










Luxury Japan

10 Nights

Tokyo > Hakone > Kyoto > Kanazawa > Tokyo

DELUXE

INSIDE
Japan

-  Look out over Tokyo's Imperial Palace Gardens from your private balcony at the Palace Hotel
-  Enjoy a wine and *sake* tasting session with a Tokyo expert
-  Take a cruise across Lake Ashi overlooked by Mount Fuji
-  Attend a private garden party with *geisha* entertainment at Gesshin-in Temple
-  Choose your accommodation at one of Japan's most exclusive properties in Hakone
-  Explore Arashiyama with a rickshaw ride through its bamboo grove and a boat ride on the Hozugawa River
-  Admire outdoor sculpture art in Hakone's Open Air Museum

IJT DELUXE TOURS

Luxury accommodation, fine dining and exclusive experiences with a focus on comfort and ease of travel

Style facts

- Local professional guides and experts in key destinations (in addition to your tour leader)
- Luxury cars and minibuses
- First-class bullet train travel
- The very best five-star accommodation
- Private airport transfers
- Breakfast every day plus several lunches
- Spectacular dinners at world-class restaurants
- Exclusive cultural experiences
- All entrance fees included
- All luggage forwarding and portage included
- Solo travellers: a single room is available throughout on payment of a mandatory supplement

Tour Overview

Explore Japan's classic sights in luxurious style on this deluxe group tour, with five-star hotels, top-quality cuisine and an array of exclusive cultural experiences arranged especially for your group. Luxury Japan is our one and only deluxe-level Small Group Tour, and we've pulled out all the stops to ensure that you have access to the very best accommodation, cuisine, experiences and guiding at all stages of your trip.

The tour begins and ends in Tokyo, where you'll be able to survey the neon glimmering skyscrapers from the balcony of your hotel overlooking the Imperial Palace Gardens - a really unique and exclusive location to kick off a fabulous tour.

After a day in the capital you'll move on to the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park area. Here you'll enjoy the very best in Japanese hospitality - or *omotenashi* as it's called in Japan - at your choice of deluxe accommodation.

After two days to enjoy the charms of Mount Fuji and its environs you'll move on to spend three days exploring Kyoto, Japan's ancient city of culture, before paying a visit to the city Kanazawa, home of one of the country's finest landscape gardens.

Finally your trip will bring you full circle as you return to the hustle and bustle of Tokyo for a final night at the elegant, high-rise Park Hyatt - immortalised by Scarlett Johansson and Bill Murray in the film *Lost in Translation*.

At every stage of your trip you'll enjoy private transfers, first-class rail travel, fine Japanese cuisine, private local guides and exclusive experiences - all whilst being accompanied by your dedicated InsideJapan senior tour leader, who will ensure that you never have to worry about a thing.

Day by day

Day 1 Tokyo (D)

As soon as you touch down at Tokyo's Narita Airport today you'll be met at arrivals and whisked away by private car to the Palace Hotel - where your neighbours will be the Japanese royal family! Your tour leader will be at the hotel for two days prior to the beginning of the tour, so if you choose to extend your stay in Japan they will be on hand to meet you and help you settle in. On your first evening in the capital you'll enjoy a drinks reception and first-night meal. This is an excellent



way to begin getting to know your tour leader and travelling companions whilst simultaneously getting a gentle introduction to Japan's cuisine.

Day 2 Tokyo (B, L, D)

On day two of your tour in addition to your tour leader one of InsideJapan's expert private guides will join you for a half day of guiding in the big city. In the morning you'll explore Asakusa, Tokyo's most traditional district and home to the city's oldest temple, Senso-ji, before lunch at the top of the dizzying 634 m Skytree - the tallest tower in the world.

After lunch another of our selected guides will join you. A certified wine sommelier and food writer, she will take you for a backstreet tour of Tokyo and will accompany you for dinner, which will be at a wonderful local restaurant with wine and *sake* tasting included.

Day 3 Hakone (B, L, D)

On day three you'll leave the capital behind as you hop aboard a private coach for the journey to Hakone, part of the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park. Here you'll have the choice to personalise your tour by choosing your accommodation amongst a selection of the most exclusive properties in the area. Be it a luxurious Japanese-style inn or an elegant Western style resort, you'll enjoy the very

best of Japanese hospitality, cuisine and hot spring baths. After an included lunch on arrival your tour leader will take you to the outstanding Open-Air Museum, which houses artworks and sculptures by masters such as Henry Moore, Yayoi Kusama and Picasso – many of which stand outside amid the beautiful scenery of the national park. Afterwards you'll make your way by private bus to your accommodation and enjoy an included dinner there.

