



Japan Uncovered

Classic Tour | 18 Days | Physical Level 1

Osaka – Hiroshima – Kyoto – Kanazawa – Takayama –
Nagano – Mount Fuji – Tokyo

Our most extensive tour of Japan includes all the classic sights and key cultural activities. Featuring modern cities, historical sights and beautiful landscapes, Japan Uncovered ensures you get the most out of your trip to this fascinating land.

- Discover delightful Kyoto & Nara
- Reflect in Hiroshima & Miyajima
- Admire beautiful Mount Fuji
- See the Snow Monkeys
- Feel the rush of Tokyo & Osaka
- Explore Kanazawa & Takayama



Japan Uncovered 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 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, early check in or late checkout 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 travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully inclusive basis so you will travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escort and local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

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 Uncovered’ 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 will 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.

Country Profile: Japan

Japan is a fascinating country situated in northeast Asia. It is comprised of more than 4,000 islands - the main four being Hokkaido, Honshu, Kyushu and Shikoku. The Japanese name for Japan is ‘Nippon’ or ‘Nihon’ meaning ‘sun origin’ and is often translated as ‘Land of the Rising Sun’. It is a country of contrasts; engaging a combination of futuristic cities, ancient culture and diverse scenery. Japan is famous for its relatively short Cherry Blossom season.

Joining Your Tour

The tour is 18 days in duration including international flights. Please note that due to airline schedules passengers may depart or arrive on Day 2.

Travellers booked on a ‘Land Only’ package, the price includes visa fees and 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 Osaka and end the tour on Day 17 in Tokyo. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your 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 maintaining the integrity of your trip.

- Please note: Miyajima's floating torii gate is currently undergoing renovation works. 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.
- Please note: Isuien Garden in Nara, visited on day 3, is closed for maintenance weekly on Tuesdays. Departures coinciding with this will visit the Kasuga Taisha Shrine as an alternative.
- Overnight in Fuji Five Lakes has been moved to Mishima

Itinerary – Japan Uncovered

Days 1-2: Fly to Osaka

Fly overnight to the lively, fast-paced city of Osaka. On arrival you will be met by an English-speaking representative and transferred 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

Osaka – Osaka is Japan's third largest city. What Osaka lacks in sightseeing locations, it makes up for with its flamboyance, fun loving people and amazing food.

Day 3: Nara

Transfer around one hour by coach to Nara and stroll through Nara Park to Todaiji Temple, meeting the resident sika deer en route. Admire the traditional Isuien Garden before returning to Osaka. Visit the impressive Osaka Castle and later cruise down the Yodogawa River.

Please note: Isuien Garden in Nara is closed for maintenance weekly on Tuesdays. Departures coinciding with this will visit the Kasuga Taisha Shrine as an alternative.



Destination Information

Nara – Due to Nara's past as the first permanent capital, it remains full of historic treasures, including 8 UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

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

Isuien Garden – Isuien is an attractive Japanese garden divided into two parts, a front garden and a rear garden, with a number of tea houses scattered throughout. The front garden dates back to the mid-17th century, while the rear garden, the larger of the two, was built in 1899 by a wealthy merchant.

Osaka Castle – Osaka Castle is one of Japan's most famous castles known for sweeping views of the city from its hilltop perch. Construction began in 1583 by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who intended that the castle to become the centre of a new, unified Japan under his rule.

Day 4: Osaka - Hiroshima

Journey around two hours by coach to Himeji and explore the magnificent 17th Century Himeji Castle and the neighbouring Kokoan, 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 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. This reduces 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. After lunch, continue around 3.5 hours to Hiroshima.



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.

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

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

Day 5: Hiroshima & Miyajima

Transfer to 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. After lunch, 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. Later this afternoon, return by ferry and coach to your Hiroshima hotel for dinner.



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

Peace Memorial Park and Museum – The Peace Memorial Park and Museum is one of the most prominent features of the city. The trees, lawns and walking paths are in stark contrast to the surrounding downtown area. Before the bomb, the area 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.

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.

Day 6: Hiroshima - Kyoto

This morning, transfer to Hiroshima Station and catch a bullet train to Kyoto, a journey of 1 hour 40 minutes. Capital for a thousand years, this enchanting city is the epitome of traditional Japan. After lunch, visit Ryoanji Temple, with its famous Zen garden, and Kinkakuji Temple, known as the 'Golden Pavilion' due to its golden exterior. Continue to your hotel to check in for a two-night stay.

