

HIDDEN WONDERS TOUR 2024

Monday 10 th February	Osaka – transfer to hotel Kyoto
Kyoto	Vischio Kyoto Hotel (4 nights)
Tuesday 11 th	Full day in Kyoto plus welcome dinner
Wednesday 12 th	Full day in Kyoto plus Wagashi workshop
Thursday 13 th	Full day in Kyoto – textile factory and Raku Museum
Friday 14 th	Travel Kyoto to Hikone via Shigaraki ceramic park.
Hikone	Comfort Inn Hikone (2 nights)
Saturday 15 th	Hikone Castle and old part of town
Sunday 16 th	Fukui Daihonzan Eiheji Temple
Fukui	Hotel Riverge Akebono (2 nights)
Monday 17 th	Lacquerware experience
	Echizen Washi factory visit
Tuesday 18 th	Kanazawa full day
Kanazawa	Tokyu Stay Kanazawa (3 nights)
Wednesday 19 th	Higashichaya district visit
	Tin casting experience
Thursday 20 th	Noh theater tour
	Koskeski Doll workshop,
	Omicho markets
Friday 21 st	Travel to Takayama
Takayama	Shiakawago Wade House
	Sky ropeway
	Tokyu Stay Takayama (2nights)
Saturday 22 nd	Visit old part of town.
	Takayama Jinya
	Takayama festival floats
Sunday 23 rd	Nagoya
Nagoya	Arimatsu Naumi shibori
	Noritakeno Mori Craft centre
	Daiwa Roynette Hotel (1night)
Monday 24 th	Tokyo
Tokyo	Obuchi Sasba tea field
	Farewell dinner
	Mitsui Garden Hotel Ootemachi (1 night)
Tuesday 25 th	Leisurely morning
	Transfer to airport

INCLUSIONS

- 4 nights Vischio Kyoto
- 2 nights Comfort Inn Hikone
- 2 nights Hotel Riverge Akebono Fukui
- 3 nights Tokyu Stay Hotel Kanazawa
- 2 Tokyu Stay Hotel Takayama
- 1 night stay Daiwa Roynette Hotel Nagoya
- 1 night Mitsui Garden Hotel Ootemachi Tokyo
- Wagashi workshop.
- Lacquerware experience.
- Tin Casting experience
- Noh Theatre explanation
- Koskeski Doll Workshop
- Various gallery and museums visits
- Shibori workshop
- Washi paper
- Daily breakfasts, three lunch and three evening dinner

Monday 10th February 2025 Day 1.

Arrival:

- Arrive at Osaka airport??
- Meet guide (Miyuki)
- Private Charter to hotel in Kyoto

Hotel Vischio Kyoto

+81 75-280-1111

44 1 Higashikujo Kamitonodacho, Minami Ward, Kyoto, 601-8002, Japan

- The hotel has a wide range of services, (Onsen, and sauna)
- Coin Laundry on 2nd floor.

February 10 th	February 13 th	# of nights
Check in 3.00pm	Check out 10.00M	4

- **Evening**
 - At your own expense and leisure.
 - There are many restaurants very close to the hotel ranging in price (read somewhere you have a choice of 566 restaurants within 0.5 kilometer!).



▪ **Kiyomizu-dera Temple.**

One of the most celebrated temples in Japan. The meaning of its name is literally translated “*Pure Water Temple*”. This name is derived from the pristine waters of the Otowa Waterfall, on which site the temple was built. It is also famous for its large wooden terrace. It’s 4 present structures were erected in 1633. Since 1994, the Kiyomizu-dera has been included on the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

- **Ginkakuji Temple (Silver Temple)** Originally to be covered in silver leaf like Kinkajui (golden temple). Some say the name refers to the moonlight reflecting on the pavilion’s dark exterior. The simple wooden design a fine example of the wabi-sabi style. Wabi-sabi is a style that demonstrates a tranquil simplicity and sense of refinement.



- **Philosophers Path.** A 2k stroll along Lake Biwa Canal. The path was named for Kyoto University professor an influential 20th-century Japanese philosopher Nishida Kitaro, who is said to have used the route for a daily meditative walk, and nowadays is very popular in spring and autumn but we are going to venture along it in winter..

