

**Zen Japan**  
**10 days/9 nights**  
**Tokyo, Yudanaka, Kyoto, Koya-San, Osaka**  
**Discovery, History, Culture**

**Day 1: Tokyo**

After passing formalities at Narita Airport, you will be met by your driver in the arrival hall who will assist you with the shared transfer to your hotel (60 – 90 minutes). The remainder of your day is free to rest and relax or to start the discovery of this fascinating city.

One of the World's most cutting-edge capitals, Tokyo is a city of contrasts. Famous for its cutting edge modernity, neon-lit landscape and towering skyscrapers, it is also home to sprawling parkland, peaceful shrines and temples and lovingly tended gardens. Despite its love affair with manga pop culture, fashion, high-tech trends and conspicuous consumption, below the surface is a city that has its roots in an ancient heritage. Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples stand close to skyscrapers as a reminder of a more contemplative time and at the heart of the hyperactive center lies the serene Imperial Palace, the home of the ruling emperor that provides a tangible link to the city's historical past. Behind the shopping, entertainment and commercial emporia can be found quaint wooden houses, private gardens with meticulously clipped bonsai trees and the Zen-like calm of the Hamarikyū Gardens. The city's reputation as a mega-expensive metropolis is ill conceived and visitors can take advantage of inexpensive izakaya bars and neighborhood cafes that serve delicious noodles and rice dishes. Overnight in Tokyo.

**Option: [1] Mobile Internet SIM card**

Stay connected while in Japan with a SIM card to use on your unlocked smartphone or tablet! The SIM will allow you to connect your device to mobile Internet up to 2GB data traffic. Please let us know your device brand and model at the time of booking.

**Day 2: Tokyo**

Take a day tour of this fascinating city with a local guide, making use of Tokyo's comprehensive and user-friendly public transport system. The day begins with a visit to Meiji Shrine, a shrine dedicated to the deified spirit of Emperor Meiji and a popular place for traditional Japanese weddings. Take a walk down Omotesando shopping street, a broad tree lined avenue home to the flagship stores of the world's top fashion brands. Head across town to Asakusa, Tokyo's old town where you can soak in the atmosphere of the Tokyo of old. Visit Sensoji, Tokyo's oldest temple and wander down Nakamise, a shopping street that has been providing temple visitors with a variety of traditional, local snacks and tourist souvenirs for centuries. Take a boat cruise on the Sumida River passing under 12 bridges. Disembark in Hamarikyū garden, an Edo Period Japanese garden surrounded by the Shiodome district's futuristic skyscrapers, a great example of how Japan is the land of contrasts, where you will stop for a cup of steaming matcha (Japanese tea) and Japanese sweets in a tea house on a small island in the park's lake. Overnight in Tokyo. [B]

**Day 3: Tokyo, Nagano, Yudanaka**

Your morning is at leisure. In the early afternoon, board Japan's world famous Shinkansen bullet train. With a top speed of 300km/h (186 mph), the Shinkansen takes 1 hour and 40 minutes to reach Nagano. Whilst in Nagano, you may want to take an unescorted visit to historic Zenkoji temple, which is a short bus ride from Nagano station. One of the most visited temples in Japan, Zenkoji was founded 1,400 years ago and 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 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.

From Nagano, you will then take a local train to Yudanaka (45 min), and then it is a short shuttle bus ride to your ryokan (Japanese guest house). Your traditional style accommodation has tatami mat flooring, futon beds and hot spring onsen baths. As well as in your ryokan, there are many public onsens around town that you can try as well, and you will see local people in kimono strolling down the street in yukata (light robes) as they head for a soak. Dinner tonight will be a Japanese traditional kaiseki meal, comprised of 9 or more dishes. The meal is made up of seasonal dishes using only the freshest of local Nagano ingredients.

Overnight in Yudanaka. [B/D]

**Day 4: Yudanaka, Shibu Onsen, Yudanaka**

This morning head on your own to the Jigokudani Yaen Koen to see the famous Snow Monkeys. Jigokudani literally means 'hell's valley' due to the steam and boiling water that bubbles out of small crevices in the frozen ground, and it is in the baths of this boiling water that the resident Japanese Macaques like to soak in on. The monkeys live in large social groups, and it can be quite entertaining to watch their interactions. Accustomed to humans, they can be observed from very close and almost completely ignore their human guests. Whilst the monkeys are most numerous during the colder months, they can be observed all year round. In the afternoon we recommend a visit to the nearby charming town of Obuse, with traditional houses, stores and streets. Obuse is known for its delicious chestnuts and as the home of Hokusai, the famous painter and printmaker from Japan's Edo period. A visit to his museum is a must. No visit to Obuse is complete without stopping in at the Masuichi sake brewery for a taste of their delicious sake made from the high quality local rice. Overnight in Yudanaka [B/D]

