



## Essential Japan Tour Dossier

Classic Tour | 12 Days | Moderate

Tokyo – Mt. Fuji – Kyoto – Hiroshima – Osaka

Immerse yourself in the unique and fascinating culture of Japan. Encompassing the essentials with natural wonders, imperial heritage and mystical surprises, this tour incorporates a number of experiences that give your holiday a truly authentic edge.

### Tour Highlights:

**Tokyo** - Explore Japan's modern, yet traditional capital city

**Fuji Five Lakes** - Discover Kawaguchi-ko and the scenic Fuji Five Lakes region, home to Mt. Fuji, traditional villages and stunning natural beauty

**Kyoto** - Japan's spiritual heart and home to famous temples and shrines

**Hiroshima** - A friendly city that has grown phoenix-like from the destruction of World War II

**Miyajima** - A beautiful neighbouring island near Hiroshima that is home to one of the most photographed locations in Japan, Itsukushima Shrine

**Himeji** - Famous for the magnificent Himeji Castle

**Osaka** - Take in the sights and sounds of this food mecca



## Essential Japan tour inclusions

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English-speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides

*Personal expenditures e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, tipping, early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary are at your own expense.*

## 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 Escorts and local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

## Moderate

'Essential Japan' is a **moderate** tour. Tours that require a higher level of fitness and may include standard activities and longer periods of sightseeing. Easy walking, high altitude and overnight train journeys may feature.

Anyone with a good level of fitness should be able to complete this itinerary. Of course, our National Escort/Local Guides always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance, but they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. Please refer to your Travel Guide for more information.

## Country Profile: Japan

Japan is a fascinating country situated in north-east 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.

## Itinerary Changes

1. 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.
2. The Edo-Tokyo Museum is closed on Mondays and the Imperial Palace East Garden is closed on Mondays and Fridays, should your visits fall on these days touring will be re-arranged in Tokyo so these sights are not missed.
3. Changes have been made to the 2017 itinerary to improve the customers experience while on tour. These changes are below:
  - Two nights have been removed from Kyoto and replaced with one night in Hiroshima and Osaka. The itinerary has always included a day trip to Hiroshima and also a day trip to Miyajima from Kyoto. By adding a night in Hiroshima, this will ease the pace of the tour and make it more comfortable for the passengers. The night in Osaka was added to make the transfer to the airport a shorter and more comfortable journey.
  - This itinerary will now include a drive past Shibuya crossing also known as "Scramble Crossing" on Day 4.
  - Tokyo Bay dinner cruise has been moved to Day 4 to give passengers more time to have some free time at the hotel prior to the dinner cruise.
  - Touring on Days 7 and 8 have been swapped around to give passengers more time at the temples.

- Mt Misen Cable car has been removed from the itinerary on Day 10. This will give passengers more time to explore Miyajima Town at their pace before transferring to Osaka.

## Joining Your Tour

The tour is 12 days in duration including international flights. Travellers booked on 'Land Only' arrangements should make their own way to the starting point. Join the tour on Day 2 in Tokyo and end the tour on Day 11 in Osaka. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

## Important Information Regarding Itinerary Changes and Flight Delays

Due to unforeseen circumstances, flights can be delayed, and therefore connecting flights may be missed. If you find yourself in this situation, please contact our Japan office on **+81 03 6895 8377 (24 hours)** to urgently advise your arrival details have changed. Please ensure you have your trip number, tour name (both included in your final documentation) and new arrival details (flight number and arrival time) handy to pass on to our local office in Japan. This will ensure your National Escort/Local Guide can be informed of your most up to date information and ensure someone is at the airport to meet you on arrival.

If we are not advised of late changes and missed connections, Wendy Wu Tours cannot guarantee someone will be able to meet you upon arrival in Japan as our local office will have no way of knowing which flight you will be arriving on. Wendy Wu Tours will not be responsible for providing reimbursement of transportation costs from the airport to your hotel in the event that our local office was not advised of changes to arrival time.

