

#DEEPJAPAN IN LATE SPRING: SAVORING THE BEST OF THE SEASONS IN THE BEAUTIFUL COUNTRYSIDE OF GIFU

May 22nd/ 23rd/24th

or

June 8th/9th/10th

3 days/ 2 nights tour in 2026

HIGHLIGHTS:



Hike in pristine nature: walk gentle to moderate mountain trails once used by villagers to connect small villages of Central Japan with the rest of the world. These quiet paths wind through tranquil mountain forests and open up into rural landscapes of Iijima in Ena and Nakatsugawa areas of Gifu prefecture, with blue skies reflected in water-filled rice paddies. Hikes are unhurried with regular breaks and time for photography and quiet appreciation of pleasant season we offer this tour on.



Stay in a traditional Japanese house @kannagara.iiji for 2 nights, a beautifully maintained traditional home that offers a rare opportunity to live as locals once did – without sacrificing comfort. Sleep on high quality futon mattresses, enjoy spotless facilities and wake to rural tranquillity and fresh mountain air. Stroll through the village and experience the slower rhythm of village life in tune with turning of the seasons.



Dinners with locals, share home cooked evening meals, with most of ingredients highly seasonal and locally sourced. This is not a performance for tourists but a genuine stay among the people that are proud to call this place home.



#DEEPPJAPAN IN LATE SPRING

Flexibility to make the itinerary as relaxed or as intense as you want it to be (see optional programs*), and freedom to interact with others as much or as little as you wish (the itinerary outline below serves as the key guideline for what to expect). Read the core plan, and if you wish to customize it adding formal dining for lunch, cooking/ demonstration class, exquisite sake tasting and brewery tour hosted by heritage craftsman, or calligraphy class experience, contact us early on.

Two sets of dates in 2026 for 3 days/ 2 nights tour: choose either May 22nd/ 23rd/24th or June 8th/9th/10th.

Two guesthouses to choose from: KANNAGARA in Ena or OMUSUBI in Nakatsugawa.

Comfortable transportation is provided to and from cultural experiences and adventures – you don't depend on the weather and scarce public transport as much as you would without a car. Sit back and enjoy the views.



Safety: the region is quiet and well-known to our local hosts. There are currently no reported sightings of bears in the region and we will continuously monitor local conditions. For hiking sturdy mountain boots, backpack and a rainproof jacket is all you need.

Small group: maximum of 6 participants ensures the experience will be customized to a certain degree, yet mindful of the local community. Intimate group size grants the opportunity to make genuine connections with local people and possibly with other participants. Children are allowed from 15 upwards, unless a private tour is booked.

Privatizing the tour is an option. Prefer to travel privately with close circle of friends, family or colleagues? Possible. Additional terms and conditions will apply – if you cover the cost equivalent to 4 participants and agree to a stricter cancellation policy and a different payment schedule, we can close applications to all other participants and enquiries.



ITINERARY OUTLINE

#DEEPJAPAN IN LATE SPRING

DAY 1

HIKING THROUGH POSTCARD-PERFECT RURAL PANORAMAS, FOLLOWED BY DINNER WITH LOCALS



Arrive ready for hiking and meet the local tour organizers at **JR Ena Station or JR Nakatsugawa Station***, who will take you to the starting point of the mountain trail. Your luggage will be transferred separately by car.

Set out along the traditional paths that once connected the isolated village of Iji with the outside world. Enjoy ever-changing rural scenery as forest trails open onto mountain views and quiet agricultural landscapes.

Approaching your accommodation—a beautifully preserved traditional Japanese farmstead—you will arrive 1–2 hours before sunset. Upon arrival at your guesthouse for the next two nights, your host will provide a short orientation tour of the house.



Relax while gazing out over a forested valley, or watch your hosts prepare dinner. Grill **gohei-mochi** (a regional specialty rice dumpling rarely found in major cities) together on the outdoor patio.

As night falls, enjoy star-filled skies and the sounds of nature far removed from the bustle of urban life.

Share a handmade dinner with local community members, featuring homemade dishes such as tempura made with locally grown vegetables, croquettes, and other regional specialties.

A local Shinto priest may join as a bartender for the evening, preparing a drink and assisting with the grilling of gohei-mochi.

Retire for the night on a traditional futon.

Transportation:

car with professional driver, from the official start time to luggage drop-off at the guesthouse.

*either JR Ena or JR Nakatsugawa stations are starting points - which one is at discretion of tour organizers.



