

Special Awaji Island Uzushio SUNSET CRUISE

[The Uzushio Cruise](#) departs from a port in Fukura, on the southern end of Awaji Island. There are several cruises every day, and each one is about an hour long. On this cruise, you'll get to see one of a kind views and encounter one of the most well-renowned natural phenomena, the Naruto Whirlpools. The time at which you'll be able to see the whirlpools will differ from day to day and seeing as they are a natural phenomenon that react according to their environment, the size of each whirlpool is generally unpredictable. While this daily cruise is exceptional, what if you had the chance to bear witness to the Naruto Whirlpools, whilst enjoying delicious cuisine made with Awaji Island sourced ingredients and live music performed by professional musicians, all the while basking in the beautiful sunset as you blissfully float through the natural phenomenon? Well, that's an actual possibility with this one of a kind Special Awaji Island Uzushio SUNSET CRUISE! To show you everything that this cruise entails, I'll be going through my own experience aboard the Uzushio SUNSET CRUISE. I'll be walking you through the cruise step by step from the boarding process all the way to my reaction of seeing the Naruto Whirlpools for the first time in the flesh!

Sunset Cruise Experience

Arrival and Boarding the Cruise



As soon as I arrived at the harbor building, I was able to see the ticket counter for the cruise right in front of me, however for this specific cruise it is highly recommended that you purchase your tickets online. The tickets that I was provided depicted the beautiful sunset over the Naruto Strait. Boarding the cruise with my general ticket went quickly and seamlessly, as the staff made sure everyone had a smooth entrance into the grand ship, regardless of which type of ticket one might have purchased. To start off our journey, we set sail in a Kanrin-Maru, which only recently started operating in 2021. This model of the ship makes for a much more comfortable ride for passengers of the cruise, not to mention the installation of a new digital attraction into the lowest level of the ship! As we began to depart for the voyage, we were seen off by the wonderful pier staff calling out “Itterasshai” or see you, and waving impressive big cutout handmade hands, and a powerful water cannon from which a beautiful rainbow formed as we embarked for the time of our lives.

Setting Sail towards Onaruto Bridge



The trek on the way to the whirlpools was incredibly smooth, and our guide got on the microphone and began to break down the origin of Awaji Island along with all the sights to behold in the surrounding area. For now, the guidance is only available in Japanese, but the guide map is currently available in English, with plans on expanding to an English guidance service in the near future. Some of the highlights you will see on this cruise include the Fukura fishing village, resorts around the area, and two small islands in the middle of the cove. As we basked in the fresh sea breeze, the ship began to make way towards Onaruto Bridge and with it came the Naruto Whirlpools. The setting sun shining down upon the whirlpools almost made for a spotlight-like scene on the main attraction. The Naruto Whirlpools had a fiery shade of red glistening all throughout as they peered in from the distance. This exquisite color along with the view of the Onaruto Bridge in the distance made for a sight that was so beautiful that no amount of superlatives would do justice to the actual scenery on the spot.

Live Music Aboard the Sunset Cruise



After about 10 minutes of peaceful tranquility amidst the sea, we were treated to a live musical performance by the members of the PASONA group's local creation project "Music Island." The music consisted of renditions of some of the most popular songs from iconic films, played with a violin and piano in an upbeat tempo. We got the chance to hear "Part of Your World" from *The Little Mermaid*, "Country Road" from *Whisper of the Heart*, and even a song from the soundtrack of *Kiki's Delivery Service*, all the while gliding through the ocean and slowly making our way to the Naruto Whirlpools. After being serenaded by their beautiful renditions of these iconic songs, all of the passengers gave them a much deserved round of applause, thanking them for making this experience all the more memorable.

Naruto Whirlpools



Soon after the musical performance was over, we were finally within range of the Naruto Whirlpools. For anyone out there who thinks that the whirlpools are just a small happening, like myself before the cruise, you'll be in for a big surprise when locking eyes with the whirlpools for the first time. It is said that the Naruto Whirlpools can reach up to 30 meters in diameter on a good day. Along the way to the whirlpools, you'll also come across two other phenomena, Uzu no hana, or "flowerlike whirlpools", and Umi no dansa, or "steps in the ocean". In the Uzu no hana, seawater that is sucked under the strait by the whirlpool hits the seabed and bounces back, which in turn causes the sea level to rise. From an onlooker's perspective, it can be seen as creating a turbulent and choppy sea on days when the whirlpools are large. In the Umi no dansa, you can see a significant difference in sea level at the point of convergence of the Pacific Ocean side and Seto Inland seaside, with the latter experiencing high tide compared to the low tide experienced near the Pacific. The height difference can amount to 1.5 meters, creating a step-like shape (hence the name), and generates the fastest tidal currents in Japan. The sight of this happening is considerably rare, even on a global scale and is well worth the price of admission alone.

Trust me when I say that these whirlpools are enormous, so much so that pictures and videos can't showcase their sheer magnitude. While the ship is very safe and secure, we were still able to feel a slight push and pull effect from the whirlpools, further demonstrating to me why they are labeled as extraordinary natural phenomena. What sets this cruise apart from the others is getting the chance to bear witness to the whirlpools in a completely different state compared to its daytime counterpart. We were left in complete awe by their beauty. Getting the opportunity to see the Naruto Whirlpools up close and personal is already a sight to behold, but seeing them under the illuminating lights of the dusk sky completely transforms the whirlpools, turning them into a bright red color that is unbeknownst to the average person. We traversed around the whirlpools for about 20 minutes, allotting us plenty of time to burn the scenery into both our eyes and cameras alike, and were even treated to one of the most beautiful sights to behold, "Magic Hour." For those who don't know, "Magic Hour" is a brief period of the day during sunset when the sky is engulfed in a rich orange hue, allowing for some of the most picturesque views you could think of.

