



Journey Through Japan

Classic Tour | 15 Days | Physical Level 1

SAPPORO – SHIRAOI – HAKODATE – HIROSAKI – KAKUNODATE – TSUNAGI –
SENDAI – NIKKO – TOKYO – HAKONE – KYOTO – OSAKA

Along with the must-see sites on the island of Honshu and a day trip to Nikko, this is a tour of varying landscapes as it journeys south from Hokkaido uncovering the charming cities of Sapporo, Otaru and Hakodate.

- Discover the northern island of Hokkaido
- Spend the night in a ryokan and bathe in the warm waters of an onsen
- Explore the culture filled town of Nikko
- Admire breathtaking Mount Fuji
- Explore Japan's history in Kyoto
- Visit a sake brewery

TOUR MAP



JOURNEY THROUGH JAPAN TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National 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:

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 whose unparalleled 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.

'Journey Through Japan' 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:

The tour is 15 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 Sapporo and end the tour on Day 14 in Osaka (departures from either Osaka Kansai or Osaka Itami 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'll make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

DETAILED ITINERARY**Day 1-2: Fly overnight to Sapporo**

Meals: D

Fly overnight to Sapporo, capital of the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido. On arrival, you will be met by an English-speaking representative and transfer approximately 1 hour 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

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

Day 3: Ascend Okurayama

Meals: B, L, D

In the morning, visit the Okurayama Viewing Point and take a 5-minute chair lift to the top of the Sapporo Winter Olympics Ski Jump to enjoy the breathtaking views of the surrounding mountains. Transfer around 1 hour to the pretty port town of Otaru, where you can enjoy strolling along the canal and enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.



Return to the hotel and enjoy a couple of hours at leisure. For dinner, head to the Sapporo Beer Garden and sample the local beer on offer and enjoy a Genghis Khan dinner, a Sapporo specialty of BBQ Lamb (other meats and vegetables will be available for those who do not like lamb, but you must advise in advance).

Destination Information

Okurayama Viewing Point – The Okurayama viewing point sits at the top of the 1972 Winter Olympic ski jump, which is still home to many international competitions. From the top you can enjoy stunning panoramic views of Sapporo and Ishikari Bay.

Otaru – Otaru is a small harbour city northwest of Sapporo. Its beautifully preserved canal area, with unique herring mansions and old warehouses giving Otaru’s city centre a distinctive character reminiscent of past decades.

Day 4: Travel to Hakodate

Meals: B, L, D

Depart Sapporo and travel around 1 and a half hour to a lovely lakeside spot to visit a museum of Ainu culture, an indigenous people of the area.

Continue to Noboribetsu Jigokudani (Hell Valley) and walk through a volcanic caldera where you can see steam jets, vents and hot springs.



After lunch, board a limited express train and travel 2 and a half hours to the harbour city of Hakodate. Check in to the hotel before heading out for dinner and then ascending the Hakodate ropeway for magnificent views over the illuminated city (weather permitting).

Please note: You will need to pack a small overnight bag for tonight as your main luggage will be transferred this morning directly to your hotel in Aomori, arriving the following day.

Destination Information

Shiraoi Ainu Museum – The Shiraoi Ainu Museum is dedicated to the history and culture of the Ainu, a group of indigenous people of Japan. The name “Ainu” is derived from the word aynu, meaning “human being” in the Ainu language. The museum hosts a number of exhibits, detailing the lives, work and history of the Ainu.

Noboribetsu Jigokudani – Jigokudani or ‘Hell Valley’ is a spectacular, appropriately named valley which displays hot steam vents, sulfurous streams and other volcanic activity. The 24-acre geothermal crater formed from the eruption of Mt Kuttara around 20,000 years ago.

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

Day 5: Explore Hakodate Asaichi

Meals: B, L, D

Start the day by strolling through Hakodate's bustling asaichi (morning market), where hundreds of stores and stalls sell fresh local produce, seafood and the odd souvenir before ascending Goryokaku Tower for views over Goryokaku Fort and Mount Hakodate.



After lunch, transfer to the train station and take a 1-hour bullet train to the city of Aomori in the north of Honshu, Japan's largest island.

On arrival in Aomori visit to the Nebuta Warasse Museum before transferring to your hotel in Hisosaki for your overnight stay.

Destination Information

Hakodate Asaichi – The Hakodate Morning Market is held daily. Products on sale include different types of fresh seafood such as crabs, salmon eggs and sea urchin, as well as other fresh produce.

Goryokaku Tower – The 98m-tall Goryokaku Tower gives a bird's eye view of the star-shaped Fort Goryokaku - a Western style citadel, which was built in the last years of the Edo Period.

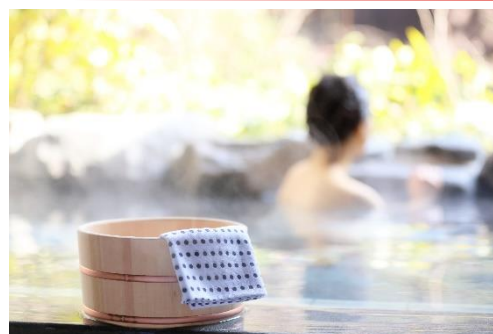
Aomori – Aomori City is the northernmost prefectural capital city on Honshu, Japan's main island, best known for its spectacular Nebuta Matsuri summer festival.

