



JAPAN BY RAIL

Classic Tour | 22 Days | Physical Level 1

FUKUOKA – NAGASAKI - HIROSHIMA – MIYAJIMA – HIMEJI – OSAKA – NARA – KYOTO –
KANAZAWA – TAKAYAMA – YUDANAKA – MATSUMOTO – SUWA – MOUNT FUJI –
TOKYO – MATSUSHIMA – SENDAI – HAKODATE – SAPPORO

For those where time is no limit, this is the ultimate top-toe tour of Japan covering three islands in one trip – Kyushu, Honshu and Hokkaido whilst travelling on the bullet train! From rural villages to bustling cities, from coastlines to alpine and from ancient traditions to new-world charm.

- Reflect in Nagasaki & Hiroshima
- Admire Kyoto's temples
- Search for the snow monkeys
- Explore bustling Tokyo
- Discover Sendai & Hakodate
- Spend time in Sapporo

TOUR MAP

JAPAN BY RAIL TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals (From dinner on day 1 to breakfast on the last day)
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with IATA

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, early check in or late checkout 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.

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.

‘Japan by Rail’ 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 various sizes of boat without assistance

Of course, our National Escort 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 22 days in duration including international flights. Please note, due to flight schedules passengers may depart/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. Please advise your international flight times to Reservations.

Join the tour on Day 2 in Fukuoka and end the tour on Day 21 in Sapporo. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Days 1-2: Fly Overnight to Fukuoka

Meals: D

Fly overnight to the charming city of Fukuoka, the gateway to the island of Kyushu. Depending on your time of arrival, the rest of the day is yours to start soaking up the local culture.

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. 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

Fukuoka – Fukuoka sits on the northern shore of Japan's Kyushu Island, and is the island's largest city. It is known for ancient temples, beaches and modern shopping malls. Fukuoka is closer to Seoul in South Korea than it is to Tokyo, which means that Fukuoka has been an important harbour city for many centuries.

Day 3: Explore Nagasaki

Meals: B, L, D

Begin the day by travelling approximately 2 hours on the Limited Express train to Nagasaki. Upon arrival, enjoy a stroll through the Glover Garden, an open-air museum that exhibits mansions attributed to the Scottish merchant who contributed to the modernisation of Japan. Also visit the Oura Catholic Church and Atomic Bomb Museum before returning to Fukuoka. You will be on your feet for approximately 4-5 hours today.



Destination Information

Nagasaki - Nagasaki is Japan's closest port city to mainland Asia, it is widely known as the second Japanese city to be destroyed by an atomic bomb in World War II following Hiroshima. Naturally you would assume that following this the city would now be filled with new buildings, however several old buildings and temples remain.

Glover Garden - Located on the hill where Western merchants settled at the end of the era of seclusion in the second half of the 19th century, Glover Garden is home to the mansions of a number of the city's former foreign residents.

Oura Catholic Church - the first Western-style building in Japan to be assigned as a national treasure, it was built in 1864 by a French missionary for the growing foreign community in the city.

Atomic Bomb Museum - commemorating the atomic bombing of Nagasaki in August 1945, the museum was built in remembrance of and with respect for the victims and survivors. The museum highlights firsthand accounts from survivors of the bomb and utilises provocative displays to support its aim of contributing to the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Day 4: Miyajima Island

Meals: B, L, D

Say goodbye to Kyushu and board the bullet train for a speedy 1 hour 40 minute journey to Hiroshima, located on Japan's largest island, Honshu. Upon arrival in Hiroshima, take the ferry across the Seto Inland Sea to the holy island of Miyajima. Here, visit the Itsukushima Shrine and enjoy a momiji manju making experience. Later, return to Hiroshima.

Please note that your luggage will be transferred directly to Osaka so you will need an overnight bag for 2 nights in Hiroshima.

**Destination Information**

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 obliterated nearly everything within a 2km radius. The city has been rebuilt and has risen phoenix-like from the ashes with destroyed sites of historical heritage reconstructed.

