



Self-Guided
Adventures
Japan

spring **10** - autumn **11**

歓迎



AWARD WINNING
JAPAN SPECIALIST



get beneath the surface

InsideJapan Tours

Self-Guided Adventures in Japan

“ A land of incredible diversity: modern yet steeped in custom; home of the friendliest of welcomes. A country of blazing neon lights and rugged mountains, coasts and valleys. ”



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InsideJapan Tours

Self-Guided Adventures in Japan

InsideJapan Tours is an award winning, dedicated team of Japan experts. We have all lived and worked in Japan and share a passion for this intriguing country.

For our Self-Guided Adventures we have drawn on our eight years of experience to design a range of unique and fascinating itineraries. The following pages showcase the wonderful diversity of Japan; a modern country with an ancient culture.

We have created these services for those who wish to travel independently but with the knowledge that their itinerary has been designed by experts, their accommodation pre-booked and carefully chosen, their transport tickets organised

and fully explained, and back up and support available every step of the way. These itineraries can be taken at any time of year and can be tailored to match your exact specifications.

We hope that you will enjoy travelling through our brochure as you journey from the wild open expanses of Hokkaido to the hidden gorges and valleys of Shikoku, via Tokyo, the world's largest metropolis and Kyoto, Japan's cultural and historical heart. All this and much more awaits you.

Contact us directly or talk to your local travel agent and make your first steps towards realising your Japan dreams.



A unique company

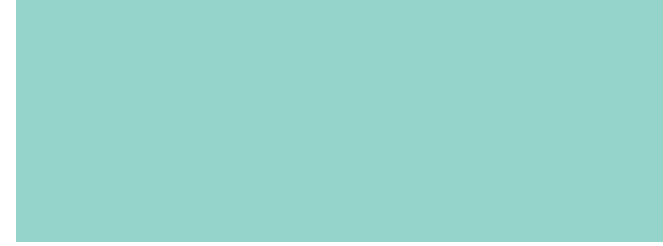
InsideJapan Tours is a company with a difference - specialising solely in Japan you will have the benefit of utilising the expertise of every member of our team. Whichever areas of Japan you wish to visit and whatever aspects of Japanese culture fascinate you, we are more than likely to have someone who shares your passion.

Independence and flexibility

Travelling to Japan is an experience that will live with you forever; a wealth of new encounters, sights, sounds and smells await you from the moment you arrive to the day you depart. Our carefully crafted Self-Guided Adventures are designed to help you get the very most out of your time in this genuinely unique holiday destination.



“ This is an ideal way of seeing the country and would definitely be a reason for travelling with you again. ”
Steve and Kate Tilbury



Award winning customer care

We will provide you with top level customer service, both before your departure and throughout your stay in Japan. InsideJapan Tours is proud to be a member of AITO (Association of Independent Tour Operators) the hallmark of superb holidays from specialist tour operators and was delighted to receive the silver award for **Best Small Tour Operator** at the British Travel Awards in 2009. All AITO companies are fully bonded and governed by an independent dispute settlement service, which means you are in safe hands.

At home and away

Our service to you does not end when you land in Japan. More than just a travel agent, InsideJapan Tours have offices in both the UK and in Japan. Our Japan office is staffed by English speakers who are just a phone call away. We ensure that your welfare and enjoyment are never left to others to look after.

Your Info-Pack

All of our services include a detailed Info-Pack which explains all about your accommodation and transport, has sightseeing guides and maps, help with language and customs as well as our favourite restaurants. The Info-Pack is your personalised, printed travel companion and an essential part of your trip.

Full financial protection

InsideJapan Tours are members of AITO - the Association of Independent Tour Operators. Land-only arrangements are bonded with AITO Trust Ltd (1130) whilst flight-inclusive packages are protected by our ATOL Licence (9419). In the extremely unlikely event of our financial failure your money is safe and secure.



Self-Guided Adventures in Japan


The Self-Guided Adventures combine our favourite destinations and experiences to create a range of itineraries covering Japan's full diversity.

The packages all include an airport meet and greet, most transport between destinations, breakfast each morning and a number of evening meals. Itineraries can be booked for single travellers, couples, families or groups and although travel is by yourself, for most itineraries there are one or two days with a local professional guide. All of this is backed up by your Info-Pack and the services of our local office in Nagoya, central Japan.

Transport is mainly by train utilising Japan's world-beating network, including the famous *shinkansen* 'Bullet Train', with the use of car hire, public buses and ferries where judicious.

Packages are priced on a land only basis leaving you free to source your own flights. However, if you prefer flight-inclusive arrangements we are more than happy to arrange these for you. Please ask for details. Itineraries start and finish in Tokyo, for arrival and departure from Tokyo Narita Airport, with the exception of the "Shikoku and Kyoto - Roads Less Travelled" itinerary where Osaka Kansai Airport is the most convenient arrival and departure point.

These itineraries are designed to be taken at any time of year – catch the cherry blossom in spring, challenge Mt. Fuji in summer, photograph the autumnal leaves or enjoy the crisp, clear days and quiet temples of winter.

If you are a big fan of Japanese food look out for the  gourmet logo denoting our best foodie trips.

You won't find any prices printed in our brochure. For a guide to prices, please refer to the printed insert or, for the most up-to-date pricing, please check our web-site – www.insidejapantours.com.

Feel free of course to request changes and additions, to go budget or treat yourself to a luxury stay – we will tailor your trip to create the perfect itinerary for you.



Booking your Self-Guided Adventure

Contact us by telephone or e-mail, or book through your local travel agent. We will need to know your full names, address and a contact telephone number as well as your dates of travel and any dietary requirements that you may have.

Accommodation

Tried and tested accommodation can be chosen on a “standard” or “upgrade” basis – approximately 3 star and 4/5 star respectively. All itineraries include a mixture of Western-style hotels and authentic *ryokan* and *minshuku* (Japanese-style inns), often with hot springs available. Please note that for some destinations standard and upgrade options have the same accommodation listed – this simply means that we believe that there is just one type of accommodation to be recommended in this location.

A brief description of the accommodation is included with each of the itineraries in this brochure but please do ask us if you would like further details. We use the following general codes:

WB: Business Hotels

Simple, clean and comfortable Western-style hotels with moderately sized en-suite rooms.

WT: Tourist Hotels

3 to 5 star Western-style hotels with larger en-suite rooms and on site restaurant.

JPM: Japanese Minshuku

Family-run Japanese-style inns known for great home cooking and hospitality. Usually with shared bathroom facilities.

JPR: Japanese Ryokan

Japanese-style inns usually with en-suite facilities. Known for great meals and fantastic personal service.

JPH: Japanese-style Hotels

Modern, Western-style hotel building with Japanese-style *tatami* guest rooms, traditional meals and often with Japanese baths available.

Please note that sometimes the named accommodation is not available and in this case we will book (subject to your approval) an alternative of the same or higher standard.

The Golden Route

9 nights

Tokyo (3) – Hakone (2) – Kyoto (3) – Tokyo (1)

The Golden Route showcases the very best of Japan combining the fascinating and contrasting cities of Tokyo and Kyoto with the beautiful countryside of Hakone National Park near Mt. Fuji. Add in the option to extend your stay with a two night trip to Miyajima and Hiroshima and this flexible, classic Japan itinerary is ideal for the first time visitor.

Tokyo is a phenomenon; a city that rose like a phoenix from the ashes of World War Two to become an economic powerhouse; a city of 30 million people carried along on a sweeping tide of energy from the suburbs to the offices and department stores and back again. Yet amidst all this activity are to be found tranquil gardens; havens of quiet away from the unceasing activity of the city. The sights, sounds, tastes and smells of the capital are yours to discover as you begin your adventure in Japan.

A world away from the modern metropolis, Hakone National Park in the foothills of Mt. Fuji is a glimpse of the natural beauty of Japan. Famed for its bubbling volcanic hot springs, you will be following in the footsteps of the first Shogun who rested his troops in Hakone in preparation for battle!

Having been swept down the coast on the world-famous 'Bullet Train', you will glide into Kyoto, a modern city of over one million people yet one which offers a window on the past; a glimpse of the majesty of old Imperial Japan; a city where exquisite gardens lie awaiting discovery behind sliding doors and round every corner turned are unknown treasures.



The included Japan Rail Pass means that from Kyoto it is possible to take day trips for no extra cost; the stunning castle in Himeji, the historic temples and deer park in Nara and the World Heritage temple of Byodoin in Uji are just some of the possibilities.



As well as breakfast each morning, two evening meals, transport between destinations and quality, tried and tested accommodation, your holiday package includes the services of a professional guide for a day in both Tokyo and Kyoto – a fantastic way to get a true insight into these cities.



“ Following the path of the old Tokaido post road, the Golden Route of Japan will take you from the hustle and bustle of Tokyo to Kyoto, the ancient capital and true heart of Japanese history and culture. With a stop in the Hakone National Park to soak in the healing hot-spring waters, this Self-Guided Adventure is a perfect introductory taste of Japan.”

Option:

Miyajima and Hiroshima (2 additional nights)
 Extend your stay with two nights on scenic Miyajima Island, reached from Kyoto by 'Bullet Train' and ferry and home to the World Heritage 'floating' torii gate of Itsukushima Shrine. Take the scenic cable car to the top of Mt. Misen for views over the Seto Inland Sea and the chance to meet the native monkeys. Hiroshima, just 30 minutes away, is an easy day trip from Miyajima and is a fascinating city.



Accommodation

STANDARD:

Tokyo Asakusa Sunroute Hotel (WB)

Comfortable business hotel in a great location

Hakone Ichinoyu Honkan (JPR)

Historic Japanese ryokan with lovely baths

Kyoto Aranvert Hotel (WB)

Modern hotel in a central location

Tokyo Kadoya (WB)

Small, friendly hotel just a short walk from Shinjuku Station

** single room option in Hakone is the Hakone Taiseikan Ryokan*

UPGRADE:

Tokyo Asakusa View Hotel (WT)

Top class hotel with great service and views of Tokyo

Hakone Taiseikan Ryokan (JPR)

Beautiful, secluded hot springs ryokan

Kyoto Hotel Granvia (WT)

Exceptional service, beautiful rooms and a great location

Tokyo Century Southern Tower (WT)

Top class, modern hotel next to Shinjuku Station

INCLUSIONS:

- 9 nights accommodation (2 nights Japanese-style)
- Breakfast each morning
- 2 evening meals
- Meet and Greet upon arrival at Tokyo Narita Airport
- All transport between destinations including airport transfers
- Excursion day from Kyoto (using included Japan Rail Pass)
- Hakone Freepass for use in the Hakone National Park
- Tokyo Pasma card for use on subway
- 8 hours private guide service in Tokyo & Kyoto
- InsideJapan Tours Info-Pack

STANDARD:

Miyajima Yamaichi Bekkan (JPR)

Friendly, family-run inn with great food
 2 extra nights with evening meals and breakfast plus transfers

UPGRADE:

Miyajima Iwaso (JPR)

Top quality ryokan in a beautiful location
 2 extra nights with evening meals and breakfast plus transfers

Whether you travel for the sweet smelling cherry blossoms of spring, the buzzing festivals of the hot summer, the blazing reds, oranges and golds of autumn, or the crisp clear skies of winter, the Golden Route is a trip to savour, and is sure to excite the senses during every season.

Traditional Japan

14 nights

Tokyo (3) – Kanazawa (1) – Shirakawa-go (1) – Takayama (2)
Matsumoto (1) – Tsumago (1) – Kyoto (4) – Tokyo (1)

Leave the bright lights and fast living behind and immerse yourself in the more traditional and laid-back side to Japan. This trip will take you off the beaten track and show you a very different Japan, away from the usual tourist haunts whilst also including the must-see cities of Tokyo and Kyoto.

After three nights in Tokyo's most traditional district, you will swap skyscrapers for mountains and escape the crowds for rural villages and inns. The preserved villages, World Heritage sites, mountain scenery and folk museums will introduce you to a more traditional, quieter face of Japan. Along the way you will experience fantastic gardens, explore *samurai* residences and have the opportunity to shop for local arts and crafts.

Shirakawa-go and Tsumago are two very rural villages – the latter an ancient post town on the Nakasendo route, the former a collection of thatched farm houses deep in the countryside. Both have fantastic leisurely walks and offer tiny Japanese-style inns with a genuine warm welcome and home cooked food.

This all awaits you as you travel through the stunning countryside and regional towns towards the ancient capital of Kyoto, a city bursting with culture, history and art; a chance to experience the religious and cultural traditions of this fascinating country. A glimpse of a *geisha* rushing between appointments is the icing on the cake for any visit to Kyoto.

One of Japan's best extant castles makes for a stunning spectacle in Matsumoto, whilst the Kenrokuen gardens in Kanazawa are rated amongst Japan's top three. Takayama's morning market meanwhile, gives you the chance to get to see a little bit of small town life.



Professional private guiding is included for one day in Tokyo and Kyoto allowing the chance to delve deeper into both of these historic cities. We will also book a visit for you to the Tondaya *machiya* in Kyoto where you can experience tea ceremony and enjoy a guided tour of this historic old town house.

Your three nights in Kyoto gives the opportunity for making a day trip using the



Accommodation

STANDARD:

Tokyo Asakusa Sunroute Hotel (WB)

Comfortable business hotel in a great location

Kanazawa APA Hotel Chuo (WB)

Quality business hotel in downtown Kanazawa

Shirakawa-go Minshuku Koemon (JPM)

Atmospheric Japanese-style thatched roof inn

Takayama Iwata-kan (JPM)

Homely, family-run Japanese-style inn

Matsumoto Hotel Richmond (WB)

Smart and modern business hotel in city centre

Tsumago Daikichi Minshuku (JPM)

Traditional *minshuku* in the centre of the old village

Kyoto Aranvert Hotel (WB)

Modern hotel in a central location

Tokyo Kadoya (WB)

Small, friendly hotel just a short walk from Shinjuku Station

UPGRADE:

Tokyo Asakusa View Hotel (WT)

Top class hotel with great service and views of Tokyo

Kanazawa Hotel Nikko (WT)

Friendly service and well sized rooms at this first class hotel

Shirakawa-go Minshuku Koemon (JPM)

Atmospheric Japanese-style thatched roof inn

Takayama Tanabe Ryokan (JPR)

Lovely traditional Japanese-style inn with fantastic food

Matsumoto Hotel Buena Vista (WT)

Best hotel in town in a great central location

Tsumago Daikichi Minshuku (JPM)

Traditional *minshuku* in the centre of the old village

Kyoto Hotel Granvia (WT)

Exceptional service, beautiful rooms and a great location

Tokyo Century Southern Tower (WT)

Top class, modern hotel next to Shinjuku Station

INCLUSIONS:

- 14 nights accommodation (4 nights Japanese-style)
- Breakfast each morning
- 4 evening meals
- Meet and Greet upon arrival at Tokyo Narita Airport
- All transport between destinations including airport transfers
- Excursion day from Kyoto (using included Japan Rail Pass)
- Tokyo Pasma card for use on subway
- Tondaya *machiya* visit with tea ceremony, *kimono* dress-up & lunch
- 8 hours private guide service in Tokyo & Kyoto
- InsideJapan Tours Info-Pack



Package highlight:

Shirakawa-go and Tsumago villages

Traditional Japan includes stays in the historic villages of Shirakawa-go and Tsumago – a real chance to see a glimpse of old Japan. Both destinations offer some lovely walks and accommodation at both is in *minshuku*, family-run inns with great meals included. The thatched roof farm houses of Shirakawa-go and the old wooden buildings of Tsumago are sure to be a highlight of your stay.

included Japan Rail Pass for no extra cost. Possible destinations include Hiroshima, Himeji and Kobe.

