

MRS Gunma Vacations

Three Mountains of Gunma

8-Day Tour

*This is our most comprehensive tour, comprising the best sightseeing Gunma has to offer and stays at both Kiyomizu & Mitsuba House.
See the six tour themes on our website for other options.*

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Foothills of Mt. Haruna

Breakfast at Kiyomizu → Japanese Gardens & Samurai House → Tombs and Statues → Picnic Lunch → Samurai & Ninja Dressing → Dinner → Onsen → Return to Kiyomizu

Day 2 Mt. Haruna

Breakfast at Kiyomizu → Ninja Museum → Lunch → Jōmon Statue Workshop → Castle Grounds Walk or Railway Cycling → Dinner & Onsen → Return to Kiyomizu

Day 3 Mt. Haruna & Ikaho

Breakfast at Kiyomizu → Kokeshi Doll Making & Museum → Traditional Crafts Shop → Lunch → Temple → Cars, Dolls and Toy Museum → Mountain Onsen Village → Dinner → Return to Kiyomizu

Day 4 Mt. Akagi

Breakfast at Kiyomizu → Hiking or lake walk → Shrine → Lunch → Flower Park → Dinner & Onsen → Return to Kiyomizu

Day 5 Mt. Haruna

Breakfast at Kiyomizu → Mountain Shrine, Lake & Gondola ride → Lunch → Onsen Village → Sweets Factory → Dinner → Check in at Mitsuba

Day 6 Mt. Miyogi

Breakfast at Mitsuba → Mountain shrines → Onsen & Lunch → Silk Mill → Traditional Food Factory → Onsen → Return to Mitsuba

Day 7 Mt. Miyogi & Karuizawa

Breakfast at Kiyomizu → Lake and Bridges → Museum → Lunch → Waterfalls → Shopping Center → Return to Mitsuba

Day 8 Foothills of Mt. Miyogi

Breakfast at Kiyomizu → Railroad Theme Park → Lunch → Onsen Village → Dinner → Return to Mitsuba

Tour Details	
Description	<p>Enjoy a mix of modern and ancient nature and culture in the center of Japan, Gunma.</p> <p>This private tour is based at a historic villa in a castle town, Kiyomizu House, and another in a riverside onsen village, Mitsuba House. Gunma is affectionately called the “Bellybutton of Japan”.</p> <p>This lush flatland is encircled by a ring of mountains, with the three most prominent being Mt. Miyogi, Mt. Haruna (Haruna Fuji) and Mt. Asama. These focal points of the tour allow you to enjoy a range of activities, depending on your interests, around the themes of: Healing Waters; Flowers and Foliage; Sacred Sites; Kings, Castles and Silk; Art; and Family Fun.</p> <p>This region provides a multitude of activities to suit the interest of guests of all ages. We can tailor-make your itinerary and adjust it throughout the tour.</p>
Availability	Year round

Lodging	Kiyomizu House	This historical villa, at the main entry road to the castle, is surrounded by gardens, museums, mountains, spiritual and nature sites. Castle-size home with timber sourced from all the mountains of Gunma. Massive interior with fun and food in mind: Everything from table tennis to wine coolers
	Mitsuba House	Located in one of Japan's most historic onsen villages, this elegant villa was built at the peak of the Bubble Economy in the 1970s with the finest of materials and sacred 'miyadaiku' carpentry. While maintaining its original structure, Mitsuba has recently been renovated and fitted with modern facilities for the ultimate comfort of our guests.
Itinerary Details		
Arrival	Travel to Takasaki, Gunma	For taxi pick up: JR Annaka-Haruna Shinkansen Station For car rental: JR Takasaki Station When driving your car: Go directly to Kiyomizu House Check in: 4~7pm Dinner options: BBQ, Nabe, Bento, Self-prepared, Catered, Onsen
Day 1	Foothills of Mt. Haruna	
Sightseeing by	Kyoto-Style	Enjoy a quiet stroll through an

