



## Tour Dossier

### Discover Japan

### Classic Tour | 14 Days | Moderate Pace

*This document was designed to provide a straightforward description of the physical activities involved in sightseeing or travelling during the tour. All passengers should read this dossier to assess the physical requirements of the programme and their ability to complete the tour.*

#### Classic Tours

Our Classic Tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures on a fully-inclusive excellent value group tour.

**‘Discover Japan’ is a Moderate Pace tour. This is defined in our brochure as the following:** 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.

#### Tour Highlights:

On our Discover Japan itinerary, you will visit **Tokyo, Takayama, Kyoto, Koyasan** and **Osaka**.

- **Tokyo** – Explore Japan’s modern, yet traditional capital city
- **Takayama** – Immerse yourself in this small town which was cut off from the rest of Japan for centuries
- **Kyoto** – Japan’s spiritual heart and famous temples and shrines
- **Koyasan** – Enjoy the unique experience of staying overnight in a ‘*shukubo*’ temple lodging
- **Osaka** – Take in the sights and sounds of this food mecca

## **Destination 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.

**Travel in Japan** - Travelling in Japan can be quite different to most other countries throughout Asia. Our programmes are designed to showcase the unique culture and allow you to experience the best that Japan has to offer and it is for this reason that our itineraries here are different to other tours you may have experienced. For example, most meals are a set menu for each person rather than being banquet-style. Japan hotels are renowned for having very small guest rooms compared to other countries. While they may be compact in size, they are clean, comfortable and conveniently located. Also, there may be occasions where it will be faster for your group to walk a short distance between sightseeing locations rather than travelling by coach. We would like your time in Japan to be well-spent exploring the amazing sites, rather than sitting in traffic! Further information regarding the abovementioned points are detailed in this document for your perusal. We have found that our customers who have a sense of humour and adventure, and who accept that things are unlike home, find their experience the most rewarding.

**Roads in Japan** - Roads in Japan have a reputation for being very congested, particularly around popular sightseeing attractions, such as Mt. Fuji. For this reason, it may not always be possible to return to your hotel after sightseeing to freshen-up before going to the restaurant for dinner. For this reason, the timings listed in the sections below are approximations only.

**Cuisine in Japan** - Japanese cuisine is one of the most influential, diverse and flavoursome culinary styles in the world. 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 and dinners are pre-set options as is custom in many local restaurants. These are also pre-booked in advance prior to your arrival by your National Escort. This will provide greater flexibility and allow you to sample a broad range of local cuisines and dishes. There will be little to no western dishes offered to you at meal times. If you are a vegan or strict vegetarian (i.e. you do not eat fish or seafood), the choice of Japanese food in restaurants may be more limited. People on gluten free diets or with Coeliac Disease may also find they have limited options. It is important we know about any special dietary requirements at the time of booking so we can do our best to cater to any special needs. All beverages will be at your own expense and are readily available.

**Joining Your Tour** - The tour is 14 days in duration including international flights. Join the tour on Day 2 in Tokyo and end the tour on Day 13 in Osaka. Travellers booked on 'Land Only' arrangements should make their own way to the starting point. Please refer to your Final Itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

### **Itinerary changes**

1. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

**Flight Delays or Changes to Arrival Times** - 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 80 3533 5614** 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 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 times.



## Itinerary – Discover Japan

### **Day 1-2: Australia to Tokyo**

#### Day Outline

Fly overnight with Cathay Pacific Airways to Tokyo for a three night stay.

*Please note: Early check in is not included today. If your flight arrives early this morning and you wish to check-in upon arrival at the hotel, please contact our Reservations Team who can check hotel availability and additional pricing.*

#### Physical Description

You will be met upon arrival after you clear customs and immigration at Narita Airport and will be escorted to the seat-in-coach transfer that will take you to your hotel. There may be a short wait as these run to a timetable. The drive from the airport to your hotel is 1.5-2 hours. Upon arrival at the hotel your national guide/local assistant will meet you at the reception area to assist with check-in. Group members arriving late in the evening may miss dinner.

