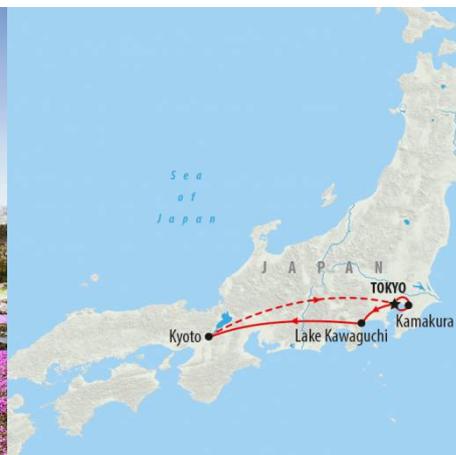


# Best of Japan

8 days | Tokyo to Kyoto or Tokyo



*Discover the best of Japan in 8 captivating days. Travelling from the modern metropolis of Tokyo to enchanting Kyoto, with its age-old temples, shrines and colourful Geisha District. See the bronze Buddha and picturesque bamboo forest at Kamakura, the breathtaking beauty of Mt Fuji at Hakone Izu National Park en route.*

## HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

### Trip Highlights

- Tokyo - Sensoji Temple district and temple, Harajuku, Takeshita Street, Meiji Shrine and Shibuya Crossing
- Kamakura - Big Buddha Statue, Hokokuji Zen Temple and the Bamboo Forest with a delightful village atmosphere. Opt to take part in a traditional tea ceremony
- Lake Kawaguchi located within Fuji Hakone Izu National Park - Spectacular mountain scenery and views of Mt Fuji
- Staying in a ryokan - Sampling Japanese hospitality, bathing in natural hot springs, wearing a Samue (casual Kimono) and sleeping on a futon
- Kyoto - UNESCO Listed Nijo Castle, Sanjusagen-do Temple with its 1000 life-

like statues and Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Temple)

- Kyoto - Walking tour of the famed Geisha District (Gion), with its ancient cobbled streets, streams, bridges and quaint teahouses and the opportunity to see Geisha and Maiko en route to their next engagement

### What's Included

- 3 breakfasts and 1 Japanese dinner at the Lake Kawaguchi
- 7 nights 3 star (inclusive of 1 night in a traditional Japanese Inn)
- Guided sightseeing and walking tours in Tokyo, Kamakura, Lake Kawaguchi and Kyoto
- Lake Kawaguchi and Mt Fuji - Kachikachiyama Ropeway and observatory. For tours staying at Lake Kawaguchi between 14 Apr – 28 May each year we'll visit to the Fuji Shibazakura (Moss Phlox) Festival with Mt Fuji as the backdrop
- Escorted by a licensed English speaking Japanese tour guide
- All transportation and transfers - buses, trains and rail passes (including Suica Swipe Card)
- Baggage forwarding service from Tokyo to Kyoto (one bag per person)
- Airport arrival transfer to tour hotel (by train) from Narita or Haneda International Airport on day 1

- Maximum Group size: 16 persons

### What's Not Included

- Entrance Fees: USD\$25-35pp, paid locally in local currency
- Airport departure transfer
- International flights and visa
- If you are opting to pay the single supplement, allowing you the privacy of your own room on this tour, a single room will be provided for all nights with the exception of day 5 (at Lake Kawaguchi), where single rooms are not available. For this night you will be matched up with a fellow tour member of the same gender
- Tip for your tour guide. We recommend you allow USD\$3-5 per day, per traveller. Tipping your guide is an entirely personal gesture

## COVID SAFE GUIDE

## DETAILED ITINERARY

### Best of Japan - 8 days

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updated on 26-09-2020 11:50:36

# Best of Japan

## Day 1 : Tokyo



Saturday. Welcome to Japan and the start of your holiday! Arrival at Haneda or Narita Airport, you will be met by your tour guide or a representative from On The Go Tours. The prominent sign depicting our company logo easily identifies our representative.

Should you not be able to locate our guide/ representative please do not leave the arrivals area. If after waiting 30 minutes at the arrivals area and you are still unable to locate our guide/representative, please call the 24 hour contact person noted on your Tour Voucher.

