

Ancient Empires of China & Japan

Classic Tour | 21 Days | Physical Level 1

Beijing – Xian – Guilin – Yangshuo – Shanghai – Osaka – Hiroshima – Miyajima – Kurashiki – Okayama – Kyoto – Hakone – Tokyo

The ultimate tour for those wishing to combine the very best of two ancient nations. Join us on an incredible journey from Beijing to Tokyo by road, boat, rail and air on this epic three-week tour!

- Walk on the Great Wall of China
- Face the spectacular Terracotta Warriors
- Take a cruise down the tranquil Li River
- Reflect in Hiroshima
- Explore Japan's history in Kyoto
- Admire breathtaking Mount Fuji

TOUR MAP



ANCIENT EMPIRES OF CHINA & JAPAN TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escorts (if your group is 10 or more passengers)
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with IATA

The only things you may have to pay for are personal expenditures e.g. drinks, after hour experiences or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

CLASSIC TOURS:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of China on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully-inclusive basis so you will travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts and local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

PHYSICAL LEVEL 1:

Our tours come with a physical rating to guide you in selecting a holiday that suits your comfort level. Joining any of our tours involves independent mobility and the ability to stay active throughout the day, which is essential for fully enjoying the unique charm of each destination.

'Ancient Empires of China & Japan' falls under a Physical Level 1 category. This indicates a level of fitness that allows you to comfortably remain on your feet with occasional rest. Expect to effortlessly navigate boarding and disembarking from various modes of transport, including coaches, trains, and boats. You'll be walking around remarkable sites and ascending steps to capture those awe-inspiring views!

Sightseeing may often involve walking for a reasonable duration, sometimes over multiple steps, or uneven surfaces. You will also be required to get on and off the boat in Tokyo Bay without assistance.

Our National Escort is dedicated to providing a high level of service and support throughout your journey. However, their primary role is to manage the daily aspects of the tour. They are unable to offer extensive personal physical assistance. We kindly ask our travelers to be prepared for the physical aspects of the tour to ensure a comfortable and enjoyable experience for everyone.

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 21 days in duration including international flights or 19 days in duration based on ‘Land Only’.

Travellers booked on a ‘Land Only’ package, the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to our reservations team.

Join the tour on Day 2 in Beijing and end the tour on Day 20 in Tokyo. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure. An informal Welcome Dinner will be held on Day 2 of the itinerary. If you miss this due to your arrival time, all information will be provided to you at breakfast the following morning.

ITINERARY CHANGES:

It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Days 1-2: Fly overnight to Beijing Meals: D



On arrival in Beijing Daxing or Beijing Capital Airport, you will be met in the arrival hall by your local guide and/or National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer approximately 1 hour to your hotel.

An informal welcome dinner will be held in the evening. Late arrivals will receive a box dinner and tour briefing the following day.

Early check-in is not included. Late arrivals will receive a box dinner. Additional nights before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.

Destination Information

Beijing – Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China. With its unequalled wealth of history, Beijing served as the centre for the many different empires and cultures that ruled China and has been the heart of politics and society throughout its long history. The ancient monuments, the stories of days gone by as well as the dynamic and modern city Beijing has become today, make it a destination not to be missed.

Day 3: Beijing Meals: B, L, D



Rise early this morning and drive around 2-hours northwest of the city to the Juyongguan Pass. Here you can take a walk on the Great Wall of China, appreciating the wall itself and the dramatic scenery. After walking from the coach to the first section, your group will receive an introduction to the Great Wall's unique history and a briefing on the different walking routes available, depending on your level of fitness. You will then have approximately 2.5-hours free time to explore at your own pace.

Please note that there are many steps at the wall and certain sections are steeper than others.

Later, visit a jade factory before strolling through the exquisite Summer Palace. In the evening, enjoy a traditional Peking Duck dinner.

After Hours Experience: *For those seeking extra excitement this evening, you may wish to see a Kung Fu show or a Golden Mask Dynasty show (time permitting, payable locally).*

Destination Information

Great Wall of China – Originally built under the first Emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang, The Great Wall of China is the country's most iconic sight. Snaking through the northern countryside from the Gobi Desert in the west, into the Bohai Sea in the east, the Great Wall of China is the longest wall in the world and was used as a fortification against northern nomadic tribes. The current structure dates back to the Ming Dynasty - over 700 years old.

Jade Factory – Learn about one of China's most symbolic and important materials: jade. Understand how to tell if jade is real or fake and watch artisans at work, carving this emerald stone into works of art.

Summer Palace – The former holiday retreat of the Qing emperors, the Summer Palace is a stunning example of Chinese garden style. The Summer Palace incorporates the Fengshui notion of 'Mountain' and 'Water', seen here with tranquil Kunming Lake and magnificent Longevity Hill. A favourite resort of the Empress Dowager Cixi, the Summer Palace is home to a stunning Marble Boat and the Long Corridor, one of the longest outdoor passageways in the world.

