



Japan Traditions

Private Tour | 17 Days | Physical Level 1

Tokyo – Takayama – Kanazawa – Kyoto – Hiroshima – Miyajima – Osaka –
Hakone – Tokyo

Visit some of Japan's most timeless destinations on this journey through tradition and culture. With knowledgeable guides to show you around, and free time to explore as you wish, you get the best of both worlds as you discover the best bits of both urban and rural Japan.

- Wander winding lanes of Nagamachi Samurai District
- Visit Kinkaku-ji Kyoto's 'Golden Pavilion'
- Explore Miyajima best known for its 'floating' torii gate
- Discover Hakone Open-Air Museum
- Time in both Tokyo and Kyoto to explore independently

TOUR MAP



JAPAN TRADITIONS INCLUSIONS:

- All accommodation
- Meals as stated
- Sightseeing and entrance fees as stated
- Transportation and transfers as stated
- English speaking Local Guides
- 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, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

PRIVATE TOURS:

These tours are designed for those who want some independence and flexibility. They offer the choice to explore local cuisine, leisure time for optional activities or excursions, and travel when it suits you. Our Private Tours offer excellent value holidays alongside the assurance that most of your arrangements are taken care of. You will also be accompanied by a dedicated and professional guide whose knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

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 Traditions' 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 guides 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.

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'll make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrive Tokyo

Meals: None

Arrive to Japan's cutting-edge capital city, Tokyo. On arrival, you will be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel by private car. The rest of the day is yours to relax and recover or to begin 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.

**Destination Information**

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 2: Explore Tokyo

Meals: B

Meet your English-speaking private guide and head into the city, making use of Tokyo's excellent public transport. With an allocation of 4000 JPY per person for entrance fees, today's itinerary is up to you but do ask your guide for recommendations. Consider visiting Meiji, a tranquil Shinto shrine, view the Imperial Palace from the lovely Kokyo Gaien plaza gardens, wander the Asakusa district pausing to visit the 7th-century Senso-ji, Tokyo's oldest temple, or ascend to the heady heights of the Tokyo Skytree.



Please note: Throughout your time in Japan, there may be occasions when your morning and afternoon excursions are swapped over, in order to match local availability, or to avoid congestion at certain sites. Your guide will have the most up-to-date information.

Please also note that removing your shoes is a typical requirement in many venues across Japan, including temples, tea houses, cultural venues, and even some boats and restaurants. Bare feet are not usually accepted. Therefore, we recommend carrying a spare pair of socks in your day bag throughout your time in Japan.

Day 3: Tokyo At Leisure

Meals: B

Today is yours to spend as you wish. You might like to keep exploring Tokyo – Hamarikyu Gardens, the Edo-Tokyo Museum, Tsukiji Fish Market and Ueno Park are all great options, or you could make use of Japan's fantastic rail network and take a day trip to Nikko to see the spectacular national park, or to Kamakura, a city on the coast.

**Day 4: Train to Takayama**

Meals: B, D

Make your way to Tokyo Station and catch the shinkansen (bullet train) to Nagoya, then change to the Limited Express train to Takayama. On arrival, make your own way to the hotel and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure, soaking up the glorious alpine scenery and rustic charm.

**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.

Day 5: Takayama Morning Markets

Meals: B, D

Spend the morning exploring Takayama's two morning markets, the Asaichi. Browse stalls full of local crafts, vegetables and farm products, taste some delicious food, and stroll through Takayama's lovely old town. Pause at Takayama Jinya, the old provincial magistrate's office, and a sake brewery to try local jisake.



Day 6: Travel to Kanazawa

Meals: B

Meet your driver at your hotel for your transfer to Kanazawa, dropping you straight at your next hotel. En route, you'll stop to discover the UNESCO World Heritage Site Shirakawa-go for a two-hour guided tour, on which you'll be able to admire the traditional gassho-zukuri farmhouses. The remainder of your day, in Kanazawa, is at leisure.