- **Robert Yellin Gallery.** Robert Yellin is one of the leading foreign experts on Japanese pottery. An American who has made his home in Japan for decades, Yellin is an encyclopaedic source of information on all aspects of Japanese “yakimono” (ceramics). His gallery, which is inside a superb old Kyoto house just steps from Ginkaku-ji Temple, is a must-see for serious fans of Japanese pottery.



- **Welcome Dinner**

Wednesday 12th February Day 3.



Kyoto

- **Netsuke Museum**

Netsuke is a small art form unique to Japan and is called “netsuke” in every language of the world. The motifs are diverse, including people, animals, plants, inanimate objects, historical events, legends, scenes of theatrical performances such as Noh and Kabuki, deities, and monsters. Each one of netsuke enshrines charm such as a wit, a riddle, and a story. We have the chance to view these delights close in low glass cabinets.

- **Wagashi Workshop**

Turning our hand to making Wagashi, a traditional Japanese confectionery that is often served with green tea will be fun and a special sweet treat to enjoy.



- **Afternoon free (own expense)**

My suggestion is why not join me visiting the Garden of Fine Arts. Eight ceramic paintings such as ‘The Last Judgement’. Upon entering we pass by Monet’s ‘Water Lilies, Morning’ set under water at the entrance to the wonderful concert structure designed by Tadao Ando.

If time allows, we could also visit the Botanic Garden next door.

- **Evening**

- At your own expense and leisure. There are several restaurants very close to the hotel.

Thursday 13th February Day 4.

Kyoto

- **Textile Centre** – A chance to view Japanese textiles and the intricate weaving of patterns.



- **Raku Museum**

Raku pottery, a technique involving hand building and low firing, and has strong roots in the tea ceremony. Raku Chōjirō founded Raku ware in the late 16th century when he began making tea bowls, and the family continues to produce Raku pottery today. It is a must see for all who love ceramics that represent the essences of simple forms and imperfect natural unevenness- they are perfect in imperfection.

- **Free Time (own expense)**

We depart Kyoto tomorrow morning so you may wish to do last minute activities such as shop or visit Sogetsu Ikebana West or Ikenobo Headquarters.



- **Maiko Dinner.** A Maiko is an apprentice geisha, and we will have this wonderful opportunity to learn about their work that consists of performing songs, dance and playing the shamisen etc.

- Pack because we are on the move tomorrow.

Friday 14th February Day 5.

Travelling by coach to Hikone

Comfort Inn Hikone

+81 749-27-8211

522-0010 Shiga, Hikone, Ekihigashicho, 1 8 -7

- Library with free coffee

February 14 th	February 16 th	# of nights
Check in 3.00pm	Check out 10.00M	2



- **No-Ma gallery** - Borderless Art Museum NO-MA occupies a converted 1930 merchants' house and *kura* storehouse, one of many beautiful examples of traditional architecture in a historical preservation district in Omihachiman, Shiga Prefecture. Noma is the name of the residence's original owners, and "borderless" describes a commitment to exhibiting art outside the mainstream,

- **Shigaraki Ceramic Park** This is a cultural park based around ceramics for practicing potters. Shigaraki is famous for Tanukis - (Raccoon dog) which are good luck charms placed at the entrance to homes and shops. It is said hide one in the garden and your garden will be beautiful.



- **Free time to settle in, (own expense if wishing to go discovering)** You may wish to wander on your own and if you have a sweet tooth visit Sawasen Japanese Sweets
- **Evening**
 - At your own expense and leisure. There are several restaurants very close to the hotel.

Saturday 15th February Day 6.

Hikone

- **Hikone Castle** Hikone Castle is a National Treasure and counted among the greatest castles in the world. It took around 20 years to build and was completed in 1622. Extremely beautiful when illuminated by moonlight, it is one of the Eight Views of Lake Biwa. The so-called "Water Castle" once stood alongside Lake Biwa and the inner lake, and its waterways were also used for the transport of goods to the town.



