

Preliminary Description and Risk Assessment

Type proposed trip title here

Hike the Michinoku Coastal Trail in Japan April 2026

During this 12-day guided adventure, participants will day-hike selected sections of the Michinoku Coastal trail in Japan from **Hachinohe** to **Jōdogahama**. Hikes chosen will be representative of the best trails along the route, showcasing the natural beauty along the Pacific coastline, cultural immersion, and post-disaster revitalization.

Nights will be spent at comfortable hotels with en-suite bathrooms in proximity to our hiking locations. Hiking level of difficulty is moderate with distances of 5-10 miles/day and elevation gains of 250-800'.

Three areas have been identified as Moderate Risk, three Low/Moderate, and none as High Risk.

Activity and route (1&2): Key terrain types along this portion of the Michinoku Coastal trail include: Coastal cliffs and bluffs; Rocky shores, pebble beaches, and “rias” (deep, jagged inlets); Forested sections (mixed woods: pine, fir, maple, etc.); Hills / ridges behind the coast; Some paved roads, concrete paths, boardwalks, especially near villages / visitor centers; Sea caves, tunnels, observatories / viewpoints.

There are risks due to wet, slippery surfaces from sea spray, rain, or tides; exposure along cliff-edges and wind; variable path surfaces; stream crossings as well as weather hazards (typhoons, high tide, bad seas) or natural disasters (earthquake, tsunami). In some places navigation may be difficult due to insufficient signage or confusing junctions. Be aware of the designated Tsunami evacuation sites and route markings on maps.

Participants will be vetted for experience on rugged trails, comfort with heights and enclosed spaces and advised to wear sturdy shoes/boots and use hiking poles.

Itinerary is set up to allow flexibility for weather or other hazardous conditions.

There will be free afternoons and evenings for participants to relax or explore from the hotel, if they are planned with at least two people, have a defined route and return time, carry maps and communication gear and are pre-approved by the leader.

Leader Experience on Route (3): The leader has not hiked on the Michinoku Coastal trail before, so an outfitter is being used who will provide navigation packs that include detailed maps and descriptions of each day's hike as well as a local guide throughout the trip. All of the hikes are routinely traveled by tourists and none are “off the beaten path”.

General Illness Risk (4): Water and food are of a high hygiene standard in most areas. Tap water is potable but need to filter water from streams. Covid risk is rated as low. Will be using public transportation.

Remoteness and Emergency Communication (11,12): Medical care is available from 5 major hospitals and 3 clinics along the route. Some remote coastal areas have few medical facilities or good cellular phone coverage. Participants will be advised to filter water if coming from streams, to mask in public spaces as needed, to self-screen for symptoms before and during trip and maintain up to date vaccines. Medical insurance will be required for participants. There will be a local guide, emergency hotline and leaders InReach available for emergencies as well as an emergency evacuation plan in place, noting distances to clinics/hospitals as well as hours of operation.

Trip-Specific Risk Assessment

Overall Assessment: *Low/Moderate*

CATEGORY	RISK ASSESSMENT	MITIGATION MEASURES
ACTIVITY-SPECIFIC RISK FACTORS		
ACTIVITY	<i>RATING: Moderate</i> <i>Most sections are gentle, close to roads or coastal paths. Some sections with steep ascents and descents; Exposure to cliff-edges, winds. Uneven rock surfaces; possibly muddy or slippery after rain; Stream crossings</i> <i>Weather hazards (typhoons, high tide, bad seas) or natural disasters (earthquake, tsunami) are risks</i>	<i>Screening participants for recent hiking experience and confidence moving on steep, rocky terrain, comfort with heights, ability to deal with rocky/uneven/slippery ground. Recommend sturdy footwear, rain gear and hiking poles</i> <i>Watch for marked evacuation routes & locations along the way</i>
ROUTE	<i>RATING: MODERATE</i> <i>Route markers exist, but remote or forested parts may have less signage or more confusing junctions</i>	<i>Same as above.</i> <i>Use of local guide, GPS tracks and maps, emergency hotline</i>
LEADER EXPERIENCE ON ROUTE	<i>RATING: MODERATE</i> <i>Established route, but leader unfamiliar with route</i>	<i>Use of local guide, GPS tracks and maps, emergency hotline</i>
DESTINATION-SPECIFIC RISK FACTORS		
GENERAL ILLNESS RISK FACTORS AT DESTINATION	<i>RATING: Low/moderate</i> <i>Water and food are of a high hygiene standard in most areas. Tap water is potable but need to filter water from streams. Covid risk is rated as low. Will be using public transportation. Medical care is available from 5 major</i>	<i>Filter water from streams.</i> <i>Mask in public spaces as needed.</i> <i>Participants self-screen for symptoms before and during trip, maintain up to date vaccines. Closely monitor health and safety risks.</i>

