

Discover Japan

Classic Tour | 14 Days | Physical Level 1

Tokyo – Mount Fuji – Suwa – Matsumoto – Takayama – Kanazawa – Kyoto – Nara – Koyasan – Osaka

This tour is the perfect introduction to the fascinating country of Japan, where skyscrapers give way to paddy fields and crowds disperse into the tranquillity of serene gardens.

- Discover the delights of futuristic Tokyo
- Admire breathtaking Mount Fuji
- Experience the speedy bullet train
- Get a glimpse of Buddhist life In Koyasan
- Explore the Vibrant city of Osaka

TOUR MAP



DISCOVER 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 things you may have to pay for are personal expenditures 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:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of Japan 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.

'Discover 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 travellers 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 14 days in duration including international flights or 12 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 Tokyo (arrive into either Tokyo Narita or Tokyo Haneda airport) and end the tour on Day 13 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.

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.

Please note: the Isuien Garden in Nara, visited on Day 10, is closed for maintenance every week on Tuesdays. Departures coinciding with this will visit the Kasuga Taisha Shrine as an alternative.

Day 1-2: Tokyo Meals: D



Fly to Tokyo, Japan's dynamic capital. On arrival, you will be met by an English-speaking representative and transferred approximately 90 minutes to your hotel.

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.

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 reservations consultant in advance.

Destination Information

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 lovingly tended gardens. Tokyo became the official capital when the newly-restored Emperor Meiji moved it from Kyoto to Tokyo in the late 1860s.

Day 3: Tokyo City Tour Meals: B, L, D



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

Begin your day at the Tokyo Skytree, where you'll ascend to the first observatory of the Tokyo Skytree for panoramic views across the city. Next, head to the old district of Asakusa and soak up the atmosphere at Sensoji, Tokyo's oldest and most famous temple, before browsing the stalls on Nakamise Shopping Street. Afterwards, drive by the Imperial Palace Plaza en route to enjoy a stroll through the tranquil Hamarikyu Gardens in the south of the city.

Return to your hotel, where your guide will let you know what time to meet for this evening's dinner cruise. Transfer from the hotel to your boat and take a leisurely dinner cruise on Tokyo Bay for some excellent city vistas. You will need to get on and off your boat this evening without assistance. You will be on your feet for 4-5 hours during your touring in Tokyo. Due to limited coach parking, you may need to walk around 15 minutes on flat road to reach some areas.

Please note that throughout your time in Japan, some temples, restaurants and other venues, including the dinner cruise, may require you to remove your shoes before entering. Bare feet are not considered respectful. Therefore, it is recommended that you carry spare socks in your day bag during your trip.

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.

Sensoji Temple – Sensoji is the oldest Buddhist Temple in Tokyo, having originally been founded in the 7th century. It is adorned with an image of the Buddhist Goddess Kannon, who was said to have been rescued by two fishermen from the Sumida River in Tokyo, and who is often worshipped as a goddess of compassion and mercy.

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

Day 4: **Mount Fuji** Meals: B, L, D



This morning, transfer to the station and take a 30-minute bullet train to Odawara. From here, drive to tranquil Lake Ashi and enjoy a short cruise before embarking the Komagatake cable car for views of the surrounding hills and the lake below.

Next, continue by road through the foothills of the iconic Mount Fuji to the mountain's base. Look out for the surrounding lakes, formed by past volcanic eruptions. In good weather, their calm waters beautifully reflect Mount Fuji's picture-perfect cone. If weather permits, drive up to Mount Fuji's 5th Station and enjoy the view.

The 5th Station is occasionally closed due to inclement weather. If the centre is closed, or if visibility is too poor to make this visit worthwhile, your guide will take you to Fuji San World Heritage Centre instead (subject to local opening hours).
Afterwards, drive to Suwa to check in to your hotel for an overnight stay.

Please note that as your day includes a bullet train journey, you will need to pack a small overnight bag for tonight. Your main luggage will be transferred separately this morning and arrive at your hotel in Takayama the next day (max one suitcase per person). You may have an early start this morning.

Destination Information

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.

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 in the distance.

Day 5: Matsumoto Castle Meals: B, L, D



This morning, drive 2 hours to Matsumoto to explore the formidable 16th-century Matsumoto Castle, nicknamed 'Crow Castle' for its intense black exterior. Afterwards, head to a miso house and learn about the process of making this famous Japanese seasoning.

After lunch, drive 2.5 hours west through the Alps to Takayama, an atmospheric town nestled high in Gifu province's mountainous Hida region. Check in to your hotel in Takayama and enjoy the relaxing onsen facilities.

Please note: You will need to walk approximately 15 minutes on flat road to reach Matsumoto Castle from the coach parking area. You will need to remove your shoes to access the castle; please note that there are some very steep, polished wooden stairs to reach the higher floors. Please take your time and be mindful of those coming the other way. If you choose not to look inside the castle, you can enjoy the surrounding gardens and architecture.

Destination Information

Matsumoto Castle – Nicknamed Crow Castle for its dark black exterior, Matsumoto Castle dates back to the 16th century and is the oldest wooden castle in Japan. It is a 'hirajiro', meaning that the castle is built on plains, rather than a hill or mountain.