- **Hikone Old Town**- Located just in front of Kyobashi Bridge, which crosses over the castle moat, the street is designed to look like the streets of an Edo Period (1603-1868) castle town, with all-, white-washed walls and black latticework. Bringing together elements of past and present, this "old-new town" street is lined with shops selling Japanese sweets, Western sweets, and many unique Hikone items.

- **Evening**
 - At your own expense and leisure. There are several restaurants very close to the hotel.
 - Time to pack, on the move again tomorrow.

Sunday 16th February Day 7.

Fukui

Hotel Riverge Akebono

+81 776-22-1000

3 Chome-10-12 Central, Fukui, 910-0006

- 'Sky public bath' – 8th Floor East Building
- Coin operated laundry 8th Floor by public bath.

February 14 th	February 16 th	# of nights
Check in 3.00pm	Check out 10.00M	2

- **Daihonzan Eiheji Zazen**

Eiheiji, "The Temple of Eternal Peace", is located deep in the mountains, not far from Fukui City. This temple was founded by Zen Master Dōgen in 1244. where he devoted himself to training his followers in the perfection of Zen practice in every action of daily life. Dōgen Zenji's authentic Zen has been scrupulously observed and passed down by his successors. Still today, at Eiheiji over one hundred monks devote themselves wholeheartedly to his practice of shikantaza ("single-minded sitting")



- **Late afternoon free time (own expense)** – Outside the west gate of the station is Dinosaur Plaza, celebrating the many dinosaurs found in this prefecture. or stroll along river part of Asuwa River

- **Evening**

- At your own expense and leisure. There are several restaurants very close to the hotel.

Monday 17th February Day 8.

Fukui

- **Washi paper factory and making**

Washi has been a main industry in the Echizen area. There are now about 70 factories that use either handmade, industrial, or processing methods, with about 500 people working in Washi related jobs in the immediate area.



- **Lacquerware experience**

The history of Echizen lacquerware goes back to the end of the Kofun period (250-538) approximately 1500 years ago. When the 26th Emperor of Japan, who was still the Imperial Prince, came to Kawada in the Echizen domain, he ordered repair work on his broken crown to be done by a lacquering master in the village of Katayama, modern-day Sabae. Subsequently, a black lacquered bowl was presented to the Imperial Prince together with the repaired crown. Impressed with its shape and quality, he is said to have sponsored the village of

Katayama as a lacquerware-producing area.

- **Evening**

- At your own expense and leisure. There are several restaurants very close to the hotel.

Tuesday 17th February Day 9.

Travel to Kanazawa

Tokyu Stay Kanazawa

+81 76-223-8109

4-50 Minamicho, Kanazawa, Ishikawa 920-0919

- Washer and dried in room.

February 17 th	February 21 st	# of nights
Check in 3.00pm	Check out 10.00M	3

- **Kenroku-en Garden** – One of Japan’s greatest traditional gardens. Kenrokuen, meaning “garden of the combined six,” is so named because it combines the six qualities of an ideal garden grouped into three pairs: spaciousness and seclusion, human artifice and the effects of age, water features and vistas. At this time of the year, we will enjoy seeing ‘Yukitsuri’ the technique for protecting foliage from heavy snow falls.



- **DT Suzuki Museum** – visit the tranquil settings of a museum dedicated to the life, writings, and ideas of Kanazawa-born Buddhist philosopher D.T. Suzuki, the facility, designed by Yoshio Taniguchi, includes a contemplative space overlooking the Water Mirror.

- **21st Century Museum.** One of the architects is Ryue Nishizawa who designed Teshima Museum (visited on a previous tour). The exhibition on display will be ‘Dancing with everything – the ecology of empathy’, or you can stroll through other exhibits or walk under the pool.

