

JOURNEY TO JAPAN:

Exploring Culture, Historic Sites, Nature and
Contemporary Life

Aboard the All-Suite Cruise ship **MITSUI OCEAN FUJI**

August 24 – September 6, 2026



The hilltop Himeji Castle, whose construction dates to 1333, is considered to be Japan's most spectacular castle

Dear Friends,

Join us on a journey from thriving Tokyo to timeless Kyoto with **Arthur Golden**, a long-term scholar of Japanese, East Asian, and Chinese art, history, cultures, and languages. In talks and discussions, Arthur will share highlights from his ten-year journey writing the NYT best-selling novel *Memoirs of a Geisha*, and shed light on aspects of Japanese history with a focus on the impacts of early foreign influences on the country's national worldview.

Japan is a country of contrasts. It is one of the largest economic powers in the world: technologically advanced and ultramodern, yet it preserves and honors its ancient customs and unique heritage. We will explore these contradictory aspects as they are reflected across well-preserved historic towns, gardens, modern cities, and idyllic rural landscapes.

Traditional elements are evident in the architecture of Shintō shrines, Buddhist temples, the feudal castle at Himeji, Tokyo's Imperial Palace, and the Higashiyama district of Kyoto. Ancient aesthetics come alive in the exquisitely designed gardens of Shinjuku Gyoen and Ryoan-ji, and the continued pursuit of mindfulness in the ritualized *cha-no-yu* tea ceremony. Modern movements can be seen in bustling urban centers like Tokyo, on a sobering note in historic Nagasaki, and more cheerfully in the blend of nature and contemporary sculpture at the Hakone Open Air Museum.

As a nation of sprawling islands, Japan is best explored by sea. Aboard the *Mitsui Ocean Fuji*, guests enjoy an immersive experience rooted in Japanese heritage and traditions, including *omotenashi*, the art of heartfelt and meticulous hospitality. Guests may also participate in authentic cultural activities from tea ceremonies and calligraphy workshops to performances by Japanese artists. With a long history of sailing Japanese waters, *Mitsui* has unmatched expertise in navigating Japanese routes, and its dedicated English-speaking Japanese officers and crew possess deep knowledge of Japan's known and hidden treasures.

This opportunity to explore Japan is unparalleled. We look forward to welcoming you.

Warm regards,

Thalassa Journeys

GUEST LECTURER

ARTHUR GOLDEN

Author of *Memoirs of a Geisha*



Arthur Golden, the acclaimed author of *Memoirs of a Geisha*, grew up in Chattanooga, Tennessee, a member of a newspaper publishing family. He graduated from Harvard College in 1978, where he studied Japanese art and history and began learning the language. In 1980 he earned a master's degree from Columbia University in East Asian Languages and Culture, studying Mandarin Chinese as well. He wrote

his master's thesis on the subject of Sino-Japanese relations during World War I.

During the summer of 1980, he studied advanced Mandarin at Beijing University, where he met another American student, Trudy Legge, who became his wife. Years later a piece he wrote looking back on their summer together in Beijing won a Silver Medal for travel writing from the American Society of Travel Writers.

After a year working in Tokyo as a magazine editor, he returned to the U.S. and began work on a book about Japanese culture, still thinking of a career in journalism, like many others in his family. A chance comment by his literary agent set him on the path to writing a novel instead.

Memoirs of a Geisha spent two years on *The New York Times* bestseller list and has sold millions of copies around the world in more than forty languages, as well as being made into an Oscar-winning film. It is consistently listed as one of the classics of historical fiction, as well as being ranked among the most beloved English-language novels.

Arthur and Trudy divide their time between the south coast of Massachusetts and Ann Arbor, Michigan, and have two children and four grandchildren.

ABOUT THALASSA JOURNEYS

Thalassa Journeys is a tour company founded by the men and women who, working as Travel Dynamics International, pioneered educational and cultural travel in the 1970s in partnership with the leading educational, research, cultural and performing arts institutions in the United States. For more than 45 years our mission was to provide robust, intellectually stimulating experiences to lifelong learners who see travel as an opportunity to expand their understanding of the world and their place in it. This same mission guides us today. We believe that the most rewarding travel experiences happen when small groups of like-minded individuals share an enthusiasm for engaging with the richly varied environments of the world, and with the history, culture, ideas and ideals of the people who inhabit them.

