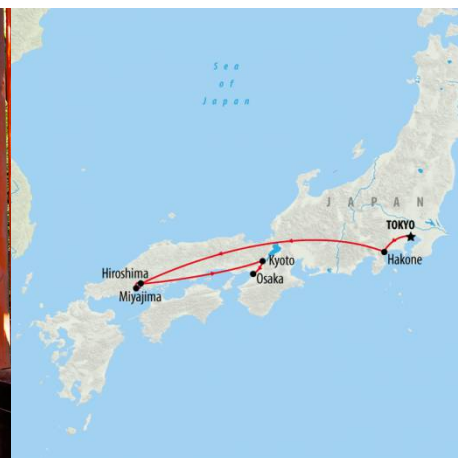
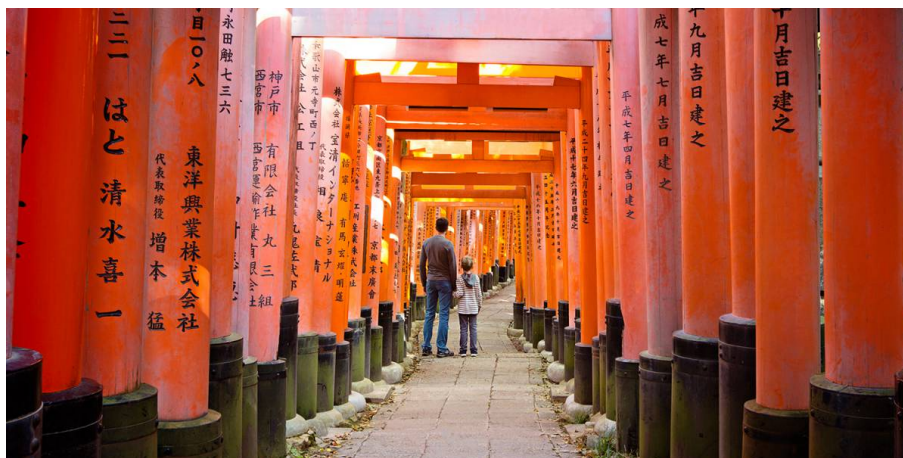


Tokyo to Osaka Family Adventure

12 Days | Tokyo to Osaka



SEMI INDEPENDENT TOUR:

Take your family on a Japanese adventure travelling from Tokyo to Osaka. Take in the must-see sights of the neon-lit capital, marvel at the breath-taking beauty of Mt Fuji at Hakone Izu National Park, feed mischievous monkeys at a monkey park, discover the famous island of Miyajima and unleash your inner gamer in Osaka on this 12-day journey offering experiences for all ages.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Tokyo - explore the historic district of Asakusa, stroll through the sumo district, walk across the famous Shibuya crossing, discover the fashion hub of Harajuku and take in the bright lights of the business district of Shinjuku
- Hiroshima – uncover the city's tragic past at the Peace Memorial museum
- Cooking Class - learn how to prepare authentic Japanese sushi with our hands-on cooking class
- Kyoto – learn the art of meditation with a lesson by a Buddhist monk in Daisen-in Temple

- Hakone - admire views of iconic Mount Fuji with optional National Park pass
- Miyajima Island - enjoy the relaxed pace of life on this Japanese isle, explore the island's many temples and shrines and do some shopping
- Stay in a ryokan - sample Japanese hospitality, bathing in natural hot springs and sleeping on a futon
- Kyoto – walk through vermilion torii gates at the Fushimi Inari Shrine

What's Included

- IC Transport Card
- 11 nights accommodation in 3 - 4 star hotels and Ryokans
- 7 Day JR Pass
- Sushi Making Class in Tokyo
- Train from Tokyo - Fuji Haone Izu National Park
- Meditation Lesson in Daisen-In Temple in Kyoto
- Calligraphy Lesson in Kyoto
- Entrances to sites mentioned in the itinerary
- Local Guides for 6 days of scheduled sightseeing in Tokyo, Kyoto, Hiroshima and Osaka. Unescorted travel between cities.
- Train from Odawara - Kyoto
- Train from Kyoto- Hiroshima
- Train from Hiroshima - Shin-Osaka

What's Not Included

- International flights and visas
- Airport transfers
- Laundry, drinks, items of a personal nature and any meals not included in the itinerary
- Optional activities

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Tokyo

Welcome to Tokyo. Arrive in Tokyo and transfer to your hotel. Details will be given on how to do this by public transport or we can arrange a private transfer at an extra charge. Remainder of day at leisure.

