



SUPERIOR

# Japan Enchantment

14 Nights

Tokyo &gt; Nikko &gt; Karuizawa &gt; Nagano &gt; Kanazawa &gt; Kyoto &gt; Hakone &gt; Tokyo

Stroll around Kyoto's Gion district followed by an exclusive audience with a trainee geisha

See flying squirrels in their natural habitat in rural Karuizawa

Enjoy a *soba* noodle-making class in one of Japan's finest mountain resorts

Discover the cultural centres and World Heritage Sites of Tokyo, Nikko, Karuizawa, Kanazawa and Kyoto

See the famous onsen-bathing "snow monkeys" of Yudanaka

Balance activity and relaxation in luxury surroundings in verdant Fuji- Hakone-Izu National Park

## IJT SUPERIOR TOURS

High-quality accommodation, several meals & entrance fees included, in-depth cultural immersion

### Style Facts

- Local professional guides & experts in key destinations
- Some private minibus transfers where beneficial
- Four to five-star accommodation
- En suite rooms in all locations
- Airport meet-and-greet and transfers
- Breakfast every day plus several lunches and dinners
- Most entrance fees included
- Selected luggage forwarding included
- Solo travellers: a single room is available throughout on payment of a mandatory supplement

## Tour Overview

Japan Enchantment is the perfect introduction to a fascinating culture often considered impenetrable by the outside world.

You'll begin and end the trip in Tokyo, icon of high modernity and a city of bewildering size and scope. Your first dinner at a local restaurant will provide you with a relaxed yet invaluable introduction to Japanese food and etiquette and is the perfect way to get to know your tour leader and group.

In thickly forested Nikko you'll be privy to the most lavish religious architecture in all of Japan, whilst in Karuizawa, you'll take a *soba* noodle-making class in a traditional rural Japanese restaurant. You won't fail to appreciate the pristine mountain air and leafy surroundings of your hotel, in one of the country's most exclusive resorts.

The cities of Kanazawa and Nagano offer yet more remarkable variety. Nestled beneath the Japanese Alps, Nagano is your gateway to the famous *onsen*-bathing snow monkeys of Yudanaka. Kanazawa offers beautifully preserved samurai residential districts, one of the very best Japanese gardens and a plethora of traditional craft workshops.

Kyoto is, for many, Japan's greatest city - imperial capital for over a thousand years and packed with architectural and cultural treasures. One highlight of your stay here is definitely your private audience with a *maiko* (trainee geisha). Such opportunities are rarely available to foreigners, giving you an exclusive window into this mysterious and captivating profession.

Complementing the city stays, you'll also get a tantalising taste of rural Japan. In the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park you'll cruise across Lake Ashi under the watchful gaze of Mount Fuji, and explore the outstanding Hakone Open-Air Museum, where you can soak and relax the feet in volcanic hot spring baths after a day exploring majestic art sculptures.



## 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)

Today you will touch down in Tokyo, Japan's capital and the most populous city in the world. On arrival, you'll be met by your driver and make your way by private car to the hotel in the fashionable Ginza district, where our IJT tour leader will be waiting to welcome you in the lobby. This evening, you will join the group for an orientation meeting before heading out to one of the area's excellent restaurants for a first-night meal – a great introduction to Japanese food and dining etiquette.

### Day 2 Tokyo (B)

On day two, your tour leader will take you around the famous landmarks and lesser-known spots you'll be visiting today. Included is a boat ride on the Sumida River, concluding with a leisurely stroll in the lovely Hamarikyu Gardens – the grounds of a former residence of successive Tokugawa Shoguns, and a real oasis amongst the skyscrapers.

You will then head to the west side of the capital, where an expert guide will introduce you to Harajuku, where the extensive precincts of Imperial Meiji Shrine are to be found just across the tracks from the latest in Japanese youth fashion district. This area is a classic example of the juxtaposition of traditional and modern in Tokyo.

The tour will end in the late afternoon, when you will have the choice of either heading back to the hotel, or further immersing yourself in the lively districts of west Tokyo. Dinner is not included tonight, but with hundreds of restaurant options around your hotel you certainly won't go hungry. If unsure, ask your tour leader for ideas!

### Day 3 Nikko (B, D)

Today you will explore the dazzling temples and shrines of Nikko, the final resting place of Japan's most famous *shogun*, Tokugawa Ieyasu. Ieyasu was the founder of the Tokugawa shogunate (military government), which ruled Japan from 1600 until the Meiji Restoration in 1868. Nikko, the site of his mausoleum, is listed as a World Heritage Site and known throughout Japan for its dazzlingly ornate architecture – quite different from the austere, minimalist style more typical of Japanese design.

