



Christmas in Japan

2024 - Classic Tour | 12 Days | Physical Level 1

Tokyo – Mount Fuji – Mishima – Kyoto – Hiroshima – Miyajima – Himeji – Osaka

Many choose the festive season to see the world, and we can think of no better place than Japan! As well as seeing the classic sights of Japan such as the bustling city of Tokyo and iconic Mt Fuji, Christmas Day will be spent exploring Kyoto's temples before taking the bullet train to Hiroshima for a special dinner cruise on Hiroshima Harbour. The tour also includes additional special dinners and experiences to round off your holiday during this festive time!

- Discover the delights of vibrant Tokyo
- Admire breath-taking Mount Fuji
- Make your own Japanese soba noodles
- Experience the speedy bullet train
- Explore Japan's history In Kyoto

TOUR MAP:



CHRISTMAS IN 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) or Local Guides
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with IATA

The only thing you may have to pay for is personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions 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:

See the classic sights in the company of expert guides so you can really understand the history and culture of the destination. On our classic tours we take care of everything, leaving you to sit back and enjoy the experience to the full. The tours are fully inclusive with all meals and a comprehensive touring programme.

To book call **0800 936 3998** or visit your local travel agent

Visit wendywutours.co.nz

PHYSICAL LEVEL 1:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights.

Christmas in Japan is rated as a physical level 1 tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it's more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You'll be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- On several days there will be sightseeing on foot for extended periods of time, often involving steps or uneven ground
- You will be required to get on and off the boat on Tokyo Bay without assistance.

Of course, our National Escort and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 12 days in duration including overnight international flights in both directions as this is the most likely flight option from Australia. Please note, some flights may depart and arrive on Day 2.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only': the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour, or when booking pre and post night accommodation with Wendy Wu Tours. Please email your international flight times to info@wendywutours.co.nz so we can arrange your transfers accordingly.

Join the tour on Day 2 in Tokyo (arrive at either Tokyo Narita or Tokyo Haneda airport) and end the tour on Day 11 in Osaka (departures from either Osaka Kansai or Osaka Itami airport). 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.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Days 1-2: Fly to Tokyo

Meals: D

Fly overnight to Tokyo, the capital of Japan. On arrival, you will be met by an English-speaking representative and transfer approximately 1 and a half hours to your hotel.

Please note: Early check in is not included. If your flight arrives in the morning and you wish to arrange this, please speak to your reservation's consultant.

You will be transferred by shared coach with other passengers who are not part of a Wendy Wu Tour. If you are on a shared bus transfer, you may have to walk for a few minutes to get to your hotel. Transfers will differ depending on group size.



Destination Information

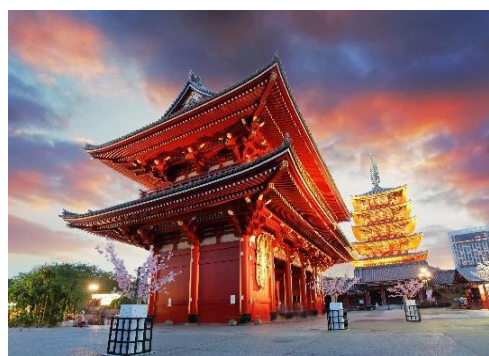
Tokyo – One of the world's most cutting-edge capital cities, Tokyo is a city of contrasts, famous for its neon-lit landscape, towering skyscrapers, peaceful shrines and lovingly tended gardens. Although long the political and cultural centre of Japan, Tokyo became the official capital when the Meiji Emperor moved it to Tokyo in 1867.

Day 3: Discover Tokyo

Meals: B, L, D

Tokyo is the ultimate 24-hour city, but look behind its frantic, high-tech frontage and you'll find plenty of tranquil backstreets and old temples to explore; today take a tour by coach of this fascinating city. Begin with a stroll through the Imperial Palace East Garden (you will not enter the palace itself) before exploring the Tokyo National Museum.

