



# CYCLE SHIKOKU

CYCLE JOURNEYS FOR SERIOUS CYCLISTS

- ☛ Cycle from 33 to 120km per day and explore from the **high mountains** to the sea at **Cape Ashizuri**.
- ☛ Climb the highest peak in Shikoku & Western Japan, **Mt. Ishizuchi** (1982m).
- ☛ Explore along Japan's **last pure waterway**, the magnificent **Shimanto River**.
- ☛ Soak up culture and history as you visit **ancient temples, castles** and **street scapes**.
- ☛ Stay in **Japanese Inns** & eat **delicious Japanese food**.
- ☛ Three nights in **4/5 star Ryokans/Hotels**.
- ☛ **Bilingual** tour leader.
- ☛ The roads are mostly **smooth and narrow**. Vehicle speeds on the mountain roads are 20-30 kmh making for **very safe cycling**. The bulk of the riding on the old samurai mountain roads sees very little vehicle traffic.
- ☛ The **support vehicle** can be used any time if you want a rest.
- ☛ No rail/bus sections. A **pure journey** by bicycle.

## Introduction

While exploring Shikoku in July 2004 I was elated by the possibilities. I was there because many riders who have joined us over the years on our Hokkaido Cycle tour were looking for something different.



I was captivated and thrilled by the beauty of the area and the visual delights that harked back to the history and culture of ancient Japan. After exploring Japan for over 20 years, I felt a sense

of completion at what I discovered in Shikoku.

I explored classic Asian mountain ranges; travelled through the stunning Iya Gorge with its thatch roofed houses; meandered along endless old samurai roads that seemed to wind downhill for hours; stopped in old villages that hang precariously on mountain sides and passed endless terraced rice paddies.

I found temples of the Buddhist saint, Kobo Daishi, where the sweet smell of incense lit by chanting modern day pilgrims filled the air. They were here to escape the crush of the modern world, in search of serenity and meaning in the Buddhist tradition.

From a cyclist's perspective, Shikoku has it all. Although the old roads are narrow they carry practically no traffic, and what

there is has to travel very slowly. There are climbs, and as serious cyclists, we welcome these (although as ever the sag wagon will be present!).



Some of the Inns I have chosen are redolent of ancient Japan with their wooden floors, paper doors and settings that will leave you breathless. As ever, wherever possible our chosen Inns have hot spring baths, a great treat after a day in the saddle.

Since 2004 I have run this ride twice yearly and it has soared above my expectations. The riders have been ecstatic with the beauty, the weather, the cultural interaction and the superb smooth riding on quiet rural roads. I have scheduled three tours to coincide with Japan's most cherished seasons. That is, for the Cherry blossom season in April, the spring blossoms in May and one for the autumn colours in October.

This tour combines the great historical and cultural features of this enigmatic land with some superb cycling, hiking, inspiring views, Japanese Inn style accommodation and great food. I look forward to you joining us.

John Morrell - Director



## Tour Details 2009/10

2009 April 1-11 May 11-21 Oct 19-29  
2010 Apr 7-17 May 11-21 Oct 11-21

\$AUS 5495 Ex Osaka (land Only)\* Call about air fares. **Includes:** Fully escorted; support vehicle; 10 nights accommodation twin or group share (single option POA); 9 dinners and 9 breakfasts; all transfers to and from Osaka (Kansai) airport; celebratory dinner last night; meet Osaka (Kansai) airport evening day 1.

**Not Included:** air fares; bicycles (please note we have several road bikes for hire POA); all items of a personal nature; travel insurance (compulsory); lunches; dinner or breakfast on first night in Osaka; entry fees; alcohol.

**How to Book:** Send the booking form with \$A250 deposit. All credit cards accepted. Full trip notes will then be sent which include bike prep, equipment list and other details. Please note this tour is operated through AWAY WE GO TOURS LN:2TA5460

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## TOUR OUTLINE

Please note that changes may occur in the exact route due to accommodation availability at time of booking or other unforeseen circumstances. The airline schedule and times will be confirmed when tickets are issued. When considering this trip, please take into account distances and hill climbs so as not to be disappointed.



Day 1. Ex Australia: Depart Australia/Arrive Osaka (Kansai Airport) approx 8:00 pm.  
Ex Osaka: Meet all group members at Kansai Airport and transfer to accommodation near airport.

