



SUPERIOR

Majestic Japan

14 Nights

Tokyo > Kanazawa > Kyoto > Kinokuni Onsen > Hiroshima > Hakone > Tokyo



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

Enjoy the natural hot springs at Kinokuni Onsen

Visit the artisans of the Kiyomizu Peninsula

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

Visit the sobering Hiroshima Peace Park and museum

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

Included laundry service mid-way through the trip

Tour Overview

Majestic Japan 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.

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.

Kinokuni Onsen is a classic Japanese hot spring resort. Nestled between mountains and sea, Kinokuni has escaped the concrete and glaring pachinko parlours of other Japanese towns. Traditional wooden houses sit along the willow-lined river which carries colourful koi carp through the town centre. Here you'll stay in a *ryokan* to experience a Japanese-style inn.

In Hiroshima, you'll visit the fascinating Peace Memorial Park and Museum, and take a trip out to the "floating" torii gate on Miyajima Island, inhabited by friendly shika deer.

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.

IJT SUPERIOR TOURS

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

Style Facts

- Local professional guides & experts in key destinations in addition to your tour leader
- Some private minibus transfers where beneficial
- Four to five-star accommodation
- En suite rooms in all locations
- Private airport 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

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 leisurely visit to 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 Harajuku on the west side of the capital, 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 Kanazawa (B)

This morning, you will leave the bright lights of Tokyo behind and take the bullet train 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 4 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 5 Kyoto (B)

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).

Day 6 Kyoto (B, L)

On day six 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 Silver Pavillion of 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 7 Kyoto (B)

On day seven, 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. Your tour leader will be happy to help you make arrangements for the day

Day 8 Kinokasa Onsen (B, L, D)

Today you will enjoy a leisurely morning before taking the train to Kinokasa Onsen. Kinokasa Onsen is one of Japan's premier hot-spring towns and is home to the seven mystic onsen. Visitors to the area will often try to bathe in all seven to feel the benefit from the sacred waters. You will have the afternoon to walk around the picturesque town before enjoying a kaiseki dinner at the ryokan.

Day 9 Kinokasa Onsen (B, L, D)

Today you will take a private coach to the East and in to the heart of the Kyotango peninsula. The peninsula is home to some breathtaking scenery and a hub for local artisans. You'll visit a swordsmith who specialise in katana and an artisan who weaves mother-of-pearl in to intricate designs for kimono.

After lunch, you'll visit Amanohashidate which is considered to be one of Japan's 'top three scenic views'. The impressive sandbar spans the Miyazu bay and is thought to be a 'staircase to heaven'. You'll the chance to cross the bay by boat, foot or bicycle before taking the private bus back to the ryokan for dinner.

Day 10 Hiroshima (B,D)

This morning we'll hop on a private coach bound for Himeji to see the World Heritage castle. It is a short walk from the station and is arguably Japan's best preserved feudal castle. Afterwards, we'll jump on the bullet train to Hiroshima and head to the Peace Memorial Park and Museum to learn a little more about the events of 6th August 1945.

Day 11 Hiroshima (B, L)

On day four, we'll jump on a boat at the Peace Park for the 45-minute journey across Hiroshima Bay to the island of Miyajima, a beautiful island on the Seto Inland Sea. Though Miyajima is most famous for its World Heritage Shrine and "floating" torii gate, you're sure to enjoy the traditional town centre and its friendly local deer.

Day 12 Hakone (B, L, 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!