Overnight - Tokyo

Day 2 : Tokyo - Shinjuku Gyoen & Sensoji Temple



This morning meet your adventure leader, who'll be waiting in the lobby of our accommodation for a trip briefing. This will

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give you all the information we need to have a safe and smooth adventure through Japan. Our day begins enjoying the spacious lawns, meandering paths and taking in the tranquil scenery of Shinjuku Gyoen, one of Tokyo's largest parks and one of the most popular places in the city to see cherry blossoms in spring.

This afternoon take in the cityscape with an incredible view from atop the Tokyo Metropolitan Government building. Then learn about Buddhism on a visit to the Sensoji Temple in Asakusa and explore the district's charming streets.

Overnight - Tokyo

Day 3 : Ghibli Museum & Shibuya Crossing

Today visit the Ghibli Museum, which showcases the work of the Japanese animation Studio Ghibli (due to overwhelming demand, tickets are not guaranteed. We will give a refund for the tickets if not available – 1000 yen for adults, 400 yen for children).

Enjoy an afternoon of traditional-modern contrast in the Harajuku area of Tokyo. First wander through the forest until you reach the Meiji Shrine dedicated to Emperor Meiji and his wife, Empress Shokun, who, in the early 20th century, began Japan's transformation from a feudal to a modern society. Then move on to the Harajuku shopping district to see maids, punks, goths, and fashionistas – anything goes in Harajuku! See the famous Shibuya Crossing. When the lights turn red at this busy intersection, pedestrians surge into the junction from all sides, like a floodgate opening. You can observe the organized chaos from the second-floor window of the Tsutaya building on the crossing's north side. The rest of the evening is at leisure.

Overnight - Tokyo

Day 4 : Japanese Sushi Making



Begin the day by experiencing the hustle and bustle of the world-famous Tsukiji Fish Market. Learn how the Japanese demand for fresh seafood drives a huge fishing industry, and try fresh fish from this morning's catch! (Optional)

Head over to the flashy Ginza shopping area. Then for something different visit Akihabara – Japan's "electric town", which is a hub of anime and manga stores and also home to Japan's most famous

J-pop group, AKB48. This afternoon enjoy a sushi-making class led by a master sushi chef, and then sample your produce for dinner. Learn how sushi evolved from a South-East Asian technique of preserving fish in fermented rice (please be punctual).

For your free time learn the ancient art of samurai with a short sword demonstration (2pm, 3pm, 4pm, 5pm) in Tokyo's Samurai Museum or call in at the batting cages to experience first-hand one of the most popular sports in Japan – baseball! (Optional)

Overnight - Tokyo

Day 5 : Tokyo to Hakone



Transfer by train to the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park and enjoy views of Mt. Fuji (weather dependent), an iconic volcano which has come to symbolize Japan, with a perfectly

symmetrical cone that rises to 12,388 feet. Take a series of cable cars and mountain railways through the park, before descending for a cruise on scenic Ashi Lake. Today, sample black eggs – a local delicacy coloured by the sulphuric spring waters they're cooked in. (Hakone Free Pass from Shinjuku 5140 yen, which includes cable car/boat round trip tickets through the national park)

Tonight you'll stay in a ryokan – a traditional Japanese inn, where you sleep on futon beds laid over tatami mat floors and enjoy Japanese traditional hot spring- Onsen. As a reminder, guests must bathe naked in the hot springs (gender separated) in the Ryokan.

Note: As of Oct 2019 the Hakone Ropeway has been reopened after been temporarily suspended due to increased volcanic activity in the area. This is great news after months of being closed, but Hakone is still recovering from the recent typhoon.

For further information, please see:

<https://www.hakoneropeway.co.jp/foreign/en/>

<https://www.hakonenavi.jp/international/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/en.pdf>

Overnight - Hakone

Day 6 : Hakone to Hiroshima

Hakone – Hiroshima. Enjoy some free time this morning before making your way to Odawara train station and taking an unguided bullet train from Odawara to Hiroshima. On arrival to Hiroshima transfer by tram to accommodation by yourself.

Looking for dinner ideas? Experience an all you can eat Okonomiyaki – a savory pancake that both the people of Hiroshima and Osaka claim is best in their home city!

