

# Wild Earth Travel

*Small Ships, Big Adventures*

**wildearth-travel.com**

**info@wildearth-travel.com**

## ETERNAL JAPAN & SOUTH KOREA - A VOYAGE FROM KANAZAWA TO KOBE

Japan is a fascinating combination of unique heritage and culture contrasting with the sprawling metropolises of the world's most advanced technological civilisation. Made up of 6,852 islands, the perfect way to explore the 'Land of the Rising Sun' is by sea and the 118-passenger MS Island Sky is the ideal vessel for such a voyage. Our fascinating itinerary offers the opportunity to visit ancient castles, serenely beautiful gardens and opulent temples and shrines combined with witnessing some of Japan's most stunning natural landscapes and the futuristic city of Tokyo.

Highlights of our voyage will include the historical city of Kanazawa with its traditional crafts and one of Japan's most famed landscape gardens, Koraku-en, the historic and serene castle town of Matsue and Nagasaki where Japan's first contact with the West took place. Here we will learn of the more somber history of the Atomic Bomb attack at the Peace Museum and Peace Park and we will also explore Dejima Island which served as a trading post during Japan's isolation period. We will also visit the awe-inspiring contemporary landscape of Tokyo but what makes our itinerary truly unique is our visits to parts of Japan where relatively few tourists set foot such as Yakushima Island with its towering mountains and ancient forest and where we can enjoy nature at its best with walks to appreciate the diverse fauna including the impressive old cedars.

In addition to our partial circumnavigation of Japan, our course takes us past the southeastern tip of South Korea where we will spend a day in Gyeongju, the 'Museum Without Walls' and we

will also visit the Haeinsa Temple, considered one of the three great temples in Korea. Such places invoke the strongest of memories and allow you to immerse yourself in the myth and mystique of these ancient lands whilst returning each evening to the peace and comfort of our vessel. Helping us understand all we will see and experience will be our expert Guest Speaker and Japanese guides who will travel on board with us and will add immeasurably to your enjoyment and understanding of this captivating country.



ng country.

### ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Tokyo, Japan.

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Fly by scheduled flight to Tokyo.

## Day 2 Tokyo.

Arrive and transfer to our centrally located hotel for an overnight stay. The remainder of the afternoon and evening are at leisure.

## Day 3 Tokyo to Kanazawa.

After breakfast in the hotel, a morning city tour will include the Meiji Shrine and Sensoji Temple. Continue to the train station to join our bullet train to Kanazawa where, on arrival, we transfer to the MS Island Sky. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner as we moor overnight.

## Day 4 Kanazawa.

Kanazawa is a thriving centre of the arts, long known for its lacquer ware, outstanding collectable pottery of the Kutani style, gold leaf workmanship, delicate hand painting of silk for kimonos and Noh theatre dramas. The narrow and winding cobblestone streets have a quaint photogenic charm with old fashioned streetlamps and wooden lattice windows hiding elegant restaurants and craft galleries. Around each bend is a traditional house, museum, art gallery, craft shop, historic samurai residence and even a geisha house to explore. The fascinating open-air market displays a vast variety of items from flowers to fish and local handicrafts. Next to the Kanazawa Castle ruins, we will visit one of Japan's premier highlights, the famed Kenroku-en Garden, ranked among the country's top three gardens.

## Day 5 Matsue.

From the port of Sakaiminato we visit Matsue, the 'town of water,' which nestles between a scenic lake and a large lagoon. We will visit the cultural attractions of the town including the 17th century Matsue Castle before enjoying a boat ride on the local canals. Alternatively visit the Adachi Museum of Art which is set in a beautiful natural environment and well known for both its superb Japanese gardens and its collection of contemporary Japanese

paintings, comprising approximately 1,500 of the country's most highly regarded paintings produced after the Meiji period. Return to the ship for lunch as we sail for South Korea this afternoon.

## Day 6 Ulsan, South Korea.

Crossing over to South Korea we embark on a full day excursion to magnificent Gyeongju, a World Heritage Site, which is often described as the world's finest open-air museum embracing ancient Korean history and Buddhist culture. As the ancient capital of the Shilla Dynasty, Gyeongju's cultural heritage dates back to the first millennium. Today, as we stroll through some of the hundreds of excavated monuments, temples, tombs and pagodas, there will be time to explore the National Museum with its exceptional collection of finely worked gold jewellery, metal weapons and distinctive pottery. At lunchtime, we will sample Korean delicacies and enjoy a cultural performance of traditional dance.