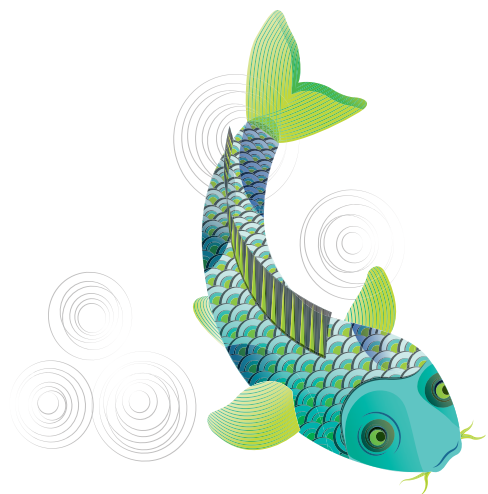
Our tours aim to be as flexible as possible, so there is no set-in-stone itinerary for each day. You will be provided on the ground with Day-by-Day sheets and the tour leader will outline what they are going to do each day in detail. If you would like to break away from the group and do something different, 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, six lunches and six evening meals
- ✓ Arrival and departure airport transfers by private car
- ✓ IC transport card with 3,000 yen credit for city transport
- ✓ Two-day Hakone Free Pass for transport in the Hakone region
- ✓ All transport between destinations in Japan
- ✓ Entrance fee to Hamarikyu Gardens in Tokyo
- ✓ Full-day private guide service in the Kyotango Peninsula.
- ✓ Visits to two local artisan workshops in Kyotango
- ✓ Full-day private guide service in Kanazawa including entrance fees
- ✓ Private afternoon tea with a *maiko*, in Kyoto
- ✓ Full-day private guide service in Kyoto including travel by private coach
- ✓ Included hotel laundry service at the mid-point in the trip
- ✓ Tickets to Hakone Open-Air Museum
- ✓ Shared portable Wi-Fi access throughout trip
- ✓ Luggage forwarding from Tokyo to Kyoto Kyoto to Hiroshima and Hiroshima 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.

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 Higashiyama, Kyoto

Nestled in the quiet Higashiyama district of north-east Kyoto, the Hotel Higashiyama offers a high quality 'oasis' away from the hustle and bustle of one of Japan's crown-jewel cities. The hotel sits next to Awata-Jinja shrine; a Shinto shrine known for its annual 'Awata Taisai' festival in October. The shrine traditionally marked the beginning of the 'Tokaido Trail' from Kyoto to the old capital of Edo (modern day Tokyo).

On arrival, you'll be greeted by personal and friendly service, accompanied by the unique aesthetic inspired by the traditional plastering technique of 'sakan'. The hotel prides itself on its art collection and the curated collection of local crafts, some of which you can buy after your stay.

Rooms are decorated with a fresh, clean aesthetic inspired by the local Shirakawa river, and equipped with all modern conveniences you might need for your stay.

Nishimuraya Shogetsutei, Kinokasa Onsen

Just tucked away from the centre of the picturesque Onsen town of Kinokasa, the Shogetsutei offers a full ryokan experience with natural hot-spring baths and kaiseki cuisine. The property has all the modern amenities that you could need but retains a traditional feel that compliments the unique atmosphere in the area.

The surrounding forested grounds change colour depending on the season and also feature a lovely walking trail. It takes roughly 15 minutes up to the top from where you can see a chapel and a waterfall on the walk.

Hilton Hiroshima, Hiroshima

Opened in 2022 in central Hiroshima, 20 minutes' walk from the Atomic Bomb Dome, this hotel has everything you need for a fantastic stay. The 420 guest rooms offer a wonderfully cosy escape from the city, with large, stylish bathrooms, Hilton signature bedding and various styles of pillow — all enveloped in a palette of warm neutral tones with splashes of blue (to evoke the Seto Inland Sea, which you might be able to see from your bedroom window).

The hotel's four in-house restaurants serve freshly baked pastries, artisanal sweets, delicious tapas, and kaiseki designed by a Michelin-starred chef, while the Zatta Bar & Lounge offers afternoon tea, local sake and cocktails with live entertainment. As you'd expect, all the facilities are top-notch, from the gym and L'Occitane spa to the large indoor pool, Jacuzzi and sauna. The service, in particular, is faultless. The Hilton Hiroshima won't shock you with any avant-garde design or out-there concepts, but that's exactly why we love it.

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 16:30 to 19:30pm 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.

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

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 at any of the locations.

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 2 nights in Kanazawa, 2 nights in Kinokuniya Onsen 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.