Connecting the past with the present, the Traditional Japan Self-Guided Adventure will captivate you with the hidden secrets of this ancient land.

World Heritage

17 nights

Tokyo (3) – Nikko (2) – Kyoto (3) – Mt. Koya (2) – Himeji (1)
Hiroshima (2) – Kanazawa (2) – Shirakawa-go (1) - Tokyo (1)

Japan is a country blessed with unique sights both natural and man-made, many of which have been recognised by UNESCO as being of “outstanding value to humanity” and have had World Heritage status conveyed upon them. This journey combines spectacular castles, ancient villages, beautiful gardens, mountain-top temple settlements and the history of Tokyo, Kyoto and Hiroshima to create a unique and comprehensive experience.

You will begin in Tokyo, the neon-lit beating heart of Japan, home of the 200mph ‘Bullet Train’ and a city racing headlong into the future. The contrast with your later visit to the ancient capital of Kyoto is dramatic; a city where the legacy of the past is all around. Temples and shrines lie hidden down romantic backstreets and sliding wooden doors open to reveal exquisite gardens. The included Japan Rail Pass also opens up the possibility of day trips from Kyoto to Nara, Kobe or Osaka at no extra cost.

In the mountains of Tochigi you will find the town of Nikko; set in stunning natural surroundings, the sacred shrines and temples of the World Heritage Toshogu complex are a world apart. The retreat of Mt. Koya in the Kii Mountains of Wakayama Prefecture gives a chance to participate in the timeless Buddhist way of life that has spanned the centuries and to stay in an atmospheric temple lodging.

Your odyssey takes in Himeji and its spectacular *samurai* castle before skipping through the centuries with a two night stay in Hiroshima, a city which has blossomed in the sixty years since the devastation caused by the A-bomb. The skeleton of the A-bomb dome stands as a poignant reminder of the horrors of war, yet just off the coast on Miyajima Island the tranquil ‘floating’ *torii* gate of Itsukushima Shrine offers a place of quiet reflection and timeless beauty.



The garden of Kenroku-en, *samurai* houses and a charming *geisha* quarter are all to be explored in Kanazawa, whilst the World Heritage village of Shirakawa-go, in the heart of the spectacular Hakusan National Park, provides a breathtaking vision of old Japan and a chance to stay in one of the unique *gassho zukuri* thatched houses.

Guiding is included for one day in each of Tokyo, Nikko and Kyoto allowing the chance to make some Japanese friends as well as gain expert insights into each of these destinations.

The World Heritage itinerary will enable you to experience the places that have shaped the Japanese nation, giving you a sense of the history and culture of this ancient land.



Option:

The Kumano Kodo (2 additional nights)

Extend your stay with the chance to explore the Kumano Kodo, an ancient postal route south of Mt. Koya, designated a World Heritage Site in 2004. Stunning mountain ranges make these ancient passes both beautiful and remote. From Kyoto travel by train to Kii Tanabe station where you will pick up a hire car to drive on to Yunomine Hot Springs and Hongu Taisha, an ancient shrine and staging post on the Kumano Kodo route. Stay here for 2 nights with a guided walk on the second day. You will then continue along some scenic roads to Mt. Koya, dropping the car off after your stay here.



Accommodation

STANDARD:

Tokyo Asakusa Sunroute Hotel (WB)

Comfortable business hotel in a great location

Nikko Green Age Inn (WT)

Friendly, family-run inn with fantastic French cuisine

Kyoto Aranvert Hotel (WB)

Modern hotel in a central location

Mt. Koya Fudo-in (JPM)

Atmospheric temple lodgings in a quiet area of Mt. Koya

Himeji Claire Higasa (WB)

Newly renovated hotel in a prime location

Hiroshima Hotel Sunroute (WB)

Business hotel adjacent to the Peace Park

Kanazawa APA Hotel Chuo (WB)

Quality business hotel in downtown Kanazawa

Shirakawa-go Minshuku Koemon (JPM)

Atmospheric Japanese-style thatched roof inn

Tokyo Kadoya (WB)

Small, friendly hotel just a short walk from Shinjuku station

UPGRADE:

Tokyo Asakusa View Hotel (WT)

Top class hotel with great service and views of Tokyo

Nikko Kanaya Hotel (WT)

Historic hotel with lovely rooms, gardens and great food

Kyoto Hotel Granvia (WT)

Exceptional service, beautiful rooms and a great location

Mt. Koya Sekisho-in (JPR)

Beautiful temple lodgings next to Okunoin cemetery

Himeji Hotel Nikko (WT)

Best hotel in town, right by the station

Hiroshima Rhiga Royal (WT)

Top class hotel located in downtown Hiroshima

Kanazawa Hotel Nikko (WT)

Friendly service and well sized rooms at this first class hotel

Shirakawa-go Minshuku Koemon (JPM)

Atmospheric Japanese-style thatched roof inn

Tokyo Century Southern Tower (WT)

Top class, modern hotel next to Shinjuku Station

INCLUSIONS:

- 17 nights accommodation (3 nights Japanese-style)
- Breakfast each morning
- 3 evening meals
- Meet and Greet upon arrival at Tokyo Narita Airport
- All transport between destinations including airport transfers
- Excursion day from Kyoto (using included Japan Rail Pass)
- Tokyo Pasma card for use on subway
- 8 hours private guide service in Tokyo & Kyoto
- InsideJapan Tours Info-Pack

STANDARD:

Ryokan Yoshinoya (JPM)

Simple Japanese-style inn with great meals

2 extra nights with evening meals and breakfast, car hire & a guided walk in Kumano

UPGRADE:

Ryokan Hana Iseya (JPR)

Good quality ryokan with own baths

2 extra nights with evening meals and breakfast, car hire & a guided walk in Kumano

Gardens of Japan

14 nights

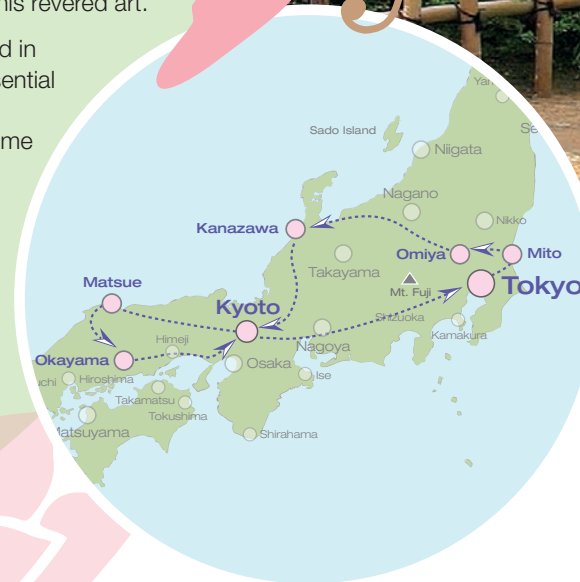
Tokyo (3) – Mito (1) – Omiya (1) – Kanazawa (2) – Kyoto (3)
Matsue (2) - Okayama (1) – Tokyo (1)

A single rock afloat a sea of meticulously raked gravel; a colourful *koi* carp gliding along serenely beneath the surface of a lotus pond; the gentle curves of a teahouse roof set against a brilliant crimson flash of autumnal maple. Such images of the gardens of Japan have found fame in the West, and this adventure seeks out some of the finest examples of this art form, to take you beyond these select images and into the hidden delights and meticulous detail of the Japanese garden.

Gardens of Japan includes stays in Japan's acknowledged top three garden cities; Mito for Kairakuen, Kanazawa for Kenrokuen and Okayama for Korakuen. Each offers its own unique beauty, yet when all three are taken together you will have a wonderfully rich experience of the breadth of this revered art.

The Japanese word *niwa*, meaning garden, once referred to an area cleansed and purified in preparation for the arrival of the *Shinto* deities, the *kami*, believed to be present in the essential natural elements or rock, water and wood. Given this link between nature and Japanese culture and religious belief, it is no surprise that the historic capital of Kyoto is home to some of the best gardens Japan has to offer – simple Zen gardens, lovingly kept stroll gardens and borrowed scenery gardens taking in the mountains surrounding this attractive city. During your stay in Kyoto we will arrange for you to take a full day private tour of some of the city's finest gardens with an expert garden guide.

North of Kyoto near the town of Matsue on the Japan Sea Coast, the Adachi Museum's stunning gardens have won accolades from around the world and are an absolute must-see. The art museum is top class too and Matsue itself is an attractive castle town.



Omiya, just outside Tokyo, is home to gardens in miniature – famous for its *bonsai* villages which hold perhaps the largest collection of these stunningly sculpted art forms in all of Japan. Here and in Matsue you will stay at Japanese-style lodgings with sumptuous evening meals included.



Garden design has long been considered an art form by the Japanese on a par with other disciplines, sharing the Japanese appreciation of, and emphasis on, abstract conceptions. This 13 night exploration will take in many of Japan's most famous gardens whilst also giving you the chance to seek out your own little corner of peace and tranquillity at some wonderful lesser-known locations.

Accommodation

STANDARD:

Tokyo Asakusa Sunroute (WB)

Comfortable business hotel in a great location

Mito Daiwa Roynet (WB)

Quality business hotel right by Mito station

Omiya Shindoyamaya (JPR)

Lovely Japanese-style inn with great food

Kanazawa APA Hotel Chuo (WB)

Quality business hotel in downtown Kanazawa

Kyoto Aranvert Hotel (WB)

Modern hotel in a central location

Matsue Terazuya (JPM)

Family-run inn in a central location

Okayama Sunroute (WB)

Modern business hotel located by the station

Tokyo Kadoya (WB)

Small, friendly hotel just a short walk from Shinjuku Station

UPGRADE:

Tokyo Asakusa View Hotel (WT)

Top class hotel with great service and views of Tokyo

Mito Hotel Terrace Garden (WT)

Quality hotel located near the station

Omiya Ryokan Higashiyama (JPR)

Japanese-style inn with beautiful rooms and great service

Kanazawa Hotel Nikko (WT)

Friendly service and well sized rooms at this first class hotel

Kyoto Hotel Granvia (WT)

Exceptional service, beautiful rooms and a great location

Matsue Minamikan (JPR)

Stunning *ryokan* with its own beautiful gardens

Okayama Hotel Granvia (WT)

Quality hotel conveniently located

Tokyo Century Southern Tower (WT)

Top class, modern hotel next to Shinjuku Station

INCLUSIONS:

- 14 nights accommodation (3 nights Japanese-style)
- Breakfast each morning
- 3 evening meals
- Meet and Greet upon arrival at Tokyo Narita Airport
- All transport between destinations including airport transfers
- Excursion day from Kyoto (using included Japan Rail Pass)
- Tokyo Pasma card for use on subway
- 8 hours private guide service in Tokyo & Kyoto
- Entrance to Saiho-ji temple in Kyoto
- InsideJapan Tours Info-Pack



Option:

Bonsai Class & Museum Visit

Located in a suburb of Tokyo the Shunkaen *Bonsai* Museum provides an opportunity to view a vast variety of *bonsai* whilst also learning more about this ancient art. Multi-award winning *bonsai* master Kunio Kobayashi has created this museum to display his life's work and passion for *bonsai*. If you are able to visit on a Sunday, you will be able to join the day long class where you can learn under the guidance of Kobayashi-san. All are welcome from beginner level through to experts.

Please contact your booking agent for more details.

Hot Springs of Japan 9

15 nights

Tokyo (3) – Kusatsu (2) – Matsumoto (1) – Kyoto (3) – Kinosaki Onsen (1)
Arima Onsen (2) – Hakone (2) – Tokyo (1)

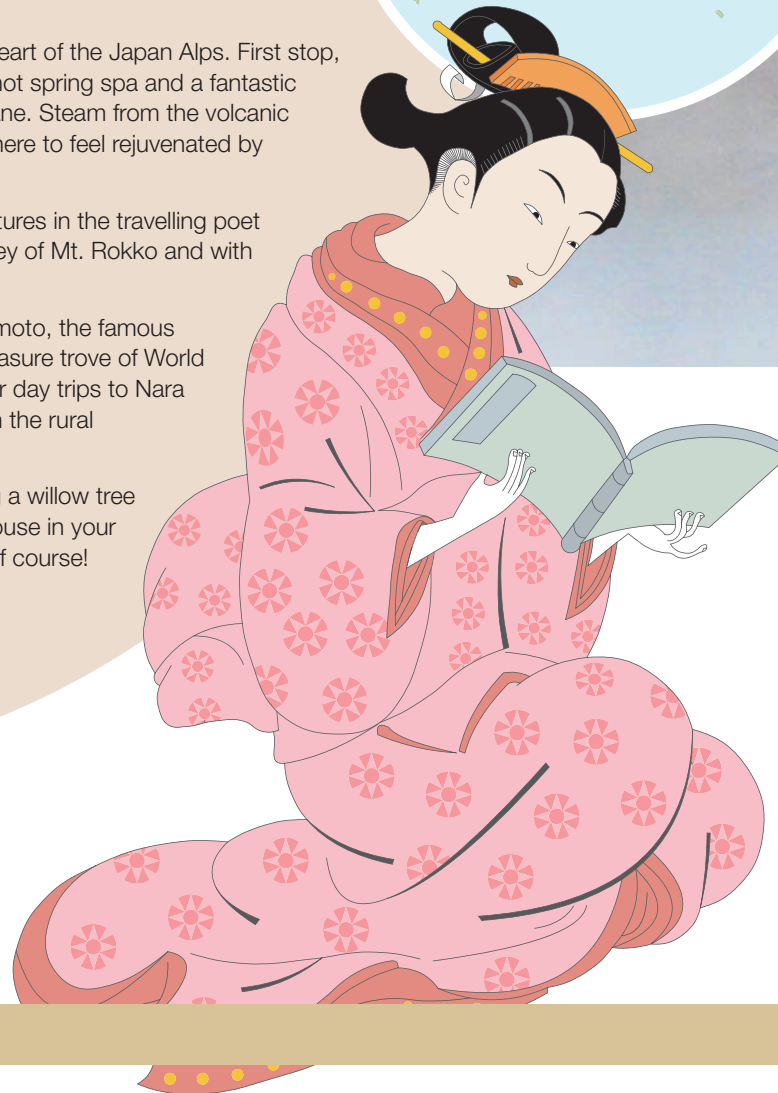
Onsen hot spring baths are quintessentially Japanese. Part of a culture and tradition stretching back more than a thousand years, they remain hugely popular today and are valued for their minerals and health benefits. We have selected here some of the very best of these hot springs combined with stays in Japan's must-see cities of Tokyo and Kyoto.

