Japan & the Scenic South
Classic Tour | Physical Level 1
Fukuoka – Kumamoto – Beppu – Hiroshima – 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
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 (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

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, tipping, 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 & the Scenic South’ 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.
On arrival into the charming city of Fukuoka, you will be met by an English-speaking representative and transfer 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. Transfers will differ depending on group size, but you may share a 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.

**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 2: Fukuoka

The lovely Fukuoka is at the heart of an area considered a cradle of culture – the city’s position facing Korea and China across the sea means it’s long been a channel of outside influence. This morning, take a stroll in the traditional Rakusuien Garden and visit Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine, dedicated to the god of academic achievement. In the afternoon, take a relaxed cruise on the Yanagawa River, passing through a National Site of Scenic Beauty on a small ‘donkobune’.

**Destination Information**

**Rakusuien Garden** – Rakusuien is a garden that was originally built in 1906 for a Hakata merchant. In 1995, Fukuoka City overhauled the structure and reopened it as a traditional Japanese garden.

**Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine** – Tenmagu shrines are dedicated to the spirit of the learned scholar Sugawara Michizane. Hundreds exist throughout Japan, but Fukuoka’s Dazaifu Tenmangu as well as Kyoto’s Kitano Tenmangu are the most important ones.

**Yanagawa River** – The 4 km-long stretch of river in the water city of Yanagawa has been designated a National Site of Scenic Beauty. Enjoy a relaxing time along the river, admiring cherry blossoms and irises in the spring, illuminated boats in the summer and colourful leaves in the autumn.
Day 3: Fukuoka - Kumamoto

Transfer around 2 hours to Kumamoto and see the famous Kumamoto Castle and Suizenji Garden. Check in to your hotel and enjoy some time at leisure before dinner this evening.

Please note that Kumamoto Castle is currently under renovation after suffering serious damage in the 2016 earthquake. The inner grounds are currently closed to the public, but it is possible to look at the massive fortress from the outside. The interior of the castle’s main keep is scheduled to reopen to the public in spring 2021, while the rest of the grounds are expected to require about 20 years to be fully repaired.

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. With large castle grounds and a variety of buildings, the castle offers visitors one of the most complete castle experiences in Japan. 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 – A spacious traditional-style garden built in the 17th century, Suizenji garden recreates in miniature the important road that linked Edo (Tokyo) and Kyoto, including a mini Mount Fuji.

Day 4: Kumamoto – Mt Aso – Beppu

Travel by coach from Kumamoto to Mount Aso, a journey of approximately 2 hours. Aso is an active volcano at the centre of Kyushu island. Aso’s crater has a circumference of over 100km and encompasses a number of other active peaks, which you’ll be able to see (weather dependent). Depending on whether the ropeway is open, you will either take a ropeway to enjoy the views or make a photo stop at the Kusasenri Plateau. Continue around 2 and a half 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 or bronchitis, or heart disease, may find their condition worsen 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. Aso’s crater is one of the world’s largest; with a circumference of over 100km it encompasses a number of other active peaks.

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’s home to more than 2,000 onsen. In addition, the Hells of Beppu are several spectacular hot springs for viewing rather than bathing.
Day 5: Beppu – Yufuin - Fukuoka

Start the day by taking a tour of Beppu’s Jigoku Meguri – a hell tour. You will find different volcanic features, including thermal mud and hot springs that have bubbled from the ground here for a millennium. Head over to Yufuin, another hot spring resort that is home to a wealth of art museums, cafes and boutiques, and stroll down its streets. After lunch, transfer around 2 hours back to Fukuoka for an overnight stay.

Destination Information

Jigoku Meguri – The “hells” of Beppu are seven spectacular hot springs for viewing rather than bathing, where hot water vigorously erupt from the ground.

Yufuin – Yufuin is a hot spring resort around 10km inland from Beppu, with a wealth of cafes, boutiques and art museums.

Day 6: Fukuoka – Yamaguchi - Hiroshima

This morning, transfer around 2 and a half hours to Yamaguchi and visit Rurikoji Temple, known for its five-storied pagoda. Continue around 1 and a half hours to the Iwakuni area to see Kintaikyo Bridge before transferring another hour to Hiroshima. Check in to your hotel and enjoy dinner in a local restaurant.

Destination Information

Rurikoji Temple – Ruriko is a Buddhist temple known for its five-storied pagoda. Built in 1442, the pagoda is ranked among Japan’s three greatest pagodas. The temple grounds of Rurikoji also holds the main hall, a temple storehouse, a bell tower and a small museum.

Kintaikyo Bridge – The Kintaikyo Bridge, Iwakuni’s most distinguished landmark, is an elegant, wooden bridge consisting of five bold arches standing on massive stone pillars. The bridge was completed in 1673 and kept standing until 1950, when Iwakuni was struck by a violent typhoon. A precise reconstruction was finished in 1953.

