



Ecotourism trip in Tohoku.

Region devastated by the tsunami of 2011 and and the bearer of Japanese folklore.

Journey on the Joyful SL Ginga, an exceptional train.

*The Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011 caused tremendous damage to **Kamaishi** City. In 2017, six years after the Great East Japan Earthquake, Kamaishi City established the "Kamaishi City Tourism Vision" for a new tourism strategy to advance the reconstruction of the heavily damaged areas of the city. The "Kamaishi Open Field Museum" concept was established as a means to realize this policy. It considers the entire city of Kamaishi as an open-air museum, and every citizen of Kamaishi as a guide, telling stories about the city's beauty. In 2018, Kamaishi was selected as one of the "100 Sustainable Tourism Destinations in the World" certified by Green Destinations for the first time in Japan.*

***Tono** provides an opportunity to discover ancient beliefs through the natural sites surrounding this small town not often visited by tourists. One of the best-known folk creatures is the kappa, a mystical water sprite that resembles a small humanoid turtle and lurks on the banks of rivers, lakes and ponds. Kappa remind us of the dangers of water and it is said that they like to eat children and cucumbers. Paradoxically, they are also loved; statues and pictures of them can be found all around Tono.*

This program helps local disaster-stricken communities in little-visited areas, and uses a special train to get there. Many local activities will allow you to discover more about these areas and their inhabitants while helping them. Many studies have identified sustainable tourism as the key to keeping the balance between environmental conservation and development of local heritage sites.

D1 : Tokyo – Kamaishi

Morning departure by shinkansen then continuation by the Joyful SL Ginga train

Restored C58 239 locomotive, the **SL Ginga** operates between Hanamaki and Kamaishi. The passenger cars are a production in themselves, decorated to bring to life the work "Night on the Galactic Railroad" by children's novelist and poet Kenji Miyazawa. With the Kamaishi line as the stage, SL Ginga expresses Miyazawa's worldview, atmosphere and era, while drawing attention to the culture and natural beauty of the Tohoku region's landscape that Miyazawa loved so much.

Interior of the carriage:

Travel back in time to the early 20th century, when Kenji Miyazawa lived. With lighting reminiscent of gas lamps, stained glass windows and astrological partitions, in compartmented cars.

Galleries:

The Kenji Miyazawa galleries are created around three themes to bring Miyazawa's world to life from many angles. The exhibits include a variety of objects associated with the railroad and the Tohoku region that Miyazawa cherished.

Planetarium:

In car number one is an exhibit dedicated to the moon, planets and beyond. It is the first optical planetarium ever installed in a train.

Scheduling of sightseeing and meals are at your convenience.



Train SL ginga

Arrival in Kamaishi in the middle of the afternoon; drop off of luggage, discovery of the city by yourself.

Overnight at the hotel.

D2 : Kamaishi

Breakfast at the hotel.

***Kamaishi** is an important industrial and fishing town located along the rugged Sanriku coast in southeastern Iwate Prefecture. Known as the cradle of Japan's modern metallurgical industry, Kamaishi has been producing iron ore since the late Edo period and is the site of the country's first Western-style blast furnace, which received World Heritage status in 2015. In March 2011, a 14-meter-high tsunami swept through the recently completed Kamaishi breakwater and through the city's low-lying industrial areas, devastating the local fishing industry, depositing several large ships alongside the harbor on dry land, and killing about 1,000 people. Reconstruction efforts are underway and tourist sites have reopened and are welcoming visitors.*

Scheduling of sightseeing and meals are at your convenience.

Suggested visits

- Located right next to Kamaishi Station, the **Sunfish Kamaishi Fish Market** comes alive each morning with the activity of fishmongers offering all types of fresh and processed seafood caught off the Sanriku coast, including salmon, balaou, scallops and abalone. The second floor features a selection of restaurants open for lunch and dinner.
- The **Iron and Steel Museum** commemorates the history of these important industries and their impact on the modernization of Japan. The museum displays a huge model of a blast furnace, which is used to illustrate the iron and steel production started in Kamaishi.
- Between sky and sea stands the **Kamaishi Daikannon**, a huge 48.5 meter high statue of the Buddhist goddess of mercy. Built in 1970, it stands facing the sea to watch over the sailors and ensure them an abundant catch. Visitors can climb inside the statue to an observation deck offering a beautiful view of Kamaishi Bay.



Possible activities (reservations required, FTC can arrange this):

- ✧ Marine activities and sports (Stand up paddle, sea kayak)
- ✧ Snorkeling experience in the Sanriku geo-park.
- ✧ Cruise on a fishing boat (3 different tours)
- ✧ Fishing experience (sea urchins, scallops, Wakame seaweed, sea fishing in Sanriku Geo Park or Kamaishi Bay)
- ✧ Hiking Ohakozaki Senjojiki,

Overnight at the hotel.

D3 : Kamaishi – Tono – Tokyo

Breakfast at the hotel.

Train to Tono.

***Tono** is a rural town located in the hills of central Iwate Prefecture. The area is remarkable for its rustic landscape and traditional agricultural culture. But Tono is best known as a repository of Japanese folklore because of its legends of spirits, animals and supernatural creatures. This rich oral tradition was passed down through generations of storytellers and eventually collected in a book by the pioneering folklorist Yanagita Kunio.*

Scheduling of sightseeing and meals are at your convenience.

Suggested visits

- **Kappabuchi pond**
Kappabuchi Pond is a small pool that lies along a stream running behind Jokanji Temple. It is believed that the Kappa water spirits make their home in these quiet waters. Possible encounter with a local folkloric character who fishes for them using cucumbers as bait. Next to the pond is a small shrine dedicated to Kappa, where women pray for an abundance of breast milk for their children.
- **Fukusen-ji Temple**
Fukusenji Temple is a large temple complex in northeast Tono. Fukusenji belongs to the Shingon sect of Japanese Buddhism and consists of several large halls and a five-story pagoda spread along a wooded mountain slope. However, its main feature is its 17-meter high wooden statue of Kannon, the Buddhist goddess of mercy.
- **Gohyaku Rakan**
The Gohyaku Rakan are a series of moss-covered relief sculptures of Buddhist disciples (rakan). They were created over 200 years ago to appease the spirits of thousands of villagers who died in the widespread famines that struck the region. About 380 of the original 500 images have survived and can be seen carved into the stones along a creek bed in the mountains southwest of the city center.

Possible activities (reservations required, FTC can arrange this):

- ✧ Fabric dyeing (handkerchief, coasters, coasters)
- ✧ Pottery (electric potter's wheel, manual potter's wheel)
- ✧ Woodworking (bamboo work, horse figurine, puzzle, key ring)
- ✧ Wood painting (Kokeshi dolls, yo-yo, Ema - temple votive tablet),
- ✧ Mochitsuki : Use of mortar and pestle to pound rice from the village and then eat the freshly made mochi.
- ✧ Soba : noodles made from buckwheat grown in Tono
- ✧ Old stories told by local people
- ✧ Fishing: in Tono swamp, catch your fish, sprinkle it with salt and cook it on charcoal to eat it.

Return by shinkansen to Tokyo at the end of the day.



We are here to help you plan and **achieve your wishes**.
We can shorten or extend your stay, or add other destinations.

Do you enjoy freedom and **lack of constraints**?
We can leave you with a personalized list of interesting activities and locations, giving you the freedom to wander around as you please during your stay.

Do you want a bulletproof plan and **hassle-free getaway**?
We can arrange everything for you in advance, whether it be reserving activities, luggage shipments, car rental or guided tours, and more.

Feel free to contact us for a **personalized itinerary**