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.

Momiji Manju - a local speciality on the island of Miyajima, momiji manju is a small, maple leaf shaped cake

Day 5: Hiroshima Highlights

Meals: B, L, D

Spend the day in Hiroshima starting with a visit to the Peace Memorial Park and Museum where you will have the opportunity to pay homage to the victims of the 1945 atomic bomb. 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. Afterwards, enjoy okonomiyaki for lunch before ascending Orizuru Tower to view the city from above, followed by a stroll through the historical Shukkeien Garden. You will be on your feet for approximately 4 hours today.

**Destination Information**

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.

Okonomiyaki - Okonomiyaki is a traditional Japanese savoury pancake, the name is derived from the word "okonomi" meaning "how you like" and "yaki" meaning "cooked".

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.

Shukkeien Garden - Shukkeien Garden was created following the completion of Hiroshima Castle in 1620. Its name can be translated to mean "shrunk scenery garden", perfect for a garden that represents beautiful valleys, mountains and forests in miniature form.

Day 6: Admire Himeji Castle

Meals: B, L, D

Depart Hiroshima by bullet train, in just 1 hour you will arrive in Himeji to visit the magnificent Himeji Castle, one of Japan's most impressive feudal era forts followed by a walk through Kokoen, an Edo-style garden just across the castle moat. The castle is largely in its original condition, so please use common sense and be mindful of your step when strolling around the castle. 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 visitors in order to limit the number of people who can enter the Main Keep, reducing congestion, waiting time, and to protect the cultural properties. Please note that this means that there may be cases where some visitors are not allowed to enter the Main Keep. Afterwards, we will continue a further hour by Limited Express Train to Osaka.

Destination Information

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.

Koko-en - One of Japan's more recently built gardens, Koko-en was built to commemorate the centenary of Himeji City. The gardens are built on the former site of the feudal lord's west residence and consist of 9 separate, walled gardens designed in the style of the Edo period matching its backdrop of Himeji Castle.

Osaka – Osaka is Japan’s third largest city and is often referred to as the culinary capital. The phrase *kuidaore* (eat until you drop) could be considered the city's slogan, What Osaka lacks in sightseeing locations, it makes up for with its flamboyance, fun loving people and amazing food.

Day 7: Osaka & Nara Day Trip

Meals: B, L, D

Begin the day in Osaka starting with a visit to the Umeda Sky Building followed by a lunch at the famous Dotonburi district. Next, transfer by coach to Japan’s former imperial capital Nara, a journey of approximately 1 hour. Visit Todaiji Temple, the world’s largest wooden structure and home to Japan’s largest Buddha. Due to the congestion of Nara Park coach parking, you may need to walk from coach parking to Nara Park for 15 minutes on flat road. Enjoy an ink making and calligraphy class before returning to Osaka. Due to the nature of the cultural experience, you will be required to remove your shoes before entering the venue.



Destination Information

Umeda Sky Building - The Umeda Sky Building is one of the tallest buildings in Osaka Prefecture and is one of the most recognisable landmarks in Osaka. The 173 metre tall building consists of two towers connected by the stunning "Floating Garden Observatory" which offers panoramic views of the city.

Nara – Home to 8 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Nara is a rewarding destination and a great spot for Japanese culture.

Todaiji Temple – A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Todaiji Temple is one of the Seven Great Temples of Japan and is home to the world’s largest bronze statue, Daibutsu.

Day 8: Kyoto's Temples and Arashiyama

Meals: B, L, D

Journey by road for approximately 1 and a half hours to Kyoto. Capital for 1,000 years, this enchanting city is the epitome of traditional Japan. Upon arrival, stroll through the Arashiyama bamboo forest and admire the towering thickets. Also visit Ryoanji, the 'temple of the peaceful dragon' and the famous Kinkakuji, also known as the 'Golden Pavilion' due to its gold-like exterior. You will need to remove your shoes at both temples. Sightseeing on foot will be approximately 4 hours today.

