

THE TRAVEL CLUB

Cherry Blossoms in Japan: Tokyo to Kyoto

10 DAYS: Friday, March 22-Sunday, March 31, 2019 pp/do \$5,114 single \$6,164

Springtime beauty blends with ancient history and cutting-edge culture.

Japan seamlessly merges centuries-old history with a modern way of life. On this tour, hues of pink and aromatic scents fill city streets and lush parks as cherry blossoms bring new life to an already vibrant country. See ancient temples alongside modern architecture while experiencing the beauty celebrated each year during the Japanese cherry blossom season.

Your tour package includes

- 8 nights in handpicked hotels
- 8 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 3 dinners
- 9 guided sightseeing tours, Expert Tour Director & local guides
- Private deluxe motor coach

Included highlights

- Cherry blossoms, Meiji Shrine, Mount Fuji, Hakone Open-Air Museum, high-speed bullet train ride,
- Golden Pavilion, Fushimi Inari complex, Nara, Osaka Castle,

Tour pace

On this guided tour, you'll walk for about 2.5 hours daily across mostly flat terrain, including paved roads and gravel paths, with few hills. You may need to climb stairs when visiting temples.



Overnight Flight

Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Tokyo today.

Tokyo

Day 2: Arrival in Tokyo

Included meals: Dinner

Welcome to Japan! Get settled in to your hotel before meeting your Tour Director and fellow travelers at tonight's welcome dinner.

Day 3: Sightseeing tour of Tokyo

Included meals: Breakfast

Join your Tour Director and embark on your first tour of Japan's bustling capital. • Pass the iconic Shibuya crossing as you drive through the central part of the city • View the Imperial Palace and its impressive grounds • Explore Tokyo's old town, including the ancient Asakusa Kannon Temple, the city's oldest and most sacred temple • Peruse a vibrant variety of handmade crafts and local fare at the centuries-old Nakamise Shopping Arcade Spend a free afternoon enjoying the views of the cherry blossoms throughout Tokyo or add an excursion.

Optional Excursion

Culinary Traditions of Japan: Sushi Making & Dinner

+\$139/pp

Join an experienced chef at a local restaurant to learn the art of sushi making. Sushi making in Japan dates back to around the 9th century, and the dish is considered one of the country's best-known foods. You'll watch as a chef cuts and prepares the fish for the sushi. Then, try your hand at crafting nigiri, a type of sushi that consists of seafood placed on top of rice, during your cooking class. After, sit down to enjoy the sushi dinner that you have created with your group members. Please note: Travelers will need to handle raw fish while making sushi on this excursion, and requests related to food allergies cannot be accommodated. Save \$10 when you book this excursion up to 3 days before your tour departs (On-tour price: \$149)

Day 4: Free day in Tokyo

Included meals: Breakfast

Enjoy a full free day in Tokyo or add an excursion.

Optional Excursion

Kamakura +\$139/pp

Step aboard a local train in Tokyo and make your way to the seaside city of Kamakura, where you'll explore the countryside, temples, and shrines on a guided walking tour. Pay a visit to the city's famous Great Buddha and Hase Kannon Temples. Then, sit down for an included lunch and enjoy free time to peruse the arts and crafts for sale along Komachi Shopping Street before transferring back to Tokyo on the train. Save \$10 when you book this excursion up to 3 days before your tour departs (On-tour price: \$149)

Hakone

Day 5: Sightseeing tour of Tokyo & Mount Fuji photo stop **Included meals: Breakfast, Dinner**

Today, follow your Tour Director on another guided sightseeing tour of vibrant Tokyo before continuing on to Hakone. • Start with a visit to the Meiji Shrine, the final resting place of Emperor Meiji • Wander through the shrine's Inner Garden, home to irises that bloom in springtime and the spiritually powerful Kiyomasa's Well • Stop for a short walk through the Harajuku neighborhood • Head to the top of the Metropolitan Government Building to get a bird's-eye view of the city Later, make your way to Hakone, a resort town in the Owakudani Valley. En route, make a photo stop at Mount Fuji. This mountain stands an imposing 12,388 feet high, and you'll take in panoramic views of nearby lakes and villages from the midway-point observatory.