DAY 2

HIDDEN GEMS: A DEEP DIVE INTO RURAL JAPANESE CULTURE

Begin the day with a gentle morning walk around the guesthouse. Take in fresh greenery, blue skies reflected in water-filled rice paddies, traditional farmhouses, and surrounding pine groves. Enjoy a self-service breakfast at your own pace, then relax until the scheduled meet-up time. Visit a local kabuki theatre for a behind-the-scenes tour, including a rare opportunity to step onto the kabuki stage and peek into the changing rooms. Recently renovated, the building still carries the scent of hinoki cedar, while generations of local ji-kabuki enthusiasts have preserved the tradition here for over 300 years. For a deeper look into everyday life of the past, visit a nearby local museum. Hina dolls and vintage posters remain carefully preserved on the second floor—linger as gentle reminders of a way of life slipping from living memory.



Lunch: TBC

(either a light meal on the go or a refined multi-course lunch. Please note that start times are fixed, and reservations for formal dining must be made well in advance.)

In the afternoon, observe local customs as your hosts pay respects at a picturesque Shinto shrine, offering insight into living spiritual traditions.

Return to the guesthouse for dinner—similar in warmth and generosity to the previous evening, but with different dishes and a new team in the kitchen.

Once again, a local Shinto priest may join as bartender, preparing drinks and assisting the team in serving various local specialties.

Retire for the night.

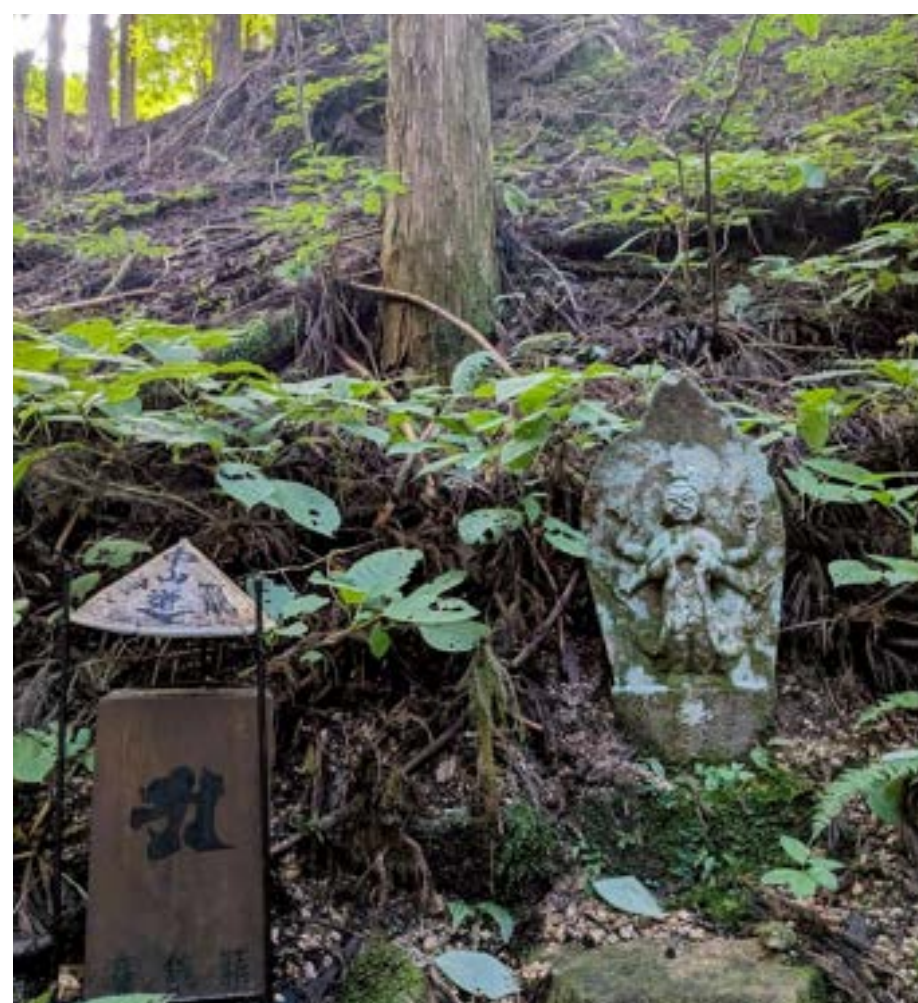
Transportation:

car with professional driver, ~8 consecutive hours.