To start the day you'll make the relatively short journey from the capital by private coach to Nikko, where you will discover the renowned temple and shrine complex in its enchanting cedar forest setting. A local guide will be on hand to introduce you to some of the history of the area. Don't forget to look out for the famous "three wise monkeys" warning all comers to "see no evil, speak no evil, hear no evil"!

### Day 4 Karuizawa (B, D)

After an elaborate Japanese-style breakfast at your *ryokan*, you'll head out with your tour leader on a private coach for a half day of exploration.

Our morning destination will be Nikko National Park, home to several spectacular waterfalls, lakes and beautiful forests. Our first stop will be to take the cable car up to Akechi-daira peak, high above Chuzen-ji Lake, for spectacular panoramic views and photo opportunities. A short coach ride then takes us on to the lakeside area itself, and the 97-metre high Kegon Waterfall.

Around lunchtime, we will continue our three-hour journey to Karuizawa, an exclusive resort town famous as a holiday retreat for the well-heeled – including the Japanese Imperial Family.

Arrival at the hotel will be in the late afternoon before meeting some of Karuizawa's nocturnal inhabitants when joining a guided flying squirrel watching tour. The day will be round off with an included high-quality evening meal at the hotel.

### Day 5 Karuizawa (B, L, D)

Today you will be joined by another knowledgeable and friendly local guide, as you visit some of Karuizawa's varied attractions - including the historical Shaw Memorial Church.

Also included today will be a lesson in soba noodle-making, a speciality of the region. You will, of course, have the chance to eat the fruit of your labours for lunch! There should be time for a spot of shopping heading out for another included dinner, this time at a local restaurant.

### Day 6 Nagano (B)

Today you will make the short bullet train journey from Karuizawa to Nagano, an alpine city famous both as the home of Zenko-ji, arguably Japan's most sacred temple, and as the host city of the 1998 Winter Olympics. You will then head to Yudanaka, a tiny spa town that has become famous all over the world for its hot spring-bathing "snow monkeys". Tickets are included to the monkey reserve, which is reached by a very pleasant, flat forest trail. Our primate cousins are sure to fascinate you, as they keep warm in their *onsen* bath, feed, groom, play and squabble!

En route back, we visit Hokusai Gallery in Obuse before our return to Nagano this evening. We recommend taking a leaf out of the monkeys' book by heading to the nearby bathhouse for a relaxing outdoor soak before an optional dinner in town.

### Day 7 Kanazawa (B)

This morning you will have the chance to enjoy a slow breakfast or explore Zenko-ji Temple before leaving Nagano. You could even rise early to join the monks at their morning prayer ceremony, at which guests are invited to search for the "key to paradise" in a pitch-dark passage underneath the main hall of the temple. It's said that grasping the key is equivalent to shaking hands with Buddha, and those who find it will find their way to Buddhist paradise!

At lunchtime, you will leave Nagano and take the pleasant train rides to Kanazawa on the Japan Sea Coast. Like Kyoto, Kanazawa was spared bombing during World War II thanks to its impressive collection of religious sites and important cultural assets.

Today it is therefore one of Japan's best-preserved historical cities. The region is renowned for its great seafood, so why not join your tour leader for a fabulous sushi or fish meal tonight?

### Day 8 Kanazawa (B, L)

You will be joined by a local guide, as well as your tour leader, for an extensive tour of Kanazawa's best sights. This is sure to include the wood-panelled geisha district of Higashi Chaya, the preserved houses of the samurai quarter, a traditional gold leaf workshop and, of course, Kanazawa's top attraction, Kenrokuen. This sublime landscape garden is lauded as one of Japan's top three, so we will ensure you have sufficient time to appreciate its full beauty.

Additionally, if you have the energy after a busy tour, you might wish to visit the local market or the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art.

### Day 9 Kyoto (B, D)

If Tokyo is Japan's beacon of modernity, Kyoto is its repository of history. Serving as imperial capital for over a thousand years, Kyoto is home to a staggering 17 World Heritage Sites and a litany of ancient shrines, temples and gardens. After a wonderful express train ride along the shores of Lake Biwa, we will arrive in Kyoto with time to start exploring some of these attractions. Nishiki Food Market and the incredible Kyoto station complex are two alternative options that are not to be missed!

Later in the day you'll join your tour leader and head to Gion, the heart of Japanese geisha culture. Here you'll have the chance to take part in a traditional tea ceremony, performed by a genuine Gion *maiko* (trainee geisha). A delicious evening meal at one of Kyoto's many outstanding restaurants will be included tonight.

