



CLASSIC

HYPERJAPAN's J-Pop & Go!

10 Nights

Tokyo > Hakone > Kyoto > Hiroshima > Osaka > Tokyo



Enter the imagination of Japan's finest animator at the Studio Ghibli Museum

Take an evening walking tour of Kyoto's Gion geisha district

Take a boat ride across Lake Ashi in the shadow of Mount Fuji

Get in touch with your spiritual side with a session of *zazen* meditation in Kyoto

Enjoy iconic *okonomiyaki* in Hiroshima

Attend the AnimeJapan convention in Tokyo (March departure only)

Tour Overview

HYPERJAPAN is the UK's biggest celebration of Japanese pop culture and food, attracting an ever-increasing throng of guests to its convention in London every year. Now, HYPERJAPAN has collaborated with InsideJapan Tours to create the ultimate J-culture adventure: J-Pop & Go!

Juxtaposing colourful cafés, video game arcades, and *kawaii* (cute) street fashions with ancient temples, exquisite gardens and spectacular natural scenery; our J-Pop & Go! trip is the perfect immersion into both kitschy pop culture and traditional Japan.

Covering five incredible destinations in ten nights, this fast-paced tour will introduce you to some of Japan's most important pop culture haunts, as well as some of its most venerated historical sites. The ultimate aim is to give you an insight into how the modern and the traditional are interwoven in today's society.

In Tokyo you'll dive head first into the world of Hayao Miyazaki at the Studio Ghibli Museum. On top of this, our March departure will include tickets for the annual AnimeJapan event.

As you speed west toward Kyoto, Japan's capital of culture and history, you'll stop off for one night in Hakone – an area in the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park, famed for its hot spring baths, beautiful traditional inns and spectacular views of Mount Fuji. Then, with two nights in Kyoto, you'll have a chance to sample some more traditional experiences: try *zazen* meditation at a Zen temple, spot geisha in the Gion district and marvel at one of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Further west still, a sobering visit to Hiroshima's Peace Park and Museum, and the stunning Miyajima Island will be followed by a night in vibrant Osaka, where you'll try your hand at *tatedo* (sword fighting as practiced in the movies!) and visit the electric areas of Shinsaibashi and Dotonbori. Then speed back to Tokyo on the famous bullet train for your final nights in Japan.



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 Tokyo (D)

Welcome to Japan! On arrival into Tokyo you will be met by your driver and travel, by shared shuttle, to your hotel in the Ikebukuro district, where you'll be met by your tour leader. There is plenty to keep you stimulated in this pulsating shopping and entertainment district of Tokyo. Later this evening you convene with your tour leader and the rest of the group for a welcome meeting. Then head out together for an included welcome meal.

Day 2 Tokyo (B, L)

This morning involves an extensive walking tour of the city. Your tour leader will introduce you to the wacky street fashions of Harajuku, take you for

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-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
- Solo travellers: a single room is available throughout on payment of a mandatory supplement

a stroll through the woods to Meiji Shrine, show you the famous scramble crossing at Shibuya. For those travelling at other times of year, visits to the Pokémon Center Mega Tokyo and Sunshine City Sky Circus Observatory will be included instead.

Day 3 Tokyo (B)

Today your tour leader will show you different areas of Tokyo, so that you get to see all sides of this vast and varied city. It may begin early with a visit to Tsukiji Fish Market where we recommend that you try the sushi, as you will not come by it fresher than this!

Then onto the tranquility of Hamarikyu Gardens before taking the monorail across the bay to the hyper-modern, glittering neon island of Odaiba – stopping to admire the giant animated Ghibli clock at Shiodome on the way. Following this, your tour leader will be heading towards Akihabara “electric town”, Tokyo’s mecca for geek culture.

After enjoying an energetic taiko drumming class in Akihabara, you’ll have the afternoon at leisure. If you fancy something different, we recommend a visit to the towering Skytree for amazing views across the city, or the futuristic National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation (called the Miraikan).

Day 4 Hakone (B)

Leaving the city behind, on day four you’ll travel out of Tokyo by bullet train, then on by bus to nearby Hakone – a beautiful area of forests, volcanoes and lakes just a stone’s throw from Mount Fuji. Anime buffs will know that Hakone is also the location of Tokyo-3 in the post-apocalyptic Japan of the popular *Neon Genesis Evangelion* series – and you’ll have a chance to visit the Evangelion gift shop whilst you are here.

During your stay in Hakone you’ll take a boat ride across the beautiful Lake Ashi and hopefully enjoy view of Mount Fuji from the Komagatake Ropeway that takes you up the mountainside to explore the area.

