



# Japan Uncovered

Classic Tour | 18 Days | Physical Level 1

OSAKA – NARA – HIMEJI – HIROSHIMA – MIYAJIMA – KYOTO – KANAZAWA –  
TAKAYAMA – YUDANAKA – NAGANO – MOUNT FUJI – MISHIMA – TOKYO

Our most extensive tour of Japan includes all the classic sights and key cultural activities. Featuring modern cities, historical sights and beautiful landscapes, Japan Uncovered ensures you get the most out of your trip to this fascinating land.

- Discover delightful Kyoto & Nara
- Reflect in Hiroshima & Miyajima
- Admire beautiful Mount Fuji
- Search for the Snow Monkeys
- Feel the rush of Tokyo & Osaka
- Explore Kanazawa & Takayama

## TOUR MAP

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### JAPAN UNCOVERED TOUR INCLUSIONS:

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- 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 Escorts (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or 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.

### CLASSIC TOURS:

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These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of Japan on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully-inclusive basis so you'll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts and local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

## PHYSICAL LEVEL 1:

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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 Uncovered' falls under a Physical Level 1 category. This indicates a level of fitness that allows you to comfortably remain on your feet with occasional rests. 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:

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The tour is 18 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](mailto: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 17 in Tokyo (depart 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:

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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.

- Please note: Isui-en Garden in Nara, visited on day 3, is closed for maintenance weekly on Tuesdays. Departures coinciding with this will visit the Kasuga Taisha Shrine as an alternative.



## DETAILED ITINERARY

**Day 1-2: Osaka**

Meals: D

Fly overnight to the lively, fast-paced city of Osaka. On arrival you will be met by an English-speaking representative and transfer to your hotel.

*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**

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

**Day 3: Discover Nara**

Meals: B, L, D

Transfer by coach to Japan’s former imperial capital Nara, a journey of approximately 1 hour. Visit Todaiji Temple, the world’s largest wooden structure and home to Japan’s largest Buddha. Also visit Isui-en Gardens, known for its natural ponds – sightseeing here will be about 3 hours on foot. Due to the congestion of Nara Park coach parking, you may need to walk from coach parking to Nara Park for 15 minutes on flat road. Continue to Osaka by coach, approximately an hour’s drive. On arrival, enjoy lunch in the vibrant Dotonbori District, a restaurant mecca, where you can sample delicious local delicacies. This afternoon, visit Osaka Castle. At Osaka castle park, you will reach to the castle for 15 minutes` walk from coach parking on flat road. Later, take a short cruise down the Yodogawa River.

**Destination Information**

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

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

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

**Osaka Castle** – Osaka Castle is one of Japan's most famous castles known for sweeping views of the city from its hilltop perch. Construction began in 1583 by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who intended the castle to become the centre of a new, unified Japan under his rule.

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**Day 4: Himeji Castle**

Meals: B, L, D

Journey around 2 hours by coach to Himeji and explore the magnificent 17th Century Himeji Castle and the neighbouring Koko-en, a traditional-style garden. 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. You will be on your feet for 3-3.5 hours during the visit.



After the reopening in March 2015, Himeji Castle has welcomed a large number of 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. After lunch, continue around 3.5 hours to Hiroshima.

**Destination Information**

**Himeji Castle** – Widely considered 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.

**Koko-en Garden** – Koko-en is a Japanese style garden consisting of nine separate, walled gardens designed in various styles of the Edo Period.

**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.

**Day 5: Explore Hiroshima**

Meals: B, L, D

Transfer to the famous Peace Memorial Park and Museum. Please be aware that the museum may be confronting and upsetting for some group members and it is at your discretion if you wish to visit or enjoy time at leisure exploring the Peace Memorial Park. After lunch, take a short ferry ride to Miyajima Island, where sightseeing will be at a leisurely pace on foot. Visit Itsukushima Shrine and enjoy free time on Miyajima Island to explore the local streets or make the walk up to Daisho-in Temple. You will be on your feet for approximately 4-5 hours today. Later this afternoon, return by ferry and coach to your Hiroshima hotel for 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, 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 6: Bullet Train to Kyoto**

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, transfer to Hiroshima Station and catch a bullet train to Kyoto, a journey of 1 hour 40 minutes. Capital for a thousand years, this enchanting city is the epitome of traditional Japan. After lunch, visit to Ryoanji, the 'temple of the peaceful dragon' and the famous Kinkakuji, also known as the 'Golden Pavilion' due to its gold-like exterior. You will need to remove your shoes at both temples. Sightseeing on foot will be approximately 2-3 hours on foot today.