Peking duck – A favourite of the Emperor's court and the upper-class elite during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Peking duck spread through Chinese society to become a national favourite and a symbol of China.

Day 4: Beijing Meals: B, L, D

Soak up the harmonious ambience of the Temple of Heaven for about 1 hour and visit the temple itself. Next, enjoy a leisurely stroll in the warren-like hutongs where you will meet a local family before walking through Tiananmen Square and into the magnificent Forbidden City.



Sightseeing will involve approximately 3-4 hours on foot.

Please note: The Forbidden City is closed on Mondays.
If this day of touring falls on a Monday, your touring in Beijing will be switched round so that the Forbidden City is visited on an alternative day. In an effort to preserve the Forbidden City, the number of entry tickets per day has been significantly reduced. Whilst every effort will be made to obtain the tickets, should this not be possible, then you will instead visit the Forbidden City from the outside and visit the nearby Prince Kung's Palace Museum.

Destination Information

Temple of Heaven – Set in a 267-hectare park surrounded by a long wall and with a gate at each compass point, the Temple of Heaven is absolutely unique. It is one of the most perfect examples of Ming architecture, created as a place of worship for the Emperors, who would ask for prosperity, longevity and good harvest for the people.

Hutongs – The Mongol rulers of Beijing established this style of housing in the 13th century as tenancy for the growing population of the city. Hutongs were designed to reflect the Chinese system of Feng Shui with 4 hutongs joining together to make a courtyard in the middle, known as Siheyuan. In more recent times, the hutong suburbs were in jeopardy of disappearing, but a fierce debate between developers and those who fought to protect the architecture and the hutong way of life diminished the threat.

Tiananmen Square – Built under the guidance of Chairman Mao Zedong, Tiananmen Square is one of the largest public squares in the world, said to hold a capacity crowd of over one million. It houses not only the Monument to the People's Heroes, it is also the final resting place of Chairman Mao himself in the Mausoleum of Mao Zedong.

Forbidden City – The sacred centre of the Chinese empire for 500 years and home to the Ming and Qing dynasties, the Forbidden City is a vast complex of over 900 buildings and covers an area of 180 acres. Since 1987, the Forbidden City has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site and its palatial architectural style has been an influence on many imperial buildings throughout Asia.

Day 5: **Beijing – Xian** Meals: B, L, D

Transfer to the train station and take the bullet train for around 5 hours to the ancient city of Xian. Upon arrival, enjoy some time at leisure at Xian's Muslim Quarter, where you will find an array of food stalls selling a wealth of flavours. Here, you will also have an opportunity to shop for some souvenirs at the various stalls selling a variety of trinkets and mementos.



In the evening, enjoy a delicious feast of traditional Shui Jiao dumplings and a lively performance of Tang Dynasty dancing.

Please note you will need to carry your own luggage on and off the train.

Destination Information

Xian – Xian has long played a pivotal role in China's extensive history and has been a thriving hub for cultural exchange, economic trade as well as national politics for centuries. Home to some of China's most ancient sights, diverse architecture and delicious fares, Xian is a must-see destination.

Tang Dynasty Dancing Show – Xian, previously known as Chang'an, was an important cultural and historical centre in not only China but in the known-world. The Tang Dynasty dancing show is an exciting exponent of this prosperous society and keeps alive the splendour of this period.

Day 6: Xian Meals: B, L, D



Spend the morning viewing the enigmatic ranks of the life-sized Terracotta Warriors. The Museum of the Terracotta Warriors and Horses is located approximately a 1-hour drive outside of Xian. From the bus park to the museum entrance is a 15-minute walk. There are electric carts offered by private vendors which can be organised at your own cost. There is no electric cart available for the return from the museum exit to the bus park. Within the museum area, the warriors can be seen in three different 'pits', which are active archaeological digs. The site is large and will take about 2 and a half hours to explore.

Later, visit the Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition Workshop to see smaller models of the warriors being made. Later, stroll on the beautifully preserved 14th-century city walls that enclose Xian's old town, and visit a local brewery for a refreshing beer tasting. Spend an evening at leisure or enjoy an after hour experience where you can join the Tang Ever-Bright City night tour (payable locally).

The local guide will give you time to explore the ancient city walls at your own pace. There are options here to hire a bicycle or an electric cart to drive along the length of the wall. These are offered by private vendors and can be organised at your own expense. Please note we are not affiliated with these vendors and these activities are at your own risk.

Destination Information

Terracotta Warriors – One of the most significant archaeological discoveries of the 20th century, this unearthed terracotta army comprises over 7,000 soldiers, horses and chariots. The army was built in life-sized form by thousands of workers and designed by Emperor Qin Shi Huang to defend himself in the afterlife.

Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition Workshop – See smaller versions of the enigmatic Terracotta Warriors being created at the Workshop and even purchase your own portable soldier.

Ancient City Walls – Dating back to the Ming Dynasty in the 14th century, Xian ancient city wall is one of the best-preserved urban fortifications in China. The wall's ideal spot give visitors a bird's eye view over the city.

Day 7: Xian – Guilin Meals: B, L, D

Today, transfer to the airport and fly approximately 2 hours to Guilin, best known for its incredible natural landscapes.



Upon arrival, stroll around Zhengyang Pedestrian Street and the picturesque Ronghu Lake and admire the Sun and Moon Pagodas – two towering examples of traditional Chinese-Buddhist architecture.

Destination Information

Guilin – Guilin is one of China's most stunning and panoramic cities and was founded during the reign of the first Chinese empire, the Qin Dynasty. It is renowned for the unique beauty of the mountains that fringe it. Guilin developed as a trading town due to the building of the Ling Canal which links the important Pearl and Yangtze River systems.

Ronghu Lake – One of two lakes originating from the Tang Dynasty when they made up part of the city moat. As Guilin Expanded in all directions, the moat became a lake within the city area.

Sun and Moon Pagodas – Known as the Gold and Silver Pagodas because of their colours at night, the sun and moon pagodas sit on top of the Chinese Fir Lake but are connected underwater by a glass tunnel.

Day 8: Guilin to Yangshuo Meals: B, L, D



Take a relaxed 4-hour cruise along the Li River to the charming town of Yangshuo, where you will stay overnight. Around every river bend is a view to take your breath away, as jagged peaks loom over rural scenes of lush greenery, grazing buffalos and local fishermen.

These are small cruise boats that usually hold approximately 100 passengers, with an enclosed dining area on the lower deck and an open viewing area on the upper deck. Usually, the boats depart at 9am from the dock located a one-hour drive from your hotel. Please note: when the river level is low they depart from further downstream, in this case, there may be a longer drive and an earlier check-out from your hotel.

After the cruise, your Local Guide will walk with you to your hotel, approximately a 30-minute walk from the river. There are electric carts offered by private vendors which can be organised at your own cost; please note that these vendors are not affiliated with Wendy Wu Tours and their services are undertaken at your own cost and risk.

In Yangshuo, enjoy some time strolling along West Street and visit the local markets.

Weather permitting, there is an after hours experience, an outdoor evening Sanjie Liu light and sound show (payable locally).

Destination Information

Li River – Pass tranquil farming and fishing scenes and picturesque villages as you cruise down the Li River. The main attraction is the stunning limestone karsts that tower above the river creating a magical landscape of mountains and water. The unique and natural beauty of this region has for centuries been an inspiration to Chinese artists and poets alike.

Yangshuo – Yangshuo is home to some of the best scenery in the world. This quaint town is renowned for its breathtaking vistas and peaceful country life. Surrounded by stark karst peaks and attractively located on the Li River, Yangshuo, alongside Guilin, prides itself on being the most sought-after beauty spot in China.

Day 9: Yangshuo to Guilin Meals: B, L, D

Today, enjoy a countryside tour before driving back to Guilin, a journey of approximately 1 hour.



Upon arrival, go on to visit the Reed Flute Caves to admire the stunning colours of the stalagmites and stalactites. You will walk through the caves, involving around 500 stairs and sometimes along damp paths. It usually takes about 1.5-hours to complete the route and it is quite cool inside.

Destination Information

Reed Flute Cave – Named so because of the clumps of slender reed that were once commonly found at the entrance to the caves, also used to make flutes, the Reed Flute Caves houses a grotto of multi-coloured stalactites and stalagmites.

Day 10: Guilin – Shanghai Meals: B, L, D

Fly just over 2 hours to the exuberant city of Shanghai for a 2-night stay. Upon arrival, check-in to your hotel, where the remainder of your day will be at leisure.



Destination Information

Shanghai – Once known as the 'Paris of the East', Shanghai is now one of Asia's most influential cities. Prior to communist arrival in 1949, Shanghai was a city with European-style mansions and was the most important trading port in Asia. Today it presents a blend of cultures; the modern and the traditional, along with the European and oriental. Modern skyscrapers intermingle with 1920s 'shikumen' buildings. This combination is what attracts millions of visitors each year.

Day 11: Shanghai Meals: B, L, D



Today's explorations include the peaceful Yu Garden and a quick visit to the old town.

Admire the magnificent colonial architecture with a stroll along the Bund and Nanjing Road, where you will also be able to enjoy some time at leisure before visiting a silk factory.

Sightseeing today involves a full day of touring around the centre of the city including 3-4 hours on foot.

