



Discover Japan

Classic Tour | 13 Days | Moderate

Tokyo – Mount Fuji - Takayama - Kanazawa - Kyoto - Nara - Osaka

This tour is the perfect introduction to fascinating Japan, where skyscrapers give way to paddy fields and crowds disperse into the tranquility of classical gardens.

- Discover the delights of futuristic Tokyo
- Admire breath-taking Mount Fuji
- Experience the speedy Bullet Train
- Get a glimpse of Buddhist life in Koya-San
- Explore the vibrant city of Osaka

Discover Japan tour inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals (From dinner on day 1 to breakfast on the last day)
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with ABTA, ATOL and IATA

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, tipping, early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary.

Classic Tours:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of Japan on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully-inclusive basis so you'll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

Moderate Tours:

'Discover Japan' is a **moderate** tour. This means that the itinerary requires a good level of fitness.

- On several days, there will be sightseeing on foot for extended periods of time, often involving steps or uneven ground
- You will be required to get on and off various sizes of boat without assistance

Of course, our National Escort will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Itinerary – Discover Japan

Days 1-2: Tokyo

Fly overnight to Tokyo, the capital of Japan and on arrival, transfer approximately 1.5 hours to your hotel. The rest of the day is free for you to explore the city until an informal welcome dinner tonight. Group members arriving late in the evening may miss dinner but will receive a refund if so.

Please note: Early check in is not included. If your flight arrives in the morning and you wish to arrange this, please speak to your reservations consultant. Transfers will differ depending on group size, but you may share a coach with other passengers who are not part of a Wendy Wu Tour. Meals will be at your own discretion until your welcome dinner tonight.



Destination Information

Tokyo – One of the world's most cutting-edge capital cities, Tokyo is a city of contrasts, famous for its neon-lit landscape, towering skyscrapers, peaceful shrines and lovingly tended gardens. Although long the political and cultural centre of Japan, Tokyo became the official capital when the Meiji Emperor moved it to Tokyo in 1867.

Day 3: Tokyo

Tokyo is the ultimate 24-hour city, but look behind its frantic, high-tech frontage and you'll find plenty of tranquil backstreets and old temples to explore. Head to the 1st observatory of the Tokyo Skytree for panoramic views over the city before taking a wander through the district of Asakusa stopping at the Sensoji Temple and Nakamise shopping street. Visit the Imperial Palace Plaza Garden (you will not enter the palace itself) and the peaceful Hamarikyu Gardens. You will be on your feet for 4-5 hours during your touring in Tokyo. Enjoy your evening meal whilst leisurely cruising for one hour along Tokyo Bay. You will need to get on and off your boat this evening for your cruise on Tokyo Bay without assistance.

Destination Information

Tokyo Skytree – is the tallest structure in Japan and the tallest tower in the world. Tokyo Skytree is predominantly a television and radio broadcast tower and is earthquake resistant.

Sensoji Temple – is an ancient Buddhist Temple and the oldest in Tokyo. The temple was originally founded in the 7th century. The temple adorns an image of the Buddhist Goddess Kannon, who was said to have been rescued by two fishermen from the Sumida River in Tokyo.

Imperial Plaza – Is the main residence of the Emperor of Japan. Built on the original site of Edo Castle, the Plaza is made up of a palace, museum and large park.

Hamarikyu Gardens – is a beautiful example of Japanese garden style which sits at the mouth of the Sumida River.

Day 4: Mount Fuji

This morning there will be an early start transferring to the station for the bullet train to Odawara. Your bullet train ride will be approximately 35 minutes, on arrival transfer to tranquil Lake Ashi. Take a cruise across the lake before taking the Komagatake cable car for spectacular views of Mount Fuji and the lake below. Continue by coach to Japan's most iconic landmark - Mount Fuji. Start at the 5th Station for breathtaking views of Fuji. Please note travelling to the 5th station at Mount Fuji is only possible if weather conditions permit it. If it is not possible, visit Fuji San World Heritage Centre (formerly Fuji Visitor Centre) for a wealth of information on the mountain and the Five Lakes area. Drive to either Kofu or Suwa to check into your hotel for an overnight stay.



