



Off-Beat Japan

Go Beyond Tour | 14 Days | Physical Level 3

Tokyo - Fuji Five Lakes – Nagano – Takayama -
Kyoto – Koyasan – Osaka

On this exhilarating tour, delve deeper into Japan's rich and fascinating past, present and future. Trek at the foot of Mount Fuji, experience the robot restaurant and stay at a traditional Buddhist lodge. You will also see the classic highlights of Japan.

- Learn the art of Taiko drumming
- Hike around the base of Mt Fuji
- Get up close to the fascinating Snow Monkeys
- Relax in a traditional Onsen
- Experience the speedy bullet train
- Chant with Buddhist monks in Koya-san



Off-Beat Japan tour inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as stated on your itinerary
- 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, meals not included, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

Go Beyond Tour:

Venture off the beaten track to explore fascinating destinations away from the tourist trail. You will discover the local culture in depth and see sights rarely witnessed by other travellers. These tours take you away from the comforts of home but will reward you with the experiences of a lifetime. These tours include:

- Walking through classic sites
- Unique cultural experiences and encounters
- Off the beaten track destinations
- More evenings at leisure for independent exploration

Physical Level 3:

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.

'Off-Beat Japan' is rated as a **physical level 3** tour. A good level of fitness is required as you need to be comfortable walking for 2-3 hours and covering longer distances. Walking or other activities such as cycling will be at a gentle pace and will involve straightforward terrain.

- Sightseeing will often be for extended periods of time on foot and occasionally at an incline
- Trekking around the base of Mt Fuji will be for approximately 4 hours

Of course, our National Escorts will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. If you require any more information about the pace of the tour, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

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 14 days in duration including international flights. Please note that due to airline schedules passengers may arrive/depart on Day 2.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only' arrangements should make their own way to the starting point. Join the tour on day 2 in Tokyo and end the tour on Day 13 in Osaka. 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.

- The domestic airlines in this region have frequent schedule changes. For this reason, we have indicated morning, afternoon or evening flights only in the following section. Your Local Guide or National Escort will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them

Itinerary – Off-Beat Japan

Days 1-2: Tokyo

Meals included: None

Fly overnight to Tokyo, the capital of Japan and transfer approximately 1.5 hours to your hotel. The remainder of your day is at leisure.

Please note: Early check in is not included today. 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

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 3: Tokyo

Meals included: Breakfast

Begin your tour of Tokyo immersing yourself in the local culture by taking part in a traditional Japanese drumming (Taiko) class. Next, visit Meiji Jingu Shrine, stroll around the vibrant district of Harajuku, and take a look at the famous Shibuya Crossing. Stop by the hotel before heading out again to visit the Robot Restaurant for a surreal, high-energy and futuristic experience, with lasers, dancing and robots. Please note, dinner is not included at the Robot Restaurant. Your visit is to experience the show, but your guide will be happy to recommend restaurants for your evening meal.



Destination Information

Taiko – Using large drums, Taiko is an ancient Japanese form of percussion which has become a popular musical art form involving tightly choreographed movements.

Meiji Jingu Shrine – Located in a huge evergreen forest, the Meiji Shrine is dedicated to the spirits of Emperor Meiji and his wife Empress Shoken.

Harajuku – A district in Shibuya, buzzing Harajuku is the centre of teenage fashion and cosplay culture.

Robot restaurant – For a futuristic, neon, cabaret style experience head to the Robot Restaurant found in the Shinjuku district of Tokyo.

Day 4: Tokyo

Meals included: Breakfast

Today embark on a Tokyo city tour, starting with a stroll through the Imperial Palace East Garden and a visit to the 2nd observatory of the Tokyo Skytree for panoramic views over the city. Continue to the district of Asakusa, stopping at Sensoji Temple and strolling along Nakamise shopping street. In the afternoon, explore the Edo Tokyo Museum and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure. You will spend 3-4 hours on foot today.



For May and September departures only: Tickets to a Sumo tournament are included. 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 Garden – The Imperial Palace East Gardens are part of the inner palace area. They are the former site of Edo Castle's innermost circles of defence.

Tokyo Skytree – The tallest structure in Japan and the tallest tower in the world; Tokyo Skytree is predominantly a television and radio broadcast tower and is earthquake resistant.

Sensoji Temple – An ancient Buddhist Temple and the oldest in Tokyo, the Sensoji 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.