*Please note: You will need to pack a small overnight bag for tonight as your main luggage will be transferred separately this morning to the Kyoto hotel and arrive the next day.*

### 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.

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### Day 7: Japanese Tea Ceremony

Meals: B, L, D

Start the day by visiting the spectacular Kiyomizu Temple. You will spend 1.5 hours on foot exploring the temple. Later, experience the age-old rituals of a traditional tea ceremony accompanied by a Tea Master. Due to the nature of the cultural experience, you will be required to remove your shoes before entering the venue. After lunch, visit the famous Fushimi Inari Shrine with its thousands of vermillion torii gates. You will walk up part of the mountain and the incline allows a steady-paced walk around 15 minutes with flat road and steps to reach torii gates. Due to the limited space of Fushimi Inari Shrine coach parking, you may need to walk from coach parking for 15 minutes.



### Destination Information

**Kiyomizu** – Meaning ‘Pure Water Temple’, the 16th century Kiyomizu Temple is one of the most celebrated temples of Japan and houses the Jishu Shrine dedicated to the deity of love. A highlight is the Hondo’s veranda which is perched over the hillside, offering spectacular woodland vistas.

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



**Day 8: Travel to Kanazawa**

Meals: B, L, D

Depart Kyoto and travel around 4 hours by coach to Kanazawa. After lunch in a local restaurant, wander through the beautiful Kenroku-en Garden before viewing the excellent art collection of the Kanazawa 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art. Continue to your hotel and check in.

**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 Kenroku-en Garden.

**Kenroku-en Garden** – One of Japan's 'Three Great Gardens', Kenroku-en dates back to the early 17th century and is noticeable for its stunning beauty in all seasons.

**21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art** – Opened in 2004, the Museum of Contemporary Art is home to some of Japan's most fascinating modern art, with most pieces dating from the 1980s onwards.

**Day 9: Washi Paper Making**

Meals: B, L, D

Visit the Nomura Samurai House and garden before transferring around 1.5 hours to Gokayama. You will need to remove your shoes before entering. Enjoy lunch and then try your hand on making washi paper. Continue approximately 1 hour to Shirakawago and explore the 300-year-old Gassho style Wada House. You will need to remove your shoes before entering. Finally, drive around 1.5 hours to reach Takayama and check into your hotel with onsen facilities.



*Overnight accommodation: Due to the hotel location, large coaches cannot enter the area and therefore the coach will be parked a short 5-minute walk from the hotel and passengers will be required to move their own luggage to/from the hotel.*

**Destination Information**

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

**Washi Paper** – Washi is a type of Japanese paper made from fibres of bark, often used in the art of origami. Shirakawago – 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.

**Shirakawago** – 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.

**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

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**Day 10: Explore Takayama**

Meals: B, L, D

Head to the Miyagawa Morning Market, where you can sample some of the delicious local fruits and vegetables (at your own expense). Next, take a leisurely stroll around the traditional houses of the area and visit some of the local museums including Takayama Festival Floats Exhibition Hall, Kusakabe Folk Crafts Museum and Takayama Jinya before spending some free time in Kamisannomachi Street. You will spend around 5 hours on foot today sightseeing around the town of Takayama.



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

**Kusabe Folk Crafts Museum** – Kusabe Folk Crafts Museum is a former house for a wealthy merchant named Kusakabe. The house is typical of the style during the Edo Period, with dark wooden beams and pillars.

**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.

**Kamisannomachi Street** – Kamisannomachi Street will make you feel like you've stepped back into the Edo Period (1600-1868). This well-preserved part of the historic city features traditional houses, sake breweries, shops and cafes — some of them have been operating for centuries.

