



Japan by Rail

Classic Tour | 22 Days | Physical Level 1

Fukuoka - Nagasaki - Hiroshima - Himeji – Osaka – Kyoto – Kanazawa –
Takayama – Yudanaka – Matsumoto – Mt. Fuji – Tokyo – Matsushima –
Sendai – Hakodate - Sapporo

For those where time is no limit, this is the ultimate top-toe tour of Japan covering three islands in one trip – Kyushu, Honshu and Hokkaido whilst travelling on the bullet train! From rural villages to bustling cities, from coastlines to alpine and from ancient traditions to new-world charm.

- Reflect in Nagasaki & Hiroshima
- Admire Kyoto's temples
- See the snow monkeys
- Explore bustling Tokyo
- Discover Sendai & Hakodate
- Spend time in Sapporo



Japan by Rail 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 more than 10 passengers)
- Visa fees for Australian passport holders
- 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, tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

Classic Tours:

See the classic sights in the company of expert guides so you can really understand the history and culture of the destination. On our Classic tours we take care of everything, leaving you to sit back and enjoy the experience to the full. The tours are fully inclusive with all meals and a comprehensive touring programme.

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.

Physical Level 1:

'Japan by Rail' 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 will be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and 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 and assistance; 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 22 days in duration including international flights. Please note that due to flight schedules passengers may depart/arrive on Day 2.

Travelers booked on a 'Land Only' package, 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 Fukuoka and end the tour on Day 21 in Sapporo. 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 whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

Itinerary – Japan by Rail

Days 1 - 2: Arrive Fukuoka

Fly overnight to the charming city of Fukuoka, the gateway to the island of Kyushu. Depending on your time of arrival, 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. You will be transferred by shared 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. Transfers will differ depending on group size.



Destination Information

Fukuoka – Fukuoka sits on the northern shore of Japan's Kyushu Island, and is the island's largest city. It is known for ancient temples, beaches and modern shopping malls. Fukuoka is closer to Seoul in South Korea than it is to Tokyo, which means that Fukuoka has been an important harbour city for many centuries.

Day 3: Explore Nagasaki

Begin the day by travelling approximately two hours on the Limited Express train to Nagasaki. Upon arrival, enjoy a stroll through the Glover Garden, an open-air museum that exhibits mansions attributed to the Scottish merchant who contributed to the modernisation of Japan. Also visit the Oura Catholic Church and Atomic Bomb Museum before returning to Fukuoka.



Destination Information

Nagasaki - Nagasaki is Japan's closest port city to mainland Asia, it is widely known as the second Japanese city to be destroyed by an atomic bomb in World War II following Hiroshima. Naturally you would assume that following this the city would now be filled with new buildings, however several old buildings and temples remain.

Glover Garden - Located on the hill where Western merchants settled at the end of the era of seclusion in the second half of the 19th century, Glover Garden is home to the mansions of a number of the city's former foreign residents.

Oura Catholic Church - the first Western-style building in Japan to be assigned as a national treasure, it was built in 1864 by a French missionary for the growing foreign community in the city.

Atomic Bomb Museum - commemorating the atomic bombing of Nagasaki in August 1945, the museum was built in remembrance of and with respect for the victims and survivors. The museum highlights firsthand accounts from survivors of the bomb and utilises provocative displays to support its aim of contributing to the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Day 4: Miyajima Island

Say goodbye to Kyushu and board the bullet train for a speedy 1 hour 40 minute journey to Hiroshima, located on Honshu, Japan's largest island. Upon arrival in Hiroshima, take the ferry across the Seto Inland Sea to the holy island of Miyajima. Here, visit the Itsukushima Shrine and enjoy a momiji manju making experience. Later, return to Hiroshima.

Please note: You will need to pack a smaller overnight bag for your 2 nights' stay in Hiroshima as your main luggage will be transferred separately to your Osaka 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 obliterated nearly everything within a 2km radius. The city has been rebuilt and has risen phoenix-like from the ashes with destroyed sites of historical heritage reconstructed.

Miyajima – Miyajima is a small island outside of Hiroshima. While officially named Itsukushima, the island is more commonly referred to as Miyajima, meaning '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.

