

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

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

*Around the thirteenth century, Japanese Buddhism, which had become prosperous, was renewed in depth by several exceptional reformers. One of them, Master Dogen (1200-1253), implanted in the country the Soto branch (in Chinese, Caodong) of Zen Buddhism (Chan). The path he had received from his master Nyojō (in Chinese, Rujing) was centered on the shikantaza, simply sitting, the **zazen** practiced under the direction of a master and understood, not as a process of gradual enfranchisement of illusions, but as immediate and universal access to the awakening of the Buddha and the patriarchs. Master Dogen is considered one of the deepest and most original thinkers Japan has ever known. His major work, Shobogenzo (The Treasure of the Eye of the True Law), brings together 95 booklets written at various periods of his life and for various audiences. His awakening is also expressed in the rules he wrote for his monastic community (Eihei Shingi, the Pure Rule of the Temple of Eternal Peace).*

### **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. Overnight in Tokyo.

*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 Hamarikyu 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**

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 Hamarikyu 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. Overnight in Kyoto. [B]

*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 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 to 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 are 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
- Tickets:
  - 7-day Japan Rail Pass in Economy class
  - 2-day Nagaden Pass
  - 2-day Nankai-Mt. Koya Pass
  - Train ticket Yudanaka – Nagano
- Full day tour of Tokyo
  - Sensoji Temple
  - Hamarikyu garden
  - Walking tour of old town
- Tour of Nagano

- Zenkoji Temple
- Tour of Yudanaka
  - Traditional kaiseki meal
  - Obuse Masuichi Sake tasting
  - Jigokudani Yaen Koen snow monkeys
- Kyoto Spiritual Tour
- Kyoto Philosopher's Path
- Scenic journey to Mt. Koya
- Visit Kongobuji temple
- Entrance fees where indicated

**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
Yudanaka	Biyu no Yado Ryokan	3.5
Kyoto	Vista Premio Kyoto	4
Koya-san	Shukubo temple	4
Osaka	Tokyu Rei Osaka	4.5
<b>Deluxe</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

**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:** JP02TYO20TE

**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.