

# Japan

Depart Cairns 21 May at 12.00PM arrive Tokyo 6.35PM – Jetstar

Commence the following tour in Tokyo on the 21 May and ending in Osaka on the 02 June

## Day 1: Tokyo

Konnichiwa! Welcome to Japan. Bursting with contemporary urban culture, there are many sides of Tokyo to explore, from fascinating museums and world-class shopping, to neighbourhood backstreets lined with restaurants and karaoke bars. Your adventure begins with a Welcome Meeting at 6pm tonight. You can arrive at any time during the day, as there are no activities planned until this important meeting. Please check with hotel reception or look on the reception noticeboard for where and when the meeting will take place. If you're going to be late, please call our local emergency number if you can to inform our local team. Have your insurance and next of kin details on hand as we'll be collecting them at this meeting. Afterwards, you'll have some free time to explore Tokyo's exhilarating nightlife. Perhaps take a walk down Shinjuku's Memory Lane. This crowded alley of busy restaurants and bar stalls started in the 1940s and quickly gained infamy as a black market drinking quarter. Today, it is still one of the best spots to try some of Tokyo's famed 'fast food' dishes.

### Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

### Optional Activities

- Tokyo - Hamarikyu Garden - JPY300
- Tokyo - Shinjuku Garden - JPY200
- Tokyo - Edo Tokyo Museum - JPY600

### Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

### Special Information

Please note we do not include daily breakfasts on this tour as past experience has taught us that our travellers often struggle with traditional Japanese breakfast foods and the western variations that our accommodation provides. You may choose to pay separately for breakfast, or alternatively, grab something from a convenience store, bakery or coffee shop in the mornings.

## Day 2: Tokyo/Nikko

Enjoy a couple of free hours this morning. Perhaps see the historic Asakusa area. This is one of the older and more traditional parts of Tokyo, and is often called the temple district. Here you can stop by Senso-ji, the city's oldest temple – founded almost 1,400 years ago when Tokyo was nothing more than a fishing village. Next, catch an express train (approximately 1 hour) and then a local train (approximately 1 hour) out of Tokyo towards Nikko. You'll enjoy a pleasant ride, with beautiful views of the countryside. Japanese trains also have trolley carts with snacks such as bento boxes (Japanese lunch boxes), green tea and beer. Once you arrive in Nikko you'll have free time to spend as you wish.

### Accommodation

- Ryokan (1 night)

### Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

### Special Information

Your 14 day Japan Rail Pass will be validated today. If you are planning to travel longer after our tour ends, you might like to consider extending your Rail Pass to 21 days at time of booking your trip. Extensions or new JRPs are not available for purchase within Japan.

### Day 3: Nikko

Nikko has been a sacred city since the middle of the 8th century, and is overflowing with beautiful shrines and temples. Perhaps visit the Toshu-gu Shrine, a resting place of a Tokugawa shogun who was one of the most powerful rulers of the country. The shrine contrasts with the traditional minimalist style commonly used throughout Japan. Instead, every corner of this monument is covered in intricate gold leaf, lacquer work, paintings and patterns. Here you can also visit the Museum of Art at the back of the temple complex. This 1920s mansion has one of the country's most beautiful collections of sliding doors and screens decorated by the best Japanese painters of the day. You can also pay a visit to the red-lacquered Shin-kyō bridge, one of the town's most famous landmarks, and the Buddhist temple of Rinnō-ji, home to fearsome statues and an elegant garden.

### Accommodation

- Ryokan (1 night)

### Included Activities

- Nikko - Toshogu Shrine

### Optional Activities

- Nikko - Bus to Chuzenji Lake (return) - JPY2200
- Nikko - Imperial Villa - JPY510

### Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

### Day 4: Hakone

Leaving Nikko, you'll board a local train followed by two bullet trains and finally a bus on your way to Hakone. Total travel time can vary depending on the connections, but we will usually arrive by mid afternoon. Once in Hakone, take a boat across Ashinoko Lake and then ride a cable car over the surrounding mountains. The area around the lake offers plenty of stunning views, and you may even catch a glimpse of Mt Fuji in the distance if weather conditions are clear. Depending on arrival time and weather, you may do these activities today or on Day 5. You'll be staying at a family run guesthouse with shared facilities and a lovely outdoor onsen. Men and women always enter separate baths and no clothing or swimming costumes are allowed.

### Accommodation

- Ryokan (1 night)

### Included Activities

- Hakone - Lake Ashino-Ko boat trip
- Hakone - Cable car

### Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

### Special Information

Please note that in public onsens men and women always enter separate baths and no clothing or swimming costumes are allowed.

