KYUSHU / FUKUOKA · BEPPU · KAGOSHIMA · YAKUSHIMA · NAGASAKI · 18 DAYS · BY TRAIN

Ramen to rainforest: Kyushu by rail, all the way to Yakushima's ancient cedars

Updated October 2026 · Best time: Mar–May · Oct–Nov

Trip planner · tabi-notes.com/kyushu-kagoshima-yakushima-by-train

This is the full Kyushu loop, from the ramen stalls of Fukuoka all the way down to the subtropical south, and back. It starts and ends in **Fukuoka**, so you can fly in and out of the same airport, and it runs entirely on trains, buses and one fast boat.

The first week follows the classics: Yufuin, Beppu, Kumamoto. Then the Shinkansen takes you south to **Kagoshima**, a city that lives with an active volcano across the bay. From there a jetfoil crosses to **Yakushima**, a round mountain island of thousand-year-old cedars, moss and waterfalls (and a lot of rain). On the way back come the hot-sand baths of **Ibusuki** and two nights in **Nagasaki** before the last ramen in Fukuoka.

18 days	**train, bus & boat** no car needed	**8** stops	**Mar–May · Oct–Nov** best time
~¥280k per person*			

*Accommodation (sharing a room) and transport, middle version. International flights not included.

The route at a glance

1 **Fukuoka** Nights 1–3	2 **Yufuin** Night 4	3 **Beppu** Nights 5–6	4 **Kumamoto** Nights 7–8	5 **Kagoshima** Nights 9–10
6 **Yakushima** Nights 11–13	7 **Ibusuki** Night 14	8 **Nagasaki** Nights 15–16	9 **Fukuoka** Night 17	



The loop by train, bus and jetfoil: Fukuoka → Yufuin → Beppu → Kumamoto → Kagoshima → Yakushima → Ibusuki → Nagasaki → Fukuoka.

Prices are per room for two per night. Ryokan prices include dinner and breakfast. ★ = famous / worth it · ★★ = splurge.

Stop by stop

01 Fukuoka 福岡

Nights 1–3 · Ramen capital & yatai food stalls

PLAN

- Arrival: Fukuoka Airport is only two subway stops from Hakata Station. Check in, then tonkotsu ramen
- Canal City, Ohori Park, Fukuoka Tower above the bay, teamLab Forest
- Half-day trip to Dazaifu Tenmangu shrine, or the giant reclining Buddha of Nanzoin
- Evenings: the yatai stalls along the river in Nakasu

WHERE TO STAY

Hotel II Palazzo design hotel by Aldo Rossi, walk to the Nakasu yatai — ¥18–30k

Nishitetsu Hotel Croom Hakata big public bath, 5 min from Hakata Station — ¥15–25k

★★ **The Ritz-Carlton, Fukuoka** high above Tenjin, views over the city — ¥80k+

> **Good to know** Book the **same hotel** for the first and the last night. Leave a suitcase there and travel light: Yakushima is much easier with a backpack.

ALSO WORTH SEEING

Fukuoka Tower
city view over Hakata Bay

Nokonoshima Island Park
flower island, short ferry ride

Ishikura Sake Brewery
sake brewery in Hakata

WHERE I EAT

Nagahama Yatai Dogenya
yatai street stall

Hakata Issou
tonkotsu ramen

Hakata Ramen ShinShin
tonkotsu ramen

Maedaya Motsunabe
motsunabe hot pot

博多もつ鍋菊武
motsunabe hot pot

Hakataro Nishinakasu
mizutaki & motsunabe

Yoshizuka Unagi
grilled eel

Daichi no Udon
Hakata udon

Hakata Yakiniku Hachi Hachi
yakiniku

Hakata Sushi Momonoki (博多鮨桃の木)
sushi

A Happy Pancake Tenjin
soufflé pancakes

Rec Coffee · Stereo Coffee · Blue Bottle
coffee

02 Yufuin 由布院

Night 4 · A ryokan night under Mount Yufu

PLAN

- Day 4: the Yufuin no Mori limited express from Hakata (~2 h 15, reserve seats) or the highway bus (~2 h)
- Lake Kinrin, the shops and cafés of Yunotsubo street, the Comico Art Museum
- Kaiseki dinner and a long soak; Lake Kinrin again early next morning when the mist rises

WHERE TO STAY

☆ **Yufuin Gettouan** every room is a cottage with its own outdoor bath — ¥60–90k

☆☆ **Yufuin Tamanoyu** secluded garden ryokan, kaiseki dinner — ¥90k+

Smaller ryokans along the river simpler inns, many with private baths — ¥35–55k

Good to know This is the night to splurge on a room with a private open-air bath.

