



Education First

College Study Tours

A photograph of a traditional Japanese shrine building with a prominent red veranda. The building is situated on a raised platform overlooking a courtyard covered in green moss and small pools of water. The scene is captured in a cinematic style with soft lighting.

JAPAN

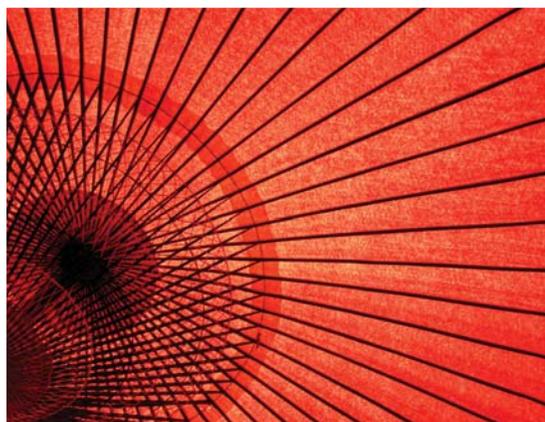
JAPAN

Wandering just a short distance in any direction could lead you to sprawling metropolises, perfectly preserved ecosystems or villages frozen in time. Japan is essentially a microcosm of civilization.

Tokyo is one of the world's mecha-Meccas—a place where cutting-edge technology leaps from the towers in flashes of light. But there is a polite order to this urbanization that is defined by the ancient world that remains. The Osaka Castle is seemingly unfazed by the

neighboring sea of skyscrapers, and is a living testimony of Japan's unique journey into modernization.

There is no better way to feel this synthesis than by riding in a bullet train—known to the Japanese as the *Shinkansen*. The snow-capped mountains fall behind blurs of bamboo as you cruise through the Japanese countryside on the fastest train in the world.



Day 1: Fly to Japan

Meet your group and travel on an overnight flight to Japan.

Day 2: Osaka

Arrive in Osaka: Welcome to Osaka, the industrial and commercial center of western Japan. Depending on your arrival time, you may have free time to settle in and explore the city on your own.

Okonomiyaki dinner: Enjoy these Japanese-style savory pancakes, which can be filled with meat, vegetables or cheese for a customizable treat.

Day 3: Osaka | Hiroshima

Osaka Castle: Take in the grandeur of the gates, moats, turrets, main tower and sword-repelling stone walls of Osaka Castle, commissioned in 1583 by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, one of Japan's "great unifiers."

Travel to Hiroshima: Continue on to Hiroshima, the largest city in the Chugoku region of Honshu, Japan's biggest island.

Day 4: Hiroshima | Kyoto

Miyajima Park: "The Sacred Island," as it's known, is most famous for its "floating" torii, the gate guarding the entrance to the Itsukushima Shrine.

Sightseeing tour of Hiroshima: An expert local guide introduces you to Hiroshima, where the world's first atomic bomb was dropped on August 6, 1945. First visit Peace Memorial Park, a UNESCO Heritage Site that contains the Atomic Bomb Dome. The Peace Memorial Museum here focuses on the devastation of the nuclear attack and its toll on the community, both on that fateful day and in the years that followed.

Bullet train to Kyoto: Reach speeds of 180 miles per hour on your way to Kyoto, the former capital and one-time hub of Japanese civilization.

Day 5: Kyoto

Sightseeing tour of Kyoto: Kyoto's past becomes your present as you explore the city with a local guide. Begin at Nijo Castle, a structure built almost entirely out of Japanese cypress. The castle was built under the orders of the powerful Tokugawa shogun, who would live here during his visits to Kyoto. Your tour concludes at the Kinkaku-ji Temple—also known as the Golden Pavilion.

Day 6: Kyoto

Inari Taisha Shrine: Kyoto's head shrine honoring Inari, the Shinto spirit of agriculture and industry, is full of torii donated by local Japanese businesses hoping to be blessed with worldly success. Follow the various lined footpaths for a beautiful view of Inari Mountain.

