



# MAGICAL EXPLORER

## **14 Days – Ultimate Japan**

### **Day 1 Fly to Tokyo**

Depart from your local airport.

If requested, our flight reservation team will be delighted to assist in booking your flight according to your preferred departure airport.

### **Day 2 Tokyo**

Arrive at the airport in Tokyo and self transfer to your hotel.

Airport meeting assistant and transfer service can be provided as an option if required.

### **Day 3 Tokyo**

#### **(Includes Breakfast & Izakaya Dinner)**

After breakfast in your hotel, meet your Tour Leader and professional Tour Guide who will look after you during your tour and travel with you throughout.

Today we explore Tokyo by subway and our first stop is the Imperial Palace, the main residence of the Emperor of Japan.

Next, we explore Tokyo's most colourful Buddhist Temple, the famous and bustling Asakusa Kannon Temple.

Experience 'Sakura' and enjoy Cherry blossoms viewing in Ueno Park, which is one of the best places to see the blossoms, which should hopefully be in bloom during your visit.

Our next stop is the modern Shinjuku district of Tokyo, where we experience the hustle and bustle of this exciting city. We visit Shibuya Crossing, said to be the busiest intersection in the world. We also explore Akuhabara and Ginza, with free time in Ginza to shop.

Return to our hotel and get ready to go out for a Izakaya meal at a local restaurant or bar. This is a great experience often not discovered by tourists and highlights real Japanese culture. It is also a good opportunity to relax and make friends.

### **Day 4 Tokyo – Mt Fuji- Hakone-Tokyo**

#### **(Includes Breakfast)**

In the morning we gather in the hotel lobby to be welcomed by our Tour Guide, where we transfer together to Hakone by bullet train.

Upon arrival in Hakone, we take a local bus and cable car to explore the scenery of Hakone with our guide. On a clear day Hakone provides great views of Mt Fuji. Together with our guide we take a cable car and explore the volcanic Owakudani Valley. Afterwards, where we board a boat to cruise the still water of Lake Ashi.

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Afterwards we visit the restored Hakone Sekisho, which was an important check point established by the Tokugawa shogun. Later we return to our hotel in Tokyo by train.

## **Day 5 Tokyo – Nagano – Yudanaka**

### **(Includes Breakfast & Japanese Dinner)**

Today, we travel around Tokyo with our Tour Guide to explore more must-see sights of Tokyo. Afterwards we travel to the impressive Meiji Shrine which is dedicated to the spirits of Emperor Meiji and his consort. Pass through the huge Shinto Torii gates and take a leisurely walk in the peaceful forest leading to the Shrine, far away from the hustle and bustle of modern Tokyo.

Later we explore Harajuku and Omotesando Districts of Tokyo which is the centre of Japan's most extreme teenage cultures and fashion styles where many teenagers dress up in crazy costumes to resemble animation characters and punk musicians etc. Harajuku and Omotesando also offers great shopping opportunities and historic sights to explore.

Around midday we leave Tokyo for Yudanaka (via Nagano) by Bullet train. Upon arrival at you Ryokan, we rest in the hot spring baths (Onsen) and enjoy a wonderful Japanese Dinner. Japanese style room

*To make your train journey more comfortable we have arranged to transfer your large luggage directly to Takayama. Prepare a smaller carry bag for your time in Yudanaka and Matsumoto.*

## **Day 6 Yudanaka – Matsumoto - Takayama**

### **(Includes Breakfast)**

In the morning we travel with our guide on the shuttle bus to see the Snow Monkey park and have time to enjoy the antics of the cheeky red faced monkeys relaxing in the outdoor hot spring pools (approx 30min). Later we return to our Ryokan and transfer together to our hotel in Matsumoto by train.

Upon arrival we have a walking tour of Matsumoto and visit Matsumoto castle, known as 'crow castle' due to its unique black exterior. Matsumoto castle is one of only four castles designated as National Treasures of Japan and is stunningly beautiful. Afterwards stroll around the traditional old quarter (Nawate Dori).