DAY 3 EXPLORE DEEP JAPAN IN COMFORT: NEAR OR FAR

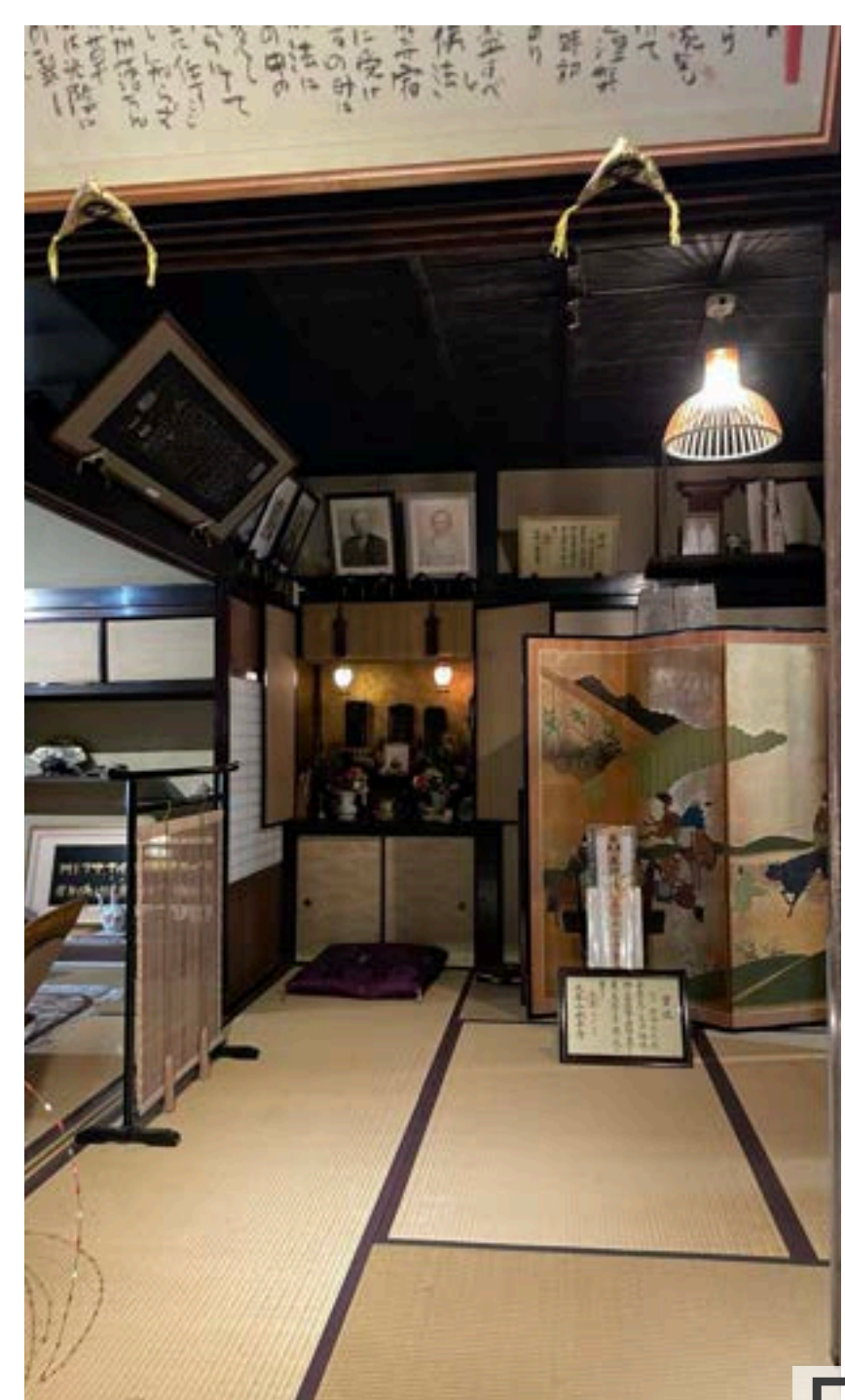