From the whirlwind activity of Tokyo, the train will ease you into the heart of the Japan Alps. First stop, the mountain town of Kusatsu; consistently voted Japan's favourite hot spring spa and a fantastic place to relax in therapeutic waters and explore the trails of Mt. Shirane. Steam from the volcanic water fills the air of the town centre like a fine mist and visitors flock here to feel rejuvenated by bathing in the healing waters.

Like Kusatsu, Arima Onsen, near the attractive port city of Kobe, features in the travelling poet Matsuo Basho's three favourite hot springs. Set beautifully in the valley of Mt. Rokko and with a history of over one thousand years, who are we to disagree?

Utsukushigahara Onsen is the base for your one night stay in Matsumoto, the famous castle town, before you head to Kyoto, Japan's cultural capital. A treasure trove of World Heritage temples, shrines and gardens, Kyoto is also a great base for day trips to Nara and Himeji Castle as well as the gorgeous Kurama Onsen located on the rural outskirts of the city.

Kinosaki Onsen, north of Kyoto, features old wooden buildings along a willow tree lined river and is the perfect place to hop from bath house to bath house in your *geta* (wooden shoes) and *yukata* (bath robe) - provided by your inn of course!



Before returning to Tokyo, you will also stop off in Hakone, the national park area near Mt. Fuji which is rich in *onsen*, and, in fine weather, enjoys views of Japan's iconic mountain.

By the time the *shinkansen* 'Bullet Train' sweeps you back toward the capital, your Japan will be one of mountains and valleys, of hidden temples and gardens and of course, the silk like geothermal waters of Japan's *onsen* spas - an adventure of a lifetime to be savoured at every turn.



INCLUSIONS:

- 15 nights accommodation (8 nights Japanese-style)
- Breakfast each morning
- 8 evening meals
- Meet and Greet upon arrival at Tokyo Narita Airport
- All transport between destinations including airport transfers
- Excursion day from Kyoto (using included Japan Rail Pass)
- Hakone Freepass for use in Hakone National Park
- Tokyo Pasmo card for use on subway
- 8 hours private guide service in Tokyo & Kyoto
- InsideJapan Tours Info-Pack



Accommodation

STANDARD:

Tokyo Asakusa Sunroute (WB)

Comfortable business hotel in a great location

Kusatsu Matsumuraya (JPM)

Friendly Japanese-style inn with nice hot spring baths

Matsumoto New Kotobuki (JPM)

Hot spring baths and well kept Japanese-style rooms

Kyoto Aranvert Hotel (WB)

Modern hotel in a central location

Kinosaki Onsen Mikuniya (JPM)

Japanese-style inn with its own hot spring baths

Arima Onsen Negiya Ryufukaku (JPM)

Friendly Japanese-style inn

Hakone Ichinoyu Honkan (JPR)

Historic *ryokan* with lovely baths

Tokyo Kadoya (WB)

Small, friendly hotel just a short walk from Shinjuku station

** single room option in Hakone is the Hakone Taiseikan Ryokan*

UPGRADE:

Tokyo Asakusa View Hotel (WT)

Top class hotel with great service and views of Tokyo

Kusatsu Hotel Kusatsu (JPR)

Beautiful Japanese-style inn with lovely hot spring baths

Matsumoto Hotel Shouhou (JPH)

Resort-style hotel with a range of baths and quality rooms

Kyoto Hotel Granvia (WT)

Exceptional service, beautiful rooms and a great location

Kinosaki Onsen Nishimura Honkan (JPR)

Luxury *ryokan* with hot springs and great food

Arima Onsen Kinzan (JPR)

Super-deluxe *ryokan* in the centre of the hot springs

Hakone Taiseikan Ryokan (JPR)

Beautiful, secluded hot springs *ryokan*

Tokyo Century Southern Tower (WT)

Top class, modern hotel next to Shinjuku Station

Option:

Shiatsu massage or spa treatment

A perfect compliment to our Hot Springs of Japan package is a traditional *shiatsu* massage or a spa treatment. *Shiatsu* is a hands-on massage treatment which can be arranged at any of your hotels or *ryokan* or alternatively, we can book you into a special studio in Tokyo. Spa treatments are also available at many of the accommodation options.

Please contact your booking agent for more details.

Mt. Fuji, Kyoto & The Japanese Alps

9

14 nights

Tokyo (3) – Kawaguchi-ko (Mt. Fuji) (2) – Matsumoto (1) – Kamikochi (2)
Takayama (2) – Kyoto (3) – Tokyo (1)

Take a leap off the tourist track and discover the crisp mountain air and clear blue skies of Japan's little known Alpine region, an area of outstanding natural beauty with walks and hikes for all abilities. Set this natural history in the context of the castles, shrines, temples and gardens of Tokyo, Kyoto and Matsumoto and you have a wonderfully varied journey to savour.

This fourteen night trip begins in the buzzing neon of Tokyo, the modern capital of Japan and a treasure trove of sights and experiences. From here travel to Kawaguchi-ko, one of the five lakes set in the shadow of Japan's most evocative image, Mt. Fuji. In summertime this famous landmark opens to climbers - only the truly determined need apply!

Stroll alongside the crystal blue waters of the Azusa River in the Kamikochi National Park – a stunning plateau some 2000 metres above sea level – keeping an eye out for the native monkey population. There is also serious hiking here if you wish, along with more opportunities for hot spring relaxation - perhaps even afternoon tea in the luxurious Kamikochi Imperial Hotel.

Whether it's to fuel gentle strolls or strenuous hikes, you'll be wanting to try as much Japanese food as possible. To this end we have made sure that this itinerary is a gourmand's treat; numerous evening meals are included, often served in your room as is traditional.

In Matsumoto, you will step back in time whilst climbing the well worn wooden stairs of the imposing 'Black Crow' castle, whilst Takayama's charming old-world streets, *sake* breweries and thatched roof farmhouses give a glimpse of rural life.



Kyoto, famed for its World Heritage temples, gardens and shrines is also surrounded by mountains. A walk through the majestic temples of Mt. Hiei or the hundreds of vermillion red *tori* gates climbing the hills of Fushimi Inari shrine, are a wonderful addition to the classic sights of the glorious Golden Pavilion and the Zen gardens of Ryoanji temple.

This Self-Guided Adventure brings you to the heart of Japan – a delicate balance between natural beauty and the ancient culture and traditions of the Japanese nation.



Accommodation

STANDARD:

Tokyo Kadoya (WB)

Small, friendly hotel just a short walk from Shinjuku Station

Kawaguchi-ko Hotel Yesterday (JPR)

Friendly family-run pension

Matsumoto Hotel Richmond (WB)

Smart and modern business hotel in city centre

Kamikochi Nishiitoya Sanso (JPR)

Friendly *ryokan* in the heart of Kamikochi

Takayama Iwata-kan (JPM)

Friendly, family-run Japanese-style inn

Kyoto Aranvert Hotel (WB)

Modern hotel in a central location

Tokyo Kadoya (WB)

A return to the hotel where your adventures began

UPGRADE:

Tokyo Century Southern Tower (WT)

Top class, modern hotel next to Shinjuku Station

Kawaguchi-ko Sunnide Village (JPH)

Top quality lakeside hotel with great views

Matsumoto Hotel Buena Vista (WT)

Best hotel in town in a great central location

Kamikochi Shirakaba-so (JPR)

High quality, friendly *ryokan* in the heart of Kamikochi

Takayama Tanabe Ryokan (JPR)

Lovely traditional Japanese-style inn with fantastic food

Kyoto Hotel Granvia (WT)

Exceptional service, beautiful rooms and a great location

Tokyo Century Southern Tower (WT)

A stay back where you began 13 nights ago

INCLUSIONS:

- 14 nights accommodation (6 nights Japanese-style)
- Breakfast each morning
- 5 evening meals
- Meet and Greet upon arrival at Tokyo Narita Airport
- Most transport between destinations including airport transfers (some travel in the Japan Alps area needs to be paid for on the day)
- Excursion day from Kyoto (using included Japan Rail Pass)
- Tokyo Pasma card for use on subway
- 8 hours private guide service in Tokyo & Kyoto
- InsideJapan Tours Info-Pack



Winter Option:

Snow monkeys in Yudanaka (instead of Kamikochi stay)

During the cold winter months (November through to mid April) heavy snow fall closes the Kamikochi National Park to visitors. Therefore, your adventure will take you from Matsumoto straight to Takayama with two nights in Yudanaka Onsen added after your stay in Kyoto. Here you can see the famous hot spring waters being enjoyed by the local Japanese macaque monkeys. The steaming pools with snow steeped all around, make for a unique sight and are an iconic image of Japan. The nearby village of Obuse with its traditional buildings is famous as having been home to Hokusai, the famous wood block print artist, and a visit to his museum is recommended.

STANDARD:

Ryokan Shimaya (JPR)

Friendly Japanese inn with hot spring baths
2 nights with evening meals and breakfast plus transfers

UPGRADE:

Ryokan Jinpyokaku (JPR)

Quality traditional inn with hot spring baths
2 nights with evening meals and breakfast plus transfers

Northern Highlights

16 nights

Tokyo (3) – Nikko (2) – Sendai (2) – Hiraizumi (2) – Naruko Onsen (1)
Haguro (2) – Niigata (1) – Sado (2) – Tokyo (1)

When the famous *haiku* poet Matsuo Basho set off on his pilgrimage to the north, he was to discover rural Japan, a land of lush scenery and rich in legend. As you journey through the pilgrimage towns of Tohoku and on to remote Sado Island you'll see that the contrast with modern Tokyo is in many ways even greater today.

The bustling capital city is where you'll start your journey, with a stay in the historic Asakusa area of Tokyo. Your hotel is close to Senso-ji temple, the focal point of the traditions of this old city.

As the neon glow of Tokyo fades over the horizon your first stop is Nikko with the opulent shrines and temples of Toshogu. Amidst the lush greenery of the national park you will feel a world away from the hustle and bustle of the capital. Highlights include the impressive Kegon waterfalls, the hot spring temple at Yumoto and a cable car ride for some great views of Chuzenji Lake as well as hiking trails if you wish.

During your stay in Sendai there are two day trip opportunities; Matsushima with its island studded bay, or Yamadera, home to an impressive temple complex clinging to the side of the mountain.

The hot springs of Naruko Onsen will provide a chance for a long, soothing soak in the thermal pools, whilst Hiraizumi is a treasure-trove of religious history with the wonderful gardens of Motsu-ji temple and the 900 year old golden Konjiki-do hall soon to be named World Heritage sights.

On Mt. Haguro you'll stay as a true pilgrim at an atmospheric *shukubo* (temple lodgings), where the spirit of the *yamabushi* (mountain priests) still lives on.



Stunning coastal landscapes await you at Sado Island where we have arranged for you to pick up a hire car so that you can fully explore the island. Begin your touring perhaps by taking the breathtaking skyline road and visiting the fascinating gold mine which in its day was one of the most productive in the world. In the evening you may have the chance to catch a performance of traditional *noh* theatre.

Transport includes several journeys on the incredible high-speed *shinkansen* 'Bullet Train', and a guide service is included in Tokyo and Nikko, giving an excellent introduction to Japan.

With nine evening meals included as well as breakfast every day, this is also a food lover's tour; traditional vegetarian temple cuisine in Haguro-san matched by multi-course feasts at your *ryokan* stays means you will never go hungry!





Accommodation

STANDARD:

Tokyo Asakusa Sunroute Hotel (WB)
Comfortable business hotel in a great location

Nikko Green Age Inn (WB)
Friendly family-run inn with fantastic French cuisine

Sendai Richmond Hotel (WB)
Modern, conveniently located hotel

Hiraizumi Musashibo (JPR)
Beautiful Japanese-style hotel with hot spring baths

Naruko Onsen Bentenkaku (JPR)
Friendly Japanese inn with great food

Haguro-san Saikan (JPM)
Authentic *shukubo* temple lodgings

Niigata Tokyu Inn (WB)
Quality business hotel in central Niigata

Sado-ga-Shima Hotel Kagetsu (JPH)
Japanese-style hotel with lake views

Tokyo Kadoya (WB)
Small, friendly hotel just a short walk from Shinjuku Station

UPGRADE:

Tokyo Asakusa View Hotel (WT)
Top class hotel with great service and views of Tokyo

Nikko Kanaya Hotel (WT)
Historic hotel with lovely rooms, gardens and great food

Sendai Hotel Metropolitan (WT)
Quality hotel situated near the station

Hiraizumi Musashibo (JPH)
Beautiful Japanese-style hotel with hot spring baths

Naruko Onsen Yusaya (JPR)
Historic *ryokan* in the centre of Naruko

Haguro-san Saikan (JPM)
Authentic *shukubo* temple lodgings

Niigata Hotel Nikko (WT)
Top quality hotel in central Niigata

Sado-ga-Shima Yoshidaya (JPH)
Lovely Japanese-style hotel with roof-top baths and fantastic food

Tokyo Century Southern Tower (WT)
Top class, modern hotel next to Shinjuku Station

INCLUSIONS:

- 16 nights accommodation (7 nights Japanese-style)
- Breakfast each morning
- 9 evening meals
- Meet and Greet upon arrival at Tokyo Narita Airport
- All transport between destinations including airport transfers
- Tokyo Pasma card for use on subway
- 8 hours private guide service in Tokyo
- Private guide service, lunch and some entrance fees in Nikko
- 2 day car hire on Sado Island
- InsideJapan Tours Info-Pack



Package highlight:

Haguro-san Saikan

The Northern Highlights package includes a stay at the mountain-top Saikan temple lodgings. This authentic pilgrims' inn serves fantastic vegetarian Buddhist cuisine and gives the opportunity to join in the morning ceremony if you wish. Saikan is an incredibly atmospheric place to stay and wonderfully peaceful at night.

