



Japan Explorer

Go Beyond Tour | 16 Days | Physical Level 1

Osaka (3N) - Takamatsu (1N) - Matsuyama (1N) - Hiroshima (2N) - Kyoto (2N) -
Mishima (1N) - Tokyo (3N)

This tour is ideal for travellers seeking a well-rounded introduction to Japan, combining iconic cultural highlights with immersive local experiences and time to unwind. It is particularly suited to first-time visitors who want to explore key regions such as Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, Nara, and Hiroshima, alongside natural highlights including Mount Fuji, Iya Gorge, and Nikko. With a balanced pace that includes guided sightseeing as well as regular periods of leisure time.

- Explore historic Edo-period streets in Kurashiki
- Visit one of Japan's oldest onsen Dogo Onsen
- Enjoy a scenic boat cruise on IYA gorge
- Reflect in Hiroshima & Miyajima
- Free time to enjoy streets of Kyoto & Osaka

TOUR MAP



JAPAN EXPLORER TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as listed in the itinerary
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escorts (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

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

GO BEYOND TOURS:

Venture off the beaten track to explore fascinating destinations away from the tourist trail. You will discover the local culture in depth and see sights rarely witnessed by other travellers. These tours take you away from the comforts of home but will reward you with the experiences of a lifetime. These tours include:

- Unique cultural experiences and encounters
- Off the beaten track destinations
- More evenings at leisure for independent exploration

PHYSICAL LEVEL 1:

Our tours come with a physical rating to guide you in selecting a holiday that suits your comfort level. Joining any of our tours involves independent mobility and the ability to stay active throughout the day, which is essential for fully enjoying the unique charm of each destination.

‘Japan Explorer’ falls under a Physical Level 1 category. This indicates a level of fitness that allows you to comfortably remain on your feet with occasional rest. Expect to effortlessly navigate boarding and disembarking from various modes of transport, including coaches, trains, and boats. You'll be walking around remarkable sites and ascending steps to capture those awe-inspiring views!

Please Consider:

- Sightseeing may often involve walking for a reasonable duration, sometimes over multiple steps, or uneven surfaces.
- Boarding and alighting from various boat sizes independently is part of the experience.

Our National Escort is dedicated to providing a high level of service and support throughout your journey. However, their primary role is to manage the daily aspects of the tour. They are unable to offer extensive personal physical assistance. We kindly ask our travelers to be prepared for the physical aspects of the tour to ensure a comfortable and enjoyable experience for everyone.

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 16 days in duration including overnight international flights in both directions as this is the most likely flight option from Australia. Please note, some flights may depart and 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, or when booking pre and post night accommodation with Wendy Wu Tours. Please email your international flight times to info@wendywutours.com.au so we can arrange your transfers accordingly.

Join the tour on Day 2 in Osaka (arrive into either Osaka Kansai or Osaka Itami airport) and end the tour on Day 15 in Tokyo (departures from either Tokyo Narita or Tokyo Haneda airport). Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure. An informal Welcome Dinner will be held on Day 2 of the itinerary. If you miss this due to your arrival time, all information will be provided to you at breakfast the following morning.

ITINERARY CHANGES:

It's 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.

DETAILED ITINERARY**Days 1-2: Fly to Osaka**

Meals: D

Arrive in Osaka, fast-paced city of Osaka! On arrival, you will be met by an English-speaking representative and transfer to your hotel. Depending on your time of arrival, the rest of the day is at leisure to start soaking up the local culture.

Please note: You will be transferred by shared coach with other passengers who are not part of a Wendy Wu Tour. 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.

**Destination Information**

Osaka – Osaka (formerly called Naniwa) is Japan's third-largest city, with a population of over 2.7 million. It is the economic powerhouse of the Kansai region, known for its bright lights, vibrant downtown district, and many urban canals.

Day 3: Discover Nara

Meals: B, L, D

Head to the old capital of Nara, visit Todai-ji Temple and the Great Buddha of Nara and the bowing deer's who are the messengers of the Japanese gods. Proceed back to Osaka for lunch and take an Osaka central walking cultural tour to catch a glimpse of the lifestyle of the Osaka people.

**Destination Information**

Todaiji Temple – The UNESCO-listed Todaiji is one of the Seven Great Temples of Japan and is home to the Daibutsu, one of the largest bronze Buddha statues in the world.

Nara – Nara was Japan's first permanent capital, from 710 until 794, when it was moved to Kyoto. It remains full of historic treasures, including 8 UNESCO World Heritage Sites. It is most famous for its cheeky wild-roaming sika deer.

