



# EXPERIENCE JAPAN

Classic Tour | 12 Days | Physical Level 1

OSAKA – NARA – KYOTO – YUDANAKA – NAGANO – MATSUMOTO  
MOUNT FUJI – MISHIMA – KAMAKURA - TOKYO

This tour not only visits the famous sights of Japan including Osaka, Nara, Kyoto, Mt Fuji and Tokyo but is brim full of experiences allowing you to immerse in the local culture! From a tea ceremony and origami to fan painting, miso tasting and sake tasting!

- Discover delightful Nara
- Visit Matsumoto & Osaka castles
- Explore Arashiyama bamboo forest
- Search for the snow monkeys
- See Kamakura's Grand Buddha
- View the impressive Mt Fuji

## TOUR MAP

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## EXPERIENCE JAPAN TOUR INCLUSIONS:

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- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escorts (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with IATA

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

## CLASSIC TOURS:

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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:

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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.

‘Experience Japan’ is rated as a physical level 1 tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it’s more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You’ll be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- On several days, there will be sightseeing on foot for extended periods of time, often involving steps or uneven ground
- You will be required to get on and off various sizes of boat without assistance

Of course, our National Escort will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

### JOINING YOUR TOUR:

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The tour is 12 days in duration including international flights. Please note, due to flight schedules passengers may depart/arrive on Day 2.

Travellers booked on ‘Land Only’, the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to Reservations.

Join the tour on Day 2 in Osaka and end the tour on Day 11 in Tokyo. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

**DETAILED ITINERARY****Days 1-2: Arrive Osaka**

Meals: D

Fly overnight to the lively, fast-paced city of Osaka. On arrival you will be met by an English-speaking representative and transfer to your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure to start soaking up the local culture.

*Please note: Early check in is not included. If your flight arrives in the morning and you wish to arrange this, please speak to your reservations consultant.*

*You will be transferred by shared coach with other passengers who are not part of a Wendy Wu Tour. If you are on a shared bus transfer, you may have to walk for a few minutes to get to your hotel. Transfers will differ depending on group size.*

**Destination Information**

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

**Day 3: Nara**

Meals: B, L, D

Spend the morning in Osaka with a visit to the impressive Osaka Castle before cruising along the Yodogawa River. At Osaka castle park, you will reach to the castle for 15 minutes` walk from coach parking on flat road. After lunch, Transfer by coach to Japan’s former imperial capital Nara, a journey of approximately 1 hour. Visit Todaiji Temple, the world’s largest wooden structure and home to Japan’s largest Buddha. Also visit Isui-en Gardens, known for its natural ponds – sightseeing here will be about 3 hours on foot. Due to the congestion of Nara Park coach parking, you may need to walk from coach parking to Nara park for 15 minutes on flat road. Return to Osaka.

**Destination Information**

**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 the castle to become the centre of a new, unified Japan under his rule.

**Yogodawa River** - the gentle Yodogawa river connects the cities of Osaka and Kyoto, a sail down the river offers visitors beautiful unobstructed views of the city.

**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** – One of Nara's many UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Todaiji Temple is one the Seven Great Temples of Japan and is home to the world’s largest bronze statue, Daibutsu. **Isui-en Garden** – Isui-en 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.

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**Day 4: Osaka - Kyoto**

Meals: B, L, D

Travel approximately 1 hour by road to Kyoto, Capital of Japan for 1,000 years, this enchanting city is the epitome of traditional Japan. Upon arrival, visit Togetsukyo Bridge located in the heart of the vibrant district of Arashiyama and stroll through the bamboo forest with its towering and impressive thickets. Also visit Ryoanji Temple, home to Japan's most famous zen garden and the famous 'Golden Pavillion' Kinkakuji Temple. Enjoy some free time this afternoon to further explore the city. You will need to remove your shoes at both temples. Sightseeing on foot will be approximately 2-3 hours on foot today.



### Destination Information

**Kyoto** – Kyoto was the ancient capital of Japan for approximately 1,000 years until 1867 when it was moved to Tokyo. Many national treasures can be found in Kyoto and in nearby Nara, including old shrines and temples, screen paintings, beautiful gardens, and statues of Buddha.

**Togetsukyo Bridge** - The Togetsukyo Bridge spans the Katsura River at the foot of Arashiyama Mountain and offers guest wonderful views, particularly during spring and autumn.

**Arashiyama Bamboo Forest** - Arashiyama Bamboo Forest is an iconic area of scenic beauty, gaze up at the vast number of towering bamboo thickets.