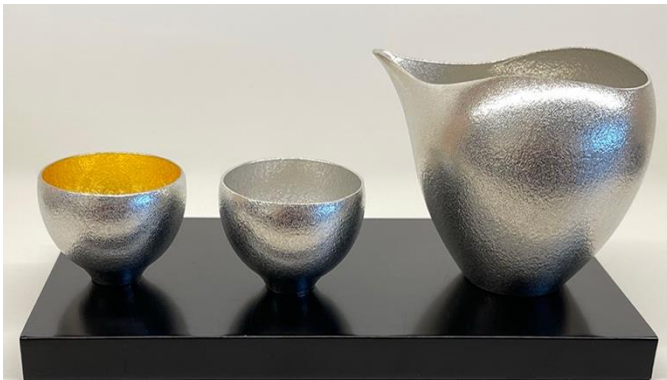
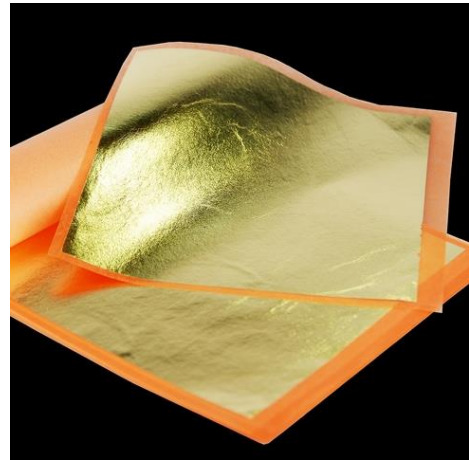


- Evening At your own expense and leisure. There are several restaurants very close to the hotel.

Wednesday 19th February Day 10.

Kanazawa

- **Visit the Higashichaya District** The traditional neighborhood with Teahouses and plus shops selling gold leaf crafts. Maybe too cold to eat a gold-leaf covered ice cream. Whiling strolling through this area take note of the ikebana at entrances to shops or arrangements on counters. Another interesting Japanese art form are Temari balls (ornate embroidered ball once used as toys) often seen on counters or in window displays.



- **Tin Casting.** In 1916, Nousaku was founded and began manufacturing Buddhist ritual objects, Japanese tea-ceremony utensils and flower vases made of brass and bronze in Takaoka City. The city flourished since 1609 and built up a reputation as a copper industry Japan for over 400 years. Our plan is to cast a sake cup as a wonderful souvenir.

- Evening
 - At your own expense and leisure. There are several restaurants very close to the hotel.

Kanazawa

- **Kanazawa Noh Theatre.** The facility will explain about Noh stages and masks and anything other questions you may have. Noh performers are simply storytellers who use their visual appearances and their movements to suggest the essence of their tale rather than to enact it. Little “happens” in a Noh drama, and the total effect is less that of a present action than of a smile or metaphor made visual. I have been told ikebana and Noh have long seated connections.



- **Kokeshi Doll workshop.** This is my request because I know nothing about Kokeshi dolls except they are simple wooden dolls with no arms or legs which have been crafted for more 150 years as toys. Originating in Northern Honshu, they are decoratively painted over the ‘body’ section and a few lines to define the face.

- **Omicho Market.** Kanazawa's Omicho Market has been one of Ishikawa Prefecture's top seafood markets for 300 years. Fresh seafood and shellfish are delivered from the Sea of Japan to the market on a daily basis, and you can find local chefs and shop owners as well as city residents and tourists strolling through the bustling market from 9 a.m. to around 5 p.m. every day.



- Evening
 - At your own expense and leisure. There are several restaurants very close to the hotel.
 - Don't forget to pack tonight we head off again tomorrow morning.

Friday 21st February Day 12.

Journey to Takayama

Tokyu Stay Takayama

+81 577-36-1109

4 Chome -301 Takayama Gifu 506-0026

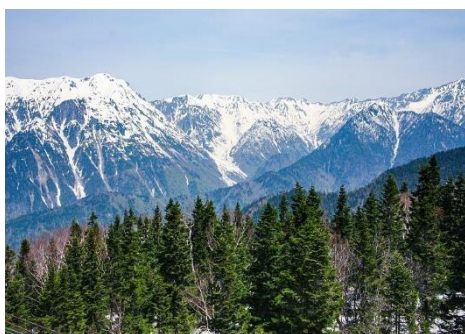
- Garden hot spring large bath or private, there is also foot bath.
- Room equipped with washer/drier.