Day 2. **Bus transfer to Iya Gorge.**

En route by bus to Shikoku we cross the famous Naruto Straits, famous for its whirlpools. We lunch in the city of Tokushima before arriving mid afternoon in the Iya Gorge. Afternoon build bikes with a little time to explore the magnificent Iya Valley.

Day 3. **Cycle 80 km**

Begin the day riding along the majestic Iya Gorge. We leave this valley with a 14 km climb where we find a small noodle house perched on the side of the mountain. From there we cruise as we ride downhill for hours on the old samurai roads, through small villages with picturesque terraced rice paddies. We have several intersections and 6 km on one major road before continuing on our back roads and onto our lakeside inn.

Day 4. **Cycle 88 km**

Today we cycle along the superb valleys of central Shikoku, past mountains and lakes, small villages and the ever present temples and old style buildings. Today the whole route is on backroads with some gradual climbing before one big climb of 9 kms at the end of the day that takes us to a ridge that will leave you breathless with its sweeping vistas of steep mountains. Tonight we stay at an Inn at the base of our climb to the summit of Mt. Ishizuchi.

Day 5. **Climb Mt Ishizuchi**

Today we rest the bikes as we embark on a 5 hour return hike to the summit of Mt Ishizuchi (1982M), the highest in Shikoku and western Japan. The views from the summit are simply stunning. This is easy to moderate walking on a formed track. We will plan the day so as to be back at our accommodation by mid afternoon, giving us the afternoon to relax or wander around the mountain area.

Day 6. **Cycle 120km**

Don't let the distance scare you. Although we have some good climbs, with one steep one of 4 km and other gradual climbs, we have about 90KM rolling downhill! The start of which is pretty fast but much of it gently rolls down river valleys. This is a superb day's riding, where you drift downhill for hours, past small villages and by crystal clear meandering streams. You will pass the ever present temples, old style farm houses, some with thatched roofs, remote farming communities, numerous terraced rice paddies and breath-taking views. The day finishes in a tiny village where we see first hand the slow gentle pace of rural Japan. Here the architecture blends with the surrounding lake and forest and provides a wonderful end to a full day in the saddle.



Day 7. **Cycle 54 km**

We start again on superb back roads as we meander down a river valley past a small town and up a 6 km climb before our final descent into a large rural city. En route we visit a historic remodelled village, showing the early methods of farming and building in Shikoku. Despite the climb, the rest of the ride is gently downhill or flat, making for a quick day's ride. This will give us time to explore our new surroundings for the afternoon. Here we have the chance to explore a bigger city and sample the delights of urban Japan after a week in the countryside.

Day 8. **Cycle 73 km**

Today our ride changes subtly as we experience life on the glittering Pacific coast of Shikoku. Here we cross paths with the pilgrims who follow the path of enlightenment of Kobo Daishi, the buddhist saint. The ride is mostly flat with some small climbs, as we travel to the farthest point on magnificent Cape Ashizuri, where we can visit one of Kobo Daishi's temples perched on a cliff top. From there we follow the coast west, past fishing villages and small beaches where we stay in a seaside Inn next to the Ocean Wildlife Reserve. After arrival, and throughout the day, you will have the opportunity to meander along one of the local beaches, have a swim if weather permits or just sit by the sparkling waters of the Pacific Ocean and observe coastal life Japanese style.

Day 9. **Cycle 84 km**

We start the day following the rugged Pacific coast. After leaving the coast we head inland to pick up the waters of the Shimanto River, reputedly Japan's last great pure river. A superb day riding along the bank of this river ensues, with its mighty mountain back drop and ever present flotilla of wooden dories. Our Inn tonight is in a small village by the river.

Day 10. **Cycle 38 km**

After an early start we depart on our last days ride, which goes gently uphill through small rural towns before descending into a large coastal city arriving here about mid day. After packing bikes away we are free to visit this ancient castle town, home of several famous samurai clan. Some shopping in the city mall and a castle visit are a must. Or maybe a visit to the shrine dedicated to sex! A big night out at a Japanese Izakaya follows to celebrate the completion of our ride.



Day 11. **To Kansai airport by coach**

We depart early morning for our coach trip to Kansai airport and departures home or extensions for further travel in Japan.

