

SAMURAI TOURS

Adventures in Discovering Traditional Japan

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Best of Tokyo and Kyoto



12 Days/11 Nights

Best of Tokyo and Kyoto

Tour Overview

Experience more of Tokyo and Kyoto, Japan's greatest cities, on the Best of Tokyo and Kyoto tour. Follow in the footsteps of feudal lords and samurai along the route of the ancient Tokaido Highway that once connected these two great cities. To the uninitiated, Tokyo may seem like a whirlwind of people and traffic. Yet, behind the ordered chaos lie remnants of a very different past. Steeped in history and tradition, Kyoto has in many ways been the cradle of Japanese culture. A stroll through Kyoto today is a walk through 11 centuries of Japanese history.

📍 Destinations

Tokyo, Hakone, Kamakura, Kyoto, Fushimi, Himeji, Arashiyama

Tour Details

You could easily spend a lifetime exploring Tokyo and never run out of places and things to discover. From “funky” old Ueno and nearby Yanaka with its fine park, museums, and old houses, to the ultra-modern Ginza with its endless department stores … the sheer energy level of Tokyo will sweep you away. And by night, Tokyo really comes into its own. Mazes of blazing neon fill every available nook and cranny of the city’s streets and alleys. Above all, Tokyo is not just a

destination, but an experience.

Kyoto is endowed with an almost overwhelming legacy of ancient Buddhist temples, majestic palaces, and gardens of every size and description. For many, just the name of Kyoto conjures up the classic images of Japan: streets of traditional wooden houses, the click-clack of geta (wooden sandals) on the paving stones, geisha in a flourish of brightly colored silks, and a tea master deliberately warming water and making tea.

You will learn the ancient religious traditions of the Japanese, visit the famous “Daibutsu” in Kamakura and see the icon of Japan, Mt. Fuji (weather-permitting). You will also meet a “maiko” (geisha-in-training) face-to-face, climb to the top of a Samurai castle, participate in an authentic tea ceremony, stroll through some of the most beautiful gardens in Japan and much, much more.

Tour Highlights

- ✔ Ginza District
- ✔ Asakusa - Sensoji Temple and Asakusa Shrine
- ✔ Hakone - Hakone Ropeway, Owakudani and Lake Ashi Sightseeing Boats
- ✔ Kamakura - Kotokuin (Great Buddha) and Hokokuji (Bamboo Temple) including Tea and Sweets in the Bamboo Garden
- ✔ Meet a Maiko Session and Gion Geisha District Walking Tour
- ✔ Fushimi Inari Shrine
- ✔ Arashiyama Bamboo Garden
- ✔ Shojin-ryori (Buddhist Vegetarian) lunch
- ✔ Himeji Castle
- ✔ Nishiki-koji Market

Tour Inclusions

- ✔ Travel Guard Gold Policy (for American tour members only)
- ✔ Electronic version of Tour Handbook and Japanese History
- ✔ Reserved Seat Shinkansen (bullet train) tickets from Tokyo to Kyoto

Tour Exclusions

- ✖ International airfare is NOT included.
- ✖ A printed itinerary is not included
- ✖ Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks and desserts are NOT included

Map



Tour Destinations

Tokyo
Hakone
Kamakura
Kyoto
Arashiyama
Fushimi

Itinerary

Day 1 Arrive Tokyo

After clearing customs and immigration (which can take up to an hour and a half due to increased tourism to Japan), you will be met at Tokyo's Narita Airport by a Samurai Tours guide. The guide will then purchase a limousine bus ticket for you and help you board the bus to the hotel. No meals are included.

1 1/2 Hours; Walking: Light

Day 2 Travel to Kamakura; Kamakura - Hase-dera, Kotokuin (Great Buddha), Hokokuji (Bamboo Temple),

After breakfast, we will begin with a welcome/orientation meeting. We will then board a subway and an express train to the ancient city of Kamakura, the former capital of Japan in the 13th century. We will start at Hase-dera. This temple, originally established in the 8th century houses a famous Kannon statue made from wood and gold leaf, and also has a commanding view of the nearby ocean. Next we will visit Kotokuin, the home of the famous Kamakura Great Buddha. This 40-foot tall bronze statue of Buddha, built in the 13th century is an icon of Japan. After a relaxing lunch, we continue by taxi to Hokokuin Temple, also known as the Bamboo Temple. Here you will be able to relax and enjoy the serene atmosphere of the bamboo garden while savoring tea and sweets. Breakfast at the ryokan and lunch at a local Japanese restaurant are included.

Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Medium

Day 3 Tokyo - Tokyo National Museum, Shinjuku and Shibuya; Shinjuku - Walking tour of Kabukicho, Shibuya - Hachiko Statue, Shibuya Crossing

We will start the day by traveling to Ueno Park. Ueno Park is a peaceful, green oasis surrounded by a concrete jungle, where you will find several pleasant temples and shrines,and two excellent museums. During late March and early April, Ueno Park is the best place inTokyo for cherry blossom viewing, and also hosts an excellent flea market. But, best of all, Ueno Park is one of Tokyo's favorite spots for family outings. The Tokyo National Museum, at the northernmost extremes of the park, is probably the single best museum in Japan, and boasts the largest collection of Japanese art in the world. Displays are rotated every several months from their extensive collection of 90,000 pieces, and the museum has done an excellent job in organizing the displays from prehistoric time to current-day, contemporary art. Here you will see old kimonos, samurai armor, priceless swords, lacquerware, metalwork, pottery, scrolls, screens, ukioye (woodblock prints), calligraphy, ceramics, archaeological finds and more. From there we will travel to the Shinjuku train station. This station is the busiest train station in the world. On average, 4,000,000 people travel through this station every day. From there, we will begin our tour through the Kabukicho entertainment district, popular with the numerous salarymen working in the surrounding office buildings.

After lunch, we will travel the short distance by train to Shibuya. Shibuya is a center for youth fashion and culture, and its streets are the birthplace to many of Japan's fashion and entertainment trends. We will start our Shibuya visit with the Hachiko statue. According to a famous story, Hachiko the dog waited for his master every day in front of Shibuya Station, and continued to do so for years even after his master had passed away. It is one of Tokyo's most popular meeting points. Next we will visit the Shibuya Crossing, the busiest pedestrian crossing in the world. The intersection is heavily decorated by neon advertisements and giant video screens and gets flooded by pedestrians each time the crossing light turns green, making it a popular

photo and movie filming spot. We will also go to the rooftop observatory of the Magnet by Shibuya 109 building which looks down onto the famous crossing.

From there the guide will take the group back to the ryokan where the day's tour will end. Or, you can choose to stay in the Shibuya area and tour on your own. The guide will give you suggestions where to visit, as well as maps of the area and transportation suggestions on how to get back to the ryokan.

Travel: 1 3/4 Hours; Walking: Heavy

Day 4 Tokyo - Tokyo Skytree, Ginza, Asakusa

After breakfast, you will be escorted to the Tokyo Skytree for a birds-eye view of Tokyo. Next we will travel to the nearby Asakusa area. Here we will tour the Nakamise-dori, Senso-ji Buddhist Temple and the Asakusa Shrine where you will learn about Buddhist and Shinto Japanese religious practices. Senso-ji Temple is the busiest temple in Tokyo, and it's history dates back to the 7th century. Afterward, we travel by subway to the famous Ginza district, the most expensive real estate in the world where we will first stop for a lunch. After lunch, you will have some free time to wander through the numerous boutiques and department stores. After taking a taxi to the Hinode Pier, we take a relaxing cruise on the Sumida River. Breakfast at the ryokan and lunch at a local restaurant included.

Travel: 1 3/4 Hours; Walking: Heavy

Day 5 Tokyo - Free Day; Optional Morning Outer Market Tour

Today is a free day to enjoy the world-class city of Tokyo. Go shopping for that perfect souvenir, visit the Tokyo National Museum, or wander through the trendy Shibuya or Harajuku districts where you will more than likely see interesting and far-out fashions.