Kiyomizu	Gardens & Samurai Building	<p>iconic castle garden right next to Kiyomizu.</p> <p>Enjoy the pond with carp, moss-lined paths, kura storage house, massive red pine and other trees which can be seen from Kiyomizu House.</p>
	Tombs & Statues, Farmer's Market	<p>Explore two tombs, one with terracotta haniwa statues of objects representing everyday life that were used in king's tombs, and the other keyhole shaped tomb covered in sasa bamboo. Enjoy the majestic 360 degree view of the mountains encircling Gunma, then enter the tumulus and view the stone boat-shaped tomb. The museum offers crafts and an extensive collection of artifacts.</p>
Lunch		
Sightseeing by Kiyomizu	Minowa Castle Grounds	<p>Feel the magnitude of the warring powers of the 1500s in this massive 47 hectare (116 acre) expanse at the foothills of Mt. Haruna which offers a strategic view of both Takasaki and Maebashi cities from this 30m hilltop.</p> <p>Although the main castle tower is not standing, visitors can enjoy hiking throughout the paths, deep moats and take commemorative photos at the reconstructed gate, bridge, massive well and peace monuments.</p>
Activities at Kiyomizu	Period Dressing	<p>Dress as a samurai heading to the castle, a ninja and in a hot spring yukata to head to the onsen</p>

Dinner	Traditional Japanese Meal	Dine in your period attire in an elegant Japanese-style private room and take photos in the scenic garden
Option	Lake Narusawa	Early morning walk around Lake Narusawa with panoramic views of Mt Haruna's mountain range and Takasaki. Start your last vacation day with a breakfast picnic. 5 min drive from Kiyomizu House.
Day 2	Mt Haruna	
Higashi-Agatsuma	Ninja Museum	This participatory museum houses Japan's largest collection of ninja tools and offers modern activities for all to enjoy.
	Jōmon Era Heart-Shaped Clay Figure Workshop	Make earthenware figurines that were placed in Jōmon era tombs
Lunch		
Higashi-Agatsuma	Castle Ruins	Enjoy an Indiana Jones-like adventure at the Iwabitsu Castle Ruins grounds
	Railway tracks bike ride @ Dam	Ride a bike "A-Gattan" attached to railway tracks that are no longer in use while enjoying the scenery of Yamba Dam
Dinner, Onsen, Return to Kiyomizu		
Day 3	Mt Haruna Arts and Crafts	
Activities in Shinto	Kokeshi Dolls	Make your own souvenir at the Usaburo.

		View a huge collection of dolls in the gift shop and museum
	Traditional Crafts	View a huge selection of traditional cloth, wooden and ceramic crafts, used kimono, dolls and more. Walk through a tunnel of hanging silk cranes (in the Guinness Book of World Records)
Lunch		
	Mizusawa Kannon Temple	Explore a large temple complex with several activities to engage in: Push the lucky wheel, view a museum collection of sacred statues, light incense at the jizō statues and get your fortune
	Toy, Doll & Car Museum	Travel back in time to the Showa Era (1926-89) and enjoy room after room of thematic fun. Make your own doll at the end.
Dinner, Onsen, Return to Kiyomizu		
Day 4	Mt Akagi	
	Lake & Caldera	Walk around Lake Onuma or hike 30min up Jizodake Peak to a spectacular view of the two lakes in the caldera. Or, 30min 1.6km walk around Lake Konuma. Unique alpine vegetation.
	Akagi Shrine	Stunning vermilion red lakeside shrine and bridge make for memorable photographs. Very popular site.
Lunch		

Afternoon Options	Flower Park	This theme park offers beautifully manicured gardens with something to enjoy in each season. The illumination in the evenings of November and December are particularly spectacular.
	Caribbean Beach	Unlike any indoor water park I've ever been to. If you want to pass on the Flower Park and enjoy some indoor play, this resort can be enjoyed by all ages year round. Water slides, river pool, waves and beach, lap pool and dining area where you can eat in your wet swimsuit!
	Keizōji Park	Fantastic park with lush nature, elevated railed bicycles, roller coaster and even a ferris wheel with a view of Mt. Akagi
Takasaki Option in lieu of Mt. Akagi Activities	Byakue Dai-Kannon Statue Kannon Caves Japanese Gardens	Admire the majestic white statue from afar and climb the stairway to the top for a glorious view of Takasaki ~ Insides filled with sacred statues and artwork.
	Daruma Atelier & Temple	Huge variety of Daruma good luck dolls and Maneki-neko Welcome cats in the gift shop of Daimonya. Make a reservation to paint the tortoise and crane on your own doll alongside a master craftsman in the private atelier. Visit the daruma temple, Shorinzan which houses a museum and discarded daruma waiting for purification in the next fire ceremony. Early morning Zen practice available.
Dinner, Hot Spring Bath and return to Kiyomizu House		

