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VACATIONS

16 Day Inspiring Japan

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From revered Mount Fuji to the charm of ancient Kyoto and the buzz of hectic Tokyo, you'll get an in-depth look at the real Japan.

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TOUR ITINERARY



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TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1

Destination Home ✈️ Osaka

Meals included

Hotel 4 ★ Hotel Hankyu Respire Osaka, or similar

Today, board your flight for Japan! Upon arrival to Kansai International Airport please make your own way to Hotel Hankyu Respire Osaka.

Your journey through this magical land of contrasts begins in Osaka, a vibrant city renowned for its food culture. Known as *tenka no daidokoro* (the nation's kitchen), it's a dream for foodies. Try some of its famed street food like *takoyaki* (octopus and pickled ginger in batter), *kushikatsu* (deep-fried meat and vegetable skewers) or Osaka-style *okonomiyaki* (a delicious savoury pancake).

With friendly locals, it's the perfect welcome to this lovely country.

Arrival & check-in: Please note there are two international airports in Osaka.

Kansai International Airport (KIX) to Hotel Hankyu Respire Osaka is accessible by train. Simply take the JR to Osaka Station which costs 430 Yen per person for the 20 minute trip. From JR to Osaka Station it's an easy 180m walk to the hotel. Alternatively, you can take a taxi from Kansai International Airport (KIX) which costs approximately 23,000 Yen per taxi for the 50km ride.

If arriving at Osaka International Airport (ITM), the transfer to the Hotel Hankyu is by subway and train. The train will take approx 30 minutes at a cost of 500 Yen. If needed, you will find a handy Osaka International Airport (ITM) transfer planner [here](#).

Travellers will be arriving at various times throughout the day. If arriving prior to check-in time (3pm), you are welcome to leave your luggage with hotel reception and explore your surroundings until check-in becomes available, as there are generally no scheduled activities for today.

Please note: Some flights may depart Australia the night before

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TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 2

Destination Osaka 🚗 Kyoto

Meals included Breakfast

Hotel 3 ★ Hotel Wing International Kyoto, or similar

There will be a welcome meeting at the hotel this morning to discuss some tour logistics and to give you a chance to meet your fellow travellers.

We'll tour central Osaka today, starting with a tour of the extensive grounds of Osaka Castle, an important historic monument of feudal Japan. It was built in the 16th century by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, one of Japan's most famous warlords. At the time of completion it was the largest castle in the country.

We'll go to the Namba area and see Shinsaibashi, a shopping district with everything from fast fashion to luxury brands. The flashy district of Dōtonbori is a hive of activity; a shopping, food and entertainment hotspot. You'll find a host of gastronomic delights here, from Michelin-starred establishments to exciting street food – no surprise given the city's strong food heritage. With its colourful neon lights and signs, it's home to one of Osaka's most photographed icons, the neon Glico running man sign. Dōtonbori Street runs parallel to the eponymous canal and is a great place to pick up souvenirs.

We'll head for magical Kyoto and visit Fushimi Inari Shrine on arrival. This important Shinto shrine in southern Kyoto was dedicated to Inari, the god of rice and sake, by the Hata clan in the eighth century. A magical path of over 5000 vibrant orange *torii* gates winds its way through the hills behind the shrine.

A contrast to bustling Osaka, Kyoto showcases the essence of traditional Japanese culture and rich history with its timeless charm. Kyoto is considered by many to be the jewel in Japan's crown and one of the only cities in Japan to escape destruction during World War II, leaving its countless relics intact.

Perhaps stroll the streets of Gion, Kyoto's most famous geisha district. With any luck you might spot a geisha, otherwise known as a geiko or maiko.

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TOUR ITINERARY

OPTIONAL TOUR - KYOTO BY NIGHT

Enjoy an evening walking tour of downtown Kyoto – from the heart of the city's geisha culture in Gion to the tiny backstreets and bars of Ponto-chō. Experience Gion's atmospheric streetscape at night and catch glimpses of geisha on their way to work. Visit neighborhood shrines illuminated at night and stop at a bar and sample some local sake and food.

DAY 3

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Destination | Kyoto |
| Meals included | Breakfast |
| Hotel | 3 ★ Hotel Wing International Kyoto, or similar |

We'll see the sights of ancient Kyoto this morning, starting with Tofukuji Temple, one of Japan's oldest and most famous temples. Its grand *sanmon* entrance gate, the oldest in Japan, is a National Treasure. This vast complex includes 24 sub-temples and four distinctly different gardens, each facing in a different direction. Many of these buildings date back to the Muromachi period (1338-1573) and are shining examples of Zen architecture of the time.

Nearby Heian Jingu Shrine is a relatively young sacred location – built in 1895 – but this Shinto shrine is very impressive, with its enormous *torii* (sacred gate) standing almost 25 metres high.