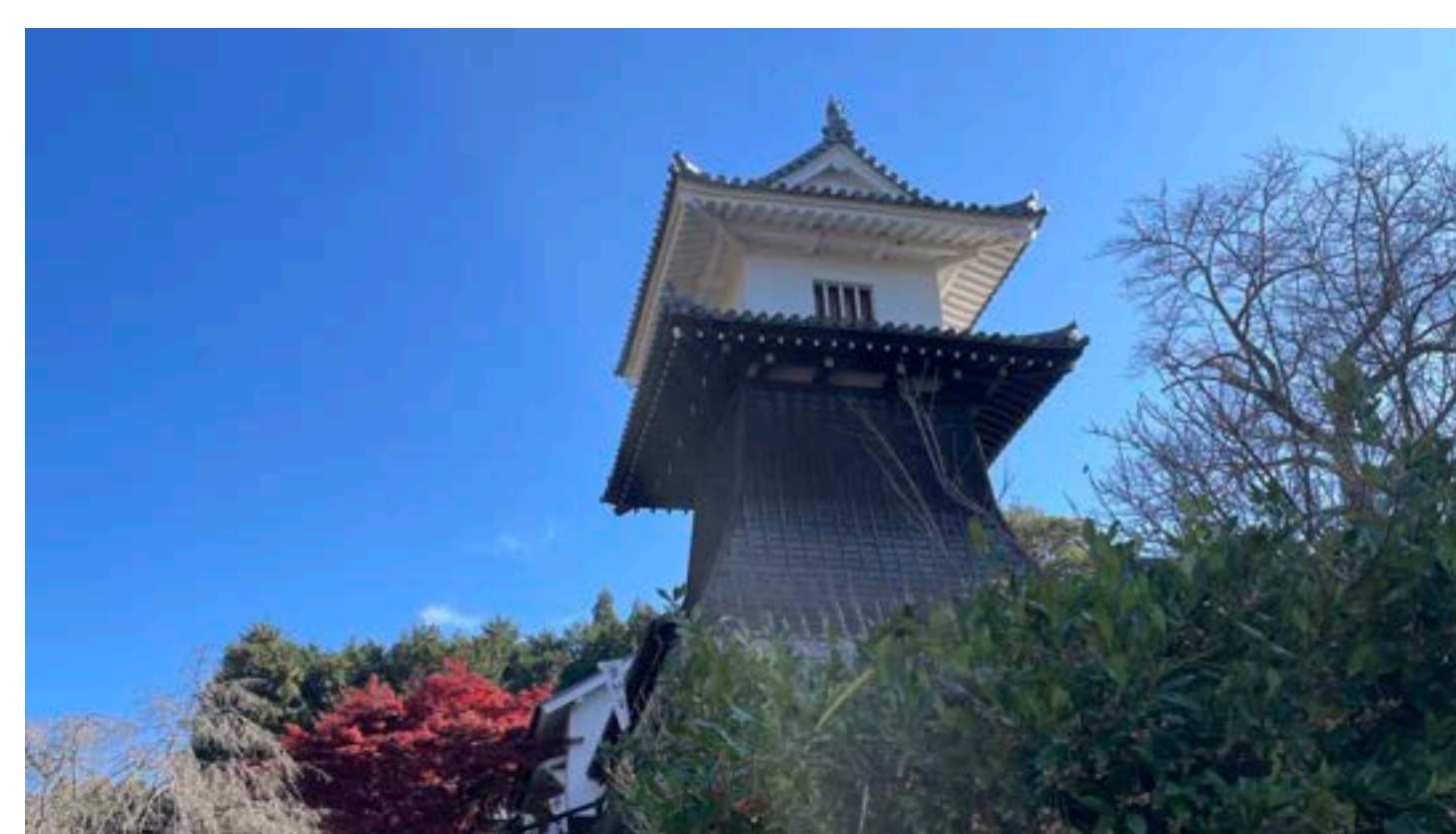
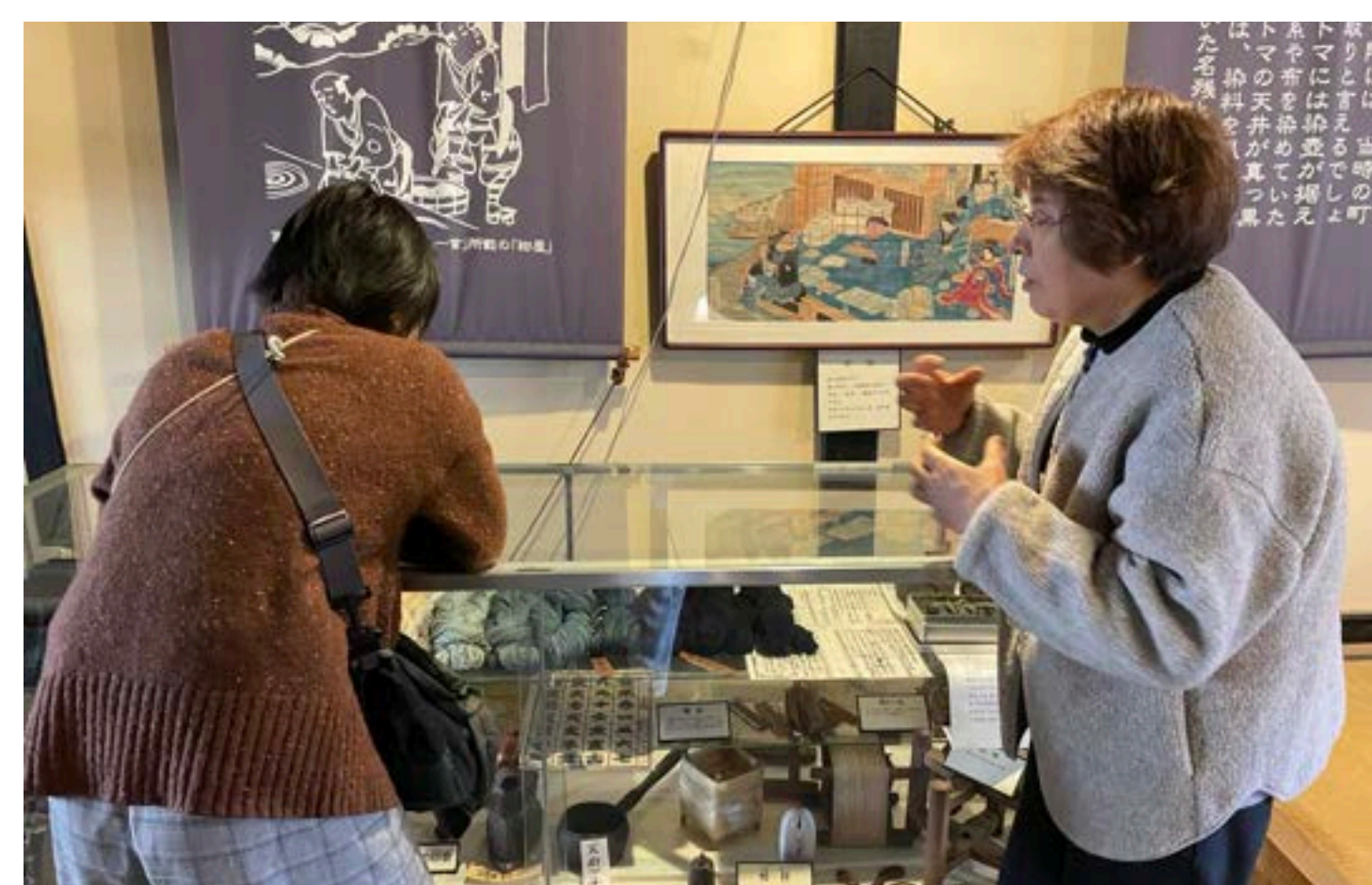
Included options (no extra cost):