Day 4 Hakone (B, L, D)

On day four of your tour you'll spend a full day sightseeing in the beautiful Hakone area, including a cruise across Lake Ashi (hopefully including spectacular Fuji views, if weather permits!) After another included lunch in Moto Hakone, you'll visit a workshop where you'll learn how traditional wooden puzzle boxes are made, followed by an afternoon and evening at leisure.

Day 5 Kyoto (B, L, D)

On day five you will board the *shinkansen* bullet train, where you will be seated in first class for the journey from Odawara to Kyoto, capital city of Japan for over a millennium (from 794 to 1868). This illustrious history has left Kyoto with a vast wealth of temples, shrines and gardens, and a cultural heritage unrivalled by any other city in Japan. On arrival in Kyoto you will have lunch with your group before checking-in at your hotel; the afternoon will be free at leisure to enjoy the facilities at your hotel or explore the local area as you wish. In the evening you will join your tour leader and group for dinner at a superb tempura restaurant.

Day 6 Kyoto (B, L)

On day six of your itinerary you will be joined by one of InsideJapan's expert private guides for a full day of sightseeing in Kyoto. First thing in the morning you will make your way to the Arashiyama district on the edge of the city, where you'll enjoy an atmospheric rickshaw ride through beautiful bamboo groves as well as a pleasant thirty-minute cruise on the Hozugawa River. After a simple local lunch, a visit to the wonderful temple of Tenryuji – also located in the Arashiyama district. This afternoon you will have the option of follow your tour leader on a visit to Kinkakuji Golden Pavilion, one of Kyoto's most famous sights, or you can opt to break away from the group for more private time. Dinner will not be included this evening, so you are free to make your own arrangements – your tour leader will be happy to make recommendations and point you in the right direction.

Day 7 Kyoto (B, L, D)

On day seven you will have another full day in Kyoto with your tour leader and private guide. In the morning you will make your way by private bus to eastern Kyoto, where you'll admire the 1001 kannon statues of the Sanjusangendo; visit Tofuku-ji, one of the city's principal Zen temples; and explore the ten thousand red gates of Fushimi Inari Shrine, dedicated to the god of rice. Lunch will be included at one of your tour leader's favourite local restaurants. After a little free time in the afternoon, dressers will visit you in your hotel room and help you put on kimono – traditional Japanese clothing. You will then make your way to Gesshin-in Temple. Here after a session of zazen meditation and a tea ceremony performance, the day will conclude with an exclusive garden party at the temple, during

which you will be entertained by Kyoto *geisha* and accompanied by a professional photographer. Dinner this evening will be at The Sodoh, a top-class Italian restaurant located in a wooded glade with beautiful Japanese-style décor

Day 8 Kanazawa (B, L, D)

Today you will begin your journey by private coach from Kyoto to Kanazawa, a lovely city located between the Japanese Alps and the Japan Sea Coast. Along with Kyoto, Kanazawa was spared bombing during the Second World War thanks to its impressive cultural heritage, meaning that many historical areas survive intact to this day. During your journey, you'll stop to visit Eihei-ji: an atmospheric temple hidden in the forests of Fukui Prefecture. After an included lunch en-route, this afternoon you will have a first taste of the traditional teahouse districts Kanazawa is famous for. The city is also well known for the high quality of its seafood, and dinner this evening will be at a wonderful local sushirestaurant.

Day 9 Kanazawa (B, L)

On day nine, you'll have a full day in Kanazawa to enjoy the city's many attractions. You'll be joined by a selected local guide for the full day, in which you'll pay an early-morning visit to Kenrokuen Garden (widely considered the finest in Japan) and Kanazawa Castle, explore the preserved *samurai* houses of the Nagamachi quarter, and visit one of the local artisans in their atelier to learn more about the *yuzen* silk dyeing or gold leaf techniques that still thrive here. Lunch will be included as part of your tour today, and your tour leader will have some excellent suggestions as to where to go for dinner.

Day 10 Tokyo (B, D)

On day eleven of your tour you will jump onboard the bullet train and speed across the country to Tokyo, where you will be spending your final night in Japan at the luxurious Park Hyatt Hotel of Lost in Translation fame. If the weather is clear, you may even be able to see Mount Fuji from your bedroom window! As the train journey takes just two-and-a-half hours, most of the day will be at leisure to do some last-minute shopping or see some of the Tokyo sights you missed on your first visit. This evening you will toast the end of a wonderful trip with a private drinks reception and dinner at the New York Grill, whilst taking in one last glance at the mesmerising night skyline through floor-to-ceiling glass windows.

Day 11 Tokyo (B)

Finally on day 11 you will be collected from your hotel and escorted by private car to Narita or Haneda Airport for your flight home.