Momiji Manju - a local speciality on the island of Miyajima, momiji manju is a small, maple leaf shaped cake.

Day 5: Hiroshima

Spend the day in Hiroshima starting with a visit to the Peace Memorial Park and Museum where you will have the opportunity to pay homage to the victims of the 1945 atomic bomb. Enjoy okonomiyaki for lunch before ascending Orizuru Tower to view the city from above, followed by a stroll through the historical Shukkeien Garden.



Destination Information

Peace Memorial Park and Museum – The Peace Memorial Park and Museum is 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, this area was the political and commercial heart of the city and is why it was chosen as the target. The museum focuses on the events of August 6th and the ensuing outcome for the residents.

Okonomiyaki - Okonomiyaki is a traditional Japanese savoury pancake, the name is derived from the word "okonomi" meaning "how you like" and "yaki" meaning "cooked".

Orizuru Tower - The 50-metre-tall Orizuru Tower is located beside the A-Bomb Dome and is one of the few tall buildings around the Peace Memorial Park. It offers a great view of the surroundings, including the less commonly seen view of the A-Bomb Dome from above.

Shukkeien Garden - Shukkeien Garden was created following the completion of Hiroshima Castle in 1620. Its name can be translated to mean "shrunk scenery garden", perfect for a garden that represents beautiful valleys, mountains and forests in miniature form.

Day 6: Hiroshima – Himeji - Osaka

Depart Hiroshima by bullet train, in just one hour you will arrive in Himeji to visit the magnificent Himeji Castle, one of Japan's most impressive feudal era forts, followed by a walk through Kokoen, an Edo-style garden just across the castle moat. The castle is largely in its original condition, so please use common sense and be mindful of your step when strolling 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 many visitors. As such, they now issue numbered tickets to visitors in order to limit the number of people who can enter the Main Keep, reducing congestion, waiting time, and to protect the cultural properties. Please note that this means that there may be cases where some visitors are not allowed to enter the Main Keep. Continue a further hour by Limited Express to Osaka.



Destination information

Himeji Castle – Widely considered as Japan's most magnificent castle for its imposing size and beauty, the well-preserved Himeji castle is both a national and world heritage listed treasure. Himeji Castle has never been destroyed by war, earthquake or fire and survives to this day as one of the country's twelve original castles.

Kokoen - One of Japan's more recently built gardens, Kokoen was built to commemorate the centenary of Himeji City. The gardens are built on the former site of the feudal lord's west residents and consist of 9 separate, walled gardens designed in the style of the Edo period matching its backdrop of Himeji Castle.

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 7: Osaka & Nara Day Trip

Begin the day in Osaka starting with a visit to the Umeda Sky Building followed by a lunch at the famous Dontonburi district. Later, travel one hour by road to Nara and explore Todaiji Temple which houses the impressive Daibutsu, a 15-metre tall bronze stature of Buddha. Enjoy an ink making and calligraphy class before returning to Osaka.



Destination Information

Umeda Sky Building - The Umeda Sky Building is one of the tallest buildings in Osaka Prefecture and is one of the most recognisable landmarks in Osaka. The 173-metre-tall building consists of two towers connect by the stunning "Floating Garden Observatory" which offers panoramic views of the city.

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

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

Day 8: Osaka - Kyoto

Journey by road for approximately 1 and a half hours to Kyoto. Capital for 1,000 years, this enchanting city is the epitome of traditional Japan. Upon arrival, stroll through the Arashiyama bamboo forest and admire the towering thickets. Also visit Ryoanji Temple, home to Japan's most famous zen garden and the famous 'Golden Pavilion' Kinkakuji Temple.



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.

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 9: Kyoto

The day begins with a visit to Kiyomizu Temple, one the most visited temples in Kyoto. Next, head to a restored Japanese wooden townhouse and immerse yourself in the culture and enjoy the age-old rituals of a tea ceremony and try your hand at fan painting. Also explore Gion, Kyoto's famous geisha district and centre of the city's traditional arts.



Destination Information

Kiyomizu Temple - One of the most celebrated temples in Japan, Kiyomizu literally translates to "Pure Water" after being founded on the site of Otowa Waterfall in 780. The temple is famous for its wooden stage that juts out 13 metres above the hillside and offers its visitors views of the beautiful sea of colours in spring and autumn caused by numerous cherry and maple trees.