Option:

Taiko lesson

Japanese *taiko* drumming is famous all over the world for its powerful rhythms and the flamboyant movements of the performers. The most famous group are the Kodo Drummers of Sado Island and we are delighted to offer you the chance to take a *taiko* lesson with a former member of this renowned group. During the session, you will have the chance to try drumming for yourself and receive instruction on the different methods and techniques - a unique opportunity and a lot of fun for young and old alike.

If you would like to include this experience as part of the Northern Highlights please let your booking agent know.

The Kyushu Adventure

9

16 nights

Tokyo (3) – Nagasaki (2) – Unzen (1) – Aso (2) – Beppu (2) – Miyazaki (1)
Kagoshima (2) – Yakushima (2) – Tokyo (1)

Rural and remote, the island of Kyushu is a world away from the non-stop hive of activity that characterises Japan's eastern seaboard. From the laid-back historic port city of Nagasaki and the beaches of Miyazaki, to the steaming hot spring town of Beppu, via the green slopes of Mount Aso's huge caldera and the stunning ancient forests of Yakushima Island, there are many treasures waiting to be discovered.

World Heritage Yakushima Island is sure to be a highlight of this trip, possessing one of Japan's most treasured natural wonders - a stunning ancient forest containing 1900 species of flora and dating back thousands of years. You will be staying close to the sea and the forest allowing you to enjoy and absorb the atmosphere of this magical island which was the inspiration for Hayao Miyazaki's classic animated film, "Princess Mononoke".

Staging point for your Yakushima stay is the city of Kagoshima, often referred to as the Naples of Japan due to its similar climate and proximity to Mt. Sakurajima volcano – Kagoshima's Vesuvius.

Mt. Aso also provides awe-inspiring natural landscapes; the lush green slopes of the world's largest volcanic caldera framing the harsh fiery void at its centre.

To the west, the port of Nagasaki was the only place in Japan that was open to the outside world during more than two centuries of national isolation and as a result has influences from China, Holland and Portugal which can be seen throughout the city. The reconstructed Dutch factory of Dejima and the Meiji period colonial style homes echo this. Nagasaki is perhaps most famous for being the victim of the second nuclear bomb at the end of World War Two. You may like to take a tram over to the Peace Memorial Park at Urakami, the epicentre of the bomb and where now stands a moving museum dedicated to that dark chapter in history.



Opportunities for hot spring baths await in Beppu, one of Japan's foremost *onsen* (spa) towns and famed for its brightly coloured lava pits known as "hells". Beppu's sand baths, meanwhile, are renowned for their therapeutic qualities.

Unzen is a much more rural hot spring resort. Along the Shimabara Peninsula, you will head 800 metres above sea level to this active volcanic national park set amongst a Martian landscape of reddish coloured ground and billowing clouds of sulphuric gas. You can take a walk alongside the bubbling waters of Jigokudani "Hell Valley", or soak in one of the vast number of hot spring baths for which the area is famous.



Accommodation

STANDARD:

Tokyo Asakusa Sunroute Hotel (WB)
Comfortable business hotel in a great location

Nagasaki Holiday Inn (WB)
Good quality hotel in a great location in town

Unzen Fukiya Ryokan (JPR)
Beautiful Japanese inn with fantastic food, overlooking 'hell valley'!

Aso Shinwa-en (JPR)
Beautiful traditional *ryokan* with amazing private use open air baths

Beppu Nogami Honkan (JPR)
Traditional inn with hot spring baths

Miyazaki Hotel Plaza (WB)
Business hotel in a downtown location

Kagoshima Tokyu Inn (WB)
Good quality business hotel in central location

Yakushima Pension Sea Forest (JPM)
Simple, family-run pension with great local food

Tokyo Kadoya (WB)
Small, friendly hotel just a short walk from Shinjuku Station

Miyazaki gives the chance for a beach break. Phoenix trees and palm trees abound and the city has a relaxed resort atmosphere.

Your discovery of Kyushu is neatly framed by stays in Tokyo, with time in the historic Asakusa district at the start and amongst the bright lights and excitement of Shinjuku at the end of your journey.

UPGRADE:

Tokyo Asakusa View Hotel (WT)
Top class hotel with great service and views of Tokyo

Nagasaki ANA Glover Hill (WT)
Great hotel located close to the Glover Gardens

Unzen Kyushu Hotel (WT)
Views over Hell Valley and beautiful hot spring baths

Aso Plaza Hotel (JPH)
Japanese-style garden and lovely traditional rooms

Beppu Kannawaen (JPR)
Outstanding *ryokan* with beautiful rooms and great food

Miyazaki Sheraton Grande Ocean Resort (WT)
154m skyscraper hotel with amazing views of the Pacific

Kagoshima Shiroyama Kanko Hotel (WT)
Quality hotel with views over Kagoshima

Yakushima JR Hotel (JPH)
Lovely coastal hotel with hot spring baths

Tokyo Century Southern Tower (WT)
Top class, modern hotel next to Shinjuku Station

INCLUSIONS:

- 16 nights accommodation (7 nights Japanese-style)
- Breakfast each morning
- 7 evening meals
- Meet and Greet upon arrival at Tokyo Narita Airport
- Airport transfers on arrival and departure
- Domestic Flights
- Most other transport between destinations (some airport transfers are not included and need to be paid for on the day)
- Tokyo Pasma card for use on subway
- 8 hours private guide service in Tokyo
- InsideJapan Tours Info-Pack



Package highlight:

Yakushima Island

Yakushima Island is an oasis of nature, the inland dominated by huge cryptomeria forests whilst the coast line boasts stunning beaches and crystal clear waters. Home to sea turtles, deer, monkeys and *tanuki* (Japanese raccoon dogs), this World Heritage island is a wonderful escape.

Hokkaido Fly-Drive 9

17 nights

Tokyo (3) – Hakodate (1) – Toya Onsen (3) – Sapporo (2) – Biei (3)
Kawayu Onsen (2) – Tsurui (Kushiro) (2) – Tokyo (1)

The huge and sparsely populated island of Hokkaido is the focus of this unique fly-drive adventure. Here within the national parks you'll find vast empty plains, crystal clear lakes and virtually untouched mountain landscapes. With well-kept, quiet roads and plenty of English signs, Hokkaido is ideal for exploring by car.

The first of the national parks you will encounter is Shikotsu Toya which is centred around a large, attractive lake with the smoking Showa Shinzan volcano as a backdrop. There are plenty of walks in this area as well as cycling routes and boat cruises. For rest and relaxation, your Japanese-style hotel has a wide range of hot spring baths to try. Easy trips to Mt. Tarumae and Noboribetsu Onsen, famous for its steaming, bubbling "hell valley" can also be made.

The city of Hakodate marks your entry point into Hokkaido and is known for its stunning night view from nearby Mt. Hakodate and also for its collection of churches, a legacy from a time when it was one of Japan's few international ports.

Bustling Sapporo is now the main city of the island and is a food lovers treat; restaurants and bars abound and the city has a sparkling atmosphere as well as the best beer in Japan – brewery tours available!

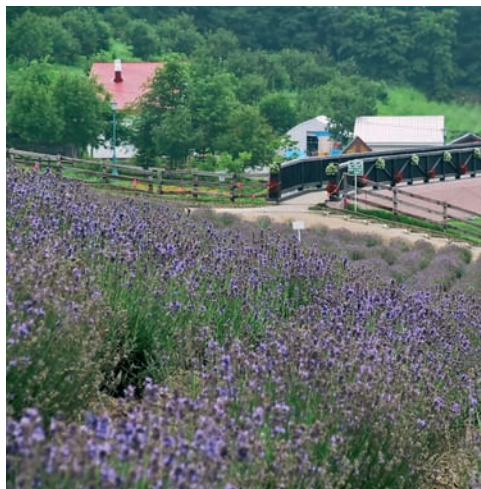
On to central Hokkaido, home to the Daisetsuzan National Park, where your base will be the attractive village of Biei, famous for its lavender and poppy fields and its vast farm lands. This is a great base for a visit to Mt. Asahidake which can be conquered on foot or by cable car and rewards you with dramatic views over steaming lava pools.



A number of protected birds including Blakiston's fish-owl have been spotted in this area. Accommodation in Biei is at a family-run inn with great home cooked meals included.

A stay in Kawayu Onsen, a lovely hot spring town set around Lake Kusharo, allows you to explore the Akan National Park. Yezo deer and numerous birds can be spotted whilst the nearby Kushiro marshlands are known for red-crowned cranes. Lake Mashu meanwhile, is said to have the clearest waters in the world and is revered as a 'lake of the Gods' by the indigenous Ainu people.

Our Hokkaido Fly-Drive combines natural wonders, small towns and exciting cities, offering an alternative vision of Japan.



Accommodation

STANDARD:

Tokyo Asakusa Sunroute (WB)

Comfortable business hotel in a great location

Hakodate Aqua Garden Hotel (WB)

Business hotel in a good downtown location

Toya Onsen Kawanami (JPM)

Simple *minshuku* with home cooked food

Sapporo Crest Hotel (WB)

Modern hotel in the centre of Sapporo

Biei Pension Hozuki (JPM)

Family-run B&B style accommodation

Kawayu Onsen Hotel Misono (JPH)

Hot spring Japanese-style hotel

Tsurui Hotel Taito (WT)

Quality hotel ideally located for the crane sanctuary

Tokyo Kadoya (WB)

Small, friendly hotel just a short walk from Shinjuku Station

UPGRADE:

Tokyo Asakusa View Hotel (WT)

Top class hotel with great service and views of Tokyo

Hakodate Kokusai Hotel (WT)

Quality hotel in prime city centre location

Toya Onsen Hotel Sun Palace (JPH)

Lovely Japanese-style resort hotel on the lakeside

Sapporo Keio Plaza (WT)

Top quality hotel in central Sapporo

Biei Pension Hozuki (JPM)

Family-run B&B style accommodation

Kawayu Onsen Kitafukurou (JPH)

Japanese-style hotel with superb *onsen* baths

Tsurui Hotel Taito (WT)

Quality hotel ideally located for the crane sanctuary

Tokyo Century Southern Tower (WT)

Top class, modern hotel next to Shinjuku Station

INCLUSIONS:

- 17 nights accommodation (10 nights Japanese-style)
- Breakfast each morning
- 10 evening meals
- Meet and Greet upon arrival at Tokyo Narita Airport
- Airport transfers on arrival and departure
- Domestic Flights
- Most other transport between destinations (some airport transfers are not included and need to be paid for on the day)
- 12 day car hire in Hokkaido
- 8 hours private guide service in Tokyo
- Tokyo Pasma card for use on subway
- InsideJapan Tours Info-Pack



Option:

Shiretoko Peninsula (2 additional nights)

Extend your trip with a two night stay in the traditional port town of Rausu on the remote Shiretoko Peninsula. One of Japan's last wilderness spots, Shiretoko is home to a vast array of birds and animals including brown bears, deer and foxes. The mountain pass from Utoro offers stunning views in summer, whilst in winter, Sea of Okhotsk drift ice cruises from Rausu let you see Stellar's sea eagle up close. The Kamuiwakka falls meanwhile, are a hot spring with a difference – steaming waters plunging over a cliff offer Japan's ultimate *onsen* experience!

ACCOMMODATION

Daiichi Hotel (JPH)

Quality Japanese-style hotel with its own hot spring baths
2 extra nights with evening meals and car hire

Shikoku & Kyoto

Paths Less Travelled

16 nights

Kyoto (3) – Kotohira (1) – Matsuyama (2) – Uwajima (1) – Nakamura (2)
Kochi (2) – Iya Valley (2) – Tokushima (2) – Osaka (1)

Our Paths Less Travelled itinerary emphasises the principles of responsible tourism, ensuring Japan, its land and its people gain maximum benefit from your visit, with minimal negative impact. In return you get to experience a side of Japan those who simply skim over the classic sights in a week will never see.

Shikoku is the smallest, least visited of Japan's four main islands, and this trip will take you right around the island, taking in its natural beauty and hidden culture. You will stay in traditional Japanese-style accommodation throughout, including local family-run inns, benefiting the people and the economy of the destinations you visit.

As you travel the island, you will have the chance to experience a range of activities, all with an emphasis on responsible tourism. Whale watching on the Pacific Ocean off Kochi is available from the end of April through October, whilst in Nakamura you can explore the stunning countryside of the Shimanto-gawa, the last untamed river in Japan.

In the remote, "lost Japan" of the Iya Valley, you will stay and take part in volunteer work in a restored thatched roof farmhouse as part of the Chiiori project. You will help with some of the running of the inn with the reward of being a real part of this very special project.

Moving through Shikoku by train, you will experience the best in Japanese culture and history as you climb the steps of Komyama san, Shikoku's most famous shrine in Kotohira and visit Matsuyama's Dogo Onsen, the oldest hot spring bath in the country.

In Tokushima we have included a stay in an atmospheric Buddhist temple lodging – number nineteen on the famous eighty-eight temple circuit – with traditional vegetarian Buddhist cuisine included.



Numerous other evening meals are included making this trip a culinary treat. And with stays at small local inns, you will have a fantastic chance to meet the Japanese people.

The trip starts in Japan's cultural capital Kyoto, home to World Heritage temples, shrines and gardens, and ends in the buzzing city of Osaka; a trip that gives you some of the very best that Japan has to offer!

Paths Less Travelled is a fascinating voyage of discovery that will reward you for taking the effort to get off the beaten track and ensure that your visit has a positive effect on Japan, its environment, its economy and its people.

For every Paths Less Travelled itinerary sold we will be making a donation to our chosen ecological charity in Japan - the Shinshu Asiatic Black Bear Conservation Group.



Accommodation

For this special itinerary accommodation is mainly in simple, Japanese-style inns and so only one grade is offered.

Kyoto Heianbo Ryokan (JPR)

Japanese-style inn located in the quiet backstreets close to Kyoto station.