- Explore **Magome**, a beautifully preserved post town along the historic Nakasendo Road, lined with traditional houses and shops.



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- **Hike to samurai castle ruins:**
Naegi Castle – dramatic ruins with breathtaking panoramic views
OR
Iwamura Castle – gentler scenery, with access to samurai weapons and memorabilia, a reconstructed gate tower, and a charming cluster of cafés and shops.





Optional experiences (additional cost):

- Local cuisine cooking/ cooking demonstration class featuring hoba-zushi, a seasonal early-summer sushi specialty
- Guided walk along the ancient Nakasendo Road with a Shugendō (mountain ascetic) priest
- Exclusive sake brewery tour with tasting
- Formal dining at local restaurant/ lunches that require restaurant reservations



Conclude the journey and bid a fond sayonara to your guide.

Transportation:

car with professional driver from the agreed start time to final drop-off at JR Ena or JR Nakatsugawa Station, with onward connections by limited express or local trains to Nagoya or Nagano.



TERMS&CONDITIONS

Price for the core itinerary

2 nights / 3 days tour, mid-May to early June 2026, staying at Kannagara Guesthouse

| Number of participants | Price per person (JPY) |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 6 participants | 277,000 |
| 5 participants | 320,000 |
| 4 participants | 390,000 |
| 3 participants | 485,000 |
| 2 participants | 650,000 |
| 1 participant | 1,111,111 |

*If you are looking for more economical option than listed above, please check same tour where our guests stay at more economical Omusubi guesthouse. Same content, same dates but different accommodation.

The final price per guest is determined by the total number of confirmed participants, as outlined above. If the final group size differs from your initial booking, any overpayment will be refunded in cash on Day 1.

