

The Essential 5-day Itinerary Around Japan's Seto Inland Sea



Yoshitsugu Nishigaki/Sebun Photo/Getty Images

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This major body of water, surrounded by the main islands of Honshu, Kyushu, and Shikoku, offers a beguiling mix of art, culture, and history. The Legacy Untold's Mark Lakin, a member of T+L's A-List Travel Advisory Board, can book this tour of the region. *From \$1,000 per person per day.*

Getting There

From Tokyo, take an 80-minute flight to Takamatsu, a city on the northern shore of Shikoku.

Day 1

In Takamatsu, visit the 17th-century Risurin Park and Shikoku Village, an open-air museum of vernacular architecture. At nearby Konpira-san, hike 1,368 steps to a Shinto shrine. Stay at Kotohira Kadan, a traditional *ryokan-onsen*.

Day 2

Drive south to Mount Tsurugi, then climb to the top for panoramic views. Head into the secluded Iya Valley and spend the night at Tougenkyo-Iya, a group of thatched-roof villas.

Day 3

Travel by car and ferry to Naoshima, an island in the Inland Sea that showcases contemporary art, with such site-specific pieces as a polka-dot pumpkin by Yayoi Kusama. Stay at Benesse House, a Tadao Ando–designed museum with guest rooms.

Day 4

Spend a day on two more art-centric islands with Benesse sites nearby: on Teshima, visit the Teshima Art Museum, shaped like a drop of water, and on Injuima, the Injuima Seirenscho Art Museum, in the ruins of a factory. Travel to Kurashiki, on Honshu's southwestern coast, and stay at Ryokan Kurashiki.

Day 5

Tour Kurashiki's superb Ohara Museum of Art. The city is a short drive from the town of Kojima, where you can visit Japanese denim ateliers on "Jeans Street."