

MRS Gunma Vacations

in the Heart of Japan

- *Private Luxury Villa Lodging – only for Independent Travelers*
- *Fun, Relaxing & Worry-Free Tours & Retreat Packages*

We offer luxury private villa lodging and self-guided tour support for those with basic knowledge of Japanese and an adventurous heart. For those seeking a total care vacation with lots of cultural experiences, time in nature or family fun, our services provide an excellent balance of privacy and activities in a safe, non-crowded environment.

About Gunma, Mitsuba House & Kiyomizu House

Beauty, Healing, Connections

- Gunma Prefecture is like a large artisans' village: Museums, ateliers, shrines and temples can be found throughout, and Kiyomizu and Mitsuba are in themselves embodiments of Japanese art. These historic properties were renovated with the needs of vacationers in mind, yet maintain the glory of their original architecture.
- Immerse yourself in nature and culture. The crane-shaped Gunma is located right in the center of Japan. It's known for hot spring spa wellness retreats, breathtaking mountains, fresh fruits and vegetables, and, thanks to the long silk history, kind and hard-working women.
- A MRS Gunma Vacation is ideal for a family or small group, and guests can enjoy all the best Japan has to offer in about a week's stay without a rail pass or using public transportation.

Travel with Peace of Mind

Safe ~ Clean ~ Healing

- During this pandemic, we have learned that leisure and connecting with family and friends is more important than ever.

- MRS Gunma Vacations offers an opportunity to engage with a peaceful culture while creating deeper bonds with yourself and those you care about most in a private setting.
- Gunma is known as a healing region, and while its nature and offerings are of top quality, it is rarely crowded.
- We welcome you to Gunma, and support your needs to relax, rejuvenate and connect.

Complete Care Vacation

Lodging + Local Guide + Onsen + All Meals = Carefree Vacation

- While Kiyomizu & Mitsuba Houses are available for lodging-only guests, we also offer complete vacation care services so you can enjoy the best Japan has to offer, stress-free.
 - Your host & guide, Renée, communicates with you prior to your arrival to create a general activities and meal plan to suit your needs and wishes.
 - During your stay, our flexibility allows us to make necessary adjustments to our schedule and meals to suit how you are feeling during your travels.
- Who better to explore the culture and nature-rich region with than the owners? Motoyasu & Renée Sawazaki (aka MRS Gunma) welcome their guests as they would their own family, and lovingly escort them to magnificent places while allowing quiet time so each can absorb their precious experience.
- Have your own private vacation home with the peace of mind knowing there is an interpreter and guide who will make sure you are well-fed and enjoy various activities at a pace that leaves you rejuvenated.
- This is the unique approach to vacationing that we at MRS Gunma take. We welcome you warmly to our homes in the heart of Japan.

Kiyomizu House ~ A Massive Villa in a Castle Town ~

- 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
- Learn about and experience the true meaning and life of samurai and ninja and silk history of this region at the junction of the Nakasendō and Mikuni Kaidō Trails

Mitsuba House ~ A Luxury Villa in an Onsen Town ~

- Modern resort villa with the feel of traditional zen. Enjoy the spacious ryokan-like home with spectacular mountain views from inside and the covered terrace
- Stroll to a famous hot spring village in your yukata robe and feel like royalty
- Learn and experience how Japanese use mineral waters to promote vibrant health

Private & Safe: COVID-19 Health & Safety Measures

We are Committed to Cleanliness and your Health

- Impeccably clean and sanitized, spacious and well-ventilated private lodging.
 - Touch points: Light switches, toilets, faucets, remote controls, kitchen appliance doors, etc. are sanitized throughout the trip.
 - No guests, hosts or related staff are known to have contracted COVID-19 (as of June 2022)
- Eat in the privacy of your vacation home, enjoy a picnic in nature, private room of a restaurant or spacious eating area of a hot spring spa
- Social distancing sightseeing: Visit amazing sites with very little crowds

- Maximum 8 guests per group, 2 people per bedroom (with the exception of small children)
- Your hosts and cultural experience guides adhere to social distancing, mask-wearing, hand and facilities sanitation requirements.
- No public transportation required during your tour
- Tour taxis are thoroughly sanitized and there is a plastic shield between the driver and passengers
- Regular temperature checks are done for your hosts and guests throughout the trip
- Hand sanitation and masks are readily available for guest use throughout the trip