## Day 7 Masan for Haeinsa.

From our berth in Masan we head inland to the Haeinsa Temple. Regarded as one of the three great temples in Korea, it was first settled in 802 AD and its name derives from a verse in a Buddhist Sutra as "reflections on a smooth sea". In the 13th century when Korea was at war with the Mongols, the government commissioned the Triptaka Koreana, a complete copy of Buddhist scriptures, in the hope of Buddha's intervention in the war. They were carved onto 81,258 double sided wooden blocks and stored on floor to ceiling shelves in the Janggyeong Panjeon building. We also visit the Daejokkwangjeon, the main worship hall of the temple. After lunch in a nearby restaurant we will return to Masan this afternoon where you may want to visit the vibrant fish market.

## Day 8 Nagasaki, Japan.

This morning we explore Nagasaki, the second city destroyed by an A-bomb in World War II. Tour the Peace Memorial Park, Atomic Bomb Museum and Glover Garden. This afternoon we will visit Dejima Island, built during the Edo Period to house Portuguese Christian missionaries and prevent the propagation of their religion. It was also the residential quarters of the Dutch, the only foreigners allowed to trade in Japan during the Sakoku isolation period for 200 years until Japan reopened to the world. Alternatively, there will be a visit to

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the abandoned Gunkan-jima, or Hashima Island\* that lies just off the coast of Nagasaki. The island was populated until 1974 and served as a coal mine with more than 5,000 residents living on an island only 480 metres long and 150 wide. To accommodate so many people in such a small area every piece of land was built on, so the island came to resemble a battleship and was given the name Gunkan-jima or Battleship Island. In 1974 the coal mine closed and the residents had to leave the island. Over the years the natural elements have taken hold giving the island an eerie atmosphere. In more recent years the island has become a set for several films. We will take a guided walk through the island to the observation areas before boarding the local ferry back to the mainland. \*Please note that the visit to Hashima Island is weather/tidal dependent. If the ferry is unable to access the pier, a cruise around the island will take place instead.

## Day 9 Miyanoura, Yakushima.

Sailing down the coast of Kyushu this morning we arrive this afternoon on the island of Yakushima which became Japan's first World Heritage Site in 1993. Yakushima is famous in botanical circles for many great garden plants, including dwarf plants that have evolved to grow smaller than their mainland cousins. We will spend time here on nature walks, including Yakusugi Land, a nature park populated by a number of the island's ancient cedar trees.

## Day 10 Hososhima, Kyushu.

We sail into Hososhima on the south side of the island of Kyushu today. The area is full of beautiful beaches, rugged coast and natural beauty. We will have a choice of options today. There will be the chance to visit the iconic Takachiho Gorge, a volcanic canyon formed over 100,000 years ago, with the Gakose river flowing through it. While there we will walk through the forests on top of the gorge, taking in wonderful views as we cross bridges from one side to another. We will also visit the Takachiho Shrine built in 1778. After lunch in a local restaurant we will drive to the Hyuga Cape, part of a national park the area is recognised for its untamed volcanic coastal formation and unique flora. There will be chance to walk along the observation trails offering wonderful views of the sea and the coastline. Alternatively, we will offer a morning tour to see the Saitobaru Burial Mounds that encompass over 300 burial tombs, dating back over 1,700 years. This is one of the only places in Japan where you can see pristine burial mounds. As we explore, hear about the history of the area and the mysteries surrounding the burial mounds.

## Day 11 Matsuyama, Shikoku Island.

Today we arrive at the island of Shikoku. From the port of Matsuyama we will visit the old town of Ozu starting with the Garyu Sanso, a subtle yet outstanding villa. Built in 1907, it is rustic in appearance but traditional in its construction offering a wonderful architectural view. It took over four years and 9,000 artisans to build the villa and each room has its own features. The villa also has a beautiful garden with its own tea house. Afterwards we will explore the old town which grew as a castle town during the Edo Period and today retains an atmosphere of a bygone era with stone paved alleys, houses from the Edo and Meiji Periods, as well as merchant and samurai houses. Alternatively spend the morning on a panoramic drive through the island, taking in the coastal road before crossing a section of the Kurushima Kaikyo Bridge, a suspension bridge crossing the Seto Inland Sea. We will cross to the island of Oshima, and from the Mount Kiro Observatory Park we will see the very impressive bridge as it crosses the sea connecting islands along the way. After lunch on board there is the option to explore Matsuyama on a walking tour which will include the grounds of the city's original castle, one of a dozen left in Japan, along with the lovely Ishiteji Temple as well as seeing the famous Dogo Onsen.