We'll continue onto some of Kyoto's most iconic sites, like Kinkakuji (Golden Pavilion). This is a Zen temple and UNESCO World Heritage Site, with two floors covered entirely in thin layers of pure gold, set within a beautiful classical Zen garden.

We'll stop for lunch at Arashiyama before a mesmerising experience – standing amongst the soaring stalks of bamboo at Arashiyama Bamboo Grove. It's green, peaceful and the seemingly endless boughs make for a serene experience, even with the tourist crowds. Take in the sound of rustling bamboo as you stroll these paths – if there's a bit of wind, the groves will gently sway back and forth which only adds to the magic.

Please note - only 1 optional activity can be chosen on this day.

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TOUR ITINERARY

OPTIONAL TOUR - GEISHA DINNER EXPERIENCE

A very special once-in-a-lifetime Japan experience – meet a maiko from Kyoto's exclusive geisha community. Enjoy a dance and music performance and learn about the life of a modern-day geisha in a private session in a traditional Kyoto townhouse, and enjoy a traditional Kyoto-style *kaiseki* meal.

OPTIONAL TOUR - TRADITIONAL SHOPS AND MARKETS OF KYOTO

Start with a walk through Nishiki Market where everything from fresh produce to Japanese green teas and pickles are sold. On the way, explore traditional fan shops, chopstick shops and one of the best knife shops in Kyoto. Wander through the famous shopping arcade of Teramachi, discovering incense shops, Japanese woodblock print shops, ceramics and traditional tea shops, as well as the best of Japan's contemporary fashion – both mainstream and quirky!

DAY 4

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Destination | Kyoto 🚗 Naruto Strait 🚗 Takamatsu |
| Meals included | Breakfast |
| Hotel | 3 ★ Dormy Inn Takamatsu, or similar |

We'll travel to Naruto Strait, and tour the Naruto whirlpools off the Shikoku coast, the smallest of Japan's four main islands. These tidal whirlpools, created by the fast tidal current, are a captivating sight on the surface of this narrow strait. In ideal conditions they can measure up to about 20 metres in diameter. The tidal current is fastest during a full moon and the roar is a spectacular sound.

We'll then head for Takamatsu, on the north coast of Shikoku island. This scenic port city is known for its udon noodles, a Japanese favourite.

Touring the open-air museum of Shikoku Mura is the perfect chance to explore Japan's history and heritage, with a glimpse of old village life. Over 20 restored traditional buildings and structures, built in the Shikoku style and mainly from the Edo and Meiji periods, were relocated here from all over the island.

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TOUR ITINERARY

This hillside village includes farmhouses, storehouses, production workshops for soy sauce and sugar, a thatched kabuki theatre and a vine suspension bridge made of vine and wood. There is also a small, modern art gallery.

We will also visit the Ritsurin Garden, an exquisite traditional garden. Built during the Edo period – when the city was a castle town controlled by the Matsudaira clan – it's a National Treasure and arguably one of the most beautiful gardens in the country.

There are six ponds and 13 buildings in this tranquil oasis, including a lush lotus pond and the Okedoi-no-Taki waterfall. Pine-covered Mount Shiun at the garden's western border provides a gorgeous backdrop. There is also a tea house and various folk art and craft exhibits.

DAY 5

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Destination | Takamatsu 🚗 Matsuyama 🚗 Beppu |
| Meals included | Breakfast |
| Hotel | 3 ★ Beppu Kamenoi Hotel, or similar |

This morning, on the way to the picturesque castle town of Matsuyama, we'll stop at Matsuyama Castle for a photo opportunity, followed by a brief visit to the Ishiteiji Temple, one of the 88 pilgrim temples and a popular tourist attraction. After, we will head onto the historic Dogo Onsen area for another photo stop and a chance to get some lunch.

At Misaki, we'll board a ferry to the *onsen* town of Beppu, known for its spectacular hot springs. It's on the island of Kyushu, Japan's third-largest island.

DAY 6

| | |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Destination | Beppu 🚗 Nagasaki |
| Meals included | Breakfast |
| Hotel | 3 ★ Dormy Inn Nagasaki, or similar |

Kyushu Island is *onsen* country, with hot springs dotted all over this island. The city of Beppu is home to over 2,000 hot springs but this morning we'll visit the most bizarre. The Hells of Beppu are a spooky sight – each hot spring bubbles and steams somewhat violently. These *jigoku* (hells) can reach temperatures of about 98 degrees. They are for viewing, not bathing!

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TOUR ITINERARY

Each 'hell' is distinctly different. The largest of the seven pools, Umi (Sea) Jigoku, earned its name for its vivid turquoise colour. The oldest hell, Chinoike (Blood Lake) Jigoku is – you guessed it – blood red, a magnificent sight with steam rising from it. Undoubtedly the most scary pool is Oniyama Jigoku, with crocodiles bred and kept here.

We'll travel south to Nagasaki, one of two cities in Japan destroyed by an atomic bomb during World War II.

