

Monitor Tour Report - Mitsuse Village~Hasami Town~Saikai City · Yukinoura Wellness Tour Family Trip

Day 1 – February 23rd 2023

9:00 - Taking a provided car to Mitsuse Village, Saga, after meeting at Hakata Station

My trip began early in the morning. I met Minami-San, our guide for the whole tour, at the bus stop behind Hakata Station. As the whole group of participants was assembled, we headed off in the direction of Saga by a provided car. Our tour group was international and consisted of people from Japan, Hong Kong, China, France and Germany.

10:00 - After arrival in Mitsuse Village: Experience picking shiitake mushrooms and making local dishes at the Farmers' inn GUZA

In Mitsuse Village in Saga, we were greeted by a friendly elderly couple at their farm house. First, we were invited to a tea, freshly cooked above open fire inside their house. After that, we went outside to the vegetable garden in front of the house. There, the owner of the Farmers' inn provided us with information about the planted vegetables and we had also the chance to harvest some by ourselves. When we were finished, we went on a little hike into the forest, to pick up some Shiitake mushrooms.



12:00 - Lunch of local cuisine at Farmers' inn GUZA

For lunch we had different kind of local Japanese food, freshly cooked together with the hosting family. Some of it was made above open fire in front of the house. The highlight was delicious tempura, which was made out of the vegetables, we harvested in the morning.

14:00 - Travelling by a car. Looking at Furuyu Hot Springs in Saga City, while going to Hasami City, Nagasaki prefecture



While we were heading in the direction of Nagasaki Prefecture, we made a quick stop at the Furuyu Hot Springs. We had a little walk through the beautiful village and the opportunity to take a foot bath for a few minutes. After that, we continued our journey to Nagasaki with our car.

16:00 - Walking through Onigi Rice Terraces, elected as one of the 100 best terraced fields in Japan

Our first destination there, was the Onigi Rice Terraces, elected as one of the 100 best terraced fields in Japan. We went for a 1 hour-long walk through rice fields and tea plantages. At the end of this experience, we entered the local tea shop Harada Tea Garden for some freshly cooked cups of tea and some snacks.



18:00 - Dinner, served over an open hearth with ingredients from the village and overnight stay at the private accommodation "oniwa", an architect's old private house, located nearby the Onigi Rice Terraces



The final program point of this day was dinner and the overnight stay at the private accommodation "oniwa". A friendly family, including parents and two kids, welcomed us in their home, a beautiful renovated architect's house. For dinner, we were served various delicious Japanese dishes, made out local ingredients. Vegetables, seafood and different kinds of meat, which was grilled above open fire, were available.

After we finished eating, we had free time, which most participants spent by relaxing in the beautiful living room. If requested, there is also an open-air bath available to get in. For the night, there was a tatami room with futons prepared for the male participants. A sperate room with 2 beds was available for woman.



Day 2 – February 24th 2023

11:00 - Hasami Pottery Kiln Tour

On the next morning, first we had breakfast at our accommodation, which we were partly cooking together with the hosting family. Then we headed of the Hasami Pottery Village, which is very well known for its pottery art (Hasami ware). First, we had a walk through the village, while we have been thaught its history and the history of the pottery making. The highlight of this program point was the opportunity to draw our own art on almost finished pottery. After this, the pottery will be finished and sent to our home address.



12:00 - Lunch, served on Hasami ware

For Lunch, the destination was a local café, which served the food on Hasami ware. There were 3 different dishes available to choose from.

14:00 - Going to Yukinoura by a car

When lunch time was over, we got back to our car and started our drive to the village Yukinoura in Nagasaki Prefecture.

15:00 - Arriving at Yukinoura, strolling around Yukinoura Village & explore the seashores

After arriving in Yukinoura, the first thing we did, was checking into Moritaya Guest House, the place, we planned to stay overnight. When we were all set, we went out the village and its beautiful seashores. Also, we made a brief stop at a local Buddhist temple and a Shinto shrine. At the end of the walk, we entered a local vinegar factory and received information about how vinegar gets made out of rice and which different kinds of vinegar there are.



17:00 - Sunset Cruise



When the sun started to go down, we gathered at the harbor of Yukinoura for my personal highlight of the day – a Sunset Cruise on a rented boat out into the ocean. As the sun was fading away, the scenery beautifully got colored in orange and red. The view on the coastline was great from the boat and we also drove through an interesting shaped rock, which looked similar to a gate.

20:00 - Folklore Evening at Moritaya Guest House

Back at the Guest House, there was a folklore evening scheduled, while the dinner was served. The dinner consisted out of a great variety of traditional Japanese Food, including fish, other seafood, vegetables and chicken. For non-seafood eating people, a special menu was prepared. For entertainment, 3 local Japanese people had been present, to play Bolivian live music for the guests. The evening was also a great opportunity to talk to locals, that also came to Moritaya to have dinner and some drinks.



For our overnight stay, separate rooms for everyone had been arranged. Multiple bathrooms and showers were available for use.

Day 3 – February 25th 2023

08:00 - Breakfast of freshly baked bread at Mahalo Bakery

On the next the day, we didn't have our breakfast in the guest house, but in a local bakery, called Mahalo. We got served very fresh and delicious bread, as well as salad and different kind of fruits.

10:00 - Nostalgic JPOP music shower at the Onyoku Museum



Our first stop of this day's program was the Onyoku Sound Shower Museum, located deep in the woods of Nagasaki Prefecture, so no nearby living people are disturbed. At the museum, we first were guided through the facilities. We learned about the history of analog music and its playback devices. The museum displays a huge number of historical machines and music, pressed on Vinyl's. At the end,

everyone of our group was allowed to choose one favorite vinyl, which was then played publicly on old analog loudspeakers.

12:00 - Curry lunch, made with local ingredients, at Yukiya maru tamo curry restaurant

After that, we headed back to Yukinoura to have a curry lunch in a local restaurant. Two delicious kinds of curry were served on one plate, using local ingredients. As desert, freshly cooked coffee was available.

13:00 - Making chocolate from cocoa beans

When everyone had finished lunch, we went back to Moritaya Guest House. There, we had the opportunity to make chocolate by ourselves. First, a PowerPoint presentation was shown by the owner, which had lived on Solomon Islands for 8 years, where he learned about cocoa beans and the process of chocolate making. Then, we had to grind cocoa beans with our own hands.



Because this is taking a lot of time, there was also some already finished, liquid chocolate prepared for us, which we could decorate by ourselves with nuts and take home after that.

15:00 – Drive back to Fukuoka

As we finished making our chocolate, our time to leave Yukinoura and the end of our journey had come. With our car, we headed of to Fukuoka, where our final destination was the bus stop behind Hakata Station, where we had our farewell.

Again, I had a great time on this trip, learning more about Japan and especially its countryside, while enjoying nature and meeting a lot of new people. I would recommend it to everyone who wants to see another side of Japan and learn about life far away from its big cities.