

**Hanami - Cherry Blossoms in Japan\***

**12 days – 119 nights**

**Tokyo, Mt. Fuji, Hakone, Kawaguchico, Matsumoto, Nagoya, Takoname, Kyoto, Lake Biwa, Nara  
Discovery, Culture, History**

**This program may be operated for individuals or for groups  
This is a suggested itinerary – Please call us to customize**

*\*Cherry blossom's expected blooming date is from the mid-March to mid-April*

*The hanami season lasts a very long time, from the end of December to May, but it can only be seen a few days at each place in Japan. In the southern islands of the country, where it is very hot, the first sakura flowers are visible from the beginning of winter, towards the end of December. But in the north, in Hokkaido, you have to wait until May to see the cherry blossoms. In the center of the country (Kyoto, Tokyo ...) hanami is celebrated from mid-March to mid-April. Each year, the first flowers appear on a different date and there are two-week differences from one year to the next. In Tokyo, the average date of onset of flowering is March 28th, for maximum flowering on April 5th.*

**Day 1: Tokyo**

Arrival at Tokyo International Airport. After the entry formalities, welcome by our guide and transfer to your hotel. Rest of day on your own.

*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.*

**Day 2: Tokyo**

Today, visit the Shinjuku Gyoen garden and Ueno Park, one of the most beautiful parks in Japan, to admire the cherry blossoms. Walk to the Ameyoko Market and then visit the historic district of Asakusa, famous for its Sensoji Temple. After lunch, you will discover the Meiji Shrine, pass over the Harajuku Bridge where you may see young people dressed in an eccentric way and walk down Takeshita-dori Street. Finally, discover the district of Akihabara and its neon colored buildings. Dinner at a local restaurant. [B/D]

**Day 3: Tokyo**

This morning, visit Asakusa Temple, Nakamise shopping street, Sumida River Sakura spot, Ginza shopping district and Imperial Palace. The rest of the day and evening will be dedicated to the cherry blossoms. You can see them all over the city. From a few trees grouped near a station to larger plots, it all depends on how you want to enjoy it. For a typical photo, take a stroll in the garden of Chidorigafuchi near the Imperial Palace. The boats sailing on water littered with petals are a classic. Nakameguro offers a beautiful landscape all day long with its canal lined with cherry blossoms and lanterns, while people drink champagne on the terrace cafes that line the road. In the evening, the trees are illuminated and the whole area is at the party with food stands. Koishikawa Korakuen Garden offers a traditional Japanese garden with beautiful blooming cherry trees offering the opportunity to

take great photos. Families will picnic at Asukayama Park and Showa Memorial Park where the vast spaces are perfect for relaxing and entertaining. Dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight in Tokyo [B/D]

#### Day 4: Tokyo, Mt Fuji, Hakone, Kawaguchiko

During the Golden Week, Mt. Fuji is stormed by locals and tourist To avoid the crowds and enjoy the magic of the place, we'll leave early morning to visit the park! On the occasion of Fuji Shibazakura Matsuri, Mount Fuji is adorned with a sumptuous pink coat. With nearly 800,000 shibazakura - Japanese name of the phlox mousse, variety "lawn" cherry - this flower festival is the largest of its kind near the capital. Red, pink, purple and white bands crisscross Ryujin Ike pond, three kilometers south of Motosuko Lake in the Five Lakes area. A festival in Japan would not be complete without the local culinary specialties that accompany it. We'll enjoy the "Mount Fuji Delicious Food Festival" to discover the essential recipes of the region, often revisited for the occasion with shibazakura sauce: Fujinomiya yakisoba (fried noodles), Fujiyama taiyaki (fish-shaped cake) stuffed with red bean paste). After lunch, continue to Kawaguchiko to discover the small village with thatched roofs of Saiko Iyashi no Sato Nenba, and Mount Fuji in the background. You dine and relax at the onsen (thermal bath) of your ryokan. [B/L/D]

