SAMURAI TOURS

Adventures in Discovering Traditional Japan

www.samuraitours.com

Best of Japan Your Way

15 Days / 14 Nights

Best of Japan Your Way

Tour Overview

You will be escorted from city to city just like on our escorted tours. But once you arrive at the destination, you are free to explore on your own just like on our self-guided packages. Or you can join one of our daily optional guided tours. A little bit of structure with a lot of flexibility may be the perfect combination for you.

Destinations

Tokyo, Hakone, Takayama, Koya-san, Osaka, Himeji, Miyajima Island, Hiroshima, Kyoto, Fushimi, Nara

Tour Factors

Cultural Immersion
★★★★☆

Pace
★★★☆☆

Physical Activity
★★★☆☆

Tour Details

You'll enjoy a colorful mix of large cities like Tokyo and Osaka, quaint and traditional Takayama, the ambiance and solitude of Miyajima Island, the historically significant Kamakura (the capital of Japan in the 13th century), the religious center of Koya-san, ancient Kyoto, the testament to peace of Hiroshima, the natural beauty of Hakone, the thermally-heated mineral water baths at an onsen and much, much more.

You'll stay overnight at a mountaintop Buddhist temple where Buddhist monks will serve you meals of shojin ryori (the traditional Buddhist vegetarian cuisine), and you can attend prayer services at the temple early the next morning. You will have the opportunity to climb to the top of a samurai castle, stroll through farmer's markets, see where the geisha live and work, take in the view on beautiful and quiet Miyajima Island, soak in the thermally-heated mineral waters at an onsen, admire sacred Mt. Fuji (weather permitting), and enjoy a gourmet Kaiseki-style dinner and one shojin-ryori Buddhist vegetarian dinner.

Tour Highlights	✔ Overnight at Buddhist temple and morning prayer service ✔ Overnight at Onsen with naturally heated mineral waters ✔ Seven separate rides on a Shinkansen (bullet train) ✔ Three overnights at a Japanese-style ryokan
Tour Inclusions	✔ Travel Guard Gold Policy (for American tour members only) ✔ 14 Day JR Rail Pass ✔ Meeting service at the arrival airport ✔ Sending service to the appropriate train station ✔ Baggage transfer from city to city ✔ Electronic version of Tour Handbook and Japanese History
Tour Exclusions	✖ Airfare is NOT included. ✖ A printed itinerary is not included ✖ Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks and desserts are NOT included

Map

Tour Destinations

- Tokyo
- Hakone
- Takayama
- Koya-san
- Osaka
- Himeji
- Miyajima Island
- Hiroshima
- Kyoto
- Nara (Optional)

🚌Itinerary

Day 1 Arrive in Tokyo

After clearing customs and immigration, you will be met at Tokyo’s Narita Airport by a Samurai Tours meeting staff member. They will then purchase a limousine bus ticket for you and help you board the bus to the hotel. After checking in, the evening is free. No meals are included.

Travel: 1-1/2 Hours; Walking: Light

Day 2 Tokyo – Tokyo Tower, Ginza, Asakusa Optional Tour

After breakfast, you will start the day with a Welcome/Orientation meeting. Breakfast at the hotel included.

Day 3 Tokyo - Optional Food Tour; Optional Yakatabune Dinner Cruise

Today is a free day to enjoy the world-class city of Tokyo. Go shopping for that perfect souvenir, visit the Meiji Shrine dedicated to the Japanese emperor of the 19th century, or wander through the trendy Shibuya or Harajuku districts where you will more than likely see interesting and far-out fashions.

Day 4 Travel to Hakone; Hakone Lake Ashi Sightseeing Boats Optional Tour; Overnight at Hakone Yumoto Onsen

Before leaving Tokyo, you will prepare your luggage to be transferred to Takayama, and will be traveling to Hakone and Takayama with an overnight bag only. You will prepare your overnight bag for 2 days and 1 night. After breakfast, we will travel by Shinkansen (bullet train) to Hakone Yumoto Onsen, where we will stay overnight. Hakone is famous for its natural beauty and the view of nearby Mt. Fuji (weather permitting). Breakfast at the hotel is included.

Day 5 Travel to Nagoya; Nagoya – Tokugawa Art Museum Optional Tour; Travel to Takayama

After checking out, we will continue by Shinkansen (bullet train) to the city of Nagoya, Later in the afternoon, we will travel by express train to Takayama.