On arrival we'll tour the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum and Peace Park. The museum is a difficult but important visit, with photos and other relics from the period that were found after the bomb. The harrowing gallery displays stories compiled from survivors. 75,000 people lost their lives in the attack and its aftermath.

Nagasaki Peace Park is next to the museum, located near the hypocentre of the atomic bomb blast. In the Zone of Hopes, the towering Peace Statue at the back of the park points up to the sky with its right hand and its left arm is horizontal to represent the wish for peace. On either side of the statue are two small shrines draped with origami crane garlands, in memory of *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*. There are five zones in this grand park, a serene place for reflection.

OPTIONAL TOUR - RAMEN DINNER AND NAGASAKI NIGHT VIEWS

Stroll through central Nagasaki in the evening, stopping for a bowl of *champon* ramen noodles, Nagasaki-style. Champon is a classic Nagasaki dish and reflects the city's cosmopolitan past and history with early Chinese and Western traders. Afterwards, head up Mount Inasa for stunning panoramic views of this attractive port city at night.

DAY 7

| | |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Destination | Nagasaki |
| Meals included | Breakfast |
| Hotel | 3 ★ Dormy Inn Nagasaki, or similar |

Today's sightseeing starts with Glover Garden, for an insight into Nagasaki's cosmopolitan past. This open air museum has six Western-style buildings from all over the city that were relocated here – grand mansions that were once home to Nagasaki's foreign residents, such as European diplomats and foreign traders. Take in the lovely views over the harbour.

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TOUR ITINERARY

We'll visit the Twenty-Six Martyrs Monument, dedicated to 26 missionaries and Christians executed here in the 16th century, when missionary activities were prohibited. They became saints in the 20th century.

Next stop is the city's major Shinto shrine, Suwa Shrine, that sits atop a hill overlooking Nagasaki. There are 277 stone steps leading up the mountain to the shrine complex. Built in 1614, it features ornate animal sculptures, including the *komainu* (guard dogs).

We'll drive past Dejima, the old Dutch trading post, and stop for a photo at Oura Church, said to be the oldest church in Japan.

DAY 8

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Destination | Nagasaki 🚗 Hiroshima |
| Meals included | Breakfast |
| Hotel | 3 ★ Washington Hotel Hiroshima, or similar |

We'll travel from Nagasaki to Hiroshima today, with a lunch stop on the way.

On arrival, we'll visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, home to the ruins of the Genbaku Dome, one of the few buildings that were left standing near ground zero. In Hiroshima today, locals have mixed feelings about the UNESCO World Heritage Site structure: some see it as a reminder of war, while others consider it a tribute to the lost that ensures we'll never forget the tragic events that took place here.

The flame in the cenotaph is intended to burn until the last nuclear weapon has been destroyed. The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, located in the Peace Memorial Park, is a sobering experience for those who wish to explore further.

OPTIONAL TOUR - OKONOMIYAKI DINNER

Tonight, you will be able to enjoy an *okonomiyaki* dinner. Okonomiyaki is a savoury Japanese pancake, famed in Hiroshima for its layering of ingredients including batter, cabbage and pork to which you can add optional items such as squid, octopus or more vegetables. The duration of this activity is one hour and commences at 1:00pm.

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TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 9

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Destination | Hiroshima 🚆 Miyajima Island 🚆 Hiroshima 🚆 Himeji 🚆 Osaka |
| Meals included | Breakfast |
| Hotel | 3 ★ Comfort Hotel Shin-Osaka, or similar |

There is an early start this morning for a full day of incredible sightseeing. We'll take the ferry to Miyajima Island this morning. Known for its lush forests, ancient shrines and temples, and freely roaming sika deer, this island is just as popular with Japanese tourists as it is with international visitors.

Just offshore we'll spy a 'floating' vermilion torii, which becomes partially submerged at high tide. It marks the entrance to Itsukushima Shrine, which was first built in the 12th century. We'll tour the shrine, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

We'll travel to the Kurashiki area where we will make a brief stop for lunch, then continue onto Himeji for a tour of magnificent Himeji Castle, the largest surviving example of a traditional Japanese castle.

Comprising 83 buildings, the white roof of this UNESCO-listed complex is said to evoke the wings of a heron taking flight, hence the popular name 'Shirasagi-jō', meaning White Heron Castle. Himeji Castle is said to be the most visited in Japan, and the site offers some wonderful views of surrounding Himeji city.

Japan's world-famous bullet train, a shining example of this country's technology and engineering prowess, is an absolute must-do. We'll take the *shinkansen* to Osaka.

OPTIONAL TOUR - SUKIYAKI DINNER EXPERIENCE

Experience one of Japan's most classic meals – *sukiyaki* – in one of Osaka's traditional restaurants in the heart of the city. Enjoy fine slices of wagyu beef, silken tofu and fresh vegetables lightly cooked in a hot pot and dipped in sauce before eating.

