



GLOBAL CYCLING
ADVENTURES

Coastal Japan: San-In Explorer

Tottori to Izumo

OVERVIEW

San-in is one of Japan's least populated and urbanised regions, making it ideal for an off-the-beaten track cycling adventure! The geography is diverse with rugged coastlines, dramatic volcanic landscapes, numerous forests and expansive farmland. You'll encounter quaint fishing villages, bustling towns, timeless shrines and temples, as well as grand Samurai castles. Soothe your muscles in hot springs, stay in cosy accommodation, and sample an outstanding variety of local delicacies.

After meeting in Tottori City, begin with an easy warm up ride to Japan's largest and most visually striking sand dunes. The next day we cycle inland via lakes, rivers, rice paddy fields and rolling hills to a renowned onsen (hot spring). Then descend back towards the coastline and ride along the slopes of Mount Daisen, an extinct volcano that towers over the region. From Sakaiminato City, ride to a stunning inland sea before catching a ferry to the Oki Islands where you'll spend two days cycling and island hopping in a remote part of offshore Japan, exploring three of the volcanic archipelago's town's four inhabited islands. Back on the mainland, visit the intricate Miho Shrine before continuing along scenic roads to the historic city of Matsue, your base for two nights. Explore the majestic "Black Castle" and also visit one of Japan's prettiest zen gardens at the Adachi Museum of Art. The tour concludes with a picturesque ride to Izumo Taisha, another of Japan's most important Shinto shrines. Your final night is in the city of Izumo from where you can easily continue your travels in Japan.

You'll cycle on good quality tarmac roads with little traffic. Total distance over the nine cycling days is approx. 453 km (expect hilly terrain but no technical ability is required). Although there are no rest days, generally you will have free time in the afternoons and evenings. A support vehicle will accompany the group on the mainland but not in the remote Oki Islands (Days 5 and 6). At the end of the tour there will be a short train ride to avoid busy city streets. Three ferry rides are included for the excursion to the Oki Islands. Your local guide will keep you informed of each day's schedule and will also supply water and refreshments along the way.

While biking is the focus of the tour, we also dedicate plenty of time to immersing ourselves in the culture, traditions, spirituality, cuisine, and wellness practices of Japan.

Accommodation on this tour is a carefully vetted mix of Japanese and Western style hotels. In the

cities you can expect the conventional western style comforts and breakfast. In the more rural areas, we stay in traditional ryokans, known for their minimalist aesthetic, featuring tatami mats, shoji screens, and futon bedding. Room and ensuite bathroom sizes are likely smaller than you may be accustomed to and breakfasts tend to be local-style (i.e. fish, rice and miso soup). English is not widely understood but you can always expect cleanliness, comfort and an enriching cultural experience - all adding to your adventure.

- DURATION - 10 DAYS
- AVERAGE DISTANCE PER DAY - 50 KM
- ARRIVAL DESTINATION - TOTTORI CITY
- DEPARTURE DESTINATION - IZUMO

ITINERARY

DAY 1 ARRIVAL IN TOTTORI CITY

Please make your own way to Tottori City, the gateway to the San-in region. We will meet at the hotel at 12.00 noon for a bike fitting followed by an easy 27 km warmup ride to the Tottori Sand Dunes, the largest and most visually striking of their kind in Japan. We'll also visit the Sand Museum with its impressive sand sculptures. In the evening there will be a tour briefing and welcome dinner at a local izakaya restaurant. Please let us know if you need help with pre-tour hotel bookings.

Cycling Distance: 27 km Meals: Dinner

DAY 2 TOTTORI CITY TO MISASA ONSEN

Starting from our hotel, we will leave Tottori and head towards the shores of Lake Koyama - a picturesque lagoon with a shrine at its centre. From here we cycle towards the Sea of Japan then wind our way through farmland and forested hills along quiet country roads. After 35 km we begin climbing for 9 km with a 4-5% gradient up a forest pass. After a well earned rest at the top we enjoy an exhilarating descent to Lake Togo followed by a flatter stretch to the historic city of Kurayoshi. Here we will visit the temple and stroll through the beautifully preserved warehouse district. It's then just another 10 km to Misasa Onsen, home to renowned 'miraculous' hot springs - an ideal place to relax and unwind after our day in the saddle.