Accommodation

Palace Tokyo, Tokyo (Deluxe Balcony rooms)

Reopened in May 2012 in a brand new building, the Palace Hotel is the finest super-deluxe hotel in Tokyo. The higher grade rooms have balconies (the only hotel in Tokyo to do so) and all rooms are equipped with quality Japanese linen, spacious bathrooms, large flat screen TVs, DVD players and complimentary WiFi.

The Palace's dining options are excellent including Japanese, Chinese, French and Italian restaurants.

The Evian Spa, boasting panoramic views of the Tokyo skyline, is the first of its kind in Japan, blending French influences and Asia therapies to create an exceptional relaxation experience.

Choice of elegant Western style resort or luxurious Japanese-style inn, Hakone

Personalise your tour by choosing your accommodation between two of the most exclusive properties in the area. Please speak to your consultant to discuss the room options available to you.

Hyatt Regency Hakone Resort and Spa

The Hyatt Regency Hakone is a luxury Western style hotel: rooms are beautifully designed with modern touches as well as great views out over the national park. The hotel boasts both 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 days sightseeing and this will be a great base for your stay in the area. Don't miss free drinks in the beautiful lounge area available for a couple of hours every day!

Gora Kadan

The Gora Kadan offers beautiful *tatami*-style rooms with cypress baths, a heated indoor swimming pool, Jacuzzi and antique, wood-lined corridors. Breakfast and dinner are included each day, and the seasonal *kaiseki* cuisine (Kyoto-style food that appeals to eyes as much as the taste buds) is prepared by one of Japan's top chefs. The meals are served to you in the privacy of your own room, providing you with a chance to experience Japanese service at its best. Kadan literally means "flower bed", and the *ryokan* sits on the site of two natural hot springs in the Gora area of Hakone National Park. The waters are rich in minerals and fill the outdoor hot spring baths, creating a very therapeutic *onsen* bathing experience. There is also a top-quality spa offering an extensive massage menu. Since 1981, the Gora Kadan has been a member of Relais & Chateaux, a global network of independent luxury hotels.

Four Seasons, Kyoto (Deluxe Garden View rooms)

The hotel is located in the temple district of Higashiyama, and its 123 guest rooms were designed by Hirsch Bedner Associates, featuring floor-to-ceiling windows with city or garden views. Though the rooms are Western-style (with beds instead of futon mattresses), each one is decorated with traditional Japanese-style details such as paper lamps to lacquerware. Beds are customisable, so you can chose from plush, signature or firm mattress toppers. The en-suite bathrooms have double vanity sinks and rain showers, and the bathtubs are positioned by the window for natural light. Luxury toiletries are by Lorenzo Villoresi. The hotel offers four dining options: an exclusive sushi restaurant, brasserie, lounge and a garden tea house for tea ceremonies by day; *sake* tastings by night. The indoor swimming pool, meanwhile, is one of the largest hotel pools in Kyoto, and there are extensive spa facilities including a sauna, a steam room, and a range of treatments and massages.

Nikko Hotel Kanazawa, Kanazawa (Luxe Floor, Deluxe rooms)

At 130 m, it is also the tallest hotel on the Japan Sea side of the country. The hotel has a wide variety of restaurants and bars serving European, Asian and Japanese cuisine as well as a pool,



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WHAT'S INCLUDED

fitness centre, sauna and Jacuzzi. The hotel's location adjacent to JR Kanazawa Station means that you really couldn't be more conveniently located for sightseeing within the city and in the surrounding area with the station serviced by the brand new Hokuriku *shinkansen* bullet train, shortening the journey time from Tokyo to two and a half hours!

Park Hyatt, Tokyo (Deluxe rooms)

Located in the top 15 floors of a Shinjuku skyscraper, this hotel is the height of modern design and luxury, with impeccable service and fantastic views across the neon metropolis. The hotel's New York Grill & Bar is a must-visit for a cocktail as the sun sets over the Tokyo skyline. Guest rooms begin at 45 sqm and include walk-in closets, deep bathtubs, desk area and luxurious beds with Egyptian cotton linen. Décor is subtle and makes use of Hokkaido elm wood, green marble and granite - as well as original artworks. The exclusive "Club on the Park" fitness centre is free of charge for all guests and includes a gym, aerobics studio and swimming pool with a glass roof and fantastic views.