February 21 st	February 23 rd	# of nights
Check in 3.00pm	Check out 11.00M	2

- **Shirakawago Wada House.** The Wada house is the largest traditional gassho-style farmhouse in Shirakawa-go. The house was owned by the Wada family, the largest landowner in the village of Ogimachi and whose members held the hereditary position of village headman (*nanushi*). The family made its fortune in the production and trading of saltpetre (potassium nitrate, an essential ingredient in gunpowder) and, from the latter half the 1800s, in silk production.



of



- **Sky Ropeway.** The Shinhotaka Ropeway is one of Japan's most unique ropeways. It has one of the largest elevation gains in the country as it climbs over 1000 meters up the side of the Hotake Mountain Range, which includes Oku-Hotakedake, Japan's third highest peak.
- Evening
 - At your own expense and leisure. There are several restaurants very close to the hotel.

Takayama

- **Walk the old Part of Town.** Takayama once a bustling hub drawing expert artisans, farmers, and merchants from throughout the surrounding area, and Sanmachi and Oshinmachi preserve the traditional aesthetic of this time. Enter this district, and you step into the closest thing to the Edo period outside of a historical drama.



- **Takayama Jinya.** This was the main government office where an official dispatched from the capital governed Takayama. It was known as the "jinya" and was under direct control of the shogunate. The governor of the jinya was responsible for collecting annual tributes for the shogunate and managing forest resources. A storehouse remains on the grounds that was used to store the rice collected on behalf of the shogunate. Today, it is an exhibition space with displays and information about the history of Takayama Jinya.

- **Takayama Festival Floats Exhibition Hall.** View magnificent floats which are pulled through the streets of Takayama in two main festivals. The festival for the last 350 years is a simple village ceremony. Since Takayama is in Hida, the centre of Japan's timber producing region, the town grew as an important distribution centre for the area, attracting large numbers of sake brewers, cloth merchants, woodworkers, and other craftsmen.



Evening

- At your own expense and leisure. There are several restaurants very close to the hotel.
- Pack luggage for departure again tomorrow morning.

Sunday 23rd February Day 14.

Travel to Nagoya

Diawa Roynette Hotel

+81 577-36-1109

4 Chome -301 Takayama Gifu 506-0026

- Garden hot spring large bath or private, there is also foot bath.
- Room equipped with washer/drier.

February23rd	February 24th	# of nights
Check in 3.00pm	Check out 11.00M	1



- **Arimatsu Narumi Museum.** Arimatsu Narumi Shibori was first created when people from Bungo (currently Oita prefecture) came to help build Nagoya castle which was under construction between 1610 and 1614. After seeing the shibori kimono worn by the people from Bungo, Shokuro Takeda who had settled in Arimatsu, made a towel using the shibori technique with Mikawa cotton (cotton produced in Aichi Prefecture). Shibori Indigo dye, a distinctive blue colour is extracted from the leaves of Indigofera tinctoria plant.

- **Noritakeno Mori Craft Centre.** Stepping back in time we can reminisce while wandering through the Noritake Museum or craft centre, of the once popular Noritake dinner ware we may have had on our dining tables.



- **Evening**
 - At your own expense and leisure.
 - Time to pack with one more time for Tokyo.

Monday 24th February Day 15.

Travel to Tokyo

Mitsui Garden Hotel Ootemachi

+81 3-3254-3131

2 Chome-1-2 Uchikanda, Chiyoda City, Tokyo 101-0047

February 24th	February 25 th	# of nights
Check in 3.00pm	Check out 11.00M	1

- **Obuchi Sasaba Tea Field.** "Obuchi Sasaba" in the Obuchi district of Fuji City is a spectacular spot with views of Mt. Fuji and tea fields. It is one of the few places to take photos of Mt. Fuji over tea fields without electric wires, and is a place visited by many media and photographers. Fingers crossed snow covered Mt Fuji will allow us to get that magic photograph.



- **Farewell Dinner.** A special time to say farewell to Japan and our wonderful guide Miyuki who has accompanied me on all my tours and making friends with return guests and now you.

Tuesday 25th February Day 15.

Homeward bound

- **Free morning** – maybe time for a last-minute shop or stroll through a garden.
- **Transfer to airport.**