Day 10: Kyoto - Kanazawa

This morning travel approximately two hours by Limited Express train to Kanazawa and upon arrival, meander your way through Kenrokuen, one of the Three Great Gardens of Japan. Also visit the Nomura Samurai House and Kunani Pottery Factory.

Please note: You will need to pack a smaller overnight bag for tonight as your main luggage will be transferred separately to your accommodation in Takayama.



Destination Information

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

Kenrokuen – One of Japan's 'Three Great Gardens', Kenrokuen dates back to the early 17th century and is noticeable for its stunning beauty in all seasons. The spacious grounds were previously the outer garden of Kanazawa Castle, constructed by the Maeda family over a period of almost two centuries.

Nomura Samurai House - Nomura Samurai House is the only samurai residence that is open to the public in this area and retains the atmosphere of the old glory days of the Samurai.

Day 11: Shirakawago

Travel by road to Takayama stopping en route at Inami for a sake wooden cup-making experience and sake tasting. Next, continue to the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Shirakawago Village which is famous for its farmhouses built in gassho-zukuri architectural style and take time to explore the village to get a glimpse of rural Japan. Continue to Takayama.



Destination Information

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

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

Day 12: Takayama

Spend the morning browsing the local handicrafts and fresh produce at Miyagawa market, the Takayama Floats Museum and Takayama Jinya. Enjoy the afternoon at leisure or perhaps take a stroll through Kami Sanomachi, Takayama's old town.



Destination Information

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

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

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

Day 13: Snow Monkeys

Travel to Matsumoto and spend time at the Daio Wasabi Farm to see the plantations and learn about its cultivation. Next, travel to Yudanaka and head to Jigokudani Yaen-Koen. Walk through a picturesque forested valley to the hot pools where you will see the famous Japanese macaques (snow monkeys) bathe and play before returning to Matsumoto.

**Destination Information**

Jigokudani Yaen-Koen – Home to Japanese Macaques, also known as Snow Monkeys, Jigokudani literally means ‘hell 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.

Day 14: 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, travel approximately 1 hour by road to Narai-juku, one of the best-preserved post towns for a zen meditation experience before continuing a further one hour by road to Suwa.



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. The wooden interior of the castle provides an authentic experience that cannot be found in many other castles that have since been rebuilt of ferro-concrete, explore the wooden staircase and observation deck offering views over the surrounding city.

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 15: Mount Fuji

Travel approximately one and a half hours by road to Hakone. 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 breath-taking scenery of the below. Later, continue your journey by road for around two hours to Tokyo, Japan's capital city.



Destination Information

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.

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 16: Tokyo

A dazzling, high-tech metropolis, Japan's capital has wonderfully traditional roots. Begin the day with a leisurely stroll through Hamarikyu Gardens. Next, take part in a sushi making class and enjoy your own creations for lunch! Later, soak up the atmosphere at Sensoji Temple, browse the stalls on Nakamise shopping street and drive by the Imperial Palace Plaza.



Destination Information

Hamarikyu Gardens – Hamarikyu Gardens is a beautiful example of Japanese garden style which sits at the mouth of the Sumida River. The traditional garden stands in bold contrast to the adjacent skyscrapers.

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.

Day 17: Even more Tokyo

Begin the day at the Tokyo Metropolitan Building and ascend to the observation deck for breathtaking views over the sprawling city. Next, soak up the atmosphere at the peaceful Meiji Jingu Shrine and drive-by the world-famous Shibuya crossing.

**Destination Information**

Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building – The 243-metre-tall Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building has two towers, each housing an observatory at a height of 202 metres.

Meiji Jingu Shrine - built in 1920, Meiji Jingu Shrine is a Shinto shrine dedicated to the deified spirits of Emperor Meiji and his wife, Empress Shōken, it was completed eight years after the emperor's passing and six years after the passing of the empress. The Meiji period in Japan brought modernisation and westernisation, bring the country to join the world's major powers.

Shibuya Crossing - considered the busiest intersection in the world but certainly the busiest in Japan, Shibuya crossing at times has 30,000 people crossing at one time.