In the evening, view the city from the Huangpu River on a panoramic cruise.

Destination Information

Yu Gardens – The Yu Gardens is seen as one of the most perfect examples of Chinese garden style. Built by the Ming-era governor, Pan Yunduan, as a retirement gift for his father, the Yu Gardens is home to exquisite jade rock, goldfish-filled ponds and stunning, tranquil pavilions.

The Bund – Recognised as Shanghai's former 'Wall Street', the Bund is home to an impressive collection of buildings from the early trade houses of the 1850s to the glamorous Art Deco modernism of the 1920s. Originally the home of the foreign population of Shanghai, the Bund's architecture has inherited much western influence and is a stark contrast to the Pudong skyline, sitting across the Huangpu River.

Silk Factory – The Silk Factory is an educational journey through the production of silk, one of China's most famous and luxurious materials. Learn about the use of silkworms and silk moths in its production; the manufacturing process; as well as silk's journey along the Silk Road.

Huangpu River – The Huangpu River flows through the centre of Shanghai and separates the city into Pudong, meaning 'east of the Huangpu' and Puxi, 'west of the Huangpu'. Cruising down the river, you will see the contrast of the historical Bund architecture on one side of the river with the modern Pudong skyline on the other side. At night, the banks of the Huangpu light up, turning Shanghai into a neon wonder.

Day 12: Shanghai – Osaka Meals: B, L, D

It's time to say goodbye to China and hello to Japan!



Transfer to the airport and fly just over 2 hours to the vibrant city of Osaka. On arrival you will be met by your English-speaking Japanese guide and transferred to your hotel.

Destination Information

Osaka – Osaka (formerly called Naniwa) is Japan's third-largest city, with a population of over 2.7 million. It is the economic powerhouse of the Kansai region, known for its bright lights, vibrant downtown district, and many urban canals.

Day 13: Osaka Meals: B, L, D



This morning, visit the famous Osaka Castle, known for its views of the city. Later, take a short cruise along the Yodogawa River before strolling around the ever-busy Dotonbori district, where you can sample delicious local delicacies for lunch.

Spend the rest of the afternoon at leisure before this evening's dinner.

Please note: Since the castle is a defensive structure, there are a number of slopes on the way to the keep.

You will need to walk approximately 15 minutes from the drop-off point to the castle entrance.

Destination Information

Osaka Castle – This beautiful castle is known for sweeping views of the city from its hilltop perch. Construction began in 1583 under Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who intended that the castle to become the centre of a new, unified Japan under his rule. He was a daimyo (feudal lord) who rose to power from a peasant background. In the early seventeenth century, the castle fell to Tokugawa, the first shogun of the Tokugawa Shogunate.

Dotonbori District – Historically a theatre district and still a popular entertainment area today, the Dotonbori district offers an eccentric and electric atmosphere.

Day 14: **Osaka – Okayama – Kurashiki – Hiroshima** Meals: B, L, D



Transfer to Osaka Station and take the speedy bullet train for 45 minutes to Okayama.

Visit Koraku-en Garden, one of the 'Three Great Gardens of Japan', before continuing around 1 hour to Kurashiki to explore the beautifully-preserved Bikan Historical Quarter.

Later, drive approximately 2 hours to Hiroshima.

Please note that due to luggage restrictions on the bullet train, your luggage will be transferred directly to Kyoto (max 1 case per person). You will need an overnight bag for your two nights in Hiroshima.

Destination Information

Okayama – Okayama, an old castle town once ruled by the Ikeda feudal lords, is the capital city of its namesake prefecture. The prefecture is known for its delicious fruit, and is often called the land of sunshine.

Koraku-en Garden – Along with Kanazawa's Kenroku-en and Mito's Kairaku-en, Koraku-en is one of the 'Three Great Gardens of Japan'. Koraku-en was built in 1687 and opened to the public in 1884. It is a spacious garden with typical Japanese landscape garden features, including a large pond, streams and walking paths. Quite unique for a Japanese garden, however, are Koraku-en's spacious lawns.

Bikan Historical Quarter – During the Edo Period (1603-1867), Kurashiki was an important point along the distribution route of Japan's most important commodity, rice. A central section of the city's former canal system has been preserved in the Bikan Historical Quarter. Along the canal, there are many of the original storehouses, which have been converted into cafés, boutiques, souvenir shops and museums.

Hiroshima – At 8.15 a.m. on 6th August 1945, the US military dropped the world's first nuclear bomb on Hiroshima. The destructive power obliterated nearly everything within a 2km radius, killing more than 70,000 people immediately; a further 20-70,000 subsequently died from injuries or radiation within the next year. Today, the city has risen phoenix-like from the ashes; it is now a powerful international symbol for peace.

Day 15: Hiroshima & Miyajima Meals: B, L, D



Take a ferry from Hiroshima to Miyajima Island, where sightseeing will be at a leisurely pace on foot.

