

JAPAN HIGHLIGHTS TOUR



MY TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

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Highlights of Japan Escorted Tour with Flights

Duration: 14 days

Stay: 12 nights hotels, overnight flight

Travel style: Escorted tour with flights from Australia

Booking code: JPHCBX14M

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14 Days Japan Tour in Cherry Blossom Season

About the holiday

This two-week adventure through Japan showcases the top sights, natural beauty and hidden gems of the “land of the rising sun”. Plus, travel during the prettiest time of the year, when the weather is starting to warm up and cherry blossoms are normally in season.

From skyscrapers and neon lights, to ancient temples and castles, Japan seamlessly blends history with modernity. Explore Tokyo, Japan’s buzzing capital. Travel to Hakone and Shizuoka for spectacular Mount Fuji views. Uncover history during Hiroshima, Takayama and Kyoto tours. Step back in time with visits to Kurashiki, Kanazawa and Shirakawa-go. Experience Osaka’s vibrant nightlife and travel on the Shinkansen bullet train. Learn about Ninjas, Sumo wrestlers, Samurai and more! This Japan tour package offers the journey of a lifetime.

Why we love this trip...

- Discover Tokyo, Japan’s capital, on a city tour
- See Itsukushima, Meiji and Hakone Shrines
- See Himeji Castle, the Arashiyama Bamboo Forest and the Kiyomizu Temple
- Enjoy full days to explore Tokyo, Hiroshima and Kyoto
- Travel back in time at Hida no Sato Folk Village and Shirakawa-go
- Take the Shinkansen bullet train from Kanazawa to Tokyo

Travel dates

2025 - Departs March to November, with Cherry Season dates in March & April*

**Departures are subject to confirmation. Price may vary depending on your travel date. Contact us for current prices of your preferred date or travel at other times of the year.*

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Tour Package includes:

Flights - Return economy airfare to Tokyo

Fly from Australian capital cities with luggage included (surcharges may apply)

Accommodation - 12 nights in a range of accommodation, based on twin share

4- & 3-star hotels with private bathrooms

Single travellers have the option of sharing rooms or paying for private rooms

Meals - 12 Breakfasts, 3 Dinners

Transportation - travel by modern air-conditioned coach with reclining seats

Shinkansen (bullet train) journey from Kanazawa to Tokyo

Any public transport used as part of the tour (excludes free days)

Tour Leader - Fully guided experienced Tour Leader

Tour leader will accompany group through & manage all logistical details

Sightseeing - included highlights as per the itinerary

Package excludes:

Japanese visa fees

Airline fees for seat selection & extra baggage

Meals, other than those specified in the inclusions

Optional sightseeing tours & activities

Gratuities for guides & drivers

Personal items, such as drinks, snacks, laundry, WiFi access etc.

Travel insurance is essential, we can provide a quote on request

Prices are based on twin share, please contact us for single rates

Subject to confirmation by airlines, tour company, hotels & local operators.

Booking conditions & cancellation fees apply.

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Highlights & Experiences:

- Enjoy a welcome dinner at an Izakaya
- Stroll through Tokyo's vibrant neighbourhoods on a city tour
- Visit the Meiji Shrine and Senso-ji Temple
- Explore the Tsukiji Fish Market
- Visit the Great Buddha in Kamakura
- See the Tsurugaoka Hachimangū Shinto shrine
- Visit Hakone Shrine on the shores of Lake Ashi
- Snap pictures of Mount Fuji during a photo stop
- Take in the views from Nihondaira
- Visit a green tea plantation
- Tour a miso factory
- See a Ninja demonstration at the Iga Ninja Museum
- Experience the world of Sumo at the Kehaya Sumo Museum
- Embark on a city tour of Osaka
- Visit the beautiful Himeji Castle
- Enjoy an Okonomiyaki dinner
- Walk along Hiroshima's Kintaikyo Bridge
- Visit the Itsukushima Shrine on Miyajima Island
- Pay your respects at the Peace Memorial Park and Museum
- Explore the historic canals and rice storehouses of Kurashiki
- Experience the enchanting city of Kyoto
- Wander through the Arashiyama Bamboo Forest
- Explore the Kiyomizu Temple
- Visit Hikone, known for its impressive Castle
- Experience Edo-period Japan in Takayama
- Visit the Hida no Sato Open Air Museum
- Travel back in time in Shirakawa-go
- Wander through Kenrokuen Garden
- Explore Kanazawa, home of the Samurai
- Take the Shinkansen bullet train to Tokyo
- Enjoy a farewell dinner in Tokyo

