

**The Golden Route
9 days – 8 nights
Tokyo, Hakone, Mt Fuji, Kyoto, Nara and Fushimi
Discovery, Culture, History**

The Golden Route strings Japan's must-see destinations in one streamlined itinerary which we have filled in with hands-on cultural experiences and visits to some of the country's most famous sites such as making sushi in Tokyo, learning a traditional art in Kyoto, and visiting Todaiji in Nara famous for its giant Buddha statue and sacred deer that roam freely within Nara Park.

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.

Option: [2] Upgrade to private airport transfer

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]

Option: [3] Upgrade to private car tour

Day 3: Tokyo

The world's largest fish market, Tsukiji Market handles about 2,888 tons of marine products a day, worth about 2.8 billion yen (\$20 million). Some 450 kinds of fish are received; from penny-per-piece sardines to golden brown dried sea slug caviar, a bargain at \$473 a pound. Some of the giant tuna go for well over 1,000,000 yen each (\$8,000). Take time to wander through this enormous market, exploring both the

vegetable and fruit areas plus the impressive seafood section. There may also be an opportunity to see a complete tuna being cut and filleted.

You will then visit a typical Japanese home. Your guide will answer all your questions about Japanese culture and everyday life in Tokyo during the transfer by public transportation. Learn to prepare maki sushi (rolled sushi), gunkan maki (sushi rice wrapped with a strip of seaweed and topped with soft ingredients), and nigiri sushi (sushi rice topped with a slice of raw fish). You will then get to enjoy your home-made sushi for lunch. The afternoon is at leisure. Overnight in Tokyo. [B]

Option: [4] Old Tokyo Walking tour

This afternoon explore Tokyo's shitamachi (downtown). The suburb of Yanaka was miraculously spared the carnage of the Allied bombings in World War II, and part of its charm today of its best spots lies in this sense of being hidden. Visit old temples and shrines, one of Tokyo's oldest Buddhist cemeteries as well as traditional shops selling Japanese paper and sweets. One of the most popular parks for hanami (cherry blossom parties) in Tokyo, Ueno Park was originally part of Kaneiji Temple, which used to be one of the city's largest and wealthiest temples and a family temple of the ruling Tokugawa clan during the Edo Period. Now it is home to some of Tokyo's best museums, including the Tokyo National Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Last stop for the day is Ueno's Ameyoko-cho, a busy market street underneath the train lines. Originally the site of a black market after World War Two, this bustling market is the last of its kind in Tokyo, and is filled with shops and stalls selling various products such as fresh fish, dried food and spices. At one of the many open air restaurants under the train tracks, you can stop for a cold drink and a yajitori (grilled chicken skewer).

Day 4: Tokyo, Hakone, Mt Fuji National Park

Hakone is a natural nature wonderland and is famous for its hot springs, outdoor pursuits and the view of the nearby Mount Fuji. It is part of the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park, about 62 miles from Tokyo, thereby providing a popular weekend destination for city residents keen to escape the frenzy of the capital. Beautiful Hakone has about everything a vacationer could wish for. Besides the towering mountains, lakes and views of Mount Fuji, it is also blessed with interesting historical sites.

Travel by train to Hakone, the gateway to the Mt Fuji region. Armed with your Hakone Pass, take advantage of the extensive local transport network to explore this stunning region. A majestic replica of a pirate ship will sweep you across the volcanic Lake Ashi, so deep that it never freezes in the winter. You can also ride switchback trains, ropeways and buses to get around to explore some of the museums, shrines, and shops scattered around the area.

Tonight you will stay in a Japanese traditional ryokan, sleeping on futons laid out on tatami mats and tasting delicious meals and piping hot onsen (hot spring) baths. Overnight in Hakone. [B/D]

Option: [5] Hotel to railroad station transfer

Option: [6] Hakone-Yokomoto railroad station to hotel transfer

Day 5: Hakone, Kyoto

Today you will ride Japan's world famous Shinkansen bullet train to Kyoto. Capable of speeds of up to 185mph (360km/h), the Shinkansen takes 2 hours to reach Kyoto.

