ODYSSEY IN THE HEART OF JAPAN'S SUBTROPICAL ISLANDS - OSAKA TO KEELUNG

From Osaka to Ishigaki, discover and fall in love with the subtropical islands of southern Japan. These lands shaped by wind and sea will share their natural wonders and distinctive culture with you. Set against the gentle expanse of the Pacific, the landscapes will unfold to reveal their beauty and diversity: wild beaches lapped by translucent waters, teeming coral reefs, lush mountains, ancient forests, and more. On this odyssey, where each island is a precious natural haven, explore the archipelago's culture, visit charming villages, and discover the arts and crafts, steeped in ancestral wisdom and traditions.

ITINERARY

Day 1 Osaka

Like its big sister Tokyo, Osaka is the product of ancestral traditions and amazing technological innovations. And despite its size, its location on the Pacific Ocean give it a sense of serenity. The main historic landmark is the 16th century Osaka Castle, which stands proud in the midst of majestic skyscrapers. The lively streets of Dotomburi and the bizarre Shinsekai district attract thousands of locals and visitors. A multitude of restaurants offer menus full of regional specialities: takoyaki, made with octopus, and other succulent dishes such as kushikatsu kebabs.

Day 2 Shingu

To the south-west of the Japanese archipelago, Shingu is a port town in the Kansai region. Founded in 1933, it belongs to the peninsula of Kii, the country s largest. Take a trip around the Kumano Sanzan religious complex dedicated to three sacred mountains and home to two Shinto temples, Kumano Hong? Taisha and Kumano Hayatama Taisha. The latter features the famous sacred nagi tree, said to have been planted around 1159. Pilgrims flock to these two sanctuaries that feature on UNESCO's World Heritage list. Hop on a boat and journey to the Dorokyo Gorge, a natural beauty spot carved out by the emerald waters of the Kumano river.

Day 3 Kochi

The fourth largest island in the Nippon archipelago, Shikoku, is also the best preserved. Here, forests and oceans stretch as far as the eye can see. On the southern coast of the island, Kochi, the tranquil metropolis will quietly welcome you. You can enjoy a lively town, with many commercial centres and restaurants. On the menu, katsuo tataki, a local speciality with delicately grilled fish. But Kochi, overlooked by the benevolent shadow of its castle, also invites you to explore its magnificent Katsurahama beach, its museums and Buddhist temples, the site of a famous annual pilgrimage.

Day 4 Kagoshima

The seaside city of Kagoshima, at the south of Kyushu Island, is best known for Sakurajima, an active volcano that faces Kinko Bay. A visit to this busy metropolis will remind you just how much the volcano is part of the inhabitants' everyday life: in the wake of the almost daily eruptions, a delicate layer of ash settles on everything. The top of a buried torii (traditional Japanese gate) measuring three metres that was 'swallowed up' by a giant lava flow in 1914 can still be seen. The power of nature will send a shiver down your spine.

Day 5 Miyanoura, Yakushima

Yakushima is a striking island in the South of Japan, covered in forest and listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Hikers are very fond of this destination because of the lush vegetation, Mount Miyanoura, the waterfalls and cascades. But without a doubt, the symbol of the island remains its many age-old cedar trees which is said to have inspired some of the scenes in the animated film Princess Mononoke. On this island, you will also find wildlife including the Japanese macaque, the sika deer, and green sea turtles which lay their eggs on the magnificent sandy beaches here.

Day 6 Motobu, Okinawa

To the north of the island of Okinawa, lying between the azure ocean and lush hills, Motobu inspires contemplation. This Japanese paradise, far off the beaten track, unveils landscapes steeped in poetry. A setting of pristine nature, with Mount Yae as a backdrop, Motobu reveals itself through its white sandy forests and its wild and preserved Yambaru forest, home to a rare wealth of fauna and flora. The hiking paths invite you to explore this incomparable nature, where every step reveals breathtaking panoramas and age-old legends.