Live Music and Magic Hour on the way back



As we began to make our way back to the dock, we were once again treated to the musical performance of Music Island. Rather than playing some upbeat tracks like before, the musicians decided to play more toned down, melodic music, almost as if to match the tranquil ambience of the journey back through the ever-present sunset. Some of the tracks I was fortunate enough to hear include “Sekai no Yakusoku” from Howl’s Moving Castle, “Moon River” from Breakfast at Tiffany’s, “Itoshi no Ellie” by Southern All Stars, and “Everything” by Misia among others. As the performance ended, our lovely tour guide encouraged the band to perform an encore, and with it the entire cruise cheered in agreement. With the band obliging to our requests, we were treated to a cover of the ever popular song “TSUNAMI” from the band Southern All Stars. After their wonderful performance of the hit song, the passengers gave another round of applause and as the ship made its way back to the port, we were able to once again catch a glimpse of Magic Hour coming to an end along Fukura Bay, putting the cherry on top of what was the most majestic and memorable cruise I’ve ever experienced.

Upgrading from General Seats to VIP Seats



While the general seating offered me incredible views of the whirlpools, if you want to experience the cruise in an even more lavish fashion, you can upgrade to the VIP seats for an extra 5,000 yen! Priced at 10,000 yen, the VIP tickets will get you a spot in a luxurious VIP room, with dining options that make the most of the ingredients Awaji Island has to offer. The menu will vary depending on the season, offering different dishes that allow you to taste the fresh and seasonal ingredients such as sauteed Awaji Island chicken and baby sardines with garlic oil. One of the cruise's main dishes is their signature onion soup, which uses plenty of extract from Awaji Island's famous onions. Along with the cuisine, they serve various types of alcohol from Awaji as well as soft drinks that are unique to the cruise. Among the wide selection of alcohol available is wine made with grapes from Awaji Island that have been carefully cultivated to enhance the flavor. The cruise also serves specially crafted beer using Kinuhikari rice, which is grown in abundance in the warm and sunny climate of Awaji Island. The beer itself has a hint of sweetness to it, along with an aroma of rice which makes for a refreshing taste. Locally brewed sake from Awaji Island is also on hand, with the brewer said to have pursued the ultimate taste of Japanese sake when crafting this particular drink. Even the soft drinks on this cruise have been carefully prepared, such as their freshly squeezed orange juice that is made without using any kind of sugars or preservatives, not to mention the cruise's original salt coffee, that gets its unique and delicious taste from roasting coffee beans with coarse salt from Naruto.: You'll also be greeted by the captain of the ship and the dedicated staff, who will provide a special tour of the wheelhouse that is usually off-limits, as well as take a commemorative photo

with the captain. And to top it off, the performers themselves will personally greet you before giving their live musical performance, making your experience all the more memorable. VIP tickets for the SUNSET CRUISE cap off at 14 people per cruise, so make sure to book your spot fast! When purchasing tickets for the SUNSET CRUISE it is highly recommended you do so online, via their website rather than at the ticket booth of the location, just because the event only goes on for such a short and limited period of time.

Book your reservation [here!](#)

Departure dates for the SUNSET CRUISE:

April 8, 2023 (Saturday) Departure at 17:30
April 9, 2023 (Sunday) Departure at 17:30
April 22, 2023 (Saturday) Departure at 17:40
April 23, 2023 (Sunday) Departure at 17:40
May 20, 2023 (Saturday) Departure at 18:00
May 21, 2023 (Sunday) Departure at 18:00

Departure point: Uzushiodome Nanairo Kan (Roadside Station Fukura), Minami-Awaji City, Hyogo Prefecture

How to get there

You can drive to Awaji Island and the location of the Uzushio SUNSET CRUISE from just about anywhere in Japan. But if you won't have a car on your trip, there are other ways of getting there too.

By train/bus

Coming from Osaka, you can take the JR Line going west from Osaka Station and get off at Maiko. From there, follow the signs to catch the bus to Fukura. This bus will take you across the Akashi-Kaikyo Bridge and through the rural parts of the island and drop you off right in front of the cruise harbor. The bus will pick you up from the same spot to take you back so you can get your return train. You can put money on an IC card to pay for both trains and buses, and ask station employees for help in making sure you're in the right place.

Cycling

While it is possible to get to Awaji Island by bike, the Akashi-Kaikyo Bridge is only for cars – there are no trains that go over it, and pedestrians aren't allowed. You'll need to take a ferry (on which you can bring your bike onboard) to get over the body of water. Once there, you'll find that Awaji Island is home to well-regarded cycling courses. If you want to spend a couple days in the area, you can bike all around the island.

Conclusion



I hope that after reading through my own experience, you've come to realize how incredible this cruise really is and just how much I recommend it to anyone visiting Japan. Getting the chance to get up close and personal with the Naruto Whirlpools, along with the beautiful sunset and the amazing music in the calming atmosphere that I was provided, is something that I will never forget. There's no other place that can offer the same experience you'll get here with its unparalleled view that truly feels like something out of a movie. Whether you've been on an Uzushio Cruise in the past or it's your first time aboard, experiencing the Uzushio SUNSET CRUISE during the prime time of sunset will make for an unforgettable voyage!