Travel: 1/2 Hours; Walking: Medium

Day 6 Travel to Hakone; Hakone - Hakone Ropeway, Lake Ashi Sightseeing Boats; Travel to Kyoto

After breakfast we will take a day trip to Hakone. Hakone is famous for its natural beauty and the view of nearby Mt. Fuji (weather permitting). We will be taking many different forms of transportation (electric train, funicular, gondola and bus) around Hakone including the Hakone Sightseeing Boats on Lake Ashi. In good weather, passengers aboard the sightseeing cruise can get a fine view of Japan's most famous peak, Mount Fuji, and enjoy Hakone's rich scenery reflected on the lake's calm surface. In the afternoon, you will travel by Shinkansen (bullet train) to the city of Kyoto. You will be escorted from the ryokan to the Tokyo train station by a sending service, met on the platform in Kyoto and escorted to the ryokan in Kyoto. Before leaving Tokyo, you will need to prepare your luggage for transfer to Kyoto. You will need to take an overnight bag with you with enough clothing and other items for two days and one night. Breakfast at the ryokan and lunch at a local restaurant is included.

Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Light

Day 7 Kyoto - Nijo Castle, Kinkakuji (Golden Pavilion), Nishikikoji Market, Tea Ceremony

After breakfast, we will start the day at the Nijo Castle. Built in 1603, it was the Kyoto home of Tokugawa Ieayasu, the first Tokugawa Shogun. The ostentatious style of construction was intended as a demonstration of Ieyasu's prestige, and to signal the demise of the emperor's

power. The finest artists of the day filled the castle with delicate transom woodcarvings and paintings by the Kano School on sliding doors. One of the castle's most intriguing features is the so-called "nightingale" floors. To protect the Shogun from real or imagined enemies, these floorboards creak when stepped on. Next we will visit Kinkaku-ji. Kinkaku-ji, also known as the Golden Pavilion, is one of Kyoto's, as well as Japan's, most recognizable attractions. The gleaming building covered in gold leaf seems to float on the aptly named Mirror Pond, especially on a sunny day. After lunch you will have some free time at Nishiki Koji. Nishiki Koji is a narrow, five block long shopping street lined by more than one hundred shops and restaurants. Known as "Kyoto's Kitchen", this lively retail market specializes in all things food related, like fresh seafood, produce, knives and cookware, and is a great place to find seasonal foods and Kyoto specialties, such as Japanese sweets, pickles, dried seafood and sushi. Following this free time, we will participate in an authentic tea ceremony. The regimented discipline of the tea ceremony has been practiced for more than 400 years, and at one time was considered mandatory for Samurai as an aid to train the mind. After the tea ceremony, we will return to the ryokan. Breakfast at the ryokan and lunch at a local restaurant included.

Travel: 1 Hour; Walking: Heavy

Day 8 Fushimi - Fushimi Inari Shrine; Kyoto - Higasihiyama District, Yasaka Shrine, Gion Geisha District

After breakfast, we are off by train to the nearby city of Fushimi, one of the largest sake producing regions of Japan. Here we will visit the Fushimi Inari shrine. This Shinto Shrine, established in the 8th century, is famous for the long tunnels of vermilion torii gates straddling a network of trails leading to the top of the heavily forested Mt. Inari. We will then travel to the Higashiyama District. This area of narrow, cobblestone alleys with its temples, shrines, numerous shops and restaurants is truly enjoyable and relaxing. We will stop for lunch in the Higashiyama District. We will then visit the Yasaka Shrine, also known as the Gion Shrine. This shrine, built over 1350 years ago, is one of the most famous shrines in Kyoto. The shrine's main hall combines the honden (inner sanctuary) and haiden (offering hall) into a single building. Next, we will walk to the famous Gion Geisha District. Here, you will see where the Geiko (in Kyoto they call themselves Geiko, not Geisha) and Maiko live and work. You may even see one on their way to one of their appointments. We will return to the hotel after some free time in the Gion District. Breakfast at the ryokan and lunch at a local Japanese restaurant are included.