#### Destination Information

**Tokyo** - The capital city of Japan since 1603, Japan has grown dramatically from the modest fishing village of Edo it once was. It is not only the home of the Emperor, but also Japan's centre of business, finance, modern culture, fashion, and entertainment. Ancient shrines and temples stand adjacent to modern skyscrapers. Tokyo is one of the world's largest, most vibrant and cosmopolitan cities.

### **Day 03: Tokyo**

#### Day Outline

A tour introduction will be held this morning. Food and drinks will not be served at this meeting. It is Visit [wendywutours.com.au](http://wendywutours.com.au)

simply an opportunity for your group to meet and learn more about travelling in Japan.

Start the days touring with a visit to Tokyo Skytree, where you can admire sweeping views of the city. Continue to Asakusa, where you will stroll Nakamise shopping street and explore Sensoji Temple. After lunch stop at Imperial Palace Plaza and wander the Hama Rikyu Gardens. This evening enjoy a dinner cruise around Tokyo Bay.

#### Physical Description

Enjoy a tour of Tokyo, overall there is around 3-4 hours on foot involved in today's sightseeing. In the evening, dinner will be on board a cruise on Tokyo Bay.

#### Destination Information

**Tokyo Sky Tree** - At 634m tall, the Tokyo Sky Tree is the tallest free-standing broadcasting tower in the world. Enjoy the spectacular views over the vast city.

**Asakusa** - The centre of Tokyo's Shitamachi (Old Town) District, where you can catch a glimpse of historical Tokyo.

**Nakamise Shopping Street** - Has a history dating back several centuries and where souvenirs such as fans and traditional local snacks can be purchased.

**Sensoji Temple** - Tokyo's oldest and most popular Buddhist temple. Local legend tells that in 628AD, two brothers fished a statue of Kannon, the goddess of mercy, from the nearby Sumida River. Even though they put the statue back into the river, it kept

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returning to them. Sensoji Temple was completed in 645AD to honour the goddess.

**Imperial Palace Plaza** - The current Imperial Palace is the residence of Japan's Imperial Family. The large plaza in front of the Imperial Palace, where you will be stopping at this morning, is where we can view the Nijubashi, two bridges that form an entrance to the inner palace grounds. The stone bridge in front is called Meganebashi (Eyeglass Bridge). The bridge in the back was previously a wooden bridge with two levels, from which the name Nijubashi (Double Bridge) is derived.

**[NB: the Imperial Palace is closed year round to the public apart from on 2nd January and 23rd December].**

**Hama Rikyu Teien** - A former private garden of an Edo Period lord and a green oasis in the middle of Tokyo. Located next to Tokyo Bay, Hama Rikyu features tidal seawater ponds and a teahouse where we can sit and appreciate the scenery. The traditional garden stands in stark contrast to the skyscrapers which surround it.

#### **Day 04: Tokyo – Mt Fuji**

##### Day Outline

Travel out of Tokyo to the Fuji Visitor Centre. Weather permitting, continue up Mt. Fuji by coach to the 5th Station where you will, with any luck, be able to view the summit. After lunch, travel to Hakone and take a cruise across Lake Ashinoko. Take the world's second longest cable car up to Mt. Owakudani. Return to Tokyo by coach.

##### Physical Description

You will have an early start this morning. Drive 2.5 hours to Mt. Fuji (130km from Tokyo to Mt Fuji). Drive up to the 5th Station of Mt. Fuji (2,305m) if weather conditions permit. Continue to Hakone (70km from Mt Fuji to Hakone, 1.5 hour drive). After lunch, you will take the cable car up Owakudani (1.4km long and 1,044m high). Please be aware that these springs have a unique scent, which may be quite strong for some people. Duration of sightseeing on foot today is limited to around one hour but there is a lot of moving between locations so please adhere to any meeting places and times advised by your National Escort. Today's touring and viewing of Mt. Fuji is subject to traffic and weather conditions.

##### Destination Information

**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, so it is entirely possible to drive around the mountain but not be able to see it.

