

8 days Cycling Japan June/July 2026 Kym & Deb Ayling

After flying into Osaka, we spent the first 10 days sightseeing in OSAKA, NAGOYA & KYOTO. The Japanese history, culture, food and people were enthralling, and we thoroughly enjoyed being tourists (relying heavily on Google Translate). Originally, we had planned to ride the famous SHIMANAMI KAIDO but after research and feedback from other avid cyclists like Nick Byron we decided to add a few other legs including the Numakuma Route, Sazanami Kaido, Tobishima Kaido, Hamakaze Kaido and the YUMESHIMA KAIDO which in the end really added to our trip (see map)



Leaving Kyoto early by Shinkansen to Imabari we then off loaded our non-cycling luggage at our hotel and picked up 2 rental bikes (1 Electric and 1 Road bike with panniers) from Red Cycles costing around \$100 a day.

We then did our '1st day sorting out ride' to Tokomurra and back (50kms) which was sunny with little traffic along a scenic coast before a ferry ride back to our hotel at Imabari where we watched a red moon over dinner - a great start!

Next day left from ONIMICHI, had a swim in the Seto Inland Sea even though the beach wasn't 'open' for another week, then cycled another 40kms to TAKEHARA where we stayed overnight.

After breakfast and a walk around the historic precinct of town, it decided to rain just as we were leaving so 2.5 hours riding made us a bit damp but Deb survived well! Onto KAWAJIRI which was mostly flat to a little guest house (which we had to ourselves) overlooking the ocean.



Next day we cycled the Tobishima Kaido from KAWAJIRI. It started overcast but soon fined up and finished with a lovely ferry ride into IMABARI with only 40KMS riding.

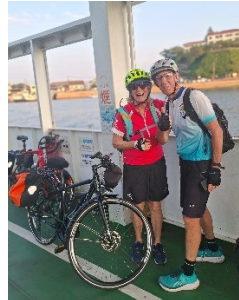
Next day was the Hamakaze Kaido from IMABARI to MATSUYAMA at 55KMS. Again, along the ocean, a little more traffic with some trucks and roads a bit worse. We arrived mid-afternoon before sightseeing the historic onsen, clock and tram then rode the chairlift to the castle before seeing great views of the city.

It rained all day as we cycled the 55kms from MATSUYAMA back to IMABARI, but we enjoyed hot dogs and chips for lunch (cyclists fuel) and there was less traffic this day which was good. After drying out, we walked to the Imabari Ginza for tea which was busy with food stalls and school kids performing. Unfortunately, there was more rain predicted (it was Typhoon season but at least it was warm).

The penultimate day was the SHIMANAMI & YUMESHIMA KAIDO leaving IMABARI destined for KAMIJIMA at only 65KMS. We left @ 6:15am with drizzle, our first bridge was 6 pylons & 20 mins across with amazing views. We managed to stumble on markets meeting friendly locals and saw an interesting museum. Then more rain before an amazing lunch then sunny for the last 6 bridges. The Fespa Hotel has an amazing view as well as providing a 12-course traditional dinner and breakfast. The presentation of food in Japan is an art form!



Our last day started wet but fined up by lunch and was an easy ride from KAMIJIMA to ONOMICHI at only 45KMS. It included 2 ferry rides and more bridges where we encountered many groups cycling with some serious riders and many more day trippers. It was sad to be finishing our trip.



We had planned to sightsee in Hiroshima for a further 3 days but unfortunately, we received some bad news about a serious illness of our grandson so flew home early. We were reminded that although exploring the world is amazing, those we love are much more important!

In the end, we followed the blue line cycling just over 400kms over 8 days (4 rainy), 6 individual 'Kaido rides', with no punctures, no mechanicals, no crashes, incredible scenery, great roads, bike friendly and considerate drivers, amazing food, respectful people and terrific sightseeing. Deb was a trooper on the e-bike as well! Where else but Japan could you experience this? If your keen, chat to Kym or plan for October 2026 when there is a one-day SHIMANAMI KAIDO mass ride.....now that would be fun!