Nebuta Warasse Museum – Nebuta Warasse is a museum dedicated to Aomori's famous, 300-year-old Nebuta Matsuri, a lively annual summer festival. The museum tries to capture the spirit of the festival and give visitors a taste of its lively atmosphere, history and traditions.

Day 6: Tsunagi Onsen

Meals: B, L, D

Depart Hirosaki and travel around 3 and a half hours by coach to Kakunodate, an old samurai stronghold still known for its samurai traditions. Visit the Aoyagi Samurai Manor Museum for a fascinating look at samurai culture and stroll around Ishiguro House, a traditional samurai residence. Continue a little over 1 hour to the hot spring resort of Tsunagi.



Tonight's accommodation is a ryokan, a traditional Japanese inn, where you will find tatami (straw mat) flooring and futon bedding to sleep on. There will be an onsen hot spring bath at the hotel for you to relax in and experience this traditional Japanese pastime. Please note that onsen baths are segregated and the majority of them do not allow bathing suits.

Please note: You will need to pack a small overnight bag for the next two nights, as your main luggage will be transferred this morning directly to your hotel in Tokyo.

Destination Information

Aoyagi Samurai Manor Museum – The Aoyagi Samurai Manor Museum is an impressive restored family compound that depicts the Samurai way of life from the 17th - 20th centuries. Inside each structure is a fascinating exhibition of objects, including samurai swords and weapons, clothing, pictures and documents.

Ishiguro House – The Ishiguro Family Clan was the most prestigious Samurai clan in the Kakunodate region. The direct descendants have turned their home into a museum to showcase their samurai heritage, while still residing in the house.

Tsunagi – Tsunagi is a small town surrounded by beautiful mountains and has several onsens in the area.

Day 7: Cruise Matsushima Bay

Meals: B, L, D

Transfer 1 and a half hour to Hiraizumi, where you'll explore Chusonji Temple, with its beautiful old gold leaf-covered hall.

Continue another 1 and a half hour to Matsushima to enjoy a relaxed cruise on Matsushima Bay, passing amongst the small pine tree-covered islands of this picturesque seascape.



Transfer to Sendai and check in to your hotel for the night.

Destination Information

Chusonji Temple – Chusonji was established in 850 as a temple of the Tendai sect of Buddhism and expanded in the 12th century. At its peak, the temple consisted of dozens of buildings but after a fire in 1337 destroyed nearly everything, only two original buildings remain, alongside more recent reconstructions. Chusonji Temple was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2011.

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

Day 8: Sendai to Nikko

Meals: B, L, D

Walk 10-15 minutes to Sendai station and take the bullet train for 1 and a half hour, then transfer 1 hour by coach to the small and charming city of Nikko.

Drive by scenic Shinkyo Bridge before visiting the lavish Toshogu Shrine. At the shrine there will be some steps to climb.



Continue to the magnificent Kegon Waterfall, taking a 100-metre tall elevator down to a viewpoint where you can look up at the stunning waterfall. You will be walking for approximately 2 hours in Nikko.

Drive 2 and a half hours to Tokyo, Japan's capital city, and check in to your hotel.

Destination Information

Nikko – Nikko is best known for its vast and rich nature as well as famous sightseeing spots, including historical shrines and temples. Many people visit Nikko for its distinctive mystical atmosphere as it used to be the centre of Shinto and Buddhist mountain worship for many centuries.

Toshogu Shrine – Toshogu Shrine is the final resting place of the founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate that ruled Japan for over 250 years until 1868. The extravagantly decorated shrine complex has more than a dozen buildings set in a beautiful forest. Numerous wood carvings and large amounts of gold leaf were used to decorate the buildings in a way not seen elsewhere in Japan, where simplicity was traditionally stressed in shrine architecture.

Kegon Waterfall – The 97-metre tall Kegon Waterfall is Nikko's most famous waterfall and has been ranked as one of Japan's three most beautiful waterfalls. Water from Lake Chuzenji falls straight down to the rocks below.

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 9: Explore Tokyo

Meals: B, L, D

Tokyo is the ultimate metropolis, perfectly blending modern technology with beautifully serene backstreets and old temples.

Today take a tour by coach of this fascinating city starting with a visit to the Asakusa district. Here you will be able to soak up the ambiance of Sensoji, Tokyo's oldest and most famous Buddhist temple and home to a five-storey pagoda as well as the iconic large red Kaminarimon Thunder Gate lantern.



Go on to explore the Tokyo National Museum. After lunch, visit Meiji Jingu Shrine, a tranquil Shinto shrine set amongst a stretch of woodland before heading up to the observatory deck of the Tokyo Government Office Building for panoramic views of Tokyo and beyond. You will be on your feet for 3-4 hours during your touring in Tokyo.

Due to the limited coach parking, you may need to walk around 15 minutes on flat road.