➕ **Nara:** Alternatively, opt to join a half-day excursion to Nara, one of Japan's ancient capitals. Visit the Todai-ji Temple and see the Daibutsu, the world's largest bronze Buddha. Then walk through the wooded Nara Park, also known as "Deer Park" thanks to its many four-legged inhabitants. Just outside the park, you will visit Kasuga Shrine, one of the most famous Shinto shrines in the country. Those who choose not to join the excursion will enjoy free time in Kyoto.

Day 7: Hakone

Bullet train to Hakone: Enjoy another ride aboard the *Shinkansen*. Before you know it you will have arrived in Hakone, one of Japan's most popular inland resort cities.

Odawara Castle: Continue on to Odawara and visit the Odawara Castle, originally constructed in 1447. Discover how the castle changed hands time and again over the next five centuries because of war, and was demolished several times for political reasons and by earthquake.

Hakone National Park: A popular getaway for Tokyo residents, Hakone offers hot springs, lakes, historic sites and close-up views of majestic Mount Fuji. Soak in the natural beauty of this remarkable spot on a boat cruise across the sparkling Lake Hakone and a cable car ride up Mount Komagatake.

Spend the night at a ryokan: Enjoy a good night's sleep this evening at a ryokan, a traditional Japanese inn featuring tatami-matted rooms.

Day 8: Kamakura | Tokyo

Kamakura: Stop in the small town of Kamakura for a photo opportunity at the Great Buddha. At a towering 37 feet, it's only the second largest of its kind next to the Buddha in Nara.

Travel to Tokyo: Continue on to the Japanese capital, a city as tied to the future as it is to the past. Tokyo's metropolitan area is the world's most populous, home to an astounding 35 million people.

Day 9: Tokyo

Sightseeing tour of Tokyo: The sights, sounds and smells of Tokyo come at you from all directions, but your licensed local guide will put it all in perspective. Begin with a visit to the Meiji Shinto Shrine and its elaborate wooded Inner Garden. Pass through Harajaku, the hip district popular among the younger city dwellers. Continue on to fashion-forward Shibuya and then Shinjuku, home to the busiest train station in the world.

Imperial Palace: See the palatial residence of the imperial family, with its gigantic stone walls, a spacious plaza and a large garden open to the public.

Asakusa: Spend free time in entertainment-heavy Asakusa. The 7th-century Asakusa Kannon Temple, dedicated to the Goddess of Mercy, is a five-story pagoda surrounded by shops, restaurants, theaters and cinemas.

Tempura dinner: Tempura, one of the better-known Japanese culinary delights, consists of fresh seafood and vegetables dipped in batter and cooked in vegetable and sesame oil. Enjoy this regional delicacy at an included tempura dinner.

Day 10: Tokyo

➕ **Nikko:** Trade the bustle of Tokyo for the natural beauty of Nikko on this half-day excursion. Begin your guided tour with a visit to the five-story pagoda of Toshugo Shrine—be sure to "see no evil, hear no evil and speak no evil" beneath the three monkeys whose poses represent the age-old proverb. Then witness the awesome power of Mother Nature at the 300-foot Kegon Waterfall, and trace your way to the falls' origin—the deep blue waters of Lake Chuzenji. Those who choose not to join will enjoy free time to choose their own path in Tokyo.

Day 11: Depart for Home

Your Tour Director assists with your transfer to the airport, where you'll check in for your return flight home.

INCLUDED ON TOUR:

-  Round-trip flights on major carriers
-  Full-time Tour Director
-  Land transportation
-  Hotels with private bathrooms
-  Light breakfast daily; 7 local dinners
-  **Sightseeing tours**
Hiroshima; Kyoto; Tokyo
-  **Entrances**
Osaka Castle; Itsukushima Shrine; Peace Memorial Museum; Nijo Castle; Gold Pavilion; Inari Taisha Shrine; Odawara Castle; Lake Hakone cruise; Mount Komagatake cable car; Meiji Shinto Shrine; Asakusa Kannon Temple
-  **Optional**
Nara; Nikko

— the easiest ways to —

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