Tonight, you’ll stay at a charming traditional *ryokan* inn with tatami mat floors, futon mattresses and some lovely indoor and outdoor hot spring baths. Hot spring bathing is an integral and very enjoyable part of Japanese culture, so make sure you take advantage of these! An optional dinner will be on offer in one of the nearby village restaurants.

Day 5 Kyoto (B)

Today, it’s back on the bus for a short stretch before you rocket across Japan’s largest island of Honshu at speeds of up to 320 kph (200 mph), arriving in Kyoto, the cultural jewel in Japan’s crown. There will be plenty of time to soak up the history and culture as your tour leader guides you through back streets, past temples and shrines to the traditional Gion geisha district of the city. In the early evening you will take a walking tour with a local expert - a chance to spot a geisha hurrying between appointments! A wealth of great restaurant choices await this evening.

Day 6 Kyoto (B)

On day six you will continue your discovery of Japan’s traditional side with a session of *zazen* meditation at Ryosoku-in Temple. Then you’ll be taken around Kyoto by your tour leader who will put together a specific itinerary to show you some of the city’s hidden gems based on the group’s

interest, the season and the weather. Of course, if you would like to break away from the group, there are a variety of great options available. We recommend a lesson in *yuzen* dyeing, a kimono show at the Nishijin textile centre, or an afternoon at the Toei Movie Park – where you can dress up as a historical character and wander authentic film sets. There is also a great manga museum for those who would like to learn about the history of Japan’s beloved comic book form.

Day 7 Hiroshima (B, D)

This morning, after a two-hour bullet train ride to Hiroshima, you will make the fifteen-minute ferry journey to Miyajima – a tiny island with fantastic natural beauty, a friendly resident population of deer, and a show-stopping view across the bay from Itsukushima Shrine.

Returning to Hiroshima later in the day, you’ll sample the local speciality, *okonomiyaki*: a savoury pancake made from noodles and vegetables, fried on a hotplate in the middle of your table.

Day 8 Osaka (B)

This morning you’ll make a visit to Hiroshima’s Peace Park and Museum, which provides a haunting reminder of the atrocities of World War II – as well as delivering a powerful message of peace for future generations.

Later, you will take the train to Osaka, where you will have the opportunity to participate in a *tatedo* stage-fighting workshop, where you’ll learn how to wield a samurai sword, like they do in films. The locals love their food and drink too, so be sure to enjoy the nightlife in this big, bold city.

Day 9 Tokyo (B)

This morning you’ll have a chance to see some more of Osaka – one of Japan’s most exciting and vibrant cities. You will be visiting Dotonbori, the *takoyaki* (octopus & batter ball) paradise, before heading over to Doguyasuji – or “cooking tools street” (more interesting than it sounds!).

Other options for the day are a visit to Universal Studios Japan or Osaka Castle, before you shoot back to Tokyo on the bullet train. Whatever you do, don’t forget to try some of Osaka’s famous street food!

If you are travelling on the March departure, you will take an early train up to Tokyo where you will attend AnimeJapan, the biggest convention of its kind.

Day 10 Tokyo (B, D)

Today you’ll have a final full day to enjoy the many delights of Japan’s capital city. Tickets to the fabulous Studio Ghibli Museum, home to the imaginative heights of director Hayao Miyazaki, are included – definitely a must for any fan of anime.

This evening you will say goodbye to Japan and your tour group with a final meal together.

Day 11 Tour ends (B)

Finally, it’s time to say *sayonara* to Japan as you catch the shared shuttle bus to Narita or Haneda Airport for your flight home. Have a safe journey home!

Our tours aim to be as flexible as possible, so there is no set-in-stone itinerary for each day. You will be provided on the ground with Day-by-Day sheets and the tour leader will outline what they are going to do each day in detail. If you would like to break away from the group and do something different, they will be available to offer advice, and help you plan your day.

What's included

- ✓ Your comprehensive InsideJapan Info-Pack
- ✓ 10 nights' accommodation
- ✓ Breakfast every day, one lunch and three evening meals
- ✓ Full-time services of your InsideJapan tour leader
- ✓ All transport between destinations: Transport passes in Hakone, Kyoto and Miyajima, and an IC transport card with 4,500 yen credit for city transport
- ✓ Tickets to Tokyo's Anime Japan event (March departure only)
- ✓ Entrance to Hamarikyu Gardens in Tokyo
- ✓ Cable car and boat ride across Lake Ashi in Hakone
- ✓ Evening walking tour of Kyoto's Gion geisha district
- ✓ Zazen meditation session at Ryosoku-in Temple
- ✓ Visit to Hiroshima's Peace Park and Museum
- ✓ Tatedo swordplay experience in Osaka
- ✓ Tickets to the Studio Ghibli Museum
- ✓ Shared portable Wi-Fi access throughout trip
- ✓ Luggage forwarding from Tokyo to Kyoto and from Hiroshima to Tokyo
- ✓ Arrival and departure transfers by shared shuttle bus

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.