After lunch, head to the Asakusa district, stopping at the atmospheric Sensoji Temple and wandering down Nakamise shopping street, followed by a visit to the observation deck of the Tokyo Skytree for panoramic views over the city. You will be on your feet for 4-5 hours during your touring in Tokyo.



Destination Information

Imperial Palace East Garden – The Imperial Palace Garden is part of the main residence of the Emperor of Japan. Built on the original site of Edo Castle, the Plaza is made up of a palace, museum, and large park.

Tokyo National Museum – Located in Ueno Park, the Tokyo National Museum is Japan's oldest museum. Here you'll find the world's largest collection of Japanese art, including ancient pottery, Buddhist sculptures, samurai swords, colourful woodblock prints eloquent kimonos and much, much more.

Sensoji Temple – Sensoji Temple is an ancient Buddhist Temple and the oldest in Tokyo. The temple was originally founded in the 7th century. The temple adorns an image of the Buddhist Goddess Kannon, who was said to have been rescued by two fishermen from the Sumida River in Tokyo.

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.

Day 4: Meiji Shrine

Meals: B, L, D

Spend a relaxed morning wandering around the classical landscapes of the Hamarikyu Gardens and exploring the Shinto Meiji Shrine, located in a green forest within the city. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before returning to your hotel, driving by the Shibuya “Scramble” Crossing on the way. The rest of the afternoon is free for you to explore independently or relax in the hotel.

**Destination Information**

Hamarikyu Gardens – Hamarikyu Gardens is a beautiful example of Japanese garden style which sits at the mouth of the Sumida River.

Meiji Shrine – Meiji Shrine is a Shinto shrine dedicated to Emperor Meiji and his wife Empress Shoken.

Day 5: Mount Fuji and Five Lakes

Meals: B, L, D

Journey two hours through the foothills of the iconic Mount Fuji to its base, where you will find the Fuji Five Lakes. The region is spectacular with the calm waters of the five lakes, formed by past volcanic eruptions, reflecting Fuji’s picture-perfect cone. Head up Fuji’s 5th Station for spectacular mountain vistas. Please note it is only possible to reach the 5th station if weather permits. After lunch, visit the Itchiku Kubota Art Museum to view the elaborate dyed silk creations before exploring the Iyashi no Sato historical village, located on the western shores of Lake Saiko, famous for its thatched-roofed houses. Transfer around 1 hour to Mishima and check into your hotel and make use of the onsen facilities.

**Destination Information**

Fuji Five Lakes – Formed by previous Mount Fuji eruptions, the Fuji Five Lakes is a region at the base of Mount Fuji made up of five beautiful lakes.

Mount Fuji – At 3,776m, Mount Fuji is the highest of Japan's mountains and an iconic symbol of the country. Mount Fuji is notoriously shy and is often enveloped by clouds.

Itchiku Kubota Art Museum – Kubota Itchiku revived the lost art of Tsujigahana silk dyeing, used to decorate elaborate kimono during the Muromachi Period (1333-1573). The museum exhibits several of his kimono creations, while the extensive gardens, designed by Kubota Itchiku himself, are also worth a stroll.

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Iyashi no Sato Historical Village – Iyashi no Sato is a replica village based on a former farming village which was destroyed by a landslide in 1966. The houses here have traditional thatched roofs.

Day 6: Bullet Train to Kyoto

Meals: B, L, D

Transfer around 45 minutes to Oshino Hakkai, a scenic area of ponds full of crystal-clear spring water created by Fuji's melting snow. Stroll around the area before trying your hand at making traditional Japanese soba noodles, which you will then tuck into for lunch. Drive around 2 hours to Mishima Station to board a 2-hour bullet train to Kyoto. An enchanting city, Kyoto was capital for a thousand years; today it is the legacy of ancient Japan, full of tranquil temples, silk-clad geisha and sublime gardens. Check in to your hotel and have dinner at a local restaurant.



Please note that your luggage will be transferred separately to your hotel in Kyoto and arrive later the same day.