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TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 10

| | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Destination | Osaka 🚗 Kanazawa |
| Meals included | Breakfast |
| Hotel | 4 ★ Agora Kanazawa, or similar |

Today we'll travel to the city of Kanazawa, on the northwestern shore of Honshu, once the base for the powerful Maeda clan. During World War II, Kanazawa was Japan's second largest city (after Kyoto) to escape destruction by air raids. This means that parts of the old castle town, such as the Nagamachi samurai district and *chaya* entertainment districts, have survived.

On arrival, we'll tour Kenrokuen Garden, heralded as one of the three most beautiful gardens in Japan. Developed over the course of more than 200 years, starting in 1620, the garden contains almost 9000 trees and 200 plant species.

We'll enjoy a walking tour of Nagamachi samurai district and the Higashi Chaya District, famous for its well-preserved wooden teahouses where geisha perform.

OPTIONAL TOUR - GOLD LEAF CRAFT EXPERIENCE

Learn about the history of gold leaf in Japan and how it's used to embellish fine lacquerware, ceramics, chopsticks and modern-day items. Create your own design and apply gold leaf to your choice of material – whether chopsticks, lacquerware, glassware or even washi stationery and postcards.

OPTIONAL TOUR - IZAKAYA PUB EXPERIENCE

Enjoy the relaxed atmosphere of an *izakaya* pub – Japan's traditional drinking place where friends and colleagues get together to catch up and socialise over traditional Japanese food and drinks. Kanazawa's proximity to the Sea of Japan means that fresh seafood (particularly crab) is a key feature of izakaya in this city.

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TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 11

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Destination | Kanazawa 🚗 Matsumoto |
| Meals included | Breakfast |
| Hotel | 4 ★ Matsumoto Hotel Kagetsu , or similar |

Step back in time to see the small, historical village of Shirakawa-go, a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in the Japanese Alps. Enjoy a walk through this village to see the traditional thatched houses (*gassho-zukuri*) and beautiful mountain scenery.

Then we'll head to the city of Takayama, nestled in the Hida mountains.

This city still retains a traditional feel, especially in its beautifully preserved old merchant district. Here you'll find quaint, old latticed wooden buildings and Sannomachi Street, with pretty homes, restaurants and sake breweries. Enjoy a walking tour of the old town before travelling to Matsumoto.

OPTIONAL TOUR - SAKE TASTING EXPERIENCE

Sample some fine sake produced from Takayama's clear alpine waters in an old sake brewery located in the heart of Takayama's old town area. Experience different sake styles from aged forms to newly released varieties made from the latest rice harvest. Enjoy the traditional rustic ambience of a merchant's house from Japan's feudal era.

OPTIONAL TOUR - BENTO LUNCH EXPERIENCE

Experience a classic Japanese bento, served lunch-box style in a traditional building near the town's old centre. The ingredients used are sourced from Takayama's farms and served in lacquered boxes.

DAY 12

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Destination | Matsumoto 🚗 Mt Fuji 🚗 Lake Kawaguchiko |
| Meals included | Breakfast, Dinner |
| Hotel | 4 ★ Fuji Kawaguchiko Resort Hotel, or similar |

This morning, we'll take a tour of historic Matsumoto Castle and the charming old town area surrounding the castle.

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TOUR ITINERARY

Nakamachi Street is a quaint, charming street with well-preserved old buildings, like restored Edo-period storehouses. Here you'll find craft shops, a sake brewery, restored Japanese *ryokan* (inns) and restaurants. This used to be the main street when Matsumoto was a castle town. Across the river, pedestrian-friendly Nawate Street is a great place to pick up quirky souvenirs and snacks.

Matsumoto Castle, with its wide moat, is also known as 'Crow Castle' due to its dramatic black exterior. The *donjon* (keep) – Japan's oldest remaining wooden keep, completed around 1593 – is listed as a National Treasure of Japan. On a clear day, the backdrop of the Japanese Alps is the perfect touch on this majestic setting.

It's then about a three-hour journey to the revered peak, Mount Fuji, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This enduring cultural symbol has been considered sacred since ancient times. It's an imposing sight, standing 3,776 metres high.

We'll travel to Mount Fuji 5th Station, about halfway up the mountain, at an elevation of 2,300 metres. You'll savour spectacular views over the Fuji Five Lakes and Hakone National Park.

You'll be staying in the Lake Kawaguchiko area. This is the most accessible of the Fuji Five Lakes; popular sightseeing spots for admiring the dramatic peak. Iconic Mount Fuji is notoriously shy, but in clear conditions the views from these spots are stunning. This lake is also home to a cherry blossom festival held during the season, one of the most popular in the country.

DAY 13

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Destination | Lake Kawaguchiko 🚗 Tokyo |
| Meals included | Breakfast |
| Hotel | 3 ★ Agora Place Asakusa, or similar |

We'll tour the Lake Kawaguchiko area for more stunning views of this revered mountain. Depending on weather conditions, we'll visit Fuji-san World Heritage Visitor Centre or Oishi Park on the north side of the lake.

