

Itinerary – Jewels of Japan

Days 1-2: Tokyo

Fly overnight to Tokyo, the capital of Japan and transfer approximately 1 and a half 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.

Please note: Check in to your hotel will be from 2pm today, 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. Meals will be at your own discretion until your welcome dinner tonight.

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; today take a tour by coach of this fascinating city. Head to the top of the Tokyo Skytree for panoramic views over the city before taking a wander through the district of Asakusa for an opportunity to pick up some souvenirs on Nakamise Shopping street and visit Sensoji Temple. Explore the Edo Tokyo Museum and Tokyo's Imperial Palace East Garden. You will be on your feet for 4-5 hours during your touring in Tokyo. Dinner this evening will be at a local restaurant within walking distance of your hotel.

Please note the Edo Tokyo Museum is closed on Mondays and the Imperial Palace East Garden is closed on Mondays and Fridays, should your visits fall on these days touring will be re-arranged in Tokyo so these sights are not missed.

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

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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.

Edo-Tokyo Museum – Depicts the history of Tokyo during the Edo Period.

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.

Day 4: Tokyo

Spend a relaxed morning wandering around the classical landscapes of the Hamarikyu Garden and exploring the huge evergreen forest that encompasses the Shinto Meiji Shrine. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before returning to your hotel, driving by the Shibuya "Scramble" Crossing on the way. Return to

your hotel where your guide will let you know what time to meet for this evenings dinner cruise, the rest of the afternoon is free for you to explore independently or relax in the hotel. Transfer from the hotel to your boat and take a leisurely 1 hour dinner cruise on Tokyo Bay for some excellent city vistas. You will need to get on and off your boat this evening without assistance.

Destination Information

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

Meiji Shrine – Is a Shinto shrine dedicated to the Emperor Meiji and his wife Empress Shoken.

Day 5: Tokyo - Fuji Five Lakes

Journey 2 hours through the foothills of the iconic Mount Fuji to its base where you will find the Fuji Five Lakes. The region is spectacular with the calm waters of the five lakes, formed by past eruptions, reflecting Fuji's picture-perfect cone. Try your hand at making traditional Japanese soba noodles before tucking in to your creations for lunch. Continue to Oshino Hakkai, a scenic area of ponds full of crystal clear spring water created by Fuji's melting snow, where there is also a small museum, Hannoki Bayashi Shiriyokan. The museum is a traditional farm house with household items, samurai armour and weapons.

Destination Information

Fuji Five Lakes – Formed by previous Mount Fuji eruptions, the Fuji Five Lakes is a region at the base of Mount Fuji made up of five beautiful lakes.

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.

Day 6: Mount Fuji

Today is a full day of touring, start with a visit to the Fuji Visitor Centre where you can learn about the cultural and ecological history of Mount Fuji. Head up Fuji's 5th Station for spectacular mountain vistas, please note it is only possible to reach the 5th station if weather permits. After lunch transfer 1 and half hours to Iyashi no Sato historical village, located on the western shores of Lake Saiko, it is famous for its thatched-roofed houses. Return to your hotel for dinner.

Please note: You will need to back a smaller overnight bag for tonight as your main luggage will be transferred this morning to your Kyoto hotel.

Destination Information

Fuji Visitor Centre – is a comprehensive introduction to the nature, culture, history and ecology of Mount Fuji.

Iyashi no Sato historical village – is a replica village based on a former farming village which was destroyed by a landslide in 1966. The houses here have traditional thatched roof.

Day 7: Fuji Five Lakes – Kyoto

Drive 1 hour 45 minutes to Mishima to board your 2 hour bullet train to Kyoto. An enchanting city, Kyoto was capital for a thousand years; today it is the legacy of ancient Japan, full of tranquil temples, silk-clad geisha and sublime gardens. Visit a traditional tea house where you will be joined by a Geisha or an apprentice Geisha, known as a Maiko. Next take a visit to the Ryoanji Temple before heading to the Kinkakuji Temple, also known as the Golden Pavilion, due to its gold-like exterior. Continue on to your hotel to check in for a 2 night stay.

