



Japan – South Korea Cruise

June 15 – 25, 2025

Norwegian Spirit



Norwegian Spirit Facts & Figures

⚓
2022
Year Refurbished
(Built in 1998)

👥
1,972
Guest Capacity
(Double Occupancy)

📏
880ft
Overall Length

👮
904
Ship Crew

Meet the Fam



Jill

- Interested in: architecture, ancient cultures, history, nature
- Step conscious
- Better living through planning!



Kevin

- Interested in: foodie, urban experiences, technology
- Creature comfort conscious
- No plan survives first contact...



Ryan

- Interested in: sleep, gaming, anime/manga, martial arts, languages
- Temperature conscious
- There's a plan?

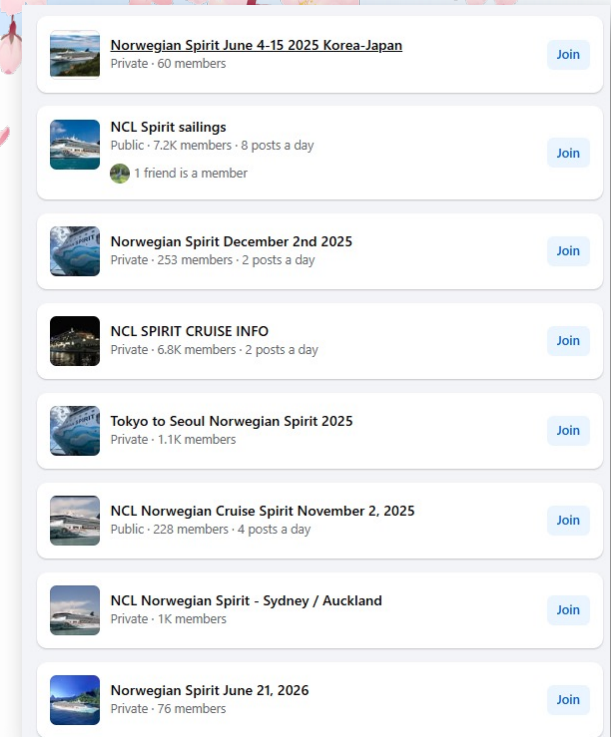


Our Itinerary

Day	Land Tours And Cruise Ports	Arrive	Depart
Sun	Tokyo, Japan	---	4:30 PM
Mon	Mount Fuji (Shimizu), Japan	7:00 AM	4:00 PM
Tue	Nagoya, Japan	7:00 AM	4:00 PM
Wed	Kyoto (Kobe), Japan	8:00 AM	7:00 PM
Thu	Kochi, Japan	7:00 AM	4:00 PM
Fri	Matsuyama, Japan	7:00 AM	5:00 PM
Sat	Beppu, Japan	9:30 AM	4:00 PM
	Kanmon Strait	---	Overnight
Sun	Sasebo, Japan	9:00 AM	6:00 PM
Mon	Jeju, South Korea	8:00 AM	4:00 PM
Tue	Seoul (Incheon), South Korea	8:00 AM	Overnight
Wed	Seoul (Incheon), South Korea (Flight Departure)	7:00 AM	---

