

To Schools and Educational Institutions



Minamisanriku: Where Life Circulates

6 Days of Learning in Daily Living and

Experiencing the Cycle of Life:

An Introduction to the Japan Study Tour



南三陸町観光協会
MINAMISANRIKU-CHO
TOURISM ASSOCIATION

南三陸
311メモリアル
MINAMISANRIKU
311 Memorial

Introducing

Minamisanriku



Minamisanriku Tourism Association



南三陸町観光協会

Established in 2009, the Minamisanriku Tourism Association serves as a regional tourism operator and as the central catalyst for 'community revitalization through tourist initiatives.'

In the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake, the organization has emerged as a leader in disaster recovery tourism, pioneering programs that include community revival markets (*fukko-ichi*) designed to restore local economic vitality, and implementing experiential learning programs led by community storytellers who preserve and share the lessons learned from the disaster with visitors.

Our Mission

Creating Experiences that Enrich Communities, People, and Time

We design and deliver transformative experiences that enhance the richness and well-being of the "community," "people," and "moments in time" connected to Minamisanriku.

Minamisanriku encompasses the life-sustaining natural environment and the "community" where historical traditions and cultural practices continue to thrive. Our diverse community includes long-term residents, visitors and active volunteer community participants. Together we recognize the precious moments found within the constantly evolving passage of time.

Through a participatory approach, we listen carefully to understand the aspirations and challenges of our stakeholders, identify undervalued local assets and stories, and design experiential programs that facilitate meaningful cross-cultural exchange and community connection.

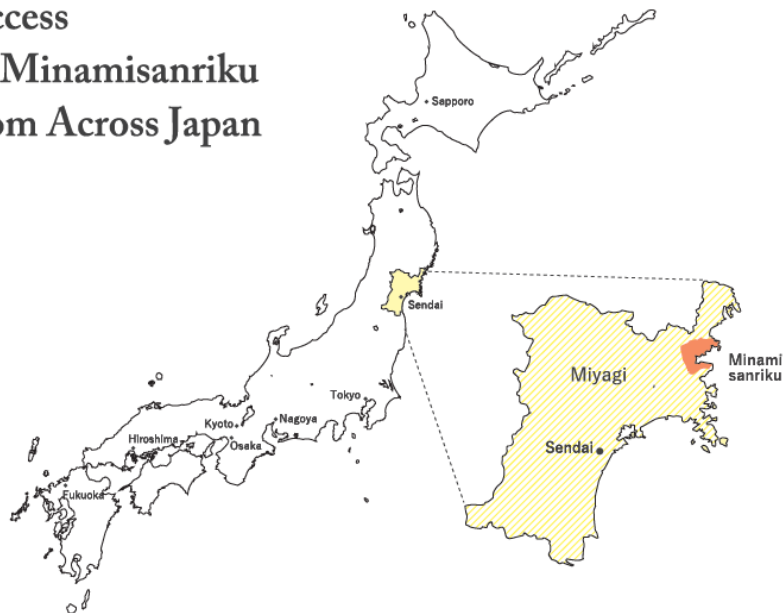
Each interaction generates satisfaction for participants and stronger interpersonal networks. We strive to create a regenerative "cycle of enrichment" in which improved well-being continuously reinforces community resilience.

Minamisanriku

Minamisanriku Town is a coastal community of approximately 11,000 residents situated along the Miyagi Prefecture's coastline in Japan's Tohoku region, embraced by beautiful ocean and mountain environments.

With a rich heritage in fishing and agriculture, Minamisanriku offers visitors exceptional seafood, pristine natural surroundings, and the genuine hospitality of residents who share firsthand accounts of disaster recovery while imparting critical lessons in community resilience.

Access to Minamisanriku from Across Japan



Great East Japan Earthquake (March 11, 2011)

Building upon the lessons of past tsunami disasters, Minamisanriku had systematically implemented disaster preparedness education and training in pursuit of comprehensive "disaster-resilient community development" strategies.

However, the Great East Japan Earthquake generated a tsunami of unprecedented magnitude that far exceeded all projections, resulting in catastrophic damage to the community.



