



Discover Japan

Classic Tour | 14 Days | Physical Level 1

Tokyo – Mount Fuji - Takayama - Kanazawa - Kyoto - Nara - Osaka

This tour is the perfect introduction to fascinating Japan, where skyscrapers give way to paddy fields and crowds disperse into the tranquility of classical gardens.

- Discover the delights of futuristic Tokyo
- Admire breath-taking Mount Fuji
- Experience the speedy Bullet Train
- Get a glimpse of Buddhist life in Koya-San
- Explore the vibrant city of Osaka



Discover Japan tour inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals (From dinner on day 2 to breakfast on the last day)
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary.

Classic Tours:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of Japan on an excellent value group tour travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully inclusive basis, so you will travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escort and local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

Physical Level 1:

'Discover Japan' is rated as a **physical level 1** tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it's more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You'll be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- On several days, there will be sightseeing on foot for extended periods of time, often involving steps or uneven ground
- You will be required to get on and off various sizes of boat without assistance

Of course, our National Escort will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Country Profile: Japan

Japan is a fascinating country situated in northeast Asia. It is comprised of more than 4,000 islands - the main four being Hokkaido, Honshu, Kyushu and Shikoku. The Japanese name for Japan is 'Nippon' or 'Nihon' meaning 'sun origin' and is often translated as 'Land of the Rising Sun'. It is a country of contrasts; engaging a combination of futuristic cities, ancient culture and diverse scenery. Japan is famous for its relatively short Cherry Blossom season.

Joining Your Tour

The tour is 14 days in duration including international flights. Please note due to flight schedules passengers may arrive/depart on Day 2.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only, the price includes your arrival/ departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to reservations.

Join the tour on Day 2 in Tokyo and end the tour on Day 13 in Osaka. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

Itinerary Changes

It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

- The domestic airlines in this region have frequent schedule changes. For this reason, we have indicated morning, afternoon or evening flights only in the following section. Your Local Guide or National Escort will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them
- Please note: Isuien Garden in Nara, visited on day 10, is closed for maintenance weekly on Tuesdays. Departures coinciding with this will visit the Kasuga Taisha Shrine as an alternative.

Changes for 2020:

- The Nomura Samurai House visit on day 7 has been removed. This will be replaced by a visit to Kenrokuen Garden which has been moved from day 8, to day 7.
- We have added in a traditional Gold Leaf making experience on day 8.

Itinerary – Discover Japan

Days 1-2: Tokyo

Fly overnight to Tokyo, the capital of Japan. On arrival, you will be met by an English-speaking representative and transfer approximately 1 and a half hours to your hotel.

Please note: Early check in is not included. If your flight arrives in the morning and you wish to arrange this, please speak to your Reservations Consultant. Transfers will differ depending on group size, but you may share a coach with other passengers who are not part of a Wendy Wu Tour. If you are on a shared bus transfer, you may have to walk for a few minutes to get to your hotel.



Destination Information

Tokyo – One of the world's most cutting-edge capital cities, Tokyo is a city of contrasts, famous for its neon-lit landscape, towering skyscrapers, peaceful shrines and lovingly tended gardens. It was the political and cultural centre of Japan, before it became the official capital in 1867 when the Meiji Emperor moved it.

Day 3: Tokyo

Tokyo is the ultimate 24-hour city, but look behind its frantic, high-tech frontage and you'll find plenty of tranquil backstreets and old temples to explore. Head to the 2nd observatory of the Tokyo Skytree for panoramic views over the city before taking a wander through the district of Asakusa, stopping at the Sensoji Temple and Nakamise shopping street. Drive by the Imperial Palace Plaza and then continue to the peaceful Hamarikyu Gardens. You will be on your feet for 4-5 hours during your touring in Tokyo. Enjoy your evening meal whilst leisurely cruising for one hour along Tokyo Bay. You will need to get on and off your boat this evening for your cruise on Tokyo Bay without assistance.



Destination Information

Tokyo Skytree – The tallest structure in Japan and the tallest tower in the world, Tokyo Skytree is predominantly a television and radio broadcast tower and is earthquake resistant.

