

# Japan & the Scenic South

## Classic Tour | 14 Days | Physical Level 1

Fukuoka – Kumamoto – Mount Aso– Beppu – Yamaguchi – Hiroshima – Miyajima – Himeji – Kyoto – Mount Fuji – Tokyo

Uncover the beauty of the lesser-known island of Kyushu, renowned for its active volcanoes, hot springs and stunning beaches, before exploring the must-see sights of Hiroshima, Kyoto and Tokyo on the largest island of Honshu.

- Explore the charming city of Fukuoka
- Discover Kumamoto
- See the impressive Mount Aso
- Reflect in Hiroshima and sail to Miyajima
- Admire beautiful Mount Fuji
- Feel the rush of Tokyo

## TOUR MAP




## JAPAN & THE SCENIC SOUTH 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'll 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.

'Japan & the Scenic South' 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 Fukuoka and end the tour on Day 13 in Tokyo (departing from either Tokyo Narita or Tokyo Haneda 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.

## DETAILED ITINERARY

**Day 1-2: Fly overnight to Fukuoka** Meals: D



Fly to the charming city of Fukuoka. On arrival, you will be met and transferred 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. Transfers will differ depending on group size.*

*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.*

**Destination Information**

**Fukuoka** – Fukuoka sits on the northern shore of Japan's Kyushu Island. It is Kyushu Island's largest city, and the sixth-largest city in all of Japan. As the closest major city to the Asian mainland, it has a long history as a prominent merchant harbour and centre of trade. One of the main districts here, Hakata, was previously a separate city on the east bank of the river. The two cities were combined in the late 19th century as part of the Meiji Government's drive to merge many small towns to make them easier to administer.

**Day 3: Explore Fukuoka** Meals: B, L, D



Today, learn about the island's unique history at the fascinating Kyushu National Museum, then head to a brewery to sample sake (rice wine) before lunch.

Later, ascend Fukuoka Tower for panoramic views over this laid-back seaside city. Return to your hotel and relax before dinner.

*Please note that the above timings are approximate. Throughout your time in Japan, there may be occasions when your morning and afternoon excursions are swapped over, in order to match local availability of tickets, or to avoid congestion at certain sites. Your guide will have the most up-to-date information.*

**Destination Information**

**Kyushu National Museum** – This fascinating museum, opened in 2005, focuses on the development of Japan in the context of wider Asian history. The collections here introduce Japan's history of cultural exchange, from the early Stone Age through to the Edo period (1603-1868).

**Sake in Kyushu** – Sake is Japan's national alcoholic beverage, brewed from rice, water, yeast and koji. Kyushu's warm climate and volcanic soil lends the local sake a distinctive profile.

**Fukuoka Tower** – This 234-metre tower is the tallest seaside tower in Japan, built on land reclaimed from Hakata Bay. A lift whisks visitors to the 123-metre-high observation deck, which offers 360° panoramas over the city and its coastline.

## Day 4: Discover Kumamoto

Meals: B, L, D



Drive around 2 hours to Kumamoto, famously home to one of Japan's largest castles, though much of it is reconstructed.

The castle itself is currently under restoration. Stop for an exterior photo of Kumamoto Castle and stroll through the landscape garden of Suizenji before checking in at your hotel.

Enjoy some time at leisure before dinner this evening.

*Please note that Kumamoto Castle is still under restoration following a spate of earthquakes in 2016. However, your group will visit Himeji Castle en route to Kyoto in a few days' time. Himeji Castle is one of the most complete and authentic castles in Japan.*

**Destination Information**

**Kumamoto** – The capital of Kumamoto Prefecture, Kumamoto is a city on Kyushu's west coast, most famous for its castle. The city is also the gateway to the Aso region.

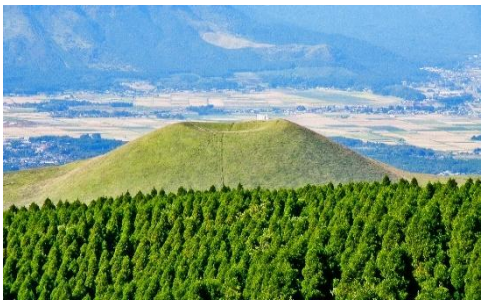
**Kumamoto Castle** – Kumamoto Castle is considered one of the three premier castles in Japan, along with Himeji Castle and Matsumoto Castle. The castle enjoys large grounds and a variety of buildings. However, only a few structures have remained intact in the centuries since the castle's construction in 1607, so the castle keep and most other buildings are modern reconstructions.