What's Included

- ✓ 10 nights' accommodation
- ✓ All transport between destinations in Japan including private airport transfers, first-class rail travel and private minibus transfers between most locations
- ✓ Full-time services of your InsideJapan senior tour leader
- ✓ Local expert guides for selected days in Tokyo, Kyoto and Kanazawa
- ✓ Entrance fees for Kenrokuen Garden and Kanazawa Castle
- ✓ Breakfast every day, eight lunches and eight evening meals
- ✓ Drinks reception on your first night in Tokyo
- ✓ Wine and *Sake* tasting at a restaurant in Tokyo
- ✓ Entrance to the Tokyo SkyTree
- ✓ Two-day Hakone Free Pass for local transport in the Hakone region
- ✓ Entrance to Hakone Open-Air Museum
- ✓ Tickets for the Hakone ropeway and a visit to Owakudani "Hell Valley"
- ✓ Cruise across Lake Ashi
- ✓ Visit to a trick box workshop in Moto Hakone
- ✓ Early-morning visit to Arashiyama with a rickshaw ride through the bamboo grove and thirty-minute boat ride on the Hozugawa River and entrance to Tenryuji Temple
- ✓ Entrance to Kinkakuji Golden Pavilion, Tofukuji and Sanjusangendo temples in Kyoto
- ✓ Kimono dress-up session in Kyoto

- ✓ Zazen meditation and tea ceremony experiences followed by a garden party with *geisha* entertainment, all at Gesshin-in Temple and accompanied by a professional photographer
- ✓ Visit to Nomura *samurai* house in Kanazawa
- ✓ Final night drinks reception at the Park Hyatt, Tokyo
- ✓ Baggage handling, luggage transfers and porterage throughout
- ✓ 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 entrance fees (including those for temples, shrines and museums) unless otherwise stated

Practical notes

International Flights

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

Check-in

Please note that rooms at the Tokyo hotel are only available from 3pm. (You can, however, securely leave your luggage at the front desk at any time).

Bathroom arrangements

All accommodation on this tour has full en suite bathroom facilities. The accommodation in Hakone also offers shared hot-spring baths for your enjoyment.

Policy on single rooms

This tour has a mandatory single supplement. This guarantees a single room throughout the tour.

Transport on tour

Airport transfers will be by private car, and we will have the use of a private minibus most days. You will be travelling by bullet train between Odawara and Kyoto (2hrs), and between Kanazawa and Tokyo (2.5 hrs). Sightseeing will include rides on cable cars, rickshaws and river boat cruises. Whilst sightseeing we can also expect to enjoy walking amongst sites and occasionally exploring by public transport.

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.

Luggage

Luggage handling between all destinations is included. Although there is porterage available at the hotels we suggest that you pack reasonably light to make your stay more enjoyable.

More tour information

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.

Visa requirements

Citizens of the UK, USA, CAN, AUS & NZ do not require an entry visa for Japan. If your home country is not listed here, please check with the Japanese embassy or consulate in your home country for information on visa requirements.

Your tour leader

Our tours are led on the ground by a native English speaker, now a resident of Japan and fluent in 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 s/he is 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 s/he feels that it is in the safety or best interest of you and/or any other members of the group (e.g. for any Mount Fuji climb, proper hiking gear and a reasonable level of fitness are required - both being generally assessed by the tour leader. Similarly, dangerous weather conditions may lead to cancellation of such an activity.).

Flexibility

Our tours aim to be as flexible as possible, so there is no set-in-stone itinerary for each day. Each morning the tour leader will outline what s/he is going to do that day, and if you would like to break away from the group and do something different, s/he will be available to give you advice, and help you plan your day.

Crime and personal safety

Japan is perhaps the world's safest country and personal crime is almost unheard-of. You are extremely unlikely to have anything stolen whilst you are in Japan and the likelihood of being threatened in any way is very small indeed. It is not uncommon to leave your wallet, phone, camera or laptop in a bar or restaurant and return hours later to find your lost property waiting for you. However, you should still take the usual precautions: keep large amounts of money out of sight and consider using a money belt; in your hotel room keep your valuables packed away and keep an eye on your bag and other personal effects when out and about.

Money & currency

What money to bring

The Japanese Yen is the currency in Japan, and you should make sure that you have access to plenty of it during your stay, as Japan is still very much a cash-based society. There are several different ways to get your hands on those precious yen and it is just a case of deciding which suits you best.

Obtaining money

Japanese yen in cash

Probably the best way to bring yen to Japan. You can purchase yen from most banks or in the UK from the post office. You can then be sure to arrive in Japan well-equipped with currency. Again, make sure you don't bring more than you plan on spending as you will have to pay to convert any leftovers into your home currency.

The best rates for obtaining yen are to be found online. In the UK try:

Thomas Exchange -
<https://www.thomasexchange.co.uk/>

Best Foreign Exchange -
<https://www.bestforeignexchange.com/services-foreign-currency-travel-money.php>

Foreign Currency in cash

You can bring your home currency in cash to change at the airport or at banks and post offices during the tour. You will get a better rate for travellers cheques at the airport than for cash. It is also much quicker to change cash at the post office than it is to change travellers cheques at a bank. However, not all post offices and banks offer this service so you can end up spending time trying to find one that does!

