

SPLENDOURS OF JAPAN WITH HIROSHIMA-CELEBRATE THE TAKAYAMA FESTIVAL

13 Days 1 Country 8 Cities

EMBRACE THE TIMELESS TRADITION AND MODERN SPIRIT OF JAPAN, CONTEMPLATE WORLD PEACE IN HIROSHIMA AND MARVEL AT A CAPTIVATING PARADE OF FESTIVAL FLOATS ON THE STREETS OF HILLSIDE TAKAYAMA.



THE ITINERARY

Day 1 ARRIVE TOKYO (2 NIGHTS)

Your in-depth exploration of Japan begins in Tokyo. On arrival at Narita or Haneda Airport, take a shuttle bus transfer to your centrally located hotel, where you'll join your Travel Director and fellow guests for a Welcome Reception drink and local appetisers.

- ★ Hotel - New Otani Garden Tower
- ★ Included Meals - Welcome Reception

Day 2 TOKYO SIGHTSEEING

We launch our City Tour in the old-time entertainment centre of Asakusa, where we'll encounter the Sensoji Buddhist Temple. One of Tokyo's most colourful and popular temples, Sensoji has been rebuilt countless times since it was founded in 628, making it Tokyo's oldest temple site. Strolling down Nakamise next, we immerse ourselves in the sights and sounds of shitamachi (downtown Tokyo), admiring the wooden dolls, colourful chiyogami (origami paper) and traditional Japanese sweets. We'll ascend Tokyo Skytree, the world's highest free-standing broadcasting tower for panoramic views of the city, then enjoy the rest of the day at leisure or on an Optional Experience.

- ★ Included Meals – Buffet Breakfast

Day 3 TOKYO - LAKE YAMANAKAKO

Our first stop today is the Imperial Palace Plaza from where the two bridges that form the entrance to the inner grounds of the Imperial Palace can be viewed. We'll have the opportunity to explore the leafy Imperial Palace East Gardens before continuing our City Tour. At the Edo-Tokyo Museum, we delve into the history and culture of Tokyo's Edo era, then continue to the Ginza district where we'll learn how to make sushi with a 'Local Specialist'. We venture to the Five Lakes District next, keeping a keen eye out for the UNESCO listed Mt. Fuji which dominates the landscape.

- ★ Hotel - Fuji Marriott Yamanakako
- ★ Included Meals – Buffet Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4 LAKE YAMANAKAKO - MT. FUJI - TAKAYAMA (2 NIGHTS)

Visit Oshino Hakkai, a small rural village in the Fuji Five Lakes district, renowned for eight natural spring water ponds that are fed by melted snow from Mt. Fuji. Admire the reflections of the sky and landscapes in its clear waters, then ascend Mt. Fuji by road to 2,300 metres at the 5th station. Ride up Mt. Tenjo on the Kachikachiyama Ropeway next, for jaw-dropping views (weather permitting) of Mt. Fuji and Lake Kawaguchiko. Then, journey through the Japanese Alps to the beautiful hillside town of Takayama, before enjoying dinner at the hotel.

- ★ Hotel - Associa Takayama Resort
- ★ Included Meals – Buffet Breakfast

Day 5 TAKAYAMA SIGHTSEEING AND FESTIVAL

Immerse yourself in tradition as you walk through the Edo-style streets of Takayama's Old Town. Indulge in a lunch of Japanese Hida-gyu - beef from a black-haired Japanese cattle breed, renowned as one of the finest quality varieties of beef. After lunch, immerse yourself in the town's festive atmosphere. Admire the intricately carved yatai (floats) that date back to the 17th century and feature karakuri ningyo, (marionettes) which move and dance as their strings are managed by the tsunakata (puppeteers). Later, return to the hotel by coach.

- ★ Included Meals – Buffet Breakfast, Regional Meal

Day 6 TAKAYAMA - GOKAYAMA – KANAZAWA

Journey back in time this morning during a visit to the peaceful UNESCO-listed Gokayama, a mountain village set amidst five valleys. Admire the unique construction of the local Gassho-zukuri wooden houses that have been built without the use of nails with steeply sloped thatched roofs to prevent snow from building up on them. Later 'Dive into Culture' observing local artisans making washi paper and trying your hand at making your own. 'Make a Difference' to the sustainability of this small business during your visit. Then, continue to Kanazawa and take a short walk through the Omicho market and enjoy an insider's view of everyday life in a busy coastal town. Next, visit the gardens of Kenroku-en, shaped over a hundred years before continuing with a visit to a 'Local Specialist' to learn the secrets of painting gold leaf. Stay overnight in Kanazawa.

- ★ Included Meals – Buffet Breakfast

Day 7 KANAZAWA - KYOTO (2 NIGHTS)

We board an Express train this morning to Kyoto, where we'll 'Connect with Locals' at a traditional ryokan, built in 1932 to serve as the second residence of Emperor Akihito's uncle. We'll enjoy a Be My Guest lunch and learn about local Japanese customs as our hosts welcome us into their beautiful home. After lunch, we visit the UNESCO-listed Kinkakuji Temple with its famous Kinkaku (Golden Pavilion), the proud symbol of Kyoto and a Zen temple, which has its origins as a 14th century villa.