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. This afternoon you will have the opportunity to experience Japanese culture hands-on, choosing between one of the following two activities (the same for the entire party).

Home Visit with Cultural Experience

Visit the home of an instructor of one of Japan's Traditional Arts. One of our assistants will meet at your hotel and escort you to the instructor's house. You may choose from Tea Ceremony, Flower Arrangement, Calligraphy or Origami. Enjoy learning these hands-on traditional arts with the support/advice from the professional instructor and interpretation from our assistant. Please notice the entire party has to choose the same activity.

Or

Japanese Cooking in Machiya Townhouse

Japanese cuisine has such high reputation that it was declared UNESCO Intangible World Heritage. In this tour you will try your hand at making some of the dishes that made this cuisine so popular in the world and in particular learn about Kyoto's typical kappo cuisine.

In Japanese, "kappo" means to cut ingredients with a knife and cook them over a fire. At a kappo style restaurant, fine seasonal cuisine is served over a counter where you sit face to face with a chef. In this class you will be the chef!

Overnight in Kyoto. [B] *Dinner included only if taking the Cooking Lesson. Make your own way to the venue.

Option: [7] Hakone hotel to Odawara railroad station transfer

Option: [8] Kyoto railroad station to hotel transfer

Day 6: Kyoto

Today you explore the former imperial capital with a knowledgeable local guide, utilizing Kyoto's comprehensive bus system to visit some of Kyoto's World Heritage Sites.

You will start your day with a visit to Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion), which was originally built as a retirement villa for the Shogun. After his death it became a Buddhist Temple at his request, and is now one of Kyoto's most famous temples. Nijo Castle is an ornamental castle was built by the founder of the Edo Shogunate as his Kyoto residence and is surrounded by stunning surrounding gardens. The main building was completed in 1603, and is famous for its architecture, decorated sliding doors and 'chirping' nightingale floors. Take a walk down to Nishiki Market, a narrow, five-block long shopping street lined by more than one hundred shops and restaurants. Known as "Kyoto's Kitchen", this lively retail market specializes in all things food related, like fresh seafood, produce, knives and cookware, and is a great place to find seasonal foods and Kyoto specialties, such as Japanese sweets, pickles, dried seafood and sushi.

The final stop today is Kiyomizu (Pure Water) Temple a Kyoto landmark. From the 43-foot high veranda jutting out from the Main Hall you can enjoy amazing views of the whole of Kyoto, whilst pondering the fact that both the Main Hall and Veranda were built without the use of nails or any kind of joiners. However, it is a steep walk uphill, and the temple is now under repair work, although it is still enjoyable.

You may decide, instead, to visit Sanjusangendo, a temple, which is Japan's longest wooden structure (394 ft.). It is famous for its 1001 statues of Kannon, the goddess of mercy. In the center of the main hall sits a large, wooden statue of a 1000-armed Kannon that is flanked on each side by 500 statues of human sized armed Kannon standing in ten rows. Together they make for an awesome sight. Overnight in Kyoto. [B]

Option: [9] Tour upgrade to private car

Day 7: Kyoto (Nara and Fushimi)

Transfer from your hotel to Nara by train (45min) with a local guide. For 74 years during the 8th century Nara was Japan's capital and many of the temples and shrines built at that time still remain. Visit Todaiji temple, the world's largest wooden building and home to Japan's largest Buddha. Next stop is Nara's most celebrated shrine, Kasuga Taisha, established in 768 AD and famous for its hundreds of bronze and stone lanterns which have been donated by worshipers.