Ishii Miso – Ishii Miso was founded in 1868 and is still producing miso, a staple Japanese seasoning, using a unique traditional method. Miso is a traditional Japanese seasoning; a fermented paste created from a mixture of soybeans, sea salt and rice koji. It is often used in soups, marinades and condiments.

Takayama – One of Japan's most atmospheric townscapes, the layout of Takayama dates back to the 17th century and is home to much Meiji architecture.

Day 6: Explore Takayama Meals: B, L, D



Head to the Miyagawa Morning Market, where you can sample some of the delicious local fruits and vegetables (at your own expense).

Later, take a leisurely stroll around the traditional houses of the area and visit the museums, stopping at Takayama Festival Floats Exhibition Hall, Kusakabe Folk Museum, Takayama Jinya and Kamisannomachi Street.

You will spend approximately 5 hours on foot today sightseeing around the town of Takayama.

Destination Information

Miyagawa Morning Market – Here, there are a number of stalls selling fresh vegetables, local craft works and local food products.

Takayama Festival Floats Exhibition Hall – This hall exhibits some of the 'yatai' from Takayama's famous festival; a twice yearly celebration when these huge parade festival floats are carried through the streets. Some date as far back as the 17th century.

Kusakabe Folk Museum – The Kusakabe were a family of prosperous merchants that worked for the shogunate in Takayama during the Edo period. This house is a wonderful example of an Edo period house, and is now home to a folk arts museum.

Takayama Jinya – A former government office dating back to the Edo Period, Takayama Jinya is the only one of its type still remaining. The main work of the office was to handle legal cases and tax collection.

Gifu Prefecture – The mountainous terrain here is not conducive to growing rice; buckwheat is the dominant crop. The region is known for its washi paper production and silkworm farming.

Day 7: Shirakawago & Kanazawa Meals: B, L, D



Check out of your hotel and drive 90 minutes north to the UNESCO-listed village of Shirakawago, famous for its traditional wooden gassho farmhouses. With their steep thatched roofs, these houses are some of the most charming sights in Japan.

Stop in Gokayama for lunch before trying your hand at making washi paper this afternoon. Drive a further 90 minutes to Kanazawa, where you can wander through the beautiful Kenroku-en Gardens before checking in at your hotel.

Destination Information

Shirakawago – Alongside Gokayama, Shirakawago is a UNESCO World Heritage site known for its unusual architectural style known as Gassho-Zukuri. The roofs of these houses are tilted at an almost vertical angle.

Washi Paper – Washi Paper is a type of Japanese paper made from the fibres of bark. This type of paper is commonly used in the art of origami.

Kanazawa – Kanazawa is the capital of the Ishikawa Prefecture and is known for its beautiful samurai and geisha districts, as well as its stunning Kenrokuen Garden.

Kenroku-en – One of Japan's 'Three Great Gardens', Kenroku-en dates back to the early 17th century and is notable for its stunning beauty in all seasons. The spacious grounds were previously the outer garden of Kanazawa Castle, constructed by the Maeda family over a period of almost two centuries. The name Kenroku-en means 'having six features', these six being spaciousness, tranquillity, artifice, antiquity, water and magnificent panoramas.

Day 8: **Gold Leaf Making** Meals: B, L, D



This morning, learn the process of how gold leaf is made and applied to everyday objects. Try it for yourself by decorating a pair of chopsticks and take your newly created artwork home!

Later, stroll down the traditional Higashi Chaya (Eastern Teahouse District) and visit Ochaya Shima – a historic former geisha house. *You will be required to remove your shoes before entering.*

After lunch, drive 4 hours to Kyoto, Japan's ancient capital. Check in to your hotel before dinner.

Destination Information

Gold Leaf Experience – When a lump of gold is beaten until it is only 1/10,000 mm thick, it becomes gold leaf, as used in temples, shrines and many traditional crafts. Kanazawa and its surrounding areas produce more than 99% of all gold leaf used in Japan.

Higashi Chaya Street – Higashi Chaya Street is a traditional Japanese street featuring historical rows of houses. It is also the geisha district of Kanazawa, offering visitors delicious treats and tea, as well as the chance to visit some of the guest houses used in the past by geishas as living quarters.

Kyoto – The atmospheric city of Kyoto was the ancient capital of Japan for approximately 1,000 years, until the newly-restored Emperor Meiji made Tokyo his capital in the late 1860s. Many national treasures can be found in Kyoto.

Day 9: Explore Kyoto Meals: B, L, D

Start the day with a visit to Ryoan-ji, the Zen 'temple of the peaceful dragon'. Continue to the famous Kinkaku-ji, also known as the 'Golden Pavilion' thanks to its golden exterior.



Later, head to a local handicraft centre and try your hand at origami before observing the age-old rituals of a tea ceremony.

Due to the nature of the cultural experience, you will be required to remove your shoes before entering the venue. Sightseeing on foot will be approximately 2-3 hours today.

Destination Information

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.

Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion) – This Buddhist temple sits over a pond in a classical garden of the 'go round' style. The top two floors are covered in pure gold leaf.

