

13 Day Luxury Cruise | Japan's Subtropical Islands with PONANT

Ha Long - Hong Kong - Ishigaki - Taketomijima - Iriomotejima - Yonagunijima - Miyakojima - Kumejima - Zamami - Naha

From **\$14,690** Typically \$14,690 pp twin share



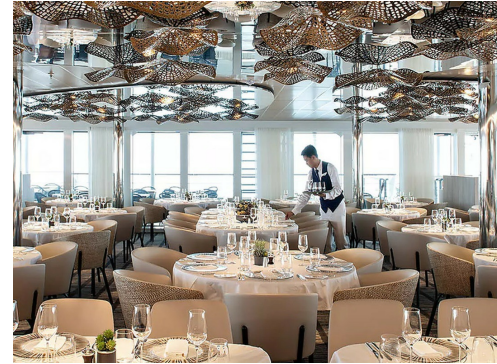
A unique expedition cruise to discover the sublime landscapes of the subtropical islands of southern Japan

Outings and shore visits in zodiac inflatables with a team of experienced naturalist guides

UNESCO World Heritage Site: Iriomotejima island

Discover beautiful beaches on the islands of Zamami and Kumejima

Description



With featured guest Maud Fontenoy, sailor and ambassador to the Ministry of National Education and Youth for education at sea and sea classes.

Embarking on Ponant's trip to Japan's subtropical islands departing from Ha Long in 2024 promises an unforgettable journey filled with natural beauty, cultural exploration, and luxurious comfort. As you set sail from the enchanting Ha Long Bay, known for its towering limestone karsts and emerald waters, you'll feel a sense of anticipation for the adventures ahead. Ponant's state-of-the-art expedition vessel ensures a seamless and comfortable voyage, with spacious cabins, gourmet dining options, and world-class amenities.

Upon reaching Japan's subtropical islands, a world of captivating wonders awaits. From the vibrant coral reefs of Ishigaki Island to the lush rainforests of Yakushima, every destination offers a unique and immersive experience. Dive into crystal-clear waters teeming with colorful marine life, snorkel alongside sea turtles, or simply relax on pristine sandy beaches. Delve into the rich cultural heritage of the region by visiting ancient shrines, exploring traditional villages, and indulging in authentic local cuisine. With Ponant's expert guides and knowledgeable staff, you'll gain a deep understanding of the islands' history, ecology, and local traditions. This Ponant trip is a perfect blend of luxury and exploration, allowing you to create lasting memories amidst the stunning beauty of Japan's subtropical islands.



Itinerary

Day 1

HA LONG

Embarkation starts from 4PM to 5PM

Departure will be at 6PM

Shielded by majestic karstic peaks, Halong reveals itself through a string of spectacular landscapes. Known the world over for its bay, listed with UNESCO, this city in northern Vietnam is lesser known for its heritage. That is a shame, as the authenticity and cultural richness of Halong is surprising. Boasting a unique mix of modern architecture and heritage from the dynasty of the Hung kings, the tourism capital of the Quang Ninh province promises unexpected moments in its bustling streets and breathtaking panoramas of one of the most beautiful bays in the world.

Meals: All Meals onboard

Accommodation: *'Le Jacques-Cartier'*

Day 2

At Sea

During your journey at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This journey without a port of call will also be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, depending on the activities offered, or to do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. As for lovers of the open sea, they will be able to visit the ship's upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine species. A truly enchanted interlude, combining comfort, rest and entertainment.

Meals: All Meals onboard

Accommodation: *'Le Jacques-Cartier'*

Day 3

Hong Kong

Hong Kong, known as the "Fragrant harbour", bordered by the South China Sea, is a heady place attracting tourists from the world over. This former British colony today combines ultramodern shopping malls and authentic markets like the Ladie's Market or the night market on Temple Street. At first sight, you'll be overwhelmed by the city's architecture which, because of lack of ground space, reaches skywards, with its 1,250 skyscrapers and other towers. Believing is seeing, so if you go up to Victoria Peak, the highest point on the island, you'll see a dizzying and unforgettable view of the bay.

Meals: All Meals onboard

Accommodation: *'Le Jacques-Cartier'*

Day 4

At Sea

During your journey at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This journey without a port of call will also be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, depending on the activities offered, or to do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. As for lovers of the open sea, they will be able to visit the ship's upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine species. A truly enchanted interlude, combining comfort, rest and entertainment.