## Day 12 Himeji.

We will set out this morning to explore the city of Himeji, known for its castle, one of the largest in Japan. The towering white building dominates the skyline of the city and we will climb through the various levels of the outer keeps before entering the main castle building. Next to the castle is Koko-en, a beautiful 3.5-hectare garden which is separated into nine different style gardens of different sizes of which there are various themes, from the Edo Period garden to the Tea Ceremony Garden. After lunch on board, spend the afternoon relaxing or visit the Shoshazan Engyo-ji Temple. The temple is located on Mount Shosha, just outside of Himeji, and covers over 31 hectares. It was established in 966 by a monk and over the years the temple received the patronage of aristocrats and the imperial family. During our visit we will explore some of the areas of the temple complex taking in its history and beautiful setting.

## Day 13 Kobe to London.

Disembark this morning and transfer to Kansai airport for the scheduled flight

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to London.

Day 14 London.

Arrive today.

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



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## YOUR SHIP: ISLAND SKY

<b>YOUR SHIP:</b>	<b>Island Sky</b>
<b>VESSEL TYPE:</b>	<b>Luxury Small Ship</b>
<b>LENGTH:</b>	<b>90 metres</b>
<b>PASSENGER CAPACITY:</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>BUILT/REFURBISHED:</b>	<b>1992 / 2010 / 2017</b>

The MS Island Sky offers an intimate and luxurious cruising experience, designed for travelers who appreciate peace, high-quality service, and a relaxed atmosphere. The ship features elegant public spaces, including a main lounge for daily briefings and talks, The Club with a pianist and a 24-hour tea and coffee station, and a well-stocked library with internet access. Guests can enjoy al fresco dining on the Lido Deck, a walk-around promenade for scenic views, and a top-deck observation area ideal for relaxation and wildlife spotting. The ship also includes a small hair salon, a doctor on board, and a lift serving all decks for added convenience. Complimentary satellite Wi-Fi is available, though signal strength may vary.

Accommodations include 59 spacious and well-appointed suites, all with outside views, seating areas, and en-suite bathrooms. Some suites offer private balconies or sliding glass doors for enhanced ocean views. Amenities include a mini-fridge, flat-screen TV, Molton Brown toiletries, air-conditioning, and a safe. The Island Suite boasts an extended balcony, complimentary minibar, and laundry service. Dining is a refined yet relaxed affair, with an emphasis on fresh, locally sourced ingredients and a single open seating. Guests

can enjoy buffet-style breakfasts, a la carte lunches and dinners, daily afternoon tea, and included wines. The ship's culinary team creates exceptional meals, often incorporating local specialties, while the friendly staff ensures a welcoming and social dining experience.

Life onboard is serene, focusing on enriching experiences rather than organized entertainment. Guests can enjoy informative talks, port briefings, and casual evening music rather than large-scale shows or games. The ship is equipped with modern safety and navigation technology, including roll stabilizers for a smooth journey. The atmosphere is akin to a private yacht or boutique hotel, where like-minded travelers can immerse themselves in nature, history, and culture.



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## PRICING

**25-Apr-2026 to 08-May-2026**

Magellan Deck Standard Suite	9295 GBP pp
Columbus Deck Superior Suite	9595 GBP pp
Marco Polo Deck Premium Suite	9895 GBP pp
Marco Polo Deck Corner Suite	10195 GBP pp
Magellan Deck Standard Single	10295 GBP pp
Columbus Deck Superior Single	10595 GBP pp
Erikson Deck Deluxe Balcony Suite	11795 GBP pp
Explorer Deck Owner's Balcony Suite	12795 GBP pp
Explorer Deck Island Suite	12995 GBP pp

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