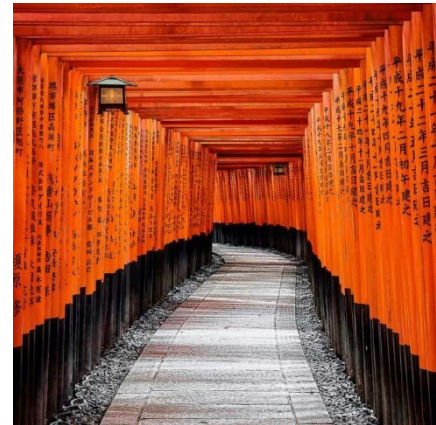
**Ryoanji Temple** – Ryoanji Temple is a Zen temple renowned for its garden, which features a dry, sand landscape with large rocks and smooth pebbles.

**Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion)** – Kinkakuji Temple is a Buddhist temple and is an excellent example of Japanese garden design. The structure is a brilliant golden hue colour and is very minimalistic.

**Day 5: Kyoto**

Meals: B, L, D

Begin the day with a visit to one of Kyoto's most famous sites – Fushimi Inari Shrine, renowned for its 10,000 vermillion torii gates and follow a forested hillside pathway passing numerous shrines along the way. You will walk up part of the mountain and the incline allows a steady-paced walk around 15 minutes with flat road and steps to reach torii gates. Due to the limited space of Fushimi Inari Shrine coach parking, you may need to walk from coach parking for 15 minutes. Later, enjoy the age-old rituals of a tea ceremony with a tea master, and try your hand at origami. After lunch, your immersive experience continues with a fan painting class where you will learn the technique of this highly refined and sought-after visual art. Due to the nature of the cultural experience, you will be required to remove your shoes before entering the venue.

**Destination Information**

**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.

**Origami** - Origami, from "oru" meaning to fold and "kami" meaning paper, was first recorded in Japan in the Heian Period (794-1185) and as paper was still a rare commodity in this time period, origami was very much a pastime for the elite.

**Day 6: Kyoto – Nagano - Matsumoto**

Meals: B, L, D

This morning travel deeper into the Japanese Alps, approximately 3.5 hours to Nagano, firstly by bullet train to Nagoya and then journey on the limited express train to Nagano. Upon arrival, stop in Yudanaka in search for the snow monkeys (Japanese Macques) at Jigokudani Yaen-Koen Monkey Park. There is around a 30-minute walk through the forested valley along paths, occasionally on an incline, from the bus park to the main pool where the monkeys bathe. Accustomed to humans, the monkeys can be observed up-close, and they almost completely ignore their human guests. Please keep in mind that the snow monkeys are wild, not domestic animals and sighting them is never guaranteed, particularly during the breeding season which runs from late September through to November. Also visit the 7th-century Zenkoji Temple, one of Japan's most prolific Buddhist temples before continuing by road to Matsumoto.



*Please note your luggage will be transferred to Matsumoto separately and will arrive on your second night, please ensure to pack an overnight bag for your first night in Matsumoto.*

### Destination Information

**Nagano** – The host city of the 1998 Winter Olympics, Nagano is the main access point for the Japanese Alps. Jigokudani Yaen-Koen – Home to Japanese Macaques, also known as Snow Monkeys, Jigokudani literally means ‘hell’s valley’. It is named this because of the steam and boiling water that bubbles out of small crevices in the ground. It is in the baths of this hot water that the resident Japanese Macaques like to soak. The monkeys live in large social groups and it can be quite entertaining to watch their interactions.

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**Zenkoji Temple** – Built in the 7th Century, Zenkoji stores what many believe to be the first Buddhist statue brought to Japan. Zenkoji's main hall has a tunnel in its basement where visitors try 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.

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### Day 7: Matsumoto

Meals: B, L, D

Begin the day with a visit to the magnificent 16th-century Matsumoto Castle, also known as ‘Crow Castle’, due to its intense black exterior. 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. From the coach parking to castle, it is around 15 minutes walk on flat road. Next, head to a miso house and learn about the process of making this famous Japanese seasoning. After lunch, visit a sake brewery and enjoy a tippie or two! There will be some free time this afternoon to further explore Matsumoto.



### Destination Information

**Matsumoto Castle** – Matsumoto Castle dates back to the 16th century and is the oldest wooden castle in Japan, it is a "hirajiro" meaning that the castle is built on plains rather than a hill or mountain.

**Miso** - Miso is a traditional Japanese seasoning, a fermented paste created from a mixture of soybeans, sea salt and rice koji. It is often used in soups, marinades and condiments.

