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# Okinawa Cherry Blossom Tour

**January 25 - February 3, 2012**

**Price:**

**Land Package: \$2080.00**

**(based on double occupancy)**

**Single Supplement: \$200**

**Airfare on Japan Airlines: \$1135 plus taxes and surcharges**

**Tour Price Includes:**

- **Roundtrip Airfare from Honolulu to Japan**
- **Daily Breakfast and dinner**
- **Ground transportation to and from the hotel**
- **Hotel Accommodations**
- **Admission to sites as indicated by itinerary**
- **Escort from Hawaii**

January 25, 2012                      Day One                      Wednesday                      Honolulu to Japan

We depart for Japan in the late morning.

January 26, 2012                      Day Two                      Thursday                      Mainland Japan to Okinawa

We arrive in Mainland Japan in the late afternoon, where we will pass through customs before going to the Japan Airlines domestic check in on the second floor. Upon arrival in Naha, we will bus to Okinawa City, which will be our home for the our stay in Okinawa.

January 27, 2012                      Day Three                      Friday                      Free Day

After a long couple of days traveling, our first day will be free to recover from jetlag. A buffet breakfast will be served daily at the hotel beginning at 7 am. In the morning we will do some shopping at a wholesale market. You will find items ranging from Okinawan Konbu to awamori to Okinawan cookies. If you are looking for Okinawan musical instruments, we can visit the factories as well. You may spend the rest of the day visiting with relatives, shopping, or just relaxing. If you require any assistance, your escort will be available to lend a hand.

January 28, 2012                      Day Four                      Saturday                      Motobu

Our tour begins as we head north for the peninsula of Motobu. Our day will be spent at **Ocean Expo Memorial Park**. Built for the 1975 World Expo, today it is home to three attractions. The first is **Churaumi**, Asia's largest aquarium. Opened in 2002, its large tank holds three whale sharks. In addition it has exhibits on turtles, dolphins, manatees, manta rays, and sharks. The second attraction is a collection of Okinawan homes, Okinawa Kyodo Mura, depicting different social classes existing prior to the 20th Century and various structures common in Okinawan villages. The final attraction is the **Tropical Dream Center**, where we can see a spectacular display of floral beauty. The center is said to have over 80,000 varieties of orchids.

From there we will visit **Goya Park**. This facility is a working Goya processing plant with an example of the hydroponic growing technique used for the goya or bitter melon.

January 29, 2012                      Day Five                      Sunday                      Yanbaru

We head back north traveling to the northern part of Okinawa known as Yanbaru. Our first stop will be **Kouri-jima**, a small island that is now connected to the main island by bridge. This gives us an opportunity to see Okinawa's natural beauty. Crystal clear waters surround the island, as well as the new bridge to the island.

From there we will stop at **Kijoka**, the only place where you can purchase bashofu in Okinawa. There are three types of cloth native to Okinawa, bingata, kasuri, and bashofu. Bashofu is unique as it is made from banana tree trunk. Kijoka is noted for having saved this Okinawan handcraft.

From Kijoka, we will visit the **Orion Beer Factory**, Okinawa's own beer, for a tour of their facility. Next we will stop at the **Nago City Museum**. This museum focuses on the daily life of ordinary Okinawans prior to modern times.

January 30, 2012                      Day Six                      Monday                      Culture Day

Today we will be taking two Okinawan culture classes. The first will be in the morning and will be a Shisa Dog decorating class. The Shisa Dog is an icon synonymous with Okinawa. This one hour class will teach how to decorate a shisa. The second class will be to learn how to make andagi, Okinawa's most famous food. After this class you are free until dinner. This is also a good day to meet with family and friends in Okinawa. If you require assistance arranging a meeting or locating your family, please let us know in advance.

January 31, 2012                      Day Seven                      Tuesday                      Shuri/Naha

We continue our exploration of Okinawan culture with a visit to **Shuri Castle**, and **Ryusen**. Shuri Castle was the capital of the Ryukyu Kingdom from 1492 until 1872. The current structure was rebuilt after suffering severe damage during World War II, when it served as a base of operations for the Japanese. Archaeological work continues beneath the current structures. Our next stop is Ryusen, a Bingata factory. Bingata is a cloth that is noted for its elaborate hand painted designs.

From here we head to Naha to do some shopping on **Kokusai** and **Heiwa Streets**. Together they form an arcade where all kinds of goods may be found. For the adventurous, you may visit the Tsuboya area behind the streets that specializes in Okinawan pottery. On our way back to our hotel we will stop at the **Okinawan Prefectural Museum**. This museum was re-opened just last fall in its new home. This museum houses exhibits on many facets of Okinawan life from its indigenous flora and fauna to a variety of exhibits on Okinawan culture. The museum itself is now housed in a building specifically built for it and is in the style of an Okinawan castle.

February 1, 2012                      Day Eight                      Wednesday                      Gyokusendo and Nanbu Senseki

We return south to visit the **Gyokusendo Kingdom Village**. This attraction is built over Japan's largest subterranean cave network. Above the cave are various craftsmen at work making, bingata, an Okinawan cloth, sanshin, the Okinawan shamisen, and glass making. The glass made here is distinctive for its unique cracking pattern. There is also an alcohol bottling display that is noted for its habu or snake sake. If you wish, a white boa is available for those who wish to have their picture taken with it. There will also be a brief Eisa dance performance.

From Gyokusendo we continue on to the **Okinawa Prefectural Peace Museum** and **Heiwa no Ishiji**. These two sites are adjacent to each other. Heiwa no Ishiji is a memorial to all who died during the Battle of Okinawa from all sides of the battle, Okinawan, Japanese, and American. The layout of the memorial is based on the rising sun on the day the battle began. The museum presents artifacts from the Battle of Okinawa through the American occupation to Reversion in 1972.

We then go to **Himeyuri no to** and the **Himeyuri Peace Museum**. During the Battle of Okinawa 219 high school students and 18 teachers were pressed into service as nurses to tend to the wounded. As the war drew to a close, they were released from service and forced to find shelter on their own. Himeyuri no to marks their last hiding place. Only five survived the battle. The museum shines a light on their experience holding artifacts, survivor accounts, hospital recreations, and more.

Our last stop will be **Higa Shuzo**, an awamori brewery. Here we will see a video on the process to make awamori as well as sample some of their goods for those over 21.

February 2, 2012                      Day Nine                      Thursday                      Free Day

As with our first day in Okinawa, we will do some shopping at a wholesale market. If you did not have a chance to pick up omiyage or missed a chance to get something last time, here is your opportunity. If you are looking for Okinawan musical instruments, we can visit the factories as well. You may spend the rest of the day visiting with relatives, shopping, or just relaxing. If you require any assistance, your escort will be available to lend a hand.

In the afternoon, we will also enjoy a short trip to Miyagi Island to visit **Nuchimasu Salt Factory**. They are in the Guinness Book of World Records for producing salt with the most minerals using their unique salt manufacturing methods. To get there we will cross **Kaichudoro**, a road that is so close to the ocean that it feels like you are gliding along the water.

Tonight will be our farewell dinner.

February 3, 2012                      Day Ten                      Friday                      Return Home

We will leave our hotel around noon and head back south to Naha to catch our flight to Mainland Japan. We will have a few hours to stretch our legs before the final flight to Honolulu.

Opportunities to view Cherry Blossoms will adjust our schedule as necessary.