



Tokyo & Southern Japan: Kyoto, Fukuoka & Nagasaki

12 days | 14 days with Kyoto extension

Honshu and Hokkaido may get most of the attention, but Kyushu—the southernmost of Japan’s four main islands—more than holds its own. On this tour, you’ll kickstart your adventure in the captivating capital of Tokyo, jumping feetfirst into the energy of Shibuya Crossing and the serenity of Senso-ji. Then, fly to Kyushu and take in the sights that make it a cultural juggernaut. You’ll snack on street food at Fukuoka’s yatai; contemplate the gravity of Nagasaki’s Peace Park; and soak in the steaming waters of Beppu’s hot springs. And if that wasn’t enough, you’ll commune with the past in Kyoto, Japan’s historic heart, on both the main tour and the extension.



Your tour package includes

- 10 nights in handpicked hotels
- 10 breakfasts
- 3 lunches
- 3 dinners with beer or wine
- 1 sake tasting
- 2 food tastings
- 10 sightseeing tours
- Expert Tour Director & local guides
- Private deluxe motor coach
- 1 on-tour flight
- 1 train ride

Included highlights

- Asakusa Kannon Temple in Tokyo
- Shibuya Crossing viewpoint
- Dazaifu Shrine in Fukuoka
- Nagasaki Peace Park & Atomic Bomb Museum
- The Hells of Beppu
- Kokura Castle in Kitakyushu
- High-speed bullet train ride
- Golden Pavilion in Kyoto

Tour pace

You’ll walk for about three or more hours daily across flat and hilly terrain, including paved roads and gravel paths. You may need to climb stairs when visiting temples.

Group size

12–22

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Overnight Flight → 1 night

Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Tokyo today.

Tokyo → 3 nights

Day 2: Arrival in Tokyo

Welcome to Japan! After arriving in Tokyo, make the short transfer to your hotel with your groupmates. You'll touch down later in the evening, so use the rest of your day to settle into your room, grab a bite to eat, catch up on sleep, and look forward to the rest of your journey.

Day 3: Sightseeing tour of Tokyo

Included meals: breakfast, welcome lunch

This morning, set out with a local guide and step back in time as you explore two prominent Tokyo neighborhoods: Yanaka and Asakusa.

- Start with a walking tour of Yanaka Ginza, a traditional shopping street that has stood the test of time. Independent stores sell everything from fresh produce and meats to street food, tea, and sweets; a sense of retro charm emanates from each stall.
- Make your way by coach to the Asakusa district and peruse Kappabashi Street. Commonly known as Kitchen Town, it's lined by more than 170 shops—almost all of which specialize in high-quality kitchenware and restaurant supplies.
- Enter Senso-ji, Tokyo's oldest Buddhist temple. (With its five-story pagoda and red-and-white facade, it's one of its most photographed, too.)
- Walk to Nakamise, a bustling market street on Senso-ji's grounds. Two ornate gates sandwich 89 shops; enjoy free time to stop at however many you'd like.
- Get to know your fellow travelers during an included welcome lunch, then drive to the iconic Shibuya Crossing. Climb a nearby vantage point for a bird's-eye view and watch as 3,000 people scramble across the junction. This dash happens every two minutes, rightfully earning the crossing the title of the world's busiest pedestrian intersection.

- Stop inside Shibuya Station to view "The Myth of Tomorrow," Japanese artist Tarō Okamoto's famous avant-garde mural depicting the explosion of an atomic bomb.
- Try to spot the Hachiko Statue. Honoring the memory of a loyal Akita dog who waited outside Shibuya Station for his deceased owner to return from work, it doubles as a popular meeting spot.

Afterward, spend some free time roaming the city. Craving a taste of another Japanese staple? Cap your day with a ramen cooking class and dinner by adding tonight's optional excursion. If you'd rather strike out on your own, find a kaitenzushi: Originating in Osaka in the 1950s, these restaurants keep a steady stream of sushi circulating around the dining room atop a conveyor belt. Grab what you want and pay by the plate—they're color-coded by price!
+ Ramen Cooking Class & Dinner

Day 4: Free day in Tokyo

Included meals: breakfast

No trip to Tokyo is complete without paying respects to Fuji-san—the imposing stratovolcano known to the world as Mount Fuji. Visit the city's favorite neighbor, and enjoy the beauty of Japanese wine country, on today's optional excursion. Alternatively, hang back and explore Tokyo at your own pace. You can check out districts like Akihabara, Shibuya, and Harajuku for a peek at different aspects of the local culture, or ascend the 2,080-foot Tokyo Skytree for a bird's-eye view of it all.
+ Mount Fuji & Yamanashi

Fukuoka → 1 night

Day 5: Flight to Fukuoka & sightseeing tour

Included meals: breakfast, tasting

Today, fly to Fukuoka, the largest city on the island of Kyushu and a longtime gateway to the rest of the country. After touching down, follow your Tour Director as they introduce you to some of the area's must-see attractions.