Destination Information

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.

Geisha – the art of the Geisha can be traced back to the Edo Period. Geisha are highly skilled entertainers who will perform with a musical instrument, a tea ceremony, Ikebana etc to entertain her guests. Geisha usually wear kimonos and an obi, a sash for traditional Japanese dress.

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

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.

Day 8: Kyoto

Start the day visiting the spectacular Kiyomizu Temple. You will spend approximately 1 and a half hours on foot exploring the temple. After lunch learn traditional Japanese handicrafts such as origami and enjoy the art of a tea ceremony. Return to your hotel and enjoy dinner at a local restaurant.

Destination Information

Kiyomizu Temple – Is a 16th century Buddhist Temple in Kyoto. A highlight is the Hondo's veranda which is perched over the hillside, offering spectacular woodland vistas.

Day 9: Kyoto – Hiroshima

This morning transfer to Kyoto station and take the 1 hour 40 minute bullet train to Hiroshima, a modern and prosperous city that will be forever remembered as the world's first atomic bomb target. Travel by coach to the famous Peace Park and Museum, please be aware that the museum may be confronting and upsetting for some group members and it is at your discretion if you wish to visit or enjoy time at leisure exploring the Peace Park. After lunch travel 1 hour by coach and take a short ferry ride to Miyajima where sightseeing will be at a leisurely pace on foot. Visit Itsukushima Shrine and explore the traditional market town at leisure. Later this afternoon return by ferry and then coach to Hiroshima for dinner before checking into your hotel.

Destination Information

Hiroshima - An atomic bomb was dropped over Hiroshima on 6th August 1945, and the city's name became famous worldwide for this unenviable distinction. The destructive power of the bomb obliterated nearly everything within a 2km radius. The city has been rebuilt and has risen phoenix-like from the ashes and destroyed sites of historical heritage were reconstructed.

Peace Park and Museum - One of the most prominent features of the city. The trees, lawns and walking paths are in stark contrast to the surrounding downtown area. Before the bomb, the area of what is now the Peace Park was the political and commercial heart of the city and this is why it was chosen as the pilot's target. The museum focuses on the events of August 6 and the subsequent outcome for the residents.

Miyajima - A small island less than an hour outside of Hiroshima. While officially named Itsukushima, the island is more commonly referred to as Miyajima, Japanese for 'Shrine Island'. This is because the island is well-known for its main attraction, Itsukushima Shrine, a giant torii gate, which at high tide seems to float on the water.

Day 10: Hiroshima - Osaka

Travel 3 and half hours by coach to Himeji, with a rest stop along the way. On arrival enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before visiting the beautiful castle and Kokoen Garden. Himeji Castle is largely in its original condition so please be mindful of your step when walking around. You will have to remove your shoes before walking along some of the wooden floors and there are some steep wooden steps to reach certain areas. After the reopening in March 2015, Himeji Castle has welcomed a large number of visitors. As such, they now issue numbered tickets to enter the Main Keep in order to limit the number of people who can enter, reducing congestion, waiting time and to protect the cultural properties. Please note this means that there may be cases where some visitors are not allowed to enter the Main Keep however there are many other parts of the castle to explore. Transfer approximately 2 hours to Osaka for your overnight stay.

Destination Information

Himeji - The second largest city of Hyogo Prefecture after Kobe, with approximately half a million inhabitants. Most famous for its magnificent castle.

Himeji Castle - Widely considered as Japan's most magnificent castle for its imposing size and beauty. The well-preserved castle is both a national and world heritage listed treasure. Himeji Castle has never been destroyed by war, earthquake or fire and survives to this day as one of the country's twelve original castles.

Day 11: Depart Osaka

This morning is free at leisure before you transfer to Osaka airport for your return flight home.

Please note: Only breakfast is included today. Late check-out is not included in our Jewels of 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.