Enjoy a visit to Itchiku Kubota Art Museum to learn about the revival of the lost art of Tsujigahana silk dyeing for kimonos, thanks to celebrated 20th-century textile artist Kubota Itchiku. This serene complex in the wooded hills, ensconced in nature with extensive gardens and a traditional tea room, is home to a vast collection of the artist's works.

Then it's onto Tokyo, famed metropolis, arguably one of the most extraordinary capital cities on the planet. Japan's eclectic capital is a city of wonder. The Tokyo metropolitan area spreads over three prefectures with 38 million residents.

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TOUR ITINERARY

On the way to our hotel, if conditions are clear, we'll stop at Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building for late afternoon panoramic city views over this energetic city.

OPTIONAL TOUR - ASAKUSA WITH KARAOKE EXPERIENCE

Celebrate the end of your Japan adventure with a casual meal in one Asakusa's backstreet eateries, followed by a visit to a karaoke bar for that quintessential Japan experience!

DAY 14

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Destination | Tokyo |
| Meals included | Breakfast |
| Hotel | 4 ★ Hotel MyStays Premier Narita, or similar |

In a city of such frenetic pace, a stop at the charming Asakusa neighbourhood is a refreshing taste of older Tokyo. It's home to the ancient seventh-century Sensō-ji Temple. Built in the Asuka era, it's the oldest and most important Buddhist temple in Tokyo – be prepared for crowds! It's known for its imposing entrance gate, Kaminarimon (also known as 'Thunder Gate'), with its magnificent red lantern.

We'll walk along Nakamise, the shopping street connecting the front gate and main hall of the temple. It's a wonderful atmosphere, with food stalls and souvenir shops, selling authentic Japanese items like traditional crafts. You'll find great souvenirs here.

Then, foodies will be in heaven at Tsukiji Outer Market, a shopping district adjacent to the enormous former wholesale fish market. This lively area is home to everything food-related – fresh ingredients, street food vendors, kitchen utensils. There's great sushi and other restaurants around here, too.

We'll explore the outer grounds of the Imperial Palace, the primary residence of the Emperor of Japan. Previously home to samurai warriors, it's a sprawling complex with beautiful 17th-century parks in the heart of the city. Built on the site of the old Edo castle, it is surrounded by a large park, moats and massive stone walls. Come cherry blossom season, it is blanketed in a sea of pink blooms.

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TOUR ITINERARY

Our day's touring will finish in Ginza, an upmarket area with high-end shopping, galleries and restaurants. This is a superb spot for people watching, given the sophisticated crowd that frequent this elegant neighbourhood. It was the first Western-style shopping district in the city and you can still find some of Tokyo's original department stores here.

We'll travel to our hotel at Narita International Airport.

DAY 15

| | |
|----------------|---------|
| Destination | Tokyo ✈ |
| Meals included | |
| Accommodation | N/A |

Enjoy one last delicious breakfast this morning, before your Japanese adventure comes to an end.

We hope you've enjoyed this extraordinary journey.

Departure & check-out: Mystays Premier Narita Hotel offers a complimentary airport shuttle transfers throughout the day, to Narita Airport only. The shuttle departs every hour and takes approximately 15 minutes to reach the airport. Some shuttles need to be pre-booked. Please confirm directly with the hotels reception upon check in. Please note, if you are booking your own flights, you will need to fly home from Narita Airport in order to use this transfer. If your flights depart from Haneda Airport you will need to make your own way to the airport, which is approx 1 hour from Narita.

Travellers will be departing at various times throughout the day. Check-out time is generally from 10am-12pm. You are welcome to leave your luggage at hotel reception and spend your final moments of free time exploring the area or, alternatively, please speak with hotel staff if you would like to extend your check-out time. This service is subject to availability and will likely come at an additional cost.

DAY 16

| | |
|----------------|--------|
| Destination | ✈ Home |
| Meals included | |
| Accommodation | N/A |

Arrive home today. We hope you've been *inspired*.

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TOUR ITINERARY

Inclusions

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return international airfares with a full service airline
- 14 nights in quality 3-4 star hotels throughout Japan
- All Transportation - coach, rail and boat
- Bullet train from Himeji to Osaka
- Activities indicated in the itinerary including entry fees
- Meals: Breakfast daily, 1 dinner, as per itinerary
- 1 English speaking tour leader – Will accompany the group throughout
- All accommodation as listed
- All entrance fees to the sites listed (except optionals)
- All activities listed in the itinerary unless a paid optional
- Comfortable, dedicated private transportation throughout