**Suizenji Garden** – This spacious traditional garden, whose name means 'Garden of Elegance', was built in the 17th century. The design was inspired by the Tokaido, the important road that linked Edo (Tokyo) with Kyoto. It is built in the 'go round' style, which offers visitors changing scenery as they stroll along the path. The key feature of the garden is its large ponds, fed by volcanic springs. Look out for the artificial hill here, designed to resemble Mount Fuji in miniature. The thatched-roof building by the lake is the Kokin-denju-no-ma, which was moved from the Kyoto Imperial Palace in 1912.

## Day 5: Visit Mount Aso & Beppu

Meals: B, L, D

Drive two hours from Kumamoto to Mount Aso, the active volcano at the centre of Kyushu island. Aso's bowl-like crater has a circumference of over 100km and encompasses a number of other active peaks, which can be admired on a clear day. Stop for a photo at Kusasenri Plateau before driving a further 2.5 hours to Beppu, one of Japan's most famous hot spring resorts.



Your hotel for the night has onsen facilities for you to make the most of the steamy waters. Please note: anyone suffering from respiratory conditions, such as asthma, bronchitis, or heart disease, may find their condition worsens when visiting Mount Aso, and will need to take extra precautions on this day or avoid visiting the caldera itself.

**Destination Information**

**Aso** – Aso is an active volcano at the centre of Kyushu island, and has given the Kumamoto region its nickname, 'the Land of Fire'. The caldera here is one of the largest in the world, measuring 11 miles across from east to west, and 15 miles from north to south. It encompasses a number of other active peaks. Look out for the region's famous grasslands, which have been painstakingly maintained by local cattle farmers for more than a thousand years.

**Beppu** – Beppu is one of Japan's most famous hot spring resorts, producing more hot spring water than any other resort in the country. Set between Beppu Bay and volcanic mountains, it is home to more than 2,000 onsen pools. In addition, the 'Hells of Beppu' are several spectacular hot springs, famous for viewing rather than bathing.

**Day 6: Explore Beppu** Meals: B, L, D



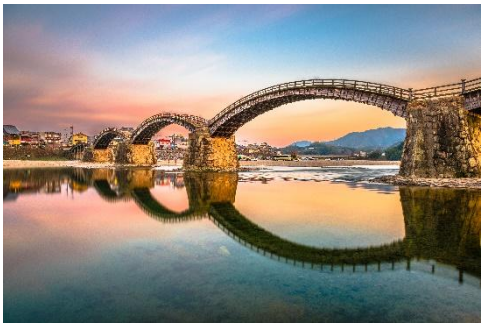
Visit Jigoku Meguri, 'the Hells of Beppu'. Admire these boiling ponds and their different volcanic features, ranging from deep red waters to bubbling mud pits.

Begin your return journey to Fukuoka, stopping en route for lunch in the hot spring town of Yufuin. Check in at your Fukuoka hotel before dinner.

**Destination Information**

**Jigoku Meguri** – The 'hells' of Beppu are hot springs, best appreciated by viewing rather than bathing. The most famous is the 'Sea Hell', known for its beautiful cobalt waters, which are caused by the high levels of iron sulphate in the boiling water. Another dramatic pool here, the 'Blood Pond', derives its red colour from its high levels of iron and magnesium.

**Day 7: Travel to Hiroshima** Meals: B, L, D



Bid farewell to Kyushu Island and drive to Hiroshima, a major city on Japan's largest island, Honshu. En route, you will drive across the Kanmon Straits, which connect the Sea of Japan with the Seto Inland Sea. The straits are a key shipping route, used as a shortcut by ships en route to Tokyo and Osaka.

Stop in the Iwakuni area en route and admire Kintaikyo Bridge, famous for its five dramatic wooden arches, which span a length of 200 metres across the Nishiki River. It is a wonderfully photogenic spot, and has inspired several great woodblock artists.