Credit / debit cards

Another convenient way to manage your money in Japan is to use your credit or debit card to withdraw cash from ATMs. Every post office in the country has an ATM that will accept your foreign issued cards. Please be aware that post office ATMs are usually only open business hours (8am to 6pm). More recently, the 24 hour convenience stores 7-Eleven and Family Mart will also accept the vast majority of foreign issued cards at their in-store ATMs. Just be sure that you know your four-digit PIN. It is advisable to notify your card issuer before you travel that you will be in Japan, to avoid the possibility that the transaction will be blocked for security reasons.

Travellers Cheques

You can change travellers cheques at banks across Japan as well as at the airport on arrival. However, it can be a time-consuming process so you could get travellers cheques only if you intend to change all of them for yen at the airport (where the exchange takes next to no time and you receive a better rate than for cash), or if you wish to keep them as emergency back-up. It is probably best to bring your travellers cheques in US Dollars or Pounds Sterling as you can change these anywhere. Euros, Australian Dollars, and Canadian Dollars are also widely accepted. You can bring Japanese Yen

travellers cheques but you will be hit with charges when you change them back to your home currency should you decide not to use them.

In conclusion, we suggest bringing a substantial amount of JPY in cash to Japan or changing a large amount of money at the airport. If you need more we suggest using your credit or debit card to make withdrawals from the post office ATMs.

How much money will I need?

This is the \$1000 question so to speak! Everybody spends a different amount when they visit.

Eating out can be very reasonable. Local transport is also not expensive with the highest fare on the Tokyo subway being just 310 yen. Entrance fees to shrines, temples and museums are also very reasonable with most being in the region of 200-500 yen. Occasionally you will need to pay as much as 1000 yen but this is not the norm.

As a rough guide we recommend 80-100 thousand yen per person as a good amount to cover basic costs on a two-week trip. This should cover simple meals, drinks, local transport and any entrance fees. What this won't cover are souvenirs and other purchases you may wish to make. Beer and drinks can also add up very quickly, so if you like a tittle of an evening you may need to budget a bit more.

Emergency funds

When travelling abroad, it is always advisable to have emergency funds tucked away somewhere in case of unexpected occurrences. In Japan this is not as much of an issue as in other parts of Asia, but it is perhaps best not to rely on your plastic for this money. We recommend keeping about £100 / \$200 of cash to one side for this purpose. This can be in your home currency or in yen, but make sure it is there and don't spend it! You never know when you might need those extra funds.

Exchange rates

20 years of zero inflation in Japan have helped Japan to remain a surprisingly affordable destination. Since the re-election of Prime Minister Abe, the exchange rate has become more favourable but continues to change frequently.

Exchange rates as of December 2017:

1 Australian Dollar AUD = 86 yen
1 British Pound GBP = 151 yen
1 Euro EUR = 133 yen
1 United States Dollar USD = 112 yen

Be sure to have a look at the rates before you travel as they can be quite volatile.

Tipping

As a rule there is no tipping in Japan. At restaurants you should not leave anything extra on top of the bill and you should not generally tip staff in hotels or taxi drivers. If you are staying in a high class *ryokan* then it is polite to tip your maid 1,000-2,000 yen on the day of arrival, but please give your tip in a discreet envelope. The same goes if you would like to tip a local guide – although a tip will not be expected and no offence will be taken if you do not give one.



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If you feel that your tour leader has done a particularly good job, a tip will always be graciously accepted and appreciated. We recommend approximately 3,000 yen per person for a two-week tour.

EVERYDAY PRICES

Soft drink (Pepsi, Fanta etc)	130 yen
Loaf of bread	200 yen
Big Mac Meal	680 yen
Banana	100 yen
Litre of petrol	130 yen
Snickers	120 yen
500 ml can of beer	290 yen
Pint of beer in bar	(500-800 yen)
Shop sandwich	230 yen
Umbrella	500 yen
Newspaper	150 yen
Bottle of water	150 yen
Subway journey	160-310 yen
Taxi (per car for 2 km)	680 yen
Starbucks Tall Latte	370 yen
Entrance to a shrine/temple/museum - Usually between	200 yen and 600 yen

Lunch: Sit-down lunch around 1,000 yen, sandwich / onigiri / snacks from a convenience store around 500 yen. Beef bowl from Yoshinoya is 400 yen.

Dinner: Multi-course meal around 3,000 yen per person, bowl of noodles up to 1,000 yen per person, hot bento (box) dinner from a convenience store around 800 yen per person.

Of course, as in every country you can pay a LOT more for food if you like. Some restaurants in Tokyo and Kyoto will set you back as much as £250 / \$500 per person.