SIGHTSEEING HIGHLIGHTS

- Osaka – Visit the expansive grounds of Osaka Castle, a grand monument of feudal Japan
- Osaka – Stroll through lively, colourful Dōtonbori and Shinsaibashi
- Kyoto – See this ancient capital's most famous temples and shrines – Kinkakuji, Heian Jingu and Fushimi Inari
- Kyoto – Revel in the lush, peaceful green splendour of Arashiyama Bamboo Grove
- Naruto – See some of the greatest whirlpools in the world in the Naruto Strait
- Takamatsu – Explore exquisite Ritsurin Garden, a National Treasure
- Matsuyama – View beautiful Matsuyama Castle, one of Japan's few original surviving castles
- Matsuyama - See the history of the oldest hot springs in Japan - Dogo Onsen
- Beppu – Tour the Hells of Beppu, a bizarre series of hot springs
- Nagasaki – Discover the devastating effects of the atomic bomb at the Atomic Bomb Museum
- Nagasaki – See the grand European mansions of Nagasaki's past at Glover Garden
- Hiroshima – Visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and Genbaku Dome to understand the tragedies of Japan's past
- Miyajima – Tour the 12th-century Itsukushima Shrine and see the famous floating torii gate
- Himeji – Explore the enormous, UNESCO-listed 'White Heron' Himeji Castle
- Himeji – Ride the iconic Japanese bullet train between Himeji and Osaka
- Kanazawa – Visit celebrated Kenrokuen Garden, ranked as one of Japan's top three gardens
- Kanazawa – Step back in time in the Higashi Chaya district, where geisha still live and perform today

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TOUR ITINERARY

- Shirakawa-go – Admire more than 100 traditional thatched houses in this historical alpine village
- Takayama – Experience the rustic charm of this quaint city with a walk through its beautifully-preserved old town
- Matsumoto – Tour the dramatic black castle and see Japan's oldest remaining wooden keep
- Mount Fuji – Savour the views from halfway up this iconic mountain at the 5th Station
- Kawaguchiko Lake – Admire the dramatic, imposing beauty of Mount Fuji
- Tokyo – Enjoy the buzz and energy of one of the world's great cities
- Tokyo – Get a bird's eye view from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building observation deck, 202 metres high
- Tokyo – Enjoy a walking tour of Asakusa, Japan's oldest temple Sensō-ji Temple, and atmospheric Nakamise
- Tokyo – Visit the outer grounds of the Imperial Palace, the primary residence of the Emperor of Japan
- Tokyo – Enjoy people watching in upmarket Ginza, an elegant area with high-end shopping and restaurants
- Tokyo – Visit Tsukiji Outer Market, a haven for foodies

Fine Print

BOOK WITH CONFIDENCE

Inspiring Vacations has been globally recognised and awarded for its handling of COVID-19 during the pandemic. The safety and wellbeing of our guests is our highest concern during this time of uncertainty, and we are continuously monitoring the evolving COVID-19 situation.

We have adopted the advice of the WHO to ensure all customers can travel with the knowledge of how to travel safely and with confidence.

Australian owned and operated with 100% Australian Customer Service support

We are proudly 100% Australian owned and operated, with our head office located in Melbourne, Victoria. When you make your booking, you will receive dedicated and ongoing support from our team of travel professionals throughout your booking, up until you are due to depart.

Flexible Date Change Option

The information provided in this document is subject to change and may be affected by unforeseen events outside the control of Inspiring Vacations. Where changes to your itinerary or bookings occur, appropriate advice or instructions will be sent to your email address.



TOUR ITINERARY

Book now, change later with our Flexible Date Change option. You may select this \$99pp option at time of purchase, giving travellers the flexibility to change your date without penalty (subject to availability, less third party costs incurred, plus any applicable surcharges for the new date selected).

Date change must be requested prior to 65 days before your original selected departure date*. Once inside 65 days of departure, date changes are not permitted.

*some packages may have a varied period in which you can request a date change due to limitations with the third-party provider.

Airfare Inclusive packages - If you are purchasing an airfare inclusive package, the Flexible Date Change option applies to the tour portion of your package. Airfare flexibility will be subject to the airline's fare rules and a change fee plus any fare difference may be applicable.

Please refer to our 'Book with Confidence' section for terms and conditions.

The Flexible Date Change option does not cover cost incurred for components not fulfilled by Inspiring Vacations or in the event extra services have been booked with Inspiring Vacations outside of the standard package, including but not limited to airfares, pre/post accommodation or insurance.

Cooling off period

If you change your mind within 7 days of making your booking online, you can request a refund of your initial deposit payment as part of our cooling off period.

Once your purchase date falls outside of the 7 day period, our standard terms and conditions will apply. Please ensure that any request to cancel your booking is received via email to support@inspiringvacations.com, including the reason for cancellation.



TOUR ITINERARY

HOW TO BOOK & PAYMENTS

Deposit & Payments

- Secure your package with only a \$99 deposit per person.
- Pay a 2nd instalment of \$1500 per person within 28 days.
- You will then be invoiced for final payment 90 days prior to departure.