On arrival in Hiroshima, check in at your hotel before dinner.

**Destination Information**

**Kintaikyo Bridge** – The Kintai-kyo (Kintai Bridge) is Iwakuni's most distinguished landmark. This elegant, wooden bridge consists of five bold arches on massive stone pillars. The bridge was completed in 1673, and stood until 1950, when Iwakuni was struck by a violent typhoon. The locals quickly sprang into action, and the beloved bridge was rebuilt by 1953. Viewed from above, the bridge echoes the path of a tossed pebble as it skips across the water.

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

**Day 8:** **Discover Hiroshima** Meals: B, L, D



This morning, take a short ferry ride to Miyajima Island (Itsukushima), where sightseeing will be at a leisurely pace on foot. Admire Itsukushima Shrine's 'floating' Torii gate and explore Omotesando Street, the island's main thoroughfare.

Return by ferry and coach to Hiroshima for 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. It is at personal discretion whether you wish to visit the museum, or spend time at leisure exploring the Peace Memorial Park.

*You will be on your feet for 4-5 hours during touring today.*

**Destination Information**

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

**Peace Memorial Park and Museum** – The Peace Memorial Park and Museum is one of the most prominent features of the city. The trees, lawns and walking paths are in stark contrast to the surrounding downtown area. Before the atomic bomb was dropped, this area was the political and commercial heart of the city, hence its selection as the USA's target. As a result, more than 90% of the casualties were non-military. The museum focuses on the events of August 6th and the local aftermath.

**Day 9: Admire Himeji Castle** Meals: B, L, D



Journey around 3 and a half hours by coach to Himeji and explore the magnificent 17th Century Himeji Castle and the neighbouring Koko-en Gardens.

Later, visit Nadagiku Sake Brewery to learn about the process of making this traditional Japanese spirit. Enjoy some tasters before continuing around 2 hours to Kyoto. This enchanting city is the epitome of traditional Japan.

*Please note: The castle is largely in its original condition, including steep wooden steps, so please be mindful of your step when strolling around. You will have to remove your shoes before walking along some of the wooden floors. You will be on your feet for 3-3.5 hours during the visit.*

*After the reopening in March 2015, Himeji Castle has welcomed many 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 rare cases where some visitors are not allowed to enter the Main Keep.*

**Destination Information**

**Himeji Castle** – The largest castle in Japan, Himeji is also widely considered Japan's most magnificent and beautiful castle. It is one of the best-preserved original castles in Japan, having never been destroyed by war, earthquake or fire. Though fortifications began in the 1400s, the castle as it survives today was completed in 1609. Floors are largely unfurnished.

**Koko-en Garden** – Koko-en is a Japanese-style garden consisting of nine separate, walled gardens designed in various styles of the Edo Period.

**Nadagiku Sake Brewery** – Sake is the national alcohol of Japan; a tour of the brewery offers the chance to learn about the manufacturing processes.

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

**Day 10:** **Explore Kyoto** 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.

Continue to Nijo Castle, the former Kyoto residence of the shogun (military ruler) Tokugawa Ieyasu, who founded the Tokugawa dynasty, which ruled Japan from 1603 - 1868. Continue to Kinkakuji Temple, the 'Golden Pavilion', before lunch. This afternoon, take a stroll in the Gion area, Kyoto's historic geisha district. Geisha are called geiko in Kyoto dialect; the term for a trainee geisha is maiko.

*You will be on foot for most of today. Most sites require a reasonable amount of walking, including a 15-minute walk from the coach parking area to each site.*

*Please note that spotting a geisha is quite rare, partially due to poor behaviour by global tourists in recent years. If you are lucky enough to spot a geisha, please behave respectfully. Photographing a geisha without her consent is punishable with a fine according to Kyoto law, and some side alleys in Gion have recently been closed to tourists to help provide safer spaces for geisha.*

**Destination Information**

**Fushimi Inari Shrine (Taisha)** – An important Shinto shrine 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. Fushimi Inari is famous for its thousands of vermillion torii gates, which form a network of tunnels around the main shrine buildings. For hundreds of years, believers have donated torii gates as a plea for a wish to come true, or out of gratitude for a wish that has been granted.

