

Ashikita Matchlock Gun Corps Samurai Experience

A day with the corps on the old Satsuma Highway

The sound of the matchlock today
is the same sound heard
in the age of the samurai.

01 Not a Show. Four Hundred Years of Skill.



The Ashikita Matchlock Gun Corps in action

The Ashikita Matchlock Gun Corps keeps alive the skill and form of the matchlock, an early type of firearm. It carries on the gunnery of the Inatomi school and the tradition of the Ashikita Ogorizutsu, local gunners who served the Hosokawa lords. Re-formed in the early 2000s, the corps is based in Ashikita, and its members are ordinary residents of the town. It has given more than 750 demonstrations, including at the Tower of London, the 150th anniversary of Japanese immigration to Hawaii, in Korea, and at Rugby World Cup 2019.

GUINNESS WORLD RECORD

Certified on 28 September 2014, right here in Ashikita

For the corps' tenth anniversary, 252 people from 31 groups across Japan gathered at Otachimisaki Park Beach, and 251 were officially counted firing their matchlocks (blanks) at the same moment.

02 The Day, Hour by Hour

- 7:45 ○ Meet at Kumamoto Station
- 8:00 ○ Depart by private coach
- 9:00 ○ Pick-up at Shin-Yatsushiro Sta. (meet 8:50)
- 10:00 ● Arrive at Sashiki-juku; orientation
- 10:15 ● Guided walk on the Satsuma Highway
- 11:30 ● Lunch at Sashiki Castle ruins
- 12:30 ● Armour fitting (option)
- 12:45 ● Matchlock demonstration
- 13:15 ● Open-air tea with koto music
- 13:45 ● Matchlock handling and stance
- 14:30 ● Photographs
- 15:20 ● Leave Sashiki
- 16:20 ○ Finish at Shin-Yatsushiro Station
- 17:20 ○ Finish at Kumamoto Station

○ Grey = coach plan only

● Red = meet-on-site plan starts (10:00) and ends (15:20)



Satsuma Highway Walk

Sashiki-juku: an old post town whose saw-tooth houses hid defenders.



Local Bento Lunch

A bento featuring Ashikita ingredients, eaten on the castle hill above the Yatsushiro Sea.



The Demonstration

A command, a breath of silence, then the roar and white smoke.



Tea and Koto Music

Matcha and a sweet to the sound of the koto, a Japanese zither.



Handling a Matchlock

A corps member teaches you the hold and the stance. You do not fire the gun.



Photos with the Corps

Photos with the corps and their banners. Wearing armour is optional.

03 Dates & Prices

2026 DATES

Sat **14 Nov**

Book by 7 Nov, 6 pm (JST)

Sun **15 Nov**

Book by 8 Nov, 6 pm (JST)

Sat **5 Dec**

Book by 28 Nov, 6 pm (JST)

Sun **6 Dec**

Book by 29 Nov, 6 pm (JST)

Solo travellers welcome

Coach Plan

Private coach included · about 9 hours

Monitor tour special price

Adult 30,000-yen **8,000** yen

Child 8,800-yen **8,000** yen

Tax incl. Child: 6-15. Under 6: free, no lunch

Kumamoto Sta.: meet 7:45 / finish 17:20

Shin-Yatsushiro Sta.: meet 8:50 / finish 16:20



Book this plan

Meet-on-Site Plan

Meet in Sashiki · about 6 hours

Monitor tour special price

Adult 20,000-yen **5,000** yen

Child 3,300-yen **3,000** yen

Tax incl. Child: 6-15. Under 6: free, no lunch

Sashiki-juku: meet 10:00 / finish 15:20

No coach; travel to Sashiki on your own



Book this plan

Monitor tour: guests fill in a questionnaire, and photos taken on the tour may be used in print.

Armour fitting and photographs: optional, 30,000 yen, limited numbers. 15-20 guests per tour; cancelled with full refund if fewer than 15.

Included

- Matchlock demonstration and handling
- Guided walk and multilingual audio guide (English)
- Open-air tea (matcha and a sweet) with koto music
- Lunch: a bento of local produce
- An original tenugui (cotton hand towel)
- Travel insurance
- Private coach there and back (coach plan only)

Not Included / What to Bring

Not included

Travel to the meeting point; food and drink other than lunch

What to bring

Walking shoes, comfortable clothes, a drink, a smartphone and earphones (for the audio guide), a hat or jacket for the season

Please Note

- You handle the matchlock only under the corps' instruction. Guests do not fire the guns.
- The castle ruins have slopes and steps.
- Order and times may change with the weather. In rain, parts of the day may move indoors.
- Lunch cannot be adjusted for food allergies.

Cancellation Fees

Up to 11 days before: free
10 to 8 days before: 20%
7 to 2 days before: 30%
Day before: 40%
On the day: 50%
After start or no-show: 100%
(% of the tour price)