Sensoji Temple – Sensoji Temple is an ancient Buddhist Temple and the oldest in Tokyo. The temple was originally founded in the 7th century. The temple adorns an image of the Buddhist Goddess Kannon, who was said to have been rescued by two fishermen from the Sumida River in Tokyo.

Imperial Palace Plaza – Imperial Palace Plaza is the main residence of the Emperor of Japan. Built on the original site of Edo Castle, the Plaza is made up of a palace, museum and large park.

Hamarikyu Gardens – Hamarikyu Gardens is a beautiful example of Japanese garden style which sits at the mouth of the Sumida River.

Day 4: Mount Fuji

This morning, transfer to the station and take a 30-minute bullet train to Odawara. On arrival, transfer to tranquil Lake Ashi. Take a cruise across the lake before taking the Komagatake cable car for spectacular views of Mount Fuji and the lake below. Continue by coach to Japan's most iconic landmark - Mount Fuji. Start at the 5th Station for breath-taking views of Fuji. Please note, travelling to the 5th station at Mount Fuji is only possible if weather conditions permit it. Drive to either Kofu or Suwa to check in to your hotel for an overnight stay.



Please note that you will need to pack a small overnight bag for tonight as your main luggage will be transferred separately this morning and arrive your hotel in Takayama the next day.

Due to your early start you may need to take a packed breakfast with you (provided).

Destination Information

Mount Fuji – At 3,776m, Mount Fuji is the highest of Japan's mountains and an iconic symbol of the country. Mount Fuji is notoriously shy and is often enveloped by clouds.

Lake Ashi – Formed after Mount Hakone's last eruption 3000 years ago, Lake Ashi is the symbol of Hakone and on a clear day offers spectacular views of Mount Fuji in the distance.

Day 5: Matsumoto

This morning, drive 2 hours to Nagano to explore the formidable 16th century Matsumoto Castle. There are steep ladder-style steps in the Matsumoto Castle that you must climb up and back down again. If you choose not to look inside the castle, you can enjoy the surrounding gardens, moat and architecture of Matsumoto Castle. After lunch, stop at a Miso House to learn about the process of making this Japanese seasoning. Try Miso soup before travelling a further 2 and a half hours to Takayama, nestled high in the mountainous Hida region.



In Takayama we use a selection of hotels, some of which are more traditional in style, but you will be accommodated in Western-style rooms.

Destination Information

Matsumoto Castle – Known as the 'crow castle due to its dark black exterior, the Matsumoto Castle dates back to the 16th century and is the oldest wooden castle in Japan.

Ishii Miso – Ishii Miso was founded in 1868 and is still producing miso, an essential ingredient in Japanese cuisine, by a unique traditional method.

Takayama – Boasting one of Japan's most atmospheric townscapes, the layout of Takayama dates back to the 17th century and is home to much Meiji architecture.

Day 6: Takayama

Head to the Miyagawa Morning Market, where you can sample some of the delicious local fruits and vegetables (at your own expense). Later, take a leisurely stroll round the traditional houses of the area and visit the museums stopping at Takayama Festival Floats Exhibition Hall, Kusakabe Folk Museum, Takayama Jinya and Kamisannomachi Street. You will spend approximately 5 hours on foot today sightseeing around the town of Takayama.



Destination Information

Miyagawa Morning Market – Occurring each morning, there are a number of stalls selling fresh vegetables, local craft works and local food products at the Miyagawa Morning Market.

Takayama Festival Floats Exhibition Hall – Housing the floats from the Takayama Festival, which dates back to the 16th century, the Takayama Festival Floats Exhibition Hall is a great introduction to the cultural celebrations of Takayama.

Kusabe Folk Museum – Kusabe Folk Museum is a former house for a wealthy merchant named Kusakabe. The house is typical of the style during the Edo Period, with dark wooden beams and pillars.

Takayama Jinya – A former government office dating back to the Edo Period, Takayama Jinya is the only one of its type still remaining. The main work of the office was to handle legal cases and tax collection.

