



Cultural Treasures OF JAPAN

2019 - 2020



TOKYO - HAKONE - TAKAYAMA - KANAZAWA - KYOTO

13 DAYS • FROM \$6,099 PP

12 Breakfasts • 2 Lunches • 7 Dinners



welcome TO JAPAN

Japan is a land of intriguing contradictions. An archipelago made up of more than 6,800 islands, it's filled with land that is either forest or mountains, leaving little for residential, industrial, or farming areas. Yet it is densely populated for its size. Its leaders have ranged from the samurai to the shogun to the emperor. Its highest point, Mt. Fuji, is beautiful and sacred, as are its many temples and shrines. Its capital city, Tokyo, is a bustling metropolis containing anything one might desire, from food to entertainment to art and culture. Kyoto is filled with serene religious buildings and glorious gardens. Japan awaits curious and eager travellers with open arms.



Matsumoto Castle



Kanazawa



Geisha at Nagamachi



Tokyo

CULTURAL TREASURES OF JAPAN

collette EXPERIENCES

- Explore the famous Yanaka Ginza district, the "shitamachi," with oldtown ambience reminiscent of Tokyo's past.
- Explore the hot springs of Hakone, on the shores of Lake Ashi.
- Travel by the famous Shinkansen bullet train.

must-see INCLUSIONS

- Take in magnificent views of Mt. Fuji from the Hakone Ropeway.
- Visit multiple UNESCO sites including Shirakawa-go, Nijo Castle, Itsukushima Shinto Shrine and Hiroshima Peace Memorial.

culinary INCLUSIONS

- Stop for a sushi lunch in Tokyo's famous fish market.
- Enjoy Hida beef dinner and sake tasting at a local sake brewery.
- Experience a traditional kaiseki dinner with Geisha show in Kyoto.



CULTURAL TREASURES OF JAPAN ITINERARY



Day 1: Tokyo, Japan - Tour Begins

Your tour begins today in Japan, the “Land of the Rising Sun.” Begin in the electrifying city of Tokyo, where pop culture is turned all the way up and traditions are rich and long-kept. Tonight, experience a traditional Japanese-style meal alongside your fellow travellers at a festive welcome dinner. (D)

Day 2: Tokyo

Feel the excitement start to build when you see the magnificent view of the city from above at Tokyo Tower, the iconic symbol of Tokyo. Then, enjoy a morning stroll through the outside grounds of the Imperial Palace, the Kokyo Gaien National Gardens, and see the Niju Bridge and Sakurada Gate, the well-known symbols of the Imperial Palace. Walk through Tsukiji, the world’s largest, busiest fish market and a preamble to a true taste of Japan – a sushi lunch at the market. Later, amid a lush forest outside of Tokyo, visit the Meiji Shrine, dedicated to Emperor Meiji and his wife, Empress Shoken. (B, L)

Day 3: Tokyo

Begin the day exploring Asakusa, Tokyo’s oldest Geisha district. Visit the famous Buddhist temple, Senso-ji, the colourful temple famous for the red chochin (lantern) hanging at the entrance gate. Experience

the long standing tradition of the Japanese tea ceremony, dating back to the 15th century. During your free time, explore the Nakamise Shopping Arcade and feel the energy of the oldest shopping street in Japan. Luckily, you don’t need a time machine to get to Tokyo’s old town, Yanaka Ginza, where quaint shops and vendors selling local cuisine transport you to a different time altogether. Tonight, dine as the locals do at an Izakaya, a preferred establishment among the Japanese “salary man” (business man), featuring Japanese tapas-style food. (B, D)

Day 4: Tokyo - Hakone

Journey to the lakeside resort of Hakone, renowned for its hot springs and spas. In the shadow of Mt. Fuji (UNESCO), this scenic town hugs the shorelines of Lake Ashi. Make a stop at Owakudani, located in an active volcanic zone. The Owakudani crater was created some 3,000 years ago, when Mt. Hakone erupted. Climb aboard Hakone Ropeway, an aerial cable car descending from Owakudani for a breathtaking view of Mt. Fuji.* From there, take to the deep-blue waters of Lake Ashi on a cruise where you’ll see epic views of the local mountains before stopping in the charming town of Moto-Hakone. (B, D)

Day 5: Hakone - Matsumoto - Takayama

This breathtaking day begins in Matsumoto. Start at Matsumoto Castle, known as the “Crow Castle” because of its striking black exterior. Enjoy the local cuisine as we stop for lunch at a Soba noodle shop. Later, you’ll step back in time in the rural Edo-period town of Takayama, nestled in the Japanese Alps. Well known to the locals for its connection to sake, this is the perfect place to gather for a visit to one of Japan’s last family-owned sake breweries. Afterward, experience a true Japanese epicurean treat – traditional rice wine paired with a special Hida beef dinner. (B, L, D)

Day 6: Takayama

The ancient cultures of Takayama come alive this morning in the town’s historic district. Take a walk through the past and glimpse the 19th century Jinya government building. Circuit the winding streets, where the town’s traditional charms are preserved in the inns and houses. Feel the energy of bustling open-air markets that date back over 600 years. This afternoon, relish some free time to continue your exploration of Takayama on your own. (B)



Mount Fuji

Day 7: Takayama - Shirakawa-go - Kanazawa

Today, embrace the unique charms of Shirakawa-go (UNESCO). Hidden away in the mountain, this harmonious village is famous for its gasshozukuri-style houses – thatched-rooftops designed to resemble two hands joined in prayer. Journey to Kanazawa, the origin of gold-leaf making since the 16th century. Next, it's over to the Samurai district where we'll enter the former home of the Nomuras, a wealthy samurai family who served the ruling Maeda family. Then, travel to the Geisha quarters of Kanazawa, the Higashi Tea district. Gather in town this evening for dinner. (B, D)