If arriving on a flight landing prior between 06:00 - 06:30 and you've flown through customs to find that our guide is not in the arrivals hall to meet you, please be patient as our guide will enroute arriving on the first train of the day scheduled to arrive at 06:30 (without delays).

After meeting up with your tour guide/ representative, together you will travel by train into the heart of the city and check into your hotel.

**Average kilometres walked today:** 1km

**Overnight - Tokyo**

## Day 2 : Tokyo sightseeing - Sensoji Temple district, Harajuku & Shibuya



Today we explore the capital. Taking the subway to Asakusa we visit the lively Sensoji Temple District, which is home to Tokyo's first temple and scores of interesting souvenir and craft stalls. In the afternoon we head to Harajuku, which is a magnet for young and fashionable Tokyoites with its hip shops and cafes. Here, we'll visit the impressive Meiji Shrine where the emperor Meiji and his wife are enshrined. Yoyogi Park, beside the shrine is a popular hangout for locals on Sundays with bands playing, drum circles, dancers and busking, free time is offered for those interested.

The last stop of the day is the Shibuya Crossing - regarded as one of the busiest intersection in the world. The famed junction has no less than 7 pedestrian crossings and when the traffic lights turn red a wave of pedestrians, up to a 1000, converge onto the intersection from every direction. Here, we'll grab a coffee or cold drink and rest our weary feet at the Starbucks, with a second floor vantage point, located directly opposite the crossing and look down upon the exciting spectacle - guaranteed to give that 'I'm in Tokyo feeling'.

This evening offers free time, though if travelling in January, May and September (tonight or any other night you are in Tokyo) you might like spend the evening watching a Sumo tournament. There are three professional Sumo tournaments held in Tokyo each year with each tournament lasting 15 days with a number of matches held throughout the day. If interested, you should book tickets independently (we cannot book these on your behalf) in advance as on the day of a match only a few balcony seats are held back for same-day sale (again, these you must independently organise).

**Average kilometres walked today:** 4km

**Overnight - Tokyo**

## Day 3 : Kamakura & the Bronze Buddha



Tokyo - Kamakura - Tokyo. This morning we board the train for our day trip to Kamakura, Japan's first feudal capital, which is just an hour from Tokyo. Kamakura is a popular seaside location with a quaint village life feel and some stunning Zen temples. Here, we'll visit the iconic bronze Big Buddha and the Zen Temple of Hokokuji with its beautiful bamboo garden. Here you can drink tea, learn about the tea ceremony's and enjoy the laid back atmosphere from the tea house before walking the cobbled shopping district - for great locally made items, before returning to Japan's bustling capital for the night. Tonight, we'll organise a Shabu Shabu (a traditional Japanese hot pot meal) if the majority of the group are interested, paid locally.

**Average kilometres walked today:** 3.5km

**Overnight - Tokyo**

## Day 4 : Tokyo Edo Museum & free time

Today offers a guided tour of the Tokyo Edo Museum which focuses on the lifestyle and culture experienced of Tokyoites over the city's 400-year history. The museum houses some of the city's best original artefacts and replicas of Edo-era buildings and landmarks, along with several large-scale models. The remainder of the day offers free time to independently explore.

**Average kilometres walked today:** 5km

**Overnight - Tokyo**

## Day 5 : Mt Fuji & Lake Kawaguchi

Tokyo - Lake Kawaguchi. This morning we travel by highway bus (with luggage forwarding) to Lake Kawaguchi, located at

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# Best of Japan

the foot of Mt Fuji in the Fuji Hakone Izu National Park. The scenery is stunning with panoramic views of a snow-capped Fuji most of the year. Upon arrival we'll travel along the Mount Fuji Panoramic Ropeway and visit the observatory. For tours staying at Lake Kawaguchi between 15 Apr – 28 May each year we'll visit the Springtime Fuji Shibazakura (Phlox Moss) Festival held at Motosu Lake, where the landscape is covered in a vibrant, hot pink moss with Fuji as the backdrop. No trip to Japan would be complete without sampling authentic Japanese hospitality at a traditional ryokan (a Japanese inn), which is where we'll bed down tonight. At the ryokan, sample tasty local cuisine and take a relaxing dip in the natural hot spring baths.