MRS Gunma Touring & Retreat Style

- MRS Gunma Vacations focus on deep exploration at a non-rushed pace so you can really get to know the land & culture of one spectacular region
- Eat both homestyle and gourmet meals
- Interact with locals and engage in cultural experiences
- Enjoy your vacation with those you know well
- Avoid the common pitfalls of a tour
 - Spending too much time traveling from location to location
 - Feeling rushed
 - Little time focused on cultural content
 - Not eating enough, the right foods, or at the necessary time

MRS Gunma Vacation Highlights

- Lodging in two distinctly unique historical villas, one in a Castle Town & the other in an Onsen Village

- Rejuvenate: Bathe in mineral waters and take nature walks with mountain backdrops
- Enjoy local cuisine with opportunities to go to markets, and options to cook with your host or chef
- Experience both classic & modern culture: Gunma his home to both nationally acclaimed shrines and mountains, museums and sacred art, as well as has a digital festival experience, fashion centers, state-of-the-art theaters, massive IT stores and more
- Family-friendly and Inclusive
 - We have supported vacations for expecting mothers to 101!
 - Although we cannot be classified as barrier-free due to the unalterable classic architecture structure of the villas, we have accommodated and escorted guests in wheelchairs and a wide-range of mental and physical abilities.

Your Hosts & Guides

Motoyasu & Renée Sawazaki (aka MRS Gunma), owners of Kiyomizu & Mitsuba Houses since 2016

Born in Gunma and educated in Tokyo, Motoyasu worked in the hot spring resort linens business as a truck driver and knows the mountains of Gunma like the back of his hand. He's an amazing cook and enjoys making homestyle meals for his guests. His passions are skiing and swimming with his family, but now he gets most of his exercise from taking care of the homes and gardens.

Born and raised in a health food and camping-loving family in northern California, Renée holds an MA in Teaching and studied abroad in historic regions of France. Since 1991, she has lived in some of the most sacred areas of Japan: Northern Kyushu, Koyasan and Gunma. For over 28 years she worked as an educator in language, culture and tourism, and now applies what she has learned when hosting guests.

- Renée’s specialty is relaxation and enjoying nature and culture. Engage with the culture, learn interesting facts, meet specialists, and have time to absorb the experience.
- She tailor-designs your trip to fit your interests and needs
 - Meal planning
 - Guide at local sites
 - Coordination and interpretation for cultural experiences

Tour & Retreat Information	
Group type	Family, Private group, Expat & Inbound guests
Age range	All ages welcome
Group size	Solo ~8 guests
Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activities adjusted to guest abilities ● Guests of all mental and physical abilities welcome
Local Guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● American ● 30y+ experience living in Japan ● Fluent in English, Japanese and French
Included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lodging at luxury villas with full amenities (Laundry, parking, WiFi, kitchen, terrace, etc) ● All meals, snacks & non-alcohol drinks ● Local Guide & Interpreter ● Cultural Experiences ● Onsen mineral baths
Not Included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Transportation to and from Takasaki, Gunma ● Local transportation: Guests’ own car, rental car or private tour taxi ● Travelers Insurance ● Alcohol and food beyond the travel budget ● Certain Cultural Experiences & Adventure Sports

Lodging	<p>Private luxury villas in Gunma</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitsuba House, Isobe Onsen in Annaka • Kiyomizu House, Misato Onsen & Minowa Castle town in Takasaki
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From homestyle to kaiseki formal dining • Gunma is known for high-quality chicken, eggs, wheat, fresh seasonal fruits & vegetables and health foods like leeks, shiitake and konyaku • Inform of any food allergies at booking • Gunma is known for soba (buckwheat) noodles. Please check for buckwheat allergy prior to your departure. • Strict vegetarian, vegan & gluten-free diet guests will not be able to enjoy the same foods as is generally provided. Although we make an effort to fulfill guest food preference requests, as trace wheat and fish is in soy sauce and dashi broth, chefs cannot provide strict vegetarian, vegan or gluten-free meals. • International foods can be included if guests find 100% Japanese is too much
Categories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture Exploration • Family Fun • Meditation with Nature
Specialties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Onsen: Mineral Waters, Sand & Steam • Nature Walks by Water • Sacred Sites: Shrines, Temples & Tombs • Castles: Walks, Samurai & Ninja Experiences • Silk and Kimonos • Japanese Art Experiences • Japanese Food Experiences • Amusement & Play Parks
Destinations	<p>【Gunma】</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isobe Onsen • Mt. Miyogi & Nakasendō Apt Trail • Misato Castle & Onsen Town • Takasaki • Tomioka • Mt. Haruna & Ikaho Onsen