Day 7: Shirakawago

Travel 1.5 hours to the UNESCO World Heritage listed Shirakawago, famous for its traditional Gassho-Zukuri farmhouses, some of which are more than 250 years old. You will spend 1.5 hours on foot exploring the area. There are some stairs in the house to climb if you want to explore the higher levels. Drive around 1 hour to try your hand at making washi paper this afternoon, before continuing another 1.5 hours to Kanazawa. On arrival, wander through the beautiful Kenroku-en, one of the ‘Three Great Gardens of Japan’, before checking in to your hotel.



Destination Information

Shirakawago – Alongside Gokayama, Shirakawago is a UNESCO World Heritage site known for its unusual architectural style known as Gassho-Zukuri. The roofs of these houses are tilted at an almost vertical angle.

Washi Paper – Washi Paper is a type of Japanese paper made from the fibres of bark. This type of paper is commonly used in the art of origami.

Kanazawa – Kanazawa is the capital of the Ishikawa Prefecture and is known for its beautiful samurai and geisha districts, as well as its stunning Kenroku-en Garden.

Kenroku-en – One of Japan’s ‘Three Great Gardens’, Kenroku-en dates back to the early 17th century and is noticeable for its stunning beauty in all seasons.

Day 8: Kanazawa - Kyoto

This morning, learn the process of how gold leaf is made and applied to everyday objects. Try it for yourself by decorating a pair of chopsticks and take your newly created artwork home! Later, stroll down the traditional Higashi Chaya (Eastern Teahouse District), visiting Ochaya Shima – a historical geisha house. After lunch, drive 4 hours to Kyoto, Japan's ancient capital, check in to your hotel and enjoy dinner at a local restaurant.



Destination Information

Gold Leaf Experience – When a lump of gold is beaten until it is only 1/10,000 mm thick, it becomes gold leaf, as used in temples, shrines and many traditional crafts. Kanazawa and its surrounding areas produce more than 99% of all gold leaf used in Japan.

Higashi Chaya Street – Higashi Chaya Street is a traditional Japanese street featuring historical rows of houses. It is also the geisha district of Kanazawa, offering visitors delicious treats and tea, as well as the chance to visit some of the guest houses used in the past by geisha as living quarters.

Kyoto – Kyoto was the ancient capital of Japan for approximately 1,000 years until 1867 when it was moved to Tokyo. Many national treasures can be found in Kyoto and in nearby Nara, including old shrines and temples, screen paintings, beautiful gardens, and statues of Buddha.

Day 9: Kyoto

Start the day by heading to a restored Japanese wooden townhouse to try your hand at origami and to enjoy the art of a traditional tea ceremony. After lunch, visit the Ryoanji Temple and Kinkakuji Temple, also known as the Golden Pavilion due to its gold-like exterior. You will spend approximately 2 hours at the temples.



Destination Information

Ryoanji Temple – Ryoanji Temple is a Zen temple which is renowned for its garden which features a dry, sand landscape with large rocks and smooth pebbles.

Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion) – Kinkakuji Temple is a Buddhist temple and is an excellent example of Japanese garden design. The structure is a brilliant golden hue colour and is very minimalistic.

Day 10: Kyoto - Nara

Travel 1 hour to Nara, stopping en route at the mesmerising Fushimi Inari Shrine. The Fushimi Inari Shrine stretches from the bottom to the top of Mount Inari (233 metres high). You will walk up part of the mountain; there are some steep steps and the incline allows a steady-paced walk. On arrival in Nara, visit Todaiji Temple, the world's largest wooden structure and home to Japan's largest Buddha. Also visit Isui-en Gardens, known for its natural ponds, sightseeing here will be about 3 hours on foot.



Please note: Isuien Garden in Nara is closed for maintenance weekly on Tuesdays. Departures coinciding with this will visit the Kasuga Taisha Shrine as an alternative.

Destination Information

Nara – Home to 8 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Nara is a rewarding destination and a great spot for Japanese culture.