Connectivity

Power and plugs

The voltage in Japan is 100V with two-pin, flat-blade plugs. Travellers from the USA will find that their plugs will fit into some Japanese sockets but not all. US appliances will work in Japan even though the voltage is slightly lower than North America. Travellers from the UK should purchase a plug adaptor before arrival in Japan as three pin adaptors are somewhat hard to find once you arrive. Please note that due to the much lower voltage UK electrical appliances (such as laptop computers) will not work unless they have a variable voltage power-pack.

Internet and Wi-Fi

In these days of Facebook, Twitter, smart phones and iPads, access to the internet and keeping in touch with friends and family online has become an important part of many people's holiday experience.

Free Wi-Fi is readily available in most hotels and *ryokan* in Japan. Some hotels only offer wired internet connections (not much help if you are trying to get online with your iPhone), but this is now more the exception than the norm.

There may be a couple of nights on your tour where internet is not available at the accommodation – especially if you are staying in a rural area. If you have concerns or want further details, feel free to call our office or talk to your tour leader. As of 2015, your tour leader will have a portable Wi-Fi unit that you will be able to request access to on railway journeys etc. Please note that this will be on a limited basis and NOT offered at the dinner table.

Pocket Wi-Fi

If you would like to have internet available for the duration of your trip you may like to consider hiring a "Pocket Wi-Fi" device. This is a smart phone-sized device which acts as a mobile wireless router. It fits comfortably into any pocket or handbag and creates a Wi-Fi zone with a reach of around ten metres. You can wirelessly connect up to ten devices simultaneously so even if you are a family of five all wielding your iPhones you can all still get online through a single Pocket Wi-Fi device.

Mobile coverage is very good in Japan, meaning you can have Wi-Fi internet with you almost

wherever you travel. Of course some rural areas might not have such a good signal but in the cities you will be connected all the time. Even on the *shinkansen* bullet train you will find you are online all the way.

If you want to guarantee mobile internet for the duration of your trip you should reserve in advance. PuPuRu offer a pocket Wi-Fi service. For more information and to book please visit: <https://pupuruwifi.com/en/>

Mobile phones

Many mobile phones will not work at all in Japan. However, if you have a 3G enabled handset and your phone contract includes "roaming", you will be able to use your mobile across most of Japan. If you do not have a suitable handset or wish to avoid high roaming charges, you may wish to hire a mobile for the duration of your stay. You can arrange phone rental on arrival at Tokyo Narita Airport, Tokyo Haneda Airport and Osaka Kansai Airport. Do note that phones are subject to availability and do sometimes run out at the busiest times of the year.

Alternatively, for our clients in North America we have teamed up with Travel Cell who provide rental cell phones which can be booked in advance: <http://www.travelcell.com/tcap.asp?ag=IJT28>

When placing an order either use the custom link above or please mention InsideJapan Tours code (IJT28).

For customers outside of North America, we have teamed up with PuPuRu mobile phone rental (PuPuRu also offer a pocket Wi-Fi service - see above). To hire a mobile please visit: <https://www.pupuru.com/en/service/>

Luggage

You will have to carry your own bags for most of the trip. Large cases WILL be an inconvenience to you and will slow down the whole group. A compact case WITH WHEELS or a good quality rucksack is appropriate for this tour. DO NOT bring holdalls or sports bags for your main luggage. If you are travelling for a long time (on a round-the-world ticket, for example), then make sure you have a smaller bag as well as your large bag. Japan has a superb system of luggage forwarding (*takuhaibin*) meaning there is no need to carry around all the items you have with you for a year-long trip! Instead you can forward them to your final hotel and they will be kept safely until you check in. The cost of this service is between 1,800 yen (for a medium-sized bag) up to 2,400 yen for a very large suitcase. There are no weight limits so you don't need to worry about this.

We highly recommend making use of the luggage forwarding service during your stay in Japan. For this reason we suggest you bring an overnight bag with you. This can be a smallish rucksack, a sports bag or any piece of luggage so long as it is not too big!

Packing Checklist

On this page you will find our packing checklist. This is not fully comprehensive but you should find nearly everything you could possibly need to bring on a trip to Japan! There are also a few things to keep in mind when packing.

Clothing and footwear

Comfortable, casual clothing is all that is required for sightseeing. For your evening meals we suggest smart casual attire. Outside of business situations the Japanese are very relaxed about dress so formal attire is unnecessary. It is always possible that some of the nights outside might be cool or even cold so a jumper or fleece jacket and a light waterproof jacket are advisable. Every day you will be doing a fair amount of walking so a pair of good-quality, comfortable walking shoes is also recommended.

Documents

- ✓ Your passport!!
- ✓ A copy of your passport
- ✓ Credit cards
- ✓ Your travel insurance / health insurance documentation

The obvious things!