**Fuji Visitor Centre** - An information centre where you can learn about the formation, ecology and cultural history of Mt. Fuji.

**Hakone** - A beautiful region of Japan well known for spectacular mountain scenery and views of Mt Fuji. If the weather is clear, you will have panoramic views of Mt. Fuji from here.

**Owakudani** - A volcanic crater formed 3,000 years ago following a large eruption on Mt Hakone. Travel up on the world second longest cable car, which will take you over sulphurous fumes, hot springs and hot rivers. At the top we can sample a hardboiled egg from the sulphuric hot springs for which Hakone is famous for.

#### **Day 05: Tokyo to Takayama**

##### Day Outline

Leave Tokyo and drive to Takayama, stopping en route in Matsumoto, where you will visit Matsumoto Castle. Visit one of Japan's largest wasabi farms where you can try your hand at making pickled wasabi vegetables before continuing to Takayama.

##### Physical Description

Leave Tokyo and drive to Takayama (5.5 hour drive). Stop en route in Matsumoto (3 hour drive from Tokyo), where you will visit Matsumoto Castle. There are steep ladder-style steps in Matsumoto Castle that you must climb up and back down again. If you choose not to look inside the castle, the surrounding gardens, moat and the façade of the castle will keep you entertained.

Visit one of Japan's largest wasabi farms where you can try your hands at making pickled wasabi vegetables (please note that wasabi can be quite hot on the palate, if you wish to sample this it is best to start with only a very small amount at first). Continue to Takayama across the alpine mountain range (2.5 hours drive from Matsumoto). The road is winding and you will pass through many tunnels. Please remain seated at all times with your seatbelt fastened.

Due to its location this town has been secluded from the rest of Japan for a long time, so please respect the traditional and local customs. There are hot spring baths (onsen) which you can use at your leisure at the hotel. Your National Escort will advise you of the procedure and etiquette for using the onsen, but as a general guide, you can expect the following:

- Hot spring baths are generally gender separated – one for men and one for women.

- Japanese hot springs are enjoyed naked. Bathers/clothing are not permitted in most, however, it is the custom to bring a small towel into the bathing area, for privacy while outside of the water. Ensure you keep the towel out of the water.
- Before entering the bath you must wash in the provided showers.
- The water in the hot springs can be very hot (typical temperatures are 40-44 degrees). If it feels too hot, try to enter very slowly.

#### Destination Information

**Matsumoto Castle** - One of the most original, complete and beautiful Japanese castles. If you do not wish to climb the stairs inside the castle, you can wander the castle grounds and explore the castle from the outside. The main castle was built from 1592 to 1614. It is well-fortified as peace was not yet fully achieved at the time.

**Takayama** - A town nestled high in the mountainous Hida alpine region of Japan. It has retained a traditional atmosphere unlike many other Japanese cities, especially in the beautifully preserved old town.

#### **Day 06: Takayama**

##### Day Outline

Head to the Miyagawa morning market where you can sample some of the region's fruit and vegetables. Later visit traditional houses and local museums, including the Takayama Festival Floats Exhibition Hall, Kusakabe Folk Museum and the Takayama Jinya. Enjoy some free time to explore the local shopping streets.

##### Physical Description

You will have approximately 5-6 hours sightseeing on foot today as you walk around the small town of Takayama.

##### Destination Information

**Miyagawa Morning Market** - Stalls sell local crafts and produce. You will have the opportunity to try some of the region's delicious fruit and vegetables.

**Takayama Festival Floats Exhibition Hall** - Comprises displays of ornate floats from the famous Takayama festival.

**Kusakabe Folk Museum** - Formerly a family home where you will see the traditional architecture of the Edo period (1603-1868).

**Takayama Jinya** - Which is now a museum but previously served as the local government office until  
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1969. It contains various offices, a residential space, a courtroom and storehouses.

