique art spaces, including works set inside a Shinto shrine and even an old dentist's house. A seaside bento box lunch provided a welcome break before we visited the island's most famous icons: Yayoi Kusama's yellow pumpkin and a series of whimsical outdoor sculptures.

In the afternoon, we travelled up into the hills in small groups to visit the Benesse House Museum and Chichu Art Museum, both designed by renowned architect Tadao Ando. The buildings themselves are works of art – minimalist, concrete structures designed to integrate natural light and landscape with the artworks they contain. A particular highlight for many was the serene space dedicated to Claude Monet's 'Water Lilies' at the Chichu Museum.

After ice cream and a final stroll through the port's outdoor art installations, we

returned by ferry and prepared for the Captain's Farewell Cocktails and Dinner. This was a chance to thank the many people who had contributed to make this adventure so memorable. Instead of the usual recap and briefing, we were treated to a special final slideshow presentation. Daniel somehow managed to distil the entire expedition into a moving sequence of images, capturing just how much we have seen, experienced, and shared. It was a perfect way to reflect on the journey before heading to dinner, where memories were shared, laughter flowed, and the highlights of an unforgettable voyage were relived one last time.



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Day 11

Wednesday 29th April 2026

Osaka

Our adventure came to an end as we put our luggage outside our doors and gathered for one final breakfast together, exchanging contact details with newly made friends. Afterwards, it was time for a last walk down the gangway and a final farewell to the Expedition Team. As we stepped ashore, we carried with us the shared experiences of our unforgettable Discover the Islands of Japan adventure. While it was time to head off in our different directions, we did so secure in the knowledge that this expedition – and our time aboard *Heritage Adventurer* – will remain with us for a very long time to come.