

This journey finds your heartland.



Heartland JAPAN

Paragliding in the Ina Valley

Fly in the wind between two Japanese alpine ranges

Category	Outdoor	Place	Ina valley
Activity	Paragliding		NAGANO
Season	JUN-SEP	Duration	7hours
Overview	<p>Ina Valley, the Valley of Wind, lies between Japan's central alps and southern alps. This program has been specially designed only for this tour by Yoshiaki Kuremoto, a hometown paraglider who grew up riding the winds of the Ina Valley. This special plan offers a set of activities that includes a "paragliding self-maneuvering experience" and "tandem paragliding flight". For the tandem flight, take off and view the Ina Valley and the alps from 300m up in the air while enjoying the scenery with all your senses. Join this program to enjoy the charm of aerial sports in the Valley of Wind!</p>		
Highlight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A special plan to experience aerial sports that includes a self-maneuvering experience and a tandem paragliding flight. • Gliding up to 300m above the ground, in clear conditions you can enjoy wonderful views of Ina Valley and Japan Alps during the tandem flight. The instructor may even offer you the opportunity to take control. • Includes a commemorative photo from your flight and an upcycled windsock gift made from a used paraglider. 		
Fitness level	3	Culture level	1
Skill level	3	Heartlander level	4



Meet a Straw Samurai

Preserving Traditional Handcrafts of the Ina Valley

Category	Tradition	Place	Ina valley
Activity	Craft making		NAGANO
Season	APR-NOV	Duration	4.5hrs
Overview	<p>Since ancient times, Japan has had a rice farming culture. The straw that comes from the rice after it has been cut is used in a wide variety of ways, including rituals to pray for good health, as well as in everyday life. Straw handcraft is one of Japan's important traditions. Iijima Town, located between two of Japan's alpine ranges, has a climate and water supply perfect for rice farming. During the Edo Period, the town was under direct shogunate government control, and was a collection site for taxing rice from surrounding areas. Local straw handcrafts have been passed down through the generations, but in recent years, with Japan's aging society, less and less people are learning and passing these traditions on. Yuji Sakai, a straw craftsman who makes sumo rings for the national sport, is trying to ensure that these traditional crafts will not be forgotten. During this special activity, you can learn about the techniques of straw crafting while listening to stories from Mr. Sakai himself.</p>		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make your own “shimenawa rope” under the instruction of Mr. Sakai, a sumo ring craftsman. Write your wish in your rope and pray at a shrine for it to come true. Your rope will be burned during the annual “Donto-yaki” ritual, which can be watched via social media. • The building used for the activity is a recreation of a magistrate's office of the Edo Period. You can feel the historical presence of samurais, magistrates using the study, criminals being sentenced in court, and daily life from the past. • Prepare your own meal, a traditional Japanese set lunch, cooked in a historical Japanese kitchen on an irori hearth, with local women. Try tasting traditional natto wrapped in straw! 		
Fitness level	1	Culture level	3
Skill level	2	Heartlander level	4



The Natural Fortress, Takato Castle, and Samurai Lifestyle

“Geo” focused guided tour of castle ruins with no remaining buildings

Category	Tradition	Place	Ina valley
Activity	Walking		NAGANO
Season	APR-NOV	Duration	4.5hrs.
Overview	<p>Takato Castle, one of Japan’s top 100 castles, no longer has any castle buildings. It is a natural fortress chosen because of its topography and location on a river terrace between two tributaries of the Tenryu River. The castle is also known for a renowned battle in 1582, during the warring state period, when samurai were battling over territories. It was a bloody conflict fought in vain, as the defenders were outnumbered 3,000 to 50,000 and the castle was overtaken. The tour looks at the castle from the perspective of its geographical features, such as the steep cliff that protects the castle, and the valley that is used as a moat. Enjoy learning about the castle’s physical features while hearing how it was built by samurais. You will also visit museums that tell tales of the samurai lifestyle, such as their schooling and medical practices.</p>		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •VR experience of the tragic history of Takato Castle and the fighting samurai. •Learn how natural features were used to build the castle. •Stamp of Takato Castle scarlet seal (go-jyo-in). •Visit museums and learn about samurai lifestyle, education, medicine, and more. •Feel the sense of “wabi-sabi” from Buddhist statues made by Takato’s Edo-era stone masons. •Lunch: a healthy lunch made from local ingredients in an old, traditional Japanese house. 		
Fitness level	2	Culture level	3
Skill level	2	Heartlander level	4



Meet a Vibrant, Traditional Performing Arts Group in the Ina Valley

A traditional arts experience with the professional and passionate performance group, Dengakuza

Category	Tradition	Place	Ina valley
Activity	Hands-on activity		NAGANO
Season	APR-NOV	Duration	2.5hrs.
Overview	<p>Located between two alpine regions, the Ina Valley has long been home to many traditional performing arts, such as Bon Odori, Shishimai, and Kabuki. Dengakuza is a professional performing group that was formed in 1964, dedicated to revitalising and spreading to younger generations the traditional folk culture of not only the Ina Valley, but all of Japan. For this experience, you will visit the training facility of Dengakuza, where you will receive a special private performance and enjoy interacting with their performers.</p>		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A special night program to fully enjoy your time in the Ina Valley. • Includes a private show by professional performers. The content of the performance will be decided based on the customer's request. • Experience traditional performing arts under the guidance of members of Dengakuza. This content also can be decided based on the customer's preferences. 		
Fitness level	2	Culture level	3
Skill level	2	Heartlander level	4



Trip from the Kiso Valley to the Ina Valley via the “Phantom Nakasendo”

1-day e-bike and trekking tour with a Tatsuno local, Ryohei Oguchi, an accomplished round-the-world cyclist

