



ESSENCE OF JAPAN

Kyoto

DISCOVER THE REVERED TRADITIONS AND UNIQUE SENSE OF BEAUTY THAT INFUSE LIFE HERE... On the main island of Honshu, from Tokyo to the hot springs resort town of Hakone and on through the “Japanese Alps” to Kanazawa and the cultural treasure trove of Kyoto, visit a private home, shoes off, for a tea ceremony and Origami... explore castles, temples, shrines, a samurai home, and world-class gardens... make sushi, taste sake, cruise Lake Ashi to see Mt. Fuji... enjoy a *taiko* performance, Shinto music, Kagura dancing, a sumo wrestling demonstration... and meet a geisha expert.

1. ARRIVE TOKYO

Tour begins: 6:30 PM, Mandarin Oriental, Tokyo. A transfer is included from Tokyo’s Narita and Haneda airports to the five-star Mandarin Oriental, Tokyo, conveniently located in the Nihonbashi district in the heart of the city. Join us for a welcome reception and dinner at your hotel. **Meals D**

2. EXPERIENCE TOKYO TRADITIONS

Life in Tokyo is a lively mix of traditions, past and present. This morning, you will have the opportunity to get your hands around two of them. First up is an exclusive and exhilarating *taiko* drumming class where you will learn the basics and the beat of this jazzed up “fat drum” music,



Traveling Well Includes...

- Multiple-night stays in premier hotels in Tokyo, Kyoto, and Hakone and at a traditional hot springs resort in Matsumoto
- Tokyo's Edo-Tokyo Museum, Shinto music, Kagura dancing, *taiko* drums, and sumo wrestling
- Kyoto – a private home visit with tea ceremony and Origami demonstration, explorations with a local Geisha expert, visits to Nijo Castle, Kinkaku-ji Temple, and Kiyomizu Temple
- A cruise on Lake Ashi beneath Mt. Fuji; a flower arranging workshop in Hakone; sake tasting in Takayama; a guided tour of Kanazawa's Kenroku-en Garden, one of Japan's most revered landscaped gardens
- Airport transfers upon arrival and departure as noted
- 29 meals, gratuities to local guides, service charges, admission fees, taxes and portage



Tokyo musician

shoes off. Sushi making with an expert is next on the menu, where you'll become proficient in the fine art of folding, rolling, and sampling your edible works of art. This afternoon, explore the Edo-Tokyo Museum, chronicling Tokyo's development from its roots as a fishing village called Edo. The rest of the day is free to enjoy on your own. Your hotel is near many restaurants, and your Tauck Director can make suggestions for places to try. **Meals BL**

3. ART IN HAKONE, A LAKE CRUISE, AND MT. FUJI

This morning board the legendary bullet train (*shinkansen*) for a short ride south to Odawara and continue on to the scenic hot springs resort town of Hakone. Enjoy a cruise by private boat on Lake Ashi; weather permitting, see views of Mt. Fuji, Japan's highest mountain, looming over the landscape. Have lunch, followed by a visit to the Okada Museum of Art; the exhibits you will see here, including Japanese, Chinese and Korean works of art, date from ancient times through present day. This afternoon, settle into your hotel for a two-night stay. Have dinner at your leisure tonight in the hotel's French restaurant. **Meals BLD**

4. EXPLORING TRADITIONS IN HAKONE

Visit the Itchiku Kubota Art Museum this morning to see a prized collection of 100+ kimonos created by the artist, Itchiku Kubota. After lunch, you have a choice of activities. You may wish to discover the secrets of *ikebana*, Japanese flower arranging, with a teacher who leads the class and gives a demonstration. Alternatively, you can visit the Hakone Open Air Museum featuring sculptures by Rodin, Picasso and others in a park-like setting. If you'd like, you can indulge in some pampering at your hotel's spa, or do as the Japanese do and take a dip in the healing hot springs (*onsen*). Tonight put on your *yukata* (kimono) and relax over a special "homey" dinner at your hotel. **Meals BLD**

5. THE JAPANESE ALPS AND MATSUMOTO

Drive across Honshu Island through the towering "Japanese Alps," forested mountains reaching a height of 9,000+ feet. Your route takes you past lakes and into winding valleys dotted with rice farms, rivers, and villages. Stop for lunch in the hot springs town of Matsumoto, where you'll see

400-year-old Matsumoto Castle; Japan's oldest castle and a national treasure, it is also known as the "Crow Castle" because of its black exterior. Continue to your hotel, combining the authenticity of a traditional Japanese inn with the comforts of a contemporary hotel, including western-style and Japanese rooms. Dinner tonight is Japanese style, *yukatas* and slippers on, in a private room with musical entertainment. **Meals BLD**

6. OLD TAKAYAMA AND A SAKE BREWERY

This morning, head off for the mountain town of Takayama, arriving in time for lunch at a restaurant famous for its *Hida* beef. This afternoon, take a lesson in sake (Japanese rice wine) making and tasting at a local brewery. Continue on to Kanazawa, just inland from the Sea of Japan, for a two-night stay; the town is well known for its well-preserved Edo-era districts, art museums and handicrafts. Dine at a choice of hotel restaurants. **Meals BLD**

7. GARDENS AND A SAMURAI HOME

A full day's sightseeing begins in the historic Samurai District with a visit to the restored Nomura Samurai Family Residence showcasing the lifestyle of the samurai during feudal times, when they were prosperous. Next, take a



INSIDE THE WORLD OF THE GEISHA

Kyoto is considered the birthplace of Japan's geisha culture with the historic Gion district at its heart. To become a *geiko*, the preferred term for geisha, women must spend years in training as a *maiko*, perfecting lessons in traditional dance, musical instruments, flower arranging, tea ceremonies, calligraphy, painting and the art of conversation. Seeing them perform is an exclusive privilege and a highlight of your visit to Japan. Learn more about their elite world as our insider expert leads you through the back streets of the city's geisha districts, sharing stories along the way.