- ✓ Underwear
- ✓ Socks
- ✓ T-shirts / polo shirts / casual shirts
- ✓ Two pairs of long trousers (jeans, cords, chinos etc)
- ✓ A pair of shorts
- ✓ Sun hat
- ✓ Warm hat (spring, autumn and winter)
- ✓ Light waterproof
- ✓ Light sweater (the air conditioning can be cold!)
- ✓ Night wear
- ✓ Fleece jacket, warm jumper or sweater (spring and autumn)
- ✓ Warm coat (winter only)
- ✓ Comfortable shoes or trainers
- ✓ Walking shoes / boots
- ✓ Open-toed sandals
- ✓ Small hand towel
- ✓ Swimwear (if you want to go to a public pool). Western ladies find it very hard to find swimwear to fit in Japan so it is best to bring your own!
- ✓ Day sack / small backpack
- ✓ Overnight bag

Toiletries / health products

Nearly all toiletries are widely available in Japan. However, many people prefer to use their own brands so you will need to bring these with you.

- ✓ Toothbrush, toothpaste
- ✓ Contact lens equipment or glasses
- ✓ Deodorant (most people do not like Japanese brands so be sure to bring your own!)
- ✓ Shower gel / Shampoo (these are provided at every night stop but you may prefer your own)
- ✓ Tampons and pads
- ✓ Mosquito repellent (summer)
- ✓ Sunscreen and after-sun cream
- ✓ Comb or brush
- ✓ Condoms or contraceptive pills
- ✓ Hair products (gel, spray etc)
- ✓ Lip balm
- ✓ Razor & shaving gel
- ✓ You may wish to take a well-stocked first aid kit containing bandages, plasters (band aids) and other similar products. In addition you may wish to bring: Pain killers (aspirin, paracetamol, ibuprofen etc) Motion sickness tablets

20 kg (44 lbs) max / 12 kg (26 lb) recommended

One main bag + one daybag + one overnight bag

Miscellaneous

- ✓ Paper / notebook (for writing your diary!)
- ✓ Pen / pencil
- ✓ Reading material - a good book never goes amiss!
- ✓ Earplugs (good on the plane and if you are sharing a room)
- ✓ Sunglasses
- ✓ Camera
- ✓ Camera charger / spare camera batteries and memory card
- ✓ Inflatable travel pillow
- ✓ Phrase book or dictionary
- ✓ Laundry detergent (available in Japan but you may prefer your own brand)
- ✓ Plug converter (for recharging your digital camera)
- ✓ Umbrella - As it will likely rain over the course of your visit a folding umbrella can be useful. However, please note that these are available everywhere in Japan for a very low cost.

You do NOT need

- ✗ **A large towel** - towels are provided at all night stops on our itineraries
- ✗ **Films** - for those purists still using film cameras you can buy extra film for far less in Japan than in the UK or USA, though it is getting ever more difficult to find
- ✗ **Regular batteries** - all standard battery sizes are available to buy in convenience stores for UK prices
- ✗ **A hair dryer** - these are provided at nearly all night stops. Hair dryers brought from the UK will generally not work due to the lower voltage in Japan



Climate

Japan has four distinct seasons with winter being cold but dry, spring warm with regular rainy days, summer very hot and humid and autumn warm and wet for the first few weeks and dry towards the end. There is also the risk of typhoons from July through to around the middle of October.

Below, you can find a chart of the average temperatures in Tokyo through the year. This is a good indicator of the kind of temperatures you can expect to experience during your trip. However, Japan is a geographically a very diverse country and this does have an effect on the temperature. Kyushu Island and the western regions of Honshu Island can be quite a lot hotter than Tokyo.

The reverse goes for the northern regions of the country which can get a lot colder than Tokyo. Much of Japan is mountainous and, of course, the higher in elevation you go, the colder it gets! Temperatures in Hokkaido can reach as low as -25°C in winter with very heavy snowfall. The same goes for the Japan Alps and other mountainous regions of Japan. Be sure to take all this into account when packing for your trip. If you are heading up into the mountains you will need warmer clothing. Even in summer the temperatures can drop quite low during the night.

You can be pretty sure that it will rain during your stay in Japan! In fact the average rainfall is nearly double that of the UK so it really does rain a lot, although in a far more concentrated manner. The wettest month of the year is September. However, this is mainly because of typhoons dumping huge amounts of rain in very short spaces of time, so you do get several dry days as well as the very rainy ones! The rainy season in Tokyo officially begins on 8th June and runs through until 20th July. However, the period of heaviest rain tends to be the last week in June and the first week in July. As with all these things though, exactly how much rain will fall in rainy season is very hard to predict and some years you really wouldn't know it was the rainy season at all!