	<i>hospitals and 3 clinics along the route. Some remote coastal areas have few medical facilities</i>	<i>Medical insurance for participants. Have local guide and emergency hotline. Leader to carry InReach</i> <i>Have emergency evacuation plan in place, noting distances to clinics/hospitals as well as hours of operation</i>
RISK OF TERRORISM/ VIOLENCE AT DESTINATION	<i>RATING: LOW Travel Advisory Level 1</i>	<i>Remind participants to be aware of surroundings and report any suspicious behavior. Check for any news reports of local violence.</i>
SECURITY OF MONEY, VALUABLES, PERSONAL PROPERTY	<i>RATING: LOW Overall low crime rate. Petty theft risk in tourist areas</i>	<i>Remind participants to keep valuables safe and watch for any suspicious behavior</i>
TRANSPORTATION RISK AT DESTINATION	<i>RATING: Low Well developed, safe public transportation system</i>	<i>Local guide to assist with transportation; well maintained roads</i>
CULTURAL RISK FACTORS AT DESTINATION	<i>RATING: Low Modern Asian country with many tourists. Remote villagers may have limited English language skills</i>	<i>Local guide with Japanese/English language skills Educate participants on cultural awareness and appropriate norms</i>
COMBINED ACTIVITY-DESTINATION RISK FACTORS		
ILLNESS POTENTIAL FOR THIS ACTIVITY AT THIS DESTINATION	<i>RATING: Low Low altitude, low Covid incidence</i>	<i>Will follow Global Adventures Infectious Disease protocols</i>
OTHER ACTIVITY HAZARDS AT DESTINATION	<i>RATING: LOW/ MODERATE See Activity and route risks</i>	<i>See activity and route risks</i>
REMOVEDNESS, DISTANCE TO GOOD MEDICAL RESOURCES AT DESTINATION**	<i>RATING: LOW, MODERATE Hospital and medical clinics available within a day's travel</i>	<i>Daily exit routes identified, and emergency transport details always kept handy Carry well-stocked first aid kit</i>
EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION AT DESTINATION	<i>RATING: LOW, MODERATE Much of the area has good 5G coverage, but phone signal can be intermittent in remote areas</i>	<i>Local guide with phones. Leader to carry Garmin InReach Satellite communication device and emergency numbers</i>

* Rating using the criteria in the [Global Adventures Master Risk Matrix](#)

Leader Name(s): Linda Shewey (lshewey@comcast.net)

Leader Qualifications: Linda has been a Mountaineer hike leader for 15 years, led over 30 hikes/multiple-day backpack trips in the last two years and participated as instructor in the Staying Found course. She has led or co-led 6 Global Adventure trips.

☐ Outfitter: Japan Alps Adventure will be providing maps, arranging lodging, transportation, and some cultural activities.

Professional local guide will be with group throughout the trip.

Bullet Summary of Measures to be Taken to Minimize Injuries and Risk to the Mountaineers:

☐ The leader will carefully screen participants for hiking skills and fitness, as well as check with participant's trip leaders for appropriate group behavior.

☐ The leader will provide in-depth pre-trip communications to participants with conditioning, gear planning and logistics in advance of the trip, and support to the group during the trip including daily briefings prior to each day's hike (likely the night before) reviewing the route and any objective hazards, and emphasizing the importance of group cohesion. Leader will check-in with each participant multiple times during the day to screen for any issues that may arise.

Participants will be provided with maps for each day's hikes and will also be required to carry the ten essentials.

☐ Leader will prepare and follow a safety and emergency response plan provided with this proposal, including daily contact info for emergency services, locations and emergency contact people at home.

☐ Each participant will be expected to submit a medical information form and certify that they have no pre-existing conditions that put them at elevated risk on this itinerary.

☐ Each participant will be asked to initial and sign a trip agreement indicating that they understand and accept the primary hazards and risks on the trip and the expectations of participants. This will include ensuring that they understand this is not a guided trip and they are responsible for their own safety and that of the group. In addition, each participant will be required to sign a Release of Liability form and will be required to hold medical and emergency evacuation insurance sufficient to transport them back to the US if needed.

☐ Participants may choose to excuse themselves from participation in hiking or other activities if needed for rest, illness or injury