Kotohira Kotobuki Ryokan (JPM)

Simple *ryokan* overlooking the river in the centre of Kotohira, just a couple of minutes walk from the steps leading up to the town's famous temple.

Matsuyama Hotel Tamagiku (JPH)

Japanese-style hotel in a great location, a stone's throw from the famous Dogo Onsen hot spring. The friendly owner and staff will ensure you are well looked after during your stay.

Uwajima Tsukigase Ryokan (JPR)

Wonderful Japanese inn with a range of hot spring baths, and its own choice of restaurants. A modern interpretation of classic Japanese-style and hospitality.

Minshuku Suza (JPM)

Friendly *minshuku* run by a mother and daughter team; homecooked food is the speciality! Convenient location close to the station and the Shimanto River.

Kochi Katsurahama-so (JPH)

Modern Japanese accommodation, offering great views of the Pacific Ocean. Local seafood is naturally the speciality at mealtimes.

Iya Valley Chiiori Farmhouse (JPM)

Thatched roof farmhouse stay at this unique restoration project.

Tokushima Tatsue-ji Temple (JPM)

An opportunity to experience a stay in traditional Buddhist temple lodgings. Buddhist vegetarian cuisine is served at mealtimes, and you may get the chance to watch prayer and meditation sessions.

Osaka Hotel Ichiei (JPH)

Comfortable Japanese-style hotel right in the centre of the action in Osaka's vibrant Namba district.

INCLUSIONS:

- 16 nights accommodation (16 nights Japanese-style)
- Breakfast each morning
- 12 evening meals
- Meet and Greet upon arrival at Osaka Kansai Airport
- All transport between destinations including airport transfers
- 8 hours private guide service in Kyoto
- InsideJapan Tours Info-Pack

Package highlight:

Stay at Chiiori Farmhouse

In the Iya Valley you will be staying at Chiiori Farmhouse which is owned and run by the Chiiori Trust.

The Chiiori dream, shared by many people over the years, is to find a place in the Japanese countryside that retains its original beauty, and to establish an eco-friendly community deeply rooted in Japan's traditional culture. The many aims and activities at Chiiori include natural agriculture, preservation of old houses and rural life and the creation of unique and forward-looking projects to revitalize the village. Hopefully these will serve as a beacon for other villages across Japan.

The house itself was rescued in 1973 by Alex Kerr, an American author and long-term Japan resident, who started this restoration project. Dating from around 1720, the house is typical of old Iya construction: wooden floors, *irori* (floor hearths), and massive beams and rafters, all smoked black from centuries of fires burning in the floor hearths. The house took the name Chiiori, which means "House of the Flute".

Whilst staying here you will be expected to pitch in with the communal chores such as cooking and cleaning. However, far from being a burden, most guests find that these activities enhance the connection they feel with the house.

Work at Chiiori beyond these usual chores is entirely optional. Whilst getting out in the dirt is good fun, we realize that you are staying in Iya for a short time and will want to get out and about. That said, once you have arrived at this magical place you may well feel like giving up a day of sightseeing in the valley for a hike to the nearby river and an afternoon in the tomato patch!

Ishigaki Club Med Beach Resort Stay 5 night add-on

Ishigaki (4) – Tokyo (1)

Available as an add-on to any of our Self-Guided Adventures, the Ishigaki Club Med beach stay makes for a wonderful, romantic getaway or relaxing beach break and also offers a chance to see some amazing marine life up close whilst scuba diving or snorkelling.

Bordered by stunning crystal clear waters, white sandy beaches and rich coral reefs, the small island of Ishigaki makes the perfect beach based addition to any trip to Japan. Some 1200 miles south of Tokyo and with a semi-tropical climate, the island is a dream destination for scuba divers, snorkelers and watersports enthusiasts as well as for those who just want to lie back on the beach or by the pool and relax.

The Kabira Bay Club Med is the best place to stay on the island, offering luxurious all-inclusive resort accommodation. Beautiful beachfront rooms are complimented by three gourmet buffet meals a day including unlimited beer, wine and soft drinks. And for a little local flavour, the Okinawa special of Awamori rice-vodka, is served in the bar. Professionally guided tours are also available, allowing you to explore the culture and wild sanctuaries of the island in more depth.

There are some great day trips from Ishigaki. On nearby Iriomote Island you can canoe through the rain forest and mango groves, whilst Taketomi Island offers a glimpse of traditional life with transport by water buffalo cart. Beautiful sunsets can be enjoyed from the lighthouses at Uganzaki Cape, or you may wish to take a twilight drive past Mt. Omotodake in search of the rare Ishigaki fruit bat.

Other natural sights on Ishigaki include a unique Yaeyama Palm tree forest and the mangrove swamps around the Miyara River.



With car hire included for the duration of your stay, you can try out the numerous beaches, visit the main town and also explore the interior of the island easily.

The add-on includes 4 nights at the Ishigaki Club Med resort, return flights from mainland Japan and one night in Tokyo at a high quality hotel.

Other accommodation options are available upon request.



Accommodation

Ishigaki Kabira Club Med (WT)

All-inclusive, top quality resort hotel with private beach

Tokyo Century Southern Tower (WT)

Top class, modern hotel next to Shinjuku Station

INCLUSIONS:

- 5 nights accommodation
- 3 gourmet buffet meals a day (at Club Med)
- Unlimited wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner (at Club Med)
- Domestic Flights
- Most other transport between destinations (airport transfers are not included)
- Car hire in Ishigaki
- InsideJapan Tours Info-Pack



Option:

Scuba diving

Some of Japan's best scuba diving is to be had off the coast of Ishigaki and the surrounding Yaeyama island chain. These sub-tropical seas bring you crystal clear waters, large coral reefs and a vast array of underwater life. Ishigaki's rich blue coral reefs play host to an abundance of colourful and rare marine life including large numbers of Pacific manta ray.

A day's diving will usually see you head out with your friendly dive master for two dives with an included Japanese *bento* lunch. A fantastic experience providing memorable diving for any level of scuba diver.

Ask us for details of the various courses that can be arranged.



Winter Sports & Culture

13 nights

Tokyo (3) – Niseko (5) – Kyoto (3) – Yudanaka (1) – Tokyo (1)

Japan boasts fantastic snow fall, modern resorts and a unique culture - a first class winter sports destination with a twist. Our Winter Sports and Culture package combines five nights in the fantastic resort of Niseko, a chance to see the famous 'snow monkeys' in Yudanaka, time in Japan's exciting capital city of Tokyo and a stay in Kyoto, the cultural and historic heart of the country.

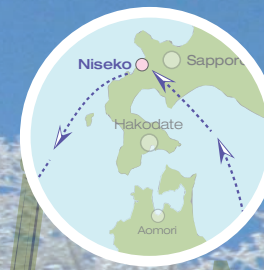
You will start your trip in the vibrant Shinjuku area of Tokyo; bright lights and fantastic restaurants as well as easy access to the more historic areas of the city. On Day Two an 8 hour private guide service is included – a great chance to see the highlights of the city in the company of a local. With so much to see and do in Tokyo your final night stay will also be back in the capital.

On Day Four you'll transfer by aeroplane from Tokyo to the north island of Hokkaido, the very best destination for winter sports in Japan. Our resort of choice is Niseko, known for its fantastic powder snow and huge variety of runs as well as a great village atmosphere. Transport from the airport and ski lift passes are all included.

Kyoto is the cultural centre of Japan and here we have included a full day with a private guide as well as plenty of time to explore this fascinating city independently. The temples, shrines and gardens are particularly beautiful in winter, and pleasingly quiet too! An included Japan Rail Pass also means that you can take a day trip from Kyoto if you wish; Hiroshima, Osaka or Nara are all excellent options.

Before heading back to Tokyo, you will spend a night Japanese-style with a sumptuous evening meal included in the hot spring town of Yudanaka, home to the snow monkeys. Your *ryokan* has its own hot spring baths for you to indulge in.

The *shinkansen* 'Bullet Train' will whisk you back to Tokyo for your final night and a bit of souvenir shopping in the historic Asakusa district.





A wide range of alternative accommodation is available. Please ask for details.

Accommodation

STANDARD:

Tokyo Kadoya (WB)

Small, friendly hotel just a short walk from Shinjuku Station

Niseko Pension Locomotion (WB)

Friendly, family-run inn

Kyoto Aranvert Hotel (WB)

Modern hotel in a central location

Yudanaka Ryokan Shimaya (JPR)

Japanese-style inn with hot spring baths

Tokyo Asakusa Sunroute (WB)

Comfortable business hotel in a great location

UPGRADE:

Tokyo Century Southern Tower (WT)

Top class, modern hotel next to Shinjuku Station

Niseko Hirafutei (WT)

Good quality, ski-in / ski-out hotel with hot spring baths

Kyoto Hotel Granvia (WT)

Exceptional service, beautiful rooms and a great location

Yudanaka Ryokan Jinpyokaku (JPR)

Quality traditional inn with hot spring baths

Tokyo Asakusa View Hotel (WT)

Top class hotel with great service and views of Tokyo

INCLUSIONS:

- 13 nights accommodation (1 night Japanese-style)
- Breakfast each morning
- Lift passes for time in resort
- 1 evening meal
- Meet and Greet upon arrival at Tokyo Narita Airport
- Airport transfers on arrival and departure
- Domestic Flights
- Most other transport between destinations (some airport transfers not included)
- Tokyo Pasma card for use on subway
- 8 hour private guide service in Tokyo & Kyoto
- Excursion day from Kyoto (using included Japan Rail Pass)
- InsideJapan Tours Info-Pack

Option:

Hakuba resort (instead of Niseko)

Home to the 1998 Winter Olympics, Hakuba is another world class resort with a great variety of runs and fantastic snow. A dramatic train journey takes you from Shinjuku station in Tokyo direct to Hakuba for your 5 night stay. You will then visit Yudanaka for a night before moving on to Kyoto.

STANDARD:

Hotel de L'aile (WB)

Small and friendly 3 star hotel in a great location

UPGRADE:

La Neige Higashi-kan (WT)

A sumptuous 5 star hotel with a fantastic location and great food

Fully Tailored Packages

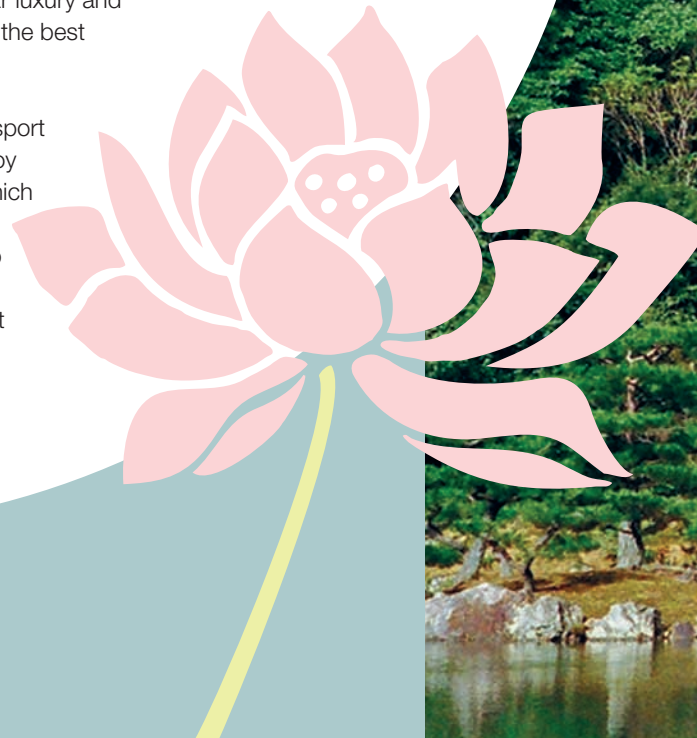
Whether for a family holiday, a romantic getaway or a solo adventure, our Fully Tailored Packages allow you the freedom to set your own itinerary and budget.

Our services cover the whole country – we can expertly advise on everything from hiking in the national parks of Hokkaido to the best beaches in Okinawa. We can also arrange special activities such as pottery classes or flower arranging as well as provide tickets for everything from *sumo* to *kabuki* theatre.

For some initial ideas, read through the Self-Guided Adventures and the suggestions and experiences on the following pages, then give us a call and make your first step toward your dream Japan holiday.

We will ask you about your ideas, accommodation preferences, places you wish to visit and interests and we are always happy to make some suggestions. We can design a trip at almost any budget right from backpackers up to five star luxury and everything in-between and we will always strive to get you the best value for money.

As with the Self-Guided Adventures, we can make all transport and accommodation arrangements leaving you free to enjoy yourself without the stresses and strains of working out which train to catch and how to get to your hotel. You will also have the full support of our Japan office staff who can help should any problems arise. Your personalised Info-Pack includes full details of all the accommodation and transport plans made as well as general information on Japan and sightseeing guides for all the places on your itinerary.





Optional extra inclusions

Private guiding

We can include either a full day or a half day with a private guide in the major cities, using the efficient public transport system, or by private car if you prefer. The guide will have some suggestions but will allow you the flexibility to choose your own itinerary if you wish. You could also choose to hire a guide to accompany you on day trips out of Tokyo to places such as the World Heritage town of Nikko and the ancient capital Kamakura or out of Kyoto to the pretty riverside town of Arashiyama or Nara the home of the Great Buddha.

Coach tours

If you prefer to tour by coach, as many Japanese do, we can arrange coach tours in the major cities. You will follow a set itinerary and be picked up and dropped off close to your hotel. Lunch will be included.

Car hire

The Japanese transport system may be among the best developed in the world, but if you really want to get off the beaten track and do some countryside exploring we highly recommend getting hold of an International Driving Permit and hiring a car. We can organise a range of Toyota cars, for up to 10 people in most areas of Japan. This is a relaxing and fun way to explore and means you are not restricted by timetables and fixed routes.

Private transfers & exclusive tours

We can arrange private car transfers, helicopter cruises, zeppelin rides and more - please ask us for details if you would like these included in your itinerary.

Fully Tailored Packages

Honeymoons in Japan

Vibrant cityscapes, stunning night time vistas, unspoilt countryside and long, white sandy beaches all combine to make Japan the perfect destination for honeymooners. Japan excels in providing top quality hotel accommodation be it deluxe Western-style hotels, high class Japanese-style *ryokan* or relaxing spa hotels where you can enjoy therapeutic bathing and massage.

Here are some ideas for places to stay and special experiences to include.