### Day 10 Kyoto (B)

On day ten you will be joined by a local Kyoto expert and board a private coach to visit some of Kyoto's most famous sights: wander through the Arashiyama district, the impressive rock Garden at Ryoanji, the opulent Golden Pavillion of Kinkakuji, or alternatively the Ginkakuji. Kyoto has so much to offer that it would take you years to see it all, but with your local guide on hand you'll certainly see a great selection of famous sites and lesser-known locations.

### Day 11 Kyoto (B)

On day 11 you will have the choice to either continue exploring Kyoto, or head out of the city on an excursion to one of the many exciting destinations within easy reach by rail. Your tour leader will be available for suggestions and advice – perhaps the ancient capital of Nara, with its giant Buddha and friendly deer or the infamous city of Hiroshima and nearby Miyajima island, home to the iconic Itsukushima Shrine. Your tour leader will be happy to help you make arrangements for the day.

### Day 12 Hakone (B, D)

Today you will jump aboard the bullet train and speed easterly to Hakone on the Tokaido line, following the ancient samurai highway linking old Tokyo (Edo) to the imperial capital of Kyoto. A private coach transfer will then take us to the heart of the Hakone area, located within the beautiful Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park, just a stone's throw from Tokyo.

This afternoon we will provide you with tickets for the outstanding Hakone Open-Air Museum, where you'll have the chance to wander amongst masterpieces by Moore, Rodin and many more, set against a stunning mountainous backdrop. You are sure to love the hospitality of tonight's top-grade hotel, where your included evening meal will be meticulously prepared and served in a dining room with lovely ambience and decor.

### Day 13 Hakone (B)

Today you'll have a full day to enjoy everything that Hakone has to offer, including a remarkably synchronised network of varied transportation. We will board a funicular, then cable car to the volcanic area known as Owakudani, famed for its views of Mount Fuji and its black eggs cooked in hot spring water.

If the weather is favourable, you will be treated to truly spectacular views of Japan's most famous mountain. A cruise across Lake Ashi will drop us off in Hakone town, where we can learn about the ancient samurai Tokaido Trail, and shop for gifts and souvenirs, such as the beautiful marquetry crafts that Hakone is renowned for. We will be back in time for you to enjoy the comforts of our wonderful hotel, where a natural hot spring bath awaits you.

#### Day 14 Tokyo (B, D)

After a relaxed final morning in the verdant tranquility of Hakone, we head into the pumping heart of Tokyo's shopping and entertainment scene, Shinjuku. You might like to use this time in the capital to get some last-minute shopping done at one of the district's many department stores, or stroll the beautiful Shinjuku Gyoen Park. Whatever you choose to do, Tokyo will inevitably keep you entertained during your final afternoon of the tour.

This evening, you'll join your tour leader and group for an included final-night meal at one of the city's superb restaurants – the perfect way to toast the end of your trip in style.

#### Day 15 Tokyo (B)

On your final morning it's time to say sayonara to Japan as you return to the airport by private car in time for your flight home, or to continue with your onward journey. Happy travels!

*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 InsideJapan Info-Pack
- ✓ Full-time services of your InsideJapan tour leader
- ✓ 14 nights' accommodation
- ✓ Breakfast every day, two lunches and seven evening meals
- ✓ Arrival and departure airport transfers by private car
- ✓ IC transport card with 2,500 yen credit for city transport
- ✓ Two-day Hakone Free Pass for transport in the Hakone region
- ✓ All transport between destinations in Japan
- ✓ Sumida River cruise and entrance at Hamarikyu Gardens in Tokyo
- ✓ Half-day private guide service in Tokyo including travel by private coach
- ✓ Full-day private guide service in Nikko & Karuizawa including entrance fees and travel by private coach.
- ✓ Flying squirrel watching tour and *soba* noodle-making lesson in Karuizawa
- ✓ Full-day private guide service in Kanazawa including entrance fees
- ✓ Private transfer & entrance to the Jigokudani monkey park in Yudanaka
- ✓ Private afternoon tea with a *maiko*, in Kyoto
- ✓ Full-day private guide service in Kyoto including travel by private coach
- ✓ Tickets to Hakone Open-Air Museum
- ✓ Shared portable Wi-Fi access throughout trip
- ✓ Luggage forwarding from Karuizawa to Kanazawa and from Kyoto to Tokyo

#### NOT Included

- ✗ International flights
- ✗ Any local transport (subways, taxis, buses) unless covered by the included transport passes
- ✗ Entrance fees (including those for temples, shrines and museums) unless otherwise specified
- ✗ Baggage handling and luggage forwarding unless otherwise specified

## 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.*

#### Gate Hotel Tokyo, Tokyo

The Gate Tokyo is a superior design hotel in Ginza, the capital's upmarket shopping district. Guest rooms are stylishly decorated and have Simmons mattresses, raindance showers and Nespresso coffee machines. The ground floor restaurant and lobby is in a large leafy atrium, while the best place to relax in the evening is the rooftop terrace - a rarity in Tokyo. The hotel is a 3-minute walk from Yurakucho Station, where you'll also find some of the best casual dining and ramen joints under the railway tracks.