Day 18: Tokyo - Sendai

As the tour journeys to northern Honshu, board the bullet train for a short 1.5-hour journey to Sendai, the largest city in Tohoku. Upon arrival, transfer by road to Matsushima and enjoy a cruise on Matsushima Bay. Also visit Zuigani Temple and the famous Nikka Whisky factory in Sendai.

Please note: You will need to pack a smaller overnight bag for the next two nights in Sendai and Hakodate as your main luggage will be transferred directly to Sapporo.



Destination Information

Sendai - Sendai is the largest city in the Tohoku region, the modern city was founded by Date Masamune, one of Japan's most powerful lords in the feudal era, in the early 17th century.

Matsushima Bay – Matsushima Bay is considered one of Japan's Three Great Views, along with Miyajima and Amanohashidate. The bay is dotted by over 200 small islands covered by pine trees.

Zuigani Temple - Zuigani Temple is one of the most famous and prominent Zen temples in the Tohoku region, the temple was originally founded in 828 as a temple of the Tendai sect and converted to a Zen temple during the Kamakura period before being restored in 1609 by Date Masamune as his family temple. It is famous for its beautifully gilded and painted sliding doors.

Day 19: Explore Hakodate

Say goodbye to Honshu Island as you board the bullet train to Hakodate located on Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island. This journey will take approximately 3.5 hours. On arrival, visit the Goryokaku Tower, a star shaped fortress followed by some time at leisure. This evening, journey on the Mt. Hakodate Ropeway and enjoy the fabulous views of the city below



Destination Information

Hakodate – Hakodate is located on Hokkaido's southern tip. It is known for its delicious, fresh seafood. Hakodate was one of the first Japanese harbour cities to be opened to international trade after the country's era of isolation, and as such has experienced notable foreign influence.

Goryokaku Tower – The 107 metre-tall Goryokaku Tower gives a bird's eye view of the star-shaped Fort Goryokaku - a Western style citadel, which was built in the last years of the Edo Period. With over one thousand cherry trees planted along its moats it is one of Hokkaido's best cherry blossom spots.

Day 20: Explore Hakodate

Board the bullet train for the very last time to Sapporo. This journey will take 3 hours and 45 minutes. On arrival in Sapporo, head to the Clock Tower and Odori Park. This evening, stop by the Sapporo Beer Museum and enjoy a tasting or two, followed by a farewell dinner.



Destination Information

Sapporo – The capital of Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island, Sapporo is known as a winter wonderland after it was introduced to the world during the Winter Olympics which were held in the city in 1972. Sapporo is also one of the nation's youngest major cities and is famous for the Snow Festival held annually in February.

Sapporo Clock Tower - The clock that features on the Sapporo Clock Tower was purchased in 1881 for Boston while the building was constructed as a drill hall for the Sapporo Agricultural College. Today it is a museum with displays showing the building's history.

Sapporo Beer Museum – Sapporo Beer, one of the oldest and most popular beer brands in the country, has been brewed in Sapporo since 1877. A former brewery from that time now hosts the Sapporo Beer Museum.

Days 21 - 22: Depart Sapporo

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

Please note: Only breakfast is included today. Late check-out is not included in our Ancient Empires of China & Japan tour. If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day in Tokyo, 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.

Japan by Rail 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 strongly encourage all customer be adequately covered by insurance for the duration of their travel arrangements. We advise 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. 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.

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. 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. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and a telephone.

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. In China, 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. 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 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 China have generally improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road – not just 1-2 kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the itinerary are approximations only. There may be sections of road where the surface is comparatively bumpy, but our drivers will do their utmost to lessen the impact. Roads in Japan are extremely well maintained and are comparatively smooth compared with the rest of Asia.

Air: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines. Internal flights during your tour are arranged locally, so you will not be given a ticket until your guide helps you check in.

Bullet trains: On this tour, you will take several high-speed train journeys.

In Japan, 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. In some cases, 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

If you are travelling within the below Public Holidays please note that celebrations last for several 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 29th April – 5th May 2021, Constitution Memorial Day is on 3rd May 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 can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount.

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

Climbing Steps

Sightseeing at nearly all 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. 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 & 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 an email with your confirmation invoice, along with a link to our website where you can find your visa information (if applicable) and other important information. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure

Last updated: September 2020