Kyoto

Day 6: Mount Komagatake & Lake Ashi

Included meals: Breakfast

Make your way to Kyoto today, stopping along the way for a guided tour of Mount Komagatake and Lake Ashi in Hakone. • Enjoy a ropeway ride up to the top of Mount Komagatake, admiring spectacular views from the cable car as you go • Take a boat ride on Lake Ashi, formed after Mount Hakone erupted 3,000 years ago • Take in surreal views of Mount Fuji looming in the background • Pay a visit to the Hakone Open-Air Museum, with endless sculptures over its 17 acres and a gallery with more than 700 works by Picasso • Soak in the annual beauty that the cherry blossoms bring to the city This afternoon, board a high-speed bullet train to Kyoto.

Day 7: Sightseeing tour of Kyoto, Gekkeikan & Fushimi

Included meals: Breakfast

Your Tour Director leads a tour of Kyoto, the city that served as the capital of Japan for more than 1,000 years—and is still considered its spiritual capital. • Tour the 17th-century Nijo Castle home to intricate architecture and a unique alarm system: floors that sound like a nightingale when walked on • Stop at the Heian Shrine to take photos of the iconic red gate • See one of Japan's most famous temples, the glittering Golden Pavilion • Travel on to Ryoanji Temple, which houses the country's finest Zen gardens • Head outside Kyoto to sample another of Japan's sacred arts at the Gekkeikan Okura Sake Museum, where you'll learn about sake brewing and enjoy a tasting • See temples honoring the Inari gods of sake and rice at the Fushimi Inari complex

Day 8: Koga & Nara

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Discover Japan's lush countryside as you wind your way to the town of Koga to visit the I.M. Pei-designed Miho Museum, which boasts an excellent collection of Japanese art and an extensive Egyptian collection. *Please note: If the Miho Museum is closed, you may visit the Kyoto Museum and Sanjusangendo Hall instead.* Then, journey to the former capital city of Nara for a guided tour before returning to Kyoto this evening. • Tour UNESCO-listed Buddhist and Shinto shrines, including the Todaiji Temple, site of the world's largest bronze Buddha statue • Stroll through Nara Park, home to more than 1,200 wild deer considered sacred by locals

Day 9: Free day in Kyoto

Included meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Enjoy a free day in Kyoto or add an excursion. Tonight, join your fellow travelers at a farewell dinner in Kyoto, where you'll enjoy traditional *shabu-shabu* (hot pot).

Optional Excursion

Arashiyama District & Nishiki Market

+\$149/pp

Depart from Kyoto and enjoy a short transfer as you travel west to Arashiyama. This historic district boasts stunning natural beauty, and you'll take it all in on a guided sightseeing tour. Step inside the UNESCO-listed Tenryu-ji Temple, which was originally constructed in the 12th century and is considered one of Kyoto's most important sites. Meander through the striking Bamboo Grove, where soaring stalks flank a singular pathway. Finally, look up at rolling, tree-covered hills as you cross the Hozu River on the Togetsukyo Bridge. The bridge's name means "moon crossing," and it's considered one of the district's most iconic landmarks. Then, return to Kyoto to explore the bustling food stalls of the Nishiki Market, which stretches across five blocks and is often referred to as "Kyoto's Kitchen." Save \$10 when you book this excursion up to 3 days before your tour departs (On-tour price: \$159)

Day 10: Sightseeing tour of Osaka & departure

Included meals: Breakfast

Continue on to Osaka, the birthplace of many of Japan's well-known arts, such as Kabuki theater and the tea ceremony. Today's guided tour, led by your Tour Director, offers a look inside the city's historic sights. • Visit the massive Osaka Castle, which houses a museum dedicated to Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the legendary leader who built it • Stroll through Kuromon Ichiba Market, famous for its selection of fresh fish, vegetables, fruit, and other Japanese specialties

This evening, transfer to the airport to board your flight home.