Day 5	Mt Haruna	
Sightseeing & Activities	Lake & Mt. Haruna	Enjoy a scenic drive up to the Fuji-shaped Mt. Haruna for a visit to one of the most beloved mountain shrines by the Japanese. Here, guests can enjoy a multitude of activities in 2 central areas
Haruna	Haruna Shrine	Feel the purity of the air as you walk up the 700m path to the 1400y old shrine lined with rock formations, sacred statues and even a waterfall.
	Lake Haruna	Enjoy a gorgeous view of the lake with the reflection of the symmetrical Haruna Fuji, a conical projection resembling Mt. Fuji. Rent a pedal swan boat or row boat, take a horse-drawn carriage ride, or zoom around on funny bikes you can rent for your small children. Something for all!
Lunch		
Haruna	Mt Haruna (Haruna Fuji)	Enjoy the area of Mt. Haruna, take 60min hike up and/or gondola ride up Haruna Fuji. Explore the mountain-top shrine and enjoy majestic views from the top of this dormant volcano.
Takasaki	Nippon Silk Center	A 10 min drive from Kiyomizu House. Lovely Japanese-style buildings houses an expansive permanent and seasonal collections of silk making and kimonos that are a visual treat. Cocoon craft making classes available. Reservations and Japanese necessary.

Dinner, Hot Spring Bath and check-in at Mitsuba House		
Day 6	Mt Miyogi	
Tomioka	Miyogi Shrine	It is little known that this imperial mountain shrine is the higher ranking sister to the popular (and crowded) Nikko Toshōgu. Jaw-dropping views, stunning architecture, majestic pathways and imperial wall. It's shocking that rarely will you see more than 10 people here when you visit.
	Nakanodake Shrine & the Golden Statue of the God of Wealth	7km up the windy path at the edge of Mt. Miyogi leads you to Nakanodake Shrine, founded by Kūkai (posthumously Kōbō Daishi) the famed monk who founded the monastic village of Kōya-san and brought the Shigon (esoteric) sect of Buddhism to Japan. You will be greeted at the entrance of this mountain shrine by Daikokusama, the God of Wealth, a massive 20m tall golden statue. Truly a marvel to behold.
Shimonita	Sakura no Sato Park	Even if the pink blossoms are not in bloom, the walk through the paths anytime of year with the backdrop of the rugged cliffs of Mt. Miyogi is worth the visit.
Lunch		
Tomioka	Silk Mill	A collaboration between the French and Japanese to improve mechanical silk production. Learn how this Meiji Era preserved mill sparked the Industrial Revolution and put Japan on the global map as an economic powerhouse.

		Designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2016.
Kanra	Food Factory	Watch how the super health food, konyaku, is made and sample a wide variety of dishes made from this gelatinous food. Definitely an experience you can talk about for a lifetime.
Options	Michi no Eki Kanra	Produce market, gift shop and food court in historical buildings.
	Rakuzanen Castle Grounds	Lovely rolling hills that seem to glide into the mountain-line backdrop. Enjoy macha green tea in the tea house.
	Museum of Natural History & Park	You don't have to understand Japanese to enjoy the language of nature. Moving dinosaurs, chirping birds, the evolution of humans and many hands-on activities. Huge park and playgrounds on the property. Magnificent view of Mt. Miyogi. One of our little guests loved this place so much he made us come here every day of their 4-day trip!
Day 7	Mt Miyogi	
	Lake Usui	The most beautiful lake I've seen in Japan. Iconic red iron bridges, rolling hills, gorgeous sunset, powerful dam. Lake Usui is the ideal visit during your tour.
	Megane Bridge	Megane Bridge, the tallest arched brick bridge in Japan. Enjoy a forest-like walk with the rushing sounds of water as you approach this masterpiece reminiscent of

		Roman aqueducts.
Option	Apt Road & Nakasendo Trail	6km walk along what was once a thriving railway for the silk industry. Walk across the Megane Bridge, through 10 tunnels and to a Nakasendo post. This historic walk through a national park just might become the highlight of your trip. End at Toge-no-Yu onsen and enjoy a mineral bath to soothe your tired muscles.
Lunch		
	Shiraito Waterfall	Be greeted by a span of cascading strings of water at the end of a cul de sac. This unique structure gives it its name “White Strings Waterfall” (Shiraito no Taki) It is said that the water moves slowly underground for 7 years before emerging at the top of the ledge. Touching this cool water and breathing the minus eon air and your body is immediately refreshed.
	Senju Hiroshi Museum	About a 10 min drive from Karuizawa’s shopping plaza, this one-of-a-kind blend of nature and art is not to be missed.
Karuizawa, Nagano	Prince Shopping Plaza & Ski Resort	This premiere resort town in Japan often comes with prohibitive price tags. Take advantage of staying at the low-cost Gunma and taking a day trip to this fantastic area. The outdoor walkways of the plaza share haute couture, show dogs and grassy slopes with a central pond and mountain backdrop. If you are traveling via shinkansen,