guided stroll through Kenroku-en Garden, considered among the country's top three landscaped gardens. Enjoy lunch at a signature brasserie restaurant of acclaimed French chef Paul Bocuse, then join us on a cultural excursion along the cobblestone streets of the historic Higashi Chaya district and Kanazawa's geisha district to see their iconic lattice-lined geisha houses and tea houses. Spend the rest of the day exploring as you wish. **Meals BL**

8. A TRAIN RIDE TO BEAUTIFUL KYOTO

Depart Kanazawa by train for Kyoto, arriving around midday for a four-night stay at a premier hotel in Kyoto. Have lunch and begin your exploration of the city that is considered one of Japan's most beautiful. On your introductory sightseeing tour, discover a city center of glass and steel skyscrapers ringed by hidden temples, shrines, and gardens that exude the tranquility and charm of Japan's ancient culture. You may choose to have dinner at our selected local restaurant this evening or tomorrow night; the choice is yours. **Meals BLD**

9. A CASTLE, A TEMPLE & THE GEISHA DISTRICT

Today's sightseeing begins with a visit to the golden-topped Kinkaku-ji Temple, set in an ancient garden on the edge of a lake – a position symbolizing its place "between heaven and Earth." Hear the story of how this 14th-century temple was burned to the ground by a young monk and then completely reconstructed. Continue to the moated Nijo Castle, a 17th-century shogun's residence and UNESCO World Heritage Site; discover the secret of its "nightingale" floors on a

guided tour, shoes off. After lunch, join our geisha expert for an insider tour of the back streets of one of Kyoto's geisha districts, sharing personal insights on the "flower and willow" world of the geishas, past and present. **Meals BL**

10. A PRIVATE HOME VISIT IN KYOTO

Begin your day with a prayer at the Kiyomizudera (Pure Water Temple) established in 778; the current buildings were rebuilt in the 17th century. Drink the water here in long-handled cups as you wish for longevity, success or love. Kyoto is known as the craft capital of Japan, and many traditional arts have been passed down through the generations. Experience the revered customs of Japanese culture firsthand during a visit to a private home here; take your shoes off, come in, and your gracious hostess will demonstrate the very specific rituals of a Japanese tea ceremony, followed by a lesson in the paper art of Origami. Return to your hotel where the afternoon is free for you to enjoy Kyoto's charms as you like. Join us for a special dinner tonight at a local restaurant. **Meals BD**

11. KYOTO AS YOU PLEASE

Today is free for you to do as you please. The city's classic cultural gems span the centuries, and your Tauck Director will have suggestions for places for you to visit. **Meals B**

12. TRADITIONAL ARTS AND SUMO IN TOKYO

Ride the train from Kyoto back to Tokyo, arriving in time for lunch at the famous restaurant Nobu. Afterward visit Meiji Shrine and view a sacred dance (Kagura) based on a poem by Emperor Meiji. Our special farewell reception



Taiko drumming

and dinner tonight take place at a local restaurant and include a larger-than-life demonstration by sumo wrestlers (weight gain is an essential part of sumo training). Japan's national sport, sumo wrestling, traditionally performed by men, dates back to ancient times when it was performed to entertain the Shinto deities. **Meals BLD**

13. JOURNEY HOME

Tour ends: Narita International Airport. Fly home anytime. An airport transfer is included from Mandarin Oriental, Tokyo to Narita International Airport. Please allow a minimum of three hours for flight check-in at the airport. **Meals B**

13 DAYS FROM \$10,290 PLUS AIRFARE

(12 Breakfasts, 9 Lunches & 8 Dinners)

BEGINS TOKYO

Mar **16, 18, 23, 25, 30** Apr **1, 6, 8, 13, 15, 20, 22, 29**
 May **4, 6, 13, 25** Jun **3, 8, 22** Aug **24** Sep **7, 9, 21, 23**
 Oct **5, 7, 19, 21** Nov **4, 16** / = **Sold Out!**

Dates in **blue** indicate **Small Group Departures** averaging 24 Tauck guests, priced from \$12,290 per person double; specific dates apply – inquire at booking.

Special Solo Traveler Savings: dates in **red** indicate special departures where you save \$400 on the single room price; inquire at time of booking.

Go to **tauck.com** for up-to-the-minute space availability; additional departure dates may become available as these sell out.

PRICE PER PERSON

March 1 – 22; July – August 30; November 16 – 30

Double \$10,290 Single \$13,654 Triple \$9714

March 23 – 31; August 31 – September 8; November 2 – 15

Double \$11,190 Single \$14,673 Triple \$10,577

April – June; September 9 – October

Double \$11,790 Single \$15,227 Triple \$11,212

International Airfare is additional. Call Tauck for special rates on international air, in coach or business, for travel originating in the US (subject to availability).

Please ask at time of booking about additional hotel nights before or after your tour and about our Guest Protection Product.



Go to page 133 for activity and pace level details.

FINE HOTELS / GREAT LOCATIONS

Night 1,2	MANDARIN ORIENTAL, TOKYO	Tokyo
Night 3,4	HYATT REGENCY HAKONE RESORT & SPA	Hakone
Night 5	TOBIRA ONSEN MYOJINKAN	Matsumoto
Night 6,7	HOTEL NIKKO KANAZAWA	Kanazawa
Night 8-11*	FOUR SEASONS HOTEL KYOTO	Kyoto
Night 12	MANDARIN ORIENTAL, TOKYO	Tokyo

*Small Group Departures will stay at The Ritz-Carlton, Kyoto.