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mt. Akagi ● Agatsuma ● Kusatsu Onsen (extended tour) ● Minakami Onsen (extended tour) <p>【Nagano】</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Karuizawa ● Matsumoto Castle (extended tour)
Cultural Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hot Springs Yukata, Samurai & Ninja Dressing ● Kirie Art Making ● Kokeshi Doll Making ● Daruma Doll Making ● Koto Playing Experience ● Soba Noodles Making
Relaxation & Nature Sightseeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Onsen: Footbaths, Mineral Baths & Sand Bath Spa ● Japanese Gardens ● Lake Walks ● Castle Grounds Walks ● Paved Railroad Walk ● Forest Walks ● Mountain Gondola
Cultural Sightseeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Museums ● Factory Visits ● Sacred Sites ● Tombs ● Caves
Shopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Traditional Japanese Crafts ● Produce Markets ● Shopping Centers
Family Fun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Museum of Natural History ● Safari Park ● Train Museum ● Digital Festival Experience ● Parks with large playgrounds ● Fruit Picking
Seasonal Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Skiing & Snowboarding ● Fruit Picking

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Flower Viewing ● Festivals & Events
Adventure Sports & Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not a MRS Gunma specialty, but very popular in Gunma. We can introduce you to specialists & services. ● Electric Bicycle Tour ● Rafting & Canyoning ● Fishing ● Golf ● Hiking ● Pedal Boating
Licenses & Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Minpaku Private Lodging License for Kiyomizu House & Mitsuba House ● Food Serving License ● Local Guide: Ten years university research & teaching experience in tourism & hospitality. Hosting & guide experience since 2016 ● Education & Research: Nearly 30 years as a classroom teacher, teacher trainer, program developer, author and coach ● Eastern & Western Therapy: 4 years US & Japan-Based Practitioner & Internship Studies ● Yoga Instructor: Certificate in Rainbow Kids & Family Yoga
Package Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Please inquire for an estimate. ● Custom package based on your number of guests, length of stay, and activities. ● Gunma is known to offer high quality food and services at the lowest prices in Japan. ● Our costs are significantly lower than all-inclusive Golden Route tours with larger group sizes & hotel rooms vs. our luxury homes. ● Sample budget: See below
Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Website Message: https://en.mrsgunma.com/contact ● Email: mrs.gunma@gmail.com ● Phone: +81 (0)70-3172-2110 ● SNS Call or Message: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Messenger ID: renee.sawazaki

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ LINE ID: reneesawazaki ○ WhatsApp number: +81 70-3172-2110
Booking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Directly by contacting Renée at MRS Gunma ● Through one of our Partner Travel Agents

Prior to making your reservation, please read the following documents. By making a reservation, you automatically agree to the terms stated.

- Mitsuba and/or Kiyomizu House Guides and Rules
- Cancellation Policy
- User Agreement

Booking a Stay or a Tour

Lodging-Only Stay

- Fees: 10,000JPY/guest/night Incl tax. Min fee: 4 guests
- Recommended for those who have at least a basic level of spoken Japanese, prefer self-guided sightseeing and cultural experiences, and want to plan their own meals at the villas or out.
- Available to larger group sizes than MRS Gunma Vacations support
 - Mitsuba House: Max 12 guests
 - Kiyomizu House: Max 16 guests
- Lodging services
 - Tea / Coffee / Filtered water
 - Welcome cookies, waffles, snacks, etc.
 - Fully stocked kitchen/dining/covered terrace for gas BBQ, electric nabe and other at-home meals
 - Towels, toothbrush and onsen bags for at home and day trip use. Bath amenities at the home and onsens
 - Optional meal service
- Book directly through MRS Gunma, one of our Partner Travel Agents, or through your preferred Online Travel Agency: Airbnb, Expedia, Hotels, Booking, Rakuten Travel, Trip Advisor
- Although MRS Gunma Vacation services can be added to an existing OTA reservation, to ensure availability, we recommend booking the lodging and vacation services together.