#### **Day 07: Takayama to Kanazawa**

##### Day Outline

Travel to the UNESCO World Heritage listed Shirakawa-go. Try your hand at making traditional Japanese washi paper at a neighboring town before continuing to Kanazawa, where you will visit the Nomura Samurai House and take a walk through the Old District.

##### Physical Description

Travel approximately 2 hours to Shirakawa-go. (1.5 hours on foot). There are some stairs in the house, which you can climb if you want to explore the higher levels. Try your hand at making Japanese washi paper before continuing to Kanazawa, (1.5-2 hours) where you will visit the Nomura Samurai House and walk through the Old District (1.5 hours of sightseeing on foot).

##### Destination Information

**Shirakawa-go** - Famous for its traditional gassho-zukuri ('praying hands') farmhouses, some of which are more than 250 years old. The steep thatched roofs may remind us of the hands of Buddhist monks pressed together in prayer. The architectural style allows the houses to withstand the heavy snow that falls in the region during winter.

**Kanazawa** - A city which has many historical attractions such as restored residences and districts, as well as modern museums.

**Nomura Samurai House** - A restored samurai residence where you can see how the Samurai once lived.

**Old District** - The historic atmosphere has been preserved through the remaining samurai residences, earthen walls, private entrance gates, narrow lanes and water canals.

#### **Day 08: Kanazawa to Kyoto**

##### Day Outline

This morning wander through the beautiful Kenroku-en Garden, one of Japan's top three gardens, and visit the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art. After lunch, travel by coach to Kyoto for a three night stay.

##### Physical Description

Wander through Kenroku-en Garden this morning and visit the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, which you can explore at your leisure (total of approximately 3 hours on foot at the garden and

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museum). After lunch, drive to Kyoto (approximately 3.5 hour drive).

#### Destination Information

**Kenroku-en Garden** - One of Japan's top three gardens. Kenroku-en means 'Garden of the Six Sublimities', referring to spaciousness, seclusion, artificiality, antiquity, abundant water and broad views, which according to landscape theory are the six essential attributes that make up a perfect garden.

**Kyoto** - 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 09: Kyoto**

##### Day Outline

This morning explore the famous Kinkaku-ji, known as the Golden Pavilion. Later, visit the UNESCO World Heritage listed Ryoanji Temple and a restored wooden townhouse where you will learn about traditional Japanese handicrafts such as origami and participate in a traditional Japanese tea ceremony.

##### Physical Description

Today is a very busy day of sightseeing to make the most of your time in Kyoto. You will spend around 2 hours on foot walking through the Golden Pavilion (Kinkaku-ji) and the Ryoanji Temple. There are some steps throughout the temple complexes. At the traditional townhouse this afternoon, there is one set of stairs to climb up and down to the classroom. This is a traditional townhouse so the steps are steep but there is a hand railing. Please take your time and be mindful of your step.

#### Destination Information

**Kinkaku-ji** - A Zen temple known as the Golden Pavilion as the top two floors are completely covered in gold leaf. The temple was once the retirement villa of the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu. This is Kyoto's most popular tourist attraction so there are often a lot of other tourists here.

**Ryoanji Temple** - Which means 'temple of the peaceful dragon'. Ryoanji Temple is the site of Japan's most famous rock garden.

Originally an aristocrat's villa, the site was converted into a Zen temple in 1450. The meaning of the garden is unclear. Some believe that the garden represents a tiger carrying cubs across a pond or islands in a sea, while others claim that the garden represents an

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abstract concept like infinity. Because the garden's meaning has never been made clear, it is up to each viewer to find their own meaning.

#### **Day 10: Kyoto - Nara**

##### Day Outline

This morning travel to Nara, the former imperial capital of Japan. Visit the Todaiji Temple, Nara Park and Issuien Gardens. Return to Kyoto stopping en route at the unforgettable Fushimi Inari-taisha Shrine.