Meals: All Meals onboard

Accommodation: *'Le Jacques-Cartier'*

Day 5

At Sea

During your journey at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This journey without a port of call will also be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, depending on the activities offered, or to do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. As for lovers of the open sea, they will be able to visit the ship's upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine species. A truly enchanted interlude, combining comfort, rest and entertainment.

Meals: All Meals onboard

Accommodation: *'Le Jacques-Cartier'*

Day 6

Ishigaki

Located to the south of the main island of the Yaeyama archipelago, Ishigaki boasts all the aspects of an authentic piece of paradise. You have guessed it, you do not come here for its skyscrapers but for its pure emerald waters and idyllic beaches. The waters off Shiraho, on the island's south-west coast, have one of the largest areas of blue coral in the world.

Meals: All Meals onboard

Accommodation: *'Le Jacques-Cartier'*

Day 7

Taketomijima - Iriomotejima

Off the coast of the Okinawa Prefecture, Taketomi Island (Taketomijima) is fascinating for its traditional character, preserved in a beautiful, lush setting. Like its big sisters, Ishigaki and Kuroshima, this island in the Yaeyama archipelago is the ideal destination for an immersion in typical landscapes and the insular way of life of the former Ryukyu Kingdom. Here, time seems to have stood still. There are very few cars about; bicycles and carriages drawn by imposing oxen remain the only means of transport. This is an ideal opportunity to wander through the picturesque streets lined with traditional dwellings with red-tiled roofs and lion-shaped shisa statues placed in front of the vast majority of houses to keep evil spirits at bay.

Nestled in the very heart of the Yaeyama archipelago, Iriomote Island conjures visions of a hidden paradise. With 90% of the island covered by thick jungle, crossed by rivers and impressive mangrove forests, Iriomote is an ideal destination for fans of large preserved spaces. With exceptional fauna and flora, this lush jewel is home to many endemic species: you may be lucky enough to get to glimpse an Iriomote cat or a crested serpent eagle. During this port of call, you will also have the possibility of admiring the captivating underwater world during a free diving session or contemplating this lush jungle close up on a cruise along the calm waters of the island's rivers.

Meals: All Meals onboard

Accommodation: *'Le Jacques-Cartier'*

Day 8

Yonagunijima

The geographic situation of the island of Yonagunijima, the most remote and western in the Japanese archipelago of Okinawa, makes it a wild and preserved territory. Between cliffs plunging into the sea and white sandy beaches, lush meadows and palettes of blue, we can admire the last sunset every day here in the Land of the Rising Sun. The island is also renowned for the Yonaguni horses, a small breed standing only a metre high, which graze freely here. If you dive, Yonagunijima will delight you with its sea beds which are as exceptional as they are mysterious.

Meals: All Meals onboard

Accommodation: *'Le Jacques-Cartier'*

Day 9

Miyakojima

Situated between the East China Sea and the Philippine Sea, Miyakojima is the main island of the Miyako Islands, in the Sakishima archipelago. The fourth largest island in the Okinawa prefecture, it is known for its many sugar cane plantations and some of Japan's most beautiful beaches. Myriad multicoloured fish await you during unforgettable swims and snorkelling.

Meals: All Meals onboard

Accommodation: *'Le Jacques-Cartier'*

Day 10

Kumejima

Located 90 km (56 miles) to the south-west of Okinawa Honto, Kumejima is a multifaceted island home to natural treasures. Hatenohama, a stunning 7 km-long (4.3 miles) fine-sand beach, promises wonderful carefree moments discovering the exceptional underwater worlds off the coast of Kumejima. Mifuga, a rock formation on the north coast of the island with a hole right through its middle, is a great example of the erosion along the coast. The eastern peninsula offers another geological feature, visible at low tide: 1,000 flat rocks each around one metre (3.2 feet) in diameter, formed by the contraction of lava from a nearby eruption a million years ago. They create a rocky plateau resembling a traditional Japanese tatami, hence the name Tatami-ishi.

Meals: All Meals onboard

Accommodation: *'Le Jacques-Cartier'*

Day 11

Iheyajima

The northernmost island of the prefecture of Okinawa, Iheyajima is a small territory that will take you back in time. At the heart of preserved natural landscapes that are a reminder of the Okinawa of the past, the inhabitants perpetuate traditional culture, particularly by maintaining ancient rites and ceremonies in honour of the divinities of the Ryukyu Kingdom. The island is home to several historic sites, such as the tomb of the ancestors of King Sho Hashi, the unifier of Okinawa and founder of the Ryukyu Kingdom, which was independent from Japan until the end of the 19th century. In this natural setting, whose emblematic Nento-Hiramatsu pine tree is a national monument, perhaps you will enjoy the privilege of seeing a traditional "Eisa" drum performance.