Tour & 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.
- See Fee Charts below for a general idea of
- For late check in or early departure, we will add lodging without the meal/guide services. Extra meal option available.
- Please inquire if you are an independent traveler who would like to book the Meal/Guide plan separately for specific days
- As feeding our guests generously is an important part of our guide services, please note that the Meal & Guide fees must both be included in your package.
- No additional tips, cleaning fees, resort fees, guide expenses, etc are necessary.

Tour & Retreat Fees

(Tax included. Subject to change, please confirm at reservation)

Category	Fee JPY Tax Incl	Details
Lodging	10,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Per guest, per night for Kiyomizu & Mitsuba Houses • 2y + • Min 4 guests fee
Meals & Onsen	10,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Per guest, per day • 3 Meals/day, Snacks, Non-alcoholic beverages • Hot Springs entrance fees • Private hot springs room fee extra • 2y +
Guide & Cultural Experiences	24,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Per group, per day • Cultural Experiences • Guide for walking & nearby sightseeing tours

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guests responsible for transportation (own car, rental car or taxi)• Renée drives her own car
--	--	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Location & Transportation

(Direct payment to service provider)

Getting to Gunma (Approximate times)

- From Tokyo → 2h drive/highway bus, 1h Shinkansen, 2h local train ride
- From Narita Airport → 3h drive/highway bus/train ride
- From Haneda Airport → 2.5h drive/highway bus/train ride

Getting to Kiyomizu House

707-2 Nishi-Akiya, Misato-machi, Takasaki-shi Gunma-ken

- JR Annaka-Haruna Shinkansen Station + 25 min taxi ride
- JR Takasaki Station + 25 min taxi/rental car ride
- Local train station: JR Annaka Station (JR Takasaki Station transfer) + 20 min taxi ride
- Yotsuya Bus Stop (300m from Kiyomizu) 30min from JR Takasaki Station West Exit Platform 2 (Misato Eigyojyo Line)

Getting to Mitsuba House

630-1 Hitomi, Matsuida-machi, Annaka-shi, Gunma-ken

- JR Annaka-Haruna Shinkansen Station + 25 min taxi ride
- JR Takasaki Station + 35 min taxi/rental car ride
- JR Isobe Station (JR Takasaki Station transfer) + 1.6km taxi ride

Transportation during your Stay

Although there are sites around each villa that can be walked to, transportation during the trip requires either the guests' own car, taxi or rental car

Estimated Travel Expenses within Japan

(Direct payment by guests to service provider)

Category	Fee	Notes
Train from Airport	7,710 one-way	One example from Narita Airport <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 40min Skyliner to Ueno Station• 1H Hokuriku Shinkansen to Annaka-Haruna Station

Train Station Pick up & Drop Off (Kiyomizu)	5,000 one-way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JR Annaka Station (JR Shinetsu line, JR Takasaki Station transfer) • JR Annaka-Haruna Shinkansen Station
Train Station Pick up & Drop Off (Mitsuba)	5,000 one-way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JR Annaka-Haruna Shinkansen Station
Train Station Pick up & Drop Off (Mitsuba)	1,000 one-way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JR Isobe Station (JR Shinetsu line, JR Takasaki Station transfer)
Single Destination Taxi	2~10,000 round-trip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good option for one destination, ½ day excursions • Fee depends on distance from Kiyomizu & Mitsuba House
Private Tour Taxi (Kiyomizu)	21,000 / 4H Half-Day 43,000 / 8H Full-Day 6,080 / + 1H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple destinations for Gunma & Nagano sightseeing
Private Tour Taxi (Mitsuba)	21,600 / 4H Half-Day 43,600 / 8H Full-Day 6,080 / + 1H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple destinations for Gunma & Nagano sightseeing • Can include pick up at one home & drop off at the other to save on travel costs & time for guests choosing to stay at both Kiyomizu & Mitsuba House

Tour Taxi Service

- Available early morning ~ 9pm
- 1~4 guests + lap infant/toddler
- 3 medium suitcases
- English-speaking driver generally available (Not working 2 days/month)
- Renée drives her car and goes along with the taxi and can transport extra/large luggage

Rental Car

- Most non-Japanese friendly provider is Toyota Rent-a-Car at JR Takasaki Station East Side
- Renée will be at the station to greet our guests as well and they can follow her to Mitsuba or Kiyomizu (25min drive)

Payment & Cancellation Policy for Tours & Retreats

Payment Policy

- 25% non-refundable deposit required at booking
- Payment remainder due by 45 days prior to arrival
- Payment can be made via international bank transfer, phone credit card payment or PayPal.