Please note: You will need to pack a smaller overnight bag for tonight as your main luggage will be transferred separately this morning to your Kyoto hotel and arrive the next day.



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 which is 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 7: Kyoto

Start the day by visiting the spectacular Kiyomizu Temple. You will spend 1.5 hours on foot exploring the temple. Later, experience the age-old rituals of a traditional tea ceremony. After lunch, visit Fushimi Inari Shrine with its thousands of vermillion 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.



Destination Information

Kiyomizu – Meaning ‘Pure Water Temple’, the 16th century Kiyomizu Temple is one of the most celebrated temples of Japan and houses the Jishu Shrine dedicated to the deity of love. A highlight is the Hondo’s veranda which is perched over the hillside, offering spectacular woodland vistas.

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

Day 8: Kyoto - Kanazawa

Depart Kyoto and travel around 4 hours by coach to Kanazawa. After lunch in a local restaurant, wander through the beautiful Kenrokuen Garden before viewing the excellent art collection of the Kanazawa 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art. Continue to your hotel and check in.



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 Garden – 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.

21st century Museum of Contemporary Art – Opened in 2004, the Museum of Contemporary Art is home to some of Japan’s most fascinating modern art, with most pieces dating from the 1980s onwards.

Day 9: Kanazawa - Takayama

Visit the Nomura Samurai House and garden before transferring around 1.5 hours to Gokayama. Enjoy lunch and then try your hand at making washi paper. Continue approximately one hour to Shirakawago and explore the 300-year-old Gassho style Wada House. Finally, drive around 1.5 hours to reach Takayama where you will stay for the next two nights. Your accommodation this evening has onsen facilities, we recommend taking a relaxing dip!



In Takayama we use a selection of hotels, some of which are more traditional in style, but you will be accommodated in Western-style rooms.

Destination Information

Nomura Samurai Family House – Nomura Samurai Family House is a restored Samurai residence with a beautiful garden. Nomura was a high-ranked samurai of the Meiji Period.

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

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

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.

Day 10: Takayama

Head to the Miyagawa Morning Market, where you can sample some of the delicious local fruits and vegetables (at your own expense). Next, take a leisurely stroll around the traditional houses of the area and visit some of the local museums including Takayama Festival Floats Exhibition Hall, Kusakabe Folk Crafts Museum and Takayama Jinya before spending some free time in Kamisannomachi Street. You will spend around 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.

Kusakabe Folk Crafts Museum – Kusakabe Folk Crafts Museum is a former house for a wealthy merchant named Kusakabe. The house is typical of the style during the Edo Period, with dark wooden beams and pillars.

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.

Kamisannomachi Street – Kamisannomachi Street will make you feel like you've stepped back into the Edo Period (1600-1868). This well-preserved part of the historic city features traditional houses, sake breweries, shops and cafes — some of them have been operating for centuries.

Day 11: Takayama - Nagano

This morning, depart Takayama and travel around 2.5 hours to Matsumoto to visit the formidable 16th century Matsumoto Castle. After lunch, stop at a Miso House to learn about the process of making this Japanese seasoning and try Miso soup. Also visit a wasabi farm to learn about its cultivation before travelling a further 1.5 hours to Nagano.



Destination Information

Matsumoto Castle – Known as the ‘Crow Castle’ due to its dark black exterior, the Matsumoto Castle dates back to the 16th century and is the oldest wooden castle in Japan.

Ishii Miso – Ishii Miso was founded in 1868 and is still producing miso, an essential ingredient in Japanese cuisine, by a unique traditional method.

Wasabi Farm – The Daio wasabi farm, one of Japan’s largest wasabi farms, has multiple large fields with a network of small streams that constantly provides clear water to each wasabi plant.

Nagano – The host city of the 1998 Winter Olympics, Nagano is the main access point for the Japanese Alps.

Day 12: Snow Monkeys

Travel deeper into the Japanese Alps to visit the Snow Monkeys at the Jigokudani Monkey Park. There is approximately 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 from up-close and they almost completely ignore their human guests. Enjoy lunch and then continue to Zenkoji, one of Japan’s most prolific Buddhist temples. Return to Nagano.



Destination Information

Jigokudani Yaen-Koen – Home to Japanese Macaques, also known as Snow Monkeys, Jigokudani literally means ‘hell valley’. 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.

