

Full Itinerary

WONDERS OF JAPAN



TALK TO OUR WELL
TRAVELLED TEAM OF
EXPERTS

0844 3350 197

Monday to Friday 09:00 - 18:00
GMT



JOURNEY SNAPSHOT

ACTIVITY LEVEL:

Level 2

DESTINATION:

Wonders of Japan

DURATION:

14 days, 13 nights

FLIGHT INFORMATION:

Arrive at Tokyo Narita Airport [NRT] on Day 1
and depart on Day 14

PICKUP LOCATION:

Tokyo Narita Airport [NRT]

OVERVIEW

Choose your own departure date for your group.

Japan is truly timeless, a place where ancient traditions are fused with modern life as if it were the most natural thing in the world. Join us to discover one of the world's most fascinating countries - Japan. Known as the 'Land of the Rising Sun', journey from Tokyo to some of the most iconic landmarks and locations in Japan! Visit Kyoto, Hiroshima and Kanazawa whilst viewing the old and the new - from Matsumoto Castle to Tokyo Tower. Japan offers a unique variety of experiences to enjoy. Try your hand at sushi making, visit the world renowned Geisha district and take a boat cruise on Lake Ashi, following a visit to the spectacular and iconic Mt. Fuji.

ITINERARY SUMMARY

PRE-JOURNEY - You will depart the UK the day before the tour starts, flying overnight to arrive into Narita Airport, Tokyo [NRT] on Day 1 and depart from Narita Airport, Tokyo [NRT] Day 14.

DAY 1 - Welcome to Tokyo

DAY 2 - Tokyo - Imperial Palace & the Asakusa Kannon Temple

DAY 3 - Tokyo - Sushi, a Shrine & Shopping

DAY 4 - Tokyo to Matsumoto & Shirahone Onsen

DAY 5 - Shirahone Onsen to Gokayama & Kanazawa

DAY 6 - Samurai in Kanazawa & the Bullet Train to Kyoto

DAY 7 - Discovering Kyoto

DAY 8 - Kyoto to Nara & Hiroshima

DAY 9 - Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park & Miyajima

DAY 10 - Bullet train to Mishima & Lake Yamanaka

DAY 11 - Mt. Fuji & Lake Ashi

DAY 12 - Katsunuma Wine Region & to Tokyo

DAY 13 - Tokyo at Leisure

DAY 14 - Farewell to Tokyo & home...

FULL ITINERARY

DAY 1 - WELCOME TO TOKYO

Upon arrival at Narita Airport, you will be met in the arrivals hall by a Big Journey Company representative and taken to the hotel's shuttle service bus. You will then be transferred to your hotel a short distance away to check in and relax after your flight.

Included meals: none

Accommodation: Narita

DAY 2 - TOKYO - IMPERIAL PALACE & THE ASAKUSA KANNON TEMPLE

This morning following breakfast we will head out to the Imperial Palace Plaza in Tokyo, a functioning palace where the Emperor and his family reside. We will then proceed to the East Gardens of the Imperial Palace. Sadly, none of the main buildings remain today but the moats, walls, entrance gates and several guardhouses still exist. You can also visit the museum displaying the Imperial Collections.

This afternoon, after enjoying lunch together in a local restaurant, we will head to the Asakusa Kannon Temple. One of Tokyo's most famous temple sites, the Asakusa Kannon Temple is dedicated to the Bodhisattva, Guan Yin - the Chinese deity of mercy and benevolence whose origins lie in Hindu beliefs from India. Alleys of shops selling all manner of souvenirs and crafts surround the temple - it is known as the Nakamise Shopping Street. The temple and its market shops are popular with the locals and visitors alike.

After our day of sightseeing, we'll check into our hotel in Tokyo, our base for the next 2 nights.

Included meals: Breakfast and Lunch

Accommodation: Tokyo

DAY 3 - TOKYO - SUSHI, A SHRINE & SHOPPING

Today, we venture to the iconic Tokyo Tower. We ascend up to the observation deck at 820 feet to enjoy an excellent panoramic view of Tokyo.

Later on, we will enjoy a Sushi making class where we will learn how to make some sushi favourites. Sushi is the most famous Japanese dish outside of Japan and one of the most popular dishes among the Japanese themselves, who usually enjoy sushi on special occasions. We will enjoy your own culinary creations for lunch.

