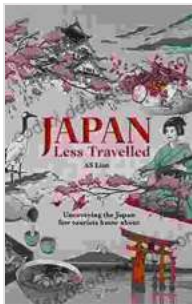


# Uncovering the Japan Few Tourists Know About: A Hidden Gem Awaits

Japan, a land of ancient traditions, bustling cities, and breathtaking landscapes, is a popular destination for travelers worldwide. However, venturing beyond the well-known tourist hotspots reveals a hidden Japan, a realm of undiscovered beauty and tranquility.



## Japan Less Travelled: Uncovering the Japan few tourists know about by Greg Hung

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 65738 KB

Screen Reader : Supported

Print length : 224 pages



This comprehensive guide will unveil the secrets of Japan's hidden wonders, offering an unforgettable travel experience. From idyllic islands to serene mountain retreats, this article will showcase the hidden gems that await your exploration.

## 1. Okinawa: A Tropical Paradise in the Far East



Nestled at the southernmost tip of Japan, Okinawa is an archipelago of over 150 islands. This subtropical paradise boasts crystal-clear waters, white sandy beaches, and lush rainforests.

Venture to Ishigaki Island, renowned for its vibrant coral reefs and world-class diving spots. Take a leisurely stroll along the scenic Kabira Bay, marveling at the dramatic limestone cliffs that rise from the turquoise waters.

For a taste of local culture, visit the historic Shuri Castle in Naha, the former royal palace of the Ryukyu Kingdom. Discover the unique arts and crafts of Okinawa, including traditional pottery and colorful textiles.

## 2. Shikoku: A Pilgrimage to Spiritual Serenity



Shikoku's sacred pilgrimage route offers a journey of spiritual discovery.

Shikoku, the smallest of Japan's four main islands, is renowned for its 88-temple pilgrimage route. This sacred journey attracts both pilgrims and travelers seeking spiritual enlightenment.

Begin your pilgrimage at Ryozen-ji Temple in Tokushima, the starting point of the circuit. Hike through verdant forests, climb scenic mountains, and visit ancient temples along the way.

Immerse yourself in the local culture by staying at traditional guesthouses and interacting with friendly locals. Along the route, discover hidden waterfalls, secluded beaches, and charming villages.