## Essential Japan Itinerary

### DAYS 1- 2: AUSTRALIA TO TOKYO

Fly overnight with Cathay Pacific Airways to Tokyo, the capital of Japan and transfer approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes to your hotel. The rest of the day is free for you to explore the city until an informal welcome dinner tonight. Group members arriving late in the evening may miss dinner.

*Brisbane passengers may depart on Day 2.*

*Please note: Early check-in is not included today, if your flight arrives in the morning and you wish to arrange this please speak to your reservations consultant. Meals will be at your own discretion until your welcome dinner tonight.*

### 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. Although long the political and cultural centre of Japan, Tokyo became the official capital when the Meiji Emperor moved it to Tokyo in 1867.

### DAY 3: DISCOVER TOKYO

Tokyo is the ultimate 24-hour city, but look behind its frantic, high-tech frontage and you will find plenty of tranquil backstreets and old temples to explore; today take a tour by coach of this fascinating city. Head to the top of the Tokyo Skytree for panoramic views over the city before

taking a wander through the district of Asakusa for an opportunity to pick up some souvenirs on Nakamise Shopping street and visit Senso-ji Temple. Explore the Edo-Tokyo Museum and Tokyo's Imperial Palace East Garden. You will be on your feet for 4-5 hours during your touring in Tokyo. Dinner this evening will be at a local restaurant within walking distance of your hotel.

*Please note the Edo-Tokyo Museum is closed on Mondays and the Imperial Palace East Garden is closed on Mondays and Fridays, should your visits fall on these days touring will be re-arranged in Tokyo so these sights are not missed.*

### Destination Information

**Tokyo Skytree** -Tokyo Skytree is 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.

**Senso-ji 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.

**Edo-Tokyo Museum** - Depicts the history of Tokyo during the Edo Period.

**Tokyo Imperial 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.

#### **DAY 4: MEJI SHRINE**

Spend a relaxed morning wandering around the classical landscapes of the Hamarikyu Garden and exploring the huge evergreen forest that encompasses the Shinto Meiji Shrine. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before returning to your hotel, driving by the Shibuya "Scramble" Crossing on the way. Return to your hotel where your guide will let you know what time to meet for this evenings dinner cruise, the rest of the afternoon is free for you to explore independently or relax in the hotel. Transfer from the hotel to your boat and take a leisurely 1 hour dinner cruise on Tokyo Bay for some excellent city vistas. You will need to get on and off your boat this evening without assistance.

#### **Destination Information**

**Hamarikyu Gardens** - A beautiful example of Japanese garden style which sits at the mouth of the Sumida River.

**Meiji Shrine** - Is a Shinto shrine dedicated to the Emperor Meiji and his wife Empress Shoken.

#### **DAY 5: FUJI FIVE LAKES**

Journey 2 hours through the foothills of the iconic Mt Fuji to its base where you will find the Fuji Five Lakes. The region is spectacular with the calm waters of the five lakes, formed by past eruptions, reflecting Fuji's picture-perfect cone. Try your hand at making traditional Japanese soba noodles before tucking in to your creations for lunch. Continue to Oshino Hakkai, a scenic area of ponds full of crystal clear spring water created by Fuji's melting snow, where there is also a small museum. The museum is a traditional farmhouse with household items, samurai armour and weapons.

#### **Destination Information**

**Fuji Five Lakes** - Formed by previous Mt Fuji eruptions, the Fuji Five Lakes is a region at the base of Mt Fuji made up of five beautiful lakes.

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

#### **DAY 6: MT FUJI**

Today is a full day of touring, start with a visit to the Fuji Visitor Centre where you can learn about the cultural and ecological history of Mt Fuji. Head up Fuji's 5th Station for spectacular mountain vistas, please note it is only possible

to reach the 5th station if weather permits. After lunch, wander through Iyashi no Sato historical village, located on one of the Fuji Five Lakes, Lake Saiko, famous for its thatched-roofed houses.