Destination Information

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

Sensoji Temple – Sensoji Temple is an ancient Buddhist Temple and the oldest in Tokyo. The temple was originally founded in the 7th century. The temple adorns an image of the Buddhist Goddess Kannon, who was said to have been rescued by two fishermen from the Sumida River in Tokyo.

Tokyo National Museum - Located in Ueno Park, the Tokyo National Museum is Japan's oldest museum. Here you'll find the world's largest collection of Japanese art, including ancient pottery, Buddhist sculptures, samurai swords, colourful woodblock prints, eloquent kimonos and much, much more.

Meiji Jingu Shrine – The Meiji shrine is dedicated to the spirits of Emperor Meiji and his wife Empress Shoken. It is a popular place for traditional Japanese weddings.

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

Day 10: Admire Mount Fuji

Meals: B, L, D

Journey around 2 hours to the base of the famous Mount Fuji. 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 Fujisan World Heritage Centre (formerly Fuji Visitor Centre) will be visited instead.



Continue to the Hakone area and take a cruise on tranquil Lake Ashi before taking the Komagatake Ropeway cable car for spectacular views of Mount Fuji and the lake below (weather permitting). Return to Tokyo.

Destination Information

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.

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.

Komagatake Ropeway – Komagatake Ropeway goes from the shore of Lake Ashi to near the Komagatake peak of Mount Hakone. When the weather and visibility is good, panoramic views of Lake Ashi and Mount Fuji can be enjoyed.

Day 11: Travel to Kyoto

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, transfer to the train station to board your 2-hour bullet train to Kyoto. An enchanting city, Kyoto was capital for a thousand years; today, it is the legacy of ancient Japan, full of tranquil temples, silk-clad geisha and sublime gardens.

This afternoon, visit Togetsukyo Bridge in the heart of the vibrant Arashiyama district and walk through the bamboo forest.



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 for approximately 1,000 years until 1867 when it was moved to Tokyo. Many national treasures can be found in Kyoto and in nearby Nara, including old shrines and temples, screen paintings, beautiful gardens, and statues of Buddha.

Togetsukyo Bridge – The wooden Togetsukyo Bridge has been a central landmark in Kyoto's Arashiyama District for over 400 years. The bridge spans the Katsura River in front of Arashiyama Mountain. Both cherry blossom season and autumn leaves season draw large crowds, as the scenery is beautiful.

Arashiyama - Famed for the Bamboo grove, Arashiyama is a sightseeing district of Kyoto filled with temples and shrines.

Day 12: Explore Kyoto

Meals: B, L, D

Start the day by visiting Kinkakuji Temple, also known as the Golden Pavilion due to its gold-plated exterior.

Stroll through Nishiki Market, dubbed 'Kyoto's kitchen', where there are many interesting food and sake stores to explore.

Arrive back at your hotel and spend the afternoon at leisure until dinner tonight at a local restaurant.



Destination Information

Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion) – Kinkakuji Temple is a Buddhist temple and an excellent example of Japanese garden design. The structure is a brilliant golden hue colour and is very minimalistic.

Nishiki Market – A narrow, five block long shopping street lined by more than 100 shops and restaurants, this lively retail market specialises in all things food related, like fresh seafood, produce, knives and cookware. It is a great place to find seasonal foods and Kyoto specialties, such as Japanese sweets, pickles, dried seafood and sushi.

Day 13: Sake Tasting

Meals: B, L, D

Try your hand at handkerchief dyeing and then experience the rituals of a tea ceremony accompanied by a Tea Master.

Due to the nature of the experience, you have to remove your shoes before entering the venue.

After lunch, visit the mesmerising Fushimi Inari Shrine, which stretches from the bottom to the top of Mount Inari (233 metres high). You will walk up part of the mountain and the incline allows a steady-pace walk around 15 minutes with flat road and steps to reach torii gates.



Please note: Due to the limited space of Fushimi Inari Shrine coach parking, you may need to walk from the coach parking for 15 minutes.

Tour a traditional sake brewery to learn about this traditional Japanese spirit before transferring 1 hour to the lively city of Osaka.

Destination Information

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

Sake Brewery - Sake is the national alcohol of Japan; a tour of the brewery offers the chance to learn about the manufacturing processes.

Osaka – Osaka, formerly known as Naniwa, is Japan's third largest city and remains the economic powerhouse of the Kansai Region. The city is famed for its delicious food and is often referred to as the culinary capital. The city also boasts vibrant colours that surround each street, rich history and culture.

Day 14-15: Depart Osaka

Meals: B

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

Please note: Only breakfast is included today. Late check-out is not included in our Journey through Japan tour. If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day in Osaka, please contact our reservations department who can confirm the additional price and make this arrangement for you, subject to availability at the hotel.



Transfers: In the event that your flight departs outside of the majority group departure time, you will be transferred to the airport by a shared coach (not with other Wendy Wu Tours passengers). If you are on a shared coach transfer, you may have to walk for a few minutes to get to the coach.

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

JOURNEY THROUGH JAPAN TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

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

INSURANCE:

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

We 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:

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:

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 portering 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.

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:

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.

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.

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 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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