Meals: All Meals onboard

Accommodation: *'Le Jacques-Cartier'*

Day 12

Zamami

Zamami is an island in the Kerama archipelago, 40 km (25 miles) west of Okinawa Island in the China Sea. Visitors to this 16 km² (6 mi²) quasi-uninhabited isle are enchanted by the many untouched natural treasures they find here. You will discover a tranquil island with lush vegetation, lined with stunning white-sand bays bathing in the glimmering 'Kerama blue' waters around the archipelago. Zamami is also renowned for the beauty of its coral reefs, where multicoloured fish engage in an endless mesmerising ballet. The observation deck on Mount Takatsuki reveals stunning views of the Kerama Islands, granted national park status in 2014. With subtle shifting shades of azure above and all around, this island truly is paradise.

Meals: All Meals onboard

Accommodation: *'Le Jacques-Cartier'*

Day 13

Naha, Okinawa

Disembarkation will be at 8AM.

Capital of Okinawa Prefecture, the town of Naha is located on the south-west of the island. You will love its lively atmosphere, particularly along Kokusai Dori, otherwise known as 'international street'. The picturesque Makishi Public Market, nicknamed 'Naha's kitchen' offers a profusion of colourful fish, Okinawan foodstuffs and local spices and you can sample delicacies cooked on the spot.

Meals: Breakfast

Inclusions & Exclusions

Inclusions

- 12 night cruise on 'Le Jacques-Cartier' in a Deluxe Stateroom, including all meals, most drinks, and daily shore excursions.

About your Guest of Honour:

MAUD FONTENOY

For over 20 years, Maud Fontenoy has fought to protect the environment, specifically the oceans and coast. An experienced adventurous sailor with many first woman exploits to her name, solo, rowing and sailing, she is Ambassador for France's Ministry of National Education and Youth for its Sea Education programme; President of the Maud Fontenoy Foundation; former spokesperson for the UNESCO Oceanographic Commission; an expert in sustainability; a talented speaker; and author of hard-hitting books and documentaries. Her ultimate goal: to inform and raise awareness among as many people as possible about the urgent need to protect our planet.

Having spent more time in her life at sea than on land, she is tireless in her campaigns to tell people about the visible effects of pollution and global warming on the oceans that she knows so well. Supported by scientists, notably through the actions taken under the aegis of her Foundation in partnership with the French Ministry of Education, Maud is committed to educating the young generation in ways that make it easy to grasp so that sustainable development becomes accessible to all and Ecology rhymes with Economy.

All her actions, commitments and interventions are built around two key pillars: to pass on the values of hard work and perseverance and the fight for Sustainable Development.

She advises a range of different companies on this theme and advocates realistic, pragmatic ecology.

Languages spoken: french and english

Images courtesy of Ponant.

Exclusions

- Anything not mentioned in the itinerary
- Personal expenses
- Flights
- Travel insurance

About your ship 'Le Jacques-Cartier': In keeping with the philosophy of PONANT and the PONANT EXPLORERS, Le Jacques-Cartier is a modern ship with slender, tapered lines, it is environmentally friendly and equipped with innovative technology.

Tastefully decorated, Le Jacques-Cartier reflects the universe so dear to PONANT, with its light tones and open-to-the-sea design providing soft light and luminosity at every instant of the day. Its ethnic chic ambiance pays homage to the destinations we visit.

Located below the waterline, the Blue Eye, the first ever multisensorial lounge, offers a unique experience: the opportunity to enjoy undersea views and the sounds of the marine world whilst sharing a glass together.

About your Cabin: The cabin onboard is a Deluxe Stateroom (Deck 3). Upgrade are available subject to availability.

ID: A Passport with 6 months validity is required to be taken with you to board the cruise ship.

Currency: on board is Euros

Insurance: All guests must have travel insurance to participate on this tour and will be required to show this prior to departure. (including Remote Area Evacuation). We recommend Covermore travel insurance. To quote and book, please click [HERE](#).

Level of fitness: All participants should be in good general health, able to walk reasonable distances over sometimes uneven terrain, and stand during excursions.

All guests must be able to make their own way up and down stairs in case of emergency.

Guests must have at least 2 vaccinations for Covid19 to be able to board.

Travelling on your own? Why not join the [Traveldream Solo Travellers Facebook group](#) where you can interact with other travellers.