- Walk along the Naka River to Nakasu,

Fukuoka's bustling entertainment district. Set atop a small island, the quarter's also famed for its food scene: Yatai—open-air food stalls—abound, selling favorites like Hakata-style tonkatsu ramen and yakitori.

- Drive to the neighboring city of Dazaifu to visit the ancient Tenmangu. Built atop the grave of the ninth-century poet Sugawara no Michizane, this Shinto shrine venerates his deified form.
- Learn about the history and lore surrounding the temple, then stop outside for a tasting of umegae mochi—a red bean-based snack inextricably tied to the legend of Michizane.

Transfer back to Fukuoka and settle into your hotel. The evening is yours: Maybe return to Nakasu for dinner and make a new friend or two over a shared meal.

Nagasaki → 3 nights

Day 6: Nagasaki via Arita region pottery workshop

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

En route to Nagasaki, stop near the town of Arita—the standard-bearer for a particular type of painted Japanese porcelain—and visit a village famed for its pottery. You'll participate in a workshop and see firsthand how these prized pieces are thrown, glazed, and fired. (Maybe you'll get to make some yourself.)

After an included lunch in the Arita region, continue to Nagasaki. Sit down to an included dinner, served with beer or wine, before retiring for the evening.

Day 7: Sightseeing tour of Nagasaki

Included meals: breakfast, tasting

Since its tragic atomic bombing by the United States in 1945, Nagasaki has rebuilt itself into a thriving harbor city. Unspoiled beaches and a contrast of cosmopolitan and historic neighborhoods attract visitors from all over; follow your local guide and get to know this fascinating place.

- Visit Nagasaki Peace Park. Established in 1955 at ground zero of the nuclear explosion, it serves as both a symbol of hope and a

reminder of the horrors of war. Then, enter and explore the adjacent Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum to better understand the effects of the attack and the process of reconstruction.

- Wander the stall-lined lanes of Shinchi, the oldest Chinatown neighborhood in Japan, and pause to taste a local specialty.
- Continue your survey of the city and walk through Dejima. Now connected to the mainland, this district was once an artificial island, constructed in the 17th century to keep European traders isolated from the local population.
- Slow down in the tranquil confines of Glover Garden. Overlooking the inlet of the city's harbor, this open-air museum features colorful flower beds, a teeming koi pond, and the oldest Western-style mansion in Japan. Tour the property and the house and return to an era when Nagasaki was an outpost of global trade in an otherwise closed nation.

For a view that rivals any you'll find in the country, add tonight's outing to Mount Inasa. Alternatively, use your free time to dive deeper into Nagasaki's history as an international port by walking the Dutch Slope. Western-style homes—the legacy of foreign settlers and traders—border this stone-paved street; check it out, then rest at the nearby Nagasaki Seaside Park.

Day 8: Free day in Nagasaki

Included meals: breakfast

More history awaits on today's optional outing to Hashima Island, a concrete-laden coal-mining outpost that's been abandoned since 1974. If you'd prefer to stay on dry land, make a point to visit some of Nagasaki's multicultural landmarks:

The Koshibyō is one of only a handful of Confucian shrines in Japan, while the Roman Catholic Urakami Cathedral doubles as an atomic bomb memorial.

+ Hashima Island

Beppu Onsen → 1 night

Day 9: Transfer to Beppu & sightseeing tour

Included meals: breakfast, tasting, dinner

From Nagasaki in the west, cross Kyushu island to the eastern city of Beppu—a holiday hotspot famous for its steaming onsen, or hot springs. After rolling into town, meet up with a local guide for a tour of the area.

Begin by visiting the Hells of Beppu—springs so beautiful, and hot, they're better for viewing

instead of bathing. You'll pass by two: Umi, the "Sea Hell" tinged bright cobalt by naturally occurring iron sulfate; and Oniishi Bozu, a gurgling pool of gray mud whose bubbles are said to resemble a monk's bald head.

Before finishing your tour, stop to sample butaman, fluffy pork buns steamed by the vapors of Beppu's onsen. Afterward, check into your hotel, then join your group for an included "hell-steamed" dinner, served with beer or wine. If you're up for it, end your day with a dip in the onsite hot spring. No trip to Beppu's complete without it!

