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Okinawa

November 1 - 10, 2012

**Price: TBA
(based on double occupancy)**

Tour price includes:

- Airfare from Honolulu to Okinawa Roundtrip
- Ground transportation as indicated by itinerary
- Admission as indicated by itinerary
- Daily Breakfast and Dinners
- Hotel Accommodations
- Tour Escort

November 1, 2012 Day One Thursday Hawaii to Japan

A morning flight takes us to mainland Japan.

November 2, 2012 Day Two Friday mainland Japan to Naha

We arrive in the afternoon and pass through customs and immigrations before connecting to our flight to Okinawa. Upon arrival we will drive to our hotel in Okinawa City.

November 3, 2012 Day Three Saturday Free Day

After a long couple of days traveling, our first day will be free to recover from jetlag. 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.

November 4, 2012 Day Four Sunday Naha City – Shuri Castle

We begin our tour by going south to explore the rich heritage of the Ryukyu Kingdom Era. We will visit 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.

November 5, 2012 Day Five Monday Gyokusendo and Nanbu Senseki

We continue our exploration of the Okinawan culture with a visit to the **Gyokusendo Kingdom Village**. This attraction is built over Japan's largest subterranean cave network. Above the cave are craftsmen at work making various handcrafts like, bingata, an Okinawan cloth, and Okinawan glass. The glass made here is distinctive for its unique crackling 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**. 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.

November 6, 2012 **Day Six** **Tuesday** **Culture Day**

Today we will be taking a more hands on approach to the Okinawan culture. The Shisa Dog is an icon synonymous with Okinawa. We will take a one hour class to decorate a shisa. Then we will have a short cooking class to learn how to make an Okinawan dish. After the classes you are free until 7:00 pm when dinner will be served. If you require assistance with meeting your family, please let us know.

November 7, 2012 **Day Seven** **Wednesday** **Motobu**

We head north today 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 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.

November 8, 2012 **Day Eight** **Thursday** **Yanbaru**

Our day will be spent traveling to the northern most reaches of Okinawa. 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. Bashofu is unique as it is made from banana stalk. 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.

November 9, 2012 **Day Nine** **Friday** **Free Day**

Before we head home 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. 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.

Tonight we will have our farewell dinner.

November 10, 2012 **Day Ten** **Saturday** **Return Home**

We leave the hotel at noon to catch our late afternoon flight back to mainland Japan. From there an evening flight will take us back to Hawaii.