Day 4: Day at Leisure - Osaka

Meals: B

Enjoy a relaxing day at leisure in the dynamic city of Osaka. Whether you choose to revisit favourite sights (independently at own expense) from your cultural walking tour or venture out to discover new corners of the city, there is plenty to see and experience. From bustling shopping districts to historic landmarks and delicious local cuisine.

Day 5: Sake & Samurai

Meals: B, L, D

Begin the day with a tasting of the world-renowned Kikumasamune sake. Then journey to Himeji to enjoy a delicious local lunch before visiting the iconic Himeji Castle, Japan's finest surviving feudal castle. Continue to the picturesque city of Kurashiki, where you'll wander through beautifully preserved samurai and merchant quarters dating back to the Edo period. End the day with a relaxing dinner at your hotel in Takamatsu.



Please note: The visit to Himeji Castle is external only. However, you will have the opportunity to see the interior of another castle in Matsuyama, built in the same period. The castle in Matsuyama is more accessible, and unlike Himeji, contains inside exhibitions.

Destination Information

Kikumasamune Sake – is a historic Japanese brewery founded in 1659 in Kobe's Nada region. Celebrated for its authentic, dry-style sake, the brand combines centuries-old Kimoto brewing traditions with a globally acclaimed range of sake-based skincare products.

Himeji – Himeji is the second-largest city of Hyogo Prefecture after Kobe, with approximately half a million inhabitants. It is most famous for its magnificent castle.

Himeji Castle – Widely considered Japan's most magnificent castle for its imposing size and beauty, the well-preserved Himeji Castle is a world heritage listed treasure. Floors are unfurnished.

Kurashiki - is a picturesque city in Okayama Prefecture, renowned for its beautifully preserved Edo-period canal district lined with traditional white-walled merchant buildings. Blending rich cultural heritage with museums, artisan shops, and charming cafés, it offers visitors a timeless glimpse into Japan's history.

Takamatsu – A laid-back port city on Shikoku's northeastern coastline, known for its waterfront views, mellow pace, and easy access to nearby art islands.

Day 6: Iya Gorge

Meals: B, L

Experience the beauty of Ritsurin Garden, a masterpiece perfected over 185 years, featuring six tranquil ponds set against a stunning mountain backdrop. Journey into the remote Iya Gorge to admire its dramatic scenery, cross the iconic vine bridge, and enjoy a scenic boat cruise through the gorge. Then unwind at historic Dogo Onsen, one of Japan's oldest hot spring resorts, before continuing to Matsuyama for an overnight stay.



***Please note** that onsen bathing is gender segregated. Clothes, including swimwear/underwear, are not permitted. Unlike many onsens, Dogo Onsen Honkan has no restrictions on tattoos. Guests who do not wish to participate in the onsen bathing are welcome to spend time at leisure in Matsuyama.*

Destination Information

Ritsurin Garden – This beautiful garden was begun in the late 16th century, and finally completed in 1745. It is made up of six lakes and thirteen landscaped hills, and designed for strolling. Each corner brings a new and changing view.

Iya Gorge - Nestled deep within Tokushima Prefecture on Shikoku Island, the Iya Gorge is one of Japan's most breathtaking natural landscapes, known for its dramatic vine bridges and emerald-green rivers.

Dogo Onsen Honkan – This ornate, tiered wooden bathhouse is one of Japan's oldest and most culturally significant hot springs. The springs themselves are over 3,000 years old, while the wooden bathhouse was built in 1894; it inspired the bathhouse in the famous Studio Ghibli film 'Spirited Away'

Matsuyama – This charming city, nestled between the mountains and the Seto Inland Sea, is the capital of Ehime Prefecture, and while small, is the largest city on Shikoku. It is most famous for its historic hot springs.

Day 7: Matsuyama - Hiroshima

Meals: B, L

Begin your day with a visit to Iwaya Temple, one of the sacred temples on the renowned Shikoku 88 Temple Pilgrimage. Continue to Matsuyama Castle, one of Japan's twelve original surviving castles, where you can admire its rich history and panoramic views. Next, travel along the spectacular Shimanami Kaido, a scenic route spanning the Seto Inland Sea. Enjoy a refreshing open-sea boat cruise while taking in the breathtaking coastal scenery before continuing your journey to Hiroshima.

**Destination Information**

Iwaya Temple – is a sacred mountain sanctuary renowned for its dramatic setting and spiritual significance. As one of the 88 temples on the Shikoku Pilgrimage, it rewards visitors with breathtaking views and a serene atmosphere surrounded by ancient forests.