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.
Day 7: Hiroshima & Miyajima

Take a short ferry ride to Miyajima Island, where sightseeing will be at a leisurely pace on foot. Visit Itsukushima Shrine and explore the traditional market town at leisure. Return by ferry and coach to Hiroshima for lunch and then visit the famous Peace Memorial Park and Museum. Please be aware that the museum may be confronting and upsetting for some group members and it is at your discretion if you wish to visit or enjoy time at leisure exploring the Peace Memorial Park.

Please note: Renovation works on Miyajima's famous floating torii gate are scheduled to start in June 2019. During the renovation works, the torii gate will be covered up by scaffolding. It is not known yet exactly how long the renovations will take, but they are expected to last 1-2 years.

While the torii gate will be covered, you can still see the Itsukushima shrine itself as well as enjoying free time on Miyajima Island to explore the local streets or make the walk up to Daisho-in Temple.

Destination Information

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

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

Day 8: Hiroshima – Himeji – Kyoto

Journey around 3 and a half hours by coach to Himeji and explore the magnificent 17th Century Himeji Castle and the neighbouring Koko-en, a traditional-style garden. The castle is largely in its original condition, so please use common sense and be mindful of your step when strolling around. You will have to remove your shoes before walking along some of the wooden floors and there are some steep wooden steps to reach certain areas. 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 cases where some visitors are not allowed to enter the Main Keep. Visit Nadagiku Sake Brewery to learn about the process of this traditional Japanese spirit and enjoy some tasters before continuing around 2 hours to Kyoto. Capital for a thousand years, this enchanting city is the epitome of traditional Japan.
Start the day by visiting Fushimi Inari Shrine with its thousands of vermilion torii gates. The Shrine stretches up Mount Inari (233m high). You will walk up part of the mountain and the incline allows a steady-paced walk. Later, visit Nijo Castle, Kinkakuji Temple, known as the ‘Golden Pavilion’ due to its golden exterior and take a stroll in the Gion area, Kyoto’s geisha district.

Day 9: Kyoto

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

Nijo Castle - Built by the founder of the Edo Shogunate 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.

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.

Gion – Gion is Kyoto’s most famous geisha district, filled with shops, restaurants and ochaya (teahouses)

Destination Information
Himeji Castle – Widely considered 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 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 1867 when it was moved to Tokyo. Many national treasures can be found in Kyoto and in nearby Nara, including old shrines and temples, screen paintings, beautiful gardens, and statues of Buddha.
Day 10: Kyoto – Hakone – Tokyo

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. 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.*

**Destination Information**

- **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.

- **Hakone Ropeway** – Hakone Ropeway lets visitors to 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 the 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 the Meiji Emperor moved it to Tokyo in 1867.

Day 11: Tokyo

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. 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.

**Destination Information**

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

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

- **Tokyo Skytree** – The tallest structure in Japan and the tallest tower in the world, Tokyo Skytree is predominantly a television and radio broadcast tower and is earthquake resistant.
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 in the busy city and consists of 120,000 trees which were donated by people from all over Japan when the shrine was established.

Day 12: Depart Tokyo

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 & 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.

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 & the Scenic South Travel Information

Visas

A visa is not required for New Zealand passport holders visiting Japan.

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with us that you take out suitable travel insurance. You must provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24-hour emergency contact number when you book with us or as soon as possible thereafter. These details will be available to your national escort should they be required. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

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 it is 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.

Please inform our reservations team of any allergies and/or special dietary requirements at time of booking.

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 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 assure 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.

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:

1. Direct shared bus (shared with other passengers, not just Wendy Wu Tours clients),
2. Shared bus plus taxi from the nearest bus stop to the hotel (maximum 5 minutes' walk),
3. Chartered coach (if there are more than 10 Wendy Wu Tours passengers arriving at the same time).

On the departure day, all passengers will be met by English-speaking staff at the hotel and transfer by one of the three ways as above. For those passengers using a shared bus or shared bus plus taxi to the airport, the guide services end when they drop you off at the bus stop, and you will need to check in at the airport on your own.

If you have paid extra for a private transfer, the above does not apply.

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

Please ensure your Wendy Wu Tours luggage tag is visible on your suitcase/hand luggage, as this may also assist your guide in identifying you. If at any stage you are unable to locate your representative, please contact our Japan ground operator on +81 (0)3-4405-1386

Please note - Any internal flights during your tour are arranged locally, you will not be given a ticket, and your guide will help you check in. Flight details, accommodation and cruises may be subject to last minute change.

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. 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. You guide will indicate when you will need to prepare for this throughout your tour.

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**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.

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**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). 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.

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**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.

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**Climate**

Please refer to our website or brochure for detailed temperature charts.

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**After your booking**

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive an email with your confirmation invoice and other important information. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

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**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.

_Last updated: 02 Sep 2019_