Day 7 Naha, Okinawa

Capital of Okinawa Prefecture, the town of Naha is located on the south-west of the island. You will love its lively atmosphere, particularly along Kokusai Dori, otherwise known as 'international street'. The picturesque Makishi Public Market, nicknamed 'Naha's kitchen' offers a profusion of colourful fish, Okinawan foodstuffs and local spices and you can sample delicacies cooked on the spot.

Day 8 Miyakojima

Situated between the East China Sea and the Philippine Sea, Miyakojima is the main island of the Miyako Islands, in the Sakishima archipelago. The fourth largest island in the Okinawa prefecture, it is known for its many sugar cane plantations and some of Japan's most beautiful beaches. Myriad multicoloured fish await you during unforgettable swims and snorkelling.

Day 9 Ishigaki

Located to the south of the main island of the Yaeyama archipelago, Ishigaki boasts all the aspects of an authentic piece of paradise. You have guessed it, you do not come here for its skyscrapers but for its pure emerald waters and idyllic beaches. The waters off Shiraho, on the island's south-west coast, have one of the largest areas of blue coral in the world.

Day 10 Keelung (Chilung)

On the north-east tip of Taiwan, the harbour city of Keelung stands on one of the most beautiful coasts on the island. Nearby is the spectacular natural park of Yehliu, famed for its striking rock formations. It's easy to tour the city's historical sites on trails that cross the lush green hills surrounding the harbour from Chung Cheng Park to Fort Ershawan, you can enjoy superb views of Keelung and the coastline. But the main attraction is the Miaokou night market, where you can taste some typically Taiwanese culinary delights.

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

YOUR SHIP: LE SOLEAL

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VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

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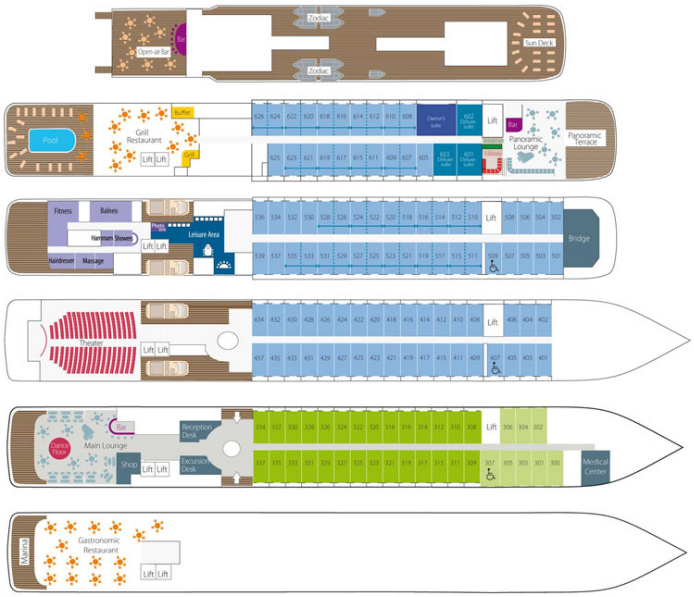
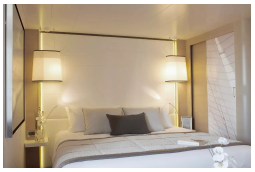


Deluxe Stateroom



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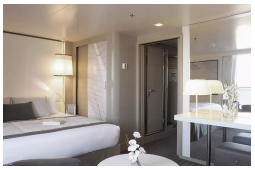

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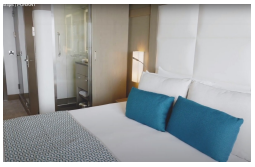

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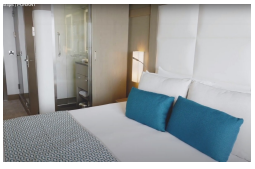

Prestige Deck 5 Suite

Prestige Deck 6

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