



Autumn Journey into #DeepJapan

Curated Finale is Optional Delights



Why not deepen your connection to Gifu? Join us for a culinary workshop, where you'll learn the secret of an autumn dish with the true taste of Gifu in the fall. Alternatively, enjoy a private tour of a sake brewery with a tasting. For the spiritually curious, a walk with a Shugendō priest provides a rare window into Japan's mountain-worship traditions – especially when wearing his traditional mountain attire.

A dedicated interpreter accompanies you throughout each optional experience, allowing you to fully immerse yourself without a second thought about language.





A Private Encounter with the Master: Exclusive Sake Brewery Tour & Tasting



Enhance your journey with an exclusive edition of the renowned sake brewery tour at Iwamura Sake Brewery.

Part I: the Philosophy of sake-making (approx. 40 minutes)

The master sake brewer himself will welcome you, sharing the distinct methods behind different styles of sake, the history of the brewery, lesser-known stories and philosophies woven into Japanese sake, and the meticulous craftsmanship behind it all. You will be guided through the brewery's storied grounds on a special private tour.

The master sake brewer will guide you through the history of the long, narrow brewery building — a layout characteristic of this former castle town.

Part II: the grand tasting (approx. 90 minutes)

In an unhurried, intimate setting, enjoy a comprehensive tasting of the brewery's entire range of sake. Seated at the table with the master sake brewer, you will taste each sake as he shares its story.

A selection of seasonal dishes, carefully chosen to complement sake, will accompany the tasting. From delicate daiginjo to rich, seasonal limited releases, savour the full depth of Japanese sake, guided by the brewery owner's insight into each one suited to your taste.

Essential details

Booking deadline: September 15, 2026

Pricing (per guest): the rate per guest is determined by the total number of participants in your private group:

Number of participants	Price per person (JPY)
5 participants	32,000
4 participants	36,000
3 participants	42,000
2 participants	48,000
1 participant	80,000



A Private Pilgrimage with the Ascetic: Into the Living Spirituality of Shugendō



Embark on a profound, spiritual journey into the heart of Japan’s ancient nature worship. Guided by an authentic, practicing Yamabushi – Shugendō priest(mountain ascetic practitioner), this private 3-hour light pilgrimage offers rare access to the living spirituality of Shugendō. Accompanied by a dedicated English interpreter for a total of 4 hours, you will seamlessly immerse yourself in the sacred rituals and philosophy of the mountains.

Part I: attire of the ascetic & The sacred river (approx. 60 mins)

Your journey begins with a profound transformation. Under the guidance of the Yamabushi, you will be robed in authentic pilgrimage attire: the sacred white robe (shiro-syozoku) symbolising purity, the woven hat (kasa), and the traditional walking stick (tsu-e). Once fully arrayed in this living history, you will receive an initial blessing and an introduction to the mystical customs of the practitioners. Before entering the mountain trail, you will pause at the serene Agigawa River, learning how water acts as a spiritual mirror and a source of purification.

Part II: pilgrimage to the ancient shrine (approx. 120 mins)

Step onto the peaceful mountain trails, feeling the rhythmic strike of your staff against the earth. Your destination is one of the region's most revered and oldest sacred sites, with a history stretching back nearly 1,000 years. Here, surrounded by ancient energy, you will witness and participate in a traditional ritual. The journey concludes with a quiet moment of reflection and an intimate Q&A session with your Yamabushi guide, allowing you to integrate the spiritual wisdom of the mountain before descending.

- Please note: comfortable walking shoes and appropriate outdoor attire are required.

Weather & substitution policy:

in the event of heavy rain or severe weather that compromises safety, the mountain walk will be altered. Instead, the experience will seamlessly transition into an exclusive indoor program held at a historic venue. This includes a private purification ritual, a deep meditation session, and a rare, intimate dialogue with the Yamabushi master, allowing for a deeper exploration of Shugendō philosophy.

Essential details

Booking deadline: September 15, 2026

Pricing (per guest): the rate per guest is determined by the total number of participants in your private group:

Number of participants	Price per person (JPY)
5 participants	44,000
4 participants	46,000
3 participants	52,000
2 participants	61,000
1 participant	90,000



Autumn Flavors: Highland Culinary Workshop with a Local in a Historic Kominka



Set in a cozy, beautifully preserved traditional folk house (Kominka) café nestled in the secluded mountain highlands, this experience invites you to immerse yourself in the timeless wisdom of "Satoyama"—Japan’s traditional, sustainable way of living in harmony with nature. In this private 3-hour culinary workshop, you will discover how to extract profound, savory flavor (Umami) using wholesome, plant-based seasonal ingredients sourced from the local foothills. Accompanied by a dedicated English interpreter, you will cook alongside a local home cook—a true master of the community's culinary heritage—creating a comforting autumn lunch cooked in a traditional Japanese claypot (Donabe).