#### Day 5: Kawaguchiko, Matsumoto

This morning, take the Kachi Kachi cable car, from which you have a magnificent view of the lake and Mount Fuj. Return to Tokyo to board Japan's world-famous Shinkansen bullet train. With a top speed of 300km/h (186 mph), the Shinkansen takes 1 hour and 20 minutes to reach Matsumoto. Visit Matsumoto Castle, nicknamed the Raven, one of the few castles in Japan that have not been rebuilt. Check in at the hotel. There are about 300 cherry trees planted around the castle moats and inside the paid inner grounds of the castle. Dinner in a local restaurant. [B/D]

#### Day 6: Matsumoto, Takoname, Nagoya

Early departure by Shinkansen bullet train to Nagoya. Upon arrival you'll be met by our guide for a drive to Tokoname. Lunch at a local restaurant before visiting this small town renowned for its thousand-year history in the art of ceramics. Walk its "pottery trail", whose floor is made of pottery breakage, and see the Hall of ceramics, walls made of pottery or bottles of shochu (potato-based Japanese alcohol) and chimneys of old ovens. Return to Nagoya for dinner and overnight. [B/L/D]

#### Day 7: Nagoya, Kyoto

Free morning. After lunch, transfer to Nagoya's rail-road station to board your bullet train to Kyoto where you'll be picked up by our guide a taken for a walk under the cherry trees of the path of philosophy in the traditional district of Gion. Check-in at the hotel. Dinner at the restaurant. [B/D]

*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.*

#### Day 8: Kyoto

Welcome to the ancient imperial capital where you will first enjoy a panoramic view from the wooden verandas of the famous Kiyomizudera Temple. A few blocks away, we will go to the monastery Sanjusangendo and its thousand and one statues of Kannon, the goddess of Mercy. You will walk in the late afternoon in the traditional district of Gion and its famous ochaya, houses of geisha, one of

the most beautiful floral parks of Western Japan. In a more spiritual setting, the Chikurin-in and Kinpusenji temples will also reveal their magnificent blooms. Return to the hotel for dinner and overnight. [B/D]

### Day 9: Kyoto

Today, continue discovering the ancient capital of Japan: The Golden Pavilion, which is reflected in its pond, the Ryoanji Temple, the famous stone garden, and the magnificent Nijo Castle. After lunch, attend the dazzling Miyako Odori, a geisha dance show held every year since 1872 and held in April only. Then, participate in a tea ceremony, a unique experience. Finally, stroll through the picturesque streets of Sannenzaka. Dinner in a local restaurant. [B/D]

### Day 10: Kyoto (Lake Biwa)

After breakfast, we leave to the shores of the largest lake in the country, Lake Biwa, where you'll discover the Japanese countryside and its various crafts. You will go back to the time of samurai in front of ancient stone ramparts, wooden merchants' houses and historic paths to reach one of the few medieval castles preserved intact, thanks to a special request of the Emperor Meiji, in the 19th century. It is part of the National Treasures. Return to Kyoto for dinner and overnight. [B/D]

### Day 11 - Apr 3: Kyoto (Nara)

Departure for Nara, first capital of Japan. His sacred deer, who roam free in the city, will not hesitate to come begging for food. You visit the Todaiji \* temple, famous for its huge Buddha statue, and then the Kasuga shrine \* and its hanging lanterns. After lunch, you head back to Kyoto and discover the Fushimi Inari Shrine. You go for a stroll under its vermilion torii tunnels in the hills, then you visit the sake museum, where you will have a tasting of this national alcohol. Return to Kyoto for dinner in a local restaurant. [B/D]

### Day 12: Kyoto, USA

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel and some free time. At the appointed time you'll be picked-up and transferred to Kyoto airport to board your flight back home. [B]

