

ESSENCE OF SPRING | GRAND TOUR

12 Days

Tokyo ▶ Hakone ▶ Nara ▶ Kyoto ▶ Osaka ▶ Hyogo ▶ Hiroshima ▶ Saga ▶ Nagasaki ▶ Kumamoto ▶ Takachiho ▶ Beppu ▶ Matsuyama ▶ Tokushima ▶ Osaka

Tour Overview

Explore the major cities of three of Japan's main islands during this unforgettable Essence of Spring | Grand Tour.

Take pictures of all the best sights and attractions during the vibrant Cherry Blossom season, when all of the favorite spots have pink and white petals floating in the horizon.

Embrace Japanese culture with multiple museum visits, temples, shrines, castles, Japanese cooking, experiences, and so more!



Tour Includes

- ✓ 9 nights Western hotel and 2 night Japanese-style hotel with hot-springs
- ✓ Daily Breakfast-Bufferets, 7 Lunches, and 5 Dinners included
- ✓ All ground transportation in Japan during the tour
- ✓ Complimentary Airport Transfers
- ✓ Admission Fees, Tax & Gratuities at all included Destinations
- ✓ Full time service of licensed English speaking tour guide & separate bus driver
- ✓ Japan Deluxe Tours Handbook and Tour Goods Package
- ✓ Free Wi-Fi in Bus & Most hotels
- ✓ Bullet train ride with Mt. Fuji & Green Tea Ceremony

Tour Highlights

- A walk through the busy Shibuya Crossing
- Tickets to the Fukagawa Edo Museum
- Tickets to a dazzling Kimono show at the Nishijin Textile Center
- A stroll through the Bamboo Groves of Kyoto's Arashiyama
- A trip to the famous Floating Torii gates of Itsukushima Shrine
- Time overlooking the ocean's spectacular Naruto Whirlpools
- A chance to brave the Tour of Hell
- The historic Kumamoto Castle and Samurai Mansion
- Admission to the Nagasaki Peace Memorial Park to learn about World War Two
- A complimentary Taiko Show during your stay in Matsuyama

Day by Day

Day 1 - Tokyo Arrival

Welcome to Japan! We will have transportation services to take you to your hotel. Please refer to your tour handbook for more information. Rest at the hotel and be ready to start your exciting tour tomorrow.

INFORMATION

From Narita Airport to downtown hotel in Tokyo - about 90 mins(Bus)
From Haneda Airport to downtown hotel in Tokyo - about 30 mins(Bus)

Day 2 - Tokyo (B, L)

Today will be devoted to exploring the multi-cultural spots of Tokyo. Our tour will first stop by the Fukagawa Edo Museum where you can get acquainted with the history of Tokyo. This charming museum is designed to replicate what life looked like during the old days of Edo. Walk through the city and enjoy walking into houses that recreate life during the period.

We will also visit the Kiyosumi Garden located nearby. Enjoy a peaceful stroll through a Japanese garden, and be sure to take a picture of the tea house on the waters. We will then delve in the old town district of Asakusa for some gift shopping at the Nakamise area.

We will also be visiting the Sensoji Temple, one of Tokyo's most popular temples. This is the perfect place to appreciate Japanese culture and take some spectacular shots of the famous Kaminarimon (Thunder Gate).

For lunch, enjoy sushi with fish provided by the Tsukiji Fish Market, the famous fish market that provides freshest ingredients for thousands of families and businesses alike.

Following our time at the market, the tour will probe the stores at Harajuku,

the unofficial fashion capital of Japan that offers the latest pop culture and fashion. Experience the chaos and beauty that is Takeshita Dori, the place to go for fashion and crepes.

Before leaving Takeshita Dori, walk along Omotesando street, a popular shopping destination lined with trendy cafe's in between.

Returning to our hotel, the tour bus will be passing by the famous Shibuya Crosswalk to be part of the thousands who cross daily, and to see the Hachiko Statue close to the station. The statue is based on the story of Hachiko, the dog who would come back to the station every day to see his owner. Returning to our hotel, this Anime tour will also visit the Gundam Base in Tokyo. The Gundam Base is where we will see the awesome life-size RX-0 Unicorn Gundam model (72 ft). The Gundam Base is an expansive store, museum, and features a cafe for guests to enjoy everything Gundam.

