



OKINAWA ISLAND – ITINERARY PLANNER

Overview

Surrounded by crystal clear blue water and a labyrinth of underwater caves, Okinawa is the largest island in this archipelago. Accented with dense foliage and cascading waterfalls Okinawa's rugged coastline is dotted with luxury resorts making it a full-service vacation destination. From the ancient castles and bustling markets of Naha to the sugar cane plantations and fruit farms of the countryside, Okinawa has developed it's own unique culture in contrast to Japan. The birthplace of Karate, Okinawa has long been a favorite among martial arts enthusiasts.

Days: 8

Destination: Okinawa Island

Leave country of origin, cross the International Date Line and arrive in Tokyo or Osaka on day two. Clear customs and board the connecting domestic flight to **Naha**, Okinawa's capital. Stay for three nights at a luxury hotel located in the heart of the city center making it easy to catch some great nightlife and experience the culture.



Explore **Kokusai-dori, International Street**, Naha's principal shopping district. Here, market stalls sell everything from brightly colored bingata fabrics to colorful tsubo-yaki pottery and awamori liquor. **Machigawa** is a bustling market place, located off of Kokusai-dori, where the energetic **Amma**, sales woman sell unique commodities such as Habu snake sake and Chinese herbal medicines. Lunchtime is one of the best times to visit. Buy a fresh fish on the first level and then have it prepared on the second level at any one of the many international restaurants.

Shuri Castle is a magnificent reconstruction representing the Ryukyu dynasty (1469 – 1879). During this period the Ryukyu Kingdom flourished and developed its own unique culture, which still stands in contrast to Japanese culture today. The main palace is Okinawa's largest wooden building where the King would have conducted his daily business. The structure is representative of Ryukyu design, which developed through the incorporation of Chinese and Japanese styles. **Sogenji** temple was a sacred place for the Ryukyu kings and its restored stone gates are a fascinating replica. On the outskirts of the city is the gate to the remains of Shuri Castle, **Shureimon (Gate of Courtesy)**, which provides a breathtaking look back at the Ryukyu Kingdom's ancient past.

Further north, step back in time at **Ryukyu Mura**, theme park replicating the flamboyant atmosphere of the Ryukyu dynasty. The park offers various arts and crafts workshops: Try out your glass-blowing skills Ryukyuan style, create your own sanshin, Okinawa's three-stringed guitar or dance with the locals to the beat of traditional song.



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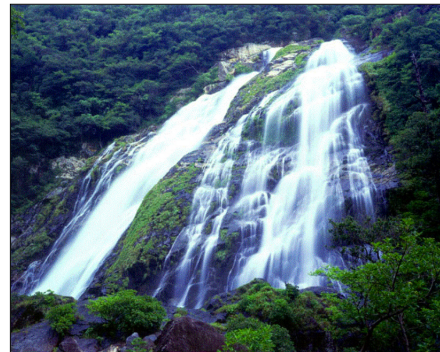
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Heading northwest along route 58 the cityscape gives way to bucolic scenery and spectacular coral reefs. The entire area from **Onna Village to Hedo Misakai** (peninsular), Okinawa's most northerly point, is designated as the **Okinawa Coast Quasi National Park**. Popular resorts such as Moon Beach and Manza Beach provide five-star accommodations, excellent dining opportunities and a full variety of sports such as golf, cave diving, parasailing, windsurfing, jet skiing and kayaking.

North of Nago City, Okinawa is sparsely populated, predominantly covered by forest and hills. Hedo Misaki, the northernmost tip offers spectacular views of Okinawa's dramatic cliffs. A hike to **Hiji Waterfall** along the west coast takes you through forests and offers a wonderfully cool retreat upon arrival.

Nago City, known for the earliest blooming cherry blossoms in Japan is the main city in the north of Okinawa. Due to Okinawa's sub-tropical climate the cherry blossom festival is celebrated in January, three months earlier than mainland Japan. The three-hundred-year-old Chinese banyan trees rise twenty meters high and stand as a symbolic gateway to the city. Okinawa's original brand **Orion Beer Plant** is also located in Nago.



On the final day return to point of origin or continue on one of our optional tours to either the Kerama Islands, Kyoto or Tokyo.



AUGUST HIGHLIGHTS: Experience Obon the summer festival, where nightly processions welcome the ancestors' spirits back to their village. Clad in beautiful Ryukyuan costume, locals perform Eisa, singing and dancing to the accompaniment of drums and shamisen (a three-stringed instrument made from snakeskin). Eisa is performed from store to store throughout the village.

thousands of locals challenge each other in a contest of strength using a forty-ton rope! Also snorkel and dive with huge pacific manta rays making their seasonal visit.

OCTOBER HIGHLIGHTS: Take part in Okinawa's biggest festival, the Tug O' War – a day when the capital city Naha, closes for a huge party. Watch

Sample Package Includes:

8 days, 6 nights accommodation • Daily continental breakfast • All hotel taxes, tips & surcharge • Departure pack •

Package price per person double occupancy: \$850
Including return flight LAX – Okinawa return: \$1850*
Single supplement: \$260

*Japan Airlines accepts American Airline miles for flights to mainland Japan.

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