Category	Outdoor	Place	Ina valley
Activity	e-bike & trekking		NAGANO
Season	APR-OCT	Duration	8.5hrs
Overview	<p>The path out of the Kiso Valley to Okaya, via the Ushikubi Pass, the Ina Valley and the Ono Pass, was the original Nakasendo. The path was initially cleared in 1601, but due to the difficulty of travelling two mountain passes, it closed after just 15 years and was spurned in favour of the current Nakasendo. In its heyday, many travelers and horses traversed this path, carrying wood from Kiso to Ina, and rice from Ina to Kiso. Now, traces of the path are scarce and it is known by only a handful of people. This “phantom road” program takes in part of the original Nakasendo, starting at Narai-juku in Kiso, going over the Ushikubi Pass, then on to Ono-juku, and concluding at Tatsuno Town in the Ina Valley. This 1-day e-bike and trekking tour allows you to indulge in the history and romance of the original Nakasendo. The journey is lead by a Tatsuno local, Ryohei Oguchi, a round-the-world cyclist. During the trip, you will get off your bike to enjoy a trek and a folk tale about the local area.</p>		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great for those looking to experience an “unknown route” just a step away from Kiso. • Experience the hinoki cypress forest path, historical milestone markers, Hayagrīva stones, tiny villages, an original post town and more. • A nice balance of cycling and walking to fully experience the rural sights of Japan’s forested mountain areas. • Lunch is a soup set, full of local ingredients, served fresh from a kitchen car. • Breaks for coffee, tea and local snacks. 		
Fitness level	5	Culture level	3
Skill level	5	Heartlander level	4



Journey of the “Phantom Nakasendo” from Kiso Valley

~ Narai Juku (Kiso Valley), Okaya and Tatsuno (Ina Valley) ~
1-day e-bike tour with a Tatsuno local, Ryohei Oguchi,
an accomplished round-the-world cyclist

Category	Outdoor	Place	Ina valley
Activity	e-bike & walking		NAGANO
Season	APR-OCT	Duration	7.5hrs
Overview	<p>The path out of the Kiso Valley to Okaya, via the Ushikubi Pass, the Ina Valley and the Ono Pass, was the original Nakasendo. The path was initially cleared in 1601, but due to the difficulty of travelling two mountain passes, it closed after just 15 years was spurned in favour of the current Nakasendo. In its heyday, many travelers and horses traversed this path, carrying wood from Kiso to Ina, and rice from Ina to Kiso. Now, traces of the path are scarce and it is known by only a handful of people. This 1 day e-bike tour allows you to indulge in the history and romance of the original Nakasendo. It starts at Narai-juku in Kiso, goes over the Ushikubi Pass, then to Ono-juku, Okaya (the end point of the original Nakasendo) and finally returns to Tatsuno Town in the Ina Valley. The journey is lead by a Tatsuno local, Ryohei Oguchi, a round-the-world cyclist.</p>		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great for those looking to experience an “unknown route” just a step away from Kiso. • Experience the hinoki cypress forest path, historical milestone markers, Hayagrīva stones, tiny villages, an original post town and more. • A nice balance of cycling and walking to fully experience the rural sights of Japan’s forested mountain areas. • Lunch is a soup set, full of local ingredients, served fresh from a kitchen car. • Breaks for coffee, tea and local snacks. 		
Fitness level	5	Culture level	3
Skill level	5	Heartlander level	4



1-Day e-Bike and Trekking Tour Off the Beaten Track in the Ina Valley, Tatsuno & Kawashima

Guided by Tatsuno local, Ryohei Oguchi,
an accomplished round-the-world cyclist

Category	Outdoor	Place	Ina valley
Activity	e-bike & trekking		NAGANO
Season	APR-OCT	Duration	9.5hrs

Overview

A wonderful experience, discovering the northern part of the Ina Valley, located between two alpine regions. It is said that the name “Tatsuno” comes from the dragon (tatsu) that lived in a lake of the area. Since long ago, Tatsuno has been the intersecting point of several roadways. The surrounding areas are blessed with rich resources of water from the Yokokawa River, and tranquil mountain scenery where locals historically foraged for firewood, wood turners and geta (traditional wooden shoes) craftsmen lived, and farmers plowed their rice paddies. In this program, you can enjoy an abundance of nature beneath beautiful mountain scenery, and see the lifestyles of local residents. Along the way, you will also get off your bike and do two short treks: one to the beautiful, 50m-high, three-level Sankyu no Taki Waterfall, through a virgin forest in the Yokokawa Gorge, and to the nationally renowned “Snake Rock”, and the other to a spot known as “Zero Point”. The program is lead by a Tatsuno local, Ryohei Oguchi, a round-the-world cyclist.

Hilight

- While riding an e-bike, enjoy the beautiful mountainous scenery of Japan and the laid-back lifestyle of the locals. There are also historical Buddhist stone monuments that can be seen.
- Enjoy two short treks: one into Yokokawa Gorge, and the other to “Zero Point”, where the lines of latitude and longitude are integers at their point of intersection.
- Lunch is a soup set, full of local ingredients, served fresh from a kitchen car.
- Breaks for coffee, tea and local snacks.

Fitness level

4

Culture level

3

Skill level

4

Heartlander level

4



Play Hard on Japan's Largest Trail!

Guided private tour of the Southern Alps Mountain Bike 3rd area course

Category	Outdoor	Place	Ina valley
Activity	Mountain bike		NAGANO
Season	APR-NOV	Duration	6.5hrs

Overview

This trail historically used by local residents to access the mountain was repurposed by TRAIL CUTTER, a trail-building group that focuses on creating trails in a sustainable way with as little impact on nature as possible, to become the 3rd Area Course, one of Japan's best mountain bike trails. At just over 10 km in length, the first half is an up and down section with hills to climb from 30- 100m. The second half is a first-class, downhill trail with a series of wild, natural berms created by nature over many years. This up and down course, surrounded by untrained beauty, is a unique and exhilarating experience.

Hilight

- The trail is limited to only one group per day, so it will be all yours to enjoy.
- The up and down first half is ideal for participants wanting to dive deeper into mountain nature.
- The second half is a first-class, downhill trail with a series of wild, natural berms created by nature over many years. Some mountain bikers come specifically for this top-class downhill section of the trail.

Fitness level	5	Culture level	2
Skill level	5	Heartlander level	4



Play Hard on Japan's Largest Trail!