**Destination Information**

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

Shirakawa-go – This UNESCO-listed heritage village is famous for its unusual architectural style known as Gassho-Zukuri (lit. hands in prayer). The steeply thatched roofs of these houses are tilted at a steep angle for two reasons: first, to prevent heavy snow from accumulating in winter, and second, to create spacious attics for silkworm cultivation. The houses are usually built from local cypress wood.

Day 7: Kanazawa Highlights

Meals: B

Your local guide will collect you from your hotel this morning and help you explore the timeless charms of this fascinating town. You'll start in the Higashi Chaya district, an enclave of the Edo Period architecture, visiting a converted tea house and a gold leaf shop.

Then, stroll the paths of Kenroku-en, considered one of Japan's top three gardens, enjoying its traditional features, like bridges, waterfalls and pagodas.



Continue to Nagamachi Samurai District and stop at the Nomura Samurai House to see its exquisite rooms and ornamental garden. Final, join the bustle of vibrant Omicho Market, its stall brimming with seafood, fresh produce, flowers, food and more.

Destination Information

Higashi Chaya district – is one of Kanazawa's historic neighbourhoods, famous for its traditional geisha entertainment culture. Established in 1820 during the Edo period, it is lined with historic teahouses, traditional wooden buildings, shops and cafés.

Kenroku-en – One of Japan's 'Three Great Gardens', Kenroku-en dates back to the early 17th century and is notable 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. The name Kenroku-en means 'having six features', these six being spaciousness, tranquillity, artifice, antiquity, water sources and magnificent panoramas.

Nomura Samurai House - Nomura Samurai House is a restored samurai residence with a beautiful garden. Nomura was a high-ranked samurai of the Meiji Period.

Day 8: Train to Kyoto

Meals: B

Make your way to Kanazawa Station and board the shinkansen and then a Limited Express train to Kyoto. On arrival, make your own way to your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure. Japan's cultural capital, Kyoto is a treasure trove of history and timeless traditions. Home to 17 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, more temples and shrines than you could count as well as gardens and palaces, there is plenty here to explore.

**Destination Information**

Kyoto – was the ancient capital of Japan from 794 until the late 1860s, when it was moved to Tokyo (then Edo) following the Meiji Restoration. Many national treasures can be found in Kyoto and in nearby Nara, including old shrines and temples, screen paintings, beautiful gardens, and statues of Buddha.

Day 9: Kyoto Highlights

Meals: B, L

Head out into the city with a knowledgeable local guide, using the excellent local bus network. Begin at Kinkaku-ji, admiring its golden pavilion and landscaped gardens, then the ornamental Nijo Castle, where you can test its nightingale floors. Learn the fascinating history behind Heian Shrine then visit the Buddhist Kiyomizu-dera from where there are panoramic views of Kyoto.

**Destination Information**

Kinkaku-ji Temple (Golden Pavilion) – This Zen Buddhist temple sits over a 'mirror pond' in a classical garden of the 'go round' style. The top two floors are covered in pure gold leaf. The temple is an excellent example of the Japanese design principle of 'shakkei', meaning borrowed scenery, which connects the building with its wider setting.

Nijo Castle - an ornamental castle built by the founder of the Edo Shogunate and surrounded by stunning gardens. famous for its architecture, decorated sliding doors and 'chirping' nightingale floors.

Heian Shrine - built on the occasion of the 1100th anniversary of the capital's foundation in Kyoto and is dedicated to the spirits of the first and last emperors who reigned from the city, Emperor Kammu and Emperor Komei.

Kiyomizu-dera Temple - literally translates to "Pure Water Temple" 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. The numerous cherry and maple trees below offer a beautiful sea of colours in spring and autumn.