Please note: If you have tattoos, some onsen may not allow you to bathe. The hotel's does, so long as your tattoos can be covered with an 8-by-10-centimeter patch. (You can buy some directly from the hotel.) For more information about onsen customs, please check our FAQ.

Kyoto → 2 nights

Day 10: Kokura Castle & train to Kyoto

Included meals: breakfast

Begin your day on the bus and drive to Kokura Castle. Perched atop a rocky plateau, this elegant edifice has been rebuilt several times since the Edo Period. As you venture its grounds, your Tour Director will fill you in on its history—how it once housed samurai, how it narrowly avoided destruction during World War II, and more.

Afterward, make the short transfer to a nearby train station and board a Shinkansen bullet train bound for Kyoto. Once you arrive, you'll have the evening to stretch your legs, explore the area on your own, or call it an early night in anticipation of tomorrow's sightseeing.

Day 11: Sightseeing tour of Kyoto & Zen meditation class

Included meals: breakfast, tasting, liquor tasting, farewell dinner

Today, join a local guide on a sightseeing tour of Kyoto, the city that served as Japan's capital for more than 1,000 years and is still considered its spiritual center.

- Begin in the western Arashiyama district, a nationally designated Place of Scenic Beauty, and wander through its eponymous Bamboo Grove. A thicket of moso bamboo, towering up to 66 feet above the ground, funnels visitors down a pathway, making for a breathtaking walk.

- Step inside the UNESCO-listed Tenryū-ji, a treasured 14th-century temple complex considered the most important of Kyoto's five Zen Buddhist shrines.
- Cross the Togetsukyo Bridge. While the current span was completed in 1934, it has existed in one form or another since the ninth century, helping travelers from one bank of the Katsura River to the other.
- Take in the splendor of Kinkaku-ji—the UNESCO-recognized Temple of the Golden Pavilion so often associated with the city of Kyoto.
- Tap into your unconscious mind during a guided Zen meditation at one of Kyoto's temples, followed by a tour of its grounds and a matcha tasting—paired with the obligatory wagashi, a traditional Japanese sweet.

Tonight, celebrate your tour with your fellow travelers at a farewell dinner. On the menu: A family-style hot pot meal, paired with a sake tasting and served with your choice of beer or wine.

Please note: Today's guided Zen meditation may take place in the morning, depending on scheduling.

Flight Home

Day 12: Departure

Included meals: breakfast

Transfer to the Osaka airport for your flight home, or extend your trip to enjoy a few more days in Kyoto. (World-famous torii gates, prized matcha tea, and adorable bowing deer await should you choose the latter.)

+ Kyoto extension

Kyoto was Japan's capital for more than a millennium—but although it ceded that title to Tokyo, its prewar buildings and UNESCO-listed landmarks keep it in a cultural class of its own. Get to know the city on your terms, and see why it's held in such high regard.

Kyoto → 2 nights

Day 12: Free day in Kyoto

Included meals: breakfast

To spend some quiet time in one of Japan's most

sacred sites—and to delight in some of its tastiest bites—add today's optional excursion to the Fushimi Inari Shrine and the castle town of Kameoka. (For a sweet experience you can't enjoy anywhere else, you'll want to take it up.) Or, make the most of your free day and roam Kyoto at your leisure. For pictures plucked from the past, head to the historic Ninenzaka and Sannenzaka districts: Lined by traditional wood-paneled buildings and free of vehicular traffic, these pedestrian paths draw visitors for a reason.

+ Fushimi Inari & Kameoka Wagashi Workshop

Day 13: Uji tea plantation & sightseeing tour of Nara

Included meals: breakfast, lunch

Japanese matcha is prized worldwide, and the hills surrounding Kyoto grow some of the country's best. Today, you'll head to Uji—a city on Kyoto's outskirts—for a tour of a tea plantation. Try your hand at preparing a cup of matcha; enjoy it alongside a wagashi; and tour a local tea museum before making your way to Nara, the eighth-century capital of Japan. Once you arrive, join up with a local guide to see some of the city's UNESCO-listed monuments.