Guided tour of the Southern Alps MTB Main Area Course

Category	Outdoor	Place	Ina valley
Activity	Mountain bike		NAGANO
Season	APR-NOV	Duration	6.5hrs
Overview	<p>Built by TRAIL CUTTER, a trail-building group that focuses on creating trails in a sustainable way with as little impact on nature as possible, this is the TRAIL CUTTER's Main Area Course, which is one of Japan's best mountain bike trails, containing more than 10 tracks full of TRAIL CUTTER bumps and berms. The trails are mostly downhill, but a vehicle will transport you back up top, so you can enjoy multiple rides throughout the day. With a wide variety of tracks, visitors can enjoy winding mountain trails that were once paths for the village's ancestors, but now offer thrills and fun unmatched by other trails.</p>		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awesome mountain biking experience with up to 4 rides per day from a total of 10 trail variations (2~10km in length). • Unique, winding trails created from ancient roads that utilize the natural landscape. • Lunch made from local ingredients provided at a traditional Japanese house. 		
Fitness level	4	Culture level	2
Skill level	4	Heartlander level	4



Renge-in Tanjo Temple Oku-no-in Temple Training

Flying Dragon Tour

Category	Culture	Place	Tamana city
Activity	Meditation		KUMAMOTO
Season	All year round	Duration	3.5hrs
Overview	<p>Clear your mind at a famous Buddhist temple known for the “flying dragon legend” and “making peoples prayers come true.”</p> <p>Tanjo Temple is known as a place where prayers will cure diseases. The priests continue to train and even undergo a strict training where they are locked in the pagoda for 100 days. At Renge-in, the 5-storied pagoda is used for training, which is quite rare. Once a month, the temple offers a special training session to the general public. The meditation part of that training is what is being offered in this activity.</p>		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Experience temple meditation in specially prepared Buddhist priest clothing. •Ring the “Dragon’s Bell,” the world’s largest temple bell 		
Fitness level	1	Culture level	2
Skill level	1	Heartlander level	3



Mt. Shodai Trail Running

Flying Dragon Tour

Category	Outdoor	Place	Tamana city
Activity	Running		KUMAMOTO
Season	All year round	Duration	5hrs
Overview	<p>Trail running on the mountain that is home to the Flying Dragon Legend. Depart from the Dragon's Bell of Renge-in Temple and take off through the ridge trail of Jagatani Park. While Mt. Shodai may not be a very tall mountain, it still boasts many great viewpoints and is full of easy to run trails that are even highly valued by pros. It is quite popular amongst trail runners. You can also enjoy the local history and culture while running. The navigators of this activity are locals who participate in the Mt. Shodai Trail Running Competition every year. Those navigators, who's knowledge of Mt. Shodai are second to none, have specially designed these courses. (10km for beginner's course, Elevation 1150m / 20km for advanced course, Elevation 1150m)</p>		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Great trails with views of the Ariake Sea, Nagasaki, Mt. Aso, and more •Hear stories of the local history and mythology while running old Shugendo trails. •Enjoy the sunset from atop the mountain. (depends on time of year) •In Autumn and Winter, turn on your head lamp and enjoy a night trail run 		
Fitness level	2 ~ 3	Culture level	1
Skill level	1	Heartlander level	3



Mt. Shodai Cultural Experience Hiking

Flying Dragon Tour

Category	Outdoor	Place	Tamana city
Activity	Hiking		KUMAMOTO
Season	OCT-JUN	Duration	3hrs (beginners' course)~ 6hrs (advanced course)

Overview

A casual hike starting from Renge-in temple. It's a short course, but one that also offers wonderful sunset and night views, depending on the time of year. You can enjoy beautiful sunset scenery while learning satoyama life and culture. Beautiful tree tunnels, many edible plants, and many more great things can be found, with the history and culture of Satoyama.(Beginner's course : 5.5km, Elevation 450m / Advanced course : 11-13km, Elevation 900-1000m),

Hilight

- Designed to enjoy the sunset and night views throughout the year.
- When the sky is clear, scenery stretches from the sun sinking into the Ariake Sea all the way to the night view of Kumamoto.
- Navigator will explain the history of Mt. Shodai and the satoyama atmosphere where nature and humans coexist.

Fitness level

2~ 3

Culture level

2

Skill level

1

Heartlander level

3



8 Gods of Health and Fitness Running Tour

Flying Dragon Tour

Category	Outdoor	Place	Tamana city
Activity	Running		KUMAMOTO
Season	OCT-JUN	Duration	3hrs

Overview

Nagomi Town is the birthplace of Shiso Kanakuri, Japan's first Olympic marathon runner. Throughout the town are small shrines dedicated to the eyes, warts, stomach, fertility, teeth, life, ears, and limbs. You will be presented with a small booklet with explanations on the offerings and affects of each shrine. (14~17km / Elevation 150m)

Hilight

- Town running in the hometown of Japan's first Olympic marathon runner
- Each shrine has a unique way to pray for that part of the body
- A running tour to experience the unique spiritual culture of the town.

Fitness level

3

Culture level

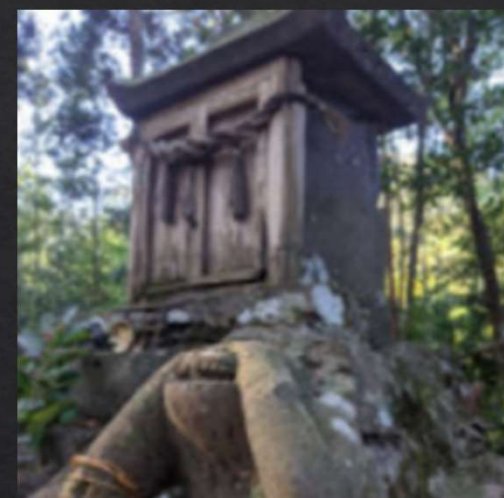
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Skill level

1

Heartlander level

3



Gods of Health & Fitness Tour + Sake Factory

Flying Dragon Tour

Category	Culture	Place	Tamana city
Activity	Walking		KUMAMOTO
Season	All year round	Duration	3hrs
Overview	A tour to experience life in Nagomi. By car, stop at 4 of the 8 shrines, as well as a sake factory. Hananoka Shuzo, which inherited the sake factory once owned by the Kanakuri family, focuses on producing high quality alcohol in smaller quantity.		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Take a factory tour and learn the distinct methods used at the Hananoka Shuzo Gallery •Option) Sake tasting, 3 flavors (currently not available due to COVID 19) •Shrine visit to 4 of the 8 small shrines to pray for good health •If time is available, a visit to the Shiso Kanakuri's Birthplace Memorial can be done with extra cost. 		
Fitness level	1	Culture level	2
Skill level	1	Heartlander level	3