Damage to Minamisanriku

(Population at time of Disaster: 17,666)

An earthquake registering seismic intensity of lower 6 on the Japanese scale and a tsunami exceeding 20 meters in height devastated the town center, destroying approximately 70 percent of residential structures.

Critical infrastructure including the town hall, police station, fire department, and public hospital sustained severe damage. Most tragically, at the Disaster Prevention Administration Building, numerous staff members who remained issuing evacuation warnings until the final moments lost their lives.

Deaths **620**

Missing **211**

Homes Completely
Destroyed **3143**

Partially Destroyed
Homes **178**



Tangible and Intangible Support from around the World | The Turning Point



Global Support and the Connections that Sustained Us

Immediately following the disaster, Australia dispatched rescue teams and Israel sent medical support units to assist recovery efforts. Taiwan provided funding that enabled the hospital's reconstruction, opening in December 2015 as the "Minamisanriku Hospital and Comprehensive Care Center" with integrated medical and welfare services.

The Republic of Chile gifted a Moai statue crafted on Easter Island as a symbol of hope and recovery. While Minamisanriku lost much in the disaster, the global connections and bonds formed through this tragedy have become treasured community assets that remain vibrant today.



A large group of approximately 30 people, mostly young adults, are posing for a group photo in a room. Behind them is a large Japanese flag (Hinomaru) and a logo for Minamisanriku Town, which features a stylized blue character and waves. In the foreground, a red banner with the University of Maryland logo is being held. The entire image has a teal overlay.

Learning in Minamisanriku Town, Miyagi Prefecture

Introduction to Educational Travel Programs in Japan



International Study Tours to Minamisanriku, Miyagi

Learning Through Daily Living: 6 Days Experiencing Nature's Rhythms

Experience the community's recovery journey, the global bonds that sustained them, and a local culture deeply rooted in human connection.

Through homestays with local families, interactions with residents, and powerful testimonies from storyteller guides who lived through the disaster, students engage with themes of disaster preparedness, community welfare, and daily life through immersive experiences and genuine exchanges.

"I found people I want to see again." "Their words stay with me." Discover transformative learning experiences that touch the heart in Minamisanriku.



3 Types of Learning Fostered in Minamisanriku

Human Resilience Surviving Any Challenge



Disaster Preparedness Born from Lived Experience



Rural Traditions and Livelihoods Beyond City Limits



**Human resilience, practical disaster preparedness, and living traditions.
Learning experiences unique to Minamisanriku.**

Minamisanriku Homestays | Ideal for stays of 3 nights, 2 weeks, or longer

Students consistently describe homestays as "the highlight of their entire experience."

Living with families engaged in farming, fishing, or guesthouse operations, participants immerse themselves in authentic Japanese life beyond typical tourist experiences.



Sample Daily Schedule

7:00~	Wake up and Breakfast	The day begins with homemade breakfast and casual conversation about the day ahead.
9:00~	Experiential Program	Programs include disaster preparedness, Japanese language study, shrine visits, farm experiences, and kiriko lantern-making.
16:00~	Return Home, Prepare Dinner	Students help their host family prepare and serve dinner after returning home.
18:00~	Dinner	Students enjoy dinner with their host family, talking about school and cultural differences.
19:00~	Clean up and Family Time	Students help cleanup after dinner, watch TV, and enjoy time with their host family.
22:00~	Bedtime	Prepare for tomorrow

- Consecutive homestay: Student's stay with the same family throughout their stay in Minamisanriku
- 3~6 students per household
- Experienced hosts ensure a comfortable, welcoming environment

Initial nervousness gives way to genuine connections - by departure, students are already planning their return. Through extended stays, participants find a "second family" in Japan.

The Value of Extended Homestays

In a nurturing family setting, students experience Japanese culture firsthand while developing independence and teamwork - growth that extends far beyond the trip.

Experience Japanese Culture and Values Through Daily Life



Homestays provide experiences tourism cannot offer. Through shared meals, family values, and daily routines, students are immersed in Japanese culture and hospitality.



Intercultural Understanding

Naturally Develop Japanese for Real Connection



Daily conversations with host families expose students to natural Japanese beyond textbooks. Through repeated real-world practice, knowledge becomes practical communication ability.