- Tour Todai-ji, an imposing temple that houses one of the country's largest bronze statues of the Buddha. Another popular pastime: trying to squeeze through a hole in the base of one of its pillars. (If you manage it, you'll earn enlightenment in your next life!)
- Continue to the lantern-lined paths of Kasuga Taisha. Rebuilt several times since its establishment in 768, this Shinto shrine uses vibrant colors to stunning effect, its vermilion columns beautifully contrasting with the surrounding forest.
- Stroll through nearby Nara Park, one of Japan's oldest green spaces. You might chance upon some of its 1,200 resident sika deer: If you do—and you have some shika senbei, or deer crackers, ready—you can give them a treat, and share a moment as they bow their heads in gratitude.

This evening, enjoy a farewell drink as you celebrate your trip with your fellow group members.

Flight home

Day 14: Departure

Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to the Osaka airport for your flight home.

Customize your experience

Customize your tour by adding excursion options. Excursions offered on the same day will occur at different times, so there's no need to choose. Save \$10 when you book your excursion up to three days before your tour departs.* Excursions requiring advance reservation only list this discounted price. Call or go online to customize your tour: <https://www.goaheadtours.com/JKKG> | 1-800-597-0350

Day 3: Ramen Cooking Class & Dinner

From \$149.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (4 hours, departs in the afternoon, includes dinner)

Although barely more than a century old, ramen now holds the same cultural cachet as other standout Japanese dishes. And today, you'll get a hands-on look at what makes it so tasty. Head to a local cooking school for a chef-guided class: You'll master the art of preparing a bowl, from broth to noodles, and also learn how to make gyoza or another typical side. Put theory into practice as you craft these dishes, then sit down with your fellow travelers to slurp down the fruits of your labor.

Day 4: Mount Fuji & Yamanashi

From \$225.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (8 hours, departs in the morning, includes lunch)

When it comes to natural beauty, Japan has it in spades—and there's no better (or bigger) example than Mount Fuji. With your Tour Director in the lead, leave Tokyo behind for a morning by Kawaguchiko, one of the Fuji Five Lakes, and drink in all the volcanic views you desire. After enjoying an included lunch, travel further into the countryside to Yamanashi Prefecture, one of Asia's preeminent wine-producing regions. There, you'll spend an afternoon at a vineyard, tasting regional wines and learning what makes them special before returning to your hotel.

Day 8: Hashima Island

From \$89.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (4.5 hours, departure time varies)

A ghost town centered on an abandoned coal mine—nine miles off the coast of Nagasaki? That's Hashima Island, one of the planet's most eerie UNESCO World Heritage Sites and the destination of today's excursion. Sail to the island and dock to begin a tour of its concrete workers' quarters, which housed more than 5,250 people at their peak. As you follow your Tour Director, you'll learn Hashima's troubled history: how coal was discovered in 1810; how Mitsubishi bought the island in 1890; and how Korean civilians and Chinese prisoners of war were forced to work there under brutal conditions in the 1930s and 40s. After a few hours, board your boat for the return journey to Nagasaki. Please note: This excursion is weather dependent; rough waters may prevent your boat from docking on the island. Travelers prone to seasickness and/or motion sickness should take special precautions.

Extension excursion options

Day 12: Fushimi Inari & Kameoka Wagashi

Workshop

From \$199.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (TBD, TBD)

With Osaka, Kobe, and Kyoto all lying within its borders, Japan's Kansai region lays claim to some of the country's richest sights and flavors. Begin your outing at the iconic Fushimi Inari Shrine: From the base of Mount Inari, its 10,000 torii gates snake up the slopes, creating tunneled trails that lead visitors to other, smaller sanctuaries. Climb to the Yotsutsuji intersection and take in a panoramic view of Kyoto before driving to the castle town of Kameoka. Sit down for an included lunch, then dive into a hands-on wagashi-making class. Traditionally served to offset the bitterness of green tea, these bite-sized works of art take a variety of elegant shapes. Under the guidance of an expert confectioner, you'll learn how to craft these stunning sweets before returning to Kyoto. Please note: Foot traffic through the Fushimi Inari Shrine flows in one direction and visitors aren't allowed to turn back. Once you enter, you must complete the walk.

*Optional excursions may be purchased up to three days prior to departure or while on tour. Pre-purchased optional excursions cannot be canceled within three days prior to departure or while on tour. Select optional excursions require advance booking and cannot be purchased or canceled after the advanced reservation deadline. GAT accepts payment by cash, Visa or MasterCard for optional excursions purchased on tour. Additional fees may apply for optional excursions purchased on tour. Excursions require a minimum number of participants to operate. Details and prices are subject to change. Due to seasonal hours of operation and availability, some excursions may not operate. If this occurs, you will be refunded any payments made for that excursion post-tour. Learn more at [goaheadtours.com/terms](https://www.goaheadtours.com/terms)