Edo Tokyo Museum – The Edo Tokyo museum's permanent exhibition illustrates Tokyo's past dating back to when it was known as Edo, including Edo Period architecture, cultural heritage, politics and more

Day 5: Tokyo – Fuji Five Lakes

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

This morning transfer 2.5 hours to Mount Fuji to take a 3-hour trek around the base of this iconic mountain. This is an easy hike at the base of the mountain through alpine forest, across meadows and around lakes. Take a short transfer to your hotel and check in for your overnight stay.



For May departures only: A visit to the 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. In the Fuji Five Lakes area we use a selection of hotels, some of which are more traditional in style. The rooms in these hotels typically feature Japanese elements. You may sleep on a futon with the mattress lying directly on a tatami mat floor. This is an opportunity to experience a more authentic style of Japanese accommodation.

Destination Information

Mount Fuji – At 3,776m, Mount Fuji is the highest of Japan's mountains and an iconic symbol of the country. Mount Fuji is notoriously shy and is often enveloped by clouds.

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.

Day 6: Fuji Five Lakes - Nagano

Meals included: Breakfast

Travel to Matsumoto, a journey of 3.5 hours, and explore the magnificent Matsumoto Castle. Continue to Nagano, stopping in Yudanaka to visit the resident Japanese Snow Monkeys at Jigokudani Yaen-Koen (Monkey Park). You will walk around 30 minutes 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 very close and they almost completely ignore their human guests.


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.

Nagano – The host city of the 1998 Winter Olympics, Nagano is the main access point for the Japanese Alps. In the winter a blanket of snow covers the rural landscape you will travel through to reach this picturesque mountain city.

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.

Day 7: Nagano - Takayama

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

This morning, travel 2 hours to Hotaka to ride the Shin-Hotaka Ropeway into the Japanese Alps. You will reach the observation platform at 2,156 metres high to get stunning views of the surrounding mountains. Drive one and a half hours to Takayama, where you will have some free time to explore Kamisannomachi Street and sample the street food on offer (at your own expense). This evening enjoy dinner in your ryokan.



Please note the ropeway may be closed due to strong winds, if this is the case, you will continue directly to Takayama where alternative sightseeing will be arranged.

Tonight’s accommodation is a Ryokan, a traditional Japanese inn, where you will find Tatami (straw mat) flooring and Futon bedding to sleep on. There will be an Onsen hot spring bath at the hotel for you to relax in and experience this traditional Japanese pastime. Please note that onsen baths are segregated and the majority of them do not allow bathing suits, and hence people will be nude.

Destination Information

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

Day 8: Takayama – Kyoto
Meals included: Breakfast

Today, take the bullet train to Kyoto. The journey consists of two trains: first the Limited express, which takes around 2 hours and 20 minutes to Nagoya, before changing to the Shinkansen bullet train for a 40-minute journey to Kyoto. On arrival this afternoon, visit the Fushimi Inari Shrine and Kiyomizu Temple. Next, take a stroll around the old neighbourhoods of Higashiyama and Gion, the geisha district with a stop at Gion Corner.



Please note: Your luggage will be transferred separately and will not arrive until the following day so you will need to pack a separate overnight bag for your first night in Kyoto.

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.

Fushimi Inari (Taisha) – Famous for its brilliant red traditional torii gates, Fushimi Inari shrine sits at the base of the mountain also called Inari and is the head shrine for 40,000 Inari shrines throughout the country.

Kiyomizu Temple – Meaning ‘Pure Water Temple’, Kiyomizu is one of the most celebrated temples of Japan and houses the Jishu Shrine dedicated to the deity of love.

Day 9: Kyoto
Meals included: Breakfast

This morning, take a half day tour of the city starting at Kinkakuji Temple, known as the ‘Golden Pavilion’, and Japan’s most famous classical garden – Ryoanji. Continue to the Arashiyama district where you will have some free time to explore the Bamboo forest as well as enjoying a rickshaw ride. Later, witness the rituals involved in the preparation and pouring of matcha tea in a traditional tea ceremony.


Destination Information

Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavillion)– 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.

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.

Arashiyama – Famed for its bamboo grove, Arashiyama is a district of Kyoto filled with temples and shrines.

Day 10: Kyoto – Koyasan

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

This morning explore the craft of Kimono creation at Nishijin Textile Centre, then continue your tour learning the art of Origami and trying on kimonos. Transfer to Koyasan for your overnight stay in a 13th century temple in a traditional tatami room. The journey is approximately 3 hours.



