

Authentic Japan

From **19/05/2026**
to **31/05/2026**

Ship: **Le Soléal**

From **Busan**
to **Osaka**



With this itinerary, PONANT invites you aboard *Le Soléal* for a unique expedition cruise between Osaka and Busan. A 13-day escapade discovering a traditional Japan shaped by age-old traditions, natural wonders and mythical legendary sites.

Throughout your journey, you will benefit from an excursion included per person per port of call, to choose from a selection offered by PONANT. During this cruise, explore the picturesque city of Chiran and its ancestral history from **Kagoshima**, discover the cultural heritage of **Nagasaki**, or appreciate the natural jewels of **Uwajima**. The diversity of experiences on offer promises you intense and varied moments (to discover the full range of excursions, go to the itinerary tab).

At the whim of the trade winds in the Sea of Japan, *Le Soléal* will sail eastbound for the charming feudal city of **Karatsu**. Further south, **Nagasaki** remains in the world's imagination as the symbol of nuclear horror. Fortunately, in the same way as Hiroshima, the city has become one of the archipelago's most peaceful towns as well as one of its most attractive. The warm and cosmopolitan city unveils its many riches throughout its narrow streets: **the Oura Catholic Church** and its gardens, the **Suwa Shrine**, the sumptuous Buddhist temples...

Following the currents, clinging to the shores of the Seto Inland Sea, *Le Soléal* will sail east. At the foot of a tropical forest burgeoning with life, **Tamano** stands proudly in the middle of this enchanting environment. Last port of call of your journey, it still bears the traces of traditional Japanese life in the 18th century, as the particular architecture of the town demonstrates. Then, you will visit **Itozaki**, a charming coastal town surrounded by green hills.

The jagged coastlines of the captivating **Miyajima Island**, also known as Itsukushima, come into view, and the vermilion Torii of the emblematic **Shinto Shrine of Itsukushima**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, unfolds before you in a lush forest setting. Time here seems stuck in the feudal era: the frenetic energy and modernity of the large Japanese metropolises make way for striking serenity and tranquillity, and hundreds of deer

wander between its spiritual and architectural treasures.

Hiroshima does not seek to elicit strong emotions. Opposite the Inland Sea, only the **Hiroshima Peace Memorial** bears witness to past events in the city known as a “City of Peace”. It is resolutely future looking and you will be able to appreciate its **modern** and **cosmopolitan** atmosphere, the **hustle and bustle of its lively streets** and the tranquillity of its natural settings, such as the splendid Shukkei-en, the city’s historic gardens.

After a unique port of call in the historic city of **Himeji**, walk the ancient pilgrimage routes of Kumano Kodō in **Shingu**, registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, connecting several religious sites nestling in tropical nature.

The gateway to the enchanting Ise Bay and its sumptuous ria coast, **Toba** invites you to enjoy a unique moment in this historic city, residence of the Imperial family. Among other things, you will have the opportunity to admire the most important Shinto shrine in Japan, Ise-jingu.

Finally, for a grand finale, your journey will end in **Osaka**, your disembarkation port.

*?*The land-based activities and excursions can be conducted in English with a translator if required.*



Authentic Japan

YOUR STOPOVERS :

BUSAN

Embarkation 19/05/2026 from 16:00 to 17:00

Departure 19/05/2026 at 19:00

With around four million inhabitants, **Busan** is the second largest metropolis on South Korea, after Seoul. This dynamic harbour city, located in the south-east, surrounded by the warm waters of the Sea of Japan, benefits from a mild, pleasant climate. You'll find delightful simply to stroll around the **lively streets** and explore the city's outstanding cultural heritage of art galleries, museums, and Buddhist sites, such as the **Haedong Yonggungsa temple**, which elegantly sits on the waterfront. Rich too in magnificent beaches and superlative natural landscapes, Busan's peaceful atmosphere will win you over, as will its inhabitants, whom you'll have the pleasure of meeting.

KARATSU

Arrival 20/05/2026 early morning

Departure 20/05/2026 early evening

Karatsu Bay is edged with long sandy beaches and a huge pine forest that was planted over 350 years ago to protect the coast from the winds and tides of the Genkai Sea. From the top of the donjon of **Karatsu Castle** or **Mount Kagami**, you will be able to admire magnificent panoramas. In the north of the Higashi-Matsuura Peninsula, the waves have eroded the lava plateau and carved a magnificent natural site, the **seven Nanatsugama Caves**, out of the basalt. The city of Karatsu is famous for the quality of its **pottery**, which is influenced by the craftsmanship of nearby Korea. Very fine pieces are displayed in the city's galleries and at Karatsu Castle, alongside magnificent **samurai armour**.

NAGASAKI

Arrival 21/05/2026 early morning

Departure 21/05/2026 late afternoon

Located on the north-west coast of Kyushu, **Nagasaki** will impress you by its rich heritage. Despite the destruction in 1945, you can visit several ancient sites, including the beautiful 19th-century **Catholic Church of Oura** and its garden, the **sanctuary of Suwa Shrine** or several Buddhist temples. A visit to the **Atomic Bomb Museum** gives you insight into the extent of the damage caused by the nuclear attack. Close by, a walk in the **Memorial Peace Park** leads you to a collection of objets d'art offered as a gift from Japan to the world.