Improved Language Skills

Organically Foster Independent Thinking and Acting



Living with a host family naturally develops respect for boundaries, consideration for others, and independent initiative. These foster autonomy and teamwork skills vital for future academic and career success.



Life Skills Development

Nearby Support Provides Comfort and Security



The host family's presence ensures comfort even for first-time long-term travelers. Students can rely on them during difficult moments, providing essential emotional security.



Support for Well-being

Learning Through Daily Living: 6 Days Experiencing Nature's Rhythms | Sample Schedule

Six days immersed in Minamisanriku life, deeply exploring disaster preparedness, culture, and community exchange. All meals, accommodations, and activities are tailored to your school or group's requirements.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
	Arrive in Japan/Travel to Minamisanriku	Opening Ceremony ~ Life and Nature Experience	School Visit	Customized Experiential Programs		Farewell and Departure
Morning	Tokyo ↓ Sendai ↓ Minamisanriku	- Welcome ceremony - Orientation - Minamisanriku 3.11 Memorial Learning Program - Lunch in the shopping district	- Welcome ceremony - Class observation - Group work - Lunch - School tour - Cultural exchange session	Preparation of local cuisine & Shared meal with community residents	Fishery Experience	Farewell Ceremony
Afternoon		- Guided Bus Tour - Meet Host Families	- Club activity experience - Closing ceremony	Kiriko Craft Experience	BBQ or Lunch at a Traditional House	Lunch in Matsushima or Sendai Area
Night	Hotel	Homestay (Dinner and Family Life)				Departure from Sendai

6 Day Study Tour (sample)

- **Minimum Group Size:** 10 people • **Price:** starting at 130,000
- **Included:** Accommodations, activity fees, and transportation between Sendai and Minamisanriku during the program
- **Not Included:** Airfare, transportation to Sendai, travel insurance, and personal expenses



Welcome Ceremony and Meeting Host Families

We introduce first-time visitors to Minamisanriku before the homestay begins.

The homestay opens with a meeting ceremony. Despite initial nerves, students depart for their host families' homes with excitement and hope.

Orientation: Introduction to
Minamisanriku



Karuta: Traditional Japanese Card Game



First Meeting with Host Families



We help students settle in on day one with various group activities and interactions!

Multiple Learning and Experiential Programs Available During Your Stay

We offer experiential programs unique to Minamisanriku throughout your stay.

From disaster preparedness education to nature and cultural immersion, activities foster individual learning and growth.

Learning to Protect Life Disaster and Nature Education

Storyteller programs teach critical lessons through lived



Cultural Exchange Japanese Schools

Experience Japanese school life and through classes and club schools.



Connecting People Through Food Culture & Food Exchange

Traditional Cooking, Zen

Meditation and shared meals foster warm connections with community members



Craftsmanship Craftsmanship Experience

Enjoy hands-on activities introducing Minamisanriku's

local industries and traditional cultures



Oceans and Forest Nature and En Learning

Fishing, farming, and nature observation reveal

connections between Minamisanriku's natural abundance and daily life.



Storyteller Bus Tour" with Amelia Sasaki from the Philippines

Bus tour of disaster sites guided by storyteller Amelia Sasaki.

Students visit affected areas, hear firsthand accounts, and learn about the recovery journey.



30 years in Minamisanriku | Disaster survivor

Amelia Sasaki (Philippines)

- Relocated to Minamisanriku following marriage
- Board member, International Exchange Association
- Coordinated disaster support for foreign residents in Japan¥

Amelia's Disaster Experience

After the earthquake, she evacuated to higher ground and watched in shock as the familiar town was swallowed by black muddy torrents. While her family evacuated safely, the English school and lunch shop she ran were completely swept away.

Her first thought was of fellow Filipinos living in Tohoku. The tsunami affected not only Japanese people but also foreign residents in the disaster area. She shares the severity of their experiences with visitors to the town.



Sample Storyteller Bus Route with Amelia
Togura Community Center → Former Disaster
Prevention Administration Building → Earthquake
Memorial Park

Students learn resilience through her example of overcoming adversity.