Booking Process

- Select the purple 'Reserve Your Seat' tab to begin your booking (you must 'Sign Up' first by entering your email and creating a password)
- Then select the purple 'Book now' tab of the tour you have selected
- Select your Departure Date, Departure City, Number of Passengers, Room Configuration, any Upgrade Options, and enter any Special Requests
- Click the purple 'Proceed to Secure Checkout' tab
- Enter your credit card or PayPal details to secure your deposit/payment
- Once your order is complete, you will be prompted to complete a Booking Form so that we can fulfil your booking
- Your booking is confirmed once your Booking Form is submitted and you can begin the countdown to your Inspiring Vacation!
- You will then be allocated and contacted by one of our Dedicated Support Agent's (within 48 hours) who will support you right up until you return from your journey

FLIGHTS, UPGRADES AND EXTENSIONS

Airfare Information

- Full-service airline used which will include meals, luggage and entertainment
- Flights may not be direct and may include a maximum of two connections.
- If you would like to travel with a preferred airline, please ensure you mention this in the special request field. Please note that appropriate fare and tax difference will be applicable in order to confirm your request.
- Adelaide customers will likely require two stops in either direction and will attract an airfare surcharge;
Adelaide Surcharge - \$250
- All tickets will include 20 kilos checked baggage per person, along with 7 kilos of hand luggage.
- Despite the airlines baggage allowance, we recommend travelling with 20 kilos per person due to restrictions with internal flights (where applicable), as well as coach and train transportation. Also, you will be responsible for handling your luggage at all times as the services of porters is not included. If travelling over this amount, you

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TOUR ITINERARY

will be liable for any excess baggage fees enforced by the airline, payable direct.

- Once ticketed, flights are non-refundable; any changes will be subject to the airline rules and change fees
- Full names as per passport (including all middle names) are required
- Any airline schedule changes or cancellations are beyond our control

Premium Economy or Business Class upgrades

- Premium Economy - Not available.
- Business Class upgrade available from an additional \$6,500 per person (subject to availability).

Please specify this as a 'Special Request' when completing your booking and you will be quoted for the additional fare. In the event your selection is unavailable, or that you are dissatisfied with the quote, you will be provided with a full refund.

Land Only discount

To purchase this tour as a Land Only itinerary, please [CLICK HERE](#)

Extending Your Stay

Some customers like to enhance their holiday by extending their stay pre- and/or post-tour or including a stopover in another destination. If you wish to do so, please follow these steps:

1. Once you have logged in to your account, click on 'Book Now' and complete the required fields until you reach the 'Special Requests' free text field.
2. Here, please specify your preferred flight arrangements and/or preferred airline. Be sure to mention if you would like us to also quote additional nights' accommodation, with the number of nights needed.

By choosing to extend your stay, please note that a supplement of \$150 per person, plus applicable fare and tax differences will apply. We will contact you via email with a quote and proposed flight itinerary, and then proceed with collecting the additional payment required to confirm your request.

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TOUR ITINERARY

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Fitness Requirements

While the tour itinerary should give you some guidance and overview to the expected requirements, to determine if this tour is right for you we categorise each of our tours in terms of their intensity. These guidelines are to ensure that each tour group is conducted as expected and to ensure the overall satisfaction of all Inspiring Vacations customers.

As a general rule, portorage is not included, therefore at all times you are expected to handle your own luggage where help may not be available.

This particular tour is categorised as a “4”.

4 - Lively: This is considered a fast-paced tour. In order to explore as much as possible, this tour may require early starts and long travel days. One to two nights at one destination is standard. While some free time may be scheduled, most sightseeing is included throughout this tour. You will be required to move about unassisted, including getting on and off vehicles, walking up and down stairs and some activities will be conducted on uneven or steep terrain. You will be required to handle your own luggage. To ensure this trip is right for you, any physical ailments you may have must be disclosed at the time of booking to determine your suitability. If you have any form of walking aid, then this tour is not suitable.

Tipping

A friendly reminder that tipping is not included in your package. While tipping is not customary, it's of great significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels, inspires excellent service, and is an entrenched feature of the tourism industry across many destinations. You may also consider tipping your tour leader and driver for outstanding service throughout your trip. Suggested amount for your guide, 500Y per person per day. Remember, a tip is not compulsory and should only be given when you receive excellent service.

Accommodation

The accommodation listed is subject to change. Any changes will be of an equal or higher standard. Bedding configurations (double or twin) are requests only. All efforts will be made to meet your preferences, however any changes are beyond our control.

Single Supplement

Single supplement is \$2,125 per person in addition to the twin-share price.

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TOUR ITINERARY

Triple Share

Not available.

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is required to protect yourself against the unexpected.

We have partnered with nib to offer our customers competitive rates for their travel insurance. You can book comprehensive or budget cover simply by clicking [HERE](#) to arrange your policy.

Visa & Passport information

It is the traveller's responsibility to ensure they have a valid passport. The passport must be valid for a minimum of six months from the intended date of return.

