

Japan, Beyond the Circuit

Kanazawa · Niigata & Sado Island · Hokkaido — with an Okinawa & Ryukyu Islands extension

Most first-time visitors to Japan see Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka. Fewer make it to the quieter cities and islands, where daily life, craft, and food haven't been shaped around tourism at all — a samurai quarter with almost no crowds, an island where sake is still poured by the people who brew it, a canal town at dusk, a coastline the color of nowhere else in Japan.

This journey is built for guests who have already done Japan once, or who simply want to start somewhere else. Everything is arranged in advance and adjusted as needed. You are not navigating Japan — you are moving through it with confidence.

Every Cultural Connections Asia journey is personally hosted. If trains are delayed, reservations need to change, or plans need to be adjusted — your host is available throughout. You focus on the experience. The logistics are handled in the background.

“Luxury is not what surrounds you. It is what you don't have to think about.”

— David Wright, Founder & Host, Cultural Connections Asia

YOUR HOST

David Wright

David Wright has lived in Tokyo for over twenty years. He speaks Japanese, knows how these places actually function, and has been designing and personally hosting private journeys across Japan and Southeast Asia since 2015. David's relationship with Asia began as a Yale-in-China Fellow in Hong Kong.

Based	Tokyo, Japan · 30 years in Asia
Languages	English · Japanese
Background	Yale-in-China Fellow · Yale MA · UC Berkeley PhD study
Experience	Personally hosting journeys since 2015 · Guests from the United States and Japan

THE JOURNEY

Destinations & Routes

This route moves through Japan's quieter corners — a refined castle town, rice and sake country, an island of taiko and rare birds, then north to Hokkaido, where the itinerary turns toward food: markets, sushi, sake, dairy, and a soak in a mountain onsen. An Okinawa and Ryukyu Islands extension can be added before or after, for guests continuing on to the subtropical south.

Route	Duration	Description
Kanazawa	2 – 3 days	Samurai and geisha districts, Kenrokuen Garden, and the Omicho seafood market — often called "Little Kyoto," at a fraction of the crowds.
Niigata & Sado Island	3 – 5 days	Rice country and sake breweries on the mainland; across the water on Sado, the crested ibis, the taiko heritage of Kodo, and tarai bune tub-boats along the coast.
Hokkaido — Sapporo & Otaru, a Food Journey	5 – 7 days	Sapporo's seafood markets and dairy country, Otaru's sushi row and last surviving sake brewery, with a day trip to soak in Jozankei Onsen.
Okinawa & the Ryukyu Islands EXTENSION	4 – 6 days	Shuri Castle and Ryukyu culture in Naha, with a swimsuit-friendly soak at Ryukyu Onsen Ryujin no Yu; a resort base in Nago/Motobu for Churaumi Aquarium and golf; snorkeling at Cape Maeda's Blue Cave and on a day trip to the Kerama Islands.
Custom / Bespoke	Any duration	Designed entirely around you. Discussed by proposal.

Churaumi Aquarium sits roughly 1.5–2 hours by car from Naha, so rather than a long round-trip day tour, the itinerary shifts its base north to a resort in Nago/Motobu for two to three nights — putting the aquarium, golf, and the Yanbaru coast within minutes rather than hours. Golf (Kise Country Club, home to The Ritz-Carlton Okinawa) and snorkeling (Cape Maeda's Blue Cave, the Kerama Islands) can be built in as options at the proposal stage.

Cultural Connections Asia LLC · Tokyo, Japan · cc-asia.com · bookings@cc-asia.com

ACCOMMODATIONS

The hotel is not the brand.

Accommodations are selected to match the character and goals of each journey — not the other way around. Every program is designed around the host, the itinerary, and the traveler. The hotel is chosen to support that experience.

SIGNATURE Well-placed. Consistently excellent.

Premium hotels in excellent locations. Strong service, without the international luxury brand price point. Examples: ANA Crowne Plaza Niigata · Hotel Kanazawa Zoushi · JR Tower Hotel Nikko Sapporo

PREMIER Refined. Distinctly positioned.

International brands and distinctive design properties in landmark locations — strong service, meaningful sense of place. Examples: KUMU Kanazawa by THE SHARE HOTELS · Hyatt Regency Seragaki Island, Okinawa · Jozankei Onsen Yurakusoan

BESPOKE Exceptional. Irreplaceable.

Asia's most celebrated properties — chosen for guests who want accommodations that are themselves a defining part of the journey. Examples: Jozankei Daiichi Hotel Suizantei, a Michelin-starred onsen ryokan · The Ritz-Carlton, Okinawa, set within the Kise Country Club golf course · The Uza Terrace Beach Club Villas

Accommodations are confirmed at the time of proposal and discussed directly with each guest. The tier is a guide — the final selection is always tailored to the journey.

WHAT IS INCLUDED

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- ✓ Personally hosted throughout by David Wright, in English or Japanese
- ✓ Accommodations matched to your journey tier
- ✓ All transportation and private transfers within Japan, including transfers between regions
- ✓ Curated meals, reservations, and activity fees
- ✓ Dedicated host available throughout — logistics handled in real time

NOT INCLUDED

- International airfare
- Domestic flights between Honshu, Hokkaido, and Okinawa (arranged on request)
- Travel insurance
- Personal expenses

JOURNEY INVESTMENT

From USD 725 per guest per day

Signature tier · 7-day minimum · Land only · 2 – 8 guests · Final pricing provided by proposal

Every journey is priced individually based on group size, duration, accommodation tier, and specific routing. There are no fixed packages. The Okinawa & Ryukyu Islands extension is optional and quoted separately, on top of the core route. David reviews every inquiry personally and responds with a detailed proposal within 48 hours.

Tier	From (per guest/day)	Guide
Signature	\$725	Well-placed, consistently excellent hotels
Premier	\$850	International brands, distinctive design properties
Bespoke	\$1,675	Asia's most celebrated, irreplaceable properties

Shown for planning purposes only — every proposal is priced individually and confirmed before booking.

Request a Proposal

A straightforward conversation about whether this is the right journey for you. David responds to every inquiry personally, in English or Japanese.

Email	bookings@cc-asia.com
Response	Within 48 hours — directly from David
Languages	English · Japanese
Currency	Pricing in USD · Payment arrangements flexible
Group size	2 – 8 guests · Private journeys only