Matsuyama Castle – Reached by cable car, this 17th-century hilltop fortress is one of just twelve original castles left in Japan. Its multi-story wooden keep, stone walls, and winding defensive paths are a classic example of Edo-period design.

The Seto Inland Sea – is a breathtaking waterway separating Japan's main islands of Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu, renowned for its calm waters, scattered islands, and stunning coastal scenery

Hiroshima – At 8.15 a.m. on 6th August 1945, the US military dropped the world's first nuclear bomb on Hiroshima. The destructive power obliterated nearly everything within a 2km radius, killing more than 70,000 people immediately; a further 20-70,000 subsequently died from injuries or radiation within the next year. Today, the city has risen phoenix-like from the ashes; it is now a powerful international symbol for peace.

Day 8: Hiroshima Peace Park & Miyajima Island

Meals: B, L, D

Spend the morning in reflection at the poignant Peace Memorial Park and Museum, paying homage to the victims of the 1945 atomic bomb. After lunch, board a ferry to the lovely island of Miyajima, with free time to admire its 'floating' Torii Gate on the edge of the Seto Inland Sea. Return to Hiroshima before dinner.



Enjoy some free time to explore the island's main shopping street. During your free time, you might like to purchase the local speciality - *momiji manju*, a confectionery shaped like a maple leaf and filled with sweet bean paste, chocolate, matcha or custard. Return to Hiroshima on the mainland before dinner.

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, the area of what is now the Peace Memorial Park was the political and commercial heart of the city, and this is why it was chosen as the pilot's target. The museum focuses on the events of August 6 and the subsequent outcome for the residents.

Miyajima – Miyajima is a small island off the coast of Hiroshima. Officially named Itsukushima, the island is more commonly referred to as Miyajima. It is famous for its beautiful torii gate, which at high tide seems to float on the water.

Day 9: Kyoto

Meals: B, L, D

Travel to Kyoto aboard Japan's famous bullet train and enjoy a traditional hotpot lunch upon arrival. Immerse yourself in the rich culture of Japan's ancient capital with a tea ceremony at a traditional tea house, followed by a visit to the iconic Kiyomizu-dera Temple.

Later, enjoy free time exploring the historic streets of Gion, where you may catch a glimpse of a maiko or geisha amidst the district's timeless charm.

***Please note** that your luggage will be transferred separately to your hotel in Kyoto and arrive later the same day.*



Destination Information

Kyoto – Kyoto was the ancient capital of Japan from 794 until the 1860s, when it was moved to Tokyo (then Edo) following the Meiji Restoration. Many national treasures can be found in Kyoto.

Kiyomizu Temple – Meaning 'Pure Water Temple', Kiyomizu is one of the most celebrated temples of Japan and houses the Jishu Shrine, dedicated to the deity of love. The temple is famous for its wooden balcony, jutting out 13 metres above the hillside. The numerous cherry and maple trees below offer a beautiful sea of colours in spring and autumn.

Gion District – is Japan's most famous geisha quarter, celebrated for its beautifully preserved wooden machiya townhouses, traditional teahouses, and timeless atmosphere.

Day 10: Day at leisure - Kyoto

Meals: B

Enjoy a day at leisure in Kyoto, Japan's ancient capital, with time to explore its serene temples, tranquil gardens, and historic neighbourhoods at your own pace (at own expense). Alternatively, take advantage of Kyoto's close proximity to Osaka and set out on an independent day trip for independent shopping and city exploration.

Day 11: Arashiyama Bamboo Forest

Meals: B ,L ,D

Continue your Kyoto journey with visits to Tenryu-ji Temple and the enchanting Arashiyama Bamboo Grove, where soaring bamboo creates a serene natural sanctuary. Proceed to Ryoan-ji Temple, famed for its Zen rock garden, before visiting the magnificent Kinkaku-ji (Golden Pavilion), a UNESCO World Heritage Site shimmering in gold.



Enjoy a local Kyoto-style lunch before boarding the Tokaido Shinkansen bullet train and continuing to the Mt Fuji region for your next stage of discovery.

***Please note** that your luggage will be transferred separately to your hotel in Mishima and arrive later the same day.*

Destination Information

Arashiyama – This sprawling bamboo grove is one of Kyoto's most photographed spots. The trees here are moso bamboo, which can reach heights of up to 28 metres (92 feet).