Overnight - Kyoto

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Day 7 : Miyajima Island



Learn about Hiroshima's tragic past at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. Its structure was all that was left standing near the hypocentre of the atomic bomb. Find out about the city's recovery and its pacifist mission for a peaceful and nuclear-free world.

In the afternoon, take a short ferry trip to Miyajima, an island where tame deer accompany you as you explore the stunning shrines, beaches and waterfalls. Head to Itsukushima shrine, a registered world heritage site. Just offshore you will see an enormous torii gate standing in the sea, one of Japan's most beloved sights. Dine at Sushi Tai, order sushi and sashimi for a delicious meal.

Note: From June 2019 the floating Torii Gate is undergoing renovations.

The iconic floating Torii Gate will be undergoing renovations from June 2019. During the renovation works the 'floating' torii gate will be covered by scaffolding. It is not known yet exactly how long the renovation will take but they are expected to last at least around one year.

Overnight - Kyoto

Day 8 : Hiroshima to Kyoto

Make your way to Hiroshima train station for your next bullet train. Travel unguided from Hiroshima to Kyoto (Transfer at Shin-Osaka Station). Your guide will be waiting for you at Kyoto Station.

Start the day with a slice of meditation. Discover your inner peace with a Zen Buddhist monk who will take you on a journey of tranquillity, during a meditation class at the Daisen-In Temple. Afterwards, explore the temple, and enjoy an informal tea ceremony with volunteers from the

temple.

Then head to perhaps the most iconic site of Kyoto: The Golden Pavilion at the Kinkaku-ji Zen Buddhist Temple. Walk around the lake and be mesmerized by the shimmering golden reflection of the pavilion on the water.

In the evening, step into the theatre at Gion Corner where you'll see a show of traditional Japanese Performances. The program includes real geisha performing their traditional arts, as well as other Japanese performances of comedy, spoken word and dance. The various performances have English translations in the accompanying program. We recommend queuing for the show 30 minutes - 1 hour in advance.

Overnight - Kyoto

Day 9 : Arashiyama Monkey Park



Walk through quaint side streets to the 1,200-year-old Kiyomizu Dera Temple and enjoy postcard-worthy views over Kyoto.

Stroll around Higashiyama District, one of the city's best-preserved historic districts, to purchase some souvenirs from traditional merchant shops. In the afternoon, visit the district of Arashiyama, on the Western outskirts of Kyoto and navigate through Arashiyama's lush bamboo forests to the Tenryu-Ji Temple. It's the most important of Kyoto's five great Zen temples, but the temple's gardens are the real show-stopper; designed in the 14th century, they have survived the fires and wars that damaged the buildings and have remained in pristine condition for centuries. Whilst there, make sure to look into the Dharma Hall to see the dragon's eyes on the mural – they'll follow you as you walk past.

Climb up (30 minutes) to Arashiyama Monkey Park. At the top, feed mischievous monkeys or simply enjoy the panoramic views of Kyoto below. (Optional). In the evening explore Nishiki Market which is called Kyoto's Kitchen where you can find all kinds of local food. (Optional)

Overnight - Hiroshima

Day 10 : Japanese Calligraphy & Fushimi Inari Shrine



Experience Japanese culture first hand with a calligraphy lesson led by a Japanese master of calligraphy in her personal workshop. Dress up in traditional Kimono/Yukata and stroll around in the city. Leave memorable photos with your family and friends!

In the afternoon, set in an old elementary school building, the International Manga Museum houses over 300,000 publications, many of which are in English, so grab one, settle into a quiet corner, and enter a whole new world of Japanese manga. You're free to watch one of the manga artists stationed there, deep in concentration as they create their art!

Visit the Fushimi Inari Shrine, a major Shinto shrine complex in wooded hills. To get onto the beautiful walking trails at the back of the complex you'll pass through corridors of thousands of bright red gates. For something quintessentially Kyoto, spend the evening wandering through Pontocho Alley, full of lanterns and intimate wood-panelled restaurants for dinner. Quietly sip on sake and look out for geishas wandering past.

Overnight - Hiroshima

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Day 11 : Kyoto to Osaka

Wave goodbye to Hiroshima and hop onto the bullet train to Shin-Osaka – an 88 min journey. In the afternoon, visit Osaka Castle, a famous Japanese landmark that represented the new and unified Japan under Toyotomi. The castle can now be visited as a museum.