Day 10: Kyoto at Leisure

Meals: B

The day is yours to spend as you wish. There is plenty more to explore in Kyoto – you could explore the Imperial Palace complex, walk through the hundreds of torii gates at Fushimi Inari Shrine, contemplate the zen garden at Ryoan-ji, or listen to the swish of bamboo in Arashiyama Forest. Alternatively, take a day trip out of the city to rural Kurama to try its onsen or to Himeji to visit its magnificent castle.

**Day 11: Train to Hiroshima**

Meals: B

Make your way to Kyoto Station and board a shinkansen to Hiroshima. On arrival, make your own way to your hotel and have the rest of the day at leisure. Hiroshima is a city that needs little introduction after the events of 6 August 1945, when the world's first atomic bomb was dropped here; the city of today is sunny, forward-thinking and peaceful – a delight to explore.

**Destination Information**

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 12: Hiroshima & Miyajima

Meals: B, L

With a knowledgeable guide and public transport, explore the city. Visit the moving Peace Memorial Museum which, as well as giving information on what happened, serves as a reminder not to take peace for granted.

After some free time for lunch, take the train to the port and board a ferry for the holy island of Miyajima. Featuring tame sika deer, Shinto shrines and Buddhist pagodas and temples in a beautiful natural setting, the island's best-known sight is its 'floating' red torii gate. You'll have time to explore, and to visit the charming shopping street.



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.

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.

Day 13: Train to Osaka

Meals: B, D

Make your way to Hiroshima station and board the shinkansen to Shin-Osaka Station. On arrival, make your way to your hotel. The rest of the day will be yours to explore Osaka until this evening, when you get to discover why the city is so famous for its food. The Osaka night food tour will take you on an unforgettable eating excursion through the backstreets of Dotounburi.



Destination Information

Osaka – formerly known as Naniwa, is Japan's third largest city and remains the economic powerhouse of the Kansai Region.

Day 14: Train to Hakone

Meals: B, D

Make your way to Shin-Osaka station, boarding a shinkansen to Odawara. On arrival, make your way to Hakone using a Hakone Free Pass, and to your hotel. The rest of the day is yours to soak up the sights of this spectacular area.



Destination Information

Hakone – Situated next to picturesque Lake Ashi, Hakone is a pleasant town, popular with Tokyoites looking for a break from the city and a great overnight stop after visiting Mount Fuji.

Day 15: Explore Hakone

Meals: B, D

With a knowledgeable guide, explore Hakone National Park, in the shadow of the mighty Mount Fuji, which you'll glimpse if it is a clear day. You'll ride the cable car and Hakone Ropeway for scenic panoramas of lakes, forests and active volcanic sights.



Ascend the ropeway to Togendai then board a pirate ship to cruise across Lake Ashi for more magical views. You'll also visit the Hakone Open Air Museum, with its diverse collection of art and sculptures, including works by Picasso and Henry Moore.

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.

Day 16: Train to Tokyo

Meals: B

Make your way to Hakone-Yumoto Station to board a Limited Express train to Tokyo. On arrival, make your own way to your hotel, where the rest of the day, your last in Japan, is yours to spend as you wish.

**Day 17: Depart Tokyo**

Meals: B

Take a private transfer to Tokyo airport for your onward flight.

JAPAN TRADITIONS 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:

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.

It is imperative that you clearly communicate any and all dietary needs when booking, and don't forget to reaffirm them during your welcome briefing with your tour guide. However, it is crucial to understand that local restaurants might face limitations in accommodating specific dietary requests, particularly in the cases of gluten-free, celiac, or vegan requirements. Please bear in mind that finding gluten-free options may not be as effortless as it is in Australia. Regrettably, we cannot assure that the food served will be entirely free from allergens.

Tea and coffee facilities are not always available in all hotels so consider bringing your own supply of coffee and tea bags. Water is included with meals, but other drinks are at personal expense.

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 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 hotel staff or Local Guide.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 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.

CLIMBING STEPS:

Sightseeing at nearly all the 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 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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