Tour Itinerary:

Day 1: Fly to Japan

Day 2: Start of tour in Tokyo

Konnichiwa Japan! This jam-packed 13-day Japan group tour starts today in Tokyo. Arrive in Japan's vibrant capital city and check into the hotel from 03:00 PM. You will get an information pack explaining today's activities. This evening, look forward to an included welcome dinner at a local restaurant and get your first taste of Japanese cuisine. As one of the world's healthiest cuisines, Japanese food is known for its high-quality, fresh ingredients. At the restaurant, meet up with your tour leader and fellow travellers and get excited about the days to come!

Included Experiences

Welcome dinner at an Izakaya: Celebrate your first night on tour in Japan with a visit to an Izakaya. These pubs are uniquely Japanese and are popular spots for locals to grab a drink and meal with groups of friends or colleagues. You'll usually find yakitori, edamame, grilled fish, French fries and more on the menu in an Izakaya. Tuck in and enjoy!

Meals - Dinner

Accommodation - Hotel

Day 3: Tokyo

Wake up in buzzing Tokyo and look forward to a full day in this iconic city. Set off on a sightseeing city tour after breakfast to discover some of Tokyo's top attractions. Discover ancient culture at the Meiji Shrine and the Senso-ji Temple. Enjoy free time for lunch at Tsukiji Fish Market (sushi, anyone?) and wander through the Ginza shopping neighbourhood which is known for its bright, neon lights. The evening is free to spend as you wish. The Tokyo+ optional excursion is highly recommended. Visit the Skytree Tower for panoramic views of Tokyo, grab dinner in Omoide Yokocho and enjoy a walking tour of Shinjuku City.

Included Experiences

Tokyo city sightseeing tour: See the highlights of Tokyo on an exciting city sightseeing day tour! Travel through Tokyo by coach and on foot. Join an expert local guide who will lead a tour through the main attractions of this sprawling city. Visit the grand Meiji Shrine dedicated to Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken. Marvel at Tokyo's oldest temple, the Buddhist Senso-ji Temple. Wander through the Nakamise Shopping Arcade and Takeshita Street. Enjoy the sights, sounds and smells of Tsukiji Fish Market where you will have free time for lunch - it's the best place to find fresh seafood and produce.

Meals - Breakfast
Accommodation - Hotel

Optional Tour Excursions

Tokyo+

Marvel at panoramic city views from the Skytree Tower, visit Omoide Yokochō and enjoy a walking tour of the bustling Shinjuku City. Approx. JPY 9000

Day 4: Kamakura - Hakone - Shizuoka Prefecture

Wave farewell to Tokyo for now as the tour travels towards Shizuoka with some insightful sightseeing along the way. Discover Kamakura, a stunning seaside city which is known for its Great Buddha and the Tsurugaoka Hachimangū Shinto shrine. Then, enjoy free time for lunch and more sightseeing in Hakone, a picturesque town on the shores of Lake Ashi which boasts spectacular Mount Fuji views! The last stop of the day is Shizuoka Prefecture. Check into the hotel and look forward to a free evening.

Included Experiences

City sightseeing tours of Kamakura and Hakone: Visit the city of Kamakura which is a laid-back seaside Japanese city that is home to numerous Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples. See the city's famous Great Buddha in the Kōtoku-in Temple as well as the Tsurugaoka Hachimangū Shinto shrine - the city's most important shrine. Next up is Hakone where you can admire Hakone Shrine - located in a beautiful spot on the edge of Lake Ashi.

Mount Fuji photo stop: Make a photo stop in Hakone where you will find excellent views of the famous Mount Fuji - Japan's iconic volcano.

Meals - Breakfast
Accommodation - Hotel

Day 5: Shizuoka - Nihondaira - Iga

Delight in a day full of one-of-a-kind Japanese experiences today! Awe-inspiring Mount Fuji views await at our first stop in Nihondaira where the group will also get to visit a green tea farm and learn more about how Japan's most popular tea is produced. After some free time for lunch, enjoy a tour of a miso factory. Finally, arrive in the city of Iga and check into the hotel for the night. The rest of the evening is free. Ask your tour leader for suggestions on things to do and places to see near the accommodation.