Farewell Ceremony

Students who were once nervous now embrace their host families. Families tell them "Please come back" and "You were like our own child" as both reluctantly part ways.



Student Testimonial

I had many special experiences during this trip. The homestay was especially memorable. My host parents prepared delicious meals every day, and I was always well-fed.

Even if I visited Japan 100 times as a tourist, I couldn't have such a special experience. This journey was far more meaningful than I ever imagined.

I'm truly grateful I participated in this study tour. Thank you.

Participants stay in touch during emergencies and are invited to weddings—family-like relationships continue long after returning home.

International Study Tours: Past Participants

Minamisanriku began formally hosting study tours in 2017.

We have maintained particularly strong, ongoing relationships with Taiwanese high schools and American university students over the years.

実施時期	学校名	国名
3/ 2017	University Study Tour (4 days)	 USA
8/ 2018	Professional Development (3 days)	 Laos
3/2018	University Study Tour (4 days)	 USA
8/2018	High School Study Tour (4 days)	 USA
6/2019	High School Japanese Language Program (14 days)	 Taiwan
2/2023	Professional Training (3 days)	Latin America
1/2024	University Japanese Language (9 days)	 Taiwan
7/2024	Elementary and Middle School (3 days)	 Korea
4/2025	Soccer Team Camp (2 days)	 Australia
5/2025	High School Japanese Language Program (5 days)	 Taiwan
7/2025	University Study Tour (3 days)	 USA
7/2025	High School Japanese Language Program (9 days)	 Taiwan



International Groups Hosted in
Minamisanriku over 8 years
(2017~2025)

**165 Groups 3,700
Participants**



Selected multi-night programs shown. We also host university study tours during summer and winter breaks, plus numerous school trips with shorter stays.

Can't stay long? We offer homestay and home visit experiences from just one night!

Limited time? No problem.

We offer homestays from just one night or day-visit home experiences. Contact us to discuss what works for your group!



*3-6 per household | Max 40 total | ~3 hours (subject to availability)



Cook together, stroll through the neighborhood, and share everyday moments.

A single day is enough to enjoy the authentic charm of rural Minamisanriku!

Comprehensive Support in Minamisanriku

"Can't send chaperones" or "Worried about preparation?" Leave those concerns to us.

From program planning to on-site support and issuing certificates of completion, Minamisanriku offers a proven track record and reliable support system you can trust.

Customized Programming



We customize programs around disaster preparedness, agriculture, inquiry learning, or other themes based on your goals and grade levels.

Tokyo sightseeing combinations are also available—we adapt to your needs.

Full On-Site Support Available No Chaperones Required



Local coordinators support the entire program even without accompanying staff.

We provide dedicated translation, scheduling, and emergency response services.

Certificate of Completion Issuance



Participants in extended study programs can receive certificates documenting their activities and achievements.

These certificates are useful for post-trip reporting, university applications, and communicating program outcomes to parents and schools.

Extensive Experience, Comprehensive Support



Proven experience hosting groups from Taiwan, the US, and beyond.

Established host family vetting, insurance coverage, and emergency protocols ensure program safety.

Study Tour FAQ

Q1	Do group leaders need to accompany the group throughout the program?	No. Local coordinators provide full support from airport arrival through departure, enabling student-only participation. Of course, accompanying staff are always welcome.
Q2	What languages are supported? Can students who don't speak Japanese participate?	Basic Japanese is expected, but support is available. Beginner-level students are welcome—trying to use the language is part of the learning experience. English and Chinese-speaking staff are available when needed.
Q3	Who creates the program schedule? Is customization possible?	We offer fully customized programs. Share your goals—learning themes, specific locations, or other preferences—and we'll design an itinerary that meets your objectives.
Q4	Are flexible program lengths available?	Flexible durations available. Typical stays are 5-7 days, but we accommodate both shorter and longer programs.
Q5	Is it possible to include other destinations beyond Minamisanriku in the itinerary?	Yes. Popular combinations include Tokyo or Sendai sightseeing and university visits. We create efficient itineraries tailored to your route and budget.
Q6	How are homestays organized? How many students stay per household?	Typically, 3-6 same-gender students per household. We accommodate cultural and religious needs, matching students with families based on allergies, dietary requirements, and other preferences.
Q7	How far in advance should we contact you before the trip?	Please contact us 3-6 months in advance. Early planning allows time for scheduling, budget approvals, and securing travel documents.
Q8	Are there blackout dates or periods to avoid?	Advance planning is needed for Japanese national holidays, year-end/New Year, and May (peak domestic school trip season). We coordinate to avoid conflicts with local school schedules and major events.
Q9	What happens in case of accident or illness?	We work closely with local medical facilities to respond appropriately. International travel insurance covering medical care is required for all participants.