### **3. Yakushima Island: A Natural Wonderland**

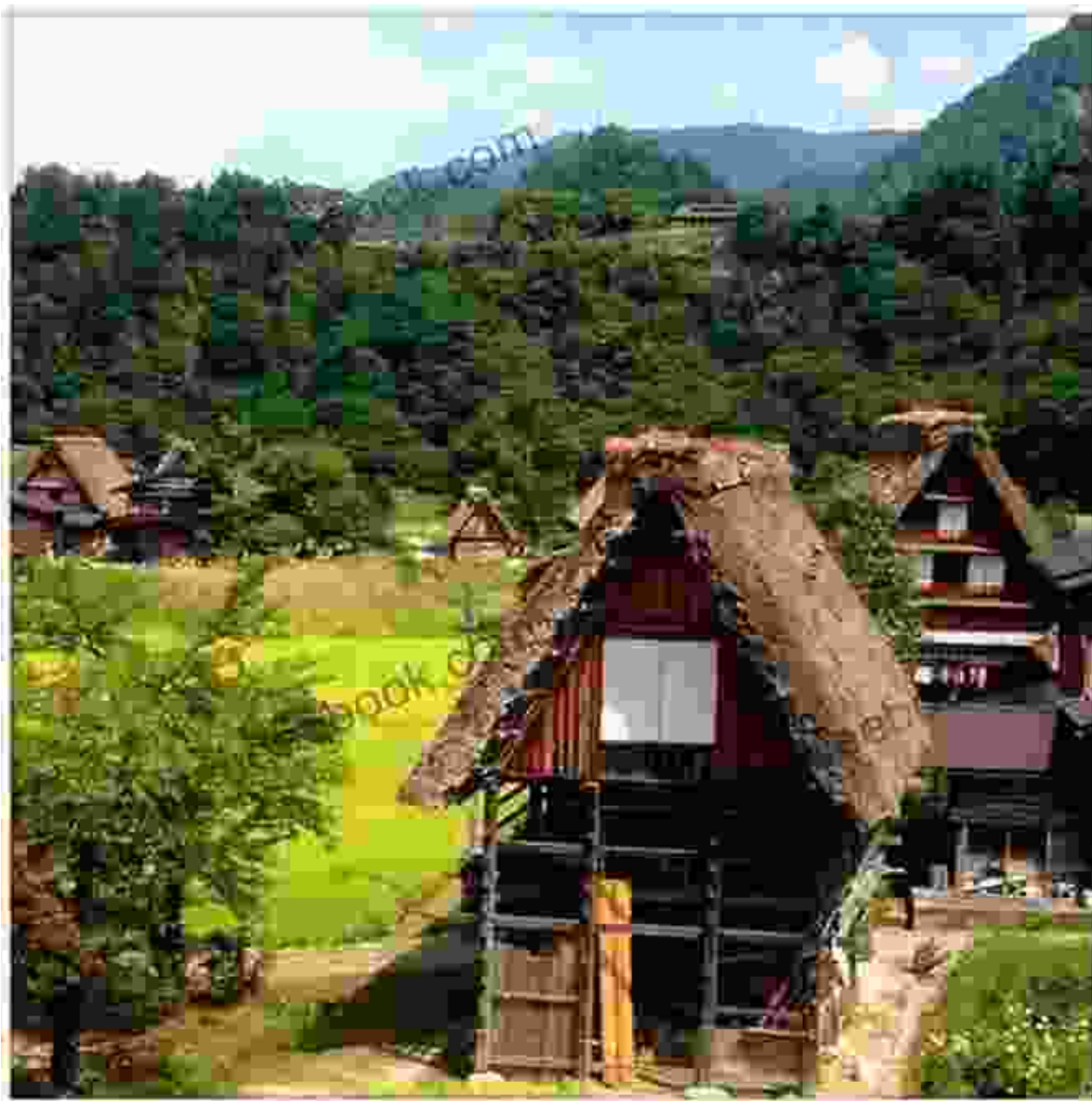


Yakushima Island, located offshore from Kyushu, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This subtropical island is home to ancient cedar forests, cascading waterfalls, and diverse wildlife.

Hike through the primeval forests, marveling at the towering cedar trees, some of which are over 1,000 years old. Visit Shiratani Unsuikyo Ravine to witness the breathtaking Jomonsugi Falls, a magnificent waterfall surrounded by lush vegetation.

Yakushima offers opportunities for kayaking, snorkeling, and birdwatching. Explore the island's rugged coastline, discover hidden coves, and encounter playful dolphins and sea turtles.

#### **4. Gokayama: A Traditional Village in the Japanese Alps**



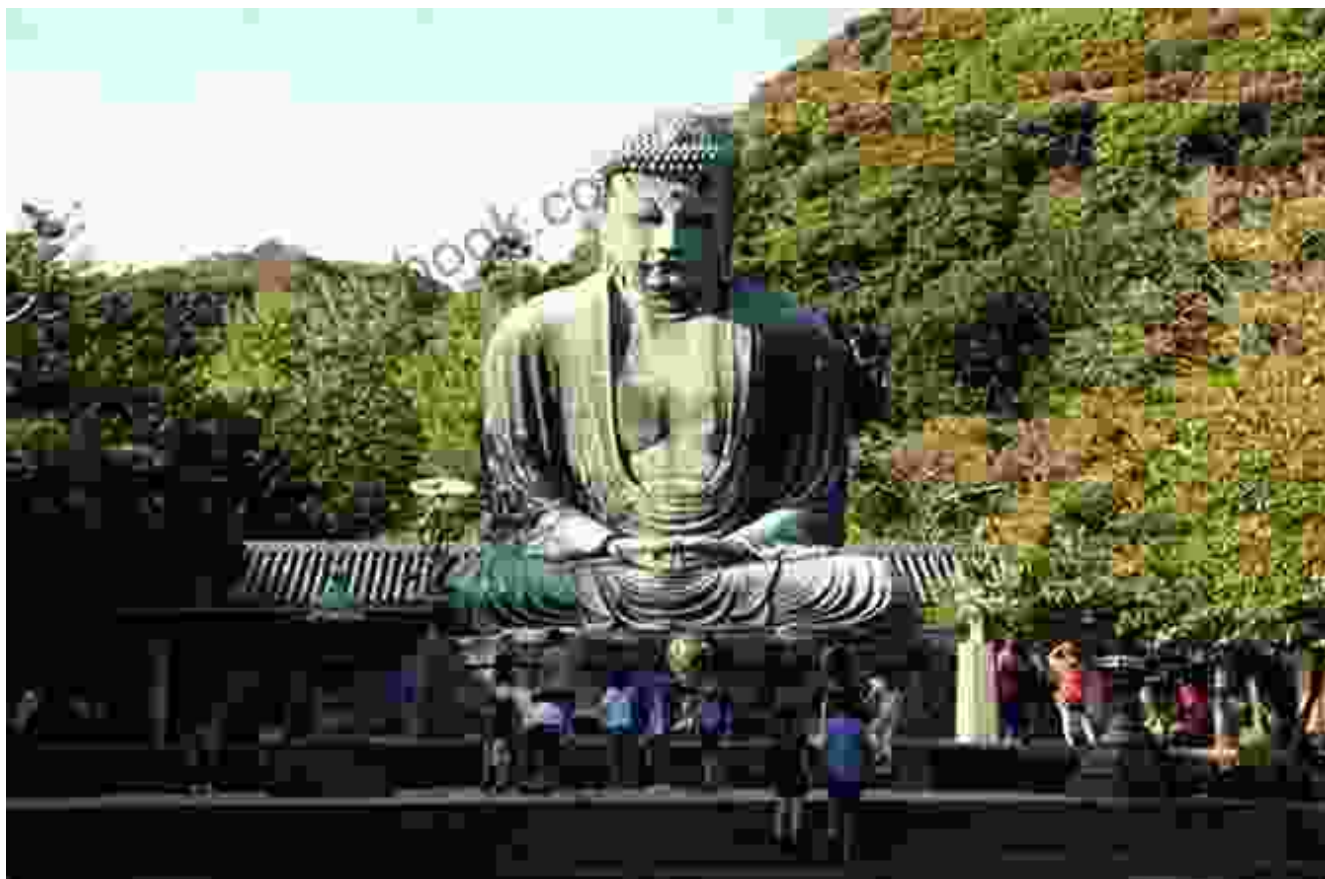
Gokayama's preserved heritage transports visitors to a bygone era.