Australian passport holders do not need a visa to travel to Japan, for stays less than 90 days.

Please note that these details are subject to change without notice. We recommend visiting <https://smartraveller.gov.au> for up to date information in terms of entry requirements.

Tour Documentation

Final documentation including, e-tickets and hotel details, will be provided approximately 30 days prior to travel.

Group Size

20-40 people

Trip Style - Group Tour

Our Group Tours offer unparalleled value for money and are the perfect style of travel for those on a budget, though still eager to pack as much in to their itinerary as possible. These tours tick all the boxes with an abundance of inclusions such as sightseeing highlights, expert tour guides, quality accommodation, transfers, coach transportation, some meals and more. Please note that the maximum group size will vary between deals and will be mentioned within the Fine Print of each deal page.

Children

Children must be 5 years old or above and share a room with parents at all times. Children are charged the same price as adults.

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TOUR ITINERARY

Tour Length

The total length of the tour in days includes time spent inflight and is subject to change, depending on the flight schedule. Please refer to the day-by-day itinerary for the time spent in your destination(s).

Luggage requirements for this tour

As the group will be travelling by coach predominantly and space is limited, we recommend that you limit your luggage to one suitcase along with a handbag/small backpack. When you travel via the shinkansen train, you can put any light hand luggage on the overhead racks if required.

While understanding that various airlines will have their own luggage requirements, please note that for the comfort of yourselves, as well as our local partners who assist you on the ground, we restrict the luggage allowance to no more than one suitcase at 20kg per person, plus a small backpack / carry on size bag.

In regards to size of the suitcases, to ensure that all luggage can be accommodated on-board, please ensure your travelling suitcase is ideally within 158cm (total dimension LxHxW). 158 cm is the maximum check-in baggage size for most airlines as well, without incurring an additional cost.

Since you are responsible for your own belongings and will be expected to carry them to and from the coach to your hotel, as well as manage them where there is train travel included, we suggest you pack as light as possible.

There will not always be porters available to assist in handling your luggage, therefore please expect that you may need to carry your bags at times and store them in the carriage. As a standard rule, please travel with no more than 20kg per person of baggage. This does not include carry on.

Cherry Blossoms

Please note: cherry blossoms are weather dependent and it is not guaranteed that they will be in bloom at the time of your arrival.

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TOUR ITINERARY

EXTRA SERVICES

You can enhance your holiday by arriving or departing before or after the tour, adding a stopover package en-route or booking a tour extension. On this tour you can choose from the following options:

Pre and post tour accommodation

- Pre-tour accommodation (Osaka): \$471 per room per night for double/twin/single including breakfast
- Post-tour accommodation (Tokyo): \$389 per room per night for double/twin/single including breakfast

Arrival and departure transfers

Should you wish to book a private arrival transfer in Osaka, please add this to your booking at the time of purchase

- Osaka - Airport Transfer to accommodation, max 3 passengers - \$311 per vehicle
- Tokyo - Airport shuttle included, please see day 15

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TOUR ITINERARY

OPTIONAL TOURS

To enhance your journey, we're offering a choice of the following optional activities:

- Kyoto by night (Day 2) - \$106
- Traditional shops & markets of Kyoto (Day 3) - \$84
- Geisha dinner experience (Day 3) - \$338
- Ramen dinner & Nagasaki night views (Day 6) - \$84
- Okonomiyaki dinner (Day 8) - \$60
- Sukiyaki dinner experience (Day 9) - \$89
- Gold leaf craft experience (Day 10) - \$43
- Izakaya pub experience (Day 10) - \$84
- Bento lunch experience (Day 11) - \$43
- Sake-tasting experience (Day 11) - \$54
- Asakusa with karaoke experience (Day 13) - \$89

Please note - On Day 3, please note only 1 option may be chosen, as the tours run simultaneously.

Optional tours can be selected once you have finalised your tour purchase and paid your deposit. When completing your Passenger Booking Form, you will be asked if you would like to add Optional Tours, where any applicable cost will be added to your final balance. If you choose not to select them at this time, you can choose to add them later by logging in to your Account online or speaking with your Dedicated Support Agent for assistance.

Please note that you must select your Optional Tours no later than 65 days before departure, after which you will be required to purchase them on tour. Please keep in mind that anything purchased on-tour is subject to availability and prices may vary as you will be paying in local currency. We appreciate your understanding.

Please note that transportation to and from each optional tour is not included in the price. You will be required to make your own way to the starting point of the optional tour, as well as back to your hotel. Your tour guide can provide you with the direction and guidance needed to make your own way.

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TOUR ITINERARY

EXCLUSIONS

- Arrival Transfer in Osaka
- Visas
- Travel insurance (compulsory)
- Tipping
- Anything not mentioned in the itinerary
- Optional activities
- Personal expenses

WHAT CLIMATE TO EXPECT

For more information on the weather in Japan, click [HERE](#).

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