Kappo-meshi & Power Food Herb Tea Making			
Flying Dragon Tour			
Category	Culture	Place	Tamana city
Activity	Workshop		KUMAMOTO
Season	All year round	Duration	3hrs
Overview	<p>A special time of exchange while you cook and eat kappo-meshi (bamboo steamed rice) and other local dishes together with the locals. Local plants and herbs found in the forests around Mt. Shodai become ingredients for many dishes and the tea. This is a great opportunity to learn and talk about traditional Japanese lifestyle of the past.</p>		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Outdoor cooking involving cutting bamboo and steaming it over open flames •Receive a lecture about the wild power food plants found in the forests of Mt. Shodai •Enjoy some local food, as well as a Kyushu specialty, dago (dumpling) soup •Interact with the locals while working and eating together with them 		
Fitness level	1	Culture level	2
Skill level	1	Heartlander level	3



Japanese Sword Workshop

Flying Dragon Tour

Category	Culture	Place	Tamana city
Activity	Workshop		KUMAMOTO
Season	All year round	Duration	2hrs
Overview	<p>Master Matsunaga is a famous swordsmith who doesn't only create newly designed swords, but often forges authentic replicas to be displayed museums. He also operates his own kobudo martial arts dogo which receives many students not only from domestic, but also from all over the world. His passion and essence that go into his lectures make this experience very well-received. At the workshop, you see the process of making a sword, and also learn how the samurai wielded . This activity will also touch on how Bushido and Japanese swords have a spiritual side.</p>		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Learn about the raw materials used and the process of making a sword •Opportunity to strike red-hot iron with a hammer (limited participants) •Opportunity to wield a real sword in the attached kobudo martial arts dojo. •Take home a special souvenir created by a master craftsman 		
Fitness level	1	Culture level	2
Skill level	1	Heartlander level	3



Island Hopping Around Kasaoka

2-day Tour on a Private Boat

Category	Culture	Place	Kasaoka
Activity	Learning		OKAYAMA
Season	APR-NOV	Duration	2days
Overview	Leisurely hop around the islands of Kasaoka on a private boat with Amy Chavez, an American who lives on Shiraishi Island. Enjoy the scenery of each island with learning about the history and meeting the people on them.		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Fisherman Experience:Board the boat of a local fisherman and check out some oyster rafts up close. You can even try walking on it. Back on the boat, enjoy a glass of wine to go with some fresh oysters. •Stonecutting Valley Observatory:Kasaoka's largest island, Kitagi Island, has long been known as "Stone Island" for its production and processing of granite stones. The high quality of stone on this island has been used in famous buildings such as Osaka Castle, Meiji Shrine and Tokyo Station. The quarries on the island are still in use today and there is an observation deck looking 100 meters down into a quarry located below sea level •Fresh Local Seafood and Craft Beer:As you hop around the islands, enjoy meals prepared using the freshest local seafood. There is also a vegan café on Shiraishi Island and a local brewery on Mushima Island. 		
Fitness level	1	Culture level	2
Skill level	1	Heartlander level	3



A Walk Around the Pottery Town Imbe and Bizen-yaki Pottery Making

Half-day Tour of Clay and Fire

Category	Culture	Place	Imbe
Activity	Craft making		OKAYAMA
Season	All year round	Duration	4hrs
Overview	Bizen-yaki, with it's simple sheen and calming characteristics, has represented Japan since the middle ages. In the hometown of Bizen-yaki, Imbe, take a walk around a neighborhood of kilns and experience making your own pottery.		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Stroll Around Imbe:Imbe is a pottery town with a unique atmosphere and mountains surrounding the numerous kilns in the area. With an English guide, feel the atmosphere of both the past and present while walking around Imbe and stopping by various kiln galleries and kiln ruins. •Amatsu shrine:The potters of Imbe visit this shrine to pray for good work every year. It has become a keystone for these potters, which is why you will make a stop here before making your own Bizen-yaki pottery. •Bizen-yaki Pottery Making :At the Tokeido Pottery Workshop, make your own one-of-a-kind pottery such as a vase or cup. It involves simply forming the clay with your hands, so anyone can do it. After the activity, you will enjoy a cup of matcha green tea from Bizen-yaki ware. 		
Fitness level	1	Culture level	2
Skill level	1	Heartlander level	3



Tomonoura History Walk, Shakyo Experience, and Kayaking

Fully Enjoy Tomonoura From Land and Sea

Category	Outdoor	Place	Tomonoura
Activity	Sea kayak		HIROSHIMA
Season	MAR-OCT	Duration	6hrs
Overview	<p>The scenic beauty that is Tomonoura is an important place for sea transport of Setouchi and is even recited about in the oldest book of Japanese poems. The splendid scenery of this town is said to be the setting of a popular animation movie. Fully enjoy this port town through traditional culture and outdoor activities both on land and at sea.</p>		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •History Walk:Tomonoura was a bustling port town in the Edo Period. The families of the town have worked hard to preserve the stone lanterns, temples, and shrines of that time. Gaze out at the ocean while hearing stories from an English guide and visiting the neighborhoods and old ruins of the Tomonoura. •Shakyo (sutra writing) Experience:Taichoroh, facing out at Sensui Island, is said to make even a hermit drunk with its beauty. The view from here is praised as being the most picturesque site in Japan. Try experiencing shakyo, transcribing sutras, at this historic temple. •Sea Kayaking:Heading south from Tomonoura, paddle along while looking out at the coastline of a national park. Along the way, make a stop at Abuto Kannon Temple. 		
Fitness level	2	Culture level	1
Skill level	3	Heartlander level	3



Setouchi Cycling and Mitarai Area History Walk			
Comfortably Enjoy a 2-day Tour of Tobishima Kaido			
Category	Outdoor	Place	Mitarai
Activity	Cycling		HIROSHIMA
Season	All year round	Duration	2days
Overview	The name Tobishima Kaido comes from the idea of connecting 7 islands of the Seto Inland Sea like stepping stones of a Japanese garden. Feel the breeze on your skin while cycling through the beautiful scenery of Setouchi.		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Cycling Pick up the bike on Shimo-kamagiri Island and ride through a maintained cycling road 40km to your destination of Mitarai. Ride at your own pace while enjoying all the wonderful scenery of Setouchi.•Shintoyo - An accommodation with over 150-year history:An accommodation with a limit of one group per day where you can feel the history of Mitarai and wonderfulness of Setouchi. Dinner is a creative kaiseki course focusing on the wonderful seafood and mountain ingredients from this area.•History Walk Around the Mitarai Protected Area:This history walk will be led by Tom Miyagawa, an Englishman living in Mitarai. Walk around the area while listening to stories of the town’s history and seeing the lifestyle of the locals.		
Fitness level	3	Culture level	1
Skill level	3	Heartlander level	3