Day 3 - Hakone & Mt. Fuji (B, L, D)

Our morning begins with a visit to the Iyashi no Sato, a traditional craft open-air museum reconstructed from the village's thatched roofed houses. Each house features a different exhibit, workshop, or cafe, including some cooking lessons.

Before making our way to the next destination, we will stop for Hoto, a Japanese noodle dish native to the Yamanashi area. A hybrid of miso soup and flat udon noodles, this dish is truly a local Japanese specialty.

We will continue our journey to Hakone after our time in Tokyo. Enjoy a ropeway to Owakudani, an active volcanic crater still steaming from its last eruption some 3,000 years ago. There you will get a taste of the local Japanese food, the black egg, cooked in one of the craters. It's said eating

one of these eggs will add years to your life!

This Japan tour would not be complete without a long relaxing soak in the onsen, hot spring, to rejuvenate you for tomorrow's adventure. Yukata, a Japanese robe, will be provided for you. The onsen is located in our own ryokan, a Japanese style hotel, which includes a traditional Japanese meal known as Kaiseki Ryori!

Day 4 - Kyoto & Nara (B, L)

Our day begins with a bullet train ride to Kyoto. The bullet train is the fastest way to travel on land and is considered an essential Japanese experience. Enjoy riding to Kyoto in comfort and speed, and be sure to take some photos of the scenery during your ride.

We will stop at a sake museum for some sampling and to learn the history of Japan's national drink. We will then head to Fushimi Inari Shrine, one of Kyoto's many can't miss destinations that features hundreds of red torii gates. The path is perfect for photos or just to calm your mind.

Once we get all our photos done, it's off to Nara to Todaiji Temple. Todaiji Temple holds the World Guinness Record as the largest wooden building. Inside the temple, you will behold the largest Buddha statue in Japan.

Just outside the temple is the Nara Deer Park, where you will be greeted by numerous deer that roam around freely. The deer here at the park are known to be friendly and may even bow at you for a little treat. We then return to the hotel.

Day 5 - Kyoto (B, L)

Our day begins with a visit to Arashiyama to walk through the Bamboo Groove Forest. The morning's sunlight passing through the bamboo makes for a perfect morning sight. We will also enjoy a spirited rickshaw ride

through Arashiyama. Guests can enjoy seeing many of the traditional-style shops and temples during the ride.

Following our time in Arashiyama, we will head to the Golden Pavilion, or Kinkakuji Temple, a Japan's must see attraction where the two upper floors are covered in gold leaf. The reflection of the golden temple on the lake adds to the stunning sight. After taking pictures, it's off to Ryoanji Temple to see the stunning rock gardens. Not all Japanese temples have them, so we made sure to include one of Kyoto's zen gardens.

To avoid getting too repetitive with the temples and shrines, we include a visit to the Nishijin Textile Center for a stunning kimono show! Keeping with the traditional feel, we included a tea-ceremony to help you relax before going back to the hotel. In the evening, we will head to the Gion Geisha District, Japan's most famous geisha district. This area is filled with shops, restaurants, and tea houses and the area in Japan that you are most likely to run into real geisha and maiko on their way to perform at the Gion Geisha Center.

Day 6 - Osaka, Hyogo & Hiroshima (B, D)

We will begin today by heading to the Kuromon Ichiban Market in Osaka. This is the same market professional chefs in Osaka use to purchase new equipment for their kitchens. You can also find fresh produce and sample some of the flavors unique to this part of Japan.

Next our tour bus will make a stop at Himeji-jo, or Himeji Castle. Himeji-jo is a UNESCO distinguished site, representing Japanese castle architecture at its highest with almost all of the castle structure still intact from its original construction in the early 1600's, having survived all wars, earthquakes and natural disasters.

After our time in Himeji, we will head to Hiroshima.

Day 7 - Hiroshima (B)

Today our Japan tour begins with a visit to the iconic Itsukushima Shrine. Located off the main shore on the island of Miyajima, the iconic gate that floats is a must see. During high tide, the torii gate looks as though it is floating in water, creating a unique sight, considered one of Japan's three most beautiful sights. Miyajima is also known for its momiji manju (maple leaf shaped cake with red beans) and oysters which you can enjoy during your time on the island.

After our visit, we will spend more time sight-seeing in Hiroshima.

One of the main highlights here in Hiroshima is the A-Bomb Dome, the only surviving building from the aftermath, and the Peace Park Memorial where you can see and read about the relic of the war.