This afternoon, we visit Meiji Shrine - a Shinto Shrine dedicated to the divine souls of Emperor Meiji and his consort, Empress Shoken. Today's sightseeing ends in Tokyo's most fashionable shopping district - Harajuku. Omotesando Street at the heart of the district is sometimes referred to as "Tokyo's Champs-Élysées". We'll return to the hotel late in the afternoon.

Included meals: Breakfast and Lunch

Accommodation: Tokyo

DAY 4 - TOKYO TO MATSUMOTO & SHIRAHONE ONSEN

After breakfast, we will walk to Tokyo's Shinjuku Station (approx 10mins walk). Once here we will board the JR Express Train to Matsumoto.

First stop on today's sightseeing tour is Matsumoto Castle, one of Japan's most complete and beautiful original castles. It is a "hirajiro" - a castle built on plains rather than on a hill or mountain. Afterwards, we'll drive to Shirahone Onsen, taking just over 1hr.

* N.B. Luggage will be transferred separately from Tokyo to Kyoto. Please prepare a hand carry-on bag for the 2 night visit to Shirahone Onsen and Kanazawa. One piece per person. Large luggage is not permitted to travel with you on the train.

Included meals: Breakfast and Dinner

Accommodation: Shirahone Onsen

DAY 5 - SHIRAHONE ONSEN TO GOKAYAMA & KANAZAWA

Following breakfast this morning, we will go to Shirakawa and visit the neighbouring town of Gokayama. Lining the Shogawa River Valley in

the remote mountains spanning from Gifu to Toyama Prefectures, the area was Declared a UNESCO world heritage site in 1995. The region is famous for its traditional farmhouses, some of which are more than 250 years old.

Gokayama is less developed and less crowded than Shirakawa, its villages are smaller, more intimate and with less intrusion from modern buildings. The Gokayama region has been well known for its washi paper since Taira Clan refugees brought the art here from Kyoto. At the factory you can watch how washi paper is made and try your hand at making some yourself.

We'll have lunch at a local restaurant together and then go to Kanazawa to check into our hotel.

Included meals: Breakfast and Lunch

Accommodation: Kanazawa Tokyu Hotel, Kanazawa

DAY 6 - SAMURAI IN KANAZAWA & THE BULLET TRAIN TO KYOTO

After breakfast, we will head out to visit Nagamachi, a samurai district located at the foot of the former Kanazawa Castle, where samurai and their families once resided. One of the main attractions of the district is the centrally located Nomura-ke. A restored samurai residence, it displays the lifestyle and artifacts of the era when samurai were prosperous. Beside Kanazawa Castle in the heights of the central part of Kanazawa lies Kenrokuen Garden. A beautiful Japanese garden spanning some 11.4 hectares, from its scale and beauty, it is regarded as one of the most beautiful feudal lords' gardens in Japan.

Within Kenrokuen Garden is the Seisonkaku, a villa built 1863 by the 13th lord of the Maeda family for his mother. A wide variety of fine Japanese artistic techniques are used for the inner pillars and walls.

After sightseeing, we will transfer to the Kanazawa Station to buy a bento (Japanese boxed lunch) to enjoy during our next journey. Here, we will board one of Japan's most iconic sights - the bullet train, which will whisk us across Japan to Kyoto at super speeds. Once arrived in Kyoto, we will proceed to the hotel located next to Kyoto Station on foot. After check-in, the evening is at leisure.

Included meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: Kyoto

DAY 7 - DISCOVERING KYOTO

This morning, we will visit the Golden Pavilion or Kinkakuji Temple. One of the landmarks of Kyoto, it is an epitome of Kitayama culture. We will continue on to Nijo Castle, built by Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1603 as his personal residence in Kyoto.

After lunch in a local restaurant together, we'll proceed to Kiyomizu Temple. According to legend, the Priest Enchin built his hermitage and a small chapel here in 788 A.D. With support from General Sakanoueno Tamuramaro, the temple was erected in 798. Many of the present buildings were reconstructed between 1631 and 1633 by order of Shogun Iemetsu Tokugawa. From the platform in the main hall you can enjoy a panoramic view of Kyoto surrounded by cherry blossoms in the spring, green foliage in the summer, and crimson maples in autumn.