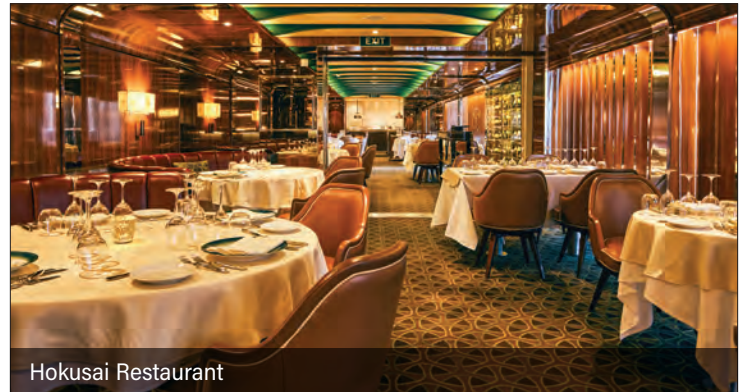
INTRODUCING THE ELEGANT ALL-SUITE *MITSUI OCEAN FUJI*



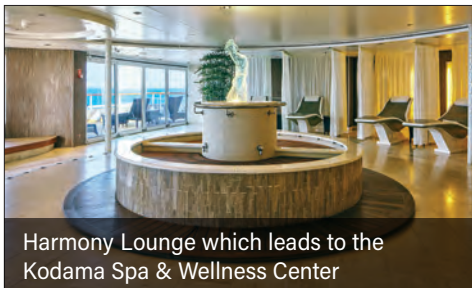
The only cruise ship operating in Japan that offers an authentic Japanese experience



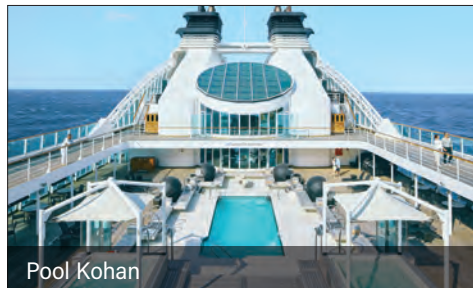
Bedroom of the spacious suites



Hokusai Restaurant



Harmony Lounge which leads to the Kodama Spa & Wellness Center



Pool Kohan



Food aboard the *Mitsu Ocean Fuji* includes Japanese and international specialties

The *Mitsu Ocean Fuji* is the only ship to offer a culturally authentic Japanese experience. With a gross tonnage of 32,477 GT, she could carry over a thousand passengers. Instead, *Mitsu Ocean Fuji* accommodates a maximum of 458 guests in 226 spacious suites. A favorable guest-to-crew ratio ensures that guests experience refined service and omotenashi - heartfelt and meticulous hospitality - from the ship's 330 English-speaking crew members.

The luxurious *Mitsu Ocean Fuji* is at the cutting edge of hospitality and environmental responsibility. Along with an ambitious emissions reduction goal to reach net-zero, the ship's innovative LFC® biodigester technology drastically reduces her carbon footprint by transforming food waste into environmentally safe water which can be released into the ocean without harming marine

ecosystems. Thus with peace of mind, guests can fully enjoy the *Ocean Fuji's* delicious dining experiences.

Under the direction of celebrated Chef Kiyomi Mikuni, four venues offer Japanese and globally inspired cuisine including Mikuni's "Japonisée" style, a masterful fusion of Japanese flavors and French gastronomic techniques. Lounges offer locally sourced specialties, and complimentary beverages and in-suite dining are available throughout the voyage. Activities aboard the ship abound: from immersive Japanese cultural workshops and traditional performances to the ship's pools, fitness studios, Spa and Wellness KODAMA, and generous open spaces offering stunning views. Complimentary unlimited Wi-Fi is available throughout the ship.

ITINERARY



Monday, August 24, 2026

DEPART THE US FOR TOKYO, Japan

Tuesday, August 25

TOKYO/EMBARK THE MITSUI OCEAN FUJI

Arrive in Tokyo and transfer to the port to embark the cruise ship *Mitsui Ocean Fuji* and settle in for your 7-night voyage. Meet your fellow travelers for a welcome dinner this evening as the ship sets sail. (D)

Wednesday, August 26

AT SEA

Relax aboard the ship, attend lectures, and participate in Japanese cultural events as the *Mitsui Ocean Fuji* spends the day at sea. (B,L,D)

Thursday, August 27

MUNAKATA, Kyūshū

The ship calls this morning in Munakata, an ancient city that

prospered from trade with Korea and China. Our tour of the city includes Hetsu-gu, one of three local UNESCO World Heritage-designated Shintō shrines with buildings that date to the 12th century. Within its grounds is the Shinpokan Museum: a treasure house of artifacts dating from the 4th to 9th centuries, which were excavated on the nearby but forbidden island of Okinoshima. (B,L,D)