**Destination Information**

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.

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.

Day 9: Tea Ceremony & Fan Painting

Meals: B, L, D

The day begins with a visit to Kiyomizu-dera, one the most visited temples in Kyoto. You will spend 1.5 hours on foot exploring the temple. Next, head to a restored Japanese wooden townhouse and immerse yourself in the culture and enjoy the age-old rituals of a tea ceremony and Zen meditation experience. Also try your hand at fan painting. Due to the nature of the cultural experience, you have to remove your shoes before entering the venue. Afterwards explore Gion, Kyoto's famous geisha district and centre of the city's traditional arts.

**Destination Information**

Kiyomizu-dera - One of the most celebrated temples in Japan, Kiyomizu-dera literally translates to "Pure Water Temple" after being founded on the site of Otowa Waterfall in 780. The temple is famous for its wooden stage that juts out 13 metres above the hillside and offers its visitors views of the beautiful sea of colours in spring and autumn caused by numerous cherry and maple trees.

Day 10: Explore Kanazawa

Meals: B, L, D

This morning travel approximately 2 hours by Limited Express train to Kanazawa and upon arrival, meander your way through Kenrokuen, one of the Three Great Gardens of Japan. Following this, you will visit the Nomura Samurai House and Kunani Pottery Factory. You will be required to removed your shoes.

Please note your luggage will be transferred directly to Takayama so you will need to pack an overnight bag for one night in Kanazawa.

**Destination Information**

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.

Kenrokuen – One of Japan’s ‘Three Great Gardens’, Kenrokuen dates back to the early 17th century and is noticeable 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.

Nomura Samurai House - Nomura Samurai House is the only samurai residence that is open to the public in this area and retains the atmosphere of the old glory days of the Samurai.

Day 11: Shirakawago Village

Meals: B, L, D

Travel by road to Takayama stopping enroute at Inami for a sake wooden cup making experience and sake tasting. Next, continue to the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Shirakawago Village which is famous for its farmhouses built in gassho-zukuri architectural style. Take time to explore the village to get a glimpse of rural Japan. Afterwards, continue to Takayama.

**Destination Information**

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

Shirakawago Village – 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.

Day 12: Discover 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, and Takayama Jinya. Enjoy the afternoon at leisure or perhaps take a stroll through Kami Sanomachi, Takayama's old town. You will spend approximately 5 hours on foot today sightseeing around the town of Takayama.

**Destination Information**

Miyagawa Morning Market – Occurring each morning, there are a number of stalls selling fresh vegetables, local craft works and local food products at the Miyagawa Morning Market.

Takayama Festival Floats Exhibition Hall – Housing the floats from the Takayama Festival, which dates back to the 16th century, the Takayama Festival Floats Exhibition Hall is a great introduction to the cultural celebrations of Takayama.

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.

Day 13: Snow Monkeys

Meals: B, L, D

Travel to Matsumoto and spend time at the Daio Wasabi Farm to see the plantations and learn about its cultivation. Next, travel to Yudanaka in search for the snow monkeys (Japanese Macques) at Jigokudani Yaen-Koen Monkey Park. There is around a 30-minute walk through the forested valley along paths, occasionally on an incline, from the bus park to the main pool where the monkeys bathe. Accustomed to humans, the monkeys can be observed up-close, and they almost completely ignore their human guests. Please keep in mind that the snow monkeys are wild, not domestic animals and sighting them is never guaranteed, particularly during the breeding season which runs from late September through to November and play before returning to Matsumoto.

**Destination Information**

Jigokudani Yaen-Koen – Home to Japanese Macaques, also known as Snow Monkeys, Jigokudani literally means 'hell's valley'. It is named this because of the steam and boiling water that bubbles out of small crevices in the ground. It is in the baths of this hot water that the resident Japanese Macaques

like to soak. The monkeys live in large social groups and it can be quite entertaining to watch their interactions.