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

DAY 3 MISASA ONSEN TO KAIKE ONSEN

We follow the Tenjin River for about 20 km back to the coast before veering west where the route then alternates between coastal and inland stretches through pear farms and rice fields. Eventually you'll catch glimpses of the towering Mount Daisen, a dormant volcano once referred to as the "Mountain of the Great God" which also resembles the more well-known Mount Fuji. As you continue along undulating roads on the lower and middle slopes of the volcano, be sure to stop regularly to appreciate the area's natural beauty. There will be a mixture of easy climbs and steeper uphill bursts with the reward of a well earned descent. Tonight's destination is the seaside town of Kaike, known for its onsens and seafood. Make sure you catch the sunset at the sandy Kaike Onsen Beach.

Cycling Distance: 73km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4 KAIKE ONSEN TO SAKAIMINATO TO DOGO ISLAND

This morning we depart Kaike by following a very pleasant coastal cycle path to Sakaiminato. The city and its surrounding area is sandwiched between the Sea of Japan to the east and the Nakaumi Inland Sea to the west. From here, we'll cross the famous Eshima Bridge to the islands of Eshima and then Daikonshima for a stop at the Yuushien Gardens. Take a stroll around these beautifully landscaped Japanese gardens before looping back to the coast via a scenic road that seemingly floats on the Nakaumi Inland Sea and then continues to hug the edge of the Sakaiminato Strait. Today's ride finishes with a high-arched bridge crossing to the harbour where the bikes will be loaded onto the ferry to Oki Islands. Consisting of 180 islands and inlets, this volcanic archipelago in the Sea of Japan will be our home for the next two days. Tonight we will sleep at a seaside hotel near the port of Dogojima, the largest inhabited island of Oki. We are now in a truly remote, offshore, part of Japan!

Cycling Distance: 46km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5 DOGO ISLAND RIDE TO CHIBURI ISLAND

Considered by those in the know as one of Japan's best cycling routes, today's ride covers a large slice of Dogo Island's craggy east coast and forested interior. From our hotel at Saigo Bay, the first half of the route carries us up the east coast on a stunning stretch of asphalt. This road hugs the shore, glides through forests, and burrows through tunnels beneath the coastal hills. We then veer inland, where the day's toughest climb (5 km / 4-5%) takes us past an ancient cedar tree believed to be over 600 years old and has spiritual significance for the islanders. The final 15 km lead us back to the coast through dense forest cover, ending our ride at a small pier, home to traditional boat-building sites and a unique "bull sumo" stable. From here we board a private charter boat and zip across the Oki Strait to the island of Nakanoshima. Here we switch to a public inter-island

ferry to reach Chiburi Island, the southernmost and smallest of the four inhabited Oki Islands. A short transfer then delivers us to our hotel with breathtaking views of the ruggedly beautiful seascape.

Cycling Distance: 39km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6 CHIBURI ISLAND TO NAKANOSHIMA RIDE TO SAKAIMINATO

This morning, a quick transfer brings us back to the pier for a ferry to the island of Nakanoshima. We'll spend the morning and early afternoon cycling around this stunning island. The ride offers a dynamic succession of 1-3 km ascents and descents with mostly gentle to moderate gradients, though be prepared for a few bursts creeping into double digits. We begin by riding down the east coast with lovely views over the bays of Oki's inner islands. After curling around the island's southern reaches, we head up the sparsely populated west coast, which is filled with dense forests of temperate broadleaf and towering cedar trees. At around 32 km, we reach the north of the island and complete our loop back to the pier, riding through the patchwork of rice paddies sprawling around Ama Town. In the mid-afternoon we board our final boat of the Oki Island stage, cruising back to the mainland for 2.5 hours. We'll take a transfer from the port in Sakaiminato City to our hotel and meet for dinner in the evening.