Make a switch from old to new with a visit to a nine-story gaming arcade in the heart of Osaka for a modern Japanese experience. End the day with a stroll around Shinsaibashi and along the Dotonbori riverfront. Osaka is known as Japan's kitchen so on your last night try some of its renowned takoyaki - battered octopus shaped into a ball and fried!

Overnight - Osaka

Day 12 : Goodbye Japan!

On your last day, have brunch in Osaka and say goodbye to your guide. Catch the bullet train back to Tokyo using your rail pass to finish up or continue your travels.

Our partners

This tour is operated in conjunction with our trusted partner and you will join travellers who booked through different operators, not solely On The Go.

The sightseeing group may vary in size from 2 – 18 persons.

Joining Arrangements

Please note arrival transfers are not included and you will need to make your own way to the hostel on day 1, you will have the remainder of the day at leisure before meeting your guide on the morning of day 2.

Meeting Point: Shiba Park Hotel

1 Chome-5-10 Shibakoen, Minato, Tokyo 105-0011, Japan
Tel: (+81) 3-3433-4141

Meeting Time: 09:00

Emergency contact: +86 185 2132 1347

End This Tour in Tokyo

You can opt to end your tour in Tokyo. On day 12 you will travel by train from Osaka to Tokyo, using your JR pass, where you will catch your connecting train or flight, or if you wish we

can arrange a night's accommodation for an additional fee.

Please note that you will be travelling unescorted on day 12 and will need to make your own way to/from the train station. If you would like to extend your stay and end your tour in Tokyo, please let us know at time of booking.

Accommodation

Most hotels in Japan offer single rooms with one bed and twin share rooms fitted with two single beds. It is relatively uncommon to find double rooms with one large bed. If you have requested a double room with one large bed we will always request this particular rooming configuration with the hotel, though it is not guaranteed and you may often be accommodated in a twin share. Further triple share rooms and family suites are very hard to come by.

All accommodation is included from the arrival day until check out time on the final day of the tour however there is an option to extend your stay and book additional post night accommodation.

Local guides

This is a semi-independent tour and you will travel from place to place unaccompanied and meet the local guide at each new destination that will conduct your sightseeing arrangements in this location.

Time keeping

Punctuality is very important throughout the tour and you will usually be given a time to meet your tour leader and the rest of the group in reception. In the event that you miss the meeting time you will have to make your own way to where the group are, this will be at your own expense.

Delays can occur on the trips, although they are rare we recommend you do not book onward travel too close to the end of the tour to allow time for delays. We take no responsibility for any missed flights or additional expenses if the group arrives late to the departure city.

Food

One of the best things about visiting any country is sampling its cuisine and during your stay in Japan you'll probably be wishing to do just that. Many Japanese restaurants specialise in one particular type of food. Sushi is of course the most famous dish, but Japanese food does not stop with raw fish; other specialities include teriyaki (marinated beef/chicken/fish seared on a hot plate), sukiyaki (thin slices of beef, bean curd and vegetables cooked in soy sauce and then dipped in egg), and tempura (deep fried seafood and vegetables).

If everything so far sounds a bit meat and fish orientated don't be alarmed - there are vegetarian options in Japan. Try the wonderful zaru soba (buck-wheat noodles served cold), a bowl of Udon (thicker noodles) in a mountain vegetable soup, tofu steak or a vegetable okonomiyaki (savoury pancake). If you are feeling adventurous you could try natto, this is a sticky and slightly smelly concoction made of fermented soya beans.

If you want a more general selection, then the best place to go is an Izakaya (Japanese pub) where you will find an extensive and pretty cheap choice of food and drink. Izakaya often offer tabehodai or nomihodai - for a set price you get an hour or two to eat or drink as much as you like. Choosing exactly what to eat is made easier by well illustrated menus or plastic food displays at the doorway – just point and see what you get. In major cities you will also find plenty of Western-style restaurants.

Each region of Japan also has its own speciality foods, unique to or particularly famous in that one area of the country. These are nearly always made from locally produced ingredients.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Japan Country Guide

Visas

UK, AUS, NZ, USA and CAN passport holders do not require a visa at present to enter Japan

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for touristic purposes for a stay of up to 90 days.

South African passport holders can obtain a visa prior to arrival for touristic purposes, for a stay of up to 90 days.

A full passport with two full blank pages and at least 6 months validity beyond date of exit from Japan upon entrance is essential. Please check your personal visa requirements with your embassy if you are from another country.

Please double-check all visa requirements with the Japan embassy at least one month before travel as the above is intended as a guide.