Ryoan-ji – Ryoan-ji Temple is a Zen temple renowned for its garden, which features a dry, sand landscape with large rocks and smooth pebbles. The garden has fifteen stones, cleverly arranged so that one rock is always hidden from view at any angle. Fifteen is considered the number of perfections; just as no individual is perfect, viewers are unable to see all the stones. It is a reminder of one's imperfect and limited perspective.

Kinkaku-ji Temple (Golden Pavilion) – This Buddhist temple sits over a pond in a classical garden of the 'go round' style. The top two floors are covered in pure gold leaf.

Day 12: Mt Fuji - Tokyo

Meals: B, L, D

Explore the eastern side of Mount Fuji with a visit to the serene springs of Oshino Hakkai. Depending on conditions, either ascend to the 5th Station of Mount Fuji for panoramic alpine views, or travel to Iyashi no Sato Nenba to experience a beautifully restored traditional village set against the mountain backdrop. Continue to a striking kimono display museum before proceeding to Tokyo for the next stage of your journey.



Destination Information

Oshino Hakkai - is a charming traditional village near Mount Fuji, renowned for its eight crystal-clear spring ponds fed by snowmelt filtered through volcanic rock. Surrounded by thatched-roof houses and scenic countryside, it offers stunning views of Japan's iconic peak and a glimpse into the country's rural heritage.

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

The Kubota Ichiku Museum - located near Lake Kawaguchi at the foot of Mount Fuji, celebrates the extraordinary textile artistry of renowned kimono designer Ichiku Kubota. Showcasing his intricate silk creations and the revived traditional art of Tsujigahana dyeing, the museum offers a captivating blend of craftsmanship, culture, and natural beauty.

Tokyo – One of the world's most cutting-edge capital cities, Tokyo is a city of contrasts, famous for its neon-lit landscape, towering skyscrapers, peaceful shrines and lovingly tended gardens. Tokyo became the official capital when the newly-restored Emperor Meiji moved it from Kyoto to Tokyo in the late 1860s.

Day 13: Nikko

Meals: B, L, D

Based in the Nikko Sanzan, the sacred three mountains of Nikko, visit the ornate mausoleum of Tokugawa Ieyasu, founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate, at Nikko Toshogu Shrine. Enjoy a local yuba-based lunch before continuing to "Little Edo," the historic town of Kanuma or surrounding Edo-style district, where beautifully preserved warehouse streets and traditional festival floats evoke Japan's rich heritage.



Destination Information

Nikko - is a historic mountain town in Tochigi Prefecture, renowned for its UNESCO World Heritage shrines, tranquil forests, and breathtaking natural scenery

The Mausoleum of Tokugawa Ieyasu - located within Nikko's renowned Tōshō-gū Shrine, is the final resting place of the founder of the Tokugawa shogunate, which ruled Japan for over 250 years. Surrounded by ancient cedar forests and elaborate architectural details, the mausoleum reflects Ieyasu's enduring legacy and the artistry of Japan's Edo period.

Kawagoe, known as "Little Edo" - is a historic city in Saitama Prefecture renowned for its beautifully preserved Edo-period streets, traditional warehouses, and nostalgic atmosphere. With iconic landmarks such as the bell tower and charming confectionery shops along the old merchant district, Kawagoe offers a glimpse into Japan's rich cultural heritage just outside Tokyo.

Day 14: Tokyo

Meals: B, L, D

Enjoy an immersive sumo experience, including a morning training session if available, or an alternative sumo demonstration. Later, visit the iconic Shibuya Crossing, where you can take in the energy of one of the world's busiest intersections. The remainder of the day is at leisure to explore Tokyo at your own pace. Conclude the day with a dinner cruise.



Please note: Departure dates for Japan Explorer are planned outside the official Sumo tournament periods to maximise the opportunity for guests to attend a traditional sumo training session.

However, training session tickets are only released approximately 30 days prior to the date and are subject to availability, so cannot be guaranteed.

Destination Information

Shibuya Scramble Crossing – The iconic Shibuya Scramble Crossing, inaugurated in 1973, is the busiest pedestrian interchange in the world, with as many as 3,000 people crossing at one time. Billboards and bright lights abound, and it is often compared to New York's Times Square.

Days 15-16: Depart Tokyo

Meals: B

Unless you have booked additional nights in Japan, any time before your flight is at leisure before transferring to the airport for your flight home.

Please note: You may be transferred by shared coach with other passengers who are not part of a Wendy Wu Tour. If you are on a shared coach transfer, you may have to walk for a few minutes to get to your pick-up point. In this case, your guide will distribute transfer tickets in advance.



PLEASE INFORM OUR RESERVATIONS TEAM OF ANY ALLERGIES AND/OR SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS AT TIME OF BOOKING.