The A-Bomb Dome has been preserved to be a reminder of the tragedy for future generations and to symbolize its wishes for everlasting peace. Stroll along the park to see famous attractions like that of Sadako's statue and the freedom bell. Here you can see and read about the relic of the war.

Day 8 - Saga & Nagasaki (B, L, D)

Our day begins in Arita, where we will see some of the finest porcelain creations. Our day then takes us to Nagasaki where we have much to cover. We will head to Glover Garden which exhibits Western style mansions.

After viewing these gorgeous mansions, we will continue with our foreign influences to the Oura Catholic Church. The Oura Catholic Church is Japan's oldest standing Catholic church.

Our last stop of the day is the Naga-

saki Peace Park which was built to commemorate the Nagasaki atomic bomb. In the park is a large pillar engraved with the names of the victims.

Day 9 - Kumamoto & Takachiho (B, D)

Our day begins in Kumamoto to visit Kumamoto Castle. Kumamoto Castle is considered one of the three premier castles in Japan, along with Himeji Castle and Matsumoto Castle. Thirteen structures in the castle complex are designated Important Cultural Property. Several ancillary wooden buildings remain of the original castle.

Located next to the castle is the Hosokawa family Mansion, the family home for one of Japan's most powerful samurai families. Walk through the residence to get a better understanding of the life among the elites, and see some relics from the Edo period in the home-turned-museum.

We will then head to Mt. Aso, the largest active volcano in Japan and among the largest in the world. Before our day ends, we will enjoy watching a Yokagura show.

Day 10 - Beppu & Matsuyama (B, L, D)

Our morning begins in the hot spring town of Beppu, where we are going for an exciting Tour of Hell. From the eight famous spots, we will visit three: the Sea Hell made up of bright cobalt blue hot water, the Blood Pond Hell where hot water containing red melted clay gushes out, and the Tornado Hell, a fiery geyser that erupts every 20 minutes.

After lunch, we will take a boat ride to Matsuyama, a castle city. Following the pattern of hot springs, we will visit one of the oldest hot springs in the world, Dogo Onsen, which is said to have over 3,000 years of history. The onsen is also widely known for welcoming the imperial family as guests

and has a room called Yushinden on reserve exclusively for their use. Dogo Onsen's impressive wooden structure served as a model for the famous film Spirited Away.

Day 11 - Takamatsu & Tokushima (B, L)

Our day will begin heading towards Osaka. Traveling East, we will visit one of the most beautiful gardens in Japan that overlooks Mt. Shiun, Ritsurin Garden. Michelin Green Guide graded the garden three stars and is a great place to take photos, especially from the highest point that overlooks the entire garden.

While making our way through Tokushima, we will stop at the Awa-odori Museum, a museum dedicated to the prefectural dance of Tokushima. During the annual Awa-Odori festival, thousands of spectators flock to Japan to watch the traditional dance. Enjoy learning some steps and history of Awa-odori at this great museum.

Our last stop before hitting Osaka is Naruto, a small town off the coast. Here in Naruto, many hope to observe the large Naruto whirlpools that can be seen under very ideal conditions. (*The whirlpool can only be seen at certain times of the day and thus we cannot guarantee seeing the whirlpool in action.)

Day 12 - Osaka Departure (B)

Your pleasant and memorable Japan tour ends today. The tour will disband after breakfast. Fly home with cherished memories or enjoy your extended stay in Japan.

****|INFORMATION****

From downtown hotel in Osaka to KIX Airport - about 70 mins (Bus)

From downtown hotel in Osaka to ITM Airport - about 30 mins (Bus)

Information

Maximum Group Size

The maximum number of participants will not exceed 24 people during your Japan tour. Your group may be joined with other tour groups during the tour. Please note that your bus and tour guide may be changed if other groups join the tour.

Single Supplement

Single travelers are required to pay a single supplement in order to guarantee single room accommodation.

Luggage

We request one suitcase, one carry-on bag, and an overnight bag per person. The tote bag we provide can be used to hold any small merchandise/souvenirs purchased during your tour. When you check out, bring your luggage to the lobby and the bus driver will assist in loading it onto the bus. When you arrive at the next hotel, the bus driver will unload your luggage for you to bring to your room.

Please note: The maximum weight of a checked in bag is typically 20 Kilograms or 44 Pounds. You will be traveling with your luggage except during the bullet train ride (if applicable).

Accommodation

All hotel rooms come with a full bathroom and room amenities free of charge unless stated otherwise.