Day 14: Matsumoto Castle

Meals: B, L, D

Begin the day with a visit to the magnificent 16th-century Matsumoto Castle, also known as 'Crow Castle', due to its intense black exterior. Next, head to a miso house and learn about the process of making this famous Japanese seasoning. After lunch, travel approximately 1 hour by road to Narai-juku, one of the best-preserved post towns for a zen mediation experience before continuing a further 1 hour by road to Suwa.

**Destination Information**

Matsumoto Castle – 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. The wooden interior of the castle provides an authentic experience that cannot be found in many other castles that have since been rebuilt of ferro-concrete, explore the wooden staircase and observation deck offering views over the surrounding city.

Miso - 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.

Day 15: Mount Fuji

Meals: B, L, D

Travel approximately 1 and a half hours by road to Hakone. The region is spectacular with the calm waters of the five lakes, formed by past volcanic eruptions, reflecting Fuji's picture-perfect cone. Weather permitting, ascend the road to the 5th Station to view Mt Fuji. Continue to tranquil Lake Ashi. Take a cruise across the lake before taking the Komagatake cable car for spectacular views of Mount Fuji and the lake below. Later, continue your journey by road for around 2 hours to Tokyo, Japan's capital city.

**Destination Information**

Mt 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.

Tokyo – 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 16: Tour Tokyo

Meals: B, L, D

A dazzling, high-tech metropolis, Japan's capital has wonderfully traditional roots. Begin the day with a leisurely stroll through Hamarikyu Gardens. Next, take part in a sushi making class and enjoy your own creations for lunch! Later, soak up the atmosphere at Sensoji Temple, browse the stalls on Nakamise shopping street and drive by the Imperial Palace Plaza. You will be on your feet for approximately 4 hours today.

**Destination Information**

Hamarikyu Gardens – Hamarikyu Gardens is a beautiful example of Japanese garden style which sits at the mouth of the Sumida River. The traditional garden stands in bold contrast to the adjacent skyscrapers.

Asakusa – Asakusa is the centre of Tokyo's Shitamachi (Old Town) District, with its traditional craft shops and street food stalls here Asakusa retains the atmosphere of an older Tokyo.

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.

Imperial Palace Plaza – Imperial Palace Plaza is 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.

Day 17: Meiji Shrine

Meals: B, L, D

Begin the day at the Tokyo Metropolitan Building and ascend to the observation deck for breathtaking views over the sprawling city. Next, soak up the atmosphere at the peaceful Meiji Jingu Shrine and drive-by the world-famous Shibuya crossing. End the day with a relaxing dinner cruise on Tokyo Bay for some excellent city vistas. You will need to get on and off your boat this evening without assistance.



Destination Information

Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building – The 243-metre-tall Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building has two towers, each housing an observatory at a height of 202 metres.

Meiji Jingu Shrine - built in 1920, Meiji Jingu Shrine is a Shinto shrine dedicated to the deified spirits of Emperor Meiji and his wife, Empress Shōken, it was completed eight years after the emperor's passing and six years after the passing of the empress. The Meiji period in Japan brought modernisation and westernisation, bring the country to join the world's major powers.

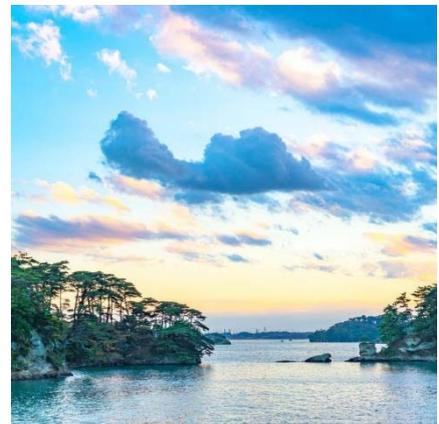
Shibuya Crossing - considered the busiest intersection in the world but certainly the busiest in Japan, Shibuya crossing at times has 30,000 people crossing at one time.