##### Physical Description

Travel to Nara by coach (45 minute drive from Kyoto). Visit the Todaiji Temple and Nara Park, which locals call Deer Park, as deer live in the park. The deer will approach you to be fed. Whether you choose to do so is entirely at your discretion. You will also enjoy a leisurely stroll through Issuien Gardens. You will spend around 2 hours on foot in Nara. Return to Kyoto stopping en route at Fushimi Inari-taisha Shrine. The gates mark the entrance to the top of Mt. Inari (233 metres high). The entire hike up the mountain takes 2.5-3 hours, but you will only walk part of the way. There are some steps and an incline but it is not overly strenuous and a steady-paced walk is all that is required.

***[NB: Please note an overnight bag is required for tomorrow's temple stay at Koyasan. It is essential due to delicate flooring and for ease in managing luggage across the temples gravelled grounds that each passenger is able to carry their own luggage. All other luggage will be transferred to your Osaka hotel, which you will receive on Day 12].***

##### Destination Information

**Nara** - For 74 years during the 8th Century, Nara was Japan's capital and many of the temples and shrines built at that time still remain.

**Todaiji Temple** - The world's largest wooden structure, which is home to Japan's largest Buddha and numerous deer. The temple was built in 752 as the head temple of all provincial Buddhist temples in Japan.

**Nara Park** - Also called Deer Park by the local people due to the large population of tame deer living there.

**Issuien Gardens** - Meaning 'garden founded on water', derived from the fact that its ponds are sourced from the Yoshikigawa River. The garden is divided into two parts; a front garden and a rear garden, with a number of teahouses scattered throughout. The front garden has a longer history, dating back to the mid-17th century. The rear garden, the larger of the two, is

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more recent and was built in 1899 by a wealthy merchant.

**Fushimi Inari-taisha Shrine** - Also known as '10,000 Torii Gates', which features in the movie *Memoirs of a Geisha*. It is an important Shinto shrine and is famous for its thousands of torii gates, which straddle the trails leading through the wooded forest of the sacred Mt. Inari, which stands at 233m. The shrine is dedicated to Inari, the Shinto god of rice. Foxes are thought to be Inari's messengers, resulting in many fox statues across the shrine grounds.

## **Day 11: Kyoto to Koyasan**

### Day Outline

Journey to Koyasan, the centre of Shingon Buddhism. Visit Kongobuji Temple, Garan Temple Complex and Okunoin. This evening have the unique opportunity of staying overnight in a Buddhist temple lodge, known as a 'shukubo'. Enjoy a Buddhist vegetarian dinner, known as Shojin Ryori.

### Physical Description

Travel approximately 3 hours to Koyasan. Here you will visit Kongobunji Temple, Garan temple complex (45 minutes on foot) and Okunoin. The walk to the mausoleum and back is 2km on a sometimes uneven surface, but generally flat. Tonight you will stay in a Buddhist temple lodge, known as a shukubo. The temple stay is staffed by the monks and they generally do not speak English. Accommodation is traditional but basic. Single mattresses will be laid on the tatami mats and can be pushed near each other to create a double bed. The tatami mat floors are not hard and mattresses are designed for comfortable sleep. The doors are made from rice paper and noise will travel. There will be a typical Japanese shared bathroom, shower and toilet facilities here, one for men and one for women that are communal. Rooms are individually heated but hallways are not. The evening meal is a Buddhist vegetarian dinner, known as shojin ryori and is served promptly at 1800hrs and your bedding is prepared by the Monks while you are at dinner. The evening is free for quiet reflection in your room. There are no TV's on the premises.

### Destination Information

**Koyasan** - A UNESCO World Heritage listed site. Koyasan is home to over 100 temples and has been the centre of Shingon Buddhism, an important Buddhist sect, for over 1,200 years.

**Kongobunji Temple** - The head monastery of Shingon Buddhism and home to Japan's largest rock garden. The temple was originally constructed in 1593 by Toyotomi Hideyoshi to commemorate the death of his

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mother. Later it was merged with a neighboring temple and reorganised as the head temple of Shingon Buddhism.

**Garan Temple Complex** - One of the first complexes built by Kobo Daishi. The complex has approximately 20 temples and buildings, the first temple was built in 819.