### Day 5: Hakone

Today is a free day in the lake, mountain and onsen area of Hakone. Perhaps visit the boiling sulphur springs, or the Hakone Jinja – the red-gated Shinto shrine. There's hiking trails in the national park, such as from Togendai to Owakudani, and from there to Mt Komagatake, passing the peaks of Mt Kanmurigatake and Mt Kami. There's also the great collection of art at the Hakone Open-Air Museum and the Pola Museum of Art, an eclectic mix that includes work by the likes of Renoir, Monet, Picasso, Van Gogh, Cézanne and Gallé. Ask your leader for some suggestions and tips about what to do in this famous onsen region.

### Accommodation

- Ryokan (1 night)

### Optional Activities

- Hakone - Open Air Museum - JPY1600
- Hakone - Checkpoint Museum - JPY500
- Hakone - Onsen (hot spring bath) - JPY1200

### Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

### Day 6: Takayama

Travel by shinkansen (bullet train) towards Takayama. You'll reach speeds of 270 kilometres per hour and it will take around 4 hours to get there. Takayama is a charming Edo period town located in the Japan alps, famous for its traditional inns, sake breweries and the museum of Hida Folk Village. The latter is your first stop, an outdoor museum where the traditional thatched-roof architecture unique to the area has been relocated in a delightful mountain setting as an effort to preserve traditional Japanese culture. Discover the techniques used to build farmhouses that could withstand fierce winters and long periods of isolation due to snow-closed roads. The thick thatching kept in warmth and the roofs were angled so as to minimise snow build-up. Each house is like it's own self-contained museum, with displays of personal items and traditional tools. You'll then have free time to explore the many art galleries, local markets and museums, or simply wander the streets of this delightful little town.

We will stay in a delightful local Ryokan where our dinner is prepared by our host and you'll get to try a variety of Japanese food that's both beautiful to look at and to taste.

### Accommodation

- Ryokan (1 night)

### Included Activities

- Takayama - Hida Folk Village

## Optional Activities

- Takayama - Bike hire (per day) - JPY800
- Takayama - Merchant House - JPY700
- Takayama - Festival Float Museum - JPY820

## Meals Included

- Dinner

## Special Information

During the Takayama Festival (14-15 April and 9-10 October), accommodation will be harder to get and may be multishare. Depending on rooming configurations, couples may sometimes have to split up for these nights. In peak seasons we may stay in a hotel instead of a ryokan.

### Day 7: Takayama

The Gifu prefecture is known to produce many fine altitude vegetables, and today you'll visit morning markets that date back over 600 years. Browse the stalls of seasonal vegetables brought in from the surrounding countryside, set up by local farm women from 6am every morning. While browsing the food markets look out for the unique local style of pickles, the bags of miso wrapped in leaves, Genkotsu ame (soy bean candy), preserved fish, spices, and the delicious marshmallow treat of owara tamaten. The rest of the day will be free to spend as you wish. The alpine climate and crystal clear mountain waters are perfect for creating sake, so why not visit a local brewery for a taste of the region's prized signature drop. Takayama is also very famous for hida beef. Don't forget to take the chance to try some A5 level marbled beef while you are in town!

## Accommodation

- Ryokan (1 night)

## Included Activities

- Takayama - Market visit
- Takayama - Sake Brewery Tasting

## Meals Included

- Breakfast
- Dinner

### Day 8: Hiroshima

Travel by train for approximately 5 hours to Hiroshima. Visit the Genbaku (A-Bomb) Dome in the Peace Memorial Park and Museum (admission not included), both of which emotionally stand testament to the fateful day in August 1945 when Hiroshima was chosen as target for the first ever wartime use of the atomic bomb. The dome was just metres from where the bomb detonated so it was able to retain its shape; the fact that it looks almost exactly as it did after the bombing means it serves as a reminder and symbol of peace. The memorial park serves the same purpose, and has museums, memorials and monuments dedicated to the memory of victims, education on what led to the bomb's use, as well as advocating world peace.

In the evening, maybe try one of the city's signature dishes for dinner – okonomiyaki, a kind savoury pancake of egg, cabbage, soba noodles, and meat or seafood.

## Accommodation

- Ryokan (1 night)

## Included Activities

- Hiroshima - Peace Park & A - Bomb Dome

## Optional Activities

- Hiroshima - Miyajima Island - JPY450
- Miyajima - Itsukushima Shrine - JPY300
- Hiroshima - Peace Museum - JPY200

## Meals Included

- Breakfast

### [Day 9: Hiroshima](#)

If you haven't done it yesterday, visit the Peace Memorial Park and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum in the morning. Then make your way to the nearby island of Miyajima with its famous 'floating' Torii Gate and the grand Itsukushima-jinja Shrine. Keep your eyes out for inquisitive and hungry deer that roam the streets.