Please note that your luggage will be transferred separately from your hotel in Tokyo to your hotel in Takayama so you will need to pack an overnight bag for tonight. Due to your early start you may need to take a packed breakfast with you (provided).

Destination Information

Mount Fuji - At 3,776m, Mount Fuji is the highest of Japan's mountains and an iconic symbol of the country. Mount Fuji is notoriously shy and is often enveloped by clouds.

Lake Ashi – Formed after Mount Hakone's last eruption 3000 years ago, Lake Ashi is the symbol of Hakone and on a clear day offers spectacular views of Mount Fuji in the distance.

Day 5: Matsumoto

This morning, drive 2 hours to Nagano to explore the formidable 16th century Matsumoto Castle. There are steep ladder-style steps in the Matsumoto Castle that you must climb up and back down again. If you choose not to look inside the castle, you can enjoy the surrounding gardens, moat and architecture of Matsumoto Castle. After lunch, you will stop at a sake brewery to learn about the process of making Japan's most revered liquor, before travelling a further 2 and half hours to Takayama, nestled high in the mountainous Hida region.

Destination Information

Matsumoto Castle – Known as the 'crow castle' due to its dark black exterior, the Matsumoto castle dates back to the 16th century and is the oldest wooden castle in Japan.

Sake Brewery – Sake is the national alcohol of Japan; a tour of the brewery offers the chance to learn about the manufacturing processes from the 1950's to the present day.

Takayama – Boasting one of Japan's most atmospheric townscapes, the layout of the town dates back to the 17th century and is home to much Meiji architecture.

In Takayama we use a selection of hotels, some of which are more traditional in style but you will be accommodated in Western-style rooms.

Day 6: Takayama

Head to the Miyagawa Morning Market, where you can sample some of the delicious local fruits and vegetables (at your own expense). Later, take a leisurely stroll round the traditional houses of the area and visit the museums stopping at Takayama Festival Floats Exhibition Hall, Kusakabe Folk Museum, Takayama Jinya and Kamisannomachi Street. You will spend approximately 5 hours on foot today sightseeing around the town of Takayama.

Destination Information

Miyagawa Morning Market – Occurring each morning, there are a number of stalls selling fresh vegetables, local craft works and local food products.

Takayama Festival Floats Exhibition Hall – Housing the floats from the Takayama Festival, which dates back to the 16th century, the Takayama Festival Floats Exhibition Hall is a great introduction to the cultural celebrations of Takayama.

Kusabe Folk Museum – Is a former house for a wealthy merchant named Kusakabe. The house is typical of the style during the Edo Period, with dark wooden beams and pillars.

Takayama Jinya – Is a former government office dating back to the Edo Period and the only one of its type still remaining. The main work of the office was to handle legal cases and tax collection.

Day 7: Shirakawago

Travel 1.5 hours to the UNESCO World Heritage listed Shirakawago, famous for its traditional Gassho-Zukuri farmhouses, some of which are more than 250 years old. You will spend 1.5 hours on foot exploring the area. There are some stairs in the house to climb if you want to explore the higher levels. Continue on a journey of 1 hour to try your hand at making washi paper this afternoon, before driving to Kanazawa, a journey of approximately 1.5 hours. On arrival, visit the Nomura Samurai House before checking in to your hotel.

Destination Information

Shirakawago – Alongside Gokayama, Shirakawago is a UNESCO World Heritage site known for its unusual architectural style known as Gassho-Zukuri. The roofs of these houses are tilted at an almost vertical angle.

Washi Paper – Is a type of Japanese paper made from the fibres of bark. This type of paper is commonly used in the art of origami.

Kanazawa – Is the capital of the Ishikawa Prefecture and is known for its beautiful samurai and geisha districts, as well as its stunning Kenroku-en Garden.

