



Experience Japan

Classic Tour | 12 Days | Physical Level 1

Osaka – Nara – Kyoto – Nagano – Matsumoto – Mt. Fuji (Mishima)
– Kamakura – Tokyo

This tour not only visits the famous sights of Japan including Osaka, Nara, Kyoto, Mt. Fuji and Tokyo, but is full to the brim of experiences allowing you to immerse yourself in the local culture! From a tea ceremony and origami to fan painting, miso tasting and sake tasting!

- Discover delightful Nara
- Visit Matsumoto & Osaka castles
- Explore Arashiyama bamboo forest
- Watch snow monkeys play
- View the impressive Mount Fuji



Experience 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
- 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 check-out 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:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights.

‘Jewels of 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 boats 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 12 days in duration including international flights. Please note that due to flight schedules passengers may depart/arrive 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 Osaka and end the tour on Day 11 in Tokyo. 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.

Itinerary – Experience Japan

Days 1-2: Arrive Osaka

Fly overnight to the lively, fast-paced city of Osaka. On arrival, you will be met by an English-speaking representative and transferred to your hotel. The rest of the day is yours to start soaking up the local culture.

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

Osaka – Osaka is Japan's third largest city and is often referred to as the culinary capital. The phrase *kuidaore* (eat until you drop) could be considered the city's slogan. What Osaka lacks in sightseeing locations, it makes up for with its flamboyance, fun loving people and amazing food.

Day 3: Nara

Spend the morning in Osaka with a visit to the impressive Osaka Castle, before cruising along the Yodogawa River. After lunch, continue by road to Nara and enjoy a leisurely stroll through Nara Park to Todaiji Temple and admire the traditional Isuien Garden before returning to Osaka.



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 the castle to become the centre of a new, unified Japan under his rule.

Yogodawa River – The gentle Yogodawa river connects the cities of Osaka and Kyoto, a sail down the river offers visitors beautiful unobstructed views of the city.

Nara – Due to Nara's past as the first permanent capital, it remains full of historic treasures, including 8 UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

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

Isuien Garden – Isuien is an attractive Japanese garden divided into two parts, a front garden and a rear garden, with a number of tea houses scattered throughout. The front garden dates back to the mid-17th century, while the rear garden, the larger of the two, was built in 1899 by a wealthy merchant.

Day 4: Osaka – Kyoto

Travel approximately 1 hour by road to Kyoto, capital of Japan for 1,000 years, this enchanting city is the epitome of traditional Japan. Upon arrival, visit Togetsukyo Bridge located in the heart of the vibrant district of Arashiyama and stroll through the bamboo forest with its towering and impressive thickets. Also visit Ryoanji Temple, home to Japan's most famous zen garden and the famous 'Golden Pavilion' Kinkakuji Temple. Enjoy some free time this afternoon to further explore the city.



Destination Information

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.

Togetsukyo Bridge – The Togetsukyo Bridge spans the Katsura River at the foot of Arashiyama Mountain and offers guest wonderful views, particularly during spring and autumn.

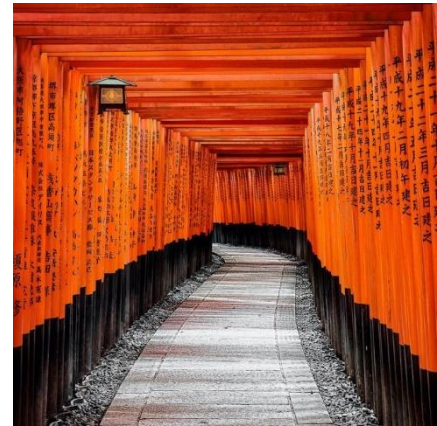
Arashiyama Bamboo Forest – Arashiyama Bamboo Forest is an iconic area of scenic beauty, gaze up at the vast number of towering bamboo thickets.