In your free time, with so much to do in the area, you'll be spoilt for choice. Why not visit the sprawling city-centre green space of Chuo Park, or the serene Shukkeien Gardens. You could stop by the magnificent Hiroshima Castle, which originally dates from the 1590s. It was destroyed by the bomb but reconstructed in all its glory in the 1950s, and now holds an informative museum in its five stories. There are numerous other museums scattered about the city, and the wonderful Shukkeien garden is the perfect place to decompress on a break from sightseeing. Winding across the stone bridges past graceful teahouses and waterfalls can make you feel like you're in another world. For something a bit louder, there's the local baseball and soccer teams (if the day is right), or endless shopping choices. Ask your leader for tips, suggestions and directions.

## Accommodation

- Ryokan (1 night)

## Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

### [Day 10: Kyoto](#)

Leave Hiroshima today and head to Japan's most impressive samurai castle at Himeji by train (approximately 1 hour). The building, which has survived earthquakes and war since the mid-16th century, was restored to its full glory in 2015. The moats, baileys, towers and walled alleyways were ingeniously designed to trick attackers – perhaps so intimidatingly that they were never in fact tested. Explore the castle that was once home to over 10,000 samurai families and look out over the castle grounds and the city below from the seventh floor.

Continue on a 1 hour train ride to Kyoto. Originally founded as Heian-kyo (literally "tranquillity and peace capital") by Emperor Kammu in 794, Kyoto had its golden age during the imperial court's heyday from 794 to 1185. Kyoto was the capital of Japan for over 1,000 years (the name means "Capital City") but the emperor and government are now located in Tokyo. With over 2,000 temples,

shrines and gardens, Kyoto is a great place to get lost in. Spend some free time getting acquainted with Kyoto and walking through the historical streets.

In the evening, head out to Gion, the famous Geisha district. Even today you can observe the age-old tradition of geisha girls visiting members of the wealthy elite. This unfolds in small teahouses tucked away in tiny back streets, or hit up the city's izakayas (traditional Japanese pubs), live music venues, theatres or nightclubs.

#### Accommodation

- Ryokan (1 night)

#### Included Activities

- Himeji - Himeji Castle
- Kyoto - Gion District walk

#### Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

#### [Days 11-12: Kyoto](#)

With its many cultural landmarks and historical sites, and the abundance of traditional arts and literature, Kyoto is regarded as the cultural heart of Japan. Kyoto is a city that lends itself to walking, and there are a number of walks available. Your tour leader will take you to visit two of the best temples depending on the season this morning.

Afterwards, it's your free time to explore this charming ancient capital. You will have almost one and half free days here to explore, which is a decent amount of time for Kyoto as there are a lot to see and experience here. Your tour leader will be able to help you with making the most out of your time here.

Fushimi Inari is definitely one of the most photographed temples in Japan. For the more active, going up the mountain following the red Torii gates is a great way to enjoy the shrine and it also offers a great view of Kyoto city. Otherwise, maybe go to Arashiyama and enjoying wandering through the bamboo forest, or cycling along Kamon River.

A gentle stroll through the nearby eastern hills along the 'Path of Philosophy' that links Ginkaku-ji, the Temple of the Silver Pavilion, with Nanzen-ji Temple is recommended. This walk can be extended south through well-preserved 'old town' areas to Kiyamizu-dera (Temple of Clear Water) from where there is a justifiably famous view across a wooded gorge toward Kyoto. Also recommended, for those visiting in spring, is a visit to the theatre for a presentation of Miyako Odori (the Cherry Blossom Dance) performed by elaborately dressed maiko (apprentice geisha), or a visit to the extravagantly decorated Kinkakuji temple, immortalised in Yukio Mishima's novel "The Golden Pavilion". Another great stop is the architecturally impressive Higashi Honganji temple and the almost surreal Sanjusangendo, home to 1,001 statues of Kannon. In the evening, head out to Gion, the famous Geisha district. Even today you can observe the age-old tradition of geisha girls visiting members of the wealthy elite. This unfolds in small teahouses tucked away in tiny back streets.

Nishiki market is a great covered food street for you to sample

You can also check out if any of our Kyoto urban adventures tours would interest you.

#### Accommodation

- Ryokan (2 nights)

#### Included Activities

- Kyoto - Temple/Shrine entrance (2)

## Optional Activities

- Kyoto - Bike hire (per day) - JPY800
- Kyoto - Sanjusangendo Temple - JPY600
- Kyoto - Obanzai Cooking Class - JPY3800
- Kyoto - Kiyomizu Temple - JPY500
- Kyoto - Tea Ceremony with Maiko - JPY2000
- Kyoto - Kinkakuji Temple - JPY500

## Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

## Day 13: Kyoto

There are no activities planned for the day and you're able to depart the hotel at any time. Check out time is 10 am. If you are departing later, you can arrange luggage storage at the hotel.

## Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

Depart Osaka 02 June at 9.00PM arrive Cairns 03 June at 5.15AM – Jetstar

Cost per person \$5,948\*pp and includes the following:

Airfares

Airport taxes

13-day tour including 2 breakfasts and 2 dinners and sightseeing as per itinerary