Afterwards we proceed to Takayama by express bus or train (non-reserved seats).

## **Day 7 Takayama – Shirakawago – Gokoyama - Takayama**

### **(Includes Breakfast)**

After breakfast we take a walking tour of Takayama, which includes the morning market, visiting the House of Yoshijima constructed circa 1907 and former home of a prosperous merchant engaged in the production of sake.

Afterwards we visit Yatai Kaikan Exhibition Hall to see the historic floats used during Takayama's yearly Festival. Our next stop is Kamisannomachi street which is in the old area

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of Takayama and reminiscent of ancient times when Samurai wandered the streets. Afterwards we visit the Takayama Jinya, a former Government Outpost of the Shogun.

Early afternoon we leave for Shirakawago by sight seeing bus with our guide. Shirakawago is UNESCO World Heritage listed, nestled into a valley surrounded by stunning forests and mountains. Shirakawago is well known for the unique architectural style of the village houses, known as gassho-zukuri. The Gassho-zukuri style of house is characterised by a thatched steeply slanting roof resembling two hands joined in prayer. Upon arrival we visit a typical Gasho-zukuri House and take a leisurely walk around Shirakawago Village.

We then travel onward by bus to Gokoyama, which is also UNESCO World Heritage listed. Gokoyama is smaller and even more charming and authentic wonder to enjoy. Afterwards we return to Takayama by bus.

## **DAY 8 Takayama – Kyoto – Nara - Kyoto**

### **(Includes Breakfast)**

After Breakfast we transfer by train to Kyoto and take a short walk to our hotel.

In the afternoon we make the short train journey to Nara where we enjoy a walking tour of the ancient capital city of Japan. Enjoy strolling in the Deer Park and exploring the impressive Todaiji Temple and Great Buddha.

Return to Kyoto by train and check into our hotel. In the evening we enjoy a wonderful Geisha / Maiko performance at Gion Corner (Not private).

*Separate 1 piece luggage transfer per person to Kyoto - Arriving the next day.*

## **Day 9 Kyoto**

### **(Includes Breakfast)**

Today we enjoy a sightseeing walking tour with our tour Guide using public transport. We visit the famous Golden Pavilion (Kinkakuji Temple) and Ryoanji Temple, which has Japan's most famous Zen rock garden.

Nijo Castle, commissioned by Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate and completed in 1626. One of the most intriguing features is the "nightingale floors" designed to squeak like birds when anyone walks on them and designed to warn occupants of sneak attacks by Ninja assassins. Afterwards we return to our hotel by local bus.

## **Day 10 Kyoto**

### **(Includes Breakfast & Dinner)**

After breakfast we visit the impressive and must-see Kiyomizu Temple, built perched on the hillside overlooking Kyoto.

We then walk through Ninnenzaka and Sannenzaka on one of Kyoto's most beautiful walks, which takes us down into the Gion area of Kyoto, famous for Geisha's. Enjoy walking down narrow streets lined with old wooden houses, traditional shops and restaurants. On our way we will visit Kodaiji Temple located in a beautiful part of Kyoto sitting atop a hill. Built in

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1605 the temple contains absolutely stunning Zen Gardens, bamboo grove, tea houses and is one of the most beautiful Zen temples in Japan. Enjoy traditional Tea Ceremony.

Afternoon we visit Ginkakuji Temple (Silver Pavilion) and take a scenic walk along the Path of Philosophy which passes by many temples and shrines and follows a canal lined by hundreds of cherry trees, which explode into colour during Spring, making this one of the city's most popular 'Hanami' (cherry blossom viewing) spots.

## **Day 11 Kyoto – Hiroshima – Miyajima - Hiroshima**

### **(Includes Breakfast & Dinner)**

This morning we transfer with our tour guide to Hiroshima by bullet trains. Upon arrival in the early afternoon, we leave our luggage and take a tour of Hiroshima using the tram system. Our tour includes visiting the Peace Memorial Park and surrounding area, including the A-bomb Dome and Museum.