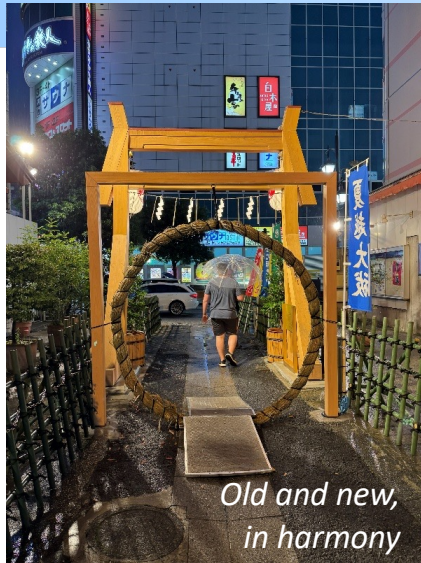
Upfront Planning

- **Booked 7 months in advance on “Travel Tuesday”**
 - Worked directly with cruise line agent... great inside knowledge of ship
 - Gave us perks because we were celebrating graduation/retirement ☺
- **Bought refundable flights... equal to cost of cruise!!**
 - Set Google Flights alert to monitor price changes
 - Twice the price dropped - 10 minute phone call to get refund for difference
 - Use airline travel center to complete visa/customs procedures
- **Spent six months learning Japanese on Duo Lingo**
 - Fun family competition but a few key phrases would have been fine
- **Joined forums to learn about ship/sailing, tours, tips**
 - ChatGPT was great for integrating interests/constraints & suggesting itineraries
 - Reddit was full of tips on taxi apps, where to eat/shop/get cash, gifting/tipping, weather...
 - Facebook groups gave alerts on pop up sales for cruise line packages + opportunity to find fellow travelers to cost share tours, past experiences, etc.
- **Downloaded the cruise line app on our phones**
 - Made specialty dining and other reservations, paid gratuities in advance
 - Requested boarding time & completed check-in / safety videos ahead
 - Consciously did not purchase much wrt dining/drinking – went ala carte
- **Excursions were \$\$\$ on board - decided to try Tours by Locals**
 - Private English-speaking guides with more variety of itineraries (customizable)
 - The same or cheaper than similar cruise ship excursions
 - Very personal – got to know our guides (starting in chat well before we arrived)
- **Activated Verizon Travel Pass & Cruise Pass on one phone**
 - Travel Pass is for when you are on shore, Cruise Pass is for when you are at sea
 - Ship wifi/app for texting on board with your party



* Tours by Locals
+ On our own
^ Ship excursion

Day 1/2 – Tokyo⁺



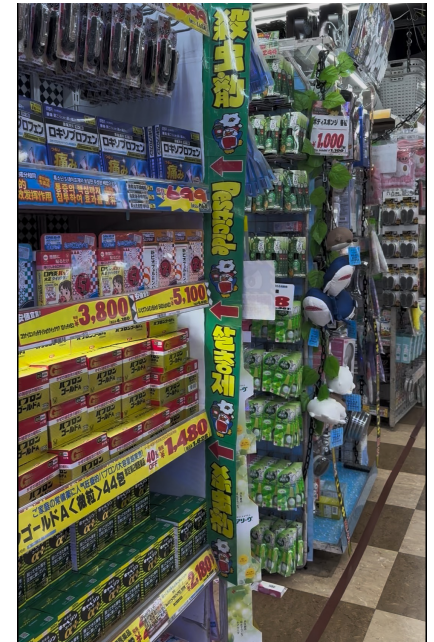
Old and new,
in harmony



Cat
Cafe



First sushi:
“Hai,” we would
like it cooked...



Akihabara & street food

Day 2 – All Aboard!



A few cruise tips:

- Buy water/soda & stow in luggage (may be limit)
- Research transportation to ship (taxi was cheapest)
- Put bag tags on before arrival at port
- Board early to explore/learn ship & get lunch
- Do muster station check-in early (REQUIRED)
- Pack carry-on with swim suits/entertainment
- Flip phones to airplane mode (or ship wifi)
- Use the app & populate your personal calendar (can find freebies, especially on first day)



Day 3 – Shimizu*



Vending
Machine 101



Toshogu Shrine



Robot waiter @ CoCo's

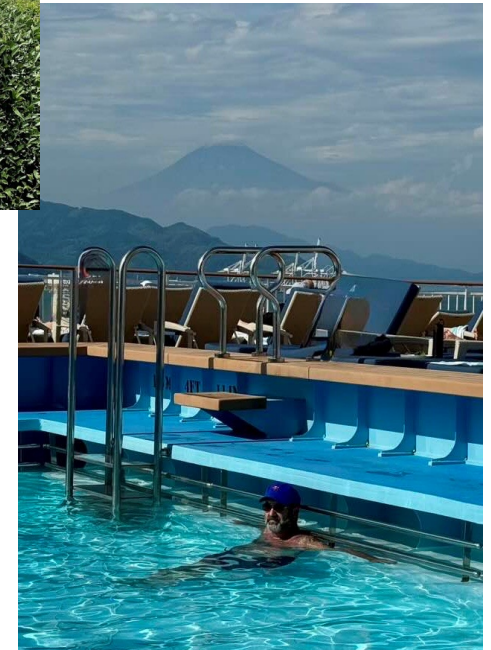
Mt Fuji black sand
beach offerings



Rare rainy season view of
Mt Fuji @ matcha tea farm



Mt Fuji @ pool-side happy hour!