Included Experiences

Take in the views from Nihondaira: Admire the panoramic vistas from Nihondaira. This ancient plateau offers incredible views of Mount Fuji, the Pacific Ocean as well as the beautiful tea plantations in the area.

Visit a green tea plantation: Shizuoka is known as the green tea capital of Japan! Enjoy a visit to a working tea plantation to see how this widely loved drink is produced. You can even try out a bit of tea picking for yourself!

Tour a miso factory: Take a tour around a miso factory to see how this popular Japanese ingredient is produced. Miso is a paste made from fermented soybeans, which is widely used in Japanese cooking - it gives dishes the distinct, salty 'umami' flavour.

Meals - Breakfast
Accommodation - Hotel

Day 6: Iga - Sumo Museum - Osaka

The adventures start right away today! After breakfast, head to the Iga Ninja Museum and learn all about these mysterious martial artists with a Ninja skill and weaponry demonstration. Leaving Iga behind, travel to the Kehaya Sumo Museum which will provide great insight into the history of this unique style of wrestling. Then, travel onwards to Osaka and enjoy some free time for lunch in the famous Dotonbori area before embarking on a guided city tour. Discover some of the city's most beloved sights and learn all about this buzzing city which is an important trade centre as well as a top nightlife destination. Enjoy a free evening to experience this nightlife for yourself!

Included Experiences

See a Ninja demonstration: Enjoy a guided tour around the Iga Ninja Museum which is dedicated to celebrating the history of the ninja! Look forward to a demonstration displaying impressive Ninja skills and weaponry. Ninjas were warriors during Japan's feudal ages known for their unconventional warfare and stealth.

Experience the world of Sumo: Visit the Kehaya Sumo Museum for insight into all things Sumo! Sumo originated in Japan and is a full-contact form of wrestling. Learn all about the history and traditions during the visit - the museum even has its own Sumo arena!

Embark on an Osaka city tour: Discover Japan's third-largest city which is famous for its vibrant nightlife, delicious and diverse street food and world-class shopping. Embark on a guided city tour and admire how seamlessly ancient history and culture blend with modern architecture and innovation.

Meals - Breakfast
Accommodation - Hotel

Optional Tour Excursions

Osaka Sightseeing: Dotonbori, Takoyaki-Making Experience & Dinner

Explore Dotonbori in the heart of Osaka! Discover the bustling neighbourhood before enjoying a Takoyaki-making class and dinner at a local restaurant. Approx. JPY 11000

Day 7: Osaka - Himeji - Hiroshima

Wave goodbye to Osaka this morning as the tour travels to another intriguing Japanese city - Hiroshima! En route, pay a visit to Himeji Castle. This castle's construction dates back to the 14th Century and is one of the best examples of Japanese architecture. Take in the incredible views (featuring cherry blossom trees in bloom between March and May) from this hilltop castle and explore its well-preserved interior. Arrive in Hiroshima later this afternoon where the group will stay for the next two nights. After checking into the hotel, enjoy an included Okonomiyaki dinner. This savoury pancake is one of Japan's most popular dishes!

Included Experiences

Visit the Himeji Castle: Enjoy a visit to one of the finest surviving examples of Japan's castle architecture. Himeji Castle's construction dates back to the 1300s and it survived extensive bombings in the area during WW2. The brilliant white walls and unique shape were created to resemble a bird taking flight. Himeji is Japan's most visited castle and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is a truly impressive sight to behold!

Okonomiyaki dinner: Tuck into a classic Japanese dish during tonight's included Okonomiyaki dinner. Okonomiyaki is a Japanese Teppanyaki (a style of cooking which uses an iron griddle to cook food) and is a savoury pancake. Popular toppings include pork belly, seafood, cabbage and Okonomiyaki sauce!

Meals - Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation - Hotel

Day 8: Hiroshima

Today offers a full day to uncover Hiroshima's modern highlights and ancient history. On a guided city tour, learn all about the impact of the atomic bomb attack on Hiroshima during WW2 and how this has shaped the city today. During the walking and driving tour, walk across the historic Kintaikyo Bridge and visit the Itsukushima Shrine, known for its "floating" torii (gate), on Miyajima Island. Explore the Peace Memorial Park and Museum and pay your respects to the victims of the 1945 bombing. The evening is free to explore Hiroshima on your own. For a taste of the Hiroshima nightlife, visit the Nagarekawa district.