Day 10: Discover Nara Meals: B, L, D



Visit the famous Fushimi Inari Shrine, with its thousands of vermillion torii gates, and walk up part of the mountain. Due to the limited parking space at Fushimi Inari Shrine, you may need to walk for 15 minutes from the coach to the beginning of the torii gates.

Drive approximately one hour to Japan's former imperial capital, Nara, home to 8 UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Sightseeing here will be about 3 hours on foot, and may include a walk of up to 15 minutes from the coach parking area. Look out for the park's beautiful resident sika deer - who have learned to bow to visitors!

Visit Todaiji Temple, the world's largest wooden structure. This temple is home to the Daibutsu, an eighth-century bronze Buddha standing almost 15 metres tall. Continue to Isui-en Garden, known for its natural ponds. *Please note that if your visit falls on a Tuesday, you may instead visit the neighbouring Yoshiki-en Gardens or a similar site instead. Opening days can vary throughout the year.*

Check in at your Nara hotel before dinner.

Destination Information

Nara – Nara was Japan's first permanent capital, from 710 until 794, when it was moved to Kyoto. It remains full of historic treasures, including 8 UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Todaiji Temple – The UNESCO-listed Todaiji is one of the Seven Great Temples of Japan and is home to the Daibutsu, one of the largest bronze Buddha statues in the world.

Fushimi Inari Shrine (Taisha) – An important Shinto shrine in southern Kyoto, Fushimi Inari is 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.

Day 11: Koyasan Meals: B, L, D



This morning, drive approximately 2.5 hours into the mountains to experience the tranquil beauty of Mt Koya, the heart of Shingon Buddhism. See Okunoin, Japan's largest cemetery and home to the mausoleum of Kobo Daishi, founder of Shingon Buddhism. Visit the Kongobuji Temple and Garan temple complex after lunch.

The walk through Okunoin Cemetery to the mausoleum of Kobo Daishi is roughly 2km and sometimes you will be walking over uneven surfaces.

During your time in Koyasan, you will be on your feet for approximately 4 hours.

Drive approximately 90 minutes to Osaka and check in to your hotel.

Destination Information

Koyasan – Known primarily as the centre of the Shingon sub-section of Buddhism, Koya-san sits in the mountains and is the ideal spot to get a glimpse of Japan's traditional religious life.

Kongobuji Temple – Dating back to 16th century, the Kongobuji Temple is the head temple of the Shingon Buddhist sect. The interior of the building is adorned with paintings of cranes and there are sliding doors throughout.

Garan Temple – Garan Temple is a compound of seven halls, the ideal number of halls in Buddhism. The main site of worship is in front of the Cosmic Buddha.

Okunoin Cemetery – Home to Kobo Daishi's mausoleum (founder of Shingon Buddhism), Okunoin Cemetery is the largest cemetery in Japan, with over 200,000 tombstones, as many wished to be buried near Kobo Daishi.

Osaka – Osaka, formerly known as Naniwa, is Japan's third-largest city and the economic powerhouse of the Kansai region.

Day 12: Explore Osaka Meals: B, L, D



Visit the famous Osaka Castle, one of the city's most famous landmarks. Recently restored, it is home to more than four centuries of Japanese history.

Next, enjoy a stroll around the ever-busy Dotonbori district before taking a short boat cruise.

Spend the rest of the afternoon at leisure before meeting your group for this evening's farewell dinner.

Destination Information

Osaka Castle – Osaka Castle is one of Japan's most famous castles, known for sweeping views of the city from its hilltop perch. Construction began in 1583 under Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who intended 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 Ieyasu, the first shogun of the Tokugawa Shogunate.

Day 13-14: Depart Osaka Meals: B



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

Please note: Only breakfast is included today. Late check-out is not included in our Discover 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.

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 TIME OF BOOKING

DISCOVER JAPAN TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

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 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 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.

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. Please note, double bed requests can be made at time of booking but cannot be guaranteed.

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 will exist between your home country 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 a 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.

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.

TRANSFERS:

As we offer our customers a variety of airlines to suit your needs, passengers will arrive/depart in Japan at various 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 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 Japan ground operator 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 Japan are extremely well maintained and are comparatively smooth compared with the rest of Asia. Coaches and mini buses do not have onboard toilet facilities, however frequent bathroom stops are made for passengers comfort.

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.

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.

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:

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.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCE:

Japanese society and culture are built on intricate social etiquette and customs. As foreigners, we are not expected to be knowledgeable about all etiquette, but it will make your time in Japan more enjoyable if you are respectful of local customs. Some examples of scenarios you may encounter include removing your shoes and hats when entering a temple or house (some restaurants as well). You may be supplied with slippers at some places, but please come prepared with plenty of spare socks, and shoes that are easy to take off for the fairly regular occasions when they must be removed. Your National Escort will advise you of some of these other customs at the beginning of your tour.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:

If you are travelling within the below Japan public holidays, please note that celebrations can last a couple of 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. Showa Day is on 29th April every year, which will start Golden Week which then runs from 29th April – 5th 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 five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable.

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.

It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling to cities outside of Tokyo. 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.

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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