History Walk, Bamboo Crafting, and Sake Tasting

Half-day History and Culture Tour of Takehara

Category	Culture	Place	Takehara
Activity	Craft making		HIROSHIMA
Season	All year round	Duration	4hrs
Overview	Takehara is called the little Kyoto of Hiroshima. It was a bustling town of salt and sake producers in the Edo Period. Now, there are many buildings and districts with sake breweries that are preserved to pass on the townscapes of the past. Make a visit to a bamboo craft workshop and sake brewery on this tour of Takehara.		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •History Walk:Take a step back in time while leisurely walking with an English speaking guide through a town full of wealthy merchant homes, historic temples, latticed nagayamon gates, shikkui plastered walls, and more. •Bamboo Crafting :After watching a master craftsman's bamboo artwork, you can try making your own bamboo basket while receiving instruction from the local craftsmen. •Genuine Sake Tasting:The tasting room of Fujii Shuzo, a sake producer of more than 150 years, is a very traditional Japanese room facing a beautiful Japanese garden. You can try a variety of different kinds of sake, each with a specific glass to match the flavor. You'll receive a bottle of sake as a souvenir. 		
Fitness level	1	Culture level	3
Skill level	1	Heartlander level	2



History Walk Around the Town of White Walls with Kingyo Chochin Craft Activity and Soy Sauce Factory Tour

Guided Town Walking Tour

Category	Culture	Place	Yanai
Activity	Craft making		YAMAGUCHI
Season	All year round	Duration	3hrs
Overview	Yanai, a town of white walls and Kingyo Chochin (paper goldfish lanterns), is blessed with an abundance of nature and the calm Setouchi climate. Historically, Yanai is known as a commercial town. Take a walk through the small roads full of white walls, a flashback of the old days.		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •History Walk:This area has been selected by the country as an important preservation district of historic buildings. Walk the beautiful white wall filled streets with an English speaking guide. •Kingyo Chochin Making:A traditional craft of Yanai for a few hundred years, the goldfish paper lanterns resemble something from the Nebuta Festival of Aomori. Inside of the well-preserved white wall warehouse buildings, make your own goldfish paper lantern by drawing eyes and body, then attaching the fins and tail. •Soy Sauce Factory Visit:Kanro Soy Sauce has been made using a traditional method since the 1800s. At Sagawa Soy Sauce Brewery, see the production methods and tools used to make Kanro Soy Sauce which is fermented in cedar barrels. Hear directly from a Kanro Soy Sauce craftsman about the history and production of the soy sauce. 		
Fitness level	1	Culture level	2
Skill level	1	Heartlander level	3



Uninhabited Island Exploration and Sea Cruising

Have Fun on an Uninhabited Island in the Seto Inland Sea

Category	Outdoor	Place	Obatake
Activity	Hiking		YAMAGUCHI
Season	All year round	Duration	8hrs
Overview	<p>Among the over 700 islands of the Seto Inland Sea, there are many uninhabited islands. One of those islands, Ominase Island, had people living on it until 60 years ago. With a trained guide in the history and nature of the island, journey through the island and hike to discover the remains of old houses and WWII ruins.</p>		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Residential and War Building Remains:Learn about the harsh island lifestyle and atrocities of war while visiting the remains of Ominase Island. While peering out at the faraway lands and islands, think about the people that used to live on this island. •Ominase Hiking:Hiking through the territory of the Islands only residents, the Japanese macaques (monkeys). Breath in the atmosphere of nature and life which hasn't been touch by humans for 60 years. •Cruising on the Sea:Cruise along the sea full of coral and view the vast scenery with traces of what was left behind from volcanic activity of the Setouchi Volcanic Belt 13 million years ago, such as Ominase island. 		
Fitness level	1	Culture level	3
Skill level	1	Heartlander level	4



A Soothing Trip of Yamaguchi – Hagi Okan and a Japanese Garden

1-day Tour Connecting Hagi and Yamaguchi

Category	Outdoor	Place	Hagi
Activity	Walking		YAMAGUCHI
Season	All year round	Duration	8hrs
Overview	Your day starts from Hagi and after walking along the popular history road Hagi Okan, finishes at Yuda Onsen in Yamaguchi City. This 1-day tour is loaded with history, nature, power spots, and many more great things of Japan.		
Hilight	<p>•Walk Along Hagi Okan:Hagi Okan, a road of historic importance, was built in the 1600s as a road for high-ranking figures to travel to and from Edo (Tokyo). Together with an English guide, walk along this mountain road from Akiragi to Sasanami while thinking of the great warriors and people that once traversed this path.</p> <p>•Sesshu Garden:A beautiful Japanese rock garden full of Zen. Feel the world of Zen while sitting in the inner temple. After walking through the large garden, enjoy some matcha green tea and a Japanese sweets with it.</p> <p>•Rurikoji Temple Visit the 5-storied pagoda of Rurikoji Temple, which is a national treasure and considered one of the most beautiful pagodas in Japan. Each season offers different scenery such as plum and cherry blossoms, autumn leaves, a blanket of snow, and more, making it a loved location of the locals.</p>		
Fitness level	2	Culture level	2
Skill level	2	Heartlander level	3



Hagi Furusato Cycling

Sake Themed Tour

Category	Outdoor	Place	Hagi
Activity	Cycling		YAMAGUCHI
Season	MAR-NOV	Duration	4.5hrs
Overview	A guided cycling tour around a beautiful countryside town that introduces locations that cannot usually be accessed. Hear the “Made in Hagi” story which introduces local sake, the rice and water ingredients, and methods of sake production.		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided Tour: Feel at ease while you “see,” “hear,” “touch,” and “taste” on this fun tour. The meal is full of local ingredients such as Mutsumi pork and sake-lees from Yachiyo Shuzo. You can also try Mutsumi sake rice. • Sake Production Story from Step 1: Start in the rice fields with an explanation of the sake rice and visit a brewery where the rice is polished. Then at a sake factory, hear how sake is actually made while seeing it firsthand. You’ll even have special access to the inside of the brewery that visitors are usually not allowed to enter. Experience the taste of water used and sake lees. • E-Bike: All the bikes are from the manufacturer, Giant, and provide a safe and comfortable ride. There are low seat bikes starting at 145cm available, as well. 		
Fitness level	2	Culture level	2
Skill level	1	Heartlander level	3