Day 6 Takayama – Miyagawa Morning Market, Jinyamae Morning Market, Takayama Jinya, San-machi-suji District Optional Tour, Hida-no-Sato Open Air Museum Optional Tour

Day 7 Travel to Koya-san; Overnight at a Buddhist Temple

We will travel to Koya-san with overnight bags only. The rest of the luggage will be delivered to our hotel in Osaka where we will be staying the following night. You will need to prepare your overnight bags for 2 days and 1 night. We board an express train and Shinkansen bound for Osaka, and continue to Koya-san by subway, train and funicular. Koya-san is the world headquarters of the Shingon school of Esoteric Buddhism. Kobo Daishi, considered by many to be the most influential religious person in Japanese history, established a religious community here in

the year 816. After checking into our shukubo (Buddhist temple lodging), you are free to roam and visit one of the 110 temples in the area or just rest in the garden at the shukubo. Your dinner of shojin-ryori (traditional Buddhist vegetarian cuisine – no meat, fish, onions or garlic) will be served by the Buddhist Monks from the temple. Breakfast at the ryokan and shojin-ryori dinner at the temple are included.

Day 8 Koya-san – Morning Prayer Service, Okunoin Cemetery and Temple, Garan Temple Complex Optional Tour; Travel to Osaka; Osaka - Dotombori and Namba Districts, Hozenji Temple and Yokocho, Ebisubashi Bridge Optional Tour

Very early in the morning, we attend o-inori (Buddhist prayer service). Afterwards, a shojin-ryori breakfast is served. Following this meal, we wander through the huge cemetery leading up to the Okuno-in temple. Kobo Daishi is buried at this temple, and many Japanese still believe that Kobo Daishi is not dead, but merely in a very advanced state of meditation, waiting to awaken at the appropriate time. After touring the Garan Temple complex, we will stop for a Shojin-ryori lunch. After lunch we will return to the Namba Station the same way we came to Koyasan. After returning to Osaka and picking up our luggage and checking into our hotel, the evening is free to visit the Dotombori-dori and the Namba Districts (South Osaka), the nearby nightlife and restaurant district. While there, you can visit the Ebisu-bashi bridge, which will make you feel like you stepped into the movie “Blade Runner.” Shojin-ryori breakfast at the temple and Shojin-ryori lunch at a local restaurant are included.

Day 9 Travel to Himeji; Himeji - Himeji Castle, Kokoen Garden Optional Tour; Travel to Hiroshima

Before leaving in the morning you will need to prepare your overnight bag for 3 days/2 nights and bring it with you to the lobby of the hotel. We will then travel by subway and Shinkansen to the city of Himeji. Later in the afternoon, we will continue by Shinkansen to Hiroshima.

Day 10 Miyajima Island – Mt Wisen Cable Car, Itsukushima Shrine Optional tour

Today we suggest you enjoy and relax in the beauty and ambiance of Miyajima Island. You can travel there using your JR rail pass. Breakfast at the hotel included.

Day 11 Hiroshima – Peace Park and Museum Optional Tour; Travel to Kyoto

Today we suggest touring the Peace Memorial Museum and the Peace Memorial Park, which are both sobering monuments to the tragic events on August 6, 1945. Afterwards, we are off to Kyoto via the Shinkansen. Once in Kyoto, we pick up our luggage and check into our ryokan, where we stay for the remainder of the tour.

Day 12 Kyoto – Nijo Castle, Kinkakuji (Golden Pavilion), Nishiki Koji, Tea Ceremony and Calligraphy class Optional Tour

Today is free to explore Kyoto on your own. Breakfast at the hotel included.

Day 13 Fushimi – Fushimi Inari Shrine; Kyoto - Higashiyama District, Yasaka Shrine, Gion Geisha District Optional Tour

Before leaving for the day, you will need to prepare your main luggage to be sent forward to the airport. If you would prefer to keep your luggage, you can do so. If you will be sending the luggage, you will need to keep enough items for three days/two nights. The luggage transfer forms will have been provided to you prior to this day, and you are responsible for paying for this transfer. Today is free to explore Kyoto on your own. Breakfast at the hotel included.

Day 14 Nara - Nara Park, Todaiji (Great Buddha), Kofukuji Temple Optional Tour; Meet a Maiko Optional Tour

Today is free to explore Kyoto on your own. Breakfast at the hotel included.

Day 15 Return Home

It’s time to say “sayonara” (Goodbye). The group will depart at 8:00 am unless we have determined you need to leave earlier (in which case you will not be provided sending service). You will be escorted to the Kyoto train station, where you will return on your own to Tokyo’s Narita airport, Tokyo’s Haneda airport or Osaka’s Kansai airport by train. (If you are flying out of Narita or Haneda Airport, be sure to schedule a flight after 15:00 to allow yourself enough time to catch your flight.)

Retrieve your main luggage in the departure lobby of the airport (map in appendix). Breakfast at the ryokan included.