# CYCLING FITNESS

We love to sightsee and visit beautiful places but we also love the joy of riding. This is a trip for cyclists with some solid days in the saddle. The route has many climbs and some incredible descents down narrow mountain roads. Please have a close look at the route description. If you ride the Great Rides or train and ride weekly with some long rides (80-100km) thrown in, you will enjoy this ride like no other.



For those who are fit but are new to cycling, we recommend two months training program prior to the start of the ride, with some weekend rides up to 100km. Many people have joined our rides over the years, both in Japan and Australia, who have not done a lot of

cycling. However they have had the right attitude (give it a go!) and have been aware that there are some big days, and they have enjoyed the rides immensely. It is a little subjective, so again, look over the notes, talk to riding friends and give us a call to clarify any issues.

## THE INNS

Japanese Inns are wonderful and are a focal point of all our tours. They are run by friendly staff, are comfortable and add to the joy of experiencing this country. They vary in many ways from western hotels that you may be used to. The rooms have straw mat floors and 'futons' to sleep on. These are folded in the cupboards and are put out of a night time by the Inn keepers. In some instances we will have western rooms, depending on the availability of the rooms and the make up of the group. Of an evening, relax in a hot muscle soothing Japanese bath. The bathrooms also have showers.

Some of the Inns have natural hot spring baths and relaxing in their soothing waters with a beer in your hand is the best way to end a day of fun and adventure in Japan.

The meals at the Inns consist of healthy Japanese food. Most Japanese meals, based around meat, fish, or chicken are filling, healthy and delicious. Raw fish is a regular side dish, and is considered a succulent delicacy. All meals are different and the variety will add to your eating pleasure.

## DAILY ROUTINE

Breakfast will be approximately 7:30 am. On the longer days we may arrange an earlier breakfast. After breakfast our staff pack the support vehicle prior to the briefing. On some days, if riders want to leave earlier and have a separate briefing, this can be arranged.



Each morning you will be given a thorough route briefing, including maps and notes to take with you for the day. This will include basic route descriptions, points of interest and other items. The information provided in the briefing allows you to ride at your own pace. The ride is NOT a "follow me" ride, which

only works if everyone goes at the same pace, which never happens. Different riders team up and head off to enjoy the day exploring Shikoku.

The support vehicle's timetable varies daily, depending on how long the days ride is. Each day, its main aim is to reach that day's accommodation prior to the first riders. The driver will then unload the luggage and arrange rooms. A list of rooms will be left at the front desk of each Inn so as riders arrive, they can settle in. Keep in mind this is important because the hotel/Inn staff do not speak English!



Within the constraints of fulfilling this requirement, the vehicle will sweep to the back, checking on riders etc. Keep in mind that if there are breakdowns,

or other issues, on a long day, you may not see the vehicle for some time. For this reason you will be advised daily to carry your personal requirements (spare tubes, tools etc.) so as to be self sufficient and be able to enjoy the riding to the maximum.

For lunch you may decide to explore local eateries (this can be an adventure, but we encourage you to try it) or you can carry supplies with you to make lunch along the way.

Depending on your riding time, you should expect to arrive at your accommodations mid afternoon on most days, and earlier on some, giving you time to have a bath and explore the areas we visit. Dinner in the Inns is usually between 6:00 and 6:30 pm. In most Inns the baths are available for the duration of our stay, although the smaller ones may have some preparation time.

## OTHER DETAILS

### Bike Storage while Extending.

Bicycles can be stored at airports while doing non cycling extensions. Fees apply. You may also use popular local express services to send your bike on to other destinations.

### Extra Costs

Following are some current costs (as at July 2008) in Japanese yen that you can use as a guideline only. The current exchange rate is around 95 yen to the \$A dollar, but please check for an accurate rate. Be sure to keep some cash for temple/castle entry fees and souvenirs.

### Lunches:

- Noodle dishes • 500 -950
- Curry rice, Spaghetti dishes, fried rice • 550 - 1000
- Cutlets and rice with egg sauce • 500 - 750
- Sushi or Japanese take away • 350 - 2000

### Dinner in Tokyo and Osaka enroute:

- Japanese style "Izakaya" • 2500 - 3000 including drinks and a variety of small dishes such as sashimi (raw fish), chicken on sticks, rice, fish, etc.
- Japanese style at hotel. • 1000 plus. A variety of meals based on fish, chicken or other seafood.
- Western style • 2000 plus. No top end here.
- Coffee or tea in coffee shop • 300 - 400