Hakone – Gora Tensui

Hakone's Gora Tensui is a fabulous oasis of luxury, offering the best of both traditional Japanese design and luxurious modern facilities. Rooms, many with private hot spring baths and veranda, are beautifully decorated, the cuisine is top-class and staff will ensure that you have your every need attended to. The Gora Tensui has a wide range of different *onsen* baths for you to enjoy from baths with medicinal herbs soaked in them to open-air baths with a flow of negatively charged ions, reputed to detoxify the body!

Set in the Fuji Hakone National Park, the Gora Tensui is a fabulous base from which to explore the stunning surrounds of Japan's iconic mountain.



Noto Hanto - Lamp no Yado

The Lamp no Yado is a haven of tranquillity and relaxation tucked away in a small cove at the top of the Noto Peninsula in Ishikawa Prefecture. The secluded nature of the inn - surrounded by cliffs on three sides, the sea on the other and accessed only by winding coastal roads - means it is something of a hidden gem; a secret *onsen* away from the rush of modern life, offering a luxurious, private getaway in unforgettable surroundings.

With only fourteen rooms, the focus is on individuality; each room enjoys a view of the ocean and some have their own outdoor, private hot spring bath attached. The inn offers exquisitely prepared food, including fresh shellfish and the Lamp no Yado's own exclusive wine and sake.



Tokyo – The Peninsula Hotel

The Peninsula Tokyo is the latest super-deluxe five star property to open in Japan's capital city and offers the ultimate in luxury accommodation. Superbly located in the prestigious Marunouchi district – opposite the Imperial Palace and Hibiya Park and within minutes' walk of the Ginza – The Peninsula offers commanding city views, luxurious comfort, sophisticated facilities, fabulous dining options and the legendary Peninsula service.

Guestrooms are among the largest in Tokyo and have stunning views from the floor to ceiling windows. The hotel offers a wide range of gourmet options with authentic *kaiseki* cuisine as well as international dining. For relaxation, the hotel features a fitness centre, spa and indoor pool overlooking the Imperial Gardens.



Ishigaki Island - Club Med Kabira Resort

Just around the corner from the stunning Kabira Bay and with its own private sandy beach, the Club Med Kabira Resort on sub-tropical Ishigaki Island is a fantastic getaway. Stays here include breakfast, lunch and dinner and all house drinks.

Set within luscious gardens, this collection of traditionally-styled, low-rise bungalows features modern guest rooms all with sea views. The resort has its own swimming pool and spa whilst for the more energetic, snorkelling, scuba diving, tennis, windsurfing and the flying trapeze are all available as optional extras.

The old villages of Taketomi Island and the wilderness of Iriomote Island are easy day trips from here, or alternatively, just relax with cocktails on the pristine white beach just footsteps from your room!

Please see pages 26-27 for further details on staying at the Kabira Club Med Resort on Ishigaki.

Champagne & flowers

For that special touch we are delighted to be able to arrange flowers and champagne, personalised if you wish, and delivered to your room.

Sunset helicopter cruise

Few places in the world have as dramatic a skyline as Tokyo and as the sun descends in the west and falls behind Mt Fuji's towering peak, the neon lights illuminate the city, bringing the Tokyo night to life. A helicopter cruise allows you to experience Tokyo in a totally unique and spectacular fashion.

The sunset cruise will take you across much of the city, flying out over the Rainbow Bridge and skirting past Tokyo Tower, before heading into the heart of the city passing over the Ginza.

Wedding *kimono* experience

Get dressed as a Japanese bride in an exquisite traditional *kimono*. Professional photographs are included and the dressing service takes place at an authentic Kyoto *machiya* town house with lunch and a tour of the town house provided.

Japanese wedding ceremony package

The ultimate way to celebrate your wedding in Japan. We can arrange a traditional Shinto wedding ceremony at a shrine in Kyoto with rickshaw transport providing extra photo opportunities.

Professional Japanese hair styling and make-up for the bride and *kimono* hire is also included. A *geisha* reception followed by a drinks party can be arranged as desired.



Experiences

A holiday to Japan is all about new experiences: new sights, new sounds, new tastes, even new high-tech toilets! At every turn Japan will surprise you and offer something you've never experienced before. With such a rich and diverse culture, however many times you return there will always be something new to discover.

In the following section we have collected together a selection of experiences which can be added to your Self-Guided Adventure or Fully Tailored Package. Japan really does offer something for everyone whether your interests lie in traditional sports such as *sumo* wrestling and archery or in the finer arts of *ikebana* flower arranging. And if you don't find your particular passion in the following section, then please get in touch as through our office in Japan and our well-established network of contacts and suppliers we are confident we will be able to help.



Experiences

Sumo

Sumo wrestling is the ancient traditional sport of Japan and provides a fascinating and at times dramatic spectacle for anyone lucky enough to make it to a *basho* (tournament). Fights can be over in a matter of seconds as one wrestler hauls his opponent over the straw bales and out of the ring or thrusts him to the ground. Yet this does not make for a lack of excitement; the tension in the arena builds to a climax as the wrestlers engage in the ritual face off before each bout begins with a thunderous clash of heads. Despite their often gargantuan size, these giants can move like ballerinas, pirouetting in the ring to circle their opponent or spinning on a sixpence to evade a violent thrusting attack.

Being able to see Japan's number one traditional sport in the flesh is a real highlight of any trip to Japan. We can arrange seats at any of the tournaments throughout the year, so if you are a keen *sumo* fan or just want to experience this truly Japanese event, be sure to time your trip to coincide with one of the main tournaments; if possible, the final week of the tournament when the action really hots up!

Check out the 2010 / 11 tournament schedules below.

2010 Grand Tournament Schedule

Tournament	Venue	First Day (Sunday)	Final Day (Sunday)
New Year Basho	Tokyo Kokugikan	10th January 2010	24th January 2010
Spring Basho	Osaka Municipal Gymnasium	14th March 2010	28th March 2010
May Basho	Tokyo Kokugikan	9th May 2010	23rd May 2010
Summer Basho	Nagoya Aichi Gymnasium	11th July 2010	25th July 2010
September Basho	Tokyo Kokugikan	12th September 2010	26th September 2010
Autumn Basho	Fukuoka Kokusai Centre	14th November 2010	28th November 2010

2011 Grand Tournament Schedule

Tournament	Venue	First Day (Sunday)	Final Day (Sunday)
New Year Basho	Tokyo Kokugikan	9th January 2011	23rd January 2011
Spring Basho	Osaka Municipal Gymnasium	13th March 2011	27th March 2011
May Basho	Tokyo Kokugikan	8th May 2011	22nd May 2011
Summer Basho	Nagoya Aichi Gymnasium	10th July 2011	24th July 2011
September Basho	Tokyo Kokugikan	11th September 2011	25th September 2011
Autumn Basho	Fukuoka Kokusai Centre	13th November 2011	27th November 2011

Sumo stable visits

If you can't make it to a tournament, then you'll be pleased to know that we can also arrange visits to a *sumo* stable in Tokyo to see the *rikishi* (wrestlers) at *asa geiko*, the morning practice session. A professional guide will accompany you throughout to make sure you get the most out of this unique experience.



Experiences

Gourmet Japan

An essential part of any holiday is the food. All of our itineraries feature a range of evening meals allowing you to discover that Japanese cuisine is more than just *sushi*! And if you are a real Japanese food fanatic be sure to check out our trips marked with the 'gourmet' sign.



However, to really get to grips with the wonderful food of Japan you should try a hands on experience.



Home cooking

Visit a typical Japanese home and enjoy the company of a Japanese family whilst learning all about home cooking in Japan. On this fascinating programme you will first go shopping at a local supermarket where fresh, local ingredients for lunch will be bought. Your host will then teach you how to prepare a traditional Japanese meal. After lunch you can chat over Japanese green tea.



Traditional cooking

Learn from the master at an exclusive, reservation-only Japanese restaurant. The chef will teach you about the rich culture behind Japanese cuisine and how to prepare dishes like a pro. Using only the choicest and freshest ingredients, the chefs at Hifumi-an create delicious dishes that are tied to the seasons. Learn how to use and prepare *dashi* (a special stock) and *miso* (soybean paste) like the master chefs. Before you take a seat to savour this delicious meal, you'll be introduced to the finer points of Japanese table etiquette so you can appreciate the food's aesthetics, aroma and connection to the seasons enabling you to enjoy Japanese cuisine like never before.



Izakaya experience

Dine out at an *izakaya*, Japan's own unique take on pub dining. These lively eateries are the preferred after work dinner spots for Japan's legions of salarymen. They are fun and lively and always offer a wide range of both Japanese and Asian-Western fusion dishes. Your English speaking guide will translate the menu for you. With all food and drinks included, this is a fantastic way to get to enjoy the mainstay of the Japanese eating-out experience.

Experiences

Responsible Tourism

All our itineraries have elements of responsible tourism in them – you'll travel by public transport, visit places beyond the classic tourist hotspots and have the opportunity to interact with the Japanese – so you can be sure that your holiday will have a positive impact on the country and its people.

However, in addition to this we have selected some experiences that allow you to explore in more depth Japan's wildlife, nature and local communities.

Bear watching in the Japan Alps

Japan's dwindling bear population faces ever-increasing pressure from urban growth, as more and more of their natural habitat is taken over by infrastructure and engineering projects. However, there remain pockets of wilderness where these amazing creatures can still be seen in the wild.

We are proud to work with Oscar Huygens, a founder member of the Shinshu Asiatic Black Bear Conservation Group, an NPO set up to study and help conserve the remaining population of bears in the Japan Alps. Oscar, the first person to obtain a PhD from studying Asiatic Black Bears, is an energetic and fun guide with an incredible knowledge of these beautiful animals.

Run in association with one of the most active bear conservation groups in Japan, this is an ideal way for nature lovers to spend a fun weekend as part of a group learning more about bear conservation issues with an expert guide.

The 2 day tour will begin in the castle town of Matsumoto, two and a half hours outside Tokyo, before travelling up into the mountains by car and then following a hiking course into the mountains.



Accommodation will be at a mountain lodge and in the evening there will be a one hour presentation on bear ecology and bear-human conflicts in this area of Japan.

The following day, the group will have breakfast in the mountain lodge before hiking down to the valley. On the way you'll stop for a *bento* packed lunch, all the while taking in the breathtaking sights of the alpine region. Throughout the hike you will be able to see how, where and why bear-human conflicts have taken place. The group will then continue to Matsumoto and arrive by early evening.

Whale watching

Okay, so we all know the story; the whole world does. Japan has been obdurate in its defiance of the International Whaling Committee's ban on the whaling of certain species, and staying within the allocated quotas for others. There have been a series of high profile clashes between Japanese whaling boats and environmental protestors with seemingly little progress towards a resolution of the issue.

However, away from the headlines and publicity stunts, some coastal communities in Japan are bucking the trend and starting to run whale watching tours. There is a great diversity of whales and dolphins to be spotted in Japanese coastal waters: humpbacks, sperm whales, bottle-nose and spinner dolphins to mention but a few.

Destinations with whale watching opportunities include Chiba and Shizuoka, both within easy reach of Tokyo, Kushimoto on the south coast of Wakayama Prefecture (convenient from Kyoto or Osaka), Kochi on the south coast of Shikoku and the Okinawa chain of islands. On Honshu and Shikoku the best time to see whales is mid-April to October whilst in Okinawa the winter months are recommended (December to April).



The longest established organisation is the Ogasawara Whale Watching Association (OWA). Ogasawara is a cluster of 30 small islands (only two of which are inhabited) 1000 km south of Tokyo, which are rarely visited by non-Japanese. The OWA has been operating for nearly 20 years, and has its own code of good practice to minimise disruption to the animals. Dolphins can be seen in these waters all year round whilst humpback whales are present from mid-December to the end of April.

Ask us for details of how we can incorporate whale watching into a Self-Guided Adventure or Fully Tailored Package.

Local communities

Enjoy the stunning scenery and unique history of Hirado Island and give vital support to the local economy.

The island of Hirado lies off the northwest coast of Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan's four major islands. Hirado has a rich history, and played a vital role in early links with Europe as the home of the Portuguese traders in the 17th century. Today it depends on its local farming and fishing industries for survival. However, with no university on the island and few job prospects outside of a field or a boat, more and more young people are leaving Hirado, and as a result the local economy is suffering and many local businesses are struggling to survive.

Local organisations have recently turned their efforts to tourism in an attempt to bring money to the island, and to provide job opportunities for those who would otherwise leave in search of work. This tourism is almost exclusively domestic, but at InsideJapan Tours we work closely with a local volunteer guide service

and a traditional *ryokan* (Japanese-style inn) and can arrange a relaxing stay for you on this beautiful island. Visiting Hirado is the very essence of responsible tourism: You will visit a part of Japan that the guidebooks don't cover and have the chance to enjoy the natural beauty and culture of the island, in the company of a knowledgeable local who can reveal the secrets that Hirado has to offer. By doing so you will be providing vital support for the local economy, thus helping to ensure both a more prosperous future for the island and its people and the survival of local customs and culture.

The Utari people

The presence of the Ainu or Utari, as they prefer to be referred to, predates the 'Japanese' by thousands of years on the Japanese archipelago. Driven from their homelands on the northernmost tip of the main island of Honshu, the remaining clusters of Utari communities can today only be found in Hokkaido.

