

Set Sail for Kure: Hiroshima's Historic Naval Hub & Gateway to Japan's Inland Sea



(c) Liaison Council for Tourism in Kure Area

Set sail for Kure, a coastal gem in Hiroshima Prefecture with a rich naval heritage and breathtaking views of Japan's Inland Sea.

Step aboard the award-winning Sea Paseo ferry for a leisurely ride across sparkling waters. Explore the JMSDF Kure Museum, partly housed in a real submarine, which brings Japan's maritime past, present, and future to life. As the sun sets, take a unique battleship tour for an unforgettable view of the city aglow against the sea.

For a taste of tradition, savor an authentic meal once enjoyed by sailors of the Imperial Japanese Navy. Venture beyond Kure to Etajima Island, home to historic naval sites and scenic coastal trails, or head to Saijo, one of Japan's most prestigious sake brewing towns. Japan's. Stroll through its charming streets on a guided brewery tour, sampling award-winning sake and experiencing a centuries-old craft firsthand. Mitarai, a beautifully preserved townscape at the edge of a picturesque island chain, invites you to relax and fall into the rhythm of island life.

Whether you're drawn to naval history, breathtaking landscapes, traditional townscapes, or local flavors, Kure and its surroundings offer an unforgettable blend of culture, history, and adventure—just waiting to be explored.

Sail the Seto Inland Sea in Style Aboard the Award-Winning Sea Paseo

Experience Japan's breathtaking Seto Inland Sea aboard Sea Paseo, an award-winning ferry that turns travel into a scenic adventure. More than just a way to get from Hiroshima to Matsuyama, this stylish vessel offers a relaxing cruise at an affordable price, with spacious luxury recliners and onboard dining where you can savor a meal as the tranquil waters pass by.

What truly sets Sea Paseo apart is its stunning rooftop deck—designed like an open-air park, complete with gazebo seating booths. Enjoy a coffee in the sea breeze as you take in panoramic views of island-dotted waters, making every moment of your journey as memorable as the destination itself.

Conveniently departing from Hiroshima Port with stops in the historic naval town of Kure before reaching Matsuyama, Sea Paseo offers a seamless and scenic alternative to the train. With prestigious honors like the 2020 Small Passenger Ship of the Year and the 2019 Good Design Award, this ferry isn't just transportation—it's an experience you won't forget.

JMSDF Kure Museum: Step Inside Japan's Submarine History

One of Kure's most striking sights is the massive Akishio submarine, fondly known as the "Iron Whale," seemingly floating above the cityscape. This decommissioned vessel is the star attraction of the JMSDF Kure Museum, offering visitors a rare chance to step inside a real Japanese submarine and experience firsthand what life is like beneath the waves.

Beyond the Akishio, the museum delves into the fascinating world of Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF), with exhibits on cutting-edge submarine technology and the high-stakes mission of mine-clearing operations. Even decades after World War II, JMSDF teams continue the dangerous but vital work of removing underwater mines, making the seas safer for future generations.

The JMSDF Kure Museum is an eye-opening journey into naval innovation, maritime defense, and the unseen sacrifices that shape Japan's modern waters, perfect for history buffs, engineering enthusiasts, and curious travelers.

Kure Battleship Tour & Sunset Cruise

Set sail on a one-of-a-kind cruise through Kure Bay, where history and breathtaking scenery come together for an unforgettable experience. This unique tour offers an up-close look at the powerful vessels of Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) as you glide past escort ships, submarines, and naval facilities that showcase Kure's deep maritime heritage.



As the sun sets over the calm waters of the Seto Inland Sea, relax on deck and take in the stunning view—the sky painted in shades of orange and gold, mountains silhouetted on the horizon. It's the perfect way to end a day exploring Kure, offering a fascinating look at Japan's modern naval fleet and a peaceful escape into the beauty of the Inland Sea.