**Day 8: Matsumoto – Mount Fuji - Mishima**

Meals: B, L, D

Travel by road to the Fuji Five Lakes area, the journey will take approximately 2 and a half hours. The region is spectacular with the calm waters of the five lakes, formed by past volcanic eruptions, reflecting Fuji's picture-perfect cone. Head up Fuji's 5th Station for spectacular mountain vistas, please note it is only possible to reach the 5th station if weather permits. If the 5th Station is closed, the Fuji San World Heritage Centre (formerly Fuji Visitor Centre) will be visited instead. Continue to tranquil Lake Ashi. Take a cruise across the lake before taking the Komagatake cable car for spectacular views of Mount Fuji and the lake below. Transfer to Mishima where you will stay overnight and enjoy the public onsen facilities.

**Destination Information**

**Fuji Five Lakes** – Formed by previous Mount Fuji eruptions, the Fuji Five Lakes is a region at the northern base of Mount Fuji made up of five beautiful lakes. It is one of the best places to view the famous Mt Fuji from a close distance.

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

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

**Day 9: Mishima - Tokyo**

Meals: B, L, D

With no less than 65 Buddhist temples and 19 Shinto shrines, begin the day with a 2 hour journey by road to Kamakura, a popular coastal city located south of Tokyo. Visit Kotokuin Temple which houses Japan's second tallest bronze buddha statue followed by a stroll through Komachi Street which is lined with pretty little shops before visiting Tsurugaoka Hachimangu, Kamakura's most important shrine. After lunch, continue to Tokyo and enjoy a leisurely stroll through Hamarikyū Garden. You will be on your feet for approximately 2-3 hours today.

**Destination Information**

**Kamakura** – A seaside city just south of Tokyo, Kamakura was the political centre of medieval Japan and is now a prominent resort town. The town is home to numerous Buddhist temples and Shinto shrine, best known for the remarkable Kotokuin Temple's Great Buddha.



**Kotokuin Temple** - Kotokuin Temple is famously home to the second tallest bronze statue of Buddha in Japan, surpassed only the Nara's Todaiji Temple. The statue was originally cast in 1252 and placed inside a large temple hall, however since the late 15th century the Buddha has been out in the open air.

**Tsurugaoka Hachimangu** - Tsurugaoka Hachimangu is Kamakura's most important shinto shrine and was founded in 1063 by Minamoto Yoriyoshi. The shrine is dedicated to Hachiman, the patron god of the Minamoto family and of the samurai in general.

**Tokyo** – Tokyo is a city of contrasts, famous for its neon-lit landscape, towering skyscrapers, peaceful shrines and lovingly tended gardens. Although long the political and cultural centre of Japan, Tokyo became the official capital when the Meiji Emperor moved it to Tokyo in 1867.

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**Day 10: Tokyo**

Meals: B, L, D

A dazzling, high-tech metropolis, Japan's capital has wonderfully traditional roots. Begin the day by ascending the soaring Tokyo Skytree, the world's tallest tower for panoramic views of the city below. Next, head to the old district of Asakusa and soak up the atmosphere at Sensoji, Tokyo's oldest and most famous temple, before browsing the stalls on Nakamise shopping street. Due to the limited coach parking, you may need to walk around 15 minutes on flat road. After lunch, take time to explore the Tokyo National Museum to learn about Tokyo's historical heritage. You will be on your feet for 4-5 hours during your touring in Tokyo.



Return to your hotel where your guide will let you know what time to meet for this evening's dinner cruise. Transfer from the hotel to your boat and take a leisurely 1-hour dinner cruise on Tokyo Bay for some excellent city vistas. You will need to get on and off your boat this evening without assistance.

**Destination Information**

**Tokyo Skytree** – The tallest structure in Japan and the tallest tower in the world at 634 metres, Tokyo Skytree is predominantly a television and radio broadcast tower and is earthquake resistant.

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

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

**Tokyo National Museum** - Located in Ueno Park, the Tokyo National Museum is Japan's oldest museum. Here you'll find the world's largest collection of Japanese art, including ancient pottery, Buddhist sculptures, samurai swords, colourful woodblock prints, eloquent kimonos and much, much more.

**Day 11-12: Depart Tokyo**

Meals: B

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This morning is free at leisure before transferring to the airport for your overnight return flight home. Please note: Only breakfast is included today.

Late check-out is not included in our Experience Japan 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 - TRAVEL INFORMATION

### VISAS:

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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:

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

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

### AIRPORT TRANSFERS:

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As we offer our customers a variety of airlines to suit your needs, clients will arrive/depart in Japan at different times during the day. Depending on the number of customers arriving/departing on the same flight as yourself, the type of transfer to your hotel/airport will vary.