In the afternoon we transfer by train to Miyajimaguchi, where we board a boat to Miyajima Island. We visit the famous Itsukushima Shrine, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and known worldwide for its floating Red torii gate. The stunning Shinto shrine and Torii gate are unique as they are constructed over the sea with each building in the complex connected by a series of walkways. We will also visit the impressive Daishoin Temple. Return to Hiroshima station and hotel.

In the evening we go out to a local restaurant for 'Okonomiyaki style' Dinner. Okonomiyak is a Japanese savoury pancake containing a variety of fillings.

*To make your train journey more comfortable we have arranged separate 1 piece luggage transfer to either Osaka or Tokyo depending upon your preferred departure airport (prepare overnight bags for your stay in Miyajima and Okayama).*

## **Day 12 Hiroshima – Okayama – Kurashiki**

### **(Includes Breakfast)**

After breakfast we take the bullet trains Okayama and then visit Okayama Castle and the beautiful Korakuen Gardens. The gardens are regarded as one of the best gardens in Japan and one of Japan's official Three Great Gardens.

Later we return to the train station and transfer to the beautiful and idyllic town of Kurashiki. Kurashiki is one of Japan's great old merchant town and a rare piece of 'old Japan' often used in classical film sets. Situated along a scenic canal, the town has beautifully preserved white-walled storehouses, charming shops and many art museums.

## **Day 13 Okayama - Osaka**

### **(Includes Breakfast)**

Today we relax and explore quaint Kurashiki, we visit the old town and Ohara Art Museum, which is the 1st privately owned art museum for Western art in Japan.

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Return to our hotel to pick up any left luggage and leave Kurashiki by train and connect to the Bullet train for Osaka. Transfer to your hotel by either local train or taxi (fare provided).

## **Day 14 Osaka – Kansai Airport (Breakfast subject o flight time)**

### **(Breakfast subject to flight time)**

Today we say **Sa-yo-na-ra**. For those who are departing from Kansai airport, you have free time (subject to your flight time) in Osaka until your airport transfer homewards. \*Optional airport transfers can be provided\*.

## **Day 14 OPTION 2 (Depart from Tokyo) (Includes Breakfast)**

Osaka - Tokyo - Haneda / Narita airport Departure

Transfer to Tokyo by bullet train in time for your flight. (If you wish to stay longer in Tokyo, extensions are available).

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## **HOTELS**

**TOKYO** - Keio Plaza Hotel

**YUDANAKA** - Issano Komichi Ryokan (Japanese style room)

**TAKAYAMA** - Takayama Green Hotel

**KYOTO** - Kyoto Tokyu Hotel

**HIROSHIMA** - Sheraton Hiroshima hotel

**KURASHIKI** - Kurashiki Kokusai

**OSAKA** - Granvia Osaka hotel

(or similar subject to availability)

## **What's Included**

- Experienced professional English speaking Tour Guide/Tour Leader from Day 3 to 11, who will accompany you throughout your tour.
- Quality selection of hotels and superb Ryokans with spa facilities.
- Daily Breakfast, 4 Evening Meals.
- Free luggage transfer from hotel to hotel (1 piece per person) between Tokyo - Takayama, Takayama - Kyoto, Kyoto to Osaka / Tokyo depending upon your departure flight. No large luggage at Yudanaka, Matsumoto and 1st night at Kyoto, Hiroshima and Kurashiki). Prepare small overnight bags to carry with you when you do not have your large luggage.
- No hidden extras, all entrance fees & transport included.
- Guided tours by trains and public transport all included.

## **What's Excluded**

- International flights. These can be provided with Full ATOL Protection
- Optional Airport meet & greet service & airport bus transfers.
- Travel Insurance.

*The itinerary is designed according to the most updated information available. On rare occasions, changes can occur due to local conditions which are out of our control, such as flight, train, hotel changes etc. We will always act in your best interest to handle any amendments if this did occur. We reserve the right to change, amend or alter the itinerary if required.*

*Please refer to our website for all current tour details, Terms and Conditions and FAQ pages for up-to-date tour information and further essential information about this tour.*

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