Dine Like a Naval Officer at Satsuki-so

Kure's naval history has strongly influenced its culinary heritage, which can be experienced at Satsuki-so through a dining experience like no other. With over 100 years of history, this elegant restaurant has long been a favorite of naval officers, serving dishes that capture the essence of the region's seasonal flavors.

Step into a beautifully preserved setting and savor *Kaigun-gozen*, a traditional multi-course banquet inspired by the meals once enjoyed by Japan's Imperial Navy. Fresh, locally sourced ingredients take center stage, creating a feast that is both refined and deeply rooted in Kure's maritime past.

Dining at *Satsuki-so* is more than just a meal—it's a journey through time, where history, tradition, and exceptional cuisine come together for an unforgettable experience.

Explore the Naval Legacy and Scenic Beauty of Etajima Island

A short cruise from Kure takes you to Etajima Island, the largest island in Hiroshima Bay, where breathtaking coastal landscapes meet a rich naval heritage. At the heart of the island stands the prestigious Etajima Naval Academy, ranked among the world's top three naval academies alongside the Annapolis in the U.S. and the United Kingdom's Dartmouth.

Step into history with a guided tour of this esteemed institution, marveling at its grand architecture and naval design. The Etajima Naval Academy Museum houses rare artifacts that offer a deeper look into Japan's maritime past—many of which can only be seen here.

Beyond its historical significance, Etajima's serene coastline and lush scenery make it a perfect escape for those seeking both cultural depth and natural beauty. Whether you're a history enthusiast or simply looking for a unique off-the-beaten-path experience, Etajima Island offers an unforgettable glimpse into Japan's naval tradition and stunning island landscapes.

Sake Tasting Tour in the Birthplace of Premium Daiginjo Sake

Just a short journey from Kure, Saijo is a must-visit destination for sake lovers. Saijo is considered one of Japan's top three sake brewing districts and the birthplace of premium daiginjo sake. The many breweries clustered in its compact brewing district are among the



country's most renowned breweries, where centuries-old traditions meet masterful craftsmanship.

On this immersive guided tour, stroll through charming streets lined with white-walled breweries, each offering a unique take on Hiroshima's signature brewing style. Visit up to seven sake breweries, tasting a diverse range of award-winning varieties while learning the secrets behind their rich, complex flavors from local experts.

Whether you're a seasoned sake enthusiast or a curious first-timer, *Saijo* offers an unforgettable experience—blending history, culture, and world-class sake in one of Japan's most celebrated brewing regions.

✧ You can apply to join the tour via [this link](#).

Travel Back in Time in Mitarai: Hidden Port Town of the Seto Inland Sea

At the edge of the Tobishima chain of island chain, the beautifully preserved port town of Mitarai offers a rare glimpse into the life and culture of the Seto Inland Sea of the past. Designated as an Important Preservation District for Groups of Traditional Buildings, this charming town flourished as a bustling port for trade and travelers during the Edo period (1603-1868). Today, it remains a living museum of Japan's rich coastal heritage.

Wander through narrow stone-paved streets lined with historic tea houses, wooden inns, and elegant merchant homes, evoking nostalgia for a bygone era. Along the way, you'll discover vintage signboards, old-fashioned mailboxes, and hidden shrines that tell the story of Mitarai's seafaring past. The peaceful waterfront, once a lively stop for sailors, now invites visitors to slow down and take in the serene beauty of the Seto Inland Sea.

Whether you're a history lover or simply looking for an off-the-beaten-path retreat, Mitarai promises an unforgettable journey into Japan's timeless coastal culture.

Related links for more information :

- [Etajima Naval Academy. \(Movie\)](#)
- [Kure Battleship Tour and sunset cruise. \(Movie\)](#)
- [Satsuki-so. \(Movie\)](#)
- [Saijo Sake Tour. \(Movie\)](#)

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Press (Photo)

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JMSDF Kure Museum.

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Mitarai Townscape Preservation Area.

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