*Please note: You will need to back a smaller overnight bag for tonight as your main luggage will be transferred this morning to your Kyoto hotel.*

#### **Destination Information**

**Fuji Visitor Centre** - Is a comprehensive introduction to the nature, culture, history and ecology of Mt Fuji.

**Iyashi no Sato historical village** - Is a replica village based on a former farming village that was destroyed by a landslide in 1966. The houses here have traditional thatched roofs.

#### **Day 7: BULLET TRAIN TO KYOTO**

Drive 1 hour 45 minutes to Mishima to board your 2 hour bullet train to Kyoto. An enchanting city, Kyoto was capital for a thousand years; today it is the legacy of ancient Japan, full of tranquil temples, silk-clad geisha and sublime gardens. Visit a traditional teahouse where you will be joined by a Geisha or an apprentice Geisha, known as a Maiko. Next, take a visit to the Ryoan-ji Temple before heading to the Kinkaku-ji Temple, also known as the Golden Pavilion, due to its gold-like exterior. Continue on to your hotel to check in for a two-night stay

*Please note: Hotel check in will be from 2pm today.*

#### **Destination Information**

**Kyoto** - The former 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.

**Geisha** - The art of the Geisha can be traced back to the Edo Period. Geishas are highly skilled entertainers who will perform with a musical instrument, a tea ceremony, ikebana to entertain her guests. Geishas usually wear kimonos and an obi - a sash for traditional Japanese dress.

**Ryoan-ji Temple** - A Zen temple which is renowned for its garden which features a dry, sand landscape with large rocks and smooth pebbles.

**Kinkaku-ji Temple (Golden Pavilion)** - 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 8: KYOTO**

Start the day visiting the spectacular Kiyomizu Temple. You will spend approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes on foot exploring the temple. After lunch learn traditional Japanese handicrafts such as origami and enjoy the art of a tea ceremony. Return to your hotel and enjoy dinner at a local restaurant.

#### **Destination Information**

**Kiyomizu Temple** - Is a 16th century Buddhist Temple in Kyoto. A highlight is the Hondo's veranda which is perched over the hillside, offering spectacular woodland vistas.

#### **DAY 9: KYOTO TO HIROSHIMA**

This morning transfer to Kyoto station and take the 1 hour 40 minutes bullet train to Hiroshima, a modern and prosperous city that will be forever remembered as the world's first atomic bomb target. Travel by coach to the famous Peace Park and Museum, please be aware that the museum may be confronting and upsetting for some group members and it is at your discretion if you wish to visit or enjoy time at leisure exploring the Peace Park. After lunch travel 1 hour by coach and take a short ferry ride to Miyajima where sightseeing will be at a leisurely pace on foot. Visit Itsukushima Shrine and explore the traditional market town at leisure. Later this afternoon return by ferry and then coach to Hiroshima for dinner before checking into your hotel.

#### **Destination Information**

**Hiroshima** - An atomic bomb was dropped over Hiroshima on 6th August 1945, and the city's name became famous worldwide for this unenviable distinction. The destructive power of the bomb obliterated nearly everything within a 2km radius. The city has been rebuilt and has risen phoenix-like from the ashes and destroyed sites of historical heritage were reconstructed.

**Peace Park and Museum** - One of the most prominent features of the city. The trees, lawns and walking paths are in stark contrast to the surrounding downtown area. Before the bomb, the area of what is now the Peace Park was the political and commercial heart of the city and this is why it was chosen as the pilot's target. The museum focuses on the events of August 6 and the subsequent outcome for the residents.

**Miyajima** - A small island less than an hour outside of Hiroshima. While officially named Itsukushima, the island is

more commonly referred to as Miyajima, Japanese for 'Shrine Island'. This is because the island is well-known for its main attraction, Itsukushima Shrine, a giant torii gate, which at high tide seems to float on the water.