◎ ALSO WORTH SEEING

Bussan-ji
small temple near the station

03 Beppu 別府

Nights 5–6 · The hells & a hot spring on every corner

PLAN

- Day 5: local bus from Yufuin (~1 h)
- The Hells of Beppu (jigoku) in Kannawa: boiling blue, red and mud ponds you look at, not bathe in
- Lunch steamed in onsen steam (jigoku-mushi), a sand bath at Takegawara, the ropeway up Mount Tsurumi
- Optional half day: the samurai slopes of Kitsuki

WHERE TO STAY

☆☆ **ANA InterContinental Beppu** hilltop resort with an infinity onsen over the bay — ¥70k+

☆ **Suginoi Hotel** huge onsen hotel with the terraced Tanayu baths — ¥25–45k

Small Kannawa ryokans family inns in the steaming old onsen quarter — ¥20–35k

◎ ALSO WORTH SEEING

Hachiman Kamado Shrine
shrine in the Kannawa hot-spring area

Beppu Park
green break in the city

Kitsuki Castle & samurai town
half-day trip, ~40 min north

Futago-ji
mountain temple on the Kunisaki peninsula

WHERE I EAT

Gyoza Kogetsu
Beppu gyoza

焼とり凡 母家
yakitori

焼肉壽壽
yakiniku

Owadazushi
sushi

Somuri Steak
steak

Tonkatsu Yamamoto Loin
tonkatsu

Fukubako Soba
soba

Saryo Morisawa (茶寮森澤)
tea house

04 Kumamoto 熊本

Nights 7–8 · Mount Aso on the way, then castle & Kumamon

PLAN

- Day 7: the Kyushu Odan bus from Beppu crosses the Aso caldera. Break the journey at Aso: Kusasenri meadow and the Nakadake crater, then the JR Hohi line down to Kumamoto
- Day 8: Kumamoto Castle and Suizenji garden, Kumamon Square, horse sashimi or Kumamoto ramen with fried garlic
- Optional: a day tour to Takachiho Gorge or Kurokawa Onsen instead

WHERE TO STAY

☆ **Kumamoto Hotel Castle** rooms facing the castle — ¥20–30k

Mitsui Garden Hotel Kumamoto modern, near the tram and Shimotori arcade — ¥15–25k

Good to know Nakadake crater closes when volcanic gas levels are high. Check the Aso volcano status on the morning you go.

◎ ALSO WORTH SEEING

Kamishikimi Kumanoimasu Shrine
mossy forest shrine on the way to Takachiho

WHERE I EAT

Akagumi Ramen
Kumamoto ramen

Mangetsu Okonomiyaki
okonomiyaki

Takiniku Gyu-chan (たき肉牛ちゃん)
grilled beef

Kunsei Garden Takeshita (燻製ガーデン タケシタ)
smoked dishes & drinks

Gluck Coffee Spot · Cafe switch
coffee

05 Kagoshima 鹿児島

Nights 9–10 · A city facing a live volcano

PLAN

- Day 9: Kyushu Shinkansen Kumamoto → Kagoshima-Chuo (~45 min). Sengan-en, the Shimadzu clan garden with Sakurajima as its backdrop, then sunset from the Shiroyama lookout
- Day 10: the 15-minute ferry to Sakurajima (it runs around the clock): the Yunohira viewpoint, a walk on the Nagisa lava trail and the long free footbath by the water
- Evening in Tenmonkan: kurobuta black-pork shabu-shabu or tonkatsu, imo shochu, and shirokuma shaved ice for dessert
- Optional half day: Chiran (~1 h 15 by bus), a street of samurai gardens and the moving Chiran Peace Museum

WHERE TO STAY

☆ **Shiroyama Hotel Kagoshima** on the hill, open-air onsen facing Sakurajima — ¥30–50k

Remm Kagoshima smart city hotel in Tenmonkan — ¥15–25k

JR Kyushu Hotel Kagoshima next to Kagoshima-Chuo Station — ¥14–22k

> **Good to know** Sakurajima erupts small ash plumes most weeks. If ash falls, locals carry umbrellas, and so should you. It is part of the experience.