Todaiji Temple – A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Todaiji Temple is one the Seven Great Temples of Japan and is home to the world's largest bronze statue, Daibutsu.

Fushimi Inari Shrine – The Fushimi Inari is a corridor of red torii gates which stretch through the thick woods of Mount Inari, a truly remarkable sight.

Day 11: Koyasan

This morning, drive 2.5 hours to Koya-San, the centre of Shingon Buddhism. See Okunoin, Japan's largest cemetery and home to the mausoleum of Kobo Daishi, founder of Shingon Buddhism. Next, visit the Kongobuji Temple and Garan temple complex. The walk through Okunoin Cemetery to the mausoleum of Kobo Daishi is roughly 2km and sometimes you will be walking over uneven surfaces. Continue to Osaka, a journey of approximately 1.5 hours to check in to your hotel.



Destination Information

Koyasan – Known primarily as the centre of the Shingon sub-section of Buddhism, Koya-San sits in the mountains and is the ideal spot to take a glimpse of Japan's traditional religious life.

Kongobuji Temple – Dating back to 16th century, the Kongobuji Temple is the head temple of the Shingon Buddhist sect. The interior of the building is adorned with paintings of cranes and there are sliding doors throughout.

Garan Temple – Garan Temple is a compound of seven halls, the ideal number of halls in Buddhism. The main sight of worship is in front of the Cosmic Buddha.

Okunoin Cemetery – Home to Kobo Daishi's mausoleum (founder of Shingon Buddhism), Okunoin Cemetery is the largest cemetery in Japan, with over 200,000 tombstones, as many wished to be buried near Kobo Daishi.

Osaka – Osaka is Japan's third largest city. What Osaka lacks in sightseeing locations, it makes up for with its flamboyance, fun loving people and amazing food.

Day 12: Osaka

This morning, visit the famous Osaka Castle before taking a stroll around the Dotonbori district, a restaurant mecca, where you can sample delicious local delicacies. Next, enjoy a 20-minute cruise along the Yodogawa River. Spend the rest of the afternoon at leisure before a farewell dinner this evening.



Destination Information

Osaka Castle – Osaka Castle is one of Japan's most famous castles, known for sweeping views of the city from its hilltop perch. Construction began in 1583 by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who intended that the castle to become the centre of a new, unified Japan under his rule.

Dotonbori District – Historically a theatre district and still a popular entertainment area today the Dotonbori district offer an eccentric and electric atmosphere.

Days 13-14: Depart Osaka

This morning is free at leisure before transferring to the airport for your return flight home.

Please note: Only breakfast is included today. Late check-out is not included in our Discover Japan tour. If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day in Osaka, please contact our reservations department who can confirm the additional price and make this arrangement for you, subject to availability at the hotel.



Transfers: In the event that your flight departs outside of the majority group departure time, you will be transferred to the airport by a shared coach (not with other Wendy Wu Tours passengers). If you are on a shared coach transfer, you may have to walk for a few minutes to get to the coach.

Please inform our reservations team of any allergies and/or special dietary requirements at time of booking.

Discover Japan Travel Information

Visas

Passports must be valid for six months beyond the length of stay. Visas are not required for Australian passport holders for entry into Japan for stays of up to 90 days.

Insurance

We strongly encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the originals.

Eating in Japan

Japanese cuisine is delicious, colourful and healthy. Meals are usually served with a bowl of rice and a bowl of miso soup and consist usually of fish, pickled vegetables and meat. Japan's other main staple is noodles, most famous being Udon and Soba. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our fully inclusive group tours from the groups' arrival until the day of departure. Our schedule of meals is designed so that you can experience the local dishes, their individual flavours as well as the different ways they are prepared and cooked throughout Japan. Food is an important element of Japanese culture. It is a time for families and friends to come together and much of family life revolves around the dinner table. Most food is eaten with chopsticks so best get practicing as cutlery is not always available at restaurants.