Beyond homestays—numerous experiences await!

Introducing Experiential Program Options Access to Minamisanriku & Contact Information

Disaster Studies

Storyteller programs and disaster education teach critical self-protection and life-saving skills through lessons from the disaster.

Learning Program

An experiential program at Minamisanriku 3.11 Memorial where participants watch resident testimonies and discuss "What would I think and do in that situation?" through peer dialogue.



Participants : 10~50

Availability: Year-round

Educational Program with Storyteller Guides

Storytellers guide participants through disaster sites, sharing experiences and conditions during the disaster. At key locations, participants walk and explore the recovery journey firsthand.



Participants : 10~

Availability: Year-round

Cultural Exchange • Culinary Experiences

Build warm connections with residents through traditional cooking, shared meals, and Zen meditation.

Traditional Cuisine



Participants : 10~30

Zen Meditation



Participants : 10~30

Soba Making Workshop



Participants : 8~20

Lunch at a Traditional House



Participants : 5~35

Availability: Year-round

School Exchange

Experience classes and club activities at local schools, building friendships and immersing in Japanese school life through peer interaction.



School Exchange

Full Day Visit

- Welcome Ceremony
- Class Participation
- Group Work
(Team Building Challenges)
- Lunch
- School Tour
- Cultural Exchange
(School introductions and Performances)
- Club Activity
- Closing Ceremony

Half Day Visit

- Welcome Ceremony
- Class Participation
- School Experience
- Club Activities
- Closing Ceremony

※School exchanges are available at 5 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, and 1 high school in Minamisanriku. If you'd like to arrange exchanges with schools outside the town, please contact us.

Participants : 40

Availability : Year Round

Craft Making Experiences

Explore Minamisanriku's traditional crafts and cultural heritage through various hands-on experiences.

Octopus Piggy Bank Painting

An octopus-shaped savings bank celebrating Minamisanriku's specialty seafood. The name "Octopus-kun" is a Japanese pun meaning "place it and pass your exams"—a popular good luck charm. Paint your own unique version on a blank white bank. (¥2,420 per person)



Participants : 1~180

Availability : Year Round

Mini Moai Painting

Minamisanriku is home to an authentic Moai statue gifted by Chile—a bond forged through shared disaster experiences. Paint your design freely to create your own one-of-a-kind Moai statue. (¥1,430 per person)



Participants : 10~150

Availability : Year Round

Cedar Wood Utensil Making

Choose your favorite wood, strip the thin bark with a small knife, and carefully sand it with sandpaper. (¥2,200/person)



Participants: 1~180

Availability : Year Round

Cocoon Crafting

Try cocoon crafting while connecting with local women in this historic sericulture birthplace! (¥1,210/person)



Participants : 2~80名

Availability : Year Round

Indigo Dyeing

Create an original hand towel using dye made exclusively from Minamisanriku grown indigo plants. (¥2,750/person)



Participants : 2~20

Availability: March~ Nov.

Nature & Environmental Experiences

Experience Minami-Sanriku's fisheries, agriculture, and abundant nature nurtured by the sea and forests to discover how they connect to daily life.

Fishing Industry

Explore Minamisanriku's core industry—fishing—through bay boat tours, marine life observation, rope skills, and educational activities. Learn about fishers' work and aquaculture operations. (¥3,630 per person)



Participants : 8~100名

Availability: May ~ Sept.

Farm Work

Experience farming shaped by local climate and landscape through hands-on work with the soil. Planting, weeding, and harvesting activities deepen understanding of food production and agriculture. (¥2,200 per person)
*Activities vary by season.