Note: If you have booked a single room with us, we have not included the cost of you having a single room at our ryokan in Lake Kawaguchi. Ryokans by their very nature don't offer single rooms so tonight, and tonight only you will be matched up with a fellow traveller of the same gender for the evening.

**Average kilometres walked today:** 5.5km  
**Overnight - Lake Kawaguchi (D)**

## Day 6 : Kyoto - 1000 statues of Kannon & the Geisha District



Lake Kawaguchi – Kyoto. The area has some great hiking trails and early this morning you might like to opt for a hike along the foreshores of the lake. After enjoying a Japanese breakfast, we'll travel by bus to Mishima, to connect to the bullet train to Kyoto - Japan's ancient and cultural capital.

As one of the most culturally rich cities in Asia, Kyoto is home to an abundance of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines. Here we enjoy a guided tour of

Sanjusagen-do Temple, famous for its statues of Kannon, the goddess of mercy. The one thousand life-size statues of Kannon are made of Japanese cypress clad in gold leaf. They stand in 10 rows of 50, each hand crafted and slightly different from the next. Late this afternoon we'll head to Gion, for a guided walking tour of this famous Geisha District. After, you may wish to watch a cultural performance at Gion Corner Theatre where you'll have the opportunity to see a Maiko (apprentice Geisha) performing.

**Average kilometres walked today:** 6km  
**Overnight - Kyoto (B)**

## Day 7 : Kyoto - Nijo Castle, Golden Pavilion & free time



This morning, we enjoy a guided tour of Nijo Castle, one of the city's most impressive UNESCO sites. Built by the first Tokugawa shogun in 1603, the exquisite Nijo Castle is a wonderful example of Momoyama architecture. After, we visit Kinkakuji (Golden Pavilion) a stunning Zen Buddhist temple and part of the Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto World Heritage Site. The top two floors of the monument are completely covered in gold leaf. Set upon a small lake with landscaped gardens, the large completely gilt structure is impressive, as it is a beautiful Temple. Kinkakuji Temple continues to be one of Japan's most visited temples.

This afternoon offers free time for you to relax or to further discover the many sights of Kyoto your own way. Consider visiting Fushimi Inari Shrine, famous for its winding path lined by thousands of bright red torii gates. Just a short train ride away from the main Kyoto Station, this must-see sight is free to visit and is open 24 hours a day. You might also wish to hire a Kimono and walk the streets as many Japanese do or take part in a cooking lesson.

**Average kilometres walked today:** 3.5km  
**Overnight - Kyoto (B)**

## Day 8 : Kyoto

Saturday. On day 8 our tour comes to an end after hotel check out.(B)

### HOTELS

Highlighted below are some of the hotels which we frequently use on this tour, though we reserve the right to substitute these hotels to ones of a similar standard.

**Please refer to your Tour Voucher for your confirmed arrival hotel and further arrival information.**

### Yaesu Terminal Hotel

Enjoying an enviable location on a cherry-blossom lined street in the centre of Tokyo, Yaesu Terminal Hotel is just a short jaunt away from the city's main railroad station giving travellers easy access to locations across the city. A comfortable 3-star hotel with a natural theme, a permanent art exhibit in the hotel lobby and an in-house restaurant serving freshly prepared local cuisine; it is a soothing place to relax after a busy day of sightseeing. Hotel guests can make use of the free Wi-Fi, benefit from complimentary bathrobes and slippers and enjoy entertainment on a flat-screen TV.



### Yamagishi Ryokan

With stunning views over Lake Kawaguchi, which is located just one minute away, the Yamagishi Ryokan is a gorgeous accommodation and an excellent base for exploring the area around the lake. Rooms are designed according to traditional Japanese styles with low furniture and lots of natural light. Breakfast and dinner are both included with the room and are served in the hotel's dining room. After dinner, guests can take a dip in one of the hotel's baths

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## Best of Japan

or relax with a coffee in the lounge. The hotel is located just an 8 minute walk from Kawaguchiko Station.