Included Experiences

Walk along the Kintaikyo Bridge: Take a walk across this impressive, arched wooden bridge which is a distinguished landmark in Yamaguchi.

Visit the Itsukushima Shrine on Miyajima Island: Take a trip to Miyajima and see the iconic “floating” gate or torii, which the shrine is famous for. This Shinto Shrine is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and many of the buildings and significant items within have been declared national treasures by the Japanese government.

Explore the Peace Memorial Park and Museum: Visit one of the most prominent sites in Hiroshima. The Peace Memorial Park and Museum were built to remember the dropping of the atomic bomb in 1945 and honour the hundreds of thousands of victims of the attack. Explore the museums on-site, see the A-bomb dome and visit the numerous monuments throughout the park.

Meals - Breakfast

Accommodation - Hotel

Day 9: Hiroshima - Kurashiki - Kyoto

Depart Hiroshima after breakfast this morning and head to Kurashiki, a charming city which is home to gorgeous canals and historic rice storehouses. Here, enjoy some free time to explore one of Kurashiki’s many museums located in its historic centre or admire the city’s sights from the water on a punting boat. In the early afternoon, travel onwards to Kyoto for a true highlight of Japan tours! This ancient city and former capital of Japan is beloved by visitors from all over the world. Enjoy some sightseeing before checking into the hotel for the night. The rest of the evening is free.

Included Experiences

Explore Kurashiki: Enjoy some free time to explore the city of Kurashiki located in Okayama Prefecture. Kurashiki was an important rice distribution centre during the Edo Period (1603-1867) and its well-preserved canals and storehouses date back to this period. Today, the storehouses have been converted into museums, cafés and boutiques offering visitors plenty of things to see and do.

Experience Kyoto: Enjoy two nights in Kyoto to immerse yourself in one of the world’s most beautiful and enigmatic cities! As the former capital of Japan, Kyoto offers centuries of history and offers a fascinating insight into ancient Japanese cultures and customs. With its hundreds of temples, shrines, palaces and gardens, you will never run out of things to do in Kyoto!

Meals - Breakfast

Accommodation - Hotel

Day 10: Kyoto

Ohayō Kyoto! Enjoy a full day to experience this enigmatic city which is home to over 1,600 Buddhist temples and 400 Shinto shrines. Start the day at the otherworldly Arashiyama Bamboo Forest and walk through the breathtaking bamboo towers.

After soaking up this stunning scenery, discover one of Japan's most impressive temples. The Kiyomizu Temple is a UNESCO World Heritage Site with over 1,200 years of history. It's also one of the best places to see sakura during cherry blossom season in Japan (March-May). Then, head towards the famous Gion district, strolling along Ninenzaka with its many shops along the way. Enjoy free time for lunch, shopping or more sightseeing before heading back to the hotel.

Included Experiences

Wander through the Arashiyama Bamboo Forest: Visiting this majestic bamboo grove feels like an otherworldly experience! Take a stroll along the path that runs through the towering green stalks. This is one of Kyoto's most photographed spots!

Explore the Kiyomizu Temple: This picturesque Buddhist temple is one of Japan's most celebrated temples. Kiyomizu, which means Pure Water Temple, was named after the nearby Otowa Waterfall. Admire the views of the surroundings from the large wooden deck.

Meals - Breakfast

Accommodation - Hotel

Day 11: Kyoto - Hikone - Takayama

More fascinating Japanese sights await as we leave Kyoto this morning. First up on the agenda today is a visit to Hikone, a quaint city on the shores of Lake Biwa (Japan's largest lake). The Edo-period Hikone Castle, which is considered a national treasure, is best viewed from the luscious, 17th-Century Genkyuen Garden. In the afternoon, travel to Takayama where the tour will spend the evening. Located in the mountainous Gifu Prefecture, Takayama offers plenty of charm, history and natural beauty. Explore the historic Sanmachi district this afternoon and learn about the artisans, merchants and farmers who lived here during the Edo period.

Included Experiences

Visit Hikone: The quaint city of Hikone is probably best known for its Edo-period castle which is considered the most significant historical site in the Shiga Prefecture. Built between 1603 and 1622, it is one of only five castles in Japan whose main keep is original. For stunning views of the castle in a tranquil setting, visit the lush Genkyuen Garden and soak up the scenery from every angle.