Ryoanji Temple – Ryoanji Temple is a Zen temple 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 5: Kyoto

Begin the day with a visit to one of Kyoto's most famous sites – Fushimi Inari Shrine, renowned for its 10,000 vermillion torii gates and follow a forested hillside pathway passing numerous shrines along the way. Later, enjoy the age-old rituals of a tea ceremony with a tea master, and try your hand at origami. After lunch, your immersive experience continues with a fan painting class where you will learn the technique of this highly refined and sought-after visual art.



Destination Information

Fushimi Inari Shrine (Taisha) – An important Shinto shrine in southern Kyoto, Fushimi Inari is most famous for its thousands of vermillion torii gates which form a network of tunnels around the main shrine buildings. The shrine itself is dedicated to Inari, the Shinto god of rice. There are many fox statues in the grounds of the shrine as foxes are thought to be Inari's messengers.

Origami –Origami, from "oru" meaning to fold and "kami" meaning paper, was first recorded in Japan in the Heian Period (794-1185) and as paper was still a rare commodity in this time period, origami was very much a pastime for the elite.

Day 6: Kyoto – Nagano – Matsumoto

This morning, travel approximately 3 and a half hours to Nagano, firstly by bullet train to Nagoya and then journey on the limited express train to Nagano. Upon arrival, head to Jigokudani Yaen-Koen and walk through a picturesque forested valley to the hot pools where you will see the famous Japanese macaques (snow monkeys) bathe and play. Also visit the 7th-century Zenkoji Temple, one of Japan's most prolific Buddhist temples before continuing by road to Matsumoto.



Please note: You will need to pack a smaller overnight bag for your first night in Matsumoto as your main luggage will be transferred separately to arrive the following day.

Destination Information

Nagano – The host city of the 1998 Winter Olympics, Nagano is the main access point for the Japanese Alps.

Jigokudani Yaen-Koen – Home to Japanese Macaques, also known as Snow Monkeys, Jigokudani literally means 'hell's valley'. It is named this because of the steam and boiling water that bubbles out of small crevices in the ground. It is in the baths of this hot water that the resident Japanese Macaques like to soak. The monkeys live in large social groups and it can be quite entertaining to watch their interactions.

Zenkoji Temple – Built in the 7th Century, Zenkoji stores what many believe to be the first Buddhist statue brought to Japan. Zenkoji's main hall has a tunnel in its basement where visitors try to find and touch the 'key to paradise' in complete darkness. The key is attached to the wall and grants enlightenment to anybody who touches it.

Day 7: Matsumoto

Begin the day with a visit to the magnificent 16th-century Matsumoto Castle, also known as 'Crow Castle', due to its intense black exterior. Next, head to a miso house and learn about the process of making this famous Japanese seasoning. After lunch, visit a sake brewery and enjoy a tipple or two! There will be some free time this afternoon to further explore Matsumoto.



Destination Information

Matsumoto Castle – Matsumoto Castle dates back to the 16th century and is the oldest wooden castle in Japan, it is a "hirajiro" meaning that the castle is built on plains rather than a hill or mountain.

Miso - Miso is a traditional Japanese seasoning, a fermented paste created from a mixture of soybeans, sea salt and rice koji. It is often used in soups, marinades and condiments.

Day 8: Matsumoto – Mount Fuji – Mishima

Travel by road to the Fuji Five Lakes area, the journey will take approximately 2 and a half hours. Weather permitting, ascend the road to the 5th Station to view Mt Fuji. Also, enjoy a peaceful cruise on Lake Ashi before taking to the skies on the Komagatake Ropeway to enjoy the breathtaking scenery of the below. Continue to Mishima and stay overnight.



Destination Information

Fuji Five Lakes – Formed by previous Mount Fuji eruptions, the Fuji Five Lakes is a region at the northern base of Mount Fuji made up of five beautiful lakes. It is one of the best places to view the famous Mt Fuji from a close distance.