Travel: 1 Hour; Walking: Heavy

Day 9 Arashiyama - Tenryu-ji, Arashiyama Bamboo Forest, Shojin-ryori (Buddhist Vegetarian) lunch, Okachi Sanso, Gioji Temple

After breakfast, we travel by train to the nearby town of Arashiyama. Once a favorite relaxation spot of the Emperors, Arashiyama is located on the hillsides bordering the banks of the Katsura River northwest of Kyoto. We will first visit the bamboo gardens which Arashiyama is famous for, located just outside the north gate of Tenryu-ji. This dense bamboo forest, with its rows upon rows of long, ringed, smooth stems, provide a feeling of composure and tranquility. The sound of the wind blowing through the bamboo, the stems knocking against each other and the rustling of the leaves is revered in Japan. Next, we visit Tenryuji Temple. Tenryu-ji is part of the Rinzai school of Zen Buddhism, and was originally built in 1339 on the former site of Emperor Go-Daigo's villa. A priest had dreamt of a dragon rising from the nearby river, hence the name which means "Heavenly Dragon". The garden represents a transition between earlier pond gardens and the karesansui (dry landscape) gardens that later became popular in Zen temples. The focus of the garden is a pond that lies at the base of the hills rising to Mount Arashi, which is incorporated into the design of the garden in the earliest known example of borrowed scenery (shakkei). At the far end of the pond are two rock groupings. These rock groupings are orientated on a vertical alignment, which was a departure from the horizontal alignments in earlier gardens. After finishing the tour of the temple and garden, we will enjoy a Shojin-ryori lunch (Buddhist vegetarian diet with

no garlic or onions) at the temple. Following lunch we will visit the Okochi Sanso and Gioji Temple. Okochi Sanso is the former villa of the popular Japanese actor Okochi Denjiro. The property consists of the living quarters, several gardens and tea houses. Gioji Temple, with its thatched roof gates and moss garden is a tranquil paradise. Later in the afternoon, we will return to Kyoto by train. Breakfast at the hotel and lunch is included.

Travel: 2 Hours; Walking: Heavy

Day 10 Himeji - Himeji Castle, Kokoen Garden

We will take a Shinkansen (bullet train) to the nearby city of Himeji. Himeji Castle, also known as White Heron Castle due to its elegant, white appearance, is widely considered Japan's most spectacular castle for its imposing size and beauty and its well preserved, complex castle grounds. The castle is both a national treasure and a world heritage site. Unlike many other Japanese castles, it was never destroyed by war, earthquake or fire and survives to this day as one of the country's twelve original castles. The castle recently underwent extensive renovation over several years and was fully re-opened to the public in March 2015. Himeji Castle lies at a strategic point along the western approach to the former capital city of Kyoto. The first fortifications built on the site were completed in the 1400s, and were gradually enlarged over the centuries by the various clans who ruled over the region. The castle complex as it survives today is over 400 years old and was completed in 1609. It comprises over eighty buildings spread across multiple baileys, which are connected by a series of gates and winding paths. After touring the castle, we will visit the nearby Kokoen Garden. Kokoen is a relatively recently constructed Japanese style garden, which was opened in 1992 on the former site of of the feudal lord's west residence (Nishi-Oyashiki). It consists of nine separate, walled gardens designed in various styles of the Edo Period. Among the gardens are the garden of the lord's residence which features a pond with a waterfall, a tea garden where visitors can enjoy green tea in a tea ceremony house, a pine tree garden, a bamboo garden and a flower garden. Late in the afternoon we will return to Kyoto by Shinkansen (bullet train). Breakfast at the ryokan and lunch at a local restaurant is included.

Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Medium

Day 11 Kyoto - Free Morning and Afternoon, Optional tour to Nara, Meet a Maiko Session, Sayonara Dinner

Today is a free day. In the late afternoon, we will meet back at the ryokan and travel to the Gion Geisha district. Here, in a teahouse, we will attend a Meet a Maiko session. (A Maiko is a Geisha in training.) She will perform a short dance, answer any of your questions and pose for pictures with you. After this we will have a walking tour of the Gion Geisha district. Here you will see where the Geisha and Maiko live and work. We may even see one on their way to their appointments. After this we will enjoy our Sayonara Dinner. Breakfast at the ryokan and dinner at a local Japanese restaurant included.

Travel: 1/2 Hours; Walking: Medium

Day 12 Sayonara

It's time to say "sayonara" (goodbye). You will be escorted to the Kyoto train station, and then take the Express train on your own to the Kansai International Airport, just outside Osaka. Breakfast at the ryokan is included.