City	Average High	Average Low	Rainy Days	Sunny Days
January				
Sapporo	-1°C / 30°F	-8°C / 18°F	60%	40%
Tokyo	10°C / 50°F	2°C / 36°F	15%	75%
Kyoto	9°C / 48°F	3°C / 37°F	20%	60%
Fukuoka	10°C / 50°F	3°C / 37°F	25%	40%
Ishigaki	19°C / 66°F	14°C / 57°F	35%	35%
February				
Sapporo	0°C / 32°F	-7°C / 19°F	55%	45%
Tokyo	10°C / 50°F	2°C / 36°F	15%	70%
Kyoto	9°C / 48°F	3°C / 37°F	15%	60%
Fukuoka	11°C / 52°F	4°C / 39°F	25%	55%
Ishigaki	19°C / 66°F	14°C / 57°F	35%	30%
March				
Sapporo	4°C / 39°F	-4°C / 25°F	50%	55%
Tokyo	13°C / 55°F	5°C / 41°F	25%	60%
Kyoto	13°C / 55°F	5°C / 41°F	30%	60%
Fukuoka	14°C / 57°F	6°C / 43°F	35%	50%
Ishigaki	21°C / 70°F	16°C / 61°F	35%	40%
April				
Sapporo	11°C / 52°F	3°C / 37°F	30%	55%
Tokyo	18°C / 64°F	11°C / 52°F	35%	55%
Kyoto	20°C / 68°F	11°C / 52°F	35%	60%
Fukuoka	19°C / 66°F	11°C / 52°F	35%	55%
Ishigaki	24°C / 65°F	19°C / 66°F	40%	35%
May				
Sapporo	17°C / 63°F	8°C / 46°F	30%	55%
Tokyo	23°C / 73°F	15°C / 59°F	30%	50%
Kyoto	24°C / 75°F	15°C / 59°F	35%	60%
Fukuoka	24°C / 75°F	15°C / 59°F	30%	55%
Ishigaki	26°C / 79°F	22°C / 72°F	30%	45%
June				
Sapporo	21°C / 70°F	12°C / 54°F	25%	55%
Tokyo	25°C / 77°F	19°C / 66°F	35%	45%
Kyoto	27°C / 81°F	20°C / 68°F	30%	55%
Fukuoka	27°C / 81°F	19°C / 66°F	25%	55%
Ishigaki	29°C / 84°F	25°C / 77°F	45%	40%
July				
Sapporo	25°C / 77°F	17°C / 63°F	25%	40%
Tokyo	29°C / 84°F	23°C / 73°F	35%	30%
Kyoto	31°C / 88°F	24°C / 75°F	40%	45%
Fukuoka	31°C / 88°F	24°C / 75°F	40%	40%
Ishigaki	31°C / 88°F	26°C / 79°F	25%	80%
August				
Sapporo	26°C / 79°F	19°C / 66°F	25%	50%
Tokyo	31°C / 88°F	24°C / 75°F	25%	55%
Kyoto	33°C / 91°F	25°C / 77°F	20%	70%
Fukuoka	32°C / 90°F	25°C / 77°F	25%	65%
Ishigaki	31°C / 88°F	26°C / 79°F	40%	70%
September				
Sapporo	22°C / 72°F	14°C / 57°F	30%	50%
Tokyo	27°C / 81°F	21°C / 70°F	35%	40%
Kyoto	29°C / 84°F	21°C / 70°F	30%	60%
Fukuoka	28°C / 82°F	21°C / 70°F	35%	55%
Ishigaki	30°C / 86°F	25°C / 77°F	35%	70%
October				
Sapporo	16°C / 62°F	7°C / 45°F	35%	60%
Tokyo	22°C / 72°F	15°C / 59°F	35%	40%
Kyoto	23°C / 73°F	15°C / 59°F	30%	55%
Fukuoka	23°C / 73°F	15°C / 59°F	20%	60%
Ishigaki	28°C / 82°F	23°C / 73°F	25%	65%
November				
Sapporo	8°C / 46°F	1°C / 34°F	45%	40%
Tokyo	17°C / 63°F	10°C / 50°F	25%	55%
Kyoto	17°C / 63°F	10°C / 50°F	20%	60%
Fukuoka	18°C / 64°F	10°C / 50°F	30%	55%
Ishigaki	24°C / 75°F	20°C / 68°F	25%	55%
December				
Sapporo	2°C / 36°F	-4°C / 25°F	50%	35%
Tokyo	12°C / 54°F	5°C / 41°F	15%	65%
Kyoto	12°C / 54°F	5°C / 41°F	20%	65%
Fukuoka	13°C / 55°F	5°C / 41°F	30%	45%
Ishigaki	21°C / 70°F	16°C / 61°F	25%	45%



Get beneath the surface

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