Nomura Samurai Family House – Is a restored Samurai residence with a beautiful garden. Nomura was a high-ranked samurai of the Meiji Period.

Day 8: Kanazawa - Kyoto

This morning, wander through the beautiful Kenroku-en, one of the 'Three Great Gardens of Japan'. Visit the 21st century Museum of Contemporary Art. Sightseeing this morning will be approximately 3 hours. After lunch, drive 4 hours to Kyoto, Japan's ancient capital, check in to your hotel and enjoy dinner at a local restaurant.



Destination Information

Kenroku-en – One of Japan's 'Three Great Gardens', Kenroku-en dates back to the early 17th century and is noticeable for its stunning beauty in all seasons.

21st century Museum of Contemporary Art – Opened in 2004, this museum is home to some of Japan's most fascinating modern art, with most pieces dating from the 1980s onwards.

Kyoto - was the ancient capital of Japan for approximately 1,000 years until 1867 when it was moved to Tokyo. Many national treasures can be found in Kyoto and in nearby Nara, including old shrines and temples, screen paintings, beautiful gardens, and statues of Buddha.

Day 9: Kyoto

Start the day with a visit to the Ryoanji Temple and Kinkakuji Temple, also known as the Golden Pavilion, due to its gold-like exterior. You will spend approximately 3 hours at the temples. After lunch, learn traditional Japanese handicrafts such as origami and enjoy the art of a traditional tea ceremony.



Destination Information

Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion) – is a Buddhist temple and is an excellent example of Japanese garden design. The structure is a brilliant golden hue colour and is very minimalistic.

Ryoanji Temple – is a Zen temple which is renowned for its garden which features a dry, sand landscape with large rocks and smooth pebbles.

Day 10: Kyoto - Nara

Travel 1 hour to Nara, stopping en route at the mesmerising Fushimi Inari Shrine. The Fushimi Inari Shrine goes from the bottom to the top of Mount Inari (233 metres high). You will walk up part of the mountain; there are some steep steps and the incline allows a steady-paced walk. On arrival in Nara, visit Todaiji Temple, the world's largest wooden structure and home to Japan's largest Buddha. Also visit Isui-en Gardens, known for its natural ponds, sightseeing here will be about 3 hours on foot.



Destination Information

Nara – Home to 8 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Nara is a rewarding destination and a great spot for Japanese culture.

Todaiji Temple – A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Todaiji Temple is one the Seven Great Temples of Japan and is home to the world's largest bronze statue, Daibutsu.

Fushimi Inari Shrine – The Fushimi Inari is a corridor of red torii shrines which stretch through the thick woods of Mount Inari, a truly remarkable sight.

Day 11: Koya-San

This morning, drive 2.5 hours to Koya-San, the centre of Shingon Buddhism. See Okunoin, Japan's largest cemetery and home to the mausoleum of Kobo Daishi, founder of Shingon Buddhism. Next, visit the Kongobuji Temple and Garan temple complex. The walk through Okunoin Cemetery to the mausoleum of Kobo Daishi is roughly 2km and sometimes you will be walking over uneven surfaces. Continue to Osaka, a journey of approximately 1.5 hours to check in to your hotel.

Destination Information

Koya-San – known primarily as the centre of the Shingon sub-section of Buddhism, Koya-San sits in the mountains and is the ideal spot to take a glimpse of Japan's traditional religious life.

Kongobuji Temple – dating back to 16th century, the Kongobuji Temple is the head temple of the Shingon Buddhist sect. The interior of the building is adorned with paintings of cranes and there are sliding doors throughout.

Garan Temple – is a compound of seven halls, the ideal number of halls in Buddhism. The main sight of worship is in front of the Cosmic Buddha.

Okunoin Cemetery – home to Kobo Daishi's mausoleum (founder of Shingon Buddhism), Okunoin Cemetery is the largest cemetery in Japan, with over 200,000 tombstones, as many wished to be buried near Kobo Daishi.