Food and Nature Around Nagato and Mukatsuku Peninsula

Feel a Sustainable Life

Category	Culture	Place	Nagato
Activity	Learning		YAMAGUCHI
Season	All year round	Duration	6hrs
Overview	This tour revolves around 2 people with careers in Tokyo who decided to return to their hometown, Nagato, and start a new life. One contributes to developing the local fishing industry and outlining stable production and supply. The other enjoys life at it simplest, farm, eat, and play while living of nature.		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Blowfish Breeding Farm:A fish farm that includes blowfish, flounder, and the rare ocean eel. Hear about the techniques and skills used to breed in sea water while observing places not usually accessed by the general public. You're sure to feel the passion of the young workers of the local sustainable fisheries industry. •Motonosumi Inari Shrine:123 red torii gates line the path leading to the blue ocean. A wonderful scenery showing the beauty of Japan, this location was chosen as one of CNN's "Japan's 31 most beautiful places." Visit here on the way to Hyakusho-an of Yuya Bay. •Salt Factory and Healthy Vegetarian Lunch:Hyakusho-an's concept starts with a self-sustaining lifestyle. After visiting a salt factory that uses a deep plowing technique rarely found in Japan, enjoy a vegetarian lunch full of homegrown seasonal vegetables. 		
Fitness level	1	Culture level	2
Skill level	1	Heartlander level	3



Sake Made from the Heavy Snowfall on the Sacred Mountain of Mt. Myoko

Factory tour and tasting at Kimi-no-i Shuzo Sake Brewery

Category	Cuisine	Place	Myoko
Activity	Learning		NIIGATA
Season	MAY-OCT	Duration	1hr
Overview	<p>Kimi-no-i Shuzo sake brewery has over many years been the recipient of multiple gold awards at various national sake competitions. Established in 1842, it is located in the Arai-juku on the Hokkoku Kaido Highway – a historically very important road where rice, salt, seafood, and Sado gold were transported in the Edo Period. The heavy snowfall in the area creates natural refrigerating conditions, while the ancient, sacred Mt. Myoko provides clean underground water – making Arai an ideal location for brewing sake. Please enjoy this visit to the Kimi-no-i Shuzo factory and appreciate the taste of sake blessed by nature.</p>		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This wonderful facility, which has appeared many times on Japanese TV, has endured over 100 years of great snowfalls. See the staff dining hall that was used by kurabito (brewery workers) many years ago, and the old tools still used in the sake creation process. • Free tasting of 2 recommended sakes from Kimi-no-i Shuzo. • Take home the bull's eye ochoko sake cup as a souvenir. 		
Fitness level	1	Culture level	1
Skill level	1	Heartlander level	5



A "Hot" Challenge to Protect Kanzuri

The Traditional Fermented Seasoning of Myoko

Category	Cuisine	Place	Myoko
Activity	Learning		NIIGATA
Season	MAY-OCT	Duration	1.5hrs
Overview	<p>Kanzuri is a traditional, fermented seasoning used to warm up the body during the cold winters of Niigata. The recipe has been passed down through the generations for over 400 years. While each household had its own variation, the base is thick, red chili peppers that are preserved in salt. In Myoko, there is even a seasonal poem about the sight of kanzarashi – where the red chili peppers are scattered onto the white snowy ground to remove their harsh taste. However, with the arrival of modern conveniences such as refrigerators and supermarkets, the culture of making kanzuri was becoming lost. In order to preserve this traditional food, the Kanzuri company was established. Despite facing many challenges over the years, the Kanzuri company continues to develop various new kanzuri products and has a policy to only use peppers grown on its own farms or from contracted local farmers. These products are sold in shops all over Japan and overseas. Please enjoy the "hot" story of Kanzuri's many challenges, and the "hot" taste of kanzuri!</p>		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn the story of the 3 generations of father, son, and grandchild working together to be successful at preserving kanzuri. Sample snacks prepared for your tasting. • Enjoy the unique flavor of kanzuri, only found in Myoko, and tales of the struggles to protect the local tradition. 		
Fitness level	1	Culture level	2
Skill level	1	Heartlander level	5



Traditional Food Tour of Snowy Myoko

Rice balls, miso, spices, and sake!!!

Visit local shops, tasting and enjoying local traditional food.

Category	Cuisine	Place	Myoko
Activity	Learning		NIIGATA
Season	MAY-OCT	Duration	6hrs

Overview

On this unique tour of the streets of Arai in Myoko, you can meet locals, and experience the traditional cuisine of the area. Included are: a visit to a rice ball shop owned and operated by a Japan rice meister, a hands-on activity in a miso shop, a factory tour and tasting of kanzuri (Myoko's traditional spicy seasoning), and a sake brewery visit and tasting at Kimi-no-i Shuzo.

Hilight

- Buy rice balls for lunch and eat them with miso soup, and local seasonings at the Kanzuri factory.
- Miso, spices, and sake! A variety of traditional Japanese foods enjoyed in one visit.
- Great opportunity to meet local residents and experience lifestyles unique to this area.
- Free tasting of 2 recommended sakes from Kimi-no-i Shuzo.
- Take home the bull's eye ochoko sake cup as a souvenir.