The B Ikebukuro, Tokyo

The B Hotel in Ikebukuro combines modern and stylish décor in this well-located hotel providing for a comfortable stay in one of Tokyo's most exciting districts. The rooms are western style and have en suite bathrooms and there is a very good Pizza restaurant on the second floor. The hotel has free WiFi throughout.

Fuji Hakone Guesthouse, Hakone

The Fuji-Hakone Guest House is a simple Japanese-style, family-run accommodation with friendly, English-speaking staff. Free Wi-Fi is available.

Established in 1984, the guesthouse is an excellent budget accommodation located in Hakone - the perfect base for your exploration of the beautiful national park area surrounding Mount Fuji. Rooms are simple but comfortable, and designed in traditional Japanese style, with *shoji* paper screens and *futon* mattresses laid out on *tatami*-mat floors. They do not have attached bathroom facilities or toilets.

The guesthouse's prime feature is its indoor and outdoor *onsen* baths, fed by natural volcanic hot spring water. Bathing facilities at the guesthouse are shared, (as is the norm in Japanese-style inns), but you can book the baths for private use.

Royal Park Canvas Kyoto Nijo, Kyoto

Located in the underappreciated Nijo district, the Royal Park Canvas is a fashionable base for kicking back in Kyoto. Complimentary specialty coffee is served in the lounge throughout the day, and the local area is teeming with cafes and restaurants just waiting to be explored. Also nearby is the Sanjo-kai shopping arcade, which is chock-a-block with small shops, supermarkets, gelato shops, and other gems.

Guest rooms are compact, comfortable and make thoughtful use of colours to accent the features of the room; like paint on a canvas. Among the highlights of the hotel is its 'Instagrammable' lobby and the large gender segregated public baths which guests can enjoy at no extra cost.

In the morning you'll be able to kick start your day with a generous buffet of Japanese and western dishes alongside bread and pastries from Kyoto's renowned Shinshindo bakery, founded in 1923.

Intergate Hotel, Hiroshima

This modern, stylish mid-range hotel is a great choice for your stay in Hiroshima. The cosy rooms have attractive wooden accents and contemporary colour palette, and come with Wi-Fi access, Simmons mattresses, and loungewear. After a day of sightseeing or travelling you might like to take advantage of the communal indoor baths (separated by gender) or relax in the Intergate Lounge where snacks and drinks are available throughout the day.

The breakfast buffet has a wide range of healthy Japanese and Western dishes including a regional seasonal menu. There isn't an on-site restaurant open for lunch or dinner, but you're spoilt for choice with where to eat in Hiroshima.

Vista Osaka Namba, Osaka

We're only in Osaka for one night, which is why we've chosen a hotel located close the vibrant 'Dotonbori' food and shopping street.

As it's a fairly new hotel, the rooms are well-designed and comfortable and all are ensuite.

Sunroute Plaza Shinjuku, Tokyo

The Shinjuku Sunroute Plaza is a modern hotel located slap-bang in the centre of Tokyo, in the buzzing Shinjuku district, ideally located to serve as a base for exploring Tokyo. Not only are there endless shopping, dining, drinking and entertainment options within a few minutes' walk of your front door, but you are just two minutes' walk from Shinjuku Station - the world's busiest, with links to all Tokyo's districts and beyond. An excellent buffet breakfast is on offer to guests.

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 be staying in a Japanese style accommodation, where 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. Shared facilities (when included) will always be separated by gender.

Policy on single rooms

There is a single supplement for this tour. Single travellers will have a single room at all of the western style hotels. However you will be asked to share with another single traveller of the same sex at the Japanese style stays (1 night).

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 baggage for 1 night in Hakone and 1 night in Osaka.

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, public buses and boats, as well as private coaches for some transfers and sightseeing.

International Flights

This tour starts and finishes in Tokyo for arrivals and departures at Tokyo Narita Airport or Tokyo Haneda Airport. 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 Tokyo 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.

The tour leader will be staying at the first hotel for two nights before the tour starts so they will be available for advice if you choose to book pre tour nights. We recommend booking at least one extra night to check in and relax before the tour begins.