Travel: 1 1/2 Hours; Walking: Light

Walking level descriptions:
Light – 0 to 2 miles on level ground
Medium – 2 to 4 miles on level ground or 0 to 2 miles on hilly ground
Heavy – 4 to 6 miles on level ground or 2 to 4 miles on hilly ground

Dates & Pricing

Dates	Price (land only) / Single Supplement (All prices are per Person)	Status

Add-On Tours

Our tours and tour itineraries are the best, but as the saying goes, “you can’t make everyone happy all of the time”. There may a specific destination or a specific experience you may want to include in your visit to Japan that may not be included your tour. Choose from our Add On tours to include your interests and make your Japan tour even better.

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Inclusions

- Local, licensed, English-speaking, Japanese guides
- **Travel insurance from Travel Guard**, one of the world's largest travel insurance providers, will be provided to everyone from the United States. All others will receive a $100 per person credit and will be responsible for obtaining their own travel insurance in their own home country. (The insurance provided by Samurai Tours will cover the land portion only. Insurance to cover airfare and other additional expenses is the tour member's responsibility.)
    - Exact coverage dependent on state
        - For residents of the following states please click here for your available plan. FL, KS, MN, MO, MT, NY, and WA
        - For all other states and the District of Columbia click here
    - **Travel Insurance Surcharge:** Depending on your age at the time the travel insurance is purchased, you may be subject to the following surcharge for your travel insurance. Travel insurance surcharges will be due at the same time as your tour deposits. (the surcharge itself is not insured)
        - Up to 69 – $0
        - 70-74 – $70
        - 75-79 – $136
        - 80-84 – $272
        - 85+ – $437
    - **Travel Insurance Opt-Out:** If you would prefer to opt out of the travel insurance, please note this at the time of registration. You will receive a $100 credit per person, which will be reflected on your invoice. In the event that you would need to cancel your tour, cancellation penalties may apply. See the Terms and Conditions page for the Cancellation Fees Schedule.
- Meeting service at Tokyo's Narita Airport or Tokyo's Haneda Airport and transfer to the ryokan in Tokyo
    - The meeting service will meet you at the airport and provide you a transfer to the ryokan in Tokyo
    - Meeting service can only be provided between 8am and 9pm. If you arrive at a time outside of these hours, we will need to provide alternative directions for you to get to the ryokan on your own.

- Transfer to Osaka's Kansai or Osaka's Itami airport by shared shuttle van.
    - Transfers to Tokyo's Narita Airport or Tokyo's Haneda Airport for departures are not included. This train ticket is $150 per person.

For those requiring meeting or sending services on other than the scheduled arrival/departure dates, there will be a $100 fee for the meeting service from the airport into Tokyo or the sending service to the Kyoto train station.

Transfers to Tokyo's Narita Airport or Tokyo's Haneda Airport for departures are not included. This train ticket is USD$150 per person.

- Train ticket from Tokyo to Kyoto on Shinkansen (bullet train)

- Meals
    - Japanese-style or Western-style breakfast every morning (Please Note: Some ryokans offer Japanese breakfasts only.)
    - Eight Japanese-style lunches
    - One Japanese-style dinner

- Lodging for 11 nights in Japanese-style ryokans or western-style hotels

- All transportation costs when traveling with the group. (Transportation costs during scheduled free times are the tour member's responsibility.)

- Admission fees to the destinations and activities listed in the Tour Highlights column on the right. (Itinerary specifics subject to change)
- Electronic version of itinerary
- Sayonara dinner at the end of the tour
- The appropriate amount of free time to follow your wanderlust and discover your own personal Japan.
- Baggage transfer from the ryokan in Tokyo to the ryokan in Kyoto (one bag only)

Each tour member receives a tour handbook. This handbook is full of tips and suggestions taken from our Japan travel experiences that allow you to better plan and prepare for your trip, and therefore enjoy your trip even more. The tips and suggestions included cover everything from how to save while exchanging money, what to pack, some basic Japanese-language tips, general etiquette do's-and-don'ts, ryokan customs, etc.

Exclusions

- Airfare is NOT included
- Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks and desserts are NOT included
- A printed itinerary is not included

Thank you for downloading this PDF version of our tour. Please visit our website at www.samuraitours.com/tours for the most current dates, prices and information.

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