Day 18: Sip Whisky in Sendai

Meals: B, L, D

As the tour journeys to northern Honshu, board the bullet train for a short 1 and a half hour journey to Sendai, the largest city in Tohoku. Upon arrival, transfer by road to Matsushima and enjoy a cruise on Matsushima Bay. Also visit Zuigani Temple and the famous Nikka Whisky factory in Sendai.

Please note that your luggage will be transferred directly from Tokyo to Sapporo so you will need to pack an overnight bag for two nights in Sendai and Hakodate.



Destination Information

Sendai - Sendai is the largest city in the Tohoku region, the modern city was founded by Date Masamune, one of Japan's most powerful lords in the feudal era, in the early 17th century.

Matsushima Bay – Matsushima Bay is considered one of Japan's Three Great Views, along with Miyajima and Amanohashidate. The bay is dotted by over 200 small islands covered by pine trees.

Zuigani Temple - Zuigani Temple is one of the most famous and prominent Zen temples in the Tohoku region, the temple was originally founded in 828 as a temple of the Tendai sect and converted to a Zen temple during the Kamakura period before being restored in 1609 by Date Masamune as his family temple. It is famous for its beautifully gilded and painted sliding doors.

Day 19: Explore Hakodate

Meals: B, L, D

Say goodbye to Honshu Island as you board the bullet train to Hakodate located on Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island, this journey will take approximately 3 and a half hours. On arrival, visit the Goryokaku Tower, a star shaped fortress followed by some time at leisure. This evening, journey on the Mt Hakodate Ropeway and enjoy the fabulous views of the city below (weather permitting).

**Destination Information**

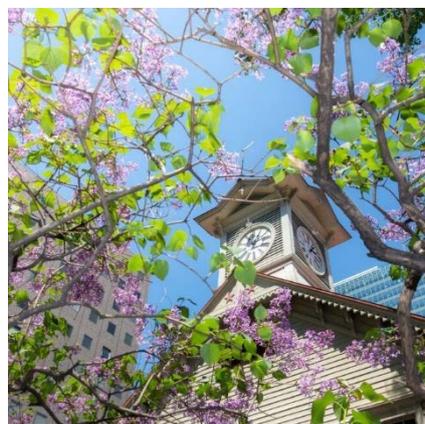
Hakodate – Hakodate is located on Hokkaido's southern tip. It is known for its delicious, fresh seafood. Hakodate was one of the first Japanese harbour cities to be opened to international trade after the country's era of isolation, and as such has experienced notable foreign influence.

Goryokaku Tower – The 107 metre-tall Goryokaku Tower gives a bird's eye view of the star-shaped Fort Goryokaku - a Western style citadel, which was built in the last years of the Edo Period. With over one thousand cherry trees planted along its moats it is one of Hokkaido's best cherry blossom spots.

Day 20: Sapporo Sightseeing

Meals: B, L, D

Board the express train for the very last time to Sapporo, this journey will take 3 hours and 45 minutes. On arrival in Sapporo, head to the Clock Tower and Odori Park. This evening, stop by the Sapporo Beer Museum and enjoy a tasting or two, followed by a farewell dinner.

**Destination Information**

Sapporo – The capital of Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island, Sapporo is known as a winter wonderland after it was introduced to the world during the Winter Olympics which were held in the city in 1972. Sapporo is also one of the nation's youngest major cities and is famous for the Snow Festival held annually in February.

Sapporo Clock Tower - the clock that features on the Sapporo Clock Tower was purchased in 1881 for Boston while the building was constructed as a drill hall for the Sapporo Agricultural College. Today it is a museum with displays showing the building's history.

Sapporo Beer Museum – Sapporo Beer, one of the oldest and most popular beer brands in the country, has been brewed in Sapporo since 1877. A former brewery from that time now hosts the Sapporo Beer Museum.

Days 21-22: Depart Sapporo

Meals: B

This morning is free at leisure before transferring to the airport for your return flight home.

Please note: Only breakfast is included today. Late check-out is not included in our Japan by Rail tour. If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day in Sapporo, 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 portage 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: Apr 2024