You will always be met on arrival by English-speaking staff and transferred all the way to your hotel either by:

- Direct shared bus (shared with other passengers, not just Wendy Wu Tours clients),
- Shared bus plus taxi from the nearest bus stop to the hotel (maximum 5 minutes' walk),
- Chartered coach (if there are more than 8 Wendy Wu Tours passengers arriving at the same time).

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

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

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

Please ensure your Wendy Wu Tours luggage tag is visible on your suitcase/hand luggage, as this may also assist your guide in identifying you.

### EATING IN JAPAN:

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Japanese cuisine is delicious, colourful and healthy. Meals are usually served with a bowl of rice and a bowl of miso soup and consist usually of fish, pickled vegetables and meat. Japan's other main staple is noodles, most famous being Udon and Soba. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our fully inclusive group tours from the groups' arrival until the day of departure. Our schedule of meals is designed so that you can experience the local dishes, their individual flavours as well as the different ways they are prepared and cooked throughout Japan. Food is an important element of Japanese culture. It is a time for families and friends to come together and much of family life revolves around the dinner table. Most food is eaten with chopsticks so best get practicing as cutlery is not always available at restaurants.

Breakfast will mostly be buffet style but may be a set-menu. Lunches are mostly pre-set options as is custom in many local restaurants. Dinner is usually buffet-style, featuring a wide selection of high-quality Japanese and Western dishes, but may occasionally be a set-menu. We usually find this style of dining suits the wide and varied tastes of our customers on tour. These are also pre-booked in advance prior to your arrival by your guides. This will provide greater flexibility and allow you to sample a broad range of local cuisines and dishes. All beverages will be at your own expense and are readily available. Please note: if you have any dietary requirements, you must inform us before your tour starts, and please be aware that restaurants may not always be able to accommodate these. Gluten-free food may not be as readily available as in New Zealand.

On some days where lots of sights are covered, dinner times may be early, and your tour group may head directly to the restaurant after sightseeing without stopping at your hotel to freshen up.

### DEVELOPMENT IN JAPAN:

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Japan is a developed country and as such matches the west in modernity and technological advances. Japan is an extremely safe country and takes great responsibility in maintaining high safety standards.

### TRANSPORT:

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**Coaches:** Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Roads in Japan are extremely well maintained and are comparatively smooth compared with the rest of Asia.

**Bullet trains:** Second class reserved seats are booked for our groups on bullet trains; there will be toilet facilities on board.

Due to the limited space on bullet trains, a separate luggage transfer service will be arranged for all suitcases (1 case per person). You will need to pack a separate overnight bag to carry on the train as your suitcase will not arrive until the following day after a bullet train journey. Your guide will indicate when you will need to prepare for this throughout your tour.

#### **TIPPING POLICY:**

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Although tipping in Japan is not customary, if you feel you have received an excellent service, please feel free to tip your guide at your discretion.

#### **PORTERAGE:**

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Please be aware that portering is not included on our tours in Japan. You will therefore need to be able to handle your own luggage within the hotel and when using transportation like trains and coaches.

#### **ACCOMMODATION:**

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Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. In the Fuji area, hotels tend to be more traditional in style and culture. In this area, you may be asked to take your shoes off at the door and store them in a secure locker – this is very traditional Japanese culture.

Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the New Zealand and Japan.

Please note that in Japan, hotel rooms and bathrooms are renowned for being small. Standard single rooms are usually smaller than a standard double or twin room, contain one small double bed (or one single bed), and are designed for one person to use. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Hotels in Japan often do not have porters and you will be required to carry your own luggage. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/local guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

#### **LUGGAGE:**

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All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

### PERSONAL EXPENSES AND OPTIONAL TOURINGS:

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Personal Expense - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you.

Optional Tours - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available.

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

### CLIMBING STEPS:

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Sightseeing at nearly all the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defence against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

### VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

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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](http://www.safetravel.govt.nz)

### BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

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We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with [www.safetravel.govt.nz](http://www.safetravel.govt.nz) as in the event of an emergency, New Zealand Consular assistance will be more readily available.

Up until the day you travel, it is vital you keep up to date and familiarised with the entry requirements as these can change at short notice. You are personally responsible for completing any entry forms, conducting any covid tests (if necessary), etc and adhering to countries' specific entry requirements.

You can also access the New Zealand Government's travel advisory service for up-to-date information about your destination on the same website.

#### **AFTER YOUR BOOKING:**

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Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation along with a link to our website where you can find your visa information (if applicable) and other important information. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

#### **ITINERARY CHANGES:**

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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.

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