Day 4 – Nagoya+



Tea Room



Shoguns' marks



Royal family rooms



Nagoya Castle

Osu Market



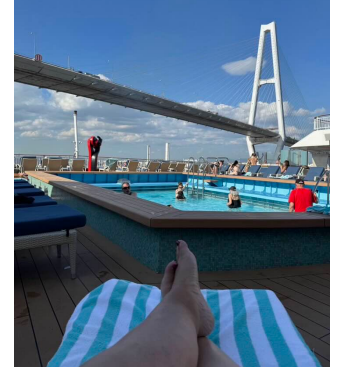
Maid Cafe



Nagoya Gardens

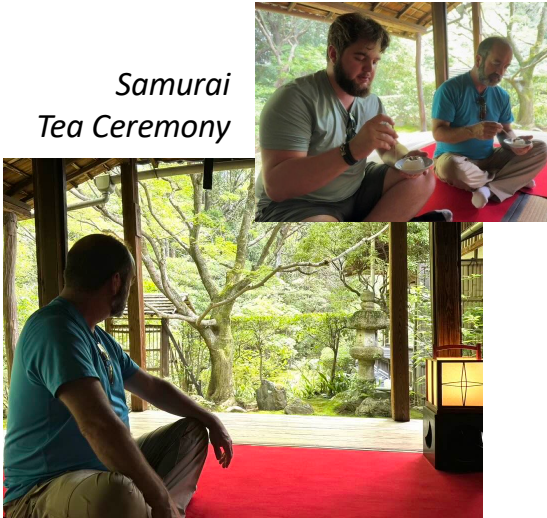


Back underway...



Day 5 – Kyoto*

Samurai
Tea Ceremony



Bamboo Forest



Fushimi Inari



13,000 steps!

Miracle Rock



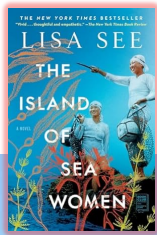
Mike



Tenryu-ji Temple garden

Day 6 – Kochi+

My
recovery
day



Sunset at sea

Guy shopping...



Kochi Castle



Conveyor belt sushi quest

Day 7 – Matsuyama+



Matsuyama Castle



Mario Kart



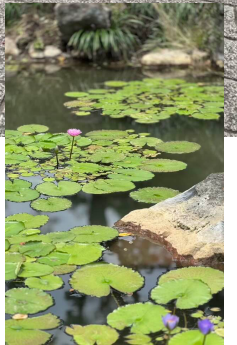
Okaido Street Arcade



Day 8 – Beppu^



Steamed
Meat
Buns



Blood Hell

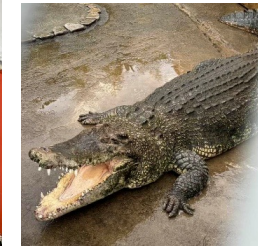
Cobalt Hell



Mud Hell



Gardens



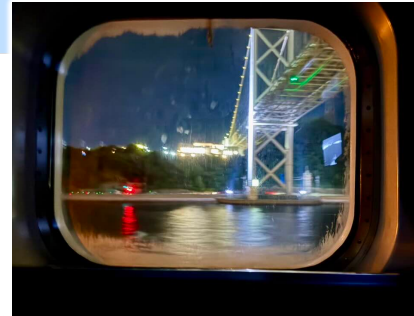
Crocodile
Hell

Day 9 – Kanmon Straits & Sasebo+

Leaving Japan



Don Quijote



Kanmon Straits



Ramen before
we go...
10/10!



Day 10 – Jeju*



Micheon Lava Tube



Jeju Folk Village



Dong Am Sa Temple

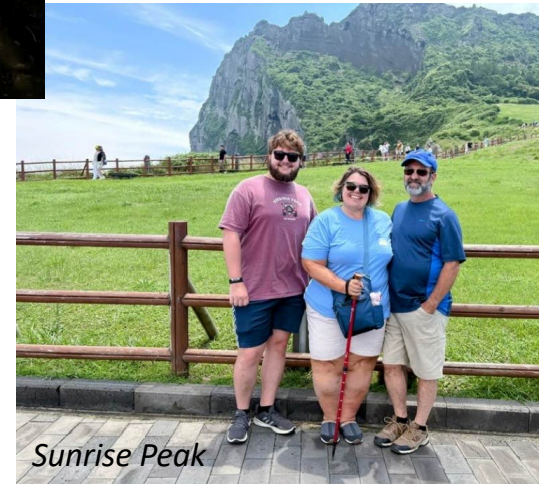


Starbucks Reserve

Kimchi



Bomal

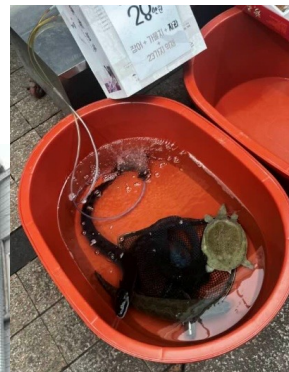


Sunrise Peak

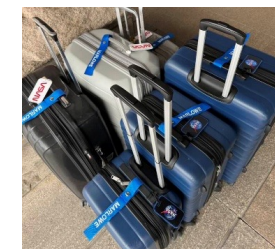
Day 11/12 – Incheon* & Disembark



Spicy Chicken!