Osaka - Japan's third largest city. What Osaka lacks in sightseeing locations, it makes up for with its flamboyance, fun loving people and amazing food.

Day 12: Osaka

This morning, visit Osaka Castle. Next, take a 1-hour cruise along the Yodogawa River. Take a stroll around the Dotonbori district, a restaurant mecca, where you can sample delicious local delicacies. Enjoy the rest of the afternoon at leisure before a farewell dinner this evening.



Destination Information

Osaka Castle - One of Japan's most famous castles known for sweeping views of the city from its hilltop perch. Construction began in 1583 by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who intended that the castle to become the centre of a new, unified Japan under his rule.

Dotonbori district – Historically a theatre district and still a popular entertainment area today the Dotonbori district offer an eccentric and electric atmosphere.

Day 13: Depart Osaka

This morning is free at leisure before transferring to the airport for your return flight home.

Please note: Only breakfast is included today. Late check-out is not included in our Discover Japan tour. If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day in Osaka, please contact our reservations department who can confirm the additional price and make this arrangement for you, subject to availability at the hotel.

Discover Japan Travel Information

Visas

A visa is not required for UK citizens visiting Japan.

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with us that you take out suitable travel insurance. You must provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24-hour emergency contact number when you book with us or as soon as possible thereafter. These details will be available to your national escort should they be required. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Eating in Japan

Japanese cuisine is delicious, colourful and healthy. Meals are usually served with a bowl of rice and a bowl of miso soup and consist usually of fish, pickled vegetables and meat. Japan's other main staple is noodles, most famous being Udon and Soba. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our fully inclusive group tours from the groups' arrival until the day of departure. Our schedule of meals is designed so that you can experience the local dishes, their individual flavours as well as the different ways they are prepared and cooked throughout Japan. Food is an important element of Japanese culture. It is a time for families and friends to come together and much of family life revolves around the dinner table. Most food is eaten with chopsticks so best get practicing as cutlery is not always available at restaurants.

Breakfast will mostly be buffet style but may be a set-menu. Lunches are mostly pre-set options as is custom in many local restaurants. Dinner is usually buffet-style, featuring a wide selection of high quality Japanese and Western dishes, but may occasionally be a set-menu. We usually find this style of dining suits the wide and varied tastes of our customers on tour. These are also pre-booked in advance prior to your arrival by your guides. This will provide greater flexibility and allow you to sample a broad range of local cuisines and dishes. All beverages will be at your own expense and are readily available. Please note: if you have any dietary requirements, you need to inform us before your tour starts, and please be aware that restaurants may not always be able to accommodate these. Gluten-free food may not be as readily available as in the UK.

On some days where lots of sights are covered, dinner times may be early and your tour group may head directly to the restaurant after sightseeing without stopping at your hotel to freshen up.

Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities.

Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and Japan.

Please note that in Japan hotel rooms and bathrooms are renowned for being small. Standard single rooms are usually smaller than a standard double or twin room, contain one small double bed (or one single bed), and are designed for one person to use. For your comfort, we have selected to book twin rooms for single use on all of our escorted group tours. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air-conditioning, TV and telephone. Hotels in Japan often do not have porters and you will be required to carry your own luggage. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/local guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

Transport

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Roads in Japan are extremely well maintained and are comparatively smooth with the rest of Asia.

Bullet trains: Second class reserved seats are booked for our groups on bullet trains; there will be toilet facilities on board. Due to the limited space on bullet trains, a separate luggage transfer service will be arranged for all suitcases. You will need to pack a separate overnight bag to carry on the train as your suitcase will not arrive until the following day after a bullet train journey. Your guide will indicate when you will need to prepare for this throughout your tour.

Development in Japan

Japan is a developed country and as such matches the west in modernity and technological advances. Japan is an extremely safe country and takes great responsibility in maintaining high safety standards.

Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a national escort. There will usually be no more than 29 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so.

Climate

Please refer to our website or brochure for detailed temperature charts.

After your booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

Itinerary changes

It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate; in these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

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