



# Take in the spirits and sights of Japan



The Whiskey Library at the Yamazaki distillery. (y u k i nk / Flickr)

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**S**ushi and Japan — sure those go together. But single-malt whiskey and Japan? Actually, the whiskey fits too, and you can find out during the Spirits of Japan tour offered through the luxury referral service Zicasso. The whiskey comes from the Yamazaki distillery, which won the title of the world's best single-malt whiskey in Jim Murray's "Whiskey Bible 2015." It's one of the stops when the tour hits Kyoto. In Sendai, there's the Miyagikyo distillery, voted Distiller of the Year by the International Spirits Challenge. While visiting Takayama's downtown, you can walk from sake brewery to sake brewery. In Kanazawa, you can visit the 400-year-old Yachiya Sake Brewery. In Osaka, craft beers come to the fore. But this trip isn't just about spirits. There also are lots of sights, including temples, museums and iconic Mount Fuji. There are great eats too, such as the Michelin-starred Sukiyabashi Jiro sushi restaurant in Tokyo. The 12-day tour is priced from \$6,990 per person double occupancy.

<http://tinyurl.com/plh4a3p>

## **Best beer towns ranked**

It's really too late for Oktoberfest, but it's never too late for beer. So it's worth taking a look at the list of best beer towns compiled by Trulia.com, a real estate site. Topping the list of what it calls the Oktoberfest Index is Traverse City, Mich., which has a healthy craft-beer scene. The Midwest scored high, with Duluth, Minn.; Madison, Wis.; and Lawrence, Kan., coming in at Nos. 5, 6 and 8, respectively. Interestingly the eastern half of the country got skunked (and no one likes skunky beer). The folks at Trulia also crunched the numbers and say Bend, Ore., and Boulder, Colo., have the most breweries per 10,000 households. Read all about it at <http://tinyurl.com/pztwrzk>.

## **Biking, hiking and cruising**

Biking or hiking can pair up with cruising in a new Italy Tour & Cruise package being offered by Windstar Cruises and VBT Bicycling and Walking Vacations. If you book one of VBT's tours, you'll get 15 percent off the cruise price, plus two free hotel nights in Rome added on to the tour. April 13, for instance, you can start a 10-day walking tour of the Amalfi Coast and Capri, then follow up with a seven-day Windstar cruise from Rome to Athens, with port stops in Capri, the island of Lipari, Italy; Giardini Naxos in Sicily and Gythion and Monemvasia, Greece. Another option is a 10-day biking tour of the Puglia coastal region in Italy combined with an eight-day cruise of Italy and the Dalmatian coast. Windstar cruises also include private events, such as, on this itinerary, a winery visit in Sicily with a lunch of traditional Sicilian food. Info: 800-258-7245, <http://tinyurl.com/psmkzbd>

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