For May departures only: Instead of visiting the Iyashi no Sato historical village, a visit to the Fuji Shibazakura Festival has been included. This is the best time of the year and one of the most scenic places in Japan to see the pink moss phlox in full bloom. Please note that the flowers' bloom is weather dependant.

Destination Information

Oshino Hakkai – Oshino Hakkai is a set of eight ponds in Oshino, a small village in the Fuji Five Lake region, located on the site of a former sixth lake that dried out several hundred years ago.

Kyoto – Kyoto was the ancient capital of Japan for approximately 1,000 years until 1867 when it was moved to Tokyo. 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.

Day 7: Explore Kyoto

Meals: B, L, D

Enjoy a full day tour of Kyoto, starting with a visit to the spectacular Kiyomizu Temple. You will spend 1.5 hours on foot exploring the temple. Next, immerse yourself in the culture, learning the traditional Japanese handicraft of origami and enjoying the art of a tea ceremony. After lunch, visit a traditional teahouse where you will be joined by a Tea Master. Due to the nature of the cultural experience, you will be required to remove your shoes before entering the venue. Next, visit the famous Fushimi Inari Shrine with its thousands of vermillion torii gates. You will walk up part of the mountain and the incline allows a steady-paced walk around 15 minutes with flat road and steps to reach torii gates. Due to the limited space of Fushimi Inari Shrine coach parking, you may need to walk from coach parking for 15 minutes.



Tonight, there will be a Christmas Eve dinner at a local restaurant.

Destination Information

Kiyomizu Temple – Kiyomizu Temple is a 16th century Buddhist Temple in Kyoto. A highlight is the Hondo's veranda which is perched over the hillside, offering spectacular woodland vistas.

Origami – Origami is the traditional Japanese craft of paper folding without glue or cutting. This colourful tradition is regarded a skilled art form in Japan and can be good fun to try.

Geisha – The art of the Geisha can be traced back to the Edo Period. Geisha are highly skilled entertainers who will perform with a musical instrument, a tea ceremony, Ikebana, etc. to entertain her guests. Geisha usually wear kimonos and an obi, a sash for traditional Japanese dress.

Fushimi Inari Shrine (Taisha) – An important Shinto shrine in southern Kyoto, Fushimi Inari is most famous for its thousands of vermilion 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.

Day 8: Journey to Hiroshima

Meals: B, L, D

Begin the day with a visit to Ryoanji Temple, home to Japan's most famous zen garden, and Kinkakuji Temple, also known as the Golden Pavilion due to its golden exterior. You will need to remove your shoes at both temples. You will be on your feet for approximately 2-3 hours today. Continue around 1 hour by coach to Osaka to have lunch in the vibrant Dotonbori district. Transfer to the train station and take the bullet train to Hiroshima, a journey of 1 hour 40 minutes. A modern and prosperous city, Hiroshima will be forever remembered as the world's first atomic bomb target.



Tonight, enjoy a special Christmas Day dinner onboard a cruise in Hiroshima Harbour.

You will need to pack a smaller overnight bag for tonight as your main luggage will be transferred separately this morning to your Osaka hotel.

Destination Information

Ryoanji Temple – Ryoanji Temple is a Zen temple renowned for its garden, which features a dry, sand landscape with large rocks and smooth pebbles.

Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion) – Kinkakuji Temple is a Buddhist temple and is an excellent example of Japanese garden design. The structure is a brilliant golden hue colour and is very minimalistic.

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

Hiroshima – An atomic bomb was dropped over Hiroshima on 6th August 1945, and the city's name became famous worldwide for this unenviable distinction. The destructive power of the bomb obliterated nearly everything within a 2km radius. The city has been rebuilt and has risen phoenix-like from the ashes and destroyed sites of historical heritage were reconstructed.