Privatizing the tour

For those who prefer a more intimate and personal setting, this tour may be arranged for your exclusive use. A private arrangement is offered at a rate equivalent to four participants, a total of 1,560,000 JPY. For private tours, a collective non-refundable deposit of 200,000 JPY applies, replacing the standard per-person deposit.

Upon receipt of payment—due within seven calendar days of the invoice date—the tour will be closed to further bookings. We will then proceed with arrangements for a private group consisting of yourself and up to three invited guests (four participants in total).

For guests who wish to privatize the tour for five or more guests, availability and pricing will be reviewed upon request. Early enquiries are warmly encouraged.

Payments and cancellations

These arrangements ensure the tour is prepared with the utmost care and attention to detail. A payment of 50% of the tour cost is required at the time of application, to be settled within one calendar week of the invoice date. This includes a non-refundable deposit of 50,000 JPY per person. The remaining 50% balance is due by Tuesday, 10 March 2026.

Once receipt of the initial payment is confirmed, the comprehensive itinerary will be shared with you within two calendar weeks. The following cancellation charges apply in all cases. These conditions reflect commitments made to local hosts and suppliers.

- Immediately after application: non-refundable deposit of 50,000 JPY
- 72 days before the scheduled tour start date: 20%
- 50 days before the scheduled tour start date: 30%
- 35 days before the scheduled tour start date: 40%
- 21 days before the scheduled tour start date: 50%
- 14 days before the scheduled tour start date: 60%
- 7 days before the scheduled tour start date: 70%
- 5 days before the scheduled tour start date: 80%
- 3 days before the scheduled tour start date: 90%
- From 2 days before the tour start date: 100%

All cancellation charges listed above are inclusive of the non-refundable deposit paid at the time of application.

Optional experiences added to the core programme may be subject to distinct cancellation conditions.

Children and family bookings

This tour is designed for adults. Children under 15 are welcome only when the tour is booked exclusively for your family. For any participating children, passport details and, where applicable, additional identification will be requested at an early stage, simply to ensure seamless arrangements and peace of mind for all involved.

Payment methods

All prices are quoted in Japanese Yen. Payments may be made via PayPal or bank transfer (international or Japanese domestic). We kindly ask that any bank charges are covered by the participant, ensuring the full amount reaches us in JPY.

Unfortunately, we are unable to accept credit card payments at present.

Itinerary

A detailed itinerary, including specific locations and venues, will be sent to all participants within two calendar weeks of formal confirmation that the initial payment (including the non-refundable deposit) has been received.

Until that time, the description provided above (Itinerary Outline) serves as the definitive reference for the tour content for all guests, regardless if they book directly or via travel concierge.

Inclusive of:

- Two nights’ accommodation at the guesthouse
- Simple self-service breakfasts and freshly prepared, lavish dinners
- An English-speaking guide or coordinator for up to 9 consecutive hours per day
- A private vehicle with a local driver for up to 8 consecutive hours per day
- All entrance fees, museum tickets, and participation fees as specified in the itinerary
- Lunch and dinner as indicated in the itinerary outline (excluding beverages)

Excluding:

- Shinkansen or local express rail tickets to and from JR Ena or JR Nakatsugawa station
- Travel and medical insurance
- Meals or snacks not explicitly listed as included
- Personal expenses such as souvenirs or incidentals
- Luggage forwarding, storage fees, or porter’s services

Luggage notes

Guests are expected to handle their own luggage as the tour we offer is authentic stay at a guesthouse and local experiences, not hotel-level service. The driver might assist at times but this should not be expected.

Up to two medium-to-large suitcases per person may be accommodated in the vehicle’s luggage compartment.

Transport

With advance notice, we might be able to assist with purchase of train tickets to and from JR Ena or JR Nakatsugawa station. Those arrangements if and when made on your behalf will be subject to different payment and cancellation conditions.

Weather considerations

The rhythm of the programme respects local conditions, with adjustments made thoughtfully as required, guided by local weather reports and official advice. In the event of heavy rain or thunderstorms, certain activities may become difficult and the schedule may be adjusted significantly.

Late spring to early summer is typically one of the most pleasant seasons in the region, with stable weather and a very low likelihood of typhoons.

To Book the Tour:

- Scan the QR code to complete the registration form.



- Or email us at **mail@ruraljapantour.com** regarding the "#DEEPJAPAN IN LATE SPRING TOUR".

Connect with RURAL JAPAN team
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Guesthouse Kannagara website