Transportation

All motor coaches come equipped with air-conditioning, plenty of space, comfortable seats, and Wi-Fi. This tour includes a bullet train ride experience.

International Flights

All of our tours begin in either Tokyo or Osaka.

When beginning or ending a tour in Tokyo, please book flights to or from Narita International Airport or Haneda International Airport.

For tours beginning or ending in Osaka, please book flights to or from Kansai International Airport or Itami Airport.

You can also contact us if you would like for Japan Deluxe Tour's to arrange your flights.

Fitness & Shoes

Traveling and visiting sights in Japan includes a good amount of walking. To fully enjoy the tour, please be prepared to keep up with the pace of the group, climb stairs with no difficulty, and wear comfortable shoes for all day use.

Itinerary & Hotel Disclaimer

Our itinerary is constantly improving, therefore we cannot always guarantee the destinations and attractions shown at the time of booking will be the same spots visited on the tour. Itinerary and hotels are subject to change or cancellation without notice. No refund will be owed for any changes or cancellations if the tour still occurs.

Our goal is to show you the very best of Japan, which is why we are always looking to improve our itineraries. Your "Tour Handbook" you receive one month prior to your tour departure will have the most accurate information for your tour.

Optional Tours

Japan Deluxe Tours offers numerous add-on tours to give you a personalized experience. Select from a range of optional excursions when reserving your tour on our website. Fees associated with optional tours are not included in the listed price of the tour. Prices for optional tours are listed on the reservation page.

Guide & Staff

All of our tour guides are licensed by the government, after passing certification exams administered by the Commissioner of the Japan Tourism Agency and register with the relevant prefectures.

Our guides speak Japanese and English, and are here to provide accurate information about the sights and attractions you see.

Our drivers will be sure to provide a comfortable ride from start to finish, assist you with your luggage at the start and end of each day, and are experts navigating the roads of Japan. If you have any questions before or during your tour, our staff is ready to help.

Visa Requirement

Citizens of the USA, CAN, UK, AUS, and NZ do not require an entry visa when visiting Japan. If you are from a country not listed above, please check with the Japanese Embassy, or contact us for more information.

Meals

Our tours include daily breakfast buffets, as well as local and regional specialties. Please let us know if you have any dietary restrictions, and we will do what we can to meet your specific dietary needs.

Airport Transfer

Complimentary airport & hotel transfers are available for the designated airports only, on the designated tour arrival & departure dates only.

Electricity

Most power outlets in Japan are for "Non-polarized Plugs" (2 prongs are same width) only. While there are some that will fit "Polarized Plugs" (2 prongs are different widths), "grounded plugs" (plugs with a ground pin) will not work without a converter.

Safety and Cleanliness

Japan is extremely safe, with one of the lowest crime rates in the world. The country is also hospitable, clean, prompt, polite, efficient, friendly, and the tap water is safe to drink. Most cities in Japan do not have garbage cans along the streets.

If you have trash with you as you walk, carry it with you until you find the appropriate garbage receptacle. There are separate bins for regular trash, burnable trash, aluminum cans and glass bottles.

Bathrooms

Japan has two styles of toilets. The commonly known Western-style and traditional Japanese-style toilet.

Japanese-style toilets are at floor level, and to use, face the hump. In a location with several toilets there may be a Western toilet as indicated on the door.

On the Shinkansen (bullet train) go for the handicapped stall, because those have Western-style toilets.

In public restrooms, you may need to be prepared with a travel pack of tissues. These packages are often handed out free (with advertisements on the reverse) as you walk along major thoroughfares in the large cities, such as Tokyo and Osaka.

Japan is also recognized for extremely high tech toilets that include heated seats, bidet, deodorizer, and can even play sounds.

Japanese Bathing & Onsen

Bathing in an onsen is a quintessential aspect of Japanese culture. Extremely few countries have public baths like Japan. Towels and swimsuits are not allowed in the actual bath itself as a means to keep the water pure/clean which means everybody is naked.

There are rules you must follow while in the onsen, one of the most important being washing yourself before getting into the bath. Because it is a communal bath, anyone who enters the bath must thoroughly wash beforehand.

In any Japanese bath, there will always be a row or multiple rows of sitting shower stalls where you can wash yourself, usually with complimentary body wash, shampoo, and etc. Though bathing naked with strangers with only a small towel for cover can be a daunting experience, it is one well worth trying.