- ★ Hotel - Nikko Princess Kyoto
- ★ Included Meals – Buffet Breakfast, Lunch

Day 8 KYOTO SIGHTSEEING

The blazing orange torii gates of Fushimi Inari Shrine guide our path through the forest, up into the mountains and to a sacred site that has heard prayers for prosperity and happiness since the 8th century. We continue to Sanjusangendo Hall and admire the minute detail of each of its 1,001 "thousand-handed" goddesses of mercy, then enjoy a walking tour of the Gion area. This evening, we indulge in a festive Farewell Dinner with your Travel Director and fellow guests.

- ★ Included Meals – Buffet Breakfast, Farewell Dinner

Day 9 KYOTO - KOTOHIRA

We leave Honshu behind, crossing the world's largest suspension bridge over the Seto Inland Sea to Awaji Island. Enjoy free time for lunch, then walk around Yumebutai, with its '100 Stepped Garden' - a group of 100 square gardens with flowers that bloom during each of the four seasons. Visit the Water Temple and admire the reflection of the surrounding mountains, rice paddies and bamboo groves as you descend the steps to the Buddhist temple beneath its still waters. Journey to the small mountain hot springs village of Kotohira where we'll stay in a traditional Japanese ryokan. We'll have some time this evening to climb the steps adjacent to the hotel to visit Kotohira-gu Shrine or take a relaxing soak in the onsen (hot spring) bath at our hotel.

- ★ Hotel - Kotohira Grand Sakuranosho (ryokan)
- ★ Included Meals – Buffet Breakfast, Dinner

Day 10 KOTOHIRA - HIROSHIMA (2 NIGHTS)

Our morning begins with a visit the Zentsuji Temple, birthplace of the high priest Kobo Daishi who was said to have founded the Shingon sect of Buddhism. We'll continue to Omishima Island and make a stop at a local restaurant for lunch. Driving to Hiroshima via the Setouchi Shimanami Kaido Expressway, we'll cross the individual bridges that link the islands of the Seto Inland Sea.

- ★ Hotel - Rihga Royal
- ★ Included Meals – Buffet Breakfast, Lunch

Day 11 HIROSHIMA SIGHTSEEING

We travel by ferry to the sacred Miyajima Island, where we'll see the famous UNESCO-listed Itsukushima Shrine and elaborate torii gate that stands majestically in the sea. After some free time for lunch and to explore the island's spiritual sanctuaries, we return to Hiroshima for a visit to the Peace Memorial Park and Museum. Imagine the devastation and horror that followed the world's first atomic explosion in 1945 as you see the UNESCO-listed Peace Memorial, the only structure left standing in the area and an expression of hope for world peace. This evening, we'll indulge in Hiroshima-style okonomiyaki, a savoury pancake made with egg, cabbage, soba noodles, and meat, seafood or cheese, grilled in layers on a hot plate.

- ★ Included Meals – Breakfast, Regional Dinner

Day 12 HIROSHIMA – OSAKA

Board the high-speed bullet train to Osaka this morning and enjoy some free time for lunch and shopping in the Dotonbori Street area. Visit Osaka Castle, which played a major role in the unification of Japan during the sixteenth century. This evening, join your Travel Director and fellow guests for a Farewell Dinner at a local restaurant.

- ★ Hotel - Sheraton Miyako Osaka
- ★ Included Meals – Breakfast, Farewell Dinner

Day 13 DEPART OSAKA

Our encounter with Japan's centuries-old traditions and modern cityscapes at its end, take a transfer by airport shuttle service to Kansai International Airport, or Osaka Itami Airport for your onward flight.

- ★ Included Meals – Breakfast

ABOUT THIS TRIP

What's included

- **12 NIGHTS** Accommodation
- **22 MEALS** 12 Breakfast, 4 Lunches (Be My Guest), 6 Dinners
- **ON-TRIP TRANSPORT** Land transportation included. Where applicable, Intra-air between cities are not included.

The Trafalgar difference

- **DIVE INTO CULTURE** Join the locals at the Takayama Festival. (Day 4 & 5)

Sightseeing highlights

- **CITY TOUR** of Tokyo, Kyoto and Hiroshima
- **VISIT** the Edo Tokyo Museum, the Sensoji Temple in Tokyo, Mt. Fuji 5th Station, the Kinkakuji Temple, Sanjusangen-do Hall, Fushimi Inari Shrine in Kyoto, the Water Temple on Awaji Island, the Peace Memorial Park and Museum in Hiroshima, the Itsukushima Shrine on Miyajima Island
- **VIEW** Mt. Fuji
- **SEE** the traditional Gassho-zukuri houses in Gokayama, the beautiful gardens of Kenrokuen in Kanazawa

Travel highlights

Specific transfer information can be found here:

- ✓ Audio Headsets for flexible sightseeing
- ✓ Daily breakfast and an average of 50% of evening meals
- ✓ Luxury air-conditioned coach or alternative transportation (such as rail journeys)
- ✓ Cherry-picked hotels all tried and trusted
- ✓ Handcrafted Highlights
- ✓ Optional Experiences and free time
- ✓ All portorage and restaurant gratuities
- ✓ Must-see sightseeing and surprise extras
- ✓ An expert Travel Director and separate Driver
- ✓ All hotel tips, charges and local taxes
- ✓ Airport transfers on the first and last day of your guided holiday