Walking level descriptions:
Light – 0 to 2 miles on level ground
Medium – 2 to 4 miles on level ground or 0 to 2 miles on hilly ground
Heavy – 4 to 6 miles on level ground or 2 to 4 miles on hilly ground

Dates & Pricing

Dates	Price (land only) / Single Supplement (All prices are per Person)	Status
May 3, 2020 - May 17, 2020	¥641,275/ ¥80,280	**Closed**
Oct 18, 2020 - Nov 1, 2020	¥641,275/ ¥80,280	Available
May 2, 2021 - May 16, 2021	¥678,204/ ¥80,280	Available
Jul 18, 2021 - Aug 1, 2021	¥678,204/ ¥80,280	Available
Oct 17, 2021 - Oct 31, 2021	¥678,204/ ¥80,280	Available

Inclusions

- All transportation from city to city will be guided by our staff
- Optional tours available almost every day for additional charge (3 participance required for most optional tours)
- English-speaking emergency contact number in Japan
- All transportation costs when traveling from city to city (transportation costs during free times are the tour member's responsibility)
    - ICOCA Card pre-loaded with 2,500 Yen to be used on the subways in Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka, and the streetcars in Hiroshima (2,500 Yen will allow as many as 7 or 8 trips depending on the length of the trips)
    - Nankai Koya-san World Heritage Tickets (includes round-trip reserved seats on the express trains to and from Koya-san; round trip cable car tickets; and bus passes in Koya-san
    - Hakone Free Passes for travel in and around Hakone
    - 14-Day Ordinary Car Japan Rail Pass (allows unlimited JR train travel)
- Airport transfers
    - Meeting service at Tokyo's Narita Airport and transfer to the hotel in Tokyo
        - The meeting service will meet you at the airport and provide your transfer to the hotel in Tokyo
        - Meeting service can only be provided between 7am and 9pm. If you arrive at a time outside of these hours, we will need to provide alternative directions for you to get to the ryokan on your own
    - Sending service to Kyoto Station and transfer to Tokyo's Narita Airport or Osaka's Kansai Airport (transfers to Itami Airport are not included)
        - The sending service will escort you to Kyoto Station and make sure you board the correct train. The sending service will not accompany you to the airport
    - For those requiring meeting or sending services on other than the scheduled arrival/departure dates, there will be a $100 fee for the meeting service from the airport into Tokyo or the sending service to Kyoto Station

- Lodging for 14 nights in Japanese-style ryokans or western style hotels
- Baggage transfers
    - Baggage transfer from the accommodations in Tokyo to the accommodations in Takayama (one bag only)
    - Baggage transfer from the accommodations in Takayama to the accommodations in Osaka (one bag only)
    - Baggage transfer from the accommodations in Osaka to the accommodations in Kyoto (one bag only)
- Meals
    - Japanese-style or Western-style breakfast every morning (please note: Some ryokans offer Japanese breakfasts only. Depending on ryokan availability in Hakone you may be given yen to purchase your own breakfast if not available at the ryokan)
    - 2 Japanese-style dinners (a gourmet kaiseki dinners at the ryokan in Takayama, and a shojin-ryori (traditional Buddhist vegetarian cuisine) dinner at a Buddhist temple)
- Electronic version of itinerary
- Each tour member receives an electronic copy of our tour handbook
    - This handbook is full of tips and suggestions taken from our Japan travel experiences that allow you to better plan and prepare for your trip, and therefore enjoy your tour even more. The tips and suggestions included cover everything from how to save while exchanging money, what to pack, some basic Japanese language tips, general etiquette do's and don'ts, ryokan customs, etc.

Exclusions

- Airfare is NOT included
- Travel insurance is NOT included

- Travel insurance is available upon request. Not purchasing insurance will be considered opting out. Please contact us for an insurance quote if you are interested in purchasing insurance.
- A printed itinerary is not included
- Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks and desserts are NOT included

Thank you for downloading this PDF version of our tour. Please visit our website at www.samuraitours.com/tours for the most current dates, prices and information.

Contact Samurai Tours

WEBSITE/EMAIL
www.samuraitours.com
info@samuraitours.com

USA CONTACT INFO
Toll-free: 1-866-316-SAMURAI
or 1-866-316-7268
Fax number: 720-210-5423

Samurai Tours
7900 East Union Ave, Suite 1100
Denver CO 80237

JAPAN CONTACT INFO
Call us: 075-361-7303

Samurai Tours
307 Yodokizu
Fushimi
Kyoto 613-0911 Japan

Kyoto-fu Chijitoroku Ryokogyo 3-576/
Japanese Travel Agency License:
Kyoto Prefecture #3-576

MEMBERSHIPS/ASSOCIATIONS
Better Business Bureau
American Society of Travel Agents
National Tour Association
Japan National Tourist Organization
JNTO-approved Japan Travel Specialist