



CLASSIC

Hidden Japan

12 Nights

Kyoto > Mount Koya > Tokushima > Takamatsu > Kotohira > Matsuyama > Hiroshima > Kyoto

Visit Kyoto's famous UNESCO Heritage sites and Hiroshima's Peace museum

Spend the night in a traditional Buddhist temple lodging on spiritual Mount Koya

Visit Joge, a small rural town for a real peek into Japanese way of life

Watch and participate in a traditional festival dance performance in Tokushima

Explore the verdant Iya Valley, with its rugged gorges and rivers, straddled by vine bridges

Explore Naoshima "Art Island" with an expert local guide

IJT CLASSIC TOURS

Mid-range tours that cover Japan's classic sights or interest-specific itineraries (e.g. hiking, cultural activities, specific regions)

Style Facts

- Three / four star accommodation
- En suite rooms in all locations (except at some unique traditional accommodation)
- Airport meet-and-greet and transfers
- Breakfast every day plus some lunches & dinners
- Selected entrance fees included
- Selected luggage forwarding included
- Solo travellers: a single room is available throughout on payment of a mandatory supplement

Tour Overview

Are you looking for more depth of cultural insight, with experiences that take you away from the tourist trail? This tour gives you both. Although a number of World Heritage sites are incorporated in the trip, you can still feel liberated from the pressure of merely ticking destination boxes, as we steer you towards the road less travelled.

Skipping Tokyo allows more time to discover Japan's intriguing south-central regions, which is why this tour begins and ends in Kyoto: Japan's historic and cultural capital. Here, you'll get to know your group and meet a trainee geisha, as well as exploring the temples and gardens that reveal themselves behind every sliding screen, and around every corner in this incredible city.

A private bus ride south of the former capital brings us to sacred Mount Koya. We offer an overnight stay in a *shukubo* temple lodging, with a meal of vegetarian Buddhist cuisine and the chance to join the monks in their morning prayers. A ferry ride then brings us to Tokushima, on Shikoku Island, where you'll be able to witness and participate (if you dare!) in the colourful and vibrant Awa Odori dance festival. Then take in the beautiful views from atop Mount Bizan, and catch a traditional *Bunraku* puppet show, where you can even meet the master puppeteers.

Takamatsu boasts a top-class Japanese garden and is the gateway to Naoshima Island and its Art House Projects, which you will uncover with an expert local guide. We then head inland to Kotohira, home to the island's most famous shrine, Konpira-san, located atop 1,368 steps. Our stay here is in a wonderful *ryokan* inn, complete with outdoor hot spring baths. This is a great base from which to explore the beautiful Iya Valley region, steeped in samurai history and raw natural beauty. Our last stop on Shikoku Island is in Matsuyama, home to a magnificent original samurai castle and the oldest bathhouse in Japan.

We then take a ferry back to the main island of Honshu to visit the sobering Peace Memorial Museum and inspiring Peace Park in Hiroshima. The following day we will take a trip out to the "floating" *torii* gate on Miyajima Island, inhabited by friendly *shika* deer.

Finally, before whizzing back to Kyoto by bullet train we will visit the historic town of Joge for a day of cultural activities with the locals.



Among the famous sights and less-frequented destinations, your full-time tour leader will be ever-present and prove to be worth their weight in gold, as they explain the finer points of local custom in these fascinating and contrasting locations.

Day by day

Many of our customers choose to arrive a day or two early to get over jet-lag and get the most out of the tour. Whatever the case, we will be happy to make arrangements to suit your needs

Day 1 Kyoto (D)

Welcome to Japan! Upon arrival at one of Osaka's airports, Itami or Kansai International, you will be met by our representative and take a private car transfer to your hotel in Kyoto. Your tour leader will be waiting to greet you in the lobby, and this evening you'll convene with your group at a welcome meeting before you all