		why not end your trip here as the station is right at the plaza and ski resort.
Day 8		
Annaka	Usui-Tōge Railway Heritage Park	Railway plays an important role in Japanese culture. Enjoy riding on and exploring trains that used to travel the Apt Railway. Indoor and outdoor.
Lunch		
Isobe	Onsen Village	Stroll through this quaint riverside hot spring village while enjoying mineral water cookie factories and shops and foot baths. Isobe has a long history, and is known as the location where the onsen mark originated.
Option	Sand Bath Spa	Unique spa treatment that combines sand, salts and mineral water in an exquisite healing atmosphere. Wrapped in a cotton yukata robe, you will enjoy a variety of herb teas and snacks that promote detox. Reservations required, 4 per hour. Inquire early if you are interested.
Departure	Mitsuba House Check Out	By 9am. Optional Breakfast Let us know your travel plans and we'll help you to get to your destination.
Additional Day		
Matsumoto, Nagano	Matsumoto Castle	It's a 2h drive from Mitsuba House, but worth the trip if you have time. This rare original castle structure is absolutely stunning,

		especially during the cherry blossom season.
Seasonal Activities		
Jan-March	Skiing & Snowboarding	There are 20+ ski resorts within a 1 1/2 h drive of Kiyomizu House. Ski or snowboard during the day, and enjoy a snow-free evening and early morning. You get the best of both worlds by staying in Takaski where snow rarely stays on the ground.
March	Plum Blossom Festival	Kiyomizu House is surrounded by plum trees, and the largest grove in Kanto is just a 5 min drive away. The hillsides cascading in pinks and whites offer a view similar to the sakura season, with the blossoms generally lasting longer.
Late March - Early April	Cherry Blossoms ~ Sakura Season!	The neighborhood park offers a cherry tree lined river walkway as well as a 360 degree circle of blossoms around a huge grass field. So few people, even at the peak. This is Gunma ~ See flowers, not people!
Mid April - Early May	Shibazakura Park	Swirlsof phlox moss “shibazakura” in cute heart shapes and other fanciful designs adorn the hillside a 5 min drive from Kiyomizu House.
Late May - June	Spring Foliage	Patches of bright green
Mid-Late October	Koizumi Cosmos Festival	Millions of beautiful flowers with the vermilion Koizumi Inari gate in the backdrop. The perfect Instagram moment!

Late October - Mid November	Fall Foliage Illumination at Kyu-Shimoda-tei Gardens	The cluster of about 15 massive maple trees is stunning during the day, and jaw dropping during the week-long illumination period. Lucky Kiyomizu guests need only stroll 3 min from their lodging to enjoy this spectacular sight. When the red leaves fall and make a carpet that blends seamlessly into the branches. Exact dates vary. Please inquire.
Most of December	Lake Haruna Illumination Festival	Over half a million festively shaped lights sparkle in the clear winter sky in the high elevation. Lazer lake show and occasional fireworks display
Events		
Last Sunday in October	Minowa Castle Festival	Witness reenactments of a the samurai procession to the castle in preparation for battle, as well as their skillful movements when engaging with the enemy
October	Kitsune no Oyome-iri (Fox Wedding Festival)	The ancients believed that at times a person could be possessed by a fox, and the way to appease it would be to perform a marriage ceremony with its host. This
October	Misato Fall Music Festival	Misato City Hall & Kyu-Shimoda-tei Japanese Gardens & Samurai House (next to Kiyomizu House) Concert, games, food stall, tea ceremony
October	Kamitsukenosato Kofun (Tombs) Festival	Enjoy a reenactment of the king's ritual, make haniwa and , see over 300,000 cosmos flowers sway in the autumn breeze with a majestic

		backdrop of Gunma's mountains Museum entry free on this date. Ask for details.
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MRS Gunma Tours & Retreats

- Packages include all three fees: Lodging, Meals & Onsen, and Guide & Cultural Experiences.
- Please let us know your travel plans and we will calculate the package for you.

Contact Us

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Thank you for considering a vacation with us in beautiful Gunma.

We're delighted to help you enjoy a trip of a lifetime.

Please don't hesitate to let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

My most kind regards,

Renée

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