

## Japan Panorama Tour (10 Days/ 9 Nights)

### Tokyo-Kyoto-Osaka-Tokyo

Now is your chance to take a once-in-a-lifetime Asian adventure vacation to Japan. Japan is a wonderful and fascinating destination. Our affordable Japan tour package lets you explore this ancient yet modern country for a truly remarkable price without compromising on quality. Fly to Japan via Singapore Airlines, voted the world's #1 airline for safety, comfort and service. Stay at beautiful and well-located 4- & 5-star hotels throughout the country, enjoying a lavish buffet breakfast daily.

Visit Tokyo, Japan's modern capital, Kyoto, ancient capital for over 1000 years, and Osaka, considered Japan's spiritual heartland, plus lots of other sites in between on this exceptional 10-day tour of Japan. But don't wait to reserve your spot! The ideal touring season for Japan is short, and at these prices, space will go very quickly.

#### Day 1: Tokyo

Your exciting journey to Japan begins this afternoon as you depart on your overnight non-stop flight to Tokyo via Singapore Airlines.

#### Day 2: Tokyo

Arrive early this evening in Tokyo, one of the world's main economic centers and Japan's modern capital, as well as its largest city. Your tour host will meet you upon arrival and escort you to your deluxe, centrally located hotel. En route, you'll have your first glimpse of the stunning, modern skyline and glittering neon-lit streets that are quintessential Tokyo. You'll also receive a short briefing about details of your tour of Japan.

#### Day 3: Tokyo

After breakfast, set out on a guided tour to explore some of Tokyo's main sites. Begin at the Tokyo Tower, modeled after - and slightly taller than - the Eiffel Tower in Paris, where you will enjoy a wonderful view of the city. Proceed to the historic Imperial Palace, which dates back to the 15th century and is the former site of Edo Castle and the present residence of the Emperor of Japan. Visitors are not permitted inside this very private residence of royalty, but you will enjoy a walk through the beautiful East Gardens, with views of the ancient castle walls and ruins. Asakusa Kannon, Tokyo Continue to Sensoji, or Asakusa Kannon, dedicated to Kannon, the Buddhist deity of mercy and compassion. Sensoji is one of the most popular sights in Tokyo, yet its delightfully serene. Smoke from its incense cauldron is said to be beneficial to health, especially the part of the body onto which it is rubbed, and you will see many people doing this before going to pray. Later, stroll Nakamise shopping street, which stretches over approximately 250 meters from the main grounds of Sensoji Temple. It is lined with more than 50 shops, which offer local specialties and souvenirs. This afternoon is free for independent touring. We suggest a visit to the Ginza, Tokyo's most famous up-market shopping, dining and entertainment district, featuring numerous department stores, boutiques, art galleries, restaurants, night clubs, cafes and Kabuki Theater.

#### Day 4: Tokyo

Today you'll enjoy a beautiful panoramic drive from Tokyo to Mt. Fuji, an almost perfectly conical volcano that is recognized around the world as a symbol of Japan. It stands over 12,000 feet high and is beautifully snow-capped in winter. Drive to the 5th station, a 5 to 6-hour trek from the summit for experienced hikers, where you'll enjoy gorgeous views of the surrounding countryside. Continue to Hakone, a hot springs resort town located in the Fuji Hakone Izu National Park, where you'll enjoy an included lunch. After lunch, take a scenic cruise on Lake Ashi, a slender body of water formed in the Hakone caldera some 400,000 years ago. Board the Komagatake Ropeway for an incredibly picturesque ascent up Mt. Komagatake and a sweeping view of Hakone National Park and Mt. Fuji. Return to Tokyo late this afternoon.

#### Day 5: Tokyo

Enjoy a day at leisure to explore Tokyo on your own. Your hotel is conveniently located in the heart of Tokyo, adjacent to the Tokyo Tower and historical Zojo-ji temple and within easy access to the fashionable shopping districts of Ginza and Roppongi.

#### Day 6: Tokyo-Kyoto

Set out this morning on a high-speed adventure aboard the Shinkansen, Japans bullet train. This fast, quiet train, itself a tourist draw, links the major cities in Japan efficiently, while reaching speeds of over 170 miles per hour. You'll arrive in Kyoto quickly and comfortably, ready to enjoy the beauty and fascination of this very special city. Upon arrival, check in at your hotel, located virtually in front of the Shinkansen. After check-in, enjoy a walking/subway orientation tour of Kyoto. Visit the Nishiki Market, a 400 meter long street lined with small stands and shops; the Ponto-cho area which is the local restaurant district and Kyotos underground department store. The balance of your day is at leisure to explore the temples, shrines, gardens and other beautiful sites located within walking distance of your hotel. Enjoy some shopping time at Kyotos underground Department Store where you'll enjoy the sights and sounds of typical Japanese life.