06 Yakushima 屋久島

Nights 11–13 · Ancient cedars, moss forests & waterfalls

PLAN

- Day 11: jetfoil from Kagoshima's high-speed ferry terminal to Miyanoura (~2 h direct). Afternoon: Shiratani Unsuikyo, the moss forest that inspired Princess Mononoke, 2–4 h on marked trails
- Day 12, the big one: the Jomon Sugi hike, ~22 km and about 10 hours return to a cedar thought to be several thousand years old. Start before dawn by mountain bus; a local guide makes it easier
- Day 13, slower: Yakusugi Land's forest walks, the 88-m Oko Falls, the coast road past Nagata beach (sea turtles nest here in early summer) and Hirauchi's sea-rock onsen, only usable around low tide

WHERE TO STAY

☆☆ **Sankara Hotel & Spa Yakushima** villa resort high above the sea — ¥150k+

☆ **JR Hotel Yakushima** onsen with a view over the ocean, in the south — ¥40–60k

Guesthouses in Miyanoura & Anbo small family stays, often with dinner — ¥12–20k

> **Good to know** Locals joke it rains 35 days a month. Pack rain gear and good shoes. Buses are sparse, so this is the one place on the trip where renting a small car for a day or two makes sense (or join tours). From March to November private cars can't drive to the Jomon Sugi trailhead; the shuttle bus is the only way.

07 Ibusuki 指宿

Night 14 · Buried in hot sand at the southern tip

PLAN

- Day 14: jetfoil back to Kagoshima, then the Ibusuki no Tamatebako limited express (~50 min), a train that hisses steam when the doors open
- The sunamushi sand bath: staff bury you to the neck in naturally heated beach sand, ten minutes is plenty
- If time allows: the local train to Nishi-Oyama under the perfect cone of Kaimondake, and Lake Ikeda, Kyushu's largest crater lake

WHERE TO STAY

☆ **Ibusuki Hakusuikan** seaside ryokan with a huge Edo-style bathhouse and its own sand bath — ¥40–60k

☆☆ **Ibusuki Syusuien** small ryokan known for its food — ¥70–100k

Good to know Trains south of Ibusuki run only every hour or two, so plan Nishi-Oyama around the timetable.

08 Nagasaki 長崎

Nights 15–16 · Harbour, history & a famous night view

PLAN

- Day 15: back to Kagoshima-Chuo, Kyushu Shinkansen north, and the Nishi-Kyushu Shinkansen from Takeo-Onsen to Nagasaki (~3 h 30 in total)
- Peace Park and the Atomic Bomb Museum, Glover Garden above the harbour, Meganebashi and Chinatown
- Mount Inasa at night, then champon noodles
- Optional: the boat tour to Gunkanjima, the abandoned Battleship Island

WHERE TO STAY

⭐ **Garden Terrace Nagasaki** on the hillside, every room looks over the harbour	¥50–80k
Hilton Nagasaki right at Nagasaki Station	¥30–50k
Hotel Monterey Nagasaki near the Dutch Slope and Glover Garden	¥16–26k

◎ ALSO WORTH SEEING

Glover Garden
Western houses above the harbour

Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum
next to the Peace Park

Gunkanjima (Battleship Island)
boat tour to the abandoned island

Kofuku-ji & Sofuku-ji
Chinese temples near Teramachi-dori

Confucius Shrine
colourful shrine & museum

Nagasaki Ropeway
the easy way up Mount Inasa

WHERE I EAT

Hakata Motsunabe Oyama
motsunabe hot pot

Shirokiya, Nagasaki Station
izakaya

Hayama Coffee (Oranda-dori)
coffee on the Dutch Slope

Tosaka Coffee (トサカコーヒー)
coffee

09 Fukuoka 福岡

Night 17 · One last bowl of ramen

PLAN

- Day 17: Nagasaki → Hakata (~1 h 30 via Takeo-Onsen), last shopping in Tenjin, a final yatai night
- Day 18: fly out from Fukuoka Airport, 10 minutes from Hakata by subway

WHERE TO STAY

Hotel Il Palazzo design hotel by Aldo Rossi, walk to the Nakasu yatai	¥18–30k
Nishitetsu Hotel Croom Hakata big public bath, 5 min from Hakata Station	¥15–25k

Good to know Same hotel as the first nights, so your luggage is already waiting.