Fitness level

2

Culture level

2

Skill level

1

Heartlander level

5



Visit to the Shugendo Training

Ruins of Sekiyama Shrine of the Sacred Mt. Myoko with a local guide

Category	Tradition	Place	Myoko
Activity	Walking		NIIGATA
Season	0	Duration	0
Overview	<p>Kimi-no-i Shuzo sake brewery has over many years been the recipient of multiple gold awards at various national sake competitions. Established in 1842, it is located in the Arai- juku on the Hokkoku Kaido Highway – a historically very important road where rice, salt, seafood, and Sado gold were transported in the Edo Period. The heavy snowfall in the area creates natural refrigerating conditions, while the ancient, sacred Mt. Myoko provides clean underground water – making Arai an ideal location for brewing sake. Please enjoy this visit to the Kimi-no-i Shuzo factory and appreciate the taste of sake blessed by nature.</p>		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This wonderful facility, which has appeared many times on Japanese TV, has endured over 100 years of great snowfalls. See the staff dining hall that was used by kurabito (brewery workers) many years ago, and the old tools still used in the sake creation process. • Free tasting of 2 recommended sakes from Kimi-no-i Shuzo. • Take home the bull's eye ochoko sake cup as a souvenir. 		
Fitness level	1	Culture level	2
Skill level	1	Heartlander level	5



1-Day Hike on Togakushi & Myoko with a Professional Mountain Guide

Myoko-Togakushi Renzan National Park

Category	Nature	Place	Myoko
Activity	Hiking		NIIGATA
Season	JUL-OCT	Duration	10hrs
Overview	<p>A one-day hike from Togakushi to Sasagamine in Myoko with a local, professional mountain guide, while enjoying the natural beauty of the Myoko-Togakushi Renzan National Park. The ancient path between Togakushi and Myoko has long been traveled by those wishing to worship at Zenkoji Temple, Togakushi, and Mt. Myoko, and was thus known as a road of faith. At the same time, it was used as a road for transporting seafood from the Sea of Japan, as well for people who wished to visit therapeutic hot springs. The local water sources and forests provided the essentials for the local inhabitants. While walking the trail, see relics of water worship, remains of old sawmills, and more. Visitors can enjoy the guide's explanations of nature as well as tales of local beliefs and lifestyles!</p>		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended for those looking to go a step further than Togakushi. • Enjoy the vast nature of a national park, the local culture of worship, and tales of the area's ancestors. • Perfect for those who prefer to a lengthy hike to mountain climbing. 		
Fitness level	3	Culture level	1
Skill level	3	Heartlander level	5



1-Day Hike on the Sacred Mt. Myoko with a Professional Mountain Guide

Myoko-Togakushi Renzan National Park

Category	Nature	Place	Myoko
Activity	Hiking		NIIGATA
Season	JUL-OCT	Duration	9.5hrs
Overview	<p>Mt. Myoko (top 100 mountain of Japan) in the Myoko-Togakushi Renzan National Park has long been considered a sacred mountain where spirits and gods that watch over farming live, as well as a place of worship and for “Shugendo” religious training. During the Edo era, there was annually one day designated when worshippers were permitted to climb Mt. Myoko. Legend says that up to 1,200 people could make the ascent from the Hozo-in (managed by Sekiyama Shrine) to the summit of the mountain to raise their village banners, chant and blow a conch shell. In this program, participants will climb the mountain with a local, professional guide to see the waterfalls, ponds, small shrines, and rocks that have made this a sacred path since ancient times. Retrace the footsteps of local ancestors as you ascend the rugged trails of this great sacred mountain and admire the fabulous variety of views and panoramas.</p>		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The trails are steep and full of challenges. Even as a day hike, this is a true mountain climb. • See the waterfalls, ponds, small shrines, and large rocks that have attracted the faithful to this route since ancient times. • On clear days, see breathtaking views of all the surrounding national park mountains. • After your hike, feel free to take a dip and refresh yourself in a free hot spring bath located at Tsubame Onsen. 		
Fitness level	5	Culture level	2
Skill level	4	Heartlander level	5



Water Crossroads Lake Nojiri Historia

1-day hike with the guide legend, Yoshi

Category	Nature	Place	Myoko
Activity	Hiking		NIIGATA
Season	MAY-NOV	Duration	6.5hrs
Overview	<p>Visitors to Lake Nojiri, located in the Myoko-Togakushi Renzan National Park, are rewarded with beautiful views of Mt. Kurohime, Mt. Myoko, Mt. Madarao, and almost fifty large and small capes and coves around its circumference. This area is the site where the fossilised remains of “Naumann’s elephants” were discovered – an archaeological dig that uncovered the hunting grounds of local inhabitants from 40,000 years ago. Since ancient times, the lake has been the source of the “blessing of water” to animals and farmers of the area. On this “blessing of water” trek of Nojiri, you will be guided by an experienced legend in the Japanese outdoor community – Yoshi – who has lived in the area for about 50 years. As well as the abundance of nature, sights include historical locations such as water worshipping sites, rural habitats, and irrigation canals dating back to the 1600s.</p>		
Highlight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A unique program designed and guided by Yoshi, a legend in the Japanese outdoor community, along paths not found on any regular map. • An enjoyable walk in nature, accompanied by stories of Japan’s history, culture and lifestyles. • Includes Yoshi’s bespoke water circulation and topography map. • Onigiri bento lunch made from local ingredients, to be enjoyed while admiring the area’s natural 		
Fitness level	3	Culture level	1
Skill level	2	Heartlander level	5



Water Crossroads Lake Nojiri Historia

1-day kayaking with the guide legend, Yoshi

Category	Nature	Place	Myoko
Activity	Kayak		NIIGATA
Season	MAY-NOV	Duration	6.5hrs
Overview	<p>Visitors to Lake Nojiri, located in the Myoko-Togakushi Renzan National Park, are rewarded with beautiful views of Mt. Kurohime, Mt. Myoko, Mt. Madarao, and almost fifty large and small capes and coves around its circumference. This area is the site where the fossilised remains of “Naumann’s elephants” were discovered – an archaeological dig that uncovered the hunting grounds of local inhabitants from 40,000 years ago. Since ancient times, the lake has been the source of the “blessing of water” to animals and farmers of the area. On this “blessing of water” kayaking tour of Nojiri, you will be guided by an experienced legend in the Japanese outdoor community – Yoshi – who has lived in the area for about 50 years. This action-packed tour includes a visit to an island with a shrine dedicated to water worshipping, and the inlets and outlets of the local irrigation canals dating back to the 1600s.</p>		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A unique program designed and guided by Yoshi, a legend in the Japanese outdoor community. • More than just paddling a kayak, this tour to many spots is an adventure! • Cook your lunch, made from local ingredients, outdoors on the island. 		
Fitness level	3	Culture level	1
Skill level	2	Heartlander level	5