Visit Itsukushima Shrine and admire its Torii gate, which appears to float above the water at high tide. Take some time to explore the island's main thoroughfare with its variety of souvenir and snack shops.

Return to Hiroshima for lunch.

This afternoon, visit the famous Peace Memorial Park and Museum. *Please be aware that the museum may be confronting and upsetting for some group members, and it is at your discretion whether you wish to visit or enjoy time at leisure exploring the Peace Memorial Park.*

Later, visit the observation deck of Orizuru Tower and enjoy views of the city.

You will be on your feet for approximately 4-5 hours today.

Destination Information

Miyajima – Miyajima is a small island outside of Hiroshima. While officially named Itsukushima, the island is more commonly referred to as Miyajima, meaning 'Shrine Island'. This is because the island is well-known for its main attraction, Itsukushima Shrine, a giant torii gate, which at high tide seems to float on the water.

Peace Memorial Park and Museum – The Peace Memorial Park and Museum is one of the most prominent features of the city. The trees, lawns and walking paths are in stark contrast to the surrounding downtown area. Before the bomb, this area was the political and commercial heart of the city and is why it was chosen as the target. The museum focuses on the events of August 6th and the ensuing outcome for the residents.

Orizuru Tower - The 50-metre-tall Orizuru Tower is located beside the A-Bomb Dome and is one of the few tall buildings around the Peace Memorial Park. It offers a great view of the surroundings, including the less commonly seen view of the A-Bomb Dome from above.

Day 16: **Hiroshima – Kyoto** Meals: B, L, D



This morning, transfer to Hiroshima Station and catch a bullet train to Kyoto, a journey of 1 hour 40 minutes.

This enchanting city was the capital of Japan for some thousand years, and remains the epitome of traditional Japan.

Visit Ryoan-ji, the Zen 'temple of the peaceful dragon', and the famous Golden Pavilion of Kinkaku-ji.

Sightseeing on foot will be approximately 4 hours today.

Your luggage has already been transferred from Osaka and will be waiting at the hotel (max one suitcase per person).

Destination Information

Kyoto – Kyoto was the ancient capital of Japan from 794 until the late 1860s, when it was moved to Tokyo (then Edo) following the Meiji Restoration. Many national treasures can be found in Kyoto and in nearby Nara, including old shrines and temples, screen paintings, beautiful gardens, and statues of Buddha.

Ryoan-ji Temple – Ryoan-ji Temple is a Zen temple renowned for its garden, which features a dry, sand landscape with large rocks and smooth pebbles. The garden has fifteen stones, cleverly arranged so that one rock is always hidden from view at any angle. Fifteen is considered the number of perfection; just as no individual is perfect, viewers are unable to see all the stones. It is a reminder of one's imperfect and limited perspective.

Kinkaku-ji Temple (Golden Pavilion) – This Zen Buddhist temple sits over a 'mirror pond' in a classical garden of the 'go round' style. The top two floors are covered in pure gold leaf. The temple is an excellent example of the Japanese design principle of 'shakkei', meaning borrowed scenery, which connects the building with its wider setting.

Day 17: Kyoto Meals: B, L, D



This morning, visit the mesmerising Fushimi Inari Shrine, which stretches from the bottom to the top of Mount Inari (233 metres high). The mountain path is framed by thousands of vermillion torii gates.

You will walk up part of the mountain. Due to the limited parking space at Fushimi Inari Shrine coach parking, you may need to walk for 15 minutes to reach the start point of the mountain path.

Next, head to Nishiki Market, also known as 'Kyoto's Kitchen', with its lively open-air market specialising in all things food! Later, experience the ritual of a tea ceremony before trying your hand at the traditional art of origami.

Destination Information

Fushimi Inari Shrine (Taisha) – An important Shinto shrine in southern Kyoto, Fushimi Inari is most famous for its thousands of vermillion torii gates which form a network of tunnels around the main shrine buildings. The shrine itself is dedicated to Inari, the Shinto god of rice. There are many fox statues in the grounds of the shrine as foxes are thought to be Inari's messengers.

Nishiki Market - A narrow, five-block shopping street lined by more than 100 shops and restaurants, this lively retail market specialises in all things food related, like fresh seafood, produce, knives and cookware. It's a great place to find seasonal foods and Kyoto specialties, like sweets, dried seafood and sushi.

Day 18: Kyoto - Hakone - Tokyo Meals: B, L, D



This morning, transfer to Kyoto station and take the super-fast bullet train to the Hakone area, a journey of around 2 hours.

Once in Hakone, board a coach to explore this beautiful area. The area is dotted with lakes formed by past volcanic eruptions, and in fine weather, they reflect Fuji's picture-perfect cone. Enjoy a cruise on Lake Ashi before taking the Komagatake cable car for spectacular views of the surrounding hills and the lake below.