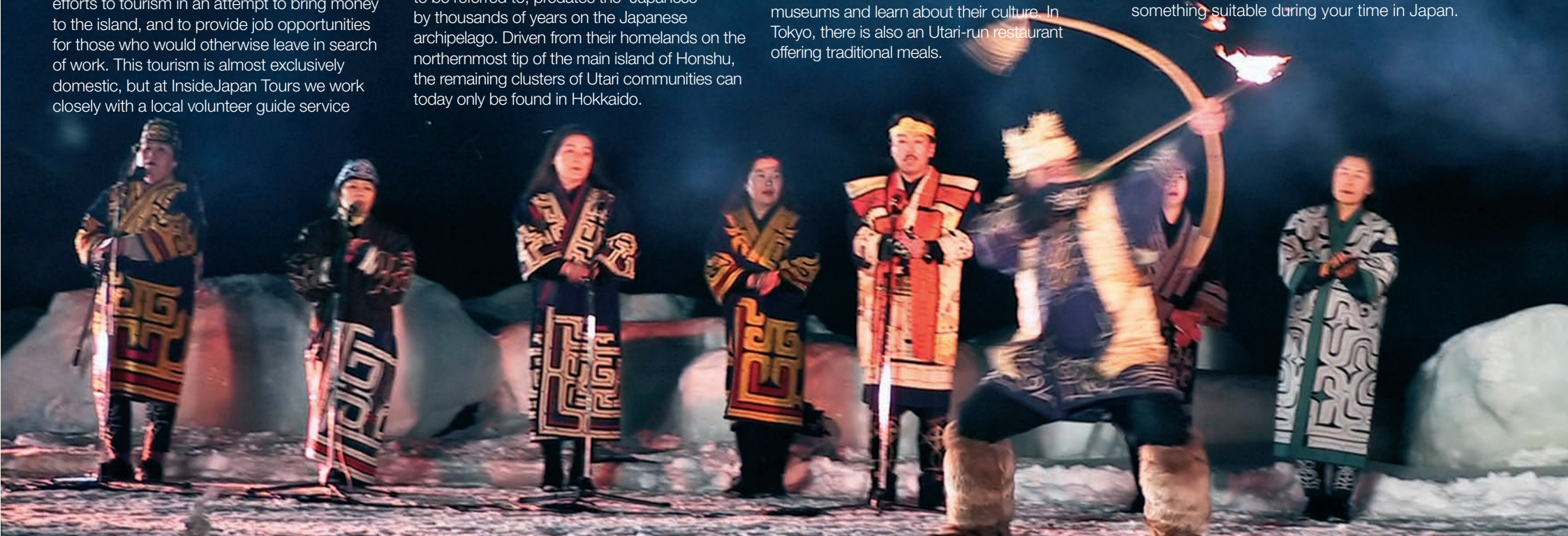
The Utari are ethnically different from the majority of the Japanese population, with their own distinct language and culture. Due to early persecution, attempts to force integration and diseases brought by other invading groups, the Utari's numbers have been severely reduced; there are only a handful of native speakers alive today. Discrimination has led to many Utari hiding their ancestry, but official estimates number 150,000 Japanese people with at least some Utari heritage. The Utari were only officially recognised as a group indigenous to Japan in June 2008, concluding a long fight to halt discrimination.

Nibutani in the south of Hokkaido has the greatest concentration of pure-blood and mixed-heritage Utari, providing a great opportunity to visit some community-run museums and learn about their culture. In Tokyo, there is also an Utari-run restaurant offering traditional meals.

Volunteering

Although you may be on holiday there is nothing quite like the feeling of helping out local people and local organisations whilst travelling in a foreign land, and the opportunity exists to spend a small part of your Japan trip working as a volunteer.

In recent years there has been a steady increase in domestic volunteer numbers, as many of Japan's urban-dwellers have sought an opportunity to remind themselves of (or in some cases, discover for the first time) the nature and ways of Japan's rural areas. You could find yourself involved in environmental preservation, learning traditional building techniques, tree planting or a host of other activities. We have links with local organisations, so if you are interested, just let us know and we'll do our best to find something suitable during your time in Japan.



Experiences

World of The Geisha

A *geisha* with her elaborate *kimono* and ghost white make-up, is one of the most enduring images of Japan. Visiting Japan and specifically Kyoto, gives you a unique opportunity to learn more about this secretive and often misunderstood world.

The word *geisha* translates as 'person of the arts' and *geisha* must train for many years before they become qualified. *Maiko* (trainee *geisha*) must attend lessons in dance, music, tea ceremony and calligraphy as well as learn how to be good conversationalists in order to entertain their clients. Traditionally, *geisha* were trained from childhood, leaving their homes in the countryside to live in the *o-kiya* in the city. However, in more recent times, girls complete their compulsory education before leaving school at fifteen to begin their training.

Most of the *geisha* in Japan live and work in Gion and the surrounding districts of Kyoto where they are referred to as *geiko* in the local dialect. It is here that you will be able to spot these graceful women as they rush between appointments in the many tea houses dotted about the back streets. These tea houses, or *o-chaya* in Japanese, are where the *geisha* entertain and perform for their clients. However, not just anyone can enter a tea house; you must have an official introduction and as is to be expected of such an exclusive service, you might have to save up for the privilege.

The role of a *geisha* is often misunderstood by many in the West and for this reason InsideJapan Tours has teamed up with local experts to give our clients a unique opportunity to learn a little more about this hidden world.





Drinks with a maiko

A unique opportunity to meet and spend some time with a Kyoto *maiko*. Join an interesting walking lecture of the *geisha* area followed by ninety minutes at a local traditional house having drinks and snacks with a *maiko*. There will also be the chance to watch a performance of traditional *geisha* dance.

Geisha dress-up

The chance to transform into a *geisha*, with full make-up, *geisha* wig, choice of *kimono* and several photo options - a fantastic souvenir of your stay in Kyoto. Men need not feel left out as you can join in too and wear a men's *kimono* for that full *samurai* look!

Maiko tea ceremony package

A tea ceremony experience accompanied by a *maiko* followed by a light dinner. Later you will have the chance to chat to the *maiko* over drinks.

Maiko lunch package

Enjoy a *kaiseki* lunch with a *maiko* followed by a walking lecture around the *geisha* district.

Geisha dance tickets

In spring and autumn the *geisha* districts of Kyoto hold their annual dances – a rare chance to see a public performance of traditional *geisha* dances along with their luxurious and priceless *kimono*.

Experiences

Traditional & Modern Arts

A modern powerhouse of an economy but with an ancient tradition of local arts and crafts – mix and match the following experiences to get to the heart of Japan!



Ghibli Museum

For fans of Japanese animé the Ghibli Museum, right outside Tokyo and fifteen minutes away from Shinjuku station, is the ultimate destination. Studio Ghibli is a major producer of Japanese animated films. The world renowned director Miyazaki has produced some of the most famous films in the studio's history: "My Neighbour Totoro", "Spirited Away", "Princess Mononoke" and many more. The museum exhibits the production process, presents short animation films and is a great way to spend a day.



Tour of Tondaya *machiya* house

Tondaya silk wholesaler is a *machiya* (traditional town house) built in 1885 and now a registered National Cultural Asset preserving and maintaining traditional customs. Here we can organise for you to have a range of experiences including a tour of the house, tea ceremony and *kimono* wearing.



Pottery lesson

Housengama is a well-known pottery studio located near Sanjusangendo temple, just a short taxi ride from Kyoto station. Here you can experience a hands-on pottery lesson led by Housengama's expert staff who speak a little English and offer a number of options and designs to follow. You can arrange for your finished items to be glazed and then shipped internationally if you wish (an extra cost applies and the service takes about three months).

Ikebana flower arrangement lesson

Ikebana is the Japanese art of flower arranging. In Kyoto we can arrange for you to take a lesson in a traditional *geisha* district house with a licensed *ikebana* teacher. Flowers and other materials are included and you will also receive some translated instructions to take home.



Martial arts – sword fighting and *aikido*

We have teamed up with TOHO entertainment school and can now offer lessons in *aikido* and *tate-do* (sword fighting). You'll be learning choreographed moves from the experts behind many of Japan's best loved action films.

Outdoor Experiences



Tokyo cycling tour

Join a one day cycling tour visiting major sightseeing spots in Tokyo. The route starts near Tokyo station, and then rides through the Nihonbashi waterfront area before stopping off for a mini walking tour of the historic Tsukuda-jima area. Next up is a ride to Tsukiji Fish Market followed by free time to explore. Then the route crosses over the various bridges to Odaiba, Tokyo's ultra modern entertainment district on a man-made island in Tokyo Bay where the group stops for lunch.

In the afternoon riders take the water bus to Hinode pier and cycle to Tokyo Tower via Zojo-ji temple. Last stop of the day is the Imperial Palace before finishing back at the Marunouchi Hotel near Tokyo Station.

Kyoto cycling tours are also available.



Mt. Fuji climb

Mt. Fuji is the most famous symbol of Japan and a climb to the peak is both a physical and emotional test. You will need to be determined and of reasonable physical fitness. You will join a guided group climb with an overnight stay at a mountain lodge - the safest way to get up to the 3,776 metre peak. Our climb will be timed to reach the top in time for sunrise at around 4.30am. The group size is tailored to allow for an appropriate instruction ratio (usually around 3 to 7 people per guide). Among the four ascending routes on Mt. Fuji, you will take the Fujinomiya trail which is the shortest route. Please note that the season for climbing Mt. Fuji is July 1st to August 31st only.

Nagoya – Our Home in Japan

Our base in Japan is the port city of Nagoya, historic home of the Tokugawa Shogun and modern-day HQ for the Toyota Motor Corporation. Conveniently located on the Tokaido *shinkansen* line between Tokyo and Kyoto and with its own brand-new international airport, Nagoya has a wealth of sights and experiences to offer. We would certainly be delighted for you to visit!

On this page are some Nagoya highlights, all of which can be easily incorporated into your visit to Japan.



Toyota Factory Visit

Whilst in Japan, take the opportunity to visit Japan's biggest car manufacturer, Toyota. The company's headquarters are located in Toyota City just outside Nagoya. There are free English language tours of the high-tech plants most days and we can make a reservation for you. Next to the headquarters is the Toyota Kaikan Exhibition Hall, where Toyota's brand new models and technologies are displayed to the public, which means you will get the chance to see them before anyone else; a must for all car fanatics!



Nagoya Castle

Originally completed in 1612, Nagoya Castle was home of the Owari Tokugawa clan of the Tokugawa family until the Meiji restoration ended *shogunate* rule in 1868. The castle was destroyed during World War Two but the *donjon* (main keep) has now been reconstructed, complete with the iconic *kinshachi* golden fish perched on the top. The castle features good English language explanations as well as a computerised 3D reconstruction of the Honmaru Palace which is due to be rebuilt in time for Nagoya's 400 year anniversary in 2010.



Tokugawa Art Museum

The Nagoya area was home of the powerful Edo *shogun* Tokugawa Ieyasu and this museum houses a fascinating collection of artefacts associated with his clan. Swords, armour, *noh* drama costumes, lacquer furniture and ceramics provide an insight into the flourishing arts of this period of relative stability. The most precious exhibit is the original scroll of the 12th century epic poem "The Tale of Genji".



Nagashima Spa Land

For something completely different, the Nagashima Spa Land resort just outside Nagoya offers theme park rides, a water park and a beautiful *onsen* all within the same complex. Steel Dragon 2000 is the world's longest roller-coaster whilst the outdoor seawater pool features some eighteen different water slides.



Kuragari Gorge

The Nagoya region is also home to some natural wonders including the impressive Kuragari Gorge, a forested area with some fantastic walks and great views. The valley follows the scenic Otoko River as it winds its way through the Hongusan nature reserve.



Meiji Mura

The opening of Japan's borders during the Meiji period (1867-1912) saw the country change dramatically as Western-styles and thinking influenced architecture, industry and society. Meiji Mura is an open air museum showcasing the styles of those heady days. Some sixty historical buildings have been moved and reconstructed in this 247 acre park, with the most important being the main entrance and lobby of Frank Lloyd Wright's landmark Imperial Hotel. The museum includes its own steam railway and is set against the rolling hills of Lake Iruka.



Atsuta Shrine & Osu Kannon Temple

Nagoya's principle religious sites are Astuta Shrine and Osu Kannon Temple. The former is one of the most important shrines in Japan. It enshrines the sun goddess Amaterasu and keeps hidden in its precincts the sacred sword, one of three sacred imperial regalia in Japan. Osu Kannon meanwhile is a bustling Buddhist temple known for the surrounding market streets as much as the main temple building.



Modern Nagoya

Spurred on by a booming economy and the 2005 World Exposition, Nagoya's skyline has been peppered with new buildings of late including the fantastic JR Towers and a brand new HQ for Toyota Motor Company. Oasis 21 in the centre of town meanwhile, is a low-rise but equally spectacular exhibition space (and bus terminus) whilst the granddaddy of them all, Nagoya TV Tower, has been given a silver facelift and commands great views over the city. An artificial island outside the city is home to Nagoya's brand new airport, known as Centrair, and is a truly impressive gateway to the city.

Important Information

Holiday Descriptions & Inclusions

Every effort will be made to deliver your holiday exactly as described in this brochure. Occasionally however, changes do have to be made and in this case we will endeavour to tell you as soon as possible about any change. If we have to change the named accommodation, we will offer an alternative accommodation option of the same or higher standard.

Our packages include:

- Accommodation in Japan as detailed
- Transport between destinations in Japan (except where stated)
- Airport transfer on arrival and departure
- Meals as detailed
- Accommodation taxes and service charges
- Info-Pack with full instructions, sightseeing and eating out advice

Our packages do NOT include:

- International flights
- Entrance fees & meals other than those detailed
- Local transport (e.g. taxis, subways, local buses)
- Drinks with any included meals
- Incidental costs at your accommodation (telephone costs, drinks, etc)

If you are unsure of the exact inclusions, please ask your booking agent for further details.

Named Accommodation

Please note that sometimes the named accommodation is not available and in this case we will book (subject to your approval) an alternative of the same or higher standard.

Flights

Our packages do not include international flights. We would be delighted to make flight arrangements for you (please ask for details) or alternatively, you can arrange your flights with your travel agent or by yourself. Once you have your flights confirmed, please make sure that your booking agent is aware of the full flight details. All of the packages are for arrivals at Tokyo Narita Airport (NRT) and departures from the same. The only exception is the Shikoku and Kyoto – Paths Less Travelled itinerary which is designed for arrivals and departures at Osaka Kansai Airport (KIX).

Meals

A number of meals are included in most packages and you will find in the brochure a number of 'gourmet' trips with 5 or more evening meals included. Please advise your booking agent of any dietary requirements you have and we will do our best to accommodate them.

Prices

Due to volatility of currency exchange rates and the flexibility of our itineraries we have not printed any prices in our brochure. For a guide to prices please refer to the printed insert or, for the most up-to-date pricing, please check our web-site – www.insidejapantours.com.

When planning your trip please keep in mind that during certain Japanese holiday periods prices can be a lot higher than usual. The main holidays are as follows:

29th December to 4th January	New Year
29th April to 5th May	Golden Week
9th August to 17th August	Obon Festival

How to Book, Payment and Travel Documents

You can book through your local travel agent or by contacting InsideJapan Tours Ltd directly. If you are booking through a travel agency, then all subsequent correspondence should be made through that agency. For all bookings, please use an InsideJapan Tours booking form. You will need to read the terms and conditions and sign the booking form to confirm on behalf of all those in your party that you accept and understand all of the terms and conditions.

Your booking agent will advise payment terms at the time of booking. InsideJapan Tours asks for a deposit upon booking and then full payment 2 months prior to your package start date. Please check with your travel agent for their payment terms as these vary from agent to agent.