Water Crossroads Lake Nojiri Historia

1-day e-bike cycling & irori lunch in a historic house with a local guide

Category	Nature	Place	Myoko
Activity	e-bike		NIIGATA
Season	MAY-NOV	Duration	7hours
Overview	<p>Visitors to Lake Nojiri, located in the Myoko-Togakushi Renzan National Park, are rewarded with beautiful views of Mt. Kurohime, Mt. Myoko, Mt. Madarao, and almost fifty large and small capes and coves around its circumference. This area is the site where the fossilised remains of “Naumann’s elephants” were discovered – an archaeological dig that uncovered the hunting grounds of local inhabitants from 40,000 years ago. Since ancient times, the lake has been the source of the “blessing of water” to animals and farmers of the area. On this “blessing of water” e-bike tour around Nojiri, your friendly and knowledgeable local guide will take you to many sites, including irrigation canals, Japan’s first water-pumping power plant, and a shrine dedicated to water worshipping. Participants can experience the lifestyles and natural beauty of this region, as well as cooking on an irori hearth inside a traditional Japanese house.</p>		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledgeable and friendly local guide with an established reputation. • Experience first-hand the lifestyles and natural beauty of this area. • Cycle to locations related to Lake Nojiri’s “blessing of water”. • Cook lunch on a traditional irori hearth inside a traditional Japanese house, using local ingredients, such as tofu and organic rice. 		
Fitness level	3	Culture level	3
Skill level	2	Heartlander level	5



“Suginosawa Harukoma”, Traditional Performance Celebrating the Arrival of Spring in the Snowy Region of Myoko

Myoko City intangible folk-culture property

Category	Tradition	Place	Myoko
Activity	Learning		NIIGATA
Season	MAY-OCT	Duration	1.5hrs
Overview	<p>The Harukoma (“spring horse”) song and dance of Suginosawa in Myoko City, is a traditional performance that has been passed down through the area’s generations for over 800 years, commemorating the arrival of spring each year after the long, snowy winter. The words of the song describe how we should all live life in our early years like a lively spring horse, then as we get older to be soft but resilient like the thread of a silkworm. The performers wear a hood and a mask, and cheerfully bang household objects like rice paddles, brooms and soup bowls in a percussive way. The Harukoma had traditionally been performed at local weddings over hundreds of years to celebrate the future of the bride and groom, until the custom began to disappear in the middle of the last century. In order to protect and pass on this tradition in the local community, in 1996 the Harukoma preservation committee was officially formed. Now, the Harukoma has been officially designated as an intangible folk-culture property of Myoko city. Enjoy this opportunity to meet the Suginosawa locals who are conserving this colourful tradition for future generations.</p>		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live performance by Suginosawa locals, preserving the Harukoma tradition for future generations. • Join in with the Harukoma performers to learn the song’s dances and beats. Spend some time to interacting with members of the organization. Souvenir chopsticks commemorating Suginosawa’s rich forests. 		
Fitness level	1	Culture level	4
Skill level	1	Heartlander level	5



Suge-Grass Weaving – Traditional Handcraft of Myoko Snow Country

craft experience in Hiramaru			
Category	Tradition	Place	Myoko
Activity	Craft making		NIIGATA
Season	JUL-OCT	Duration	4.5hrs
Overview	<p>Myoko, known for its incredibly heavy snowfall, is also home to an amazing traditional handcraft. Sedge (hereby referred to as suge-grass), is a grassy variety of plant that grows well in wet areas. Nestled deep in the mountains of Myoko, inhabitants of the Hiramaru region have a long history of weaving suge-grass into a variety of items such as hats and winter clothes. The craft was once an important source of income for the locals. However, Japan’s post-war industrialization and the introduction of synthetic fabrics pushed traditional, labor-intensive crafts such as suge-grass weaving close to extinction. It was at this point that Hiramaru locals began selling ornamental horses that had been woven from suge-grass. Despite struggles, their idea eventually became a success. Various ornaments, such as the animals of the zodiac, became popular. However, in more recent years, the craft has again become in danger of dying out due to the ageing of local craftsmen and changes to society as a whole. The Hiramaru Sugezaiku Preservation Committee is an NPO that was created to preserve this tradition for future generations. Through this organization, visitors can now experience the charm of the village and craft for themselves. Take a guided walk through the tranquil village of Miyama, and try making wreaths from suge-grass yourself in this immersive, truly local experience.</p>		
Hilight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended for those looking for destinations rarely found in guidebooks! • Walk through the tranquil community of Hiramaru, guided by the members of the Preservation Committee. • Make a wreath from suge-grass. Write a wish in your wreath and pray at a local temple. Your wreath will be burned during an annual ritual called Saino-kawara, so your wish may come true. • During the experience there will be plenty of time to interact with the organization members. 		
Fitness level	2	Culture level	5
Skill level	1	Heartlander level	5



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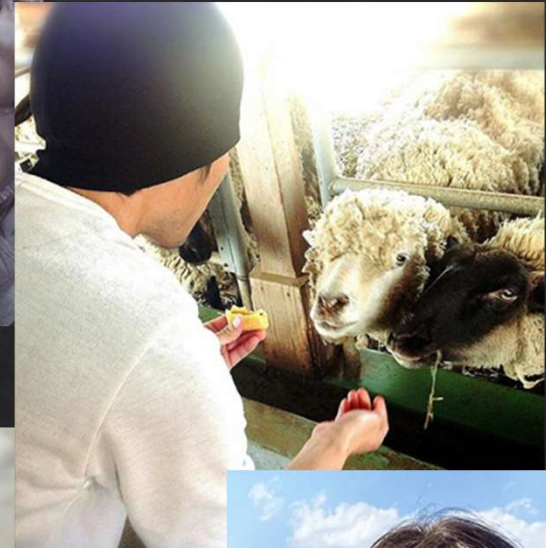
KEIJIRO SAWANO

CEO & founder

Keiji Sawano is from a small fishing town in Yamaguchi prefecture. He founded Heartland Japan with strong desire to revitalize rural Japan. He hopes to create a society where rural people can thrive and be proud of their hometown.

Our team...

Our teams' hometowns are not big cities either. We are as proud of our products as we are of our hometowns. We are now ready to work with you.



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Heartland JAPAN

From here!



A : Vilette Hayashi 503, Waseda Tsurumaki-cho 566, Shibuya-ku, Japan 162-0041

E : info@heartlandjapan.com

T : +81 (0)3-6265-3294

W : <https://heartlandjapan.com/>