Take a wander through Nara Park, called Deer park by locals due to the large population of more than 1,000 tame deer living there. On the way back from Nara, visit Fushimi Inari Shrine, which was used in the movie "Memoirs of a Geisha". It is home to over 10,000 red torii gates, which form a path up the mountain behind the temple. Overnight in Kyoto. [B]

Day 8: Kyoto, Tokyo

Today, make the return trip to Tokyo by Shinkansen train(2.5 hours) at any time you want, so you can either spend your day sightseeing in Kyoto, or head back early to see more of Tokyo (please inform us at the time of booking). Overnight in Tokyo. [B]

Option: [10] Kyoto hotel to Kyoto railroad station transfer

Option: [11] Tokyo railroad station to hotel transfer

Day 9: Tokyo, USA

Your day is free until your shared transfer to Narita or Haneda Airport (60-90 minutes). [B]

Option: [12] Upgrade to private Narita Airport transfer

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

Your tour includes:

- Arrival and departure transfers
- Assistance at airports
- 8 nights accommodation
 - Tokyo – 4 nights
 - Hakone – 1 night
 - Kyoto – 3 nights
- Meals
 - Daily breakfast
 - 1 lunch
 - 1 dinner
- Tokyo day tour
- Tsukiji Fish Market Walk and Sushi Making
- Nara and Fushimi day tour
- Entrance fees for specified tours
- 7 Day Japan Rail Pass (Standard Class)
- English speaking local guides as specified



Price does not include:

- International and domestic airfares
- Meals other than specified as included
- Options
- 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
- All that is not specifically described in the text is not included

Hotels in your tour:

City	Hotel Name	Tripadvisor
Grand Class		
Tokyo	Villa Fontaine Shiodome	4
Hakone	Yutorelo An Ryokan	3.5
Kyoto	Vista Premio Kyoto	4
Superior Class		
Tokyo	Park Hotel	4.5
Hakone	Tenyu Ryokan	3.5
Kyoto	Kyoto Tokyu	4.5

Hotels may be substituted by similar ones at time of booking

Tour Prices:

Category	Double	Single*	Single**	3 pax	4 pax
Standard	\$2,785	\$3,535	\$5,169	\$2,385	\$2,279
Superior	\$3,339	\$4,269	\$6,075	\$2,965	\$2,835

* Single traveling with others

** Single traveling alone

Prices are valid January 4 through December 29 2018, are per person and may change without notice.

Prices may be subject to supplement due to local events or seasons and will be confirmed at time of booking.

Options

Description	Type	1 pax	2 pax	3 pax	4 pax
[1] - Internet SIM card	2 GB	\$49			
[2] - Upgrade to Private Airport Transfer	Private Car	\$49	\$145	\$99	\$69
[3] - Tour upgrade for tour by private car	Private Car	\$849	\$415	\$319	\$235
[4] - Old Tokyo Walking Tour	Shared	\$379	\$209	\$155	\$125
	Private Car	\$875	\$449	\$349	\$269
[5] - Tokyo Hotel to Tokyo Station Transfer	By Taxi	\$209	\$105	\$79	\$59
	Private car	\$279	\$139	\$115	\$85
[6] - Hakone-Yokomoto station to hotel transfer	Private Car	\$189	\$95	\$99	\$75
[7] - Hakone Hotel to Odawara Station Transfer	Private Car	\$189	\$95	\$99	\$75
[8] - Kyoto Station to Kyoto Hotel Transfer	By Taxi	\$209	\$105	\$79	\$59
	Private Car	\$255	\$125	\$105	\$79
[9] - Optional tour upgrade	Private Car	\$625	\$305	\$239	\$175
[10] - Kyoto Hotel to Kyoto Station Transfer	By Taxi	\$209	\$105	\$79	\$59
	Private Car	\$255	\$125	\$105	\$79
[11] - Tokyo Station to Tokyo Hotel Transfer	By Taxi	\$209	\$105	\$79	\$59
	Private car	\$279	\$139	\$115	\$85
[12] - Upgrade to Private Narita Airport Transfer	Private Car	\$419	\$175	\$115	\$69

Prices are per person and my change without notice

Tour Code: JP01TYO18DA