**Okunoin** - Japan's largest cemetery and holds the mausoleum of the founder of Shingon Buddhism, Kobo Daishi. Walk to the mausoleum, passing 200,000 tombstones belonging to feudal lords and prominent monks along the way.

## **Day 12: Koyasan to Osaka**

### Day Outline

Rise early this morning to witness the monks chant their morning prayers and experience a traditional Shojin Ryori breakfast. Travel to Osaka, Japan's largest city, and visit Osaka Castle and take a cruise along the Yodogawa River. Tonight stroll Dotonbori, a restaurant mecca, where you can sample delicious local delicacies during your farewell dinner.

### Physical Description

Rise early at 0630hrs to witness the morning prayers. The ceremony is in Japanese, lasts around 40 minutes and is very solemn. Photography is not permitted. Following this you will have a shojin ryori breakfast. Breakfast is vegetarian and minimal as it is in keeping with Buddhist tradition; this is a great experience to learn about this unique way of life. Later, drive to Osaka 2.5 hours for an overnight stay. Visit Osaka Castle (around 2 hours on foot and there are many stairs in the castle) and take a cruise (1 hour) along the Yodogawa River. Tonight you will wander down Dotonbori, a restaurant mecca, where you can sample local delicacies.

### Destination Information

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

**Osaka Castle** - 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.

## **Day 13: Depart Osaka**

### Day Outline

This morning is at leisure before you are transferred to Kansai airport to board your overnight flight to Australia.

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### Physical Description

Any time before your flight is at leisure.

You will be transferred from your hotel to Kansai International Airport, according to the departure time of your international flight.

**[NB: 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 additional pricing and make this arrangement for you, subject to availability at the hotel].***

**Day 14: Arrive Australia**

Day Outline

Arrive home today.

## Tour Profile

**Visa Requirements** - 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.

**Accommodation** - All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and a telephone. 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/Local Guide.

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 or a heritage type hotel. In remote areas accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local deluxe standard, but do please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between Australia and Japan. 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.

Hotels rooms in Japan are renowned for being small. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and a telephone. 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. 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. Tea and coffee facilities are not always available in hotels in Japan, so bring your own supply of coffee and tea bags.

During the tour, you will stay overnight in a temple lodging called a shukubo in Koyasan. The shukubo is constructed in pure Japanese-style; each room features a view of the garden and futon-style bedding (on the floor). The sleeping and eating areas are individually heated, but hallways and some common areas are not so can be very cold during the evening and early morning. Toilet and shower facilities are on a shared-basis. Buddhist priests serve Shojin Ryori (vegetarian cuisine) for breakfast and dinner. Please note: only basic vegetarian cuisine is served during your overnight stay here. This is a truly unique experience.

**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** - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that maybe offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of AU\$250 per week should be sufficient; however for those that can't resist a bargain, consider allocating a higher amount.



**Tipping** - Tipping is a firm and expected element in the tourism industry. A nominated tipping amount is included in all group tour pricing, however is not collected in your final payment received by Wendy Wu Tours. This is so that it can be paid directly to your National Escort/Local Guide who will then distribute the tips among your main service providers (guides, drivers and attendants) on your behalf. Any other tipping, such as tips for bathroom attendants or hotel porters that are taking luggage to your room, is at your discretion based on satisfaction of services received, as are gratuities for additional requested special services. The final tipping amount will be outlined in your final documentation.

**Optional Tours** - Optional tours maybe 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. 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.

**Respecting Local Customs and Traditions** - 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.

**Group Size** - In most cases the group will operate with a minimum of 10 travellers with local guides only. If there are 10 travellers or more, your group will be accompanied by a National escort as well as local guides. There will usually be no more than 28 travellers in each group.

**Climate** - You will find a complete packing list and a helpful climate chart in the 'Suggested Packing List', which is 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).

**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 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 approx. 2 weeks prior to departure, and will include a travel wallet, a travel guide (which includes a suggested packing list) and phrase book, along with your final itinerary and international e-tickets.

**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.

**Updated: 9 June 2016**