

MITSUMI OCEAN CRUISES Partners with Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport & Tourism and Local Port and Tourism Boards to Deliver New and Innovative Shore Excursions Program



MITSUMI OCEAN CRUISES destinations include Shimonoseki and Beppu Hatto.

[November 11, 2024, Tokyo, Japan] – MOL Cruises, Ltd. [Tsunemichi Mukai – President]: For over 100 years, MITSUMI OCEAN CRUISES has sailed the iconic 18,000 miles of Japan's coastlines showcasing the country's unique history, traditions, arts and customs. This long history has provided MITSUMI OCEAN CRUISES with unrivaled destination experience and expertise.

As part of its continuous improvement efforts, MITSUMI OCEAN CRUISES has partnered with Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport & Tourism (MLIT) and with local port and tourism boards across Japan. As a result of these collaborative efforts, the cruise line is offering a program of new shore excursions for both of its cruise ships – NIPPON MARU and the upcoming MITSUMI OCEAN FUJI.

Japan has 150 ports of call for cruise ships - more than any other country in the world. Together with its smaller ships, this presents many opportunities to continually review and refine tours and attractions presented to the guests onboard MITSUMI OCEAN CRUISES.

“The wide variety of ports Japan offers and our focus on the smaller ship experience provide us a greater opportunity to create more bespoke and exclusive experiences based on what's new, different and of potential guest interest,” said Sae Ichikawa, General Manager of Destination Experience for MITSUMI OCEAN CRUISES. “We are excited to optimize the guest experience ashore, so we welcome our partnerships with both Japan's MLIT and local port and tourism boards across the country to deliver unique, memorable and engaging tours, many of which are exclusive for our guests only. We are also very proud to be able to support and contribute to the economy of the smaller ports around the country.”

MLIT's broad responsibilities include its nation's ports and is committed to fostering the sustainable development of domestic ports and revitalizing regional areas through cruise tourism. As part of these efforts, MLIT has collaborated with MITSUMI OCEAN CRUISES to further enhance the cruise line's high quality shore excursions program.

"The Ministry places great importance on collaborating with MITSUI OCEAN CRUISES to develop premium shore excursions programs," said Mr. Yusuke Hayashi, Director of Cruise Market Development, MLIT. "We look forward to Mitsui's efforts to enhance shore excursion offerings and develop innovative programs at emerging ports."

In addition to MLIT's efforts, the ports across Japan are represented by proactive and knowledgeable port and tourism boards. MITSUI OCEAN CRUISES' partnership with these teams of local experts has yielded a wide variety of new and authentic excursions. Here are a few examples:

- **Fugu restaurant and Usuki Castle Town (Beppu):** Guests journey to Usuki Stone Buddhas located in southeast of Oita Prefecture. There exist 60 stone Buddhas and 59 of them registered as national treasures. Guests will be impressed by their sheer number and high quality. After that, guests will enjoy a popular delicacy Pufferfish lunch. Then, stroll through the castle town of Usuki on foot with stops at the Usuki Castle ruins, Inaba Family Suburban Residence and Nogami Yaeko Literature Museum, to fully experience the history and culture of Usuki.
- **Okonomiyaki in-Depth (Hiroshima):** Hiroshima-style okonomiyaki is one of the soul foods of Hiroshima. It's unique for its layered preparation, with ingredients like cabbage, bean sprouts, pork, and noodles piled onto a thin crepe-like batter. Enjoy Okonomiyaki at 'Micchan,' a long-established Okonomiyaki restaurant beloved by the people of Hiroshima, which will be reserved exclusively for MITSUI OCEAN FUJI guests. A special and exclusive visit to "Micchan," where lines are a must, allows guests to enjoy the authentic taste of okonomiyaki while listening to the history and how to eat it.
- **Sikoku Pilgrim Walking (Sakaide):** First, guests will walk with a guide along the 550-meter pilgrimage route to Negoro-ji Temple to experience the Shikoku pilgrimage to the temple. The pilgrimage route is a charming path with many remnants of the old road still visible today. Guests will enjoy the pilgrimage experience while listening to the special guide's explanations, walking the same path that Kobo Daishi once did. At Nekoro-ji Temple, learn the official way to visit the temple on the pilgrimage route, along with a monk's guide to the temple grounds. Next visit Ritsurin Park where, in the Edo period it was a villa of the feudal lord called Ritsurin – a "hospitality garden," where the lord entertained his guests. Guests will admire the beautifully manicured gardens.
- **Zentuji Temple with Monk (Takamatsu):** In this tour, you will be guided by the Monk through the precincts of Zentsuji Temple, known as the birthplace of Kobo Daishi, including Nandaimon (South Gate), the Five-Storied pagoda, Kondo (Golden Hall), and Kaidan Meguri. The Five-Storied Pagoda is a nationally important cultural property, and its normally closed doors will be specially opened for the guests of MITSUI OCEAN FUJI, providing an unforgettable experience.

"Collaborating with MITSUI OCEAN CRUISES to explore ways for guests to enjoy our region is an exciting endeavor, and at the same time, it provides a valuable opportunity to envision and

actively shape the future of our community,” said Mayumi Hayashi, Kochi Prefectural Government Port Representative.

These new shore excursions will be offered for the debut cruise of the cruise line’s new 458-guest, 32,477-ton MITSUI OCEAN FUJI, scheduled to debut in Yokohama on December 1, 2024. MITSUI OCEAN FUJI will be Japan's most luxurious all-suite cruise ship with and spacious passenger venues, traditional omotenashi service, delicately flavored and beautifully presented cuisine, lively entertainment and exciting ports of call. The ship will sail on inspiring voyages celebrating the blue ocean and Japan’s awesome natural beauty.

On sale now, the inaugural season offers a series of Debut Cruises (December 2024-January 2025), including a special New Year’s sailing; Spring and Golden Week Cruises (April-May 2025); and a 66-day Grand Asia Cruise (May-July 2025).

Guests booked onboard MITSUI OCEAN FUJI or NIPPON MARU will receive a shore excursions brochure and application form by mail. They may also make reservations through the Cruise Desk or once onboard at Guest Services.

For additional information on MITSUI OCEAN CRUISES, booking information and a video tour of MITSUI OCEAN FUJI, visit <https://mol-cruises.jp/en>.

About MITSUI OCEAN CRUISES:

Rooted in Japanese heritage, nature and traditions, from the blue sea, MITSUI OCEAN CRUISES connects people with the wonders of nature and Japanese culture to enrich people’s lives and secure a happier and more sustainable future. MITSUI OCEAN CRUISES is the brand of the MOL Cruises, Ltd, the most experienced cruise line in Japan and is part of the Mitsui O.S.K. Lines. Ltd. (MOL) group of companies. It operates the cruise ship NIPPON MARU and will begin operating its second luxury cruise ship, MITSUI OCEAN FUJI in December 2024.

Contact Information:

MITSUI OCEAN CRUISES

Public Relations

Karen Candy

karen.candy@molgroup.com

+1 661-644-3999