Participants: 20~120

Availability: April ~November

Mountain Ascetic's Trail

Mount Tazune is a sacred mountain with sweeping Pacific Ocean views. Traverse the ancient paths once traveled by mountain ascetics and experience their spiritual and training culture. (¥3,300 per person)



Participants: 3~40

Availability: March ~ Sept.

Pedal-Powered Kayak "HOBIE"

Feel the ocean firsthand while operating a 5-person pedal kayak. Teamwork deepens as participants collaborate to navigate. (¥6,600 per person)



Availability: May ~ Oct.

Participants: 16 ~ 40

Kiriko

Create traditional "kiriko" paper-cut art passed down through Minamisanriku families. This hands-on activity offers insights into regional spiritual culture and traditional forms of prayer. (¥2,420 per person)



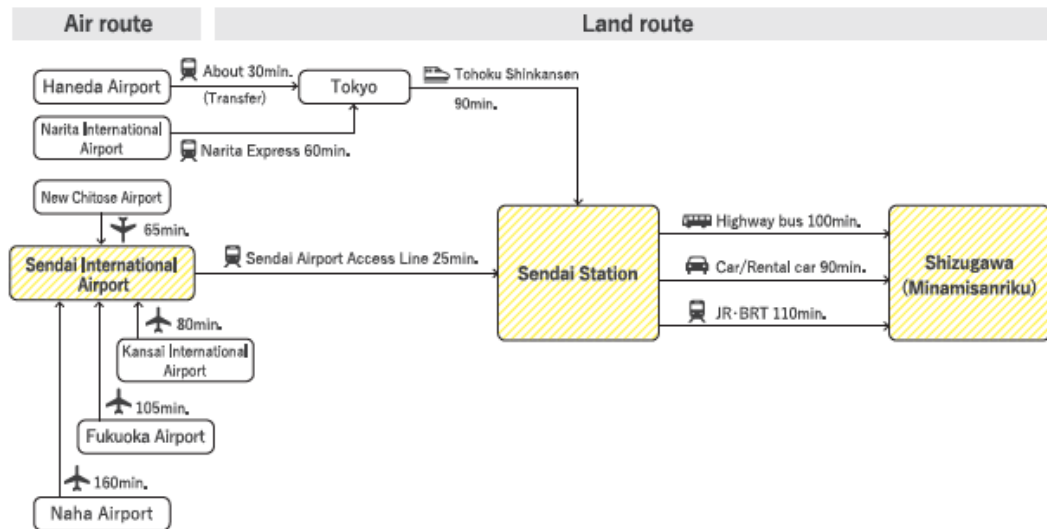
Participants: 10~40

Availability: Year Round

Direct flights to Sendai Airport operate from Taiwan, China, and South Korea. From the Tokyo area, the Shinkansen (bullet train) reaches Sendai in approximately 2 hours.

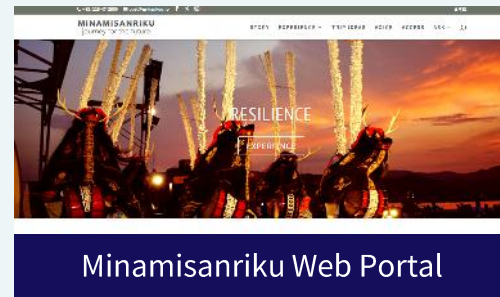
For group travel, chartered buses from Sendai Airport or Sendai Station offer convenient transportation options. The Tourism Association can arrange bus services on your behalf.

Access to Minamisanriku from Across Japan



Encounters and learning experiences in Minamisanriku empower individuals to shape a better future. 。

Please contact us with any questions or to discuss program opportunities!



<https://www.m-kankou.jp/english/>

For inquiries regarding this program

Minamisanriku Tourism Association (General Incorporated Association)

【Travel Agency License No.: 3-330 (Registered with the Governor of Miyagi Prefecture)】

TEL : 0226-47-2550 E-MAIL : post@m-kankou.jp ※Business Hours 9:00~18:00 (Closed for End of Year Holidays)

Homepage: <https://www.m-kankou.jp/>



Contact us directly through
our inquiry form!