After we have processed your booking, we will issue you or your travel agent with a confirmation document which will show exactly what is included in your holiday. Please check all the details very carefully and advise your booking agent if there are any mistakes or if there is anything that you do not understand.

Your Info-Pack and other travel documents will be sent to you approximately 3 weeks before departure.

Some tickets may be sent to your first hotel in Japan. Full details of which tickets and documents will be sent and where they will be sent will be shown on your confirmation documents.

Late Bookings

Bookings made 4 weeks or less before your planned departure date will be accepted on a case by case basis. In most situations we will be able to confirm your holiday at the price in this brochure.

However, there may be situations where we will have to change the price. For late bookings we will endeavour to confirm your holiday arrangements and the price within 3 working days.

Passports and Visas, Health and Advice

It is your responsibility to ensure that you and all members of your party have the correct passports and, if appropriate, visas to enter Japan. At the time of printing, citizens of the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand did not need a visa to visit Japan. If you are unsure, please ask the Japanese Embassy in your home country. You can find a full list of embassies here: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/>

Vaccinations are not generally needed for visiting Japan, but if you suffer from any health problems, please visit your doctor for advice before booking. Health care in Japan is generally very good but can be expensive. Your own government will be able to supply the latest health advice about visiting Japan. You may also want to ask the Japan National Tourist Organisation (JNTO) for advice.

For UK Citizens please see:

Foreign Office: www.fco.gov.uk/travel or
telephone: 0870 606 0290

JNTO UK: www.seejapan.co.uk/
JNTO Worldwide: www.jnto.go.jp/

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you and all members of your party have adequate travel insurance to cover medical costs and repatriation. You will be asked to sign a booking form to show that you have, or will have, this insurance in place for the duration of your trip. Although not compulsory, we also recommend that you also take out cancellation insurance.

Money & Debit / Credit Cards

Japan is still in many ways a cash society and many shops and restaurants do not accept cards. You will therefore, need to carry Japanese yen in cash whilst in Japan. You can get Japanese yen cash in advance of your trip or you can exchange US dollar, GB pound or Euro cash and travellers cheques as well as cash in most other currencies on arrival at any airport. You can do the same at some banks and post offices during your trip. Please note that bank and post office opening hours are often shorter than in the UK or the US and they are closed on Saturday afternoons, Sundays and national holidays. You can also use Visa, Mastercard, Cirrus or Maestro branded credit and debit cards to take money out of ATMs at post office branches and branches of the Seven Eleven convenience store chain – you will need a 4 digit PIN number to do this. If you plan to do this, please inform your card issuer before departure that you will be using the card abroad and have a backup in mind in case of any problems (eg. take some travellers cheques as well).

Children

Children aged 12 years or older are treated as adults in terms of accommodation and transport costs. For younger children we can sometimes offer discounts on the published prices – please ask your booking agent for further details. Any children aged 17 years old or younger at the time of travel, must be accompanied by a parent, guardian or another adult who will assume legal responsibility for them for the duration of the trip.

Rooms and Check-In, Single Travellers

Check-in and check-out times vary from hotel to hotel. Check-in can be any time from 13.00 to 16.00 and check-out from 09.00 to 12.00. Please note that in Japan check-in times are strictly adhered to and early check-in requests may well be refused. You can, however, always leave your suitcases with the front desk even before check-in time.

Please advise your booking agent if you wish to have smoking or non-smoking accommodation and we will do our best to accommodate your wishes. Triple or quad-share rooms may be available upon request – please ask your booking agent for further details. In order to secure a single room it is sometimes necessary to change the named accommodation for single travellers. We will advise you of this as soon as possible.

Car Hire

If your package includes car hire, the named driver must be in possession of a full and valid driving license from their home country as well as a full and valid International Driving Permit (issued in accordance with the Geneva Convention 1949). Cars drive on the left and most road signs are in English as well as Japanese. Swiss and German driving licence holders need to obtain a Japanese translation of their home country driving licence before departure and can not use an international permit.

Luggage

Porterage is not included in any of our packages so you will be responsible for carrying your luggage from place to place. Most train stations have escalators but a few do not. Some trains only have limited luggage space. Please pack as lightly as possible and make sure that you are able to handle your own luggage comfortably. We recommend packing a small, light suitcase with good wheels.

Japan does have an excellent luggage forwarding service called *takuhaibin* which is available from the front desk of most hotels. You can send your luggage from hotel to hotel or even to the airport if you wish. This is at a small additional cost (payable in yen at the time of sending) and full instructions will be in your Info-Pack. If you plan to take advantage of this service, it will be useful for you to have an overnight bag as well as your main bag.

If you have any questions or queries please contact your travel agent. If booking direct, please contact InsideJapan Tours on:

Tel: +44 (0)117 314 4620

Email: info@insidejapantours.com

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100% FINANCIAL PROTECTION







Japan Facts & Figures

Average weather conditions

Japan is a fantastic destination all year round and the Japanese are very proud of their distinctive seasons. Traditionally, the most popular times of year to visit are spring (March/April) and autumn (October/November), when the weather is warm but not too humid and there is a good chance of seeing cherry blossom and the autumn leaves respectively (see opposite page for more details).

However, every season has its unique charms and visiting out of season has many benefits, not least being the vastly smaller number of tourists at key sightseeing spots. Winter is characterised by crisp, clear days and heavy snow fall in the mountains and the northern regions. Summer is hot and more humid in the cities, but is the perfect time to explore the higher altitudes of the Japanese countryside.

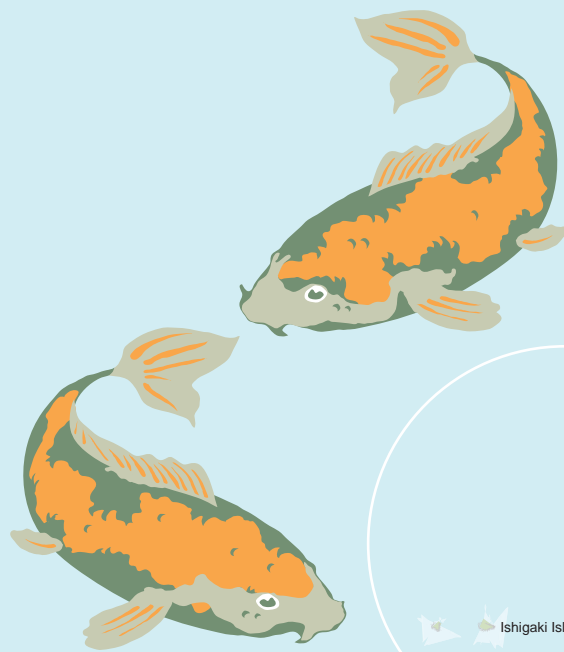


Image credits

Please see www.insidejapantours.com/brochure-images for full details of all the images used in our brochure.

Average start of cherry blossom

The springtime cherry blossom is a fantastic time to be in Japan. The beauty of the blossom aside, partying under the *sakura* is a national institution.

Below are the average start dates for cherry blossom. Note that full bloom is usually reached a few days after the start date and then lasts for a week or so:

City	Average Date	2007	2006	2005
Sapporo	5th May	4th May	8th May	10th May
Hakodate	3rd May	30th Apr	7th May	1st May
Sendai	12th Apr	6th Apr	13th Apr	14th Apr
Tokyo	28th Mar	20th Mar	21st Mar	31st Mar
Kanazawa	6th Apr	29th Mar	6th Apr	7th Apr
Kyoto	31st Mar	25th Mar	27th Mar	2nd Apr
Hiroshima	29th Mar	22nd Mar	22nd Mar	3rd Apr
Matsuyama	28th Mar	23rd Mar	24th Mar	1st Apr
Kumamoto	24th Mar	23rd Mar	20th Mar	1st Apr
Kagoshima	26th Mar	30th Mar	20th Mar	3rd Apr
Ishigaki	19th Jan	23rd Jan	13th Jan	19th Jan

Average start of autumn leaves

The *koyo* (leaf viewing) season is a highlight of autumnal Japan and makes for some beautiful vistas especially in the national parks. On average you can see leaves at their best as follows:

Region	Autumn Leaves
Hokkaido	mid September to late October
Tokyo	mid November to early December
Nikko	mid October to mid November
Hakone	early to mid November
Kawaguchi-ko	late October to early November
Kyoto	mid November to early December
Shikoku	mid October to late November
Kyushu	mid October to early November

Rainy season

From June to mid-July much of Japan experiences a mild rainy season with Okinawa being affected approximately one month earlier. Average start and finish dates are as follows:

Region	Start	End
Ishigaki	8th May	23rd Jun
Kagoshima	29th May	13th Jul
Osaka, Kyoto, Nara	6th Jun	19th Jul
Tokyo	8th Jun	20th Jul

Source: Japan Meteorological Agency

During the rainy season it does not rain every day and it is not always torrential. Hokkaido does not have a rainy season at all. Some sights can be enhanced by rain and are quieter as well – and cheap umbrellas are available from every convenience store!

City	Max. Temp	Min. Temp	Rainy Days	Rainfall	Sunshine
January					
Sapporo	-1 C (30F)	-8 C (18F)	18 d	111 mm	97 h
Tokyo	10 C (50F)	2 C (34F)	5 d	49 mm	181 h
Kyoto	9 C (49F)	3 C (37F)	5 d	44 mm	142 h
Fukuoka	10 C (50F)	3 C (38F)	9 d	72 mm	100 h
Ishigaki	19 C (66F)	14 C (58F)	11 d	115 mm	95 h
February					
Sapporo	0 C (32F)	-7 C (19F)	16 d	96 mm	110 h
Tokyo	10 C (50F)	2 C (36F)	6 d	60 mm	161 h
Kyoto	9 C (49F)	3 C (37F)	6 d	59 mm	131 h
Fukuoka	11 C (51F)	4 C (38F)	9 d	71 mm	114 h
Ishigaki	19 C (67F)	14 C (58F)	11 d	125 mm	85 h
March					
Sapporo	4 C (38F)	-4 C (26F)	14 d	80 mm	157 h
Tokyo	13 C (55F)	5 C (41F)	10 d	115 mm	160 h
Kyoto	13 C (56F)	5 C (41F)	9 d	100 mm	158 h
Fukuoka	14 C (57F)	6 C (43F)	11 d	109 mm	150 h
Ishigaki	21 C (70F)	16 C (61F)	12 d	160 mm	109 h
April					
Sapporo	11 C (52F)	3 C (37F)	9 d	61 mm	178 h
Tokyo	18 C (65F)	11 C (51F)	10 d	130 mm	165 h
Kyoto	20 C (67F)	11 C (51F)	10 d	121 mm	184 h
Fukuoka	19 C (67F)	11 C (51F)	10 d	125 mm	177 h
Ishigaki	24 C (75F)	19 C (66F)	11 d	181 mm	134 h

City	Max. Temp	Min. Temp	Rainy Days	Rainfall	Sunshine
May					
Sapporo	17 C (63F)	8 C (46F)	9 d	55 mm	197 h
Tokyo	23 C (73F)	15 C (59F)	10 d	128 mm	181 h
Kyoto	24 C (76F)	15 C (60F)	10 d	140 mm	200 h
Fukuoka	24 C (74F)	15 C (59F)	9 d	139 mm	181 h
Ishigaki	26 C (80F)	22 C (71F)	12 d	234 mm	150 h
June					
Sapporo	21 C (70F)	12 C (54F)	7 d	51 mm	187 h
Tokyo	25 C (77F)	19 C (66F)	12 d	165 mm	120 h
Kyoto	27 C (81F)	20 C (68F)	12 d	201 mm	150 h
Fukuoka	27 C (80F)	19 C (67F)	12 d	272 mm	148 h
Ishigaki	29 C (85F)	25 C (76F)	11 d	212 mm	182 h
July					
Sapporo	25 C (77F)	17 C (63F)	8 d	67 mm	176 h
Tokyo	29 C (84F)	23 C (73F)	10 d	162 mm	148 h
Kyoto	31 C (89F)	24 C (75F)	10 d	155 mm	186 h
Fukuoka	31 C (87F)	24 C (75F)	11 d	266 mm	183 h
Ishigaki	31 C (88F)	26 C (80F)	9 d	176 mm	243 h
August					
Sapporo	26 C (79F)	19 C (65F)	9 d	137 mm	174 h
Tokyo	31 C (87F)	24 C (76F)	8 d	155 mm	178 h
Kyoto	33 C (91F)	25 C (77F)	7 d	99 mm	211 h
Fukuoka	32 C (89F)	25 C (76F)	9 d	188 mm	199 h
Ishigaki	31 C (88F)	26 C (79F)	12 d	247 mm	223 h

City	Max. Temp	Min. Temp	Rainy Days	Rainfall	Sunshine
September					
Sapporo	22 C (79F)	14 C (65F)	10 d	138 mm	160 h
Tokyo	27 C (80F)	21 C (69F)	11 d	209 mm	113 h
Kyoto	29 C (84F)	21 C (70F)	10 d	175 mm	149 h
Fukuoka	28 C (82F)	21 C (69F)	10 d	175 mm	158 h
Ishigaki	30 C (88F)	25 C (79F)	10 d	200 mm	197 h
October					
Sapporo	16 C (60F)	7 C (44F)	12 d	124 mm	153 h
Tokyo	22 C (71F)	15 C (59F)	9 d	163 mm	130 h
Kyoto	23 C (73F)	15 C (59F)	8 d	109 mm	162 h
Fukuoka	23 C (73F)	15 C (59F)	7 d	81 mm	175 h
Ishigaki	28 C (82F)	23 C (73F)	8 d	163 mm	169 h
November					
Sapporo	8 C (47F)	1 C (34F)	14 d	103 mm	100 h
Tokyo	17 C (62F)	10 C (49F)	6 d	93 mm	141 h
Kyoto	17 C (63F)	10 C (49F)	6 d	66 mm	147 h
Fukuoka	18 C (64F)	10 C (49F)	8 d	81 mm	133 h
Ishigaki	24 C (76F)	20 C (67F)	9 d	124 mm	121 h
December					
Sapporo	2 C (36F)	-4 C (24F)	16 d	105 mm	87 h
Tokyo	12 C (54F)	5 C (40F)	4 d	40 mm	171 h
Kyoto	12 C (54F)	5 C (41F)	5 d	38 mm	149 h
Fukuoka	13 C (55F)	5 C (41F)	8 d	54 mm	117 h
Ishigaki	21 C (70F)	16 C (61F)	8 d	101 mm	114 h



get beneath the surface

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