KAGOSHIMA

Arrival 22/05/2026 early morning

Departure 22/05/2026 evening

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

MIYAZAKI

Arrival 23/05/2026 early morning

Departure 23/05/2026 early evening

The cradle of Japanese mythology, Miyazaki is a hidden treasure on the **southern coast of Ky?sh?**. Known for its climate, its golden beaches and its spectacular rocky formations, it is an invitation to exploration and contemplation. In the heart of the city, the **Miyazaki-jing? Shinto shrine** stands majestically, surrounded by ancient forests and peaceful gardens, in which an atmosphere of serenity reigns. Make the most of the authenticity of this city with fascinating local culture and, during the visit of the Miyazaki Shrine, **fall under the spell of the kagura**, a dance and song performance by the shrine's priests and helpers.

UWAJIMA

Arrival 24/05/2026 early morning

Departure 24/05/2026 mid afternoon

Located on the west coast of Shikoku island, Uwajima will delight lovers of history and traditional customs. The magnificent **Uwajima Castle** was built in the 17th-century by the powerful Date clan and has a beautiful ornamental garden and bridge. The much-visited **Taga Shrine** is dedicated to fertility and is full of phalluses. As for eating, you must taste *jakoten*, a local delicacy based on fried fish.

TAMANO

Arrival 25/05/2026 early morning

Departure 25/05/2026 evening

Located on the **island of Honshu**, hugging the banks of the Sento Inland Sea, **Tamano** is a popular destination thanks to its sun-drenched climate. Upon arrival, marvel at the way in which the city has been built along the coast at the foot of a deep, dark forest. In the area surrounding Tamano, stroll down the streets of **Kurashiki**, known as the 'white-walled city' in a nod to the pretty façades of the houses that line the streets of this ancient Edo-period trading town. Another major regional attraction is the **Seto Ohashi bridge**. Its 12.5 kilometres make it the world's longest double-decker bridge.

ITOZAKI

Arrival 26/05/2026 early morning

Departure 26/05/2026 evening

Jewels of the heart of Hiroshima Prefecture, **Itozaki** invites travelers to a timeless escape. Bordered by the Seto Inland Sea, it captivates with its landscapes blending the gentle shimmer of its waters and the silent majesty of its mountains. Itozaki is a journey into the soul of Japan, a haven where time stands still. The Japanese city will serve as the starting point for discovering, just a short distance away, the historic Onomichi, renowned for its nearly twenty temples and shrines.

MIYAJIMA ISLAND

Arrival 27/05/2026 early morning

Departure 27/05/2026 midday

At the heart of the Inland Sea, **Miyajima**, the “island sanctuary” will reveal its treasures. In the background you will see the **Shinto Grand Sanctuary**, whose entrance is guarded by a magnificent vermilion “Torii”. Considered to be one of the most beautiful sites in the Japanese islands, you will be transported by the unique character and the serenity of this sacred site.

HIROSHIMA

Arrival 27/05/2026 midday

Departure 27/05/2026 evening

Visiting **Hiroshima** is a moving experience. The town spreads along **Honshu Island**, along the inside coasts of Seto. While firmly focused on the future, Hiroshima doesn't forget its past, and a visit to the **Peace Memorial Park** and **Genbaku Dome** is a must. You'll enjoy the city's **modern, cosmopolitan atmosphere and effervescent nightlife** just as much as the peaceful stillness of its natural parkland areas such as splendid Shukkei-en, the town's historic garden.

HIMEJI

Arrival 28/05/2026 late morning

Departure 28/05/2026 late afternoon

You may get the impression that you've already seen **Himeji Castle**, as it has been featured many times on the big screen. The feudal edifice seems to spread its wings over the town like a white heron – in fact, its nickname is the castle of the white heron. Originally started in the 15th century and then rebuilt in the 17th-century, it is a UNESCO World Heritage site. At its feet lies the gorgeous **Koko-en garden**, which has nine different **gardens** designed to flourish in each of the four seasons.

SHINGU

Arrival 29/05/2026 early morning

Departure 29/05/2026 late afternoon

To the south-west of the Japanese archipelago, **Shingu** is a port town in the **Kansai** region. Founded in 1933, it belongs to the **peninsula of Kii**, the country's largest. Take a trip around the Kumano Sanzan religious complex dedicated to three sacred mountains and home to two **Shinto temples, Kumano Hongu Taisha** and Kumano Hayatama Taisha. The

latter features the famous **sacred nagi tree**, said to have been planted around 1159. Pilgrims flock to these two sanctuaries that feature on UNESCO's World Heritage list. Hop on a boat and journey to the **Dorokyo Gorge**, a natural beauty spot carved out by the emerald waters of the Kumano river.

TOBA

Arrival 30/05/2026 early morning

Departure 30/05/2026 early afternoon

Toba is a coastal city located in Japan's Mie Prefecture, on the shores of the Pacific Ocean. Situated in the **Ise-Shima National Park**, Toba has given its name to majestic bay sheltering a string of small islands, famous for the beauty of their forests and the production of **cultured pearls**. You will have the possibility of discovering the **Ise Shrine**, residence of the Imperial family and venerated by the Japanese people as the "soul of Japan".

OSAKA

Arrival 31/05/2026 early morning

Disembarkation 31/05/2026 at 08:00

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