### Hotel Mifujien

This Japanese-style hotel boasts stunning views over Lake Kawaguchi and Mount Fuji from each of its guestrooms. Offering traditional low furniture and modern amenities, each room is also equipped with air conditioning and a TV. The views can be enjoyed from the hotel's lobby, tea lounge and the Japanese restaurant, which uses local ingredients and offers a feast of traditional dishes. On the 7th floor you'll find both indoor and outdoor hot spring baths, perfect for unwinding at the end of the day.



### Hotel Elcient Kyoto

Boasting a fantastic location in the heart of Kyoto, Hotel Elcient Kyoto is within walking distance of top attractions such as Kyoto Tower and the picturesque Shosei-en Garden. Guestrooms are compact and simply furnished, complete with modern amenities such as air conditioning and ensuite bathrooms. Enjoy more than 30 different dishes at the Western and Japanese buffet-style restaurant, with light lunches and dinner also available. On the second floor you'll find a large public bath and sauna, offering the perfect spot to relax after some sightseeing.



### Dormy Inn Premium Kyoto

Located just a short walk from Kyoto Station and the lofty Kyoto Tower, you really cannot get more central than this! Combining convenience with comfort, this contemporary hotel boasts modern guest rooms with flat screen televisions, complimentary WiFi, refrigerators and a private toilet – though washing facilities are shared. Buffet breakfast is available, with a choice of local and western dishes on offer. The hotel is surrounded by a wide choice of shops and restaurants, and there are plenty of cultural landmarks just a short stroll away. After a day of sightseeing guests can relax with a soak in the hotel's natural hot spring baths or opt for a sauna and massage.



### Departure transfer

A departure transfer is not included on this tour. There are several ways to reach Kansai International Airport (KIX) in Osaka from Kyoto.

- Limousine bus (airport coach) - costs approx JPY2,550pp and takes around 80 mins. The first in the morning arrives at 5:55am, the last arrives at 23:05
- Train - costs approx JPY3570pp and take around 78 minutes
- Taxi - costs approx JPY32,000 and seats 4 if you don't have too much luggage
- Shared shuttle bus service - costs approx. JPY3,600pp and takes around 3 hrs. Note that there is an additional luggage fee and the journey can involve a change of vehicle en route

### End this tour in Tokyo

If you would like to extend your stay and end your tour in Tokyo, please let us know at time of booking so we can arrange this for you (supplement applies). Please note that you will be travelling unescorted on day 8 and 9 and will need to make your own way to/from the train stations, but the hotels are within close proximity.

#### Opting to end your tour in Tokyo:

On day 8 you will travel by train from Kyoto to Tokyo, where you will spend the night. On day 9 (Sunday) catch the train to Tokyo Airport (breakfast excluded on day 9).

**Includes:** Train ticket from Kyoto to Tokyo on day 8, train ticket to Tokyo Airport on day 9 and 1 night 3 star hotel in Tokyo (unescorted).

### KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

#### Welcome to Japan - Arrival transfer

We use public transportation for all touring in Japan because it's modern, punctual and easy to use. Japan's bullet trains run at speeds of up to 320km/h so they're undoubtedly the quickest way to get around the country. On day 1 (or if you arrive early and have booked pre tour accommodation with us) you will be met at Narita or Haneda International Airport in Tokyo by your tour guide and transferred by train to your hotel in Tokyo.

**If, for any reason you have trouble locating our representative** (after waiting 20 minutes in the arrival hall) or your flight to Japan is delayed, please call or send a text message (standard text message, not Messenger or WhatsApp) to the emergency contact number as stated on your Tour Voucher.

If you are arriving earlier and you have booked your accommodation independently, you will need to make your own way to our start hotel. The hotel name and address can be found on your Tour Voucher.

If included: We always try to activate your rail pass on your arrival day, however this is not always possible depending on flight times. Your passport is required to activate your rail pass and your guide will be at hand to assist you with this process.