EXTEND YOUR TRIP: Wendy Wu Tours offers additional night options as well as sightseeing packages. Contact your Reservations Consultant in advance of your trip to learn all about our many extension options.

JAPAN EXPLORER 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:

It is a condition of your booking that you are insured for the duration of your trip. We recommend comprehensive travel insurance to cover cancellation, medical requirements, luggage, repatriations and additional expenses. At a minimum, the policy is required to cover medical requirements including medical evacuations / repatriations. The choice of insurer is yours. We strongly suggest you purchase insurance at the time you pay your deposit. This is because cancellation fees and charges are payable from that time.

We may request you to provide evidence that you have taken out and paid for a policy to comply with this condition. If you fail to provide a certificate of currency of insurance within a reasonable time after our request, then this will be deemed a cancellation by you and standard cancellation fees will apply.

EATING IN JAPAN:

For Go Beyond tours most meals are included (excluding drinks), please see your day-to-day itinerary for details on which meals are included. On all Group tours, Extensions and Pre & Post Stays, no refund will be given for any meals missed due to your flight timings, or personal choice.

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, the most famous being Udon and Soba.

Our schedule of meals is designed so that you can experience the local dishes; their individual flavours as well as 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 – Western cutlery is not always available at restaurants.

Breakfast will mostly be buffet-style but may be a set menu. Lunches are mostly pre-set options as is custom in many local restaurants. Dinner is usually buffet-style, featuring a wide selection of high-quality Japanese and Western dishes, but may occasionally be a set menu. We usually find this style of dining suits the wide and varied tastes of our customers on tour. These are also pre-booked in advance by your guides. This will provide greater flexibility and allow you to sample a broad range of local cuisines and dishes.

All beverages will be at your own expense and are readily available. Please note: if you have any dietary requirements, you must inform us before your tour starts, and please be aware that restaurants may not always be able to accommodate these. Gluten-free food may not be as readily available as in Australia.

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

Tea and coffee facilities are not always available in all hotels so consider bringing your own supply of coffee and tea bags.

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 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 portage 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.

TRANSFERS:

As we offer our customers a variety of airlines to suit your needs, passengers will arrive/depart in Japan at various times during the day. Depending on the number of customers arriving/ departing on the same flight as yourself, the type of transfer to your hotel/ airport will vary.

You will always be met on arrival by English-speaking staff and transferred to your hotel either by:

- Direct shared bus (shared with other passengers, not just Wendy Wu Tours clients)
- Shared bus plus taxi from the nearest bus stop to the hotel (maximum 5-minute walk)
- Chartered coach (if there are more than 8 Wendy Wu Tours passengers arriving at the same time)

If your hotel is more than a 5-minute walk from the drop-off bus stop, a taxi will be arranged for you prior to leaving the airport to meet you at the drop-off bus stop.

When you check-in to your hotel, a welcome letter will be provided with details of the group's welcome dinner or first meeting point. You will meet your national escort at dinner or, if arriving late, the following morning after breakfast at the welcome meeting.

On your departure day, you will be provided with tickets for your return airport bus, to make your own way to the airport.

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. Coaches and mini buses do not have onboard toilet facilities, however frequent bathroom stops are made for passengers comfort.

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 (1 case per person). 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.

GROUP SIZE:

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

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). 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. Traditionally, the polite method of gifting money in Japan is to use an envelope (available at convenience stores or occasionally hotel receptions); however, this is not required.

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. Socks with grip are useful at sites like castles with steep wooden steps.

In shops, there is a small coin tray at the till. This is where you should place your money and collect any change, rather than handing it directly to the assistant. If the card machine is behind the desk, do the same with your card. Shaking hands is not typical in Japan. Instead, stand and bow slightly (about 15 degrees) from the waist. Do not put your hands together prayer-style as in some other Asian countries.

Two essential phrases: Please = Kudasai. Thank you: Arigatou or Arigatou gozaimasu.

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 Japan public holidays, please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed. Coach, air and train travel may also be affected. Tourist attractions will be open; but may be crowded. Showa Day is on 29th April every year, which will start Golden Week which then runs from 29th April – 5th May, Constitution Memorial Day is on 3rd May, and Emperor's Birthday is on 23rd February every year.

SOUVENIRS:

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

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.

PERSONAL EXPENSES AND OPTIONAL TOURINGS:

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, consider allocating a higher amount.

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.

CLIMBING STEPS:

Sightseeing at nearly all the palaces, fortresses and some temples involve 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 including a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

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