Experience Edo-period Japan in Takayama: Takayama offers a fascinating insight into Edo-period Japan as well as gorgeous mountain scenery. Takayama Jin'ya is a former Edo-era government building which now houses a museum while the historic Sanmachi district seems to be frozen in time. Wandering its charming streets will take you back to when the area was abuzz with craftsmen, merchants and farmers.

Meals - Breakfast

Accommodation - Hotel

Day 12: Takayama - Shirakawa - Kanazawa

Today offers a unique opportunity to discover Gassho-zukuri architecture. After breakfast, look forward to visiting the Hida no Sato Open Air Museum and exploring the numerous old farmhouses which represent the architectural styles of Japan's mountainous regions. Characteristic of the Gassho-zukuri style, many of the houses are made of wood and feature thatched gable roofs. Then, explore the traditional village of Shirakawa-go. This UNESCO World Heritage Site feels like stepping into a fairytale with its traditional houses and serene scenery among the Japanese Alps. In the afternoon, the tour will make its way to Kanazawa where the group will spend the night. Here, visit the picture-perfect Kenrokuen Garden, which blooms with cherry blossoms in spring and colourful leaves in autumn!

Included Experiences

Visit the Hida no Sato Open Air Museum: Also known as Hida Folk Village, this open air museum displays around 30 old farmhouses which are designed in the traditional architectural styles of Japan's mountainous regions. Most notably, many houses were built in Gassho-zukuri style with thatched gable roofs. The scenery here is particularly picturesque as the village is located on a hill overlooking the Takayama Valley.

Travel back in time in Shirakawa-go: The fairytale village of Shirakawa-go is a UNESCO World Heritage Site set against the backdrop of the Japanese Alps. Explore the traditional Gassho-zukuri houses (some of which are over 300 years old!) and soak up the tranquil, mountainous scenery.

Wander through Kenrokuen Garden: Considered one of Japan's "three most beautiful landscaped gardens", Kenrokuen Garden is one of the top places to see in Kanazawa. From pink cherry blossoms in spring and gorgeous greenery in summer to the changing colours of the maple trees in autumn and a snowscape wonderland in winter, Kenrokuen has something to offer visitors all year round!

Meals - Breakfast

Accommodation - Hotel

Day 13: Kanazawa - Tokyo

The tour may be ending tomorrow but the adventures aren't over yet! Enjoy free time this morning to explore Kanazawa, the capital of Ishikawa Prefecture. Rich in history and cultural heritage, Kanazawa shares many similarities with Kyoto yet is much less crowded. This hidden gem of a city is probably best known for the Nagamachi Samurai District. Here, wander its cobblestone streets lined with shops and restaurants and admire the former samurai homes. In the afternoon, the tour heads to the train station and hops aboard the Shinkansen towards Tokyo. Known for its exceptional speed, this bullet train can travel up to 320kph (200mph)! Check into the hotel upon arrival in Tokyo. This evening, enjoy a farewell group dinner.

Included Experiences

Explore Kanazawa: Enjoy a free morning to explore this historic city which has roots in the Samurai era. In the Nagamachi District, former Samurai homes have been preserved making this the perfect destination to learn about these noble figures. Kanazawa is located in a less-visited region of Japan making it a bit of a hidden gem offering a more laid-back sightseeing experience.

Take the Shinkansen to Tokyo: Travel from Kanazawa to Tokyo on the lightning-fast Shinkansen bullet train. The price of the train is included in this Japan tour package so all you have to do is sit back, relax, and enjoy the journey!

Farewell dinner in Tokyo: Reminisce about the countless adventures over the last 12 days with your newfound travel buddies over a farewell dinner in Tokyo.

Meals - Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation - Hotel

Day 14: End of tour in Tokyo

After an unforgettable 13 days of exploring Japan's highlights and hidden gems, the tour comes to an end this morning after breakfast. We wish you a safe journey onward and hopes to see you on tour with us again soon. Sayōnara!

Meals - Breakfast

Please note: The day by day descriptions are intended as an indicative guide only. Travel by nature is unpredictable. Weather patterns, road & rail conditions, public holidays, travel restrictions and many other factors may necessitate itinerary changes that are ultimately for the benefit of clients. It is essential that clients are understanding and flexible in this regard.

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