Later, drive 2-3 hours (traffic depending) to Tokyo, Japan's iconic capital.

Please note that due to bullet train luggage limitations, your luggage will be transferred from Kyoto to Tokyo (max one suitcase per person), arriving the same day.

Destination Information

Hakone – Situated next to picturesque Lake Ashi, Hakone is a pleasant town, popular with Tokyoites looking for a break from the city and a great overnight stop after visiting Mount Fuji.

Lake Ashi – Formed after Mount Hakone's last eruption 3000 years ago, Lake Ashi is the symbol of Hakone and on a clear day offers spectacular views of Mount Fuji's cone in the distance.

Tokyo – One of the world's most cutting-edge capital cities, Tokyo is a city of contrasts, famous for its neon-lit streets, towering skyscrapers, peaceful shrines and lovely gardens. Although long the political and cultural centre of Japan, Tokyo became the official capital when the Emperor Meiji moved it there after his restoration in the 1860s.

Day 19: Tokyo — Meals: B, L, D

Tokyo is the ultimate 24-hour city, but look behind its busy, high-tech façade and you will find plenty of tranquil backstreets and old temples to explore.



Begin your day at the 634-metre Tokyo Skytree and ascend to the observation deck for magnificent views.

Later, head to the vibrant Asakusa district and soak up the ambiance of Senso-ji, Tokyo's oldest Buddhist temple.

Due to the limited coach parking in the area, you may need to walk for around 15 minutes on flat road to reach Senso-ji.

Later, enjoy a farewell dinner cruise on Tokyo Bay, admiring the city lights as you cruise across the bay's waters.

Destination Information

Tokyo Skytree – The tallest structure in Japan and the tallest tower in the world, Tokyo Skytree is predominantly a television and radio broadcast tower and is earthquake resistant.

Senso-ji Temple – This 7th-century Buddhist temple is the oldest in Tokyo. It is adorned by an image of Kannon, the goddess of mercy and compassion, who was said to have been rescued by two fishermen from the Sumida River in Tokyo. To reach Senso-ji, most visitors pass through two elaborate red gateways, which bear enormous red lanterns, and walk up Nakamise-Dori Street. Nakamise-Dori is lined with small shops selling modern souvenirs. These shops are part of a living tradition of selling to pilgrims who walked to Senso-ji.

Days 20-21: Depart Tokyo Meals: B



Any time before your flight is at leisure before transferring to the airport for your flight home, arriving the following day.

Please note: Only breakfast is included today. Late check-out is not included in our Ancient Empires of China & Japan tour.

If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day in Tokyo, please contact our reservations department.

Please note: You may be transferred by shared coach with other passengers who are not part of a Wendy Wu Tour. If you are on a shared coach transfer, you may have to walk for a few minutes to get to your pick-up point. In this case, your guide will distribute transfer tickets in advance.

PLEASE INFORM OUR RESERVATIONS TEAM OF ANY ALLERGIES AND/OR SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS AT THE TIME OF BOOKING.

ANCIENT EMPIRES OF CHINA & JAPAN TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

China visa info

New Zealand passport holders can currently enter China visa-free for stays of up to 30 days, for travel completed before 31 December 2026. If you hold a different passport, please contact us.

If you're travelling in 2027 or beyond, visa requirements may change. Should a visa be required for New Zealand passport holders, Wendy Wu Tours will organise this for you at no additional cost. Full details of the visa process – including processing times, required documentation and instructions – will be sent to you electronically at full payment.

Japan visa info

A visa is not required for New Zealand passport holders for entry into Japan for stays up to 90 days.

Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back in New Zealand.

Please note the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate; Wendy Wu Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa.

INSURANCE:

We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original.

EATING IN CHINA & JAPAN:

We welcome people on our tours with a wide variety of tastes and as such try to present an array of food options to suit everyone in the group.

Our schedule of meals is designed so that you can experience the local dishes, their individual flavours as well as the different ways they are prepared and cooked throughout China and Japan. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our fully inclusive group tours from dinner on the day of the groups' arrival until breakfast on the groups' day of departure.

Chinese cuisine is one of the most influential, diverse and flavoursome culinary styles in the world with a legacy stretching back thousands of years. Often you'll find that the local Chinese style is very different from what you're used to at home. Dishes served in restaurants on our group tours are varied. Some will be vegetable-based with meat mixed in, and a few will be meat-based.

Traditionally, Chinese people cook with a lot of vegetables because meat used to be hard to come by. Dishes often come pre-seasoned with soy sauce or other sauces. Our restaurants are well aware of the western palate – there are plenty of non-spiced options. Most meals are served with plain rice on the side which is intended as an accompaniment to your meal.