Cancellation Policy

- 75% refund made 30-45 days prior to check in date
- 50% refund made 15-30 days prior to check in date
- No refund made within 14 days of check in date

Tour Itinerary

- Planned in advance and confirmed upon check-in
- Adaptable for various weather conditions, ages and physical abilities
- Designed for year-round enjoyment, but can also include seasonal and special events
- The Mitsuba and Kiyomizu House Guides provide detailed information about popular local sights and cultural activities

One-Week Tour Sample Itinerary

See the MRS Gunma Vacation webpage for more Options

Kiyomizu House

Day 1

- Orientation and House Tour
- Walking Tour: Kyoto-style Castle Gardens & Samurai House; Thatched-roof Water Mill
- Hot Spring onsen spa & Dinner

Day 2

- Kokeshi Doll-Making & Museum Visit
- Traditional Crafts Shop & Bakery Lunch
- Temple Visit
- Hot Spring Village Visit (Choose one)
 - Dolls & Cars Museum

- Yumeji Takehisa Museum
- Ikaho Onsen Walking Tour & Foot Bath
- Udon & Tempura Dinner

Day 3

- Sacred Mountain, Lake and Shrine Visit
 - Shrine visit: 700m nature & sacred statues path walk
 - Lunch at a traditional gift shop
 - Mountain and Lake Recreation
 - Gondola ride / Hiking to the top + mountain top shrine visit
 - Horse drawn buggy ride & Walk along the lake
 - Hot spring onsen bath
- Ninja Museum Visit
- Kyoto-style Kaiseki Dinner

Day 4

- Kirie Art Museum visit & art-making
- Kominka Street historic walk & traditional Japanese sweets at a kominka
- Mall souvenir shopping

Mitsuba House

Day 5

- Mountain Shrines & Lucky Golden Statue visit
- Lunch and Hot Spring Bath
- Afternoon options
 - UNESCO World Heritage Site Tomioka Silk Mill tour & Indian dinner
 - Konnyaku Park tour & light dinner
 - Museum of Natural History + Sushi dinner

Day 6 (Ski & Sledding option in winter)

- Lake with traditional bridges & Dam Walk
- Resort-town Tour: Museums, Waterfalls, Mega Shopping Plaza

Day 7

- Walking Tour: Onsen Village & River Walk; Visit to cookie factory; Hot spring foot bath
- Homestyle Japanese Dinner and Hot Spring Bath
 - Optional sand bath spa

Day 8

- Downtown city shopping & Lunch

What our Guests Say

In the past 5 years since we purchased Mitsuba & Kiyomizu House we have been hosting and taking to heart all of the feedback our guests have given, and made improvements accordingly. We are now at a place where we feel confident that we are offering the best services possible, and still try to learn more about our community to improve our guide services.

Some common comments these days are:

Guest: You are so energetic, Renée! Do you ever get tired?

Renée: Well, to avoid that, I eat well, get plenty of rest when necessary, and laugh a lot!

Guest: I slept like a baby. I love your fluffy futons.

Renée: We take meticulous care of our bedding, using natural disinfectants, dry completely with electric futon driers, and use RAYCOP machines for disinfectant, antiviral and house dust and dust mite cleaning. Although our homes are not in areas as humid as typical mountain cottages, we use dehumidifiers daily to reduce humidity. So, you'll find the futons and rooms in general comfortable, with no mold and only the rare appearance of an insect.

Is a MRS Gunma Vacation a good choice for you and yours?

Thanks for reading through this explanation! If this description of our offerings for a complete care cultural vacation sounds exactly like what you are looking for, I encourage you to go one step further and get to know me before making a final decision.

You'll have plenty of private and relaxation time during your stay, but we'll also be spending a substantial amount of time together. So, please subscribe to the MRS Gunma YouTube Channel to see the MRS Gunma Vacations videos as they come out, and feel free to give me an SNS call!

If you feel we have a personality match, and you have this feeling that a trip to Gunma is just what you are looking for, then we're good to go!

I look forward to hearing from you, and possibly meeting up soon. All the best, and, as the Japanese say "Yoroshiku onegaishimasu" (Wow, that's a mouthful! I'll teach you simple Japanese and shorter phrases throughout your stay.)

Renée Sawazaki, MRS Gunma Vacations Host & Guide
www.en.mrsgunma.com/vacations