



## 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

**Himeji Castle:** As the largest castle in Japan, this hilltop fortress possesses 83 buildings and dates back to 1333. Notice the design details and magnificent white exterior as you explore the area. Pay close attention to the advanced defensive systems from the feudal period.

**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—and a visit to a textile center where you'll witness a traditional kimono show.

**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.

## Day 6: Kyoto

**Arayashima Bamboo Grove:** Take a walk through the bamboo grove on this guided sightseeing tour. More than just food for pandas, this bamboo made various products, such as baskets, cups and boxes for centuries.

📍 **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. Those who choose not to join the excursion will enjoy free time in Kyoto.

## Day 7: Hakone

**Bullet train to Hakone:** Ride aboard the Shinkansen to 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 (or Hakone ropeway depending on weather conditions).

**Travel to Owakudani:** Spend the evening exploring this volcanic hot spring on your own and feast on a traditional meal including Kuro-tamago (black egg), a local delicacy.

## Day 8: Kamakura | Tokyo

**Kamakura:** Stop in the small town of Kamakura for a photo opportunity at the Great Buddha and Hachimangu Shrine.

**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. Eat lunch in 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.

**Akihabara:** Your Tour Director will guide you around this cultural center and shopping district.

**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.

## Day 10: Tokyo

**Shibuya:** Take a walking tour of this shopping district, known as one of the fashion centers of Japan. You'll also get to meet with Japanese students who will teach you about traditional Japanese crafts. Enjoy your last night in Japan at your own pace during some free time.

## 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.