Unlike the western world, Chinese people do not normally pre-heat their plates and food can be presented at a variety of temperatures, which is a typical Chinese way of doing things. When eating meals on group tours in China, you will be seated around a circular table with other tour members.

Dishes will be served in the traditional 'family style' on a lazy susan; meaning that various dishes will be laid out on a spinning turntable in the centre of the table top. These dishes are intended to be shared amongst the group – there is always more than enough to feed everybody. 'Family style' means that there is a pair of serving chopsticks for each dish which are used specifically to serve the food (please ask your server if you require a fork or spoon) and everybody will help themselves to all the dishes on the lazy susan. You will have an individual bowl, chopsticks and cup for your own use. Please be courteous and consider your fellow diners; if your favourite dish is on the other side of the table, it will make its way round to you soon! We find our customers really enjoy this sociable style of eating.

Japanese cuisine is delicious, colourful and healthy. Meals are usually served with a bowl of rice and a bowl of miso soup and consist usually of fish, pickled vegetables and meat. Japan's other main staple is noodles, most famous being Udon and Soba.

Food is an important element of Japanese culture. It is a time for families and friends to come together and much of family life revolves around the dinner table. Most food is eaten with chopsticks so best get practicing as cutlery is not always available at restaurants.

In Japan, breakfast will mostly be buffet style but may be a set-menu. Lunches are mostly pre-set options as is custom in many local restaurants. Dinner is usually buffet-style, featuring a wide selection of high-quality Japanese and Western dishes, but may occasionally be a set-menu. We usually find this style of dining suits the wide and varied tastes of our customers on tour. These are also pre-booked in advance prior to your arrival by your guides. This will provide greater flexibility and allow you to sample a broad range of local cuisines and dishes.

All beverages will be at your own expense and are readily available. Please note: if you have any dietary requirements, you must inform us before your tour starts. Your National Escort will do their utmost to cater for any special requests such as gluten free or vegetarian meals, however, people on restricted diets should expect complications.

Although most Asian countries are now quite developed, only quite recently have they started to widely accept Western guests. Western food requirements are quite far removed from Asian food requirements, and even medical reasons can be quite difficult to explain. While our ground partners will do everything they can to cater for a wide range of dietary requirements on tour, we ask kindly for your patience and understanding that they cannot always be delivered to the standard you will be used to at home.

It is recommended that passengers with food intolerances bring snacks or additional food items with them, especially when travelling further from major cities as not all dietary requests will be met due to the limited foods available.

Please read your travel guide which you will receive with your final documents for more information about eating in China and Japan. We recommend that when it comes to Chinese and Japanese food, you stay open minded, try to be adventurous and always have a go with the chopsticks!

On some days where lots of sights are covered, dinner times may be early and your tour group may head directly to the restaurant after sightseeing without stopping at your hotel to freshen up.

ACCOMMODATION:

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between New Zealand and China and Japan. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone.

Due to environmental regulations, not all hotels in China provide toiletries in the rooms. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room.

Please note that in Japan, hotel rooms and bathrooms are renowned for being small. Standard single rooms are usually smaller than a standard double or twin room, contain one small double bed (or one single bed), and are designed for one person to use.

In the Fuji area, hotels tend to be more traditional in style and culture. In this area, you may be asked to take your shoes off at the door and store them in a secure locker – this is very traditional Japanese culture. Please note, double bed requests can be made at time of booking but cannot be guaranteed.

If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

PORTERAGE:

Please be aware that porterage is not included on our tours in China and Japan. You will therefore need to be able to handle your own luggage within the hotel and when using transportation like trains and coaches.

AIRPORT TRANSFERS:

As we offer a variety of airlines and flight times to suit your needs, tour members will arrive/depart China and Japan at different times during the day. Depending on the number of customers arriving/departing on the same flight as yourself, the type of transfer to your hotel/airport will vary.

You will always be met on arrival by English-speaking staff and transferred all the way to your hotel either by:

- Direct shared bus (shared with other passengers, not just Wendy Wu Tours clients),
- Shared bus plus taxi from the nearest bus stop to the hotel (maximum 5 minutes' walk),
- Chartered coach (if there are more than 8 Wendy Wu Tours passengers arriving at the same time).

On the departure day, all passengers will be met by English-speaking staff at the hotel and transfer by one of the three ways as above. For those passengers using a shared bus or shared bus plus taxi to the airport, the guide services end when they drop you off at the bus stop, and you will need to check in at the airport on your own. If you have paid extra for a private transfer, the above does not apply.

You will meet your national escort at the welcome dinner or, if arriving late, the following morning after breakfast at the welcome meeting.

Please ensure your Wendy Wu Tours luggage tag is visible on your suitcase/hand luggage, as this may also assist your guide in identifying you. If at any stage you are unable to locate your representative, please contact our ground partners on the number included in your final documents.