Zenkoji Temple – Founded 1400 years ago, Zenkoji stores what many believe to be the first Buddhist statue ever brought to Japan. Zenkoji's main hall has a tunnel in its basement in which visitors are trying to find and touch the ‘key to paradise’ in complete darkness. The key is attached to the wall and grants enlightenment to anybody who touches it.

Day 13: Mt Fuji

Today, travel around 3.5 hours by coach to the Fuji Five Lakes area and ascend by road to Fuji's 5th station (weather permitting) for fantastic views over the area. Visit Itchiku Kubota Art Museum to view the elaborate dyed silk creations of artist Kubota Itchiku. Continue to your hotel in Mishima and check in.

For May departures only: *Instead of visiting Itchiku Kubota Art Museum, a visit to Fuji Shibazakura Festival has been included. This is the best time of the year and one of the most scenic places in Japan to see the pink moss phlox in full bloom.*



Destination Information

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

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.

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

Day 14: Hakone - Tokyo

This morning, transfer to Hakone, a drive of around two hours. 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. After lunch, continue around two hours to Japan's capital city, Tokyo.



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 – The Hakone Ropeway allows 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.

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. It was the political and cultural centre of Japan, before it became the official capital in 1867 when the Meiji Emperor moved it.

Day 15: Discover 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 Imperial Palace East Gardens, the Meiji Jingu Shrine, and walk the famous Shibuya Crossing. The rest of the day is at leisure for you to spend how you wish.



For May and September departures only: Tickets to a Sumo tournament are included in the afternoon. Many of Japan's most ancient traditions are preserved in the sport; the ritual involved in the performance is just as fascinating to watch as the sport itself.

Destination Information

Imperial Palace East Gardens – The Imperial Palace East Gardens are part of the Imperial Palace, the main residence of the Emperor of Japan and the former site of Edo Castle.

Meiji Jingu Shrine – Meiji Jingu 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 16: Tokyo

Start your last full day in Tokyo with a stroll in the vibrant Asakusa district and soak up the ambiance of Sensoji, Tokyo's oldest Buddhist temple. Continue to the 634-metre Skytree and ascend to the observation deck for magnificent views. The afternoon is free at leisure until the evening, when you will board a traditional yakata boat for a dinner cruise.



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 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.

Days 17-18: 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 Uncovered 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.

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

Japan Uncovered 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 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 originals.

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. All beverages will be at your own expense and are readily available.

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

Those with dietary requirements will be well catered for - just make sure to inform your booking agent of any specific requirements well in advance of your trip. Please be aware however that restaurants may not always be able to accommodate these. Gluten-free food may not be as readily available as in New Zealand.

All the restaurants we visit will be researched and inspected regularly to ensure that they follow the strictest health, cleanliness, and safety guidelines. All waiting staff will wear face masks and gloves and self-service buffets will be avoided in favour of à la carte dining, waiter-served meals, or waiter-assisted buffets. Hand sanitiser will be provided to the group before and after every food and beverage service.

Please read your travel guide, which you will receive with your final documents for more information about eating in Japan. We recommend that when it comes to Japanese food, you stay open minded and try to be adventurous!

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. 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 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 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.

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. 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.

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 in Japan

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 and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open but may be crowded. Showa Day is on 29th April every year, Golden Week is on 29th April – 5th May 2022, Constitution Memorial Day is on May 3rd and Emperor's Birthday is on 23rd December 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 demonstrates 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.

Group Size

The group size on our Classic Tours is on average 21 passengers, with a maximum group size of 28. You may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling. On our group tours we operate a seat-and-a-half policy, allowing you to travel in greater comfort.

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.

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.

Exchanging Cash

It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling to cities outside of Tokyo. US Dollars and New Zealand Dollars can be exchanged at Narita Airport and in some hotels, provided the New Zealand currency is new and undamaged. 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.

Personal Expenses & Optional Tours

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. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of NZ\$250 per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount.

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. 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 palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defense 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

Wendy Wu Tours is committed to always providing a safe and healthy environment for all passengers. We work closely with our airline partners to take effective measures to protect you from contracting and spreading COVID-19, in accordance with legal requirements and government guidelines. Please follow the link [here](#) for more details on our COVID vaccination policy.

COVID Safe

Your safety and well-being will always be our Number 1 priority which is why we've instituted the most stringent COVID health and safety protocols on all of tours. As we continue to monitor current restrictions and operational impacts, these protocols will evolve, and we will provide detailed guidelines for your particular tour prior to departure. For further details please go to the following link [here](#)

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. 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 including a visa application form (if applicable). Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

Last updated: October 2021