Part I: the art of Dashi & traditional claypot cooking (Approx. 100 mins)

Your experience begins with the very foundation of Gifu's regional cuisine: Dashi broth. You will learn the patient process of cold-brewing slow-dried Shiitake mushrooms and premium, high-quality Kombu seaweed to create a rich, golden stock. Under your host's guidance, you will learn time-honored local techniques to prep fresh, plump autumn bounties and chop robust seasonal root vegetables. Finally, fire up the traditional Donabe claypot to steam a classic Gifu heirloom rice dish, while simultaneously crafting one or two traditional autumn side dishes that locals have enjoyed for generations, utilizing the savory depth of your homemade Dashi.

Part II: the Autumn banquet, tea & dessert (Approx. 80 mins)

With the cooking complete, sit down to slowly savor your self-made, vegetable-focused autumn banquet in the peaceful atmosphere of the Kominka. Observe how the earthenware claypot has cooked each grain of rice to fragrant perfection. Your meal concludes with a seasonal local dessert and premium green tea from Gifu, a region celebrated for its exceptional tea cultivation, allowing you to relax and share stories with your local host.

Please note: As we prioritize locally sourced ingredients from the foothills, the specific dishes prepared may vary based on what nature provides that day.

Essential details

Booking deadline: September 15, 2026

Pricing (per guest): The rate per guest is determined by the total number of participants in your private group:

Number of participants	Price per person (JPY)
5 participants	35,000
4 participants	38,000
3 participants	43,000
2 participants	53,000
1 participant	85,000



Optional Restaurant Reservations & Policies

While all core meals (from Day 1 Dinner to Day 3 Lunch) are fully included in your tour package, we understand you may want to explore local dining options. If you wish to dine at one of our recommended restaurants, our team is happy to assist with your reservations, dietary communications, and schedule coordination.

Please review the following policies before requesting a booking:

Concierge & Arrangement Fee (Tax Included)	Per person (JPY)
Lunch	3,000
Dinner	5,000

Meal costs & refund policy:

the actual cost of your food and drinks at the restaurant will be at your own expense. Please note that no refunds or discounts can be issued for the unused meals already included in your core tour price.

Day 2 lunch (Magome & Tsumago area):

a specially prepared Bento box is already included in your tour for this day. However, if you prefer to have lunch at a restaurant within the historic post towns, we would be happy to arrange a reservation for you.

Please note that the exact timing and location of your lunch—whether it falls in Magome-juku or Tsumago-juku—can vary significantly depending on your overall itinerary and trekking pace. Therefore, if you wish to book a restaurant lunch, please consult with us first so we can coordinate it seamlessly with your daily schedule. As restaurants in this area can become extremely crowded, enjoying your included Bento box amidst the nature remains a highly recommended and flexible option for your trek.

Day 3 lunch:

similarly, the best restaurant options for Day 3 will depend on your final destination—whether you choose to explore the Naegi Castle ruins area or the historic Iwamura Castle town. We will coordinate the schedule while considering the preferences of other group members as well.

Please rest assured that there are also many wonderful local restaurants and cafés in these areas that do not require advance reservations, allowing you to choose spontaneously on the day if you prefer.

Custom requests & late dinners:

if you have any other specific dining requests or wish to book meals outside the standard itinerary, please contact us directly. To ensure seamless transportation within our private driver's standard operating hours (8 hours per day), we will happily review your schedule and advise you on the best options. Please feel free to inquire.

For your reference, we have curated a list of recommended lunch restaurants below.

Dinner

- **eresia** — contemporary French cuisine in central Nakatsugawa, where local ingredients meet a refined European sensibility.
- **Soba WAKURI** — handmade soba in the finest Japanese tradition, unhurried and deeply satisfying.

Lunch

Tsumago-juku :

- **Otokichi** —offers a wonderful taste of traditional post town cuisine including tempr.
- **Fujioto** — authentic Kiso regional set meals crafted with seasonal mountain bounties and exquisite handmade soba noodles in a refined, tranquil setting.

Magome-juku:

- **Haginoya** — traditional Japanese cuisine in the heart of the post town. Irregular closing days; please enquire in advance.
- **Sobadokoro Mikazukian**— a delightful spot in Magome-juku famous for its authentic, stone-ground handmade soba.

Day 3 — Iwamura or Nakatsugawa area

- **Iwamura Sanso** — steak grilled over an open hearth, or an elegant Hoba-miso kaiseki lunch; one of the region's most distinctive dining experiences.
- **Kinoka, Naegi** — a refined seasonal set meal centred on tofu and local vegetables; quiet, restorative, and deeply local.
- **Ryotei Yakeyama** — a historic ryotei near the station, serving tempura lunch with a sense of old Japan.