Tis the season...



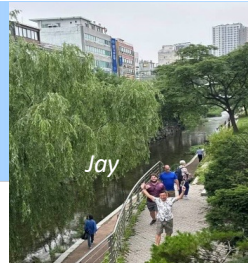
Packing & Playing

Day 13/14 – Seoul⁺

N



Gwangjang Market



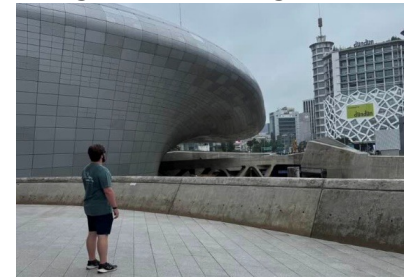
Jay



Gyeongbokgung Palace



Dongdaemun Design Plaza



Myeongdong Market



Electronics Market



Sulbing Dessert Bar

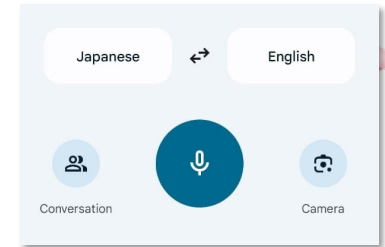
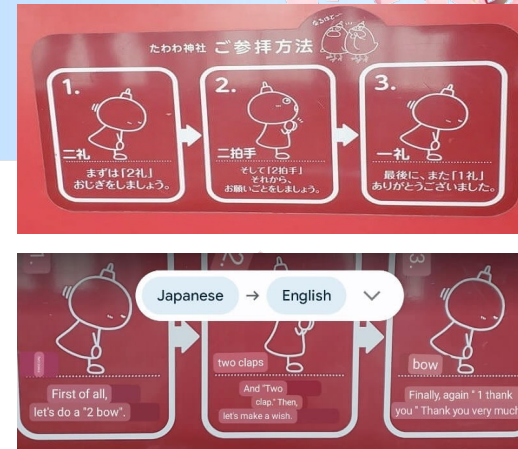


Korean BBQ

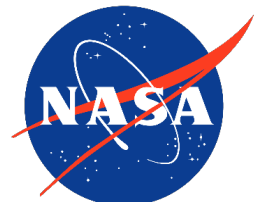


Take Aways

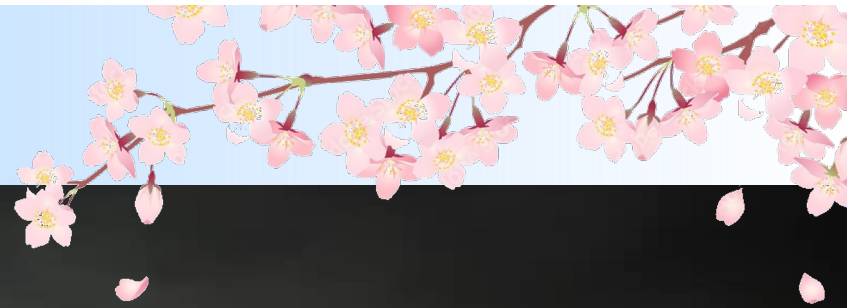
- Cruise is a great way to “sample” the region w/o having to frequently pack/unpack BUT hard to see inland destinations
- Both Japan & South Korea felt very safe & welcoming
- Doing homework ahead of time paid dividends: cash/ATMs, taxi apps, tips vs. gifts, tours, weather, shopping, etc.
- Learn a few key phrases and use Google Translate
- 10/10 for Tours by Locals – will definitely use them again
- Plan in some down time... you don't have to do it all, and will enjoy what you do more
- Build your stamina as part of your trip prep... >10K steps/day average
- Taxi apps and trains are easy (but plan extra time to find driver!)
- Reading a historical novel (vs just trip planning books) gave colorful missing context
- Blog/journal your trip as soon as you get home (helps for giving a talk later!)
- NASA fans are everywhere!



Translate
Google



Questions?



Grand Hyatt Seoul – Han River View Suite