What's included

- ✔ Your comprehensive InsideJapan Info-Pack
- ✔ Airport transfers by private car and driver
- ✔ 12 nights' accommodation
- ✔ Breakfast every day, four lunches and six evening meals
- ✔ Full-time services of your InsideJapan tour leader
- ✔ All transport between destinations
- ✔ Selected entrance fees & local transport in Kyoto
- ✔ Afternoon tea with a maiko in Kyoto
- ✔ Full-day private guide in Mount Koya, including lunch & entrance fees
- ✔ Tickets to Awa Odori Kaikan Museum, Mount Bizan Ropeway, Awa Jurobe Yashiki Puppet Theatre in Tokushima & Ritsurin Gardens in Takamatsu
- ✔ Iya Valley entrance fees & lunch
- ✔ Full-day private guide service in Naoshima
- ✔ Hiroshima Peace Museum & Park
- ✔ Okonomiyaki dinner in Hiroshima
- ✔ Visit to Miyajima Island including entrance fees
- ✔ Luggage forwarding from Kyoto to Tokushima and from Kotohira to Hiroshima
- ✔ Shared portable Wi-Fi access throughout trip

NOT Included

- ✘ International flights
- ✘ Any local transport (subways, taxis, buses) unless covered by the included transport passes
- ✘ Any entrances fees (including those for museums, temples & shrines) unless otherwise specified
- ✘ Baggage handling and luggage forwarding unless otherwise specified - you will be expected to carry your own luggage

Sample Accommodation

Please note that accommodation is subject to change. Final details of the accommodation will be included in your Info-Pack, which will be sent out approximately four weeks before departure. If you'd like to know more, please speak to your travel consultant.

Royal Park Kyoto Sanjo, Kyoto

The Royal Park Hotel is a modern, stylish hotel in a great location in central Kyoto.

Rooms are Western-style, en suite and generally quite generously sized. The hotel has its own restaurant (with meals made using seasonal produce), bar and bakery-café as well as a useful concierge service. All rooms also feature free Wi-Fi internet and there is a coin laundry and massage service should you have need of either. The hotel is conveniently located just a short walk from both City Hall (Shiyakusho) Station and Sanjo Station (about 15 minutes by taxi from JR Kyoto Station), making this a great base for a very comfortable and convenient stay in Kyoto.

Renge-in Shukubo, Mount Koya

Renge-in is a traditional temple on Mount Koya dedicated to Shingon Buddhism. The temple has a long history and connections to the Tokugawa clan who ruled Japan from 1603 to 1867. As befits a place dedicated to meditation, the temple's lodgings are simple and classic Japanese style with *tatami* mat floors and *futon* mattresses to sleep on. Bathing facilities are shared but all rooms have their own toilet. Dinner and breakfast are included in your stay at Renge-in so you can look forward to sampling *shojin-ryori* (Buddhist cuisine) - strictly vegetarian home cooking. Guests are welcome to attend morning devotional exercises along with the monks. The ceremony will of course be in Japanese, but it is a truly unique and atmospheric experience nonetheless – not to be missed.

Hotel Sunroute, Tokushima

Hotel Sunroute is a great base for your time in Tokushima. Rooms are simply decorated, with a television, en suite bathroom, toiletries, a fridge and a hairdryer. On the top floor of the hotel are communal hot spring baths with great views across the city. There is a convenience store and coin-operated laundry facilities within the hotel should you need them, along with a Japanese and Chinese restaurant. Wi-Fi is available throughout.

Sunroute is a Japanese hotel chain with numerous properties across the country. With friendly service, comfortable rooms and excellent locations (all within walking distance of a main train station), the Sunroute is a great moderate accommodation option.

JR Clement Hotel, Takamatsu

The Clement is a superior hotel located near the waterfront in the attractive harbour town of Takamatsu.

The hotel enjoys great views over the sea and town. Rooms are well-sized and there is a choice of restaurants, including a good bakery. Wired internet is available in the rooms and rental laptops are also available. Takamatsu's stunning Ritsurin Gardens are just a short distance away and there are ferries on your doorstep for an easy day trip to Naoshima "Art Island".

Sakura No Sho, Kotohira

The Sakura no Sho is a modern hotel with traditional Japanese rooms and excellent service.

Located at the foot of the pilgrims' steps to Konpira-san shrine, this is certainly the best place in town to relax, with inviting indoor and outdoor hot spring baths. The food at the Sakura no Sho is first class, with an array of Japanese- and Western-style dishes available to suit all tastes.