Friday, August 28

NAGASAKI

One of Japan's most picturesque and cosmopolitan cities, Nagasaki was its only center for European trade from 1641 to 1850, while the rest of the country was isolated from the world. Nagasaki would have remained just another bustling port, except it was the second Japanese city devastated by the atomic bomb on August 9, 1945, ending WWII in the Pacific Theater. Pay a reflective visit to the Atomic Bomb Museum and nearby Peace Park. See also the contemplative Nishizaka Hill; artificial Dejima island, constructed in



View point of Kiyomizu-dera Temple, Kyoto



The Japanese tea ceremony, or *Chanoyu*, is rooted in Zen Buddhism



Mount Fuji, Lake Ashinoko, and the torii gate of the Hakone Shrine, Hakone

1636 to segregate foreign traders from the local population; unique Fukusai-ji Zen temple; Shofuku-ji, which survived WWII and is among the world's finest examples of Chinese Ming dynasty temple architecture; and the excellent Nagasaki Museum of History and Culture. (B,L,D)

Saturday, August 29
JEJU ISLAND, South Korea

Situated on the Korea Strait between Japan and South Korea, volcanic Jeju Island has been inhabited since the Neolithic period and is known for its natural beauty and traditional customs, particularly its haenyeo culture. These female free divers collect shellfish and seaweed from depths as much as 30 feet below the surface without the assistance of underwater breathing apparatuses. The entire island is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and we will explore Jeju's striking volcanic landscape and attractive waterfalls. (B,L,D)

Sunday, August 30
AT SEA

Enjoy the day at sea as the ship cruises back to Japan. (B,L,D)

Monday, August 31
SHIMIZU, Honshu, Japan/HAKONE/SHIMIZU

From the port of Shimizu, take an excursion to Hakone in the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park. Renowned for its rugged beauty and numerous hot springs, the scenic town of Hakone offers magnificent

views of iconic Mount Fuji, Lake Ashinoko, and the notable vermilion torii gate of the Hakone Shrine. Our exploration includes the Hakone Open Air Museum, where contemporary sculptures spread across the grassy hillsides; and the superb Okada Museum of Art, which also has a lovely garden. Return to the *Mitusi Ocean Fuji* for our last night onboard. (B,L,D)

Tuesday, September 1
TOKYO/DISEMBARK

After breakfast, disembark in Tokyo to explore Japan's vibrant and dynamic capital city. Today's highlights include the colorful pagoda-style Buddhist Asakusa Kannon Temple, Tokyo's oldest temple; and Meiji-jingu, a venerated Shintō shrine dedicated to the deified spirits of Emperor Meiji and his Empress Shoken, who were pivotal figures in Japan's modernization. After lunch, visit the Tokyo National Museum, which houses the world's largest collection of Japanese art. Accommodations for the next two nights are at the *Prince Park Tower Hotel* (or similar). (B,L)

Wednesday, September 2
TOKYO

This morning, visit the tranquil grounds of the Imperial Palace, built upon the remnants of the Edo Castle complex, which was the seat of the Tokugawa Shogunate from 1603 until it was overthrown in the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Continue to beautiful Shinjuku Gyoen, with sections of garden designed in the Landscape, Formal, and Traditional Japanese styles. The afternoon and evening are at leisure. (B)



Buddhist Asakusa Kannon Temple, Tokyo



Kyoto street scene

Thursday, September 3

TOKYO/KYOTO

Depart Tokyo this morning on the bullet train to Kyoto. The capital of Japan for over a thousand years, Kyoto is endowed with sublime temples, shrines, palaces and gardens. Upon arrival, visit the renowned rock garden at Ryoan-ji, which evokes a sense of mystery. Visit also Kinkaku-ji, the glittering Temple of the Golden Pavillion, surrounded by gardens. After lunch explore the Arashiyama district including Tenryu-ji, a Rinzai Zen Temple and garden built in 1339 in memory of contemporary Emperor Go-Daigo, and the winding paths of the spectacular Arashiyama bamboo grove. Our home for three nights is the *Hotel Okura Kyoto Okazaki Bettei* (or similar). (B,L)

Friday, September 4

KYOTO/HIMEJI/KYOTO

Travel for the day to the welcoming town of Himeji to explore the formidable fortress complex of Himeji-jo, the most magnificent example of Japan's twelve surviving feudal-era castles, established in 1346 and today a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Later, visit the Hyogo Prefectural Museum of History, housed in a striking modern building; and Himeji Koko-en, with its reconstructed samurai quarters and nine connected Edo-style gardens. Return to Kyoto in the late afternoon. (B,L)