#### Kanaya Hotel, Nikko

Opened in 1873 during the reign of the Emperor Meiji, The Kanaya is one of Japan's classic old western style hotels and is one of the longest continuously operating hotels in the country. The main buildings are wonderful wood constructions and evoke the atmosphere of a bygone age. The location close to the iconic Shinkyo Bridge and just across the river from the majestic Toshogu Shrine make it the perfect base for your time in Nikko.

#### Karuizawa Marriott, Karuizawa

The Karuizawa Marriott is a modern, deluxe grade hotel located in the quiet Naka-Karuizawa district of the town and is a 15 minute taxi ride from Karuizawa Station and the Prince Shopping Plaza. The rooms are simple and modern with elegant wooden flooring and panelling around the bed, and many of them have views of the forest. The on-site restaurant, the Grill & Dining G, serves a breakfast buffet with a mix of Japanese and Western dishes, many of which use local vegetables from the surrounding Shinshu area. Just in front of the restaurant is a bar and lounge where you can relax with a drink before dinner.

Other facilities include a 24 hour fitness centre with weights and running machines, and an indoor and outdoor hot spring bath, which was designed to mimic Shiraito Falls in Karuizawa. The spa is modelled on an old Japanese-style tea house, and you can treat yourself to a variety of treatments using products from Shiseido and Mikimoto.





### Metropolitan Hotel, Nagano

Directly connected to Nagano Station, the Metropolitan is a 12-storey hotel with 235 spacious guest rooms. The hotel has a wide range of restaurant options serving Japanese and Chinese cuisine, as well as a café. There is Wi-Fi access in the lobby, though unfortunately not in the guest rooms, and many of the rooms have excellent views over the city and surrounding mountains. The reception staff speak good English, so you can rest assured that you'll receive excellent service. Nagano City's most famous sight, Zenko-ji Temple, is just ten minutes away by local bus or a 30-minute walk through to the traditional district of town.

### Hyatt Centric Kanazawa, Kanazawa

Despite being part of a Western chain, the Hyatt Centric Kanazawa has stayed true to the Centric brand's ethos of 'destination-focused rooms'; you'll find an emphasis on Kanazawa's aesthetics throughout the hotel, with elegant light furnishings and striking splashes of colour in your room, similar to those used in the local Kaga yuzen silk dyeing.

The hotel is right by the station and as it's a wonderfully compact city, it'll be easy to get around for sightseeing. In the evening you might like to relax on the roof terrace bar for a drink while taking in the nighttime views.

### Hotel Granvia, Kyoto

This large hotel owned by Japan Railways West is located within the Kyoto Station building - itself a fantastic piece of futuristic architecture designed by Hiroshi Hara. The hotel offers convenient transport links for sightseeing anywhere in the city. Front desk staff speak good English and the concierge desk can provide sightseeing advice and recommendations.

### Hyatt Regency Hakone, Hakone

This luxury hotel is in a great location in the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park. The rooms are beautifully designed with modern touches, as well as offering great views out over the area. The hotel boasts top-quality Japanese and French restaurants, as well as the largest spa in the area. The hot spring baths are a great way to relax at the end of a busy day's sightseeing. Don't miss free drinks in the beautiful lounge area, available from 4-7 pm every day!

### Century Southern Tower, Tokyo

We will spend the final tour night at the Century Southern Tower located in the very heart of Tokyo's bustling Shinjuku district. The lobby offers great views of the city and on clear days you can see Mt Fuji towering up in the distance. All rooms are stylishly decorated with modern earthy tones and high quality bed linen.

## Important Tour Information

### Fitness

Even when not using public transport, sightseeing in Japan often involves walking between sights, climbing stairs 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 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.

### En suite / shared facilities

We aim to secure rooms at all accommodation with attached en-suite facilities. Culturally, communal bathing is common practice in Japan. 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 three occasions and you will be without your main baggage for 1 night in Nikko, 1 night in Nagano and 2 nights in Hakone.

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 2pm**.

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.