Candeo Matsuyama, Matsuyama

Candeo Matsuyama Okaido is a smart Western hotel located in a prime spot in Matsuyama city, just across the road from the tram stop and with the shopping and dining area on your doorstep. Rooms are compact but comfortable and modern. A real highlight is the top-floor Sky Spa, with indoor and open-air hot spring baths offering views out towards Matsuyama Castle, ideal for relaxing after a busy day of sightseeing.

The following 2025 departures will stay at Koubaitei instead: 20 Mar, 03 Apr, 10 Apr, 08 May, 21 Aug, 28 Aug

Intergate Hotel, Hiroshima

Hotel Intergate Hiroshima combines comfort with cultural immersion in the heart of the city, just a 5-minute walk from Hatchobori Station. Its 233 guest rooms feature premium Simmons mattresses and original loungewear to ensure a restful night's sleep.

The top-floor Intergate Lounge offers panoramic views of the city and surrounding mountains, serving specialty coffee, cocktails, and showcasing local books and art. Guests can also unwind in the communal baths, which provide a space to relax after a day of exploration.

Important Tour Information

Fitness

Even when not using public transport, sightseeing in Japan often involves walking between sights, climbing up steps in temples and being 'on the go' for much of the day. To enjoy any of our Small Group Tours you should be of moderate fitness, able to walk and climb stairs without difficulty and able to maintain a pace that is comfortable for the majority of the group.

Dietary Requirements

There are a number of meals included on all our tours. Please let us know in advance if you have any special dietary requirements and we will try to ensure that included meals meet these needs.

In addition, please note that dietary requirements (such as vegetarianism, gluten-free diets and even some allergies) are very uncommon in Japan so meals for those with specific requirements may be simpler and less varied.

On this tour you'll stay at a number of Japanese style accommodation, you will be served a traditional dinner, as well as a Japanese breakfast in the morning.

En suite / shared facilities

Culturally, communal bathing is common practice in Japan. Please note that in some traditional accommodations fully private en suite facilities may not be available. We will do our best to secure rooms on tour with private toilet and sink however some accommodations are not able to offer private bathing facilities. Shared facilities (when included) will always be separated by gender.

Policy on single rooms

Single rooms are guaranteed at all night stops on this tour through payment of a mandatory single supplement.

Double rooms

Please note that in Japan, twin rooms are very much the norm, and there are far fewer double rooms available. Please understand that we will not be able to offer a double in every hotel on this tour.

A double grade does not guarantee double rooms throughout.

Your tour leader

Our tours are led on the ground by a fluent English speaker, now a resident of Japan and able to speak Japanese. They are there to ensure that you get the most out of your trip and that the whole adventure goes smoothly. The tour leader travels with the group and stays at the same hotels and *ryokan*, so please feel free to ask for help or advice at any time.

Your tour leader is not a guide so may not know every historical detail of every shrine, temple or palace, yet they are available pretty much all day every day and will even be happy to accompany tour members out at night on occasion!

Please note that the tour leader reserves the right to deny participation in an activity if they feel that it is in the safety or best interest of you and/or any other members of the group. Similarly, dangerous weather conditions may lead to cancellation of such an activity.

Luggage

We highly recommend that to make your stay more enjoyable you pack reasonably light. Large suitcases will be an inconvenience to you as you will have to carry your bags for short distances at times and some stations do not have escalators or elevators/lifts.

For ease of transit, we will be forwarding your luggage on two occasions and you will be without your main bag for 1 night on Mount Koya and 1 night in Matsuyama.

You will need a small overnight bag (e.g. backpack) for use when we forward our main bags to the next location.

Transport on tour

Please note that most transfers are by public transport making use of Japan's first-rate transport network. This tour uses a mixture of trains, taxis, trams, and ferries as well as private coaches for some transfers and sightseeing.

International Flights

This tour starts and finishes in Kyoto for arrivals and departures at Osaka, Kansai or Itami airports. Please note that the included meet-and-greet and airport transfer to the first hotel is ONLY available from these two airports.

Check-in

Upon arrival you will probably be tired after a long international flight. Please note that rooms at the Kyoto hotel are only available **from 3pm**.

Hotels in Japan operate strict check-in policies. If you have an early arrival you can either book an extra night for any-time check-in, or the hotel will be happy to securely store your luggage for you whilst you go for a drink or explore the local area.

We recommend booking at least one extra night to check in and relax before the tour begins.