Cycling Distance: 44km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7 SAKAIMINATO TO MATSUE

After breakfast it's a 12 km ride over the northern tip of the peninsula to Miho Shrine, one of Japan's most scenic shinto shrines. Miho is nestled on the slopes of Mount Atago and consists of intricate wooden architecture, including a gorgeous torii gate. Another 3 km leads us to the Mihonoseki Lighthouse where you can climb to the top for breathtaking views of the surrounding sea, lagoon and cliffs. Then it's a short backtrack before cutting across the hilly peninsula for 5 km to the coast. For the next 35 km the terrain is rolling as we cycle along the nature-rich coastline around headlands and through bays sheltering fishing villages. The final 10 km through rural areas leads to the historic city of Matsue on the shores of Lake Shinji where we'll walk over to the "Black Castle" - one of only 12 original feudal-era castles left standing in Japan! Perched on a hill and surrounded by a moat and thick walls, visiting Matsue castle is a great ending to the day.

Cycling Distance: 65km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8 MATSUE RURAL LOOP

Using the hotel in Matsue as our base, today's ride is a fun loop that covers a large swathe of forest-covered rolling hills and flat farmland. For the first 15 km there's some gradual climbing but then it's all downhill or flat. Today's highlight is a visit to the Adachi Museum of Art in the lovely village of Hirose. This Museum is renowned for its integration of Japanese art within meticulously maintained gardens that feature lush greenery, carefully arranged rocks and serene ponds. Truly zen! Spend some time here before circling back to Matsue via roads flanked by extensive farmland. The rest of the day is yours to explore more of the city or to simply relax.

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

DAY 9 MATSUE TO IZUMO

Time for the home stretch as we cycle eastwards from Matsue to the coastal city of Izumo. The first 25 km has some steepish climbs and descents through a series of small valleys north of Lake Shinki. As we curve around the lake, the roads flatten and then skirt along the banks of two rivers - first the Hii and then the Kando – for 30 km towards the turquoise waters of the Sea of Japan. The last few kilometres follow the coast to today's destination of Izumo Taisha. This is one of Japan's oldest and most important Shinto Shrines and certainly one of the most impressive due to its grand architecture! Spend some time exploring the beautiful grounds before taking a train (30 min) to your Izumo hotel. During tonight's final dinner together we will celebrate the completion of your San-in cycling exploration.

Cycling Distance: 63km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 10 DEPARTURE FROM IZUMO

Time to say goodbye! Depending on your onward travel plans, either head to the nearby airport or the train station. Daily flights are available to Tokyo, Osaka, and Fukuoka. Kyoto and Osaka can be reached in half a day by train.

Cycling Distance: 0km Meals: Breakfast

INCLUDED IN THE TOUR

- Accommodation: 9 nights (mix of Western & Japanese style)
- Meals: as listed in the itinerary
- Local English speaking riding guide(s)
- Vehicle for transport and general support
- Ferries as listed in the itinerary
- Trains as listed in the itinerary
- Entrance fees as listed in the itinerary
- Snacks & drinks during bike rides
- Cycling jersey & 1 water bottle

NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR

- Flights and airport taxes
- Passport and travel visa requirements
- Airport pick up and drop off
- Extra surcharge for single room
- Personal expenses and drinks
- Bike hire
- Optional activities and sightseeing
- Travel insurance
- Tips for guide(s) and support crew

TOUR GRADE 4: ACTIVE

This is an active level tour and riders can expect to be challenged by the route and terrain in a variety of ways. We climb an average of 725 m per day, with three days going beyond 1000 m (max 1300 m). Riding distances vary between 45 - 70 km and we aim for a comfortable pace with frequent cultural and scenic stops. The main challenge of the tour is keeping up stamina over back-to-back riding days and tackling consistently hilly terrain (at times exacerbated by headwinds). Less experienced riders are welcome but should prepare in advance to manage the terrain at a reasonable pace. A support vehicle is available at all times to provide refuge for weary riders. There are e-bikes available to give you a boost on the hills, but they are limited

This trip is on paved roads which are mostly in good condition, though broken asphalt, road debris, and potholes do present themselves. San-in is one of Japan's least urbanized regions, so traffic tends to be minimal at all times. However, we still regularly share the road with cars, motorbikes and buses. There are a few unavoidable sections along busier main roads, particularly when entering and exiting cities or near popular attractions. Rainfall is not uncommon in Japan during the spring and fall and, being near the coast means that strong winds and storms can also make an appearance. We generally ride rain or shine, but depending on the guide's discretion or your comfort level, modifications to the planned route can be made. It's all part of the adventure!