

# EXPLORE!

Book with confidence

## Highlights of Japan

JAPