

Land of the Rising Sun

14 days | Tokyo to Osaka



Private Tour: Travel like the Tokyoites do in Japan's capital city, learn how to prepare local cuisine, explore mountainous Hakone, cycle through rural countryside in Hida, discover the culture-rich city of Kyoto, visit thriving Hiroshima and spend the night on Miyajima Island on this private tour.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Tokyo - Choose from exploring the historic district of Asakusa, cruising the Sumida River, strolling through Hamarikyu Gardens, discovering the fashion hub of Harajuku and taking in the bright lights of the business district of Shinjuku
- Kyoto - Choose from visiting the Golden Pavillion zen temple of Kinakakuji, Kiyomizu Dera Temple, Higashiyama historic district, Fushimi Inari Shrine and Gion Geisha district
- Cooking Class - Learn how to prepare authentic Japanese cuisine with our hands on cooking class
- Hakone - Explore the Hakone National Park on mountain bus, railway, cable car or funicular railway; cruise across Lake Ashi and admire views of Mount Fuji

- Osaka - Choose from visiting the city aquarium, riding one of the big ferris wheels, exploring Osaka Castle and sampling the city's nightlife
- Nara - Visit shrines and temples, explore Nara Park and feed the unabashed deer
- Takayama - Choose from strolling down the old town's cobbled streets, visiting its many shrines, visiting a Hida folk village outside of the city, browsing market stalls and trying Takayama's famous micro sake brews
- Hiroshima - Choose from visiting the Peace Park and Museum, Hiroshima Castle, the baseball stadium, the Hiroshima Prefectural Museum of Art and the Shukkei-en Garden
- Cycling tour - Explore rural Japan on a cycling tour through the farming villages of Hida
- Miyajima Island - Enjoy the relaxed pace of life on this Japanese isle, take a cable car ride from Mount Misen, explore the island's many temples and shrines and do some shopping

What's Included

- 13 breakfasts, 6 dinner
- Arrival transfer via shared public shuttle bus from Tokyo Airport
- 13 nights accommodation in 3 star hotels and Ryokans. 4 and 5 star options are also available

- Departure transfer via shared shuttle bus to Osaka Airport
- Full day of guided sightseeing in Tokyo
- Cooking class in Tokyo
- Full day of guided sightseeing in Kyoto
- Cycling tour of Hida
- IC Transport Card
- 3 day Hakone Freepass
- Train from Ueno to Odawara
- Train from Odawara to Takayama
- Return train from Takayama to Kyoto
- Train from Kyoto to Hiroshima
- Train from Hiroshima to Miyajima

What's Not Included

- International flights and visas
- Laundry, drinks, items of a personal nature
- Entrance fees not listed in inclusions (for shrines, temples, museums etc.) budget approx \$50 - \$65

ITINERARY

Day 1 : Welcome to Japan!

Welcome to Tokyo! You will be met upon arrival at Tokyo Narita Airport and escorted by shuttle bus to your hotel in the city. Look out for some great views as you ride the elevated highways into town, and spend the rest of the day exploring the city at your own leisure.

Overnight - Tokyo

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Day 2 : Sightseeing in Tokyo



Enjoy a full day of guided sightseeing in Tokyo led by a local guide, offering a perfect introduction to the city. Travelling by public transport, as Tokyoites do, you will get a real feel for city life and your guide will help you discover aspects of Tokyo that you would not be able to find on your own. Rather than a fixed itinerary, you can enjoy the flexibility of seeing and doing exactly what you want.

You can start the day by visiting Asakusa, Tokyo's historic district. Here you can browse the bustling market place of Nakamise Dori, visit the famous Senso-ji Temple and explore the backstreets lined with Kabuki theatres, rustic bars and restaurants. From Asakusa you can take a river cruise on the Sumida River to the Hamarikyu Gardens, a peaceful oasis of greenery and exquisite Japanese aesthetics in the heart of a bustling city.

A short train journey from here can take you to Harajuku, the focal point for Tokyo's teen culture where you will find teenagers hanging out wearing quirky and extreme fashions. Nearby you can also find Meiji Jingu, one of the most famous and important shrines in Tokyo. Then why not end the day surrounded by the bright lights of Shinjuku, Tokyo's main business and entertainment district. Spend the rest of the evening discovering the city on your own. **Overnight - Tokyo (B)**

Day 3 : Japanese Cooking Class

Today try your hand at preparing Japanese cuisine with the help of a local person. Your host will first take you to a local market and together you'll shop for fresh ingredients. You'll then head to a kitchen, located in the Yanaka area, a well-preserved

and traditional district of Tokyo, where you'll be shown how to prepare a traditional Japanese meal including classic dishes such as sushi, tempura or teriyaki chicken which of course you can then enjoy for lunch.

Overnight - Tokyo (B)

Days 4-5 : Tokyo to Hakone



Tokyo - Hakone - breakfast. On the morning of day 4 make your way to Tokyo station where you will get the train to Odawara station, the access point for the Hakone National Park. Bus routes, railway lines and cable cars criss cross this mountainous region making it easy to explore and enjoy the surroundings as well as some of the many top quality art museums. Spend rest of day 4 and day 5 taking in the highlights of the region at your own leisure, and if you are lucky with the weather, you may even be rewarded with stunning views of Mount Fuji.

Note: As of Oct 2019 the Hakone Ropeway has been reopened after been temporarily suspended, although some restrictions remain in place – please see the Trip Notes for further details. **Overnight - Hakone (B:2, D:2)**

Day 6 : Hakone to Takayama



Hakone - Takayama - breakfast. This morning you will take the train from Odawara to Takayama, a delightful town in the heart of the Hida Mountains. Established in the 16th

century as the castle town of the Kanamori family and now famous throughout Japan for its old town area of narrow streets containing many well-preserved inns, tea houses, shops and merchants houses with the latticed windows and overhanging roofs characteristic of the Edo period. The town has many shrines and temples of its own giving rise to the title of 'Little Kyoto'.

Just on the outskirts of the town is the fascinating Hida folk village where old farm houses from across the Hida region have been brought together and rebuilt (beam by beam) on a hillside overlooking the town. Takayama's morning market on the bank of the Miyagawa River is famous and well worth a visit to see the stands selling local farm produce, flowers and crafts. There are also some great micro sake breweries affording the chance to sample the wares of Takayama's most famous product! A stay in Takayama is a chance to get a feel for a way of life that really has all but disappeared from modern Japan. **Overnight - Takayama (B, D)**

Day 7 : Cycling tour of Hida

Today you will have the opportunity to head deeper into rural Japan and take a cycling tour through the rice fields and rural farming villages of Hida. As well as the rural scenery, you will also visit a natural spring, a local temple, Minka (traditional wood farmhouses) and an orchard, offering real insight into country way of life. **Overnight - Takayama (B, D)**

Day 8 : Takayama to Kyoto



Takayama - Kyoto - breakfast. This morning you will travel by train to Kyoto, Japan's ancient capital and the cultural centre of the nation. One of the most culturally rich cities in Asia, Kyoto is home to 17 UNESCO World

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Heritage sites, over 1,600 Buddhist temples and 400 Shinto shrines, this ancient city showcases the heart and soul of traditional Japan. Spend the rest of the day at your own leisure exploring the city. **Overnight - Kyoto (B)**

Day 9 : Sightseeing in Kyoto

Today enjoy a full day of sightseeing in Kyoto, again travelling by public transport with a private guide. With no fixed itinerary and a knowledgeable local at your side, you will be set for a great day in this amazing city and are sure to discover things you might otherwise miss.

You may want to start your day at Kinkakuji - Kyoto's famous Golden Pavilion zen temple which is decorated with gold leaf and stands over a tranquil pond. From Kinkakuji in the north of the city you can then head to Kiyomizu Dera Temple in the east. This impressive wooden structure is perched on a hillside surrounded by woodland and looks out across the city.

The afternoon could be spent at Fushimi Inari Shrine in the south of the city. This shrine's appeal is the thousands of red torii gates which create a network of pathways through the wooded forests of Mt Inari, linking the various buildings of the shrine together. You may want your guide to finish the day of sightseeing by taking you to the Gion Geisha District where if you are lucky you will be able to see a Geisha shuffling through the streets between appointments. Spend the evening at your own leisure. **Overnight - Kyoto (B)**

Day 10 : Kyoto to Nara



Kyoto - Nara - breakfast. This morning take the train to Nara, renowned for the wealth of its Buddhist and Shinto Heritage. Nara was formerly the end of the Silk Road and was for

this reason the area which first saw Buddhist teaching making the transition across the ocean from China. The myriad of shrines and temples are all set against the backdrop of the low lying mountains and in the midst of Nara Park, which is famously home to a vast population of pesky deer. Return to Kyoto in the evening. **Overnight - Kyoto (B)**

Day 11 : Kyoto to Hiroshima

Kyoto - Hiroshima - Miyajima - breakfast. Today you will take the train to Hiroshima, a city that needs little introduction. It is of course infamous for being the site of one of two atomic bombs dropped on Japan at the end of the Second World War. The Peace Park and Museum are a poignant reminder of the reason for Hiroshima's fame and everyone should spend an afternoon in this part of town. Other attractions in Hiroshima include Hiroshima Castle and the baseball stadium. Shukkei-en Garden is well worth an afternoon stroll with a number of tea houses dotted about the grounds, and the Hiroshima Prefectural Museum of Art contains some wonderful paintings by both Japanese and Western artists.

After spending some time exploring Hiroshima you will need to make your way to Miyajima Island, where you will be staying for the next two nights. Located just off the coast of Hiroshima, is one of Japan's most loved places with a charming rural atmosphere to match the beautiful surroundings. **Overnight - Miyajima (B, D)**

Day 12 : Miyajima Island



Enjoy a free day exploring the highlights of Miyajima Island. The island is perhaps best known for the red torii gate of Itsukushima Shrine which appears to be floating in the sea. In the evening this gate and the shrine

behind it (as well as other traditional buildings in the area) are floodlit and the atmosphere is magical. A cable car takes you to fantastic views across the Inland Sea from Mount Misen, the highest point of the island. There are many pleasant walks on Miyajima among the temples and along the bustling shopping street in the island's small village.

You may also see some of the island's native fauna; the sacred deer are easy to spot as they roam freely, but you'll have to work a little harder to spot any of the resident monkey population; keep your eyes peeled! Miyajima is a wonderful place to slow down, unwind and relax, so take your time and let the magic of this island enchant you! **Overnight - Miyajima (B, D)**

Day 13 : Miyajima To Osaka



Miyajima - Osaka - breakfast. This morning you will leave Miyajima Island behind and travel on to Osaka, Japan's second city and an extremely vibrant and lively place to stay. The city aquarium is world class and you cannot stay in Osaka without taking a ride on one of the city's several giant big wheels, perhaps the most dramatic of which is perched on top of the Hep 5 department store in the Umeda district of the city - just don't look down if you are afraid of heights! Osaka Castle is well worth a visit despite being a reconstruction as the original was burnt down during the firebombing at the end of World War Two and you will find a variety of very interesting museums scattered throughout the city.

After dark Osaka really comes alive, and a walk through the bright lights of the Nanba district is a great way to take in the atmosphere, with some great people-watching opportunities. With

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literally thousands of restaurants, bars and entertainment spots to choose from, Osaka is perfect for a big night out, some hearty local food and the chance to let your hair down.

Overnight - Osaka (B)

Day 14 : Goodbye Japan!

Today your adventure in Japan comes to an end. A departure transfer by shuttle bus will take you to Kansai Airport for your onward travel. **Overnight - Osaka (B)**

HOTELS

Highlighted below are some of the hotels which we frequently use on this tour, though we reserve the right to substitute these hotels to ones of a similar standard.

Please refer to your Tour Voucher for your confirmed arrival hotel and further arrival information.

Sunroute Plaza Shinjuku

Renovated in 2007, the chic Sunroute Plaza Shinjuku offers contemporary accommodation in Japan's capital. Guest rooms are tastefully furnished in a modern style with comfortable amenities. The hotel also offers a number of excellent dining options including the Villazza trattoria style restaurant and the Bar Ku Kon Shinjuku dining experience! Why not sip on a delicious cocktail by the crackling fire - a great way to spend the evening! Located in the west of the city - a short walk from Shinjuku train station.



Ichinoyu Honkan

Ichinoyu Honkan is rich in history dating back to 1630. The Ichinoyu holds true to the traditional values of service for which it is famed. The Ichinoyu has large communal baths for you to enjoy. The ryokan also has its own reasonably priced bar which is open from 3pm to midnight and is a great place in which to relax. All in all, the Ichinoyu Honkan

is a great place to stay and an establishment with a significant history. Your stay includes breakfast and dinner both served in the hotel restaurant.



Yamakyu

Located a 20 minute walk from the station, Yamakyu is a traditional Japanese Ryokan offering charming Japanese hospitality. Guest rooms are all in the authentic Japanese ryokan style with private WC but shared bathing facilities (onsen). The Yamakyu can also provides authentic Japanese meals throughout your stay which are taken in a communal eating area – which is generally a sitting down on straw mats affair with endless tea available!



Hotel Vista Premio

Nestled in the heart of Kyoto just a short walk from the Gion District, the Hotel Vista Premio offers travellers a wonderful combination of comfort and convenience. Guest rooms are contemporary in style with a few traditional aesthetic Japanese touches and all feature ensuite facilities with deep soaking bathtubs. The hotel benefits from two restaurants serving both local and international cuisine and complimentary WiFi is available in public areas.



Yamaichi Bekkan

The Yamaichi Bekkan is a family-run inn just a short walk from both the pier and Miyajima's famous shrine gate. The owner Shinko-san is an absolute delight - with her you can be sure of a warm welcome to Miyajima Island. The ryokan has just four guest rooms (three traditional Japanese-style and one Western twin) all with en suite bathrooms. Downstairs the ryokan acts as a restaurant as well, and has a great reputation for its high quality food: sashimi, tempura and the island speciality conger eel.



Cross Hotel

The Cross Hotel is a smart hotel located on Dotombori, one of the most famous and lively streets in all of Japan never mind just Osaka. The hotel has been recently refurbished in a sleek, modern design, giving it something of a boutique feel. Rooms are well designed and generously sized. The hotel is well located near a plethora of restaurants and bars in the surrounding streets.



PRICES / DATES INFO

Prices shown are 'per person', based on a travelling party of at least 2 adults. The single supplement price needs to be added to the 'per person' price if single rooms are required. If travelling solo, an additional '1-person' supplement will apply.

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PRICES / DATES 2020

Date	Twin Share	Single
04 Apr	GBP 3,145	GBP 4,305

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