WHERE I EAT

Hakata Ramen ShinShin (Deitos, at Hakata Station)
one last tonkotsu ramen

Maedaya Motsunabe Nakasu
motsunabe hot pot

NOOICE Hakata
breakfast café

Budget

Estimates for October at ¥150 ≈ US$1 · ¥165 ≈ €1. Ranges, not promises.

Version	Accommodation (2 people)	+ Transport (per person)	Per person
Value: business hotels and guesthouses, one simple ryokan	≈ ¥300k	≈ ¥80k	≈ ¥230k
Middle: ryokans in Yufuin and Ibusuki, onsen hotels elsewhere	≈ ¥400k	≈ ¥80k	≈ ¥280k
+ Splurge: Gettouan in Yufuin or a night at Sankara	+ ¥60–150k		+ ¥30–75k

MY RECOMMENDATION

Take the middle version, **about ¥280k per person**. If you splurge once, do it in Yufuin: the private-bath ryokans are what Kyushu does best.

Transport includes Shinkansen and limited express trains, the Kyushu Odan bus, and the Kagoshima ⇄ Yakushima jetfoil (roughly ¥20k return).

NOT INCLUDED

- International flights
- Food outside the ryokan dinners
- Car or tours on Yakushima: about ¥8–12k per day for a small car
- Ropeways, boat tours, entrance fees, guides
- Golden Week, Obon and autumn weekends: up to +30%

Booking & practical tips

RAIL PASS OR TICKETS?

JR Kyushu Rail Passes run on consecutive days, and Yakushima sits in the middle of this trip. Price them against single tickets: point-to-point often wins. Book seats online with JR Kyushu.

YAKUSHIMA BOATS

Jetfoils (~2 h) can be cancelled in rough seas, especially in typhoon season. The slower ferry (~4 h) is cheaper and more robust; there are also flights from Kagoshima and Fukuoka.

WEATHER

Spring and October–November are best. June is the rainy season, and August–September bring typhoons, which hit Yakushima and the south hardest.

LUGGAGE

Forward your big suitcase with takkyubin from Kagoshima to your Nagasaki or Fukuoka hotel and take only a backpack to Yakushima.

EAT

Hakata ramen and yatai, jigoku-mushi in Beppu, horse sashimi in Kumamoto, kurobuta pork and shirokuma in Kagoshima, flying fish on Yakushima, champon in Nagasaki.

BOOK EARLY

Yufuin ryokans and Yakushima's few good hotels fill first. Book about six months ahead for spring and autumn.

Shorter or longer

14 DAYS · THE QUICK SOUTH

1. Fukuoka (2 nights)
2. Beppu (2)
3. Kumamoto via Aso (1)
4. Kagoshima (2)
5. Yakushima (3)
6. fly Yakushima → Fukuoka (1)
7. Nagasaki as a day trip from Fukuoka, or skip

21 DAYS · SLOW TRAVEL

1. add a 2nd night in Yufuin
2. add Kurokawa Onsen between Beppu and Kumamoto
3. add a 4th Yakushima night as a rain buffer
4. add a 2nd Ibusuki night for Kaimondake
5. add Takeo or Ureshino Onsen before Nagasaki

Frequently asked questions

How many days do I need on Yakushima?

Three nights is the minimum: one day for the Jomon Sugi hike, one for the forests and the coast, and one as a buffer for rain or cancelled boats.

Is the Jomon Sugi hike hard?

It's long rather than technical: about 22 km and 10 hours, partly along an old logging railway, then steep forest trail. You need good fitness, proper shoes and a very early start. Shiratani Unsuikyo is the easier alternative.

What happens if the jetfoil is cancelled?

It happens in rough seas, mostly in typhoon season. The slower ferry runs more often in bad weather, and flights connect Yakushima with Kagoshima and Fukuoka. Keep a spare day before your flight home.

Can I really do Yakushima without a car?

Yes, with buses and tours, but buses are infrequent. Renting a small car on the island for a day or two is the easiest way to see the coast road and the waterfalls.

Is Sakurajima safe to visit?

Yes. It erupts small ash plumes regularly, but visitor areas are kept well away from the crater. Check the volcano alert level and expect ash on cars and streets.