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# Best of Japan

## Rooming arrangements

Most hotels in Japan offer single rooms with one bed and twin share/double room fitted with two single beds. There is only ever a very small inventory of double rooms with one large bed. If you have requested a double room with one large bed we will always request this particular rooming configuration with the hotel, though it is not guaranteed and you may often be accommodated in a twin share. Further triple share rooms and family suites are very hard to come by.

If travelling on one of our Signature Tours, we most often stay in conveniently located hotels in the city. All rooms in the heart of the city are small, with twin share rooms measuring no more than 12.5sqm and a single room measuring no more than 10sqm. If travelling with large suitcases you will find it difficult to have both suitcases open at once without utilising the space on your bed but this is the price to pay for a convenient city location.

## Non-smoking rooms

Japan trails behind the Western world in regards to its anti-smoking laws. Although it's uncommon to see Japanese people walking along the street smoking, as this is culturally frowned upon, smoking is still permitted in bars, some restaurants and hotels. It is becoming more common for hotels to offer an indoor smoking room rather than allowing smoking throughout the property, though many hotels still only have a small inventory of non-smoking rooms. Where possible we do book as many non-smoking rooms as we can, though we cannot guarantee throughout your holiday that non-smoking room will be provided. It is requested with the hotel, but cannot be guaranteed.

The restaurants we do book are non-smoking, and if heading out to a bar we will reserve a place in the non-smoking section of the bar. If you are extremely sensitive to cigarette smoke you may wish to reconsider travelling on one of our group tours but instead book a tailor-made private holiday with us, where we are able to select small (limited rooms) high-end boutique properties that operate a 100% no smoking policy.

## Guides & groups

Some of our group tours are sectors of a larger tour. Some travellers on your tour may only travel with you for part of your tour. It also might be that you end your holiday part way through a longer tour and others in the group continue on. As such, you may have more than one guide during your holiday.

Guides: We believe the best way to see a country is through the eyes of a local and as such we only employ tour guides native to the country you are visiting. Our guides are passionate, caring, knowledgeable and fun, and by travelling with a local you to get to see the wonders of the country through their eyes.

In order that we show the best of Japan in a non-hurried fashion to you, it is imperative you are ready for departure each day. Please do not delay and inconvenience fellow travellers. It is your responsibility to be at the proposed meeting point for the group in time. We will depart at our specified times.

## Japan Country Guide

### Visas & passports

Visa requirements are subject to change and visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from Japan.

After booking your holiday, please provide us with your passport details as soon as possible so that we can proceed to book all services. Please be advised visa requirements are subject to change, therefore it is essential that you check current visa requirements with the embassy at least one month prior to travel. For information about visas, head to [www.onthegotours.com/Japan/Visas](http://www.onthegotours.com/Japan/Visas)

Please note: If you plan to renew your passport between now and your departure date, please let us know as soon as possible. For booking your accommodation and transportation, we must have the details of the passport that you will be carrying with you on your trip.

## Fitness & tour transportation

We utilise public transportation in Japan because it's modern, punctual and easy to use. Japan's bullet trains run at speeds of up to 320km/h so they're undoubtedly the quickest way to get around the country. Additionally, we use buses, trains and our trusted feet for sightseeing within the cities. This provides a unique insight to how the locals do it and also means that we avoid heavy traffic and delays. We walk an average of 3.5–9km each day, with steps, slopes and often uneven ground at sites.

Please note: that there may be times when you may not get a seat and will need to stand for the duration of travel and that you will be required to carry your own luggage at stations.

With the above in mind, it makes a lot of sense to spend some time getting additional exercise in preparation for your holiday and to wear suitable footwear.

## Entrance fees

On most of our packages, the entrance fees are not included in the price of your holiday, although reasonably priced. We collect the entrance fees at the Welcome Meeting on day 1 (the amount is noted under exclusions on the first page of this document). A breakdown of the entrance fee total is provided upon arrival. Entrance fees are payable in local currency - Japanese Yen (JPY).