Later, we will enjoy a walking tour of Kyoto's Gion district. Heading through the old back streets lined with wooden houses, we will wander down the alleyways of Kyoto's world-renowned geisha districts as the geiko or maiko make their way to and from their lessons. You will receive an insider's view into the past, present and future of this unique and exotic world.

Included meals: Breakfast and Lunch

Accommodation: Kyoto

DAY 8 - KYOTO TO NARA & HIROSHIMA

Following breakfast, we will travel to the city of Nara. Here we will visit the Todai-ji Temple. First built in 752 AD, it houses the world's largest bronze casting, the giant Daibutsu statue. Commissioned by the Shommu in 743 AD, the Buddha image required 437 tons of bronze and 130 kilograms of pure gold! The wooden structure which houses the Buddha image is believed to be the largest wooden structure on earth and has undergone several reconstructions due to the frequent fires which have ravaged it.

Afterwards, enjoy a stroll through Nara Park, a vast nature park famous for its many deer, which graze in the grassy serenity of the park. Spectacular cherry blossoms, Japanese Andromeda and many other flowers bloom here. We will also visit the Kasuga Shrine, which was built in 768 AD and reconstructed every 20 years thereafter, as was the custom in ancient times. The temple is complemented by 3,000 lanterns, of which over 1,600 are made from stone and the remainder bronze. The lanterns are lit twice a year on the eve of the Mandoro Festival.

This afternoon we will travel to Shin-Osaka Station to board the train to Hiroshima, where upon arrival we will be transferred to the hotel.

* N.B. Luggage will be transferred separately from Kyoto to Lake Yamanaka. Please prepare a hand carry-on bag for the 2 night visit to Hiroshima. One piece per person. Large luggage is not permitted to travel with you on the train.

Included meals: Breakfast and Lunch

Accommodation: Hiroshima

DAY 9 - HIROSHIMA PEACE MEMORIAL PARK & MIYAJIMA

Hiroshima is infamously the site of one of the two nuclear bombs detonated by the United States in August 1945 at the end of WW2, causing mass destruction and horrific loss of life. Today, we will head out to Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park, one of the most prominent features of the city, covering some 120,000 square metres. Its trees, lawns and walking paths are in stark contrast to the surrounding downtown area. Central to the park is the Peace Memorial Museum, displaying a history of Hiroshima and the advent of the nuclear bomb. The Hiroshima Orizuru Tower is located beside the A-Bomb Dome in Hiroshima. The 50m tall tower is one of the few tall buildings around the Peace Memorial Park and offers a great view of the surroundings, including the less commonly seen view of the A-Bomb Dome from above.

This afternoon, after lunch in a local restaurant together, we will transfer to Miyajima-Guchi. Here we will board a local ferry to Miyajima, to enjoy a walking tour of the Itsukushima Shrine. The shrine and its torii gate are unique for being built over water, seemingly floating in the sea during high tide. After sightseeing, we will return to our hotel in Hiroshima for an evening at leisure.

Included meals: Breakfast and Lunch

Accommodation: Hiroshima

DAY 10 - BULLET TRAIN TO MISHIMA & LAKE YAMANAKA

After breakfast, we will transfer to Hiroshima Station for our journey north through Japan. Here, we will board the bullet train first heading at for Nagoya, where we will connect onwards to Mishima.

Upon arrival in Mishima, we will be transferred to the ryokan at scenic Lake Yamanak. After check-in, dinner will be served at the hotel.

Included meals: Breakfast and Dinner

Accommodation: Lake Yamanaka

DAY 11 - MT. FUJI & LAKE ASHI

This morning, we will visit the iconic Mount Fuji – Japan's highest and most prominent mountain. Mount Fuji is divided into ten stations, the first station at the foot of the mountain and the tenth station being the summit. Paved roads go as far as the fifth station, around 1,400-2,400 meters above sea level. Alternatively, you can choose to visit the Fuji Visitor Centre. An information desk on the first floor provides details about climbing and weather conditions, as well as about tourist attractions around the mountain. On the second floor there is a restaurant and an observation deck with views onto Mount Fuji.