In case of Emergency

While traveling presents exciting adventures and new experiences, there is always the risk of something going wrong. Our guides and staff will do the best to help you during your tour in case of an emergency, and there is an emergency contact number provided on our "Tour Handbooks" in case you need us during your tour.

Internet and Wi-Fi

Hotels

Most hotels in Japan offer free Wi-Fi. However, some higher end Western style hotels charge for Wi-Fi, while traditional Japanese inns do not provide Wi-Fi at all.

Free Wi-Fi

There are many options for Free Wi-Fi in Japan. The three largest options include: Free Wi-Fi Passport, Travel Japan Wi-Fi, and Japan Connected-free Wi-Fi. There is also free Wi-Fi available at 7-11 and Lawson convenient stores and at major JR stations across Tokyo.

Rental Smartphones/SIM Cards

Keep your smartphone connected with data while in Japan with a rental SIM Card, or rent a smart phone.

Many companies in Japan provide services renting out cell phones or sim cards, providing unlimited data and also Wi-Fi tethering abilities.

You can only use a rented SIM Card provided your phone is not locked to a specific company (SIM-Free).

Rental Wi-Fi

A rental Wi-Fi is a great way to internet access, especially when travelling with a group. Renting a pocket Wi-Fi allows multiple devices to connect at once. A great option for families or group travelers, Wi-Fi rentals are available for pick-up in hotels, airports, or even in your home country.

Currency

Yen

The Japanese unit of currency is the Yen. You can exchange your money at the airport, at most banks and at post offices. They should have the current rates of exchange clearly on display. You'll need your passport when exchanging money.

ATM

You can get a cash advance at 12000 ATM machines located at Seven Eleven convenience stores around Japan at any time using your ATM or credit cards. (You can use Visa, Plus Debit Card, American Express, JCB, Discover & Diners Club) Japanese Post Offices also offer ATM cash withdrawal service for overseas ATM cards.

Credit Card

Credit cards are accepted at stores and services in Japan, but most cases are cash only. You may need cash for buses, taxis, trains, and admission to some museums, sights, temples, and shrines.

Sales Tax

Japan has an 8% consumer tax (the price shown on goods is before this tax) and some local taxes for restaurant bills exceeding 5,000 yen and hotel bills exceeding 10,000 yen.

Tipping

Japan is a tip free country and you do not have to tip chambermaid, taxi drivers, or hotel or restaurant personnel. At Japan Deluxe Tour, we do not have tipping guidelines nor expect receive gratuities from our customers.

It is up to your discretion to tip our staff in Japan only if you believe that you have received excellent service from them. Your travel document holder contains a gratuity envelope for your convenience, however it does not mean you will have to use it.

Weather

Visiting Japan can be enjoyable in every season of the year. Below is a brief introduction to Japan's four seasons.

Winter (December - February)

Most locations on our tours, such as Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka, will have a cool winter, with the temperature rarely dropping below 0°C. Central Japan and Northern Japan are highly reputed regions for winter sports. Southern Japan is comparatively mild and pleasant in winter.

Clothing: overcoats, sweaters, etc.

Spring (March - May)

Marked with Cherry Blossoms, the spring season is mild throughout Japan. Cherry Blossoms fill the skies making this the ideal time to visit Japan

Clothing: light jackets, light sweaters and other similar kinds of tops.

Summer (June - August)

The Japanese summer begins in June with a three to four week rainy season. The weather is hot and humid from July onward. Summer is when many interesting festivals and other events are held all over the country.

Clothing: light clothes (cardigans and other similar kinds are handy, since indoors are mostly air-conditioned.)

Autumn (September - November)

Autumn brings light breezes and cooler temperatures after the hot summer. The weather is cool and crisp and the leaves begin changing to glorious autumn colors.

Clothing: light jackets, light sweaters and other similar kinds of tops.

Packing

There's plenty to see and do in Japan, so be sure to pack accordingly.

We advise to check the weather when deciding on what clothes to bring, but don't forget the essentials like:

- Travel Documents (Passport/ Travel Insurance/ Flight Ticket/ Tour Handbook)
- Camera/Cell Phone/Laptop other Electronic Devices and Chargers
- Clothing
- Comfortable Walking Shoes
- Portable first-aid kit
- Money
- Hat/Sunglasses/Watch
- Hand Towel/Travel Wipes
- Eye Mask/Ear Plugs
- Day Pack for Essential