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



**Tour includes:**

- Private transfer airport (Narita or Haneda) to hotel
- Private transfer hotel to Kansai Airport
- 11 nights' accommodation
  - Tokyo – 3 nights
  - Kawaguchiko - 1 night
  - Matsumoto – 1 night
  - Nagoya - 1 night
  - Kyoto - 5 nights
- Meals
  - Breakfast daily
  - 2 lunches
  - 10 dinners
- Full day tour of Tokyo
  - Shinjuku Gyoen garden and Ueno Park
  - Sensoji Temple
  - Hamarikyu market
  - Walking tour of old town
  - Discover the Meiji Shrine
  - Stroll the garden of Chidorigafuchi
  - Visit Asakusa Temple
  - Visit the Akihabara district
  - Blossoms at Nakameguro
  - Koishikawa Korakuen Garden
- Tour of Mt. Fuji and Hakone
  - Visit the Five Lakes area
  - Ride the Kachi Kachi Cable car
- Visit Matsumoto Castle
- Tour Takoname's "pottery trail"
- Tour of Kyoto
  - Walk "philosophy path" in blossom

- Panorama from Kiyomizudera Temple
- View the thousand and one statues of Kannon
- Visit ochaya houses of geisha
- Tour the Chikurin-in and Kinpusenji temples
- Visit the Golden Pavilion, Ryoanji Temple and Nijo Castle
- Attend Miyako Odori geisha dance
- Excursion to Lake Biwa
- Excursion to Nara
  - Visit Todaiji Temple and Kasuga Shrine
- Entrance fees where indicated
- Courier guide or local guides at your choice
- 2-day car with driver (car will be adapted to number in party)
- 7-day Japan Rail Pass in Economy or First Class
- Entrance fees for sites visited

**Tour does not include:**

- International airfare, taxes and fees
- Meals or drinks other than specified as included
- Japan Visa processing and issuing visa fee
- Travel Insurance
- Expenses of a personal nature (minibar, phone call, laundry, etc.),
- Tips to guides/drivers/porters, etc.
- Entrance fees for any extra sightseeing
- Optional activities

**Recommended Hotels in your tour:**

City	Hotel Name	Tripadvisor
<b>First Class</b>		
Tokyo	Shiba Park	4
Kawaguchiko	Konansu	5
Matsumoto	Matsumoto Marunouchi Hotel	4.5
Nagoya	Hotel Nagoya Castle	4.5
Kyoto	Vista Premio Kyoto	4
<b>Deluxe</b>		
Tokyo	Park Hotel	4.5
Kawaguchiko	Onsenji Yumedono Ryokan	4.5
Matsumoto	Tobira Onsen Myojinkan	4
Nagoya	Nagoya Marriott Associa Hotel	4
Kyoto	Kyoto Tokyu	4

Hotels will be confirmed at time of booking

**Tour Prices:**

These programs can be customized for individuals and groups. Changes to this program may be requested by phone (1855-55-TOURS) or using the web FIT Quote Request

- **Airfare**

We also be glad to add the necessary airfare from your gateway so you take advantage of our special discounted leisure fares

- **Program**

You may add or remove;

- Trip days
- Cities and sites
- Meals

- **Other options**

- The program was designed with private services, however, we may substitute shared sightseeing where available
- If you prefer deluxe services we may operate this program including private driver, private guide and concierge service.

- **Quotation**

Once we have designed the program the way you want we'll give you a quote within 2 business days.

**Tour Code:** JP07TYO20TE

**Options:**

- Lunches and dinners can be arranged for individuals, families and groups at top restaurants or any restaurant requested by you.
- We can revise the itinerary to spend more time and provide more depth in those areas that you are interested on.
- Any other changes to the itinerary will be accommodated depending on the facilities available in the area.

**Group Quotations**

- If you wish to use these programs for your group or as the basis for a customized journey please either call us (1-855-55-TOURS or use the web Group Quote Request.
- In either case our specialists will work with to refine all the details and they will get you a quote with 2 business days. Quotes may be obtained for the air and land portions of just for the land journey.
- Booking both air and land with us will represent savings for you because of our buying power and longtime relationship with the airlines.
- We will also may have the choice between regular fares and special leisure fares not available to the public.