Day 9: Hiroshima and Miyajima

Meals: B, L, D

Hop on the ferry to Miyajima Island, where sightseeing will be at a leisurely pace on foot. Visit Itsukushima Shrine and explore the traditional market town at leisure. Return by ferry and then coach to Hiroshima and have lunch. Later, 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 if you wish to visit or enjoy time at leisure exploring the Peace Memorial Park. Also visit the Orizuru Tower. You will be on your feet for approximately 4-5 hours today.

**Destination Information**

Miyajima – Miyajima is a small island less than 1 hour outside Hiroshima. While officially named Itsukushima, the island is more commonly referred to as Miyajima, Japanese for 'Shrine Island', because of its well-known 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, the area of what is now the Peace Memorial Park was the political and commercial heart of the city and this is why it was chosen as the pilot's target. The museum focuses on the events of August 6 and the subsequent 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 10: Himeji Castle

Meals: B, L, D

Travel 3.5 hours by coach to Himeji, with a rest stop along the way. On arrival, enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before visiting the beautiful Himeji Castle and Koko-en Garden. Himeji Castle is largely in its original condition, so please be mindful of your step when walking around. You will have to remove your shoes before walking along some of the wooden floors and there are some steep wooden steps to reach certain areas. You will be on your feet for 3-3.5 hours during the visit. After the reopening in March 2015, Himeji Castle has welcomed a large number of visitors. As such, they now issue numbered tickets to enter the Main Keep in order to limit the number of people who can enter, reducing congestion, waiting time and to protect the cultural properties. Please note this means that there may be cases where some visitors are not allowed to enter the Main Keep, however, there are many other parts of the castle to explore. Later, transfer approximately 2 hours to Osaka for your overnight stay and enjoy a pre-New Year's dinner at the hotel to end your holiday in Japan!



Please note: There will be a substantial amount of walking today, including a large number of steps.

Destination Information

Himeji – Himeji is the second largest city of Hyogo Prefecture after Kobe, with approximately half a million inhabitants. It is most famous for its magnificent castle.

Himeji Castle – Widely considered as Japan’s most magnificent castle for its imposing size and beauty, the well-preserved Himeji castle is both a national and world heritage listed treasure. Himeji Castle has never been destroyed by war, earthquake or fire and survives to this day as one of the country's twelve original castles.

Days 11-12: Depart Osaka

Meals: B,

This morning is free at leisure before you transfer to Osaka airport for your return flight home arriving home today or the following day.

Please note: Only breakfast is included today. Late check-out is not included in our Christmas in Japan tour. If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day in Osaka, please contact our reservations department who can confirm the additional price and make this arrangement for you, subject to availability at the hotel.

Transfers: In the event that your flight departs outside of the majority group departure time, you will be transferred to the airport by a shared coach (not with other Wendy Wu Tours passengers). If you are on a shared coach transfer, you may have to walk for a few minutes to get to the coach.

JAPAN - TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

Visas are not required for New Zealand passport holders for entry into Japan for stays of up to 90 days. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into New Zealand.

At the time of booking Visa conditions may have changed, currently no visa is required for New Zealand Passport holders. Your travel consultant will inform you if any changes are applicable prior to your departure.

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

AIRPORT TRANSFERS:

As we offer our customers a variety of airlines to suit your needs, clients will arrive/depart in 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.

EATING IN JAPAN:

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. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our fully inclusive group tours from the groups' arrival until the day of departure. 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 Japan. 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.

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, and please be aware that restaurants may not always be able to accommodate these. Gluten-free food may not be as readily available as in New Zealand.

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.

DEVELOPMENT IN JAPAN:

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.

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 Japan are extremely well maintained and are comparatively smooth compared with the rest of Asia.

Bullet trains: 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 (1 case per person). 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.

TIPPING POLICY:

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.

PORTERAGE:

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

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. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. 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.

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 the New Zealand and Japan.

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. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Hotels in Japan often do not have porters and you will be required to carry your own luggage. 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.

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 five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. 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:

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.

Optional Tours - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available.

Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

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.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

We recommend that you contact either your Doctor or Health centre for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Safetravel 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 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 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

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 whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

Updated: Dec 2023