#### **DAY 10: HIROSHIMA TO OSAKA**

Travel 3 hours and 30 minutes by coach to Himeji, with a rest stop along the way. On arrival, enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before visiting the beautiful castle and Kokoen Garden. Himeji Castle is largely in its original condition so please be mindful of your steps when walking around. You will have to remove your shoes before walking along some of the wooden floors and there are some steep wooden steps to reach certain areas. After the reopening in March 2015, Himeji Castle has welcomed a large number of visitors. As such, they now issue numbered tickets to enter the Main Keep in order to limit the number of people who can enter, reducing congestion, waiting time and to protect the cultural properties. Please note this means that there may be cases where some visitors are not allowed to enter the Main Keep however there are many other parts of the castle to explore. Transfer approximately 2 hours to Osaka for your overnight stay.

#### **Destination Information**

**Himeji** - The second largest city of Hyogo Prefecture after Kobe, with approximately half a million inhabitants. Most famous for its magnificent castle.

**Himeji Castle** - Widely considered as Japan's most magnificent castle for its imposing size and beauty. The well-preserved castle is both a national and world heritage listed treasure. Himeji Castle has never been destroyed by war, earthquake or fire.

#### **DAY 11: DEPART OSAKA**

This morning is free at leisure before you transfer to Osaka airport for your return flight home.

*Due to flight schedule, Perth passengers may arrive home on Day 11.*

*Please note: Only breakfast is included today. Late check-out is not included in our Essential 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.*

#### **DAY 12: ARRIVE AUSTRALIA**

Arrive home today.

## ESSENTIAL 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 be buffet style. 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. 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.

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. In the Fuji Five Lakes area, hotels tend to be more traditional in style and culture. In this area, you may be asked to take your shoes off at the door and store them in a secure locker – this is very traditional Japanese culture.

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 are renowned for being small and rooms booked for single use 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. Please note double bed requests can be made at time of booking but cannot be guaranteed.

Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty please speak to your National Escort. Tea and coffee facilities are not always available in hotels in Japan, so bring your own supply of coffee and tea bags.

## 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 with the rest of Asia.

**Trains:** Japan's transport system is well known for being efficient, clean and convenient. We like to make sure that you get the opportunity to travel with the locals, making use of the city's world-renowned bullet trains that will whizz you from city to city in no time. When taking the bullet train (Shinkansen) your main luggage will be transported separately due to limited space on the train. We recommend you pack a small overnight bag to take with you on the bullet train, which includes a change of clothes and other necessary items including any medication that is required.

Please note that seatbelts are not compulsory by law in Japan and therefore the local people largely choose not to wear them. For this reason, some vehicles may not be fitted with seatbelts or they may be hidden underneath protective seat covers. It is recommended that where seatbelts are available customers must use them and remain seated at all times while the vehicle is moving. If you have any concerns, please notify your National Escort/Local Guides.

## 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.

## Souvenirs

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions which demonstrates 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.

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. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with Local Guides only.

## Tipping Policy

Tipping is not a practiced custom in Japan. For this reason, tipping is not compulsory or included in the price of our Japan group tours. If you feel your National Escort has provided excellent service, you may (at your own discretion and) provide them with a tip at the end of your tour. When travelling around Japan, you should resist the temptation to let someone 'keep the change' or to tip wait staff, bar staff, taxi drivers or bellboys as this may lead to confusion.

## 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](http://www.weather.com).

### Luggage

All travellers 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 5kg. It is essential that your luggage is lockable.

### 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

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\$250 should be sufficient; however for those that cannot resist a bargain, consider allocating a higher amount.

Optional tours may be offered in each city you visit during your tour at an additional cost. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide.

### 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 defence 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. Hindu and 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 Differences

Japanese society and culture is 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 clean socks with no holes, 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](http://www.travelvax.com.au).

### Before You Leave

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://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 with deposit documentation via email. This includes important information and links to access the visa application form and instructions sheet online (if applicable). Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

**Updated: 24 May 2017**