The temple where you will lodge tonight is staffed by monks who generally do not speak English. Accommodation is traditional and basic; single mattresses will be laid on traditional tatami mats. Tatami mat floors are not hard and mattresses are designed for comfortable sleep. The doors to rooms are made from rice paper so noise will travel, and they cannot be locked. Rooms are individually heated but hallways are not. There will be shared bathrooms with shower and toilet facilities. The evening meal is a Buddhist vegetarian dinner, known as Shojin Ryori and is served promptly at 18:00. The evening is free for quiet reflection in your room. Please note there are no TVs on the premises.

Destination Information

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

Day 11: Koyasan - Osaka

Meals included: Breakfast

Rise early this morning to join the monks in their daily morning prayers before a traditional breakfast. Take a walking tour of Koyasan, visiting Kongobuji. Afterwards, travel by chartered coach to visit Okunoin. Travel 2.5 hours to Osaka this afternoon and check in to your hotel for the next two nights.


Destination Information

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

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

Osaka – Osaka 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 12: Himeji

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Today, drive two hours to Himeji to visit the 17th century Himeji Castle. The castle is largely in its original condition, so please use common sense and be mindful of your step when strolling around the castle. You will have to remove your shoes before walking along some of the wooden floors and there are some steep wooden steps to reach certain areas. After the reopening in March 2015, Himeji Castle has welcomed a large number of visitors. As such, they now issue numbered tickets to visitors in order to limit the number of people who can enter the Main Keep reducing congestion, waiting time, and to protect the cultural properties. Please note that this means that there may be cases where some visitors are not allowed to enter the Main Keep. Continue on to a sake brewery to learn about the brewing process and enjoy some tasters. Travel back to Osaka stopping at the bright lights of the Dotonbori district, where you will enjoy some free time before taking the coach back to the hotel. In the evening, enjoy a farewell dinner.


Destination Information

Himeji – Himeji is the second largest city of Hyogo Prefecture after Kobe, with approximately half a million inhabitants. Most famous for its magnificent castle.

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.

Sake Brewery – Sake is the national alcohol of Japan; a tour of the brewery offers the chance to learn about the manufacturing processes from the 1950’s to the present day.

Dotonbori district – Historically a theatre district and still a popular entertainment area today, the Dotonbori district offer an eccentric and electric atmosphere.

Days 13-14: Depart Osaka

Meals included: Breakfast

Any time before your flight today is at leisure. Transfer around one hour to the airport according to the departure time of your international flight.

Please note: Only breakfast is included today. Late check-out is not included in our Trails of Japan tour. If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day in Osaka, please contact our reservations department who can confirm additional pricing 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.

Off-Beat Japan Travel Information

Visas

Visas are not required for New Zealand passport holders for entry into Japan for stays of up to 90 days. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into New Zealand.

At the time of booking Visa conditions may have changed, currently no visa is required for New Zealand Passport holders. Your travel consultant will inform you if any changes are applicable prior to your departure.

Insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original.

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. 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.

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!

Evenings at leisure

To give you more flexibility and choice when travelling on this tour, we have carefully balanced special highlight meals with evenings at leisure so that you can explore the many culinary delights that Japan has to offer. Alternatively, you can use this time to enjoy the facilities of your hotel. Your National Escort will be happy to provide you with advice about good places to eat and assist in the booking of transportation to get you there (at your own expense).

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

Please note: On this tour, you will stay at a Ryokan, a traditional Japanese inn, where you will find Tatami (straw mat) flooring and comfortable Futon bedding to sleep on. There will be an onsen hot spring bath at the ryokan for you to relax in and experience this traditional Japanese pastime. Please note that onsen baths are segregated and the majority of them do not allow bathing suits, and hence people will be nude.

You will also stay one night in traditional, basic Buddhist temple accommodation, where you will be provided with single mattresses to sleep on Tatami mat floors. Tatami mat floors are not hard, and mattresses are designed for comfortable sleep. The doors to rooms are made from rice paper so noise will travel, and they cannot be locked. Rooms are individually heated but hallways are not. There will be shared bathrooms with shower and toilet facilities.

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 is 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 29th April – 5th May 2022, Constitution Memorial Day is on 3rd May 2021 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

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 18 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. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only.

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.

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 Expenses - 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. Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

Climbing Steps

Sightseeing at nearly all 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 & 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 followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form (if applicable). Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

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