Lake Ashi is one of the principle attractions of the Hakone area. Created by volcanic activity, it lies at approximately 2,380 feet above sea level. We will board a leisurely boat cruise on the picturesque lake, framed by the majestic mountain landscape. For those who are not afraid of heights, we will also visit Mt. Komagatake – a 1,637 meter volcano mountain rising above Lake Tazawa's eastern edge. Hop on the aerial cableway for a journey up and down Mt. Komagatake, providing you with a sweeping view of celebrated Hakone National Park and Mt. Fuji.

This afternoon, we'll also visit the Hakone Open-Air Museum, home to hundreds of modern and contemporary art masterpieces. Sculptures from the likes of Rodin, Moore and other masters are scattered throughout the sprawling 17-acre compound. Additionally, there are four indoor exhibition halls, including the Picasso Pavilion, which houses over 300 of his creations. Late afternoon, we will return to the ryokan, where dinner will be served.

Included meals: Breakfast and Dinner

Accommodation: Lake Yamanaka

DAY 12 - KATSUNUMA WINE REGION & TO TOKYO

After breakfast, we will transfer to the Yamanashi region and visit a winery. Katsunuma lies in the beautiful countryside north of Mount Fuji. It is one of the Japan's most famous fruit growing areas, where grapes, peaches and plums are grown in abundance. The Katsunuma area is home to 31 wineries, both large and small, and 27% of Japanese wine is produced here.

We'll have lunch in a local restaurant as we head back to the hotel in Tokyo. After check-in, the evening is at leisure to explore the city.

Included meals: Breakfast and Lunch

Accommodation: Tokyo

DAY 13 - TOKYO AT LEISURE

Day at leisure to explore all that Tokyo has to offer! Perhaps spend another day sightseeing, shopping and taking in the sights and sounds of the bustling metropolis.

This evening, we will meet up as a group once again for our farewell dinner to round off our Japan experience.

Included meals: Breakfast and Farewell Dinner

Accommodation: Tokyo

DAY 14 - FAREWELL TO TOKYO & HOME...

After breakfast today say farewell to Tokyo until next time... You will be transferred to Narita Airport by shared airport limousine bus.

Included meals: Breakfast

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ATOL Protection
- For UK guests, return economy flights to/from LHR are included in the cost of the journey. For US/International guests, international flights are not included - please arrange your own international flights. Regional UK airport departures may be available - please ask at the time of booking. Supplements may apply.
- Meet & Greet at Tokyo Narita Airport on arrival and airport shuttle transfers as detailed in the itinerary
- Accommodation as detailed in the itinerary, or similar
- Transportation in an air-conditioned, deluxe vehicle and train travel as detailed in the itinerary
- Meals as detailed in the itinerary
- All activities, visits and excursions as detailed in the itinerary
- Experienced English speaking tour guides
- Tour Director from The Big Journey Company as well as the local tour guide (subject to minimum group size of 15 being reached)

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Drinks
- Gratuities
- All entrance fees to non-stipulated attractions
- Visas, travel insurance
- Any personal items and anything not mentioned under included in price above
- Any meals not mentioned in itinerary
- Any optional activities offered

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Please note: some hotels may vary but any alternative hotels offered will be of a comparable standard.
- Please let The Big Journey Company know prior to travelling if you have any medical needs or take any medication that we need to be made aware of to ensure that you have a safe and pleasant journey.
- Check in is after 2-3pm and check out is before 10am unless otherwise specified in the itinerary.
- Cancellation 90 - 0 days prior to departure cancellation fee is 100%. It is your responsibility to ensure the correct travel insurance in place to protect you against the need to cancel your holiday.
- A non-refundable deposit is due at the time of booking. Full balance will be due 14 weeks prior to departure.
- All passengers must have valid travel insurance prior to travelling (to include but not limited to health insurance and cancellation insurance).
- Further terms and conditions apply and will be provided upon request or at the time of booking.
- The Big Journey Company reserves the right to withdraw any offer prior to accepting a reservation request. This does not affect your statutory rights.

BOOK YOUR JOURNEY

Choose from the list of dates below

Call to Book

0844 3350 197

Monday to Friday 09:00 - 18:00 GMT