



GLOBAL CYCLING
ADVENTURES

Japan - Kyushu Onsen to Onsen

Fukuoka to Beppu

OVERVIEW

Cycling and Japanese hot spring (onsen) culture are a match made in heaven. And there's no better place to experience this synergy than Kyushu, an island in the southern Japanese Archipelago - celebrated for its rich heritage of traditional onsen. This 6-day traverse across northeast Kyushu leads us on backcountry roads through rice fields, along rivers, up mountain passes, and to historic temples and cultural landmarks as we connect a string of onsen towns by bike.

Our tour begins in Fukuoka, Kyushu's urban hub. We head east and begin cycling from one of Japan's most prominent Shinto shrines towards Hita, via farmlands, the Chikugo River, and forested hills. The following two days will involve more ascents and descents as we tackle the Fushiki Pass, once a part of the "Kaido" highway. We trace the slopes of volcanic Mount Futago on our way to the coast of the Kunisaki Peninsula. Our last riding day leads us to Beppu, one of Japan's onsen meccas, where we finish the tour. The cycling is complemented by plenty of cultural highlights, such as one of Japan's oldest wooden temples (Fuki-ji) and smallest Samurai castles (Kitsuki).

- DURATION - 7 DAYS
- AVERAGE DISTANCE PER DAY - 46 KM
- ARRIVAL DESTINATION - KYOTO
- DEPARTURE DESTINATION - KYOTO

ITINERARY

DAY 1 MEET IN FUKUOKA

We meet in Fukuoka, Kyushu's largest metropolis and also one of Japan's most populated cities. For many centuries, Fukuoka has been an important hub in East Asian maritime trade and is technically closer to Seoul, Korea, than to Japan's capital Tokyo! Our hotel is very easy to find as it is near the Hakata train station - a quick train ride from the airport. This evening, we'll meet at our tour hotel for a trip briefing and welcome dinner.

Distance: 0 km Meals: Dinner

DAY 2 FUKUOKA TO DAZAIFU AND HITA

After breakfast, we transfer out of buzzing Fukuoka to the city of Dazaifu. Before getting on the bikes we'll visit the Dazaifu Tenmangū, a popular Shinto shrine honouring the deity of knowledge and featuring centuries-old torii gates and beautiful plum trees. Our first day of cycling begins with a leisurely warm-up ride along flat country roads leading to the Chikugo River, a lifeblood of the region. We follow the course of this river east for 20 km before heading inland where we'll have a bit of climbing through a valley of forested hills and rice fields. After a refreshing descent we finish the day's cycling in Hita, a city renowned for its hot springs and Edo-era merchant houses. In the afternoon, you can go for a stroll on the historic Mameda Machi Street before we gather for dinner.

Cycling Distance: 74 km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3 HITA TO USA

This morning, after a 10 km flat warm-up out of Hita, we'll tackle the climb up to the Fushiki Pass. The narrow, meandering road, flanked by dense forest, was once part of the "Kaido Highway," vital for trade in Japan's Edo period. Upon reaching the highest point, we'll cruise downhill to the Yamakuni River, following its course for 25 km. Then, we'll dip south along the smaller Yakata River, leading us to today's second climb up the Sakura Pass. The short ascent is followed by a fun downhill, then a flat stretch on our way to the town of Usa. Before reaching our hotel we'll ride by Kure Bridge, once used by the Emperor's envoys to enter Usa. In the afternoon you can explore the famous Shinto shrine of Usa-jingū which dates back 1,200 years. It is the chief shrine among some 40,000 in Japan dedicated to the warrior-god Hachiman.

Cycling Distance: 71 km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4 USA TO KUNISAKI

Today we reach the sea by traversing the Kunisaki Peninsula from west to east! In the center of the peninsula sits Mount Futago, a prominent stratovolcano shaping the region's hilly terrain. After an initial, mostly flat, 15 km through the rural areas surrounding Usa, we'll begin our climb into the highlands. We ride on quiet mountain roads with pleasant views over the surrounding valleys as we climb for about 15 km to the top of two mountain passes. Along the way we'll pass some beautiful, rustic temples, chief among them being Fuki-ji, famous for its ancient wooden pagoda - one of the oldest in Japan. As we descend down from the second pass, we'll be greeted with views over the Seto Inland Sea. Once we reach sea level we complete the journey to the coastal town of Kunisaki where we spend the night.

Cycling Distance: 47 km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5 KUNISAKI TO BEPPU

Our final ride takes us along an undulating inland route south to Beppu, one of Japan's most famous onsen towns. We'll be crossing several streams that trickle down from Mount Futago and

after 22 km we'll stop in the historic town of Kitsuki. The town is renowned for well-preserved feudal-period architecture, including traditional wooden houses, samurai residences, and stone-paved streets. The highlight is Kitsuki Castle, said to be the smallest castle in Japan. We'll ride the final stretch to Beppu following the main road for the last 10 km, allowing us to reach Beppu with plenty of time to indulge in a celebratory soak in an onsen! Beppu produces more hot spring water than any other resort in the country. It also has a range of baths to enjoy – ordinary hot water baths, mud baths, sand baths, and steam baths. In addition, the Hells of Beppu are several spectacular hot springs to view, but not to bathe in. The choice of onsen is yours. In the evening, we'll meet for a farewell dinner.

Cycling Distance: 50 km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6 DEPARTURE DAY - BEPPU

You are welcome to stay at the hotel until check-out time. Feel free to extend your stay in Beppu or head to the airport or the train station for your onward travel.

Cycling Distance: 0 km Meals: Breakfast

INCLUDED IN THE TOUR

- Accommodation: 5 nights
- Hybrid bike hire and helmet
- Meals as listed in the itinerary
- Local English speaking tour guide
- Support vehicle
- Cycling jersey and water bottle
- Bottled drinking water & snacks while cycling

NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR

- International flights and taxes
- Passport and visa requirements
- E-Bike Hire
- Single room surcharge
- Personal expenses & drinks
- Optional activities and sightseeing
- Tips

TOUR GRADE 4: ACTIVE

We ride 242 km over 4 cycling days. More than 75% mountainous terrain, Japan's southern island of Kyushu offers a remote and rugged experience hard to find within such a highly developed country. As a result, the route is mostly undulating with climbs, big and small, sprinkled throughout each day's ride. We cycle predominantly on quiet country roads, enjoying scenic views and immersing ourselves in the lifeways of rural Japan with stops at cultural sites along the way. In the afternoons there is time to explore the cities and visit onsen. Onsen with bathing facilities are available throughout the tour and our team will assist you in making arrangements,

but please note that any associated costs are not included. Your guide's expert knowledge of the area and terrain means that you always know what is coming up in terms of distance and difficulty. This makes a tremendous difference, as does the constant supply of water and refreshments along the way. This tour is fully supported with a vehicle following us at all times.

Active trips require cycling experience, but not technical expertise. Riders should be comfortable making sustained climbs, being in the saddle for longer, consecutive cycling days and for tackling one or two especially difficult riding days.

Get out and ride three times a week, with a longer ride, up to 70km, on the weekends. Aim to feel comfortable spending several hours at a time in the saddle, and with cycling on back-to-back days. Try to ride in hillier areas to get used to climbing.

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