Saturday, September 5

KYOTO

Visit Kiyomizu-dera this morning. Leading up to the "Pure Water Temple" are the atmospheric streets of Higashiyama, one of Kyoto's best-preserved historic districts, lined with traditional architecture and shops selling local pottery and other local specialties. Halfway up Mount Otowa, Kiyomizu-dera offers superlative views of Kyoto from its wooden platform. Later, experience the ritual of *Chanoyu* ("the way of tea") at a nearby temple. This intricately choreographed tea ceremony is embedded in Japanese culture, and reveals the art and refined method of Japanese etiquette and hospitality. Spend the afternoon at leisure for independent activities. In the evening, enjoy a festive farewell dinner. (B,D)

Sunday, September 6

KYOTO/OSAKA/HOMEWARD

After breakfast, transfer to the Osaka airport for flights homeward. (B)

ACTIVITY LEVEL

Travelers can expect an estimated daily total of 2-4 hours of walking. Featured sites and nature excursions may involve walking on uneven surfaces such as cobblestones, unpaved paths, or stairs without handrails. During some site visits guests may need to stand briefly if seating is not available. Embarking and disembarking from motor coaches and other transportation methods will be necessary. Please note that temperatures in central and southern Japan in late August can reach the 80s.

ALL ACCOMMODATIONS ABOARD *MITSUI OCEAN FUJI* ARE ELEGANT SUITES THAT COMBINE SPACIOUSNESS, COMFORT, AND LIGHT.

Each suite has an expansive and unobstructed ocean view, with a comfortably furnished living space and bedroom that can be divided by a partition at the occupants' choice for a restful in-suite experience. Each private ensuite bathroom includes a bathtub and separate shower, sophisticated Japanese-style toilet, and a marble vanity thoughtfully designed to accommodate two sinks.

SUITES FEATURE:

- All suites have picture windows and 95% feature a private balcony with daybed or sun lounger for relaxation. Suites measure between 272 and 284 sq. ft.
- Queen or twin beds with luxury Egyptian cotton linen bedclothes and duvet.
- Lounge area with seating and dining/coffee table.
- Spacious walk-in wardrobe and vanity table.
- Plush robes, slippers, towels, and luxury bath products.
- Fully-stocked in-suite minibar, replenished once per voyage.
- Multi-lingual infotainment system with on-demand movies and TV channels.
- Individual climate and lighting control.

RATES

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	PER PERSON / DOUBLE OCCUPANCY
B	Oceanview Suites	\$ 11,690
A	Veranda Suites	\$ 12,490

Solo occupancy rates:

Category B \$ 13,290 total; Category A \$ 14,290 total.

PROGRAM INCLUSIONS

The rates are all-inclusive. There are no hidden costs and no additional charges such as shore excursions and embarkation and port charges. Other than the international airfare and expenses of a personal nature, all else is included. Specifically, the rates include the following:

- Cruise aboard the *Mitsui Ocean Fuji* as described.
- Two nights at *Prince Park Tower Hotel* (or similar) in Tokyo, and three nights at *Hotel Okura Kyoto Okazaki Bettei* (or similar) in Kyoto at the end of the program (post-cruise).
- Bullet train between Tokyo and Kyoto.
- All meals aboard the ship, with a selection of wines, beer and soft drinks during lunch and dinner.
- 10 post-cruise meals including a festive farewell dinner.
- Airport/hotel/pier transfers and handling of luggage on program arrival and departure dates.
- Lectures and discussions with Arthur Golden on Japanese history and culture.
- Onboard activities and enrichment lectures centered on Japanese culture, traditions and lifestyle.
- Traditional Japanese entertainment offerings such as rakugo (the art of Japanese storytelling).
- Complete program of shore excursions and activities, led by professional English-speaking local guides and onboard experts.
- Specialty teas, coffees, and juices available at any time.
- 24-hour room service.
- Gratuities to the ship's crew, guides, porters and drivers.
- Welcome sweets on embarkation day for each suite.
- Wi-Fi aboard the ship with unlimited Internet service.
- Access to onboard motion and fitness studios, where some fitness classes and yoga are complimentary.
- Access to complimentary self-service laundrettes throughout the voyage.
- Services of an English-speaking hotel crew member, and local guides, porters and drivers.
- Services of an experienced Thalassa Journeys Trip Director.
- All local taxes and service charges, including port and embarkation taxes.
- Complete pre-departure material.

NOT INCLUDED: International airfare; travel insurance; expenses of a personal nature; experience fees for Hokusai Fine Dining and Omakase Sushi in the Terrace Restaurant Hachiyō; treatments in Spa and Wellness KODAMA; any items not mentioned in the itinerary or the above inclusions.

