

# Takayama, Kanazawa and Shirakawa-go

## UNESCO World Heritage Site and thatched-roof houses

EXPERIENCE / TOUR EXTENSION  
4 days

### Highlights

- Spend a night in one of the historic thatched-roof houses in the village of Shirakawa-go
- Visit the castle town of Takayama, former enclave of the imperial court's carpenters
- Try the local Hida beef and perhaps some locally-brewed saké
- Visit the UNESCO World Heritage site of Shirakawa-go village
- Paint and decorate your own Kaga Hachiman Okiagari traditional Japanese Doll
- Visit Kenrokuen, one of Japan's "three best landscape gardens"

Takayama was formerly an enclave for skilled carpenters working for the imperial courts in Kyoto and Nara. It has retained much of its traditional architecture and is well-known for its crafts, particularly yew-wood carving, Shunkei lacquer ware, pottery and furniture. North-west of Takayama is the village of Ogimachi, within the Shirakawa-go area of the Sho-kawa valley. The village is home to a large number of Gassho-Zukkuri houses, and has been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1995. These large wooden houses have steep-thatched roofs, designed to withstand heavy snow, and the term Gassho-Zukkuri refers to the shape of praying hands formed by the roofs. Kanazawa escaped major earthquakes and air raids, so its beautiful old scenery is still preserved today. The most notable place here is Kenrokuen, one of Japan's "three best landscape gardens" and considered by many to be the most beautiful of all. As a castle town, Kanazawa also boasts beautiful traditional culture, crafts, and cuisine.

### ITINERARY

#### DAY 1 > Travel to Takayama

Transfer to Takayama by train. Takayama was formerly an enclave for skilled carpenters working for the imperial courts in Kyoto and Nara. It has retained much of its traditional architecture and is well-known for its crafts, particularly yew-wood carving, Shunkei lacquerware, pottery and furniture. After arriving at your accommodation, you may have time to explore the ruins of Takayama castle and walk along the east-side temples. Relax in a hot-spring bath before dinner. In the evening

we recommend you try the local Hida beef and perhaps some locally-brewed saké.

**Accommodation:** Minshuku (Family-run Guesthouse)

#### DAY 2 > Sightseeing in Takayama

Today you have a full day at leisure in Takayama. We recommend the Takayama morning market. You may also wish to explore the San-machi area with its rows of old merchant houses, some open as museums.



Wander the old town and hunt for souvenirs or perhaps see museums, such as the Takayama Matsuri Yatai Kaikan (Takayama Festival Floats Exhibition Hall), which displays some of the huge, elaborate floats used for the Takayama Festival, famous as one of the three most beautiful festivals of Japan.

**Accommodation:** Minshuku (Family-run Guesthouse)

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### **DAY 3 > Shirakawa-go and Ogimachi**

Depart by bus from Takayama and travel to the UNESCO World Heritage site of Shirakawa village, and have a full day to explore here.

Within the Shirakawa-go area of the Sho-kawa valley is the village of Ogimachi. The village is home to a large number of Gassho-Zukuri houses, and has been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1995. These large wooden houses have steep thatched roofs designed to withstand heavy snow, and the term Gassho-Zukuri refers to the shape of praying hands formed by the roofs. Your accommodation is

one of these traditional houses.

**Accommodation:** Gassho-Zukuri thatched-roof house

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### **DAY 4 > Sightseeing in Kanazawa and onwards by train**

Today you travel to Kanazawa by bus and have the rest of the day to explore the city that was the fourth-largest in Japan during the Edo Period. Kanazawa was the seat of the Maeda Clan, one of the most powerful feudal clans in the country at that time. Kanazawa escaped major earthquakes and air raids, so its beautiful old scenery is still preserved today. The most notable place here is Kenrokuen, one of Japan's "three best landscape gardens" and considered by many to be the most beautiful of all. As a castle town, Kanazawa also boasts beautiful traditional culture, crafts, and cuisine.

You then travel onwards by train to your next destination.