## Tipping

Tipping is an essential part of the culture. For a job well done, we would suggest for your tour guide: USD\$3-5 per traveller, for each day of sightseeing.

For any drivers or On The Go Representatives we'd recommend USD\$1-2 per traveller for each day of service. Tipping is an entirely personal gesture and ultimately the amount is up to you.

## Is this holiday right for you?

Travelling to far-flung corners of the earth often involves encountering lifestyles and conditions that are very different from what you are used to back home. As such it is important to come prepared for

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# Best of Japan

unusual situations, local inadequacies and unpredictable events as and when they occur. Foreign travel is definitely not suitable for people who expect everything to go precisely as planned, as things can and do change in foreign countries. The people, customs, creed and languages are different from one region to the next.

Japan is a country of unparalleled contrasts, a destination where you'll be afforded plenty of unique encounters, and if you can travel with an open mind you will have a wonderful time here. In return, please remember to demonstrate sensitivity and respect for local customs.

Please visit [www.onthegotours.com/Japan/Travel-tips-and-useful-info](http://www.onthegotours.com/Japan/Travel-tips-and-useful-info) for local customs, currency, WiFi and other helpful information to prepare you for your holiday.

## Health

You should seek medical advice for vaccinations and about medications before travelling. Water is safe to drink in all areas of Japan.

Some medication including the stimulant dexamphetamine (used to treat ADHD) and pseudoephedrine (found in some cold and flu tablets) are banned. There are strict rules on the import of medication, and what can be brought into the country for personal use, check if your medication is legal and find out if any quantity restrictions or certification requirements apply. Consult your doctor about alternatives well in advance of travel.

## Packing

Please check local temperatures so you can pack accordingly. Visit [www.worldclimate.com](http://www.worldclimate.com)

One medium sized suitcase is recommended for travel around Japan and you will also want to take a small backpack or day pack for daily use. This small backpack will also come in use when your main suitcase has been forwarded ahead, such as when visiting Lake Kawaguchi on our groups tours or when travelling from Kanazawa to Kyoto on our Cherry Blossom tour.

Make sure you pack comfortable shoes as an extended time will be spent on your feet – high heels are not a nifty way to travel through Japan! Also, shoes will often be taken off and put back on, so something that is easy to put on and off easily is best!

- Comfortable walking shoes
- Universal travel adaptor
- DEET based mosquito repellent/ antihistamine cream
- First aid kit including Dioralyte
- Tour Voucher and a copy of your travel insurance policy, spare passport photos and a photocopy of your passport
- Camera and charger – Japan is a photographer's dream!
- Sunglasses, hat, sunscreen, swim costume, torch and money belt
- Either a rucksack or suitcase is suitable. A small daypack for your day-to-day needs

## Own arrangements

If you have made your own arrangements for accommodation, trains, planes or further sightseeing etc. independent of your holiday with us, our guides are more than happy to offer general information about your new adventure and point you in the right direction. That said, our guides are unable to become involved with these arrangements, such as calling your hotel and speaking on your behalf, changing your reservation, or escorting you to your new location, as it puts them in a difficult situation if things do not go to plan.

## Free Wi-Fi in Japan

There are three nationwide services that make connecting to free Wi-Fi hotspots easier:

### Japan Connected-free Wi-Fi:

A smartphone app that unifies the registration process of over 150,000 free tourist hot-spots. Look for it in the AppStore, Google Play or visit the following link for more details: <http://www.ntt-bp.net/jcfw/en.html>

### Free Wi-Fi Passport:

Two weeks free access to approximately 400,000 Softbank hot-spots across Japan. To register, call a toll-free number from a foreign cellphone while connected to the

Softbank roaming network. You are given to a password that can be used on up to five devices. Visit the following link for more details on how to sign up:

<http://www.softbank.jp/en/mobile/special/freewifi/en/>

### Travel Japan Wi-Fi:

A smartphone app that provides two weeks free access to over 200,000 Wi2 hotspots in Japan. Look for it in the AppStore, Google Play or visit the following link for more details:

<https://japanfreewifi.com/>

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