

# Spirited Away: The Ultimate Japanese Booze Tour

by Melissa Locker September 25, 2015



Bloomberg via Getty Images

Horror addicts and supernatural enthusiasts may be disappointed to know that arguably the best [Spirits of Japan](#) tour has nothing to do with ancient demons or *The Grudge*-style plotlines. That's because it celebrates a totally different type of spirit: whiskey, sake, beer, and more.

Travelers who opt for this tour spend 12 days haunting Japan's finest sake makers, distilleries, breweries, and restaurants, all while exploring some of the country's most beautiful sites.

Start the tour in Tokyo at the world-famous Miyagikyo Distillery, which was voted the 2015 Distiller of the Year at the International Spirits Challenge. Work up an appetite while exploring Tokyo (a stop at the [Kawaii Monster Harajuku Café](#), perhaps?) before dinner at

Fu-Unji, an iconic ramen shop. Their name translates as “lucky adventurer”—a name you’ll agree with when you taste their world-famous *tsukemen* broth.

Then head to Hakone for a guided tour of the Fuji Gotemba Distillery and, of course, a taste (or two!) of its renowned whiskey. Travel to Takayama to explore the ancient city’s equally ancient sake trade, including a stop at the 400-year old Hirase sake brewery. Travelers will take part in a traditional Kaiseki ryori dinner, visit *Ninja* Temple, and see the Higashi District where scenes from *Memoir of a Geisha* seem to spring to life.

Kyoto is next, where tourists get a peek into Yamamoto Honke Brewery, which dates back to 1667, and pay their respects at the Gekkeikan Okua and Kinshi Masamume museums, which are dedicated to the craft of brewing sake. The tour also includes a visit to the world’s top-rated single malt whiskey distillery, the Suntory Yamazaki Distillery. (Yes, the whiskey that Bill Murray was selling in *Lost in Translation*.)

While the Irish may love their Guinness, Osaka’s Minoh Brewery won Best Stout at the 2009 World Beer Awards. Try a pint on a tour of the brewery. Tour the *Osaka Castle and maybe even crack open an Asahi while taking in an Osaka Haishin Tigers* baseball game. The tour wraps up back in Tokyo, where travelers can dream of sushi during dinner at the three Michelin star Sukiyabashi Jiro (yes, *that* Jiro).

The tour is open to travelers all year. [Get details here.](#)