Nestled in the picturesque Japanese Alps, Gokayama is a traditional village that has preserved its Edo-period architecture. Its charming thatched-roof houses, known as gassho-zukuri, are designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Stroll through the village's narrow streets, admiring the well-maintained houses and gardens. Visit the Wajima Museum to learn about the local history and culture.

Stay overnight in a traditional gassho-zukuri house to experience the authentic lifestyle of rural Japan. Enjoy a delicious meal prepared with fresh local ingredients.

## **5. Kamakura: A Coastal Haven of Zen**



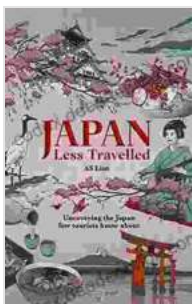
Located just an hour south of Tokyo, Kamakura is a coastal town steeped in history and spirituality. Home to over 130 temples and shrines, Kamakura offers a sanctuary for relaxation and reflection.

Visit the Great Buddha of Kamakura, a towering bronze statue that stands as a symbol of peace and tranquility. Explore the Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine, a majestic Shinto shrine dedicated to the god of war.

Stroll along the scenic Yuigahama Beach, enjoying the panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean. Take a leisurely hike in the nearby Kamakura Forest, immersing yourself in the beauty of nature.

Japan's hidden gems offer an unforgettable travel experience, inviting you to delve into the country's rich culture, stunning landscapes, and spiritual traditions. From the tropical paradise of Okinawa to the sacred pilgrimage of Shikoku, from the ancient forests of Yakushima to the traditional villages of Gokayama, these hidden wonders will captivate your senses and create memories that will last a lifetime.

Venture beyond the beaten path and discover the Japan few tourists know about. Your journey will be rewarded with a deeper understanding of this fascinating country and its hidden treasures.



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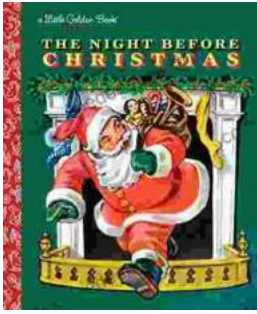
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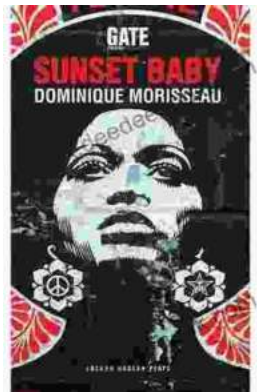
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