Please Note: Visa information is subject to change. Contact your nearest Japanese Embassy for the most up to date information. www.onthegotours.com/Japan/Visas

Fitness & Tour Transportation

We utilise public transportation in Japan because it's modern, punctual and easy to use. Japan's bullet trains run at speeds of up to 320km/h so they're undoubtedly the quickest way to get around the country. Additionally, we use buses, trains and our trusted feet for sightseeing within the cities. This provides a unique insight to how the locals do it, and also means that we avoid heavy traffic and delays. We will walk an average of 3.5 – 9km each day, with steps, slopes and often uneven ground at sites.

Please note also that there may be times when you may not get a seat and will need to stand for the duration of travel and that you will be required to carry your own luggage at stations.

With the above in mind, it makes a lot of sense to spend time getting additional exercise in preparation for your holiday and wearing suitable footwear whilst on our Japan tours.

Is This Holiday For You?

Travelling to far-flung corners of the earth often involves encountering lifestyles and conditions that are very different from what you are used to back home. As such it is important to come prepared for

unusual situations, local inadequacies and unpredictable events as and when they occur. Foreign travel is definitely not suitable for people who expect everything to go exactly as planned, as things can and do change in foreign countries. The people, customs, creed and languages are different from one region to the next.

Japan is a country of unparalleled contrasts, a destination where you'll be afforded plenty of unique encounters, and if you can travel with an open mind you will have a wonderful time here. In return, please remember to demonstrate sensitivity and respect for local customs.

Climate

Weather conditions vary in Japan depending on location and time of year. Typically summers are hot and humid, whilst winters are significantly colder - especially in the mountains, with a dry climate and light snowfall. Spring and Autumn offer warm days and cool nights, making this a wonderful time to explore the highlights of Japan. June is considered the rainy season with hot and muggy weather. Temperatures do vary depending on the region, so be sure to check in advance when travelling to the far north or far south of Japan.

Health

While Japan is considered safe make sure you are up to date on routine vaccinations; it is also recommended to be vaccinated for Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Japanese B Encephalitis.

Japan does have mosquitoes in the summer months, but Malaria is not a problem in Japan. If you are allergic to bites from mosquitoes please take appropriate precautions; anti-mosquito sprays and creams are widely available in Japan or you could bring your own from home.

Some medication including the stimulant dexamphetamine (used to treat ADHD) and pseudoephedrine (found in some cold and flu tablets) is banned. There are strict rules on the import of medication, and what can be brought into the country for personal use, check if your medication is legal and find

out if any quantity restrictions or certification requirements apply. Consult your doctor about alternatives well in advance of travel.

Water is safe to drink in all areas of Japan.

Currency

The official currency in Japan is Japanese Yen (JPY).

Most major currencies can be exchanged at the airport. Please bring JPY with you from home or exchange your preferred currency to JPY at the airport. Traveller's cheques can be exchanged in major banks, larger hotels and some duty free shops. While credit cards are becoming increasingly popular in Japan, they are not commonly used for making purchases as in western countries so you are best to pay in cash where possible.

Avoid cash machines at banks as these do not normally accept foreign-issued cards. Instead use the Post Office cash machines from which you will be able to take out money using Visa cards, MasterCard, Cirrus or Maestro. Note that Post Offices may only be open during office hours Mon to Fri. Convenience store chain 7-Eleven will have ATMs in almost all of its stores which will accept most foreign-issued credit and debit cards.

Japan is a mainly cash using country, so it is recommended to bring a healthy amount of cash with you to get started (around JPY 50,000), not USD or other currencies which are only easily changeable at the airport. While credit card usage is increasing, be prepared to use cash.

Time & Voltage

Time: Japan is 9 hours ahead of GMT and does not observe daylight savings.

Voltage: In Japan the standard voltage is different from other regions of the world at 100V, and power outlets accept a flat 2-pin plug (similar to North American outlets). To cover all bases, it is best to pack an international travel adaptor!

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

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Japan

Hakone - Fuji Hakone Free Pass JPY 5140 pp

Kyoto - Bike Hire JPY 1400 pp

Kyoto - Gion Corner Show JPY 3100 (per adult) JPY 2200 (per child)

Kyoto - Golden Pavillion Entrance JPY 400 pp

Tokyo - Batting Cages JPY 400 pp

Tokyo - Samurai Museum & Performance JPY 1800 pp