REGISTRATION

TJLL 26F-0824

Enclosed is my check or credit card no. for \$ _____ (\$ 1,500 per person) as a deposit to hold _____ place(s) on **JOURNEY TO JAPAN**, August 24–September 6, 2026 with Thalassa Journeys. I understand that final payment is due ninety (90) days prior to departure and is payable by check or credit card. We accept Visa, Mastercard, or Discover credit cards.

For reservations, please call Thalassa Journeys at: (866) 633-3611 or email: reservations@thalassajourneys.com

or make a check payable and mail with this registration form to:

Thalassa Journeys: 8815 Conroy-Windermere Rd., Suite 406, Orlando, FL 32835

Visa Mastercard Discover
No. _____
Exp. _____ 3- or 4-Digit Security Code _____

PLEASE SELECT STATEROOM CATEGORY IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE

1st choice _____ 2nd choice _____

Double Occupancy Single Occupancy

PREFERRED BED CONFIGURATION

Double _____ Twin _____

FIRST MIDDLE LAST (AS ON YOUR PASSPORT)

FIRST MIDDLE LAST (AS ON YOUR PASSPORT)

ADDRESS _____

Each participant must sign below: I/We have read the "General Information" section and agree to its terms.

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

TELEPHONE (HOME) _____

(CELL) _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

EMAIL _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

GENERAL INFORMATION

PAYMENT SCHEDULE: A deposit of \$1,500 per person is required to reserve your space on the tour. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure. Payment can be made by personal check or charged to a credit card.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS: All cancellations are subject to a \$300 per person administrative fee. Cancellations received 71-90 days prior to departure will be assessed a penalty equal to 50% of the total program cost per person. Cancellations received within 70 days of departure are subject to 100% cancellation penalties. Requests for cancellations must be made in writing. No refunds will be made for any part of this program in which you choose not to participate.

INSURANCE: We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance, which is available for coverage of expenses in conjunction with cancellation due to illness or accident. Baggage insurance is also recommended. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement.

ITINERARY: The itinerary, accommodations and arrangements are subject to change at the discretion of Thalassa Journeys.

RESPONSIBILITY: Please read carefully the following terms and conditions, which constitute the sole, legally enforceable agreements between the traveler and Thalassa Journeys. Thalassa Journeys acts solely as agents for the traveler with respect to all transportation, hotel and other tour arrangements. In that capacity, we exercise all reasonable care possible to ensure the traveler's safety and satisfaction, but, we neither assume nor bear any responsibility or liability for any injury, death, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity arising in connection with the services of any ship, airplane, train, automobile, motor coach, carriage or other conveyance, or the actions of any third-party, involved in carrying the traveler or in affecting these tours. We are not responsible for damages, additional expenses, or any other losses due to cancellation, delay or other changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, civil disturbances, acts or threats of terrorism, travel warnings or bans, termination or suspension of war risks or other carrier insurance, quarantine, acts of God or other causes beyond our control. All such losses must be borne by the traveler, and tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. In the event of cancellation, delay or rescheduling mandated by any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall have the option of accepting in lieu of the original tour such rescheduled tour or other substituted tour(s) as may be offered by us, or else, receiving a refund of as much of such advance tour expenditures as we are able to recover on the traveler's behalf from carriers, third-party tour vendors, etc., but, we shall not have any obligation or liability to the traveler beyond the foregoing. We reserve the right to make alterations to the tour's itinerary and to substitute hotels, transportation methods, or lecturers if this is required. We reserve the right to cancel, delay, or reschedule any tour prior to departure, and, so long as this is not due to any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall be entitled to retain any person as a member of any tour should such person's health, condition or actions adversely affect or threaten the welfare or safety of other travelers or impede the tour. Baggage or valuables brought on the tour shall be transported, handled or stored at the traveler's risk entirely, and, we shall bear no liability or responsibility for any damage or other loss thereto. Resolution of any disputes arising hereunder shall be effected exclusively in the state or federal courts presiding in Florida, pursuant to applicable Florida law.

RATES: Tour costs are based upon current airfares, tariffs, and currency values. While we do everything possible to maintain the listed prices, they are subject to change.

**CST 2138603-50
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Beyond the ordinary

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Join **Arthur Golden**, Author of *Memoirs of a Geisha*, on **JOURNEY TO JAPAN**

Kinkaku-ji Temple, Kyoto

For Reservations and Information, Please Call **866-633-3611**
or Email: reservations@thalassajourneys.com