**Day 5: Yudanaka, Kyoto**

Today you will ride the scenic Shinano limited express train to Nagoya, speeding through the beautiful Japanese Alps, and then change onto Japan's world famous Shinkansen bullet train to Kyoto. Capable of speeds of up to 185 mph the journey will take a total of 3.5 hours. Your afternoon will be at leisure. This is a must see destination in Japan. Kyoto is the nation's former capital and was the residence of the emperor from 794 until 1868. It is Japan's seventh largest metropolis with a population of around 1.4 million and a city of culture that offers a plethora of temples, shrines and other historically priceless structures that still survive today. With 2,000 religious buildings, including 1,600 Buddhist temples and 400 Shinto shrines, as well as palaces, gardens and associated architecture, it is one of the best preserved cities in Japan and has been awarded UNESCO World Heritage status. Kyoto represents the "Japan of old" and beyond the high rise skyscrapers built as a monument to progress, the real monument to Japan's historical and cultural past can be found in the city's narrow alleyways where tea houses abound and kimono-clad geisha hurry from elegant function to function. This is a place to go back in time to Japan's mysterious past where echoes of the court nobility resonate at the Imperial Palace and the search for contemplation can be found in Ryoanji's Zen rock gardens. Overnight in Kyoto. [B]

**Day 6: Kyoto (Spiritual tour)**

This morning experience the quintessential Japanese enlightenment experience – Zazen (Zen meditation). Your guide will meet you in the morning and take you to a Zen temple, where you can learn the basics of the sitting meditation that led the Buddha to Enlightenment: folded legs, erect posture, half-closed eyes and a focus on measured breathing that leads to awareness of the way the mind works. After Zazen, head to Chion-in temple. Chion-in is the head temple of the Jodo (Pure Land) sect of Japanese Buddhism, which has millions of followers and is one the most popular Buddhist sects in Japan. The Sanmon Gate, Chionin's main entrance gate, dates back to the early 1600s, stands 79 ft. tall and 154 ft. wide, making it the largest wooden gate in Japan. From Chion-in walk through Maruyama Park and Yasaka Shrine, one of Kyoto's most popular Shinto Shrines. Your spiritual day finishes with a Tea Ceremony in a Gion teahouse. Your Tea Master will give you a full explanation of Japanese tea as well as the tea ceremony itself, a long history and relationship with Zen Buddhism. The Master will also tell you the meaning behind each movement involved in the making and serving of the tea, as well as the equipment involved. Overnight in Kyoto. [B]

**Day 7: Kyoto (Philosophers Path)**

The Philosopher's Path is a pleasant stone path through the northern part of Kyoto's Higashiyama district. The path follows a canal, which is lined by hundreds of cherry trees. Approximately 1 mile and a quarter long, the path begins around Ginkakuji (Silver Pavilion) and ends in the neighborhood of Nanzenji. The path gets its name due to Nishida Kitaro, one of Japan's most famous philosophers, who was said to practice meditation while walking this route on his daily commute to Kyoto University. There are many small temples and shrines to stop off along the walk. Your afternoon is free. Overnight in Kyoto. [B]

**Day 8: Kyoto, Koya-san**

This morning you make a scenic journey to holy Mt Koya (Koya-san) where you will meet your guide. The 2-hour train ride is one of the best in Japan, as the local train winds its way up into the mountains of Wakayama Prefecture. The final ascent to the top of Koya is made by cable car. Your knowledgeable local guide will be

waiting for you on arrival to show you Koya-san's sights and explain about Japanese Buddhism. Mount Koya is the center of Shingon Buddhism, an important Buddhist sect, which was introduced to Japan in 805 by Kobo Daishi. Since then over one hundred temples have sprung up along the streets of Koyasan. The most important among them are Kongobuji, the head temple of Shingon Buddhism, and Okunoin, the site of Kobo Daishi's mausoleum. Koya-san and its surroundings is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Tonight you will be staying at a shukubo, Japanese temple lodging. Dinner will be shojin ryori, traditional Buddhist cuisine. This vegetarian meal is not only healthy but delicious as well! Overnight in Koya-san. [B/D]