Mt 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 9: Mishima – Tokyo

With no less than 65 Buddhist temples and 19 Shinto shrines, begin the day with a 2-hour journey by road to Kamakura, a popular coastal city located south of Tokyo. Visit Kotokuin Temple which houses Japan's second tallest bronze buddha statue followed by a stroll through Komachi Street which is lined with pretty little shops before visiting Tsurugaoka Hachimangu, Kamakura's most important shrine. After lunch, continue to Tokyo and enjoy a leisurely stroll through Hamarikyu Garden.

**Destination Information**

Kamakura – A seaside city just south of Tokyo, Kamakura was the political centre of medieval Japan and is now a prominent resort town. The town is home to numerous Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, best known for the remarkable Kotokuin Temple's Great Buddha.

Kotokuin Temple – Kotokuin Temple is famously home to the second tallest bronze statue of Buddha in Japan, surpassed only the Nara's Todaiji Temple. The statue was originally cast in 1252 and placed inside a large temple hall, however since the late 15th century the Buddha has been out in the open air.

Tsurugaoka Hachimangu – Tsurugaoka Hachimangu is Kamakura's most important shinto shrine and was founded in 1063 by Minamoto Yoriyoshi. The shrine is dedicated to Hachiman, the patron god of the Minamoto family and of the samurai in general.

Tokyo – 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 10: Tokyo

A dazzling, high-tech metropolis, Japan's capital has wonderful traditional roots. Begin the day by ascending the soaring Tokyo Skytree, the world's tallest tower for panoramic views of the city below. Next, head to the old district of Asakusa and soak up the atmosphere at Sensoji, Tokyo's oldest and most famous temple, before browsing the stalls on Nakamise shopping street. After lunch, take time to explore the Edo-Tokyo Museum to learn about Tokyo's historical heritage. End the day with cruise of the waters of Tokyo Bay and enjoy dinner from the perfect vantage point to admire the supercharged lights of the city.



Destination Information

Tokyo Skytree – The tallest structure in Japan and the tallest tower in the world at 634 metres, Tokyo Skytree is predominantly a television and radio broadcast tower and is earthquake resistant.

Asakusa – Asakusa is the centre of Tokyo's Shitamachi (Old Town) District, with its traditional craft shops and street food stalls here Asakusa retains the atmosphere of an older Tokyo.

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.

Edo Tokyo Museum – Providing a vivid illustration of Tokyo's history in an interactive way, visitors are taken through many features of the capital in the Edo Period and into more recent decades. Explore the way of life during the Edo Period, the architecture and cultural heritage.

Days 11-12: Depart Tokyo

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

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



Experience Japan Travel Information

Visas

Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia. Visas are not required for Australian passport holders for entry into Japan for stays of up to 90 days.

Insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We 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 group's 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.

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.

Those with dietary requirements will be well catered for - just make sure to inform your booking agent of any specific requirements well in advance of your trip. Please be aware; however, that restaurants may not always be able to accommodate these. Gluten-free food may not be as readily available as in Australia.

All the restaurants we visit will be researched and inspected regularly to ensure that they follow the strictest health, cleanliness, and safety guidelines. All waiting staff will wear face masks and gloves and self-service buffets will be avoided in favour of à la carte dining, waiter-served meals, or waiter-assisted buffets. Hand sanitiser will be provided to the group before and after every food and beverage service.

Please read your travel guide, which you will receive with your final documents for more information about eating in Japan. We recommend that when it comes to Japanese food, you stay open minded and try to be adventurous!

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. Please note double bed requests can be made at time of booking but cannot 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 a 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.

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.

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.

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 and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open but may be crowded. Showa Day is on 29th April every year, Golden Week is April 29th – 5th May 2021, Constitution Memorial Day is on 3rd May 2021 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 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

The group size on our Classic Tours is on average 21 passengers, with a maximum group size of 28. You may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling. On our group tours we operate a seat-and-a-half policy, allowing you to travel in greater comfort.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). A national escort will accompany each group of 10 or more. 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 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 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 AU\$250 per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that cannot 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 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.

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.

Last updated: September 2020