Day 8: Kanazawa

More than 25 acres of absolute beauty awaits you today at KenrokuEn – Garden of Six Qualities. From the beauty of Japan's most stunning gardens, dive in to the ancient craft of gold leaf making during a hands on lesson in decorating your own bento box! In the centre of town, take in the action of the Omicho fish market before venturing out on your own to really immerse yourself in Kanazawa's dynamic culture. (B)

Day 9: Kanazawa - Kyoto

Kyoto awaits! The former Imperial capital of Japan is now one of the nation's top cosmopolitan cities. At the same time, Kyoto's connection with its past is strong; you won't need to look far to see one of its 2,000 temples and shrines. Visit Kinkakuji, the Golden Pavilion, a zen temple whose top two floors are completely covered in gold leaf. Then, stroll through the Gion district where you may spot women in traditional dress along the narrow lanes of teahouses. Tonight, dine in the heart of the city at a traditional yakitori (grilled chicken) restaurant. (B, D)

Day 10: Kyoto - Bullet Train - Hiroshima - Kyoto

All aboard the Shinkansen bullet train to Hiroshima. Upon arrival, board a ferry for the short trip to Miyajima Island, or "Shrine Island" (UNESCO), where the iconic torii gate and the Itsukushima Shrine appears to float on water. After lunch, head into Hiroshima city to visit the Peace Memorial Park, and pause to see the ruined Atomic Dome (UNESCO). Reflect at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. As this moving day comes to a close, return to Kyoto by the Shinkansen bullet train. (B)

Day 11: Kyoto

Explore Fushimi Inari Taisha for a tour of the most revered shrine of Inari. Follow the spectacular rows of orange torii (made famous in the movie *Memoirs of a Geisha*) that weave through the forest, leading you to the inner shrine. Move on to the home of the first Shogun, Nijo Castle (UNESCO), and see intricate woodcarvings, wall paintings, and the Ninomaru Garden, designed by Kobori Enshu, a landscape architect and tea master. Next, visit Marumasa Nishumura for a lesson in the art of stenciling at a traditional Kyoto townhouse. (B)

Day 12: Kyoto

Today, spend some time relaxing or set out to explore Kyoto on your own. Fully immerse yourself in Japanese culture tonight during a special kaiseki farewell dinner and Geisha show. (B, D)

Day 13: Kyoto - Tour Ends

Your tour comes to a close in this fascinating land. As you depart, reflect on Japan's beauty and all you have learned about its rich history and culture. (B)

HOTELS

Days 1 - 3 | Tokyo Prince Hotel,

Tokyo or Shiba Park Hotel, Tokyo

Day 4 | Odakyu Hotel de Yama, Hakone or The Prince

Hakone Lake Ashinoko, Hakone

Days 5, 6 | Takayama Green Hotel, Takayama

Days 7, 8 | Kanazawa Tokyu Hotel, Kanazawa or ANA

Crowne Plaza, Kanazawa

Days 9 - 12 | Westin Miyako Kyoto, Kyoto

can't-miss

EXPERIENCES IN JAPAN



JAPANESE CUISINE

No trip to Japan would be complete without experiencing its flavourful dishes. A bowl of gohan, or cooked rice, is a central part of Japanese meals. From there we go to sushi, famous both outside of and inside Japan. Sushi is made from cold boiled rice, moistened by vinegar and typically combined with seafood and vegetables. Sashimi is thinly sliced raw food – most often seafood. (Japan is an island, after all.) The most popular noodles are soba (buckwheat flour), udon (wheat flour), and ramen, a noodle soup dish. Tempura is lightly battered, deep-fried seafood and vegetables. Yakatori refers to grilled chicken skewers you can try at a yakitori-ya. Be sure to enjoy green tea with your meal, as the Japanese do.



TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Temples and shrines are found all over Japan, with most municipalities having at least one temple. (Kyoto has 1,200.) Temples are Buddhist places of worship, and they store and display sacred objects. They typically consist of a main hall, a lecture hall, a pagoda, gates, bells, and a cemetery. Some were monasteries in the past, and some still are. Shrines are Shinto places of worship. They are the dwellings of the kami, or to pray for good fortune. The approach to the shrine is marked by Torii gates; the komainu, a pair of guardian dogs or lions, is found on each side of the shrine's entrance.



TOKYO

Until the 19th century, Tokyo was known as Edo. It started out as a fishing village, but grew to become the seat of a feudal government in the early 17th century. Emperor Meiji moved the capital from Kyoto to Edo in 1868 and renamed it Tokyo, or "Eastern Capital." By then it had become one of the world's most populous cities. After World War II it was completely rebuilt. Today, Tokyo is more than just a large city – it is a metropolis with 23 wards. It provides all that one can desire in the way of culture, art, cuisine, and shopping. From the Ginza district to the Sumida River there is so much for today's traveller.



HAKONE

Hakone has been a hot springs resort for centuries. There are more than a dozen hot springs, with Yumoto being the most famous. There is much natural beauty to be appreciated here. Lake Ashinoko, or Lake Ashi, was formed in a volcanic caldera after an eruption 3,000 years ago; it is the perfect place for a scenic boat ride with views of Mt. Fuji. The Hakone Shrine, on the shores of Lake Ashi, is Hakone's most famous Shinto shrine. Three striking Torii gates mark the approach to the shrine.

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