#### Day 7: Kyoto

If you had to choose only one city in Japan to visit, Kyoto would be the one. This ancient city, home to almost 1.5 million people, was the capital of Japan for more than a thousand years and still is considered the countrys spiritual capital. On todays full day tour, you'll visit the main attractions of the city, beginning at the 17th-century Nijo Castle. You can see the architecture change as you go from the most public spaces to the private chambers of the shogun, which were protected by a highly imaginative security system comprised of floorboards deliberately built to squeak when walked upon. Proceed to the Golden Pavilion (Kinkakuji Temple), which is covered in gold leaf and whose three stories each reflect a different architectural style. The small lake nearby adds to the glimmer, and while no one is allowed inside, you can take pictures that are sure to be among your favorite and most memorable images of Japan. The actual building is a perfect reconstruction, erected after a disaffected monk set fire to the original, centuries-old wooden structure in 1950. Japans child in traditional costume Continue to the fascinating Handicraft Center, where you'll be greeted by five colorful floors offering for sale beautiful Japanese arts and handicrafts including pearls, lacquer ware, dolls, toys, kimono (including antique kimono), woodblock prints, pottery, paper products, swords, lanterns, silk and textile goods, painted scrolls, music boxes and much, much more. This afternoon, visit Kiyomizu Temple, located on a hillside at the east edge of the city and famous both for its waterfall and for the stunning view from its vast wooden terrace. The temple is particularly beautiful in April, when cherry blossoms abound, and in November, when maple leaves show their autumn colors. After your visit, stroll through the narrow lanes of traditional houses, boutiques and stores below the temple, particularly its pottery shops which are particular favorites.

#### Day 8: Kyoto

Enjoy a full day at leisure to explore Kyoto further on your own. Or, take advantage of a very special full day optional tour that takes you to Hiroshima and Miyajima. You'll depart after breakfast and travel by bullet train to Hiroshima. Enjoy some time to sightsee and stroll around Omotesando Street before taking a short ferry ride to the island of Miyajima, just off the coast from Hiroshima. Here, you'll visit the UNESCO World Heritage site of the Shrine of Itsukushima, one of the most photographed sites in Japan. Constructed in 593 to honor the fishing gods, the shrine sits on wooden piers over the water. The orange paint on the shrine's entrance gate provides for a stunning color contrast against the crystal blue waters of the bay. Return to Hiroshima for lunch at a local restaurant. Afterward, visit the Hiroshima Bomb Dome, a skeleton of a building that survived the atomic bomb blast in 1945. Continue across the street to the Peace Park, where you'll find a moving memorial to the victims of the bomb as well as a museum that offers a compelling and important history of the horrors of war. Conclude your tour at the Children's Peace Memorial, a moving monument that celebrates the desire for long life and happiness. This optional excursion must be purchased locally.

#### Day 9: Kyoto-Osaka

After breakfast, say goodbye to Kyoto as you drive to Nara, one of the earliest capitals of Japan. Visit Todaiji Temple, whose Buddha is the largest bronze statue in the world, and whose main structure is the worlds largest wooden building. The temple sits in a huge park where small deer have free rein to mingle with visitors and beg for treats that you can buy from local vendors for a few yen. Another delight is Kasuga Shrine, festooned with thousands of paper lanterns. This afternoon, continue your drive to Osaka, considered Japans spiritual heartland. The site of one of the earliest capitals of the country, it remains a vital center for trade and entrepreneurial culture. On an afternoon city tour, visit Osaka Castle, one of Japans most famous castles, which played a major role in the unification of the country during the sixteenth century of the Azuchi-Momoyama period. The castle is situated on a plot of land roughly one kilometer square and is a popular spot during festival seasons; especially when the cherry blossoms bloom and the sprawling castle grounds are covered with food vendors and taiko drummers. Continue to Dotonboroi Street, a former pleasure district now famous for its theatres, shops, and restaurants and the many colorful neon and mechanized signs, including snack/candy manufacturer Glico's giant electronic display of a runner crossing the finish line. Enjoy strolling the long street and take advantage of the opportunity to shop for last-minute souvenirs.

#### Day 10: Osaka-Tokyo

After breakfast, board the bullet train from Osaka to Tokyo. Upon arrival, transfer to Narita Airport to board your non-stop return flight. Your Japan adventure ends on arrival in Los Angeles later today.

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