TRANSPORT:

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Roads in China have generally improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road – not just 1-2 kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the itinerary are approximations only. There may be sections of road where the surface is comparatively bumpy, but our drivers will do their utmost to lessen the impact. Roads in Japan are extremely well maintained and are comparatively smooth compared with the rest of Asia.

Planes: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines. Internal flights during your tour are arranged locally, so you will not be given a ticket until your guide helps you check in.

Bullet trains: On this tour, you will take several high-speed train journeys. Second-class soft seats with air conditioning is used in China. For train journeys in China you must ensure that you pack liquids, aerosols and gels/lotions in your hand luggage as per recent regulations. The National Escort will inform you of specific details prior to boarding. The train companies have implemented a policy which does not allow passengers to carry inflammable liquids including aerosols, styling gel, compressed air or insecticides; any explosives, magnetised material, knives, scissors or sharp items (medication is fine). Bag checks are conducted randomly and any of these items may be confiscated before boarding the train (in hand luggage or main luggage). In Japan, second class reserved seats are booked for our groups on bullet trains; there will be toilet facilities on board. Due to the limited space on bullet trains, a separate luggage transfer service will be arranged for all suitcases. In some cases, you will need to pack a separate overnight bag to carry on the train as your suitcase will not arrive until the following day after a bullet train journey. Your guide will indicate when you will need to prepare for this throughout your tour.

DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA AND JAPAN:

Though parts of China match the west in modernity and technological advances, it is important to remember that parts of China are still developing and as such, many aspects of tourism in China do not have the solid infrastructure and safety standards as seen here in the west.

Japan is a developed country and as such matches the West in modernity and technological advances. Japan is an extremely safe country and takes great responsibility in maintaining high safety standards.

GROUP SIZE:

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a national escort. There will usually be no more than 28 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). A national escort will accompany each group of 10 or more. However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so.

TIPPING POLICY:

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and China is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. In order to avoid any inconvenience, Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your National Escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed to local guides and drivers throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the National Escort.

If you are travelling in a smaller group with local guides only, then tipping is paid in each destination. To be fair to the guides we ask for slightly higher amounts per traveller with small groups.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy but we do recognize that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

Although tipping in Japan is not customary, if you feel you have received an excellent service, please feel free to tip your guide at your discretion.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:

If you are travelling within the below Public Holidays, please note that celebrations can last a several days and during these times some businesses will be closed. Coach, air and train travel may also be affected. Tourist attractions will be open; but may be crowded.

China: Chinese New Year is from 28 January – 4 February 2025 and 17 – 23 February 2026. Golden Week public holidays fall annually between 29 April – 3 May and 30 September – 7 October.

Japan: Showa Day is on 29th April every year, 'Golden Week' public holidays fall annually at the end of April/beginning of May, Constitution Memorial Day is on 3rd May, and Emperor's Birthday is on 23rd February every year.

SOUVENIRS:

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs, so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions which demonstrate a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone, so we aim to take you to places, which hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

LUGGAGE:

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 5kg. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. In general, we recommend packing only as much as you can lift as you will need to carry your own luggage on and off trains. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

PERSONAL EXPENSES AND OPTIONAL TOURINGS:

Our fully inclusive Classic tours feature full days of sightseeing to ensure you experience all the must-see sights and unforgettable moments. Occasionally, when time allows, we offer optional extras such as evening shows for those seeking extra excitement. These extra's will be listed in your final documents and can be paid for locally through your guide.

Personal Expense - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you.

It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling to different. We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be very limited. Your National Escort will remind you to do this before departure.

CLIMBING STEPS:

Sightseeing at nearly all the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defence against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails.

Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

TRAVEL MONEY:

We recommend having access to multiple sources of money while traveling. A combination of payment methods, including mobile payment apps, cash, and cards, will offer the most security and flexibility. Mobile payment apps like WeChat and Alipay are often more widely accepted than international cards or cash in China. You will need an internet connection when in China to use the apps. For more information, please refer to our www.wendywutours.co.nz/help-and-visas/china-travel-tips/

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

Wendy Wu does not give specific health advice, but we do recommend you see your doctor at least six weeks prior to travel for advice and to allow time for any necessary vaccinations. Please remember to take your itinerary with you. Safe travel has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.safetravel.govt.nz

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.safetravel.govt.nz as in the event of an emergency, New Zealand Consular assistance will be more readily available.

Up until the day you travel, it is vital you keep up to date and familiarised with the entry requirements as these can change at short notice. You are personally responsible for completing any entry forms, conducting any covid tests (if necessary), etc and adhering to countries' specific entry requirements. You can also access the New Zealand Government's travel advisory service for up-to-date information about your destination on the same website.

AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice along with a link to our website where you can find your visa information (if applicable) and other important information. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

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