**Day 9: Koya-san, Osaka**

An early start today as you will be able to hear the monks chanting their morning prayers. This spiritual experience is followed by a shojin ryori breakfast. The rest of the morning is free to further explore Koya-san, before making the 2-hour trip by train to Osaka. Japan's third biggest city, what Osaka lacks in sightseeing draw cards it makes up for with its flamboyance, fun loving people, and amazing food. Known as 'Japan's kitchen', take a walk down Dotonbori, a former pleasure district turned restaurant mecca where amongst other things you can sample fugu (poisonous puffer fish) and takoyaki (octopus balls). Historically the commercial capital of Japan with a population of 2.6 million, Osaka is Japan's third largest metropolis and second most important business city and it has been the economic powerhouse of the Kansai region for centuries. Osaka first gained prominence when a powerful warlord built the country's most magnificent castle in the 16th century. To develop resources for his castle town, the ruler persuaded merchants from other parts of the nation to resettle in Osaka and it became an important distribution center. As the merchant class prospered, the town grew and traditional arts, such as kabuki and bunraku flourished. With the legacy of the city's commercial beginnings still intact, Osaka is renowned as an international business center. It is also famous for its local cuisine, the castle, bustling port, aquarium, underground shopping arcades, the oldest state temple in Japan and its popular Universal Studios attraction. This afternoon is free for you to catch up on any last minute shopping, and have one more delicious Japanese meal before heading home. Overnight in Osaka. [B]

**Day 10: Osaka, USA**

Your day is free until you're the appointed time for your shuttle bus to Kansai International Airport (60 minutes).

[B] = Breakfast | [B/D] = Breakfast and Dinner

**Tour includes:**

- Shared transfer airport (Narita or Haneda) to hotel
- Shared transfer hotel to Kansai Airport
- 9 nights accommodation
  - Tokyo – 2 nights
  - Yudanaka - 2 nights
  - Kyoto - 3 nights
  - Koya-San - 1 night
  - Osaka - 1 night
- Meals
  - Breakfast daily
  - 3 dinners
- 7-day Japan Rail Pass in Economy class
- 2-day Nagaden Pass (days 3 & 4)
- 2-day Nankai-Mt. Koya Pass (days 8 & 9)
- Train ticket Yudanaka – Nagano, cultural activity in Kyoto
- Full day tour of Tokyo
- Cultural activity in Kyoto
- Private full day tour of Kyoto by public transport (day 6)
- Private half day tour of Kyoto by public transport (day 7)
- 4 hours guiding in Mt. Koya (guide will meet you at Mt. Koya station)



- Entrance fees where indicated

**Price does not include:**

- International or Domestic airfares, taxes and fees
- Meals other than specified as included
- Travel Insurance or expenses of a personal nature (minibar, phone call, laundry, etc.),
- Drinks or personal expenses or entrance fees for any extra sightseeing or optional activities
- Any guiding, transfer or service not expressly mentioned in the text

**Hotels in your tour:**

City	Hotel Name	Tripadvisor
<b>Standard</b>		
Tokyo	Shiba Park	4
Yudanaka	Biyu no Yado Ryokan	3.5
Kyoto	Vista Premio Kyoto	4
Koya-san	Shukubo temple	4
Osaka	Tokyu Rei Osaka	4.5
<b>Superior</b>		
Tokyo	Park Hotel	4.5
Yudanaka	Kokuya Ryokan	4
Kyoto	Kyoto Tokyu	4
Koya-san	Shukubo Temple	4.5
Osaka	New Otani Osaka	4.5

Hotels will be confirmed at time of booking and may be substituted by similar ones at time of booking.

**Tour Prices:**

Category	Season	Double	Single		Triple	4 Pax
			Alone	With Others		
Standard Grade Hotels	Low	\$2,819	\$4,539	\$3,479	\$2,445	\$2,409
	High	\$3,285	\$4,889	\$4,019	\$2,849	\$2,869
Superior Grade Hotels	Low	\$3,525	\$5,815	\$4,755	\$3,079	\$3,109
	High	\$3,875	\$6,505	\$5,119	\$3,349	\$3,459

Prices are per person and may change without notice

**Options:**

Description	Price
SIM card (per card)	\$49

**Upgrades**

Service	Type	1 Pax	2 Pax	3 Pax	4 Pax
Japan Rail Pass	Fist Class	\$105			
Transfer by private car	Airport	\$385	\$165	\$119	\$79
Rail & Coach * stations Transfers	Economy	\$519	\$259	\$285	\$215
	First	\$565	\$305	\$329	\$255
Assistance at Train Stations	Day 5	\$135	\$65	\$45	\$35
	Day 8	\$135	\$65	\$45	\$35
City Tours by private car**	Day 2	\$705	\$345	\$289	\$215
	Day 6	\$575	\$289	\$215	\$165

- Transfers will be operated by a mix of taxi and private cars, and on foot when the hotel's location is directly adjoining the station.
- Kyoto, Day 7, is a walking tour
- Mt. Koya, Day 8, there are car restrictions in the area

**Tour Code:** JP02TYO17DA