**Tokugawa Ieyasu -** Tokugawa Ieyasu was one of the most significant figures in Japanese history. He was born to a minor daimyo (lord) during a period of intense civil war, when Japan was made up of many small warring areas. Through various alliances and military campaigns, he took control of swathes of small areas and unified them under his rule. In 1603, the Emperor appointed him Shogun, or Great General. From then until 1868, the Tokugawa clan were the true rulers of Japan, with the emperor only a figurehead. (until the Meiji Restoration). A deeply fictionalised version of Tokugawa's rise to power is told in James Clavell's best-selling 1975 novel 'Shogun', in which Tokugawa is called Toranaga. A 2024 TV series recently received global acclaim and multiple Emmy nominations.

**Nijo Castle** - Built by Tokugawa Ieyasu, as his Kyoto residence, Nijo Castle is surrounded by stunning gardens. The main building was completed in 1603, and is famous for its architecture, decorated sliding doors and 'chirping' nightingale floors. The latter were designed to alert residents to intruders during the quiet hours of the night. The entire structure was designed to show off the wealth and power of the new Shogun (military ruler) in comparison to the weakening emperor, whose nearby palace is rather stark and plain in comparison.

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

**Day 11: Visit Hakone** Meals: B, L, D



Depart Kyoto and transfer to the train station for a 3-hour bullet train journey to Atami Station.

Continue by coach to the Hakone area and enjoy a boat cruise on the peaceful waters of Lake Ashi before boarding the Hakone ropeway to soar over the hilltops to the volcanic Owakudani Valley. *If Hakone Ropeway or Owakudani Valley are closed due to volcanic activity, you will visit Hakone Shrine and take the Komagatake Ropeway instead.*

Travel around 2 hours to Japan's vibrant capital city, Tokyo.

*Please note that your luggage will be transferred separately to your hotel in Tokyo and arrive later the same day (max one suitcase per person).*

**Destination Information**

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

**Hakone Ropeway** – Hakone Ropeway lets visitors take in spectacular views of the crystal-clear blue waters of Lake Ashi, the rising volcanic fumes of Owakudani and the grandeur of Mount Fuji on a fine, sunny day.

**Owakudani Valley** – Owakudani is a valley area around a crater created during the last eruption of Mount Hakone, some 3000 years ago. The area is a volcanic zone, with hot springs and steam vents.

**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 Emperor Meiji moved it from Kyoto in the late 1860s.

**Day 12: Tour Tokyo** Meals: B, L, D

Tokyo is the ultimate 24-hour city, but look behind its busy, high-tech façade and you will find plenty of tranquil backstreets and old temples to explore. This morning, head to the vibrant Asakusa district and soak up the ambiance of Senso-ji, Tokyo's oldest Buddhist temple. Due to the limited coach parking in the area, you may need to walk for around 15 minutes on flat road to reach Senso-ji.



Continue to the 634-metre Tokyo Skytree and ascend to the observation deck for magnificent views. After lunch, drive by the Imperial Palace Plaza, visit Meiji Jingu Shrine and see the famous Shibuya Crossing.

*You will be on your feet for 4 hours today.*

**Destination Information**

**Asakusa** – Asakusa is the centre of Tokyo's Shitamachi (Old Town) District, where you can get a glimpse of historical Tokyo.

**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.

**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.

**Meiji Shrine** – Meiji Shrine is a Shinto shrine dedicated to the Emperor Meiji and his wife Empress Shoken. The shrine is located in an evergreen forest within the busy city and consists of 120,000 trees which were donated by people from all over Japan when the shrine was established. Meiji was the 122nd emperor of Japan, but the first in centuries to hold true power. The Meiji Restoration refers to the period in which power was taken back from the shogun and returned to the emperor. Under Meiji's rule, Japan underwent a period of rapid modernisation, and became involved in global politics after centuries of isolation. In one generation, the country became a leading world power; thus, the Japanese take pride in the Meiji era.

**Day 13-14: Depart Tokyo** Meals: B

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



*Please note: Only breakfast is included today. Late check-out is not included in our Japan & the Scenic South tour. If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day in Tokyo, 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 THE TIME OF BOOKING.**

# JAPAN & THE SCENIC SOUTH 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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