Optional Experiences – Terms & Conditions

These Terms & Conditions apply specifically to Optional Experiences booked in addition to the core tour. Except where expressly stated otherwise below, the core tour's Terms & Conditions shall apply in full, including but not limited to provisions on Force Majeure, Governing Law, Payment Methods, and Changes and Substitutions by the Operator.

Booking process

Optional Experiences are available exclusively to guests who have confirmed a booking for the core tour and may not be purchased on a standalone basis. Requests for Optional Experiences must be submitted no later than Tuesday, 15 September 2026. As each Optional Experience depends on the availability of an individual local host or expert, your request will first be checked directly with the relevant host. Once availability has been confirmed and your place provisionally held, we will invite you to proceed with formal booking. No deposit is requested, and no obligation arises, until this confirmation has been given. Should an Optional Experience prove unavailable, no deposit will be requested and no fee will be charged.

Payment

Upon confirmation of availability with the relevant local host, the total fee for the Optional Experience is due in full within one calendar week of the invoice date. Of this amount, 10,000 JPY per person is a non-refundable deposit, which is retained in all cases, including in the event of cancellation.

Cancellation policy

As optional experiences involve direct, individual arrangements with local masters and artisans whose schedules are reserved specifically for you, the following cancellation policy applies. All time periods below are calculated based on **Japan Standard Time (JST)**, counting backward from the date of the optional experience itself (not the core tour's start date).

- Up to 45 days before the experience date: non-refundable deposit only
- 44 to 30 days before: 20% of total fee
- 29 to 14 days before: 40% of total fee
- 13 to 7 days before: 60% of total fee
- 6 to 3 days before: 80% of total fee
- 2 days or fewer before, or no-show: 100% of total fee

Final pricing

The final price per guest for each Optional Experience is determined by the total number of confirmed participants in that experience. If the final group size differs from your initial booking due to additional participants joining, any resulting overpayment will be refunded via bank transfer following completion of the tour. A smaller group size resulting from cancellations will not lead to a higher price for the remaining participants.

Governing Law

These Terms & Conditions are governed by the laws of Japan, in accordance with the core tour's Terms & Conditions.

Inclusive of:

- dedicated interpretation throughout the experience
- entrance fees, materials, and special tools required for the experience.
- a private hired vehicle to and from the Optional Experience location

Excluding:

- travel and medical insurance, as well as any insurance specific to the Optional Experience itself
- meals or snacks not explicitly listed as included
- personal expenses such as souvenirs or incidentals

Changes and substitutions

Each optional experience is built around a specific individual and cannot be replicated with a substitute of equal standing. Should minor adjustments to timing or content become necessary, we will always consult with you in advance. In the rare event that your host is unable to proceed — due to sudden illness or unforeseen circumstances — the optional experience will be cancelled, and the full amount paid (including the deposit) will be refunded. You will return to the core tour itinerary for that duration.



Frequently Asked Questions for Optional Experience

Q: How do I book an optional experience?

A: Simply let us know which experience you would like to add when you confirm your core tour booking, no later than 15 September 2026. Because each experience is arranged personally with a local host, we first confirm their availability before any payment is requested. Once confirmed, we will guide you through the simple booking steps.

Q: What if my preferred date or experience isn't available?

A: If we are unable to secure the local host's availability, no deposit or fee will ever be requested, and you are free to choose another experience or simply enjoy the core tour as planned.

Q: When do I need to pay in full?

A: Once your host's availability is confirmed, the full fee for the Optional Experience is due within one calendar week. This is settled separately from, but alongside, your core tour arrangements.

Q: Can I book an optional experience on its own?

A: Optional experiences are not available as standalone bookings. They are offered exclusively to guests who have confirmed a booking for our core tour.

Q: What happens if I need to cancel after booking?

A: Because these are individual, one-of-a-kind arrangements, our cancellation policy is as follows. All time periods are calculated in **Japan Standard Time (JST)**, counting backward from the date of the optional experience itself.

Up to 45 days before the experience date: Non-refundable deposit only.

44 to 30 days before: 20% of total fee.

29 to 14 days before: 40% of total fee.

13 to 7 days before: 60% of total fee.

6 to 3 days before: 80% of total fee.

2 days or fewer before, or no-show: 100% of total fee

Q: Will the price change if more guests join my experience?

A: Pricing for shared experiences is based on the final number of confirmed participants. If additional guests join after your booking, any resulting overpayment is refunded by bank transfer after the tour. If others cancel, your price will never increase as a result.

Q: Can I add an Optional Experience after my core tour has already started?

A: Unfortunately, this is not possible. Each optional experience requires dedicated preparation with our local hosts, all of which must be arranged well in advance. For this reason, all requests must be submitted by 15 September 2026.

To Book the Optional Experience:

Option1: Email us at info@ruraljapan.co.jp regarding the "Optional experience for Autumn tour".

Option2:
Contact to RURAL JAPAN team
via WhatsApp or Telegram



WhatsApp: +81 70 4325 2279
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