Breakfast will mostly be buffet style but may be a set-menu. Lunches are mostly pre-set options as is custom in many local restaurants. Dinner is usually buffet-style, featuring a wide selection of high-quality Japanese and Western dishes, but may occasionally be a set-menu. We usually find this style of dining suits the wide and varied tastes of our customers on tour. These are also pre-booked in advance prior to your arrival by your guides. This will provide greater flexibility and allow you to sample a broad range of local cuisines and dishes. All beverages will be at your own expense and are readily available. Please note: if you have any dietary requirements, you must inform us before your tour starts, and please be aware that restaurants may not always be able to accommodate these. Gluten-free food may not be as readily available as in Australia.

On some days where lots of sights are covered, dinner times may be early, and your tour group may head directly to the restaurant after sightseeing without stopping at your hotel to freshen up.

Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Please note double bed requests can be made at time of booking but can't be guaranteed.

Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between Australia and Japan.

Please note that in Japan hotel rooms and bathrooms are renowned for being small. Standard single rooms are usually smaller than a standard double or twin room, contain one small double bed (or one single bed), and are designed for one person to use. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air-conditioning, TV and telephone. Hotels in Japan often do not have porters and you will be required to carry your own luggage. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/local guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

Porterage

Please be aware that porterage is not included on our tours in Japan. You will therefore need to be able to handle your own luggage within the hotel and when using transportation like trains and coaches.

Transport

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Roads in Japan are extremely well maintained and are comparatively smooth compared with the rest of Asia.

Bullet trains: Second class reserved seats are booked for our groups on bullet trains; there will be toilet facilities on board. Due to the limited space on bullet trains, a separate luggage transfer service will be arranged for all suitcases. You will need to pack a separate overnight bag to carry on the train as your suitcase will not arrive until the following day after a bullet train journey. Your guide will indicate when you will need to prepare for this throughout your tour.

Air: Pre-flight seat allocation is not available on international and internal flight sectors.

Development in Japan

Japan is a developed country and as such matches the west in modernity and technological advances. Japan is an extremely safe country and takes great responsibility in maintaining high safety standards.

Public Holidays in Japan

If you are travelling within the below Japan Public Holidays, please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed. Coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open but may be crowded. Showa Day is on 29th April, Constitution Memorial Day is on May 6th and Emperor's Birthday is on 23rd December every year.

Souvenirs

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs, so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions which demonstrate a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone, so we aim to take you to places, which hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a national escort. There will usually be no more than 28 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

To book call **1300 727 998** or visit your local travel agent

Visit wendywutours.com.au

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so.

Tipping Policy

Although tipping in Japan is not customary, if you feel you have received an excellent service, please feel free to tip your guide at your discretion.

Packing list and Climate

You will find a complete packing list and a helpful climate chart in the 'Suggested Packing List', which will be included in the pre-departure information link sent within your deposit documentation. Seasonal weather patterns can be quite unpredictable. Up to the minute information on worldwide weather can be found on www.weather.com

Luggage

All travelers are limited to two items of luggage each; a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

Exchanging Cash

It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling to cities outside of Tokyo. US Dollars and Australian Dollars can be exchanged at Narita Airport and in some hotels, provided the Australian currency is new and undamaged. We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be very limited. Your National Escort will remind you to do this before departure.

Personal Expenses & Optional Tours

Personal Expense - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of AUD\$250AUD per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount.

Optional Tours - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available. In your Final Documentation an Optional Excursion Sheet will be included outlining the activities available in each city and local cost associated. Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

Climbing Steps

Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defense against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Buddhist temples

or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries, who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

Cultural Difference

Japanese society and culture are built on intricate social etiquette and customs. As foreigners, we are not expected to be knowledgeable about all etiquette, but it will make your time in Japan more enjoyable if you are respectful of local customs. Some examples of scenarios you may encounter include removing your shoes and hats when entering a temple or house (some restaurants as well). You may be supplied with slippers at some places, but please come prepared with plenty of spare socks, and shoes that are easy to take off for the fairly regular occasions when they must be removed. Your National Escort will advise you of some of these other customs at the beginning of your tour.

Vaccinations and Your Health

We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.travelvax.com.au

Before You Leave

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.smartraveller.gov.au as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

After your booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

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