**Day 11: Travel to Nagano**

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, depart Takayama and travel around 2.5 hours to Matsumoto to visit the formidable 16th Century Matsumoto Castle, also known as ‘Crow Castle’, due to its intense black exterior. 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. From the coach parking to castle, it is around 15 minutes walk on flat road. After lunch, stop at a Miso House to learn about the process of making this Japanese seasoning and try Miso soup. Also visit a wasabi farm to learn about its cultivation before travelling a further 1.5 hours to Nagano to check in at your hotel and enjoy the onsen facilities.

**Destination Information**

**Matsumoto Castle** – Known as the crow castle due to its dark black exterior, Matsumoto Castle dates back to the 16th century and is the oldest wooden castle in Japan.

**Ishii Miso** – Ishii Miso was founded in 1868 and is still producing miso, an essential ingredient in Japanese cuisine, by a unique traditional method.

**Wasabi Farm** – The Daio wasabi farm, one of Japan’s largest wasabi farms, has multiple large fields with a network of small streams that constantly provides clear water to each wasabi plant.

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

**Day 12: Snow Monkeys**

Meals: B, L, D

This morning travel deeper into the Japanese Alps to Yudanaka in search for the snow monkeys (Japanese Macques) at Jigokudani Yaen-Koen Monkey Park. There is around a 30-minute walk through the forested valley along paths, occasionally on an incline, from the bus park to the main pool where the monkeys bathe. Accustomed to humans, the monkeys can be observed up-close, and they almost completely ignore their human guests. Please keep in mind that the snow monkeys are wild, not domestic animals and sighting them is never guaranteed, particularly during the breeding season which runs from late September through to November. Also visit the 7th-century Zenkoji Temple, one of Japan’s most prolific Buddhist temples. Return to Nagano.



### Destination Information

**Jigokudani Yaen-Koen** – Home to Japanese Macaques, also known as Snow Monkeys, Jigokudani literally means ‘hell’s valley’. It is named this because of the steam and boiling water that bubbles out of small crevices in the ground. It is in the baths of this hot water that the resident Japanese Macaques like to soak. The monkeys live in large social groups and it can be quite entertaining to watch their interactions. Please keep in mind that the snow monkeys are wild, not domestic animals and sighting them is never guaranteed, particularly during the breeding season which runs from late September through to November.

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

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### Day 13: Mount Fuji

Meals: B, L, D

Today, travel around 3.5 hours by road through the foothills of the iconic Mount Fuji to the mountain’s base. The region is spectacular with the calm waters of the five lakes, formed by past volcanic eruptions, reflecting Fuji’s picture-perfect cone. Head up Fuji’s 5th Station for spectacular mountain vistas, please note it is only possible to reach the 5th station if weather permits. If the 5th Station is closed, the Fuji San World Heritage Centre (formerly Fuji Visitor Centre) will be visited instead. Visit Itchiku Kubota Art Museum to view the elaborate dyed silk creations of artist Kubota Itchiku. Continue to your hotel in Mishima or Gotemba and check in.



Overnight Location: *The majority of departures will stay overnight in Mishima. Due to hotel availability, some departures may stay overnight in the wider Fuji area.*

*For May departures only: Instead of visiting Itchiku Kubota Art Museum, a visit to Fuji Shibazakura Festival has been included. This is the best time of the year and one of the most scenic places in Japan to see the pink moss phlox in full bloom. Please note that the flowers’ bloom is weather dependent.*

### Destination Information

**Fuji Five Lakes** – Formed by previous Mount Fuji eruptions, the Fuji Five Lakes is a region at the base of Mount Fuji made up of five beautiful lakes.

**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.



**Itchiku Kubota Art Museum** – Kubota Itchiku revived the lost art of Tsujigahana silk dyeing, used to decorate elaborate kimono during the Muromachi Period (1333-1573). The museum exhibits several of his kimono creations, while the extensive gardens, designed by Kubota Itchiku himself, are also worth a stroll.

**Day 14: Explore Hakone**

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, transfer to Hakone, a drive of around 2 hours. Enjoy a boat cruise on the peaceful waters of Lake Ashi before boarding the Hakone ropeway to soar over the hilltops to the volcanic Owakudani Valley. After lunch, continue around 2 hours to Japan's capital city, Tokyo.



*Please note, if Hakone Ropeway and Owakudani Valley is closed due to volcanic activity, you will visit Hakone Shrine and take the Komagatake Ropeway instead.*

**Destination Information**

**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.

**Hakone Ropeway** – The Hakone Ropeway allows visitors to take in spectacular views of the crystal-clear blue waters of Lake Ashi, the rising volcanic fumes of Owakudani and the grandeur of Mount Fuji on a fine, sunny day.

**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. 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 15: Discover Tokyo**

Meals: B, L, D

Tokyo is the ultimate 24-hour city, but look behind its busy, high-tech façade and you will find plenty of tranquil backstreets and old temples to explore. This morning, head to the Imperial Palace East Gardens, the Meiji Jingu Shrine, and walk the famous Shibuya Crossing. You will be on your feet for 4 hours today. The rest of the day is at leisure for you to spend how you wish.



**Some May and September departures only:** Tickets to a Sumo tournament are included in the afternoon to some of our departures travelling in May and September. Many of Japan's most ancient traditions are preserved in the sport; the ritual involved in the performance is just as fascinating to watch as the sport itself. Please note that the tickets are subject to availability.

### Destination Information

**Imperial Palace East Gardens** – The Imperial Palace East Gardens are part of the Imperial Palace, the main residence of the Emperor of Japan and the former site of Edo Castle.

**Meiji Shrine** – Meiji Shrine is a Shinto shrine dedicated to the Emperor Meiji and his wife Empress Shoken. The shrine is located in an evergreen forest within in the busy city and consists of 120,000 trees which were donated by people from all over Japan when the shrine was established.

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### Day 16: Tokyo Panorama

Meals: B, L, D

Start your last full day in Tokyo with a stroll in the vibrant Asakusa district and soak up the ambiance of Senso-ji, Tokyo's oldest Buddhist temple. Due to the limited coach parking, you may need to walk around 15 minutes on flat road. Continue to the 634-metre Skytree and ascend to the observation deck for magnificent views. You will be on your feet for 3-4 hours during your touring in Tokyo. The afternoon is free at leisure until the evening, when you will board a traditional yakata boat for a dinner cruise. You will need to get on and off your boat this evening without assistance.



### Destination Information

**Asakusa** – Asakusa is the centre of Tokyo's Shitamachi (Old Town) District, where you can get a glimpse of historical Tokyo.

**Senso-ji 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.

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

**Day 17-18: Depart Tokyo**

Meals: B

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 Japan Uncovered 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 UNCOVERED TRAVEL INFORMATION

### VISAS:

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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:

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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 also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original.

### EATING IN JAPAN:

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All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our fully inclusive classic group tours, from dinner on the group's arrival until breakfast the day of departure. 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. It is based on combining staple foods, typically rice or noodles, with a soup and okazu — dishes made from fish, meat, or vegetables to add flavor to the staple food. These are typically flavored with dashi, miso, and soy sauce. Breakfast will mostly be buffet style but maybe a set menu. Your meal at lunch and dinner will likely be a pre-set option or bento box style including a combination of the following: rice and miso soup, noodles or fish and vegetables. It is also important to note that in local Japanese restaurants, it is customary for most meals to be served at room temperature and that it is sometimes customary to remove your shoes prior to entering a restaurant.

The 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.

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.



For your convenience, generally, at the end of a long travelling day your meal will be at the hotel restaurant or nearby local restaurant.

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:**

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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:**

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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:

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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.

You will be met on arrival at the airport by an English-speaking assistant who will provide instructions for you to make your own way to your hotel using the direct airport bus. Please note the bus will be shared with other passengers and is not just for Wendy Wu Tours clients.

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:

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**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:

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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:

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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:

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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:

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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:

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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 2024, Constitution Memorial Day is on 3rd May, and Emperor's Birthday is on 23rd February every year.

### SOUVENIRS:

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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:

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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:

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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:

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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:

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We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful [www.travelvax.com.au](http://www.travelvax.com.au)

### BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

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We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au) as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.



### AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

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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.

Updated: March 2024