



Japan

Land of the Rising Sun

Osaka • Kyoto • Lake Kawaguchi • Tokyo • (*Optional Hiroshima Excursion*)



Day 1 • Departure

Our journey begins as we board our trans-Pacific flight bound for Osaka, Japan.

Day 2 • Osaka

Our flight arrives at the Kansai Airport near Osaka, a major Japanese commercial center and the heart of the country's second largest metropolitan area (Osaka-Kobe-Kyoto) with a population of over 17 million. We meet our tour director and motor coach and transfer to our hotel. Tonight we have a light dinner at the hotel. **D**

Day 3 • Kyoto

We depart Osaka for Kobe, which has been an important port for centuries. With the Rokko Mountains as a backdrop, Kobe is considered to be one of Japan's most attractive cities. Here we visit the **Hanshin-Awaji Great Earthquake Memorial Park**, which documents the tragedy which struck the city in 1995, resulting in over 5000 deaths and tens of thousands of homes destroyed. Kobe is also a center for the brewing of "Sake," and a stop at the **Kikumasa Brewery** introduces us to the production of this traditional Japanese beverage. We then continue on to Himeji for a tour of the magnificent **Himeji Castle**, designated a World Cultural Heritage Site by UNESCO. The castle, completed in 1609, was never destroyed. Our day ends in Kyoto. **B/D**

Day 4 • Kyoto

Today we explore Kyoto, which from 794 A.D. to 1868 was the capital city of Japan and residence of the Emperor. Because of its historical significance, the city was spared from bombing during World War II. Our sightseeing includes a visit to **Nijo Castle**, another World Cultural Heritage Site which features distinctive Momoyama architecture along with a unique and surprising security system! This afternoon we tour the **Golden Pavilion**, a Zen temple, covered with gold leaf, which houses Buddhist relics. We also have time to stroll through a local market, **Nishiki Koji**, known as "Kyoto's Kitchen." **B/D**

Day 5 • Kyoto

This morning we embark on a full day excursion. Our first stop is Nara, established as the first permanent capital of Japan (710 A.D.) and home to some of its finest Buddhist temples. In Nara we visit the **Todaiji Temple**, world's largest wooden building, built in 1692, which houses a large bronze statue of Buddha. At the **Sacred Deer Park** in Nara's center we enjoy the hundreds of freely roaming deer, which the Shinto religion considered "messengers of the gods." Adjacent to the park is the **Kasuga Taisha**, Nara's most celebrated Shinto shrine. In the afternoon we drive to the city of Uji, famous for producing Japanese green tea. Here we participate in a **Japanese tea ceremony**. Later we return to Kyoto. **B/D**

Day 6 • Lake Kawaguchi

We board a Japan Railway super express train for Odawara this morning. Upon arrival we take a short **cruise on Lake Ashi**, the crater lake formed by an eruption 3000 years ago. This area around this peaceful lake, with its magnificent view of Mt. Fuji, in-

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cludes spa resorts and the Fuji-Hakone National Park. We also spend some time at the “**Chokokuno-Mori**” **Open Air Museum**, a sculpture garden in a spectacular, mountainside setting which features works by Henry Moore and Rodin. There are also indoor galleries, one of which houses a large Picasso collection. Afterwards we continue on to Lake Kawaguchi, one of the Fuji Five Lakes, for our overnight. This evening we enjoy a traditional Japanese dinner and learn about the Japanese Kimono. **B/D**

Day 7 • Tokyo

We drive up to the 5th station (7,545 ft/2,300 m) of **Mt. Fuji** this morning. This is the highest station accessible by vehicles. The 11,073 foot high mountain (3376 m) is Japan’s highest peak and has been considered a sacred site for ages. Afterwards we continue on to the Yamanashi region. Upon arrival we experience Japanese “Washi” paper making at the **Nakatomi Washi Center**. Our day ends in Tokyo, the nation’s capital and home to the imperial family. **B/D** [*Takanawa Prince Hotel or similar*]

Day 8 • Tokyo

A full day awaits us as we explore Tokyo, known as Edo until it became the imperial capital in 1868. We take a morning subway ride with a local guide to visit the **Tsukiji Fish Market**. Here we see the morning fish auction and enjoy sampling the **Sushi**. Other highlights today include visits to the **Meiji Shinto Shrine**, the **Imperial Palace Plaza**, the **Asakusa Kannon Temple** with its shopping arcade, "**Nakamise**," and a **Sumida River Cruise**. In the afternoon we explore the **Ginza District**, the city’s modern commercial center. [*Optional activity here: “Kabuki” drama performance at Kabuki Theater*] This evening we enjoy a “Shabu Shabu” dinner (cooked, thin-sliced beef) at a local restaurant. **B/D**

Day 9 • Tokyo

We have a full day at leisure to pursue individual interests. [*Optional tour to Nikko, a lovely, small city located at the entrance to a national park and best known for the Toshugu, Japan’s most lavishly decorated complex of shrines.*] **B/D**

Day 10 • Return

Our journey draws to a close as we transfer to the Tokyo airport and board our homebound flight. *Sayonara!* **B**

Optional day excursion to Hiroshima • Kyoto

[This excursion can be added and would become Day 6 on the itinerary. Overnight would be in Kyoto.]

Another full day excursion takes us by Japan Railway super express train to Hiroshima. Hiroshima was the city targeted for the first atomic bomb attack in history, August 6, 1944. The event resulted in 200,000 civilian deaths and, along with a second atomic attack on Nagasaki three days later, the speedy end of World War II. In Hiroshima we visit the Peace Memorial Park, located at the epicenter of the blast, and the Peace Museum, dedicated to the promotion of a peaceful world. The museum also documents the history of a militarized Japan and the events which led up to its involvement in the war. Following our visit here we return to Kyoto by high speed rail. **B/D**

Abbreviations for Meals: B=Breakfast L=Lunch D=Dinner

Cost of tour: Request Quote

<u>Included</u>	<u>Not included</u>
<p>Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private deluxe air-conditioned motor coach • Rail transfer where noted in itinerary <p>Accommodations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-bedded three-star hotels <p>Meals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As indicated in itinerary <p>Sightseeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admission to all activities as indicated in itinerary <p>Tour Guides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services of a professional tour director • Local guides for major attractions <p>Taxes and Tips</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All taxes and tips for provided services except end of tour tips for tour director and drivers <p>Complementary Tours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One tour per 8 paying participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roundtrip air transportation • Meals not indicated in the itinerary • Beverages, except with breakfast • End of tour tips for tour director and drivers • Items of a personal nature such as passport fees • <i>Passport must be valid for 6 months beyond return date</i> • Travel Insurance <p style="text-align: center;">This tour can be customized to your specifications.</p>

Tour Code: SPJL10

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