



Seto Inland Sea Art Tours: Naoshima & Teshima

Takamatsu, Naoshima, and Teshima: Day 1

The journey begins in the Bikan Historical Quarter of Kurashiki City. The white walled, black tiled homes are well preserved examples of Japanese architecture dating back to as far as the 17th century. Located along a canal once used for transporting goods, the gently flowing waters reflecting classic facades, wooden boats drifting, and the bent willow trees swaying with the breeze transports one back to streets of late Edo Japan.

After a brief step back in time, you will board the Marine Liner bound for Takamatsu City. The Seto Bridge was completed as recently as 1988 and the vastness of the swirling blue waters whisking past truly accentuates the remoteness the region has had for so long.

After arriving in Takamatsu City, you will be driven to the sprawling Ritsurin Garden to witness a prime example of classic Japanese architecture. In addition to green ponds teeming with koi fish, swaying pines, and vibrant seasonal flowers, one can also witness the historical marks left by former rulers of Takamatsu. Most notably these include non-native plants gifted by the lord's of other prefectures, trees planted by nobles, and even an artificial waterfall built for the amusement of a former lord of Takamatsu.

During your time at the garden you will be treated to tea in a classically renovated tea house overlooking the park. Here you can enjoy the beauty and serenity in the same manner as those who have maintained and kept this garden alive for the past 400 years.

To end the day, you will have the chance to watch the sun disappear beneath the gentle blue waters of the Seto Inland Sea aboard a catamaran style yacht. With the sun's departure, the yacht will bring you to Naoshima for the first night.



Takamatsu, Naoshima, and Teshima: Day 2

After breakfast and checking out from your lodging, it will be a day of artistic exploration and discovery on Naoshima.

To begin, you will view the various “art houses” located on the island—renovated homes and buildings converted into contemporary expressions of art.

After lunch taken at a local café, you will have an opportunity to visit the Chichu Art Museum

Well established as a haven for artistic expression and freedom, the museum boasts installations and works of contemporary art by figures such as James Turrell and Walter De Maria.

Furthermore, the museum itself was designed by famous self-taught Japanese architect Tadao Ando. Located on one of the highest points of the island, the building takes advantage of the natural light and space of the island and serves as an impressive work of art in its own right, and a worthy home for the art inside.

The day will end with a ride on a private water taxi that will bring you to the final stop on your artistic adventure, the island of Teshima where you will spend the night in a traditional style Japanese guesthouse.



Takamatsu, Naoshima, and Teshima: Day 3

A hidden gem amid the waters of the Seto Inland Sea, Teshima is not nearly as well known as Naoshima. However, Teshima embodies the joy of discovery and is the perfect example of why we should seek the unexpected and the hidden when we travel.

After breakfast and departing your accommodation, you will have the chance to experience Teshima Art Museum.

Located on slopes covered with rice terraces and overlooking the blue waters of the Seto Inland Sea, the museum matches the curves and contours of the land seamlessly.

The cavernous interior allows light into the chamber via apertures in the ceiling. The affect is an otherworldly atmosphere that changes depending on the time of day, weather, season, and personal mindset.

While walking through the reverent silence with only the sound of wind, muffled footsteps, and nature, one can wrestle with this thing we call "art." Something dimly visible through the hectic monotony of life, something real, something true, something beautiful even. A "thusness" or essence that is perceivably felt while experiencing the museum interior.

This day will also include a trip to Inujima, an even tinier island waiting to be discovered. On this island you can witness the creativity and transformative nature that art can possess. From 1909 to 1919, an oil refinery provided work for the island. The massive structure was never demolished and today the ivy-covered walls and smokestacks have been transformed into an open-air work of art displaying turn of the century industrial architecture with the aim of encouraging the recycling and repurposing of the industrial past.

And with this last day in the past, here the tour will end. And after transportation back to Takamatsu, it will be one more trip over the Seto Bridge toward Okayama. While on the train rushing over the sea back to Okayama, we hope that some aspect of this journey lingers with you providing some inspiration, lasting experience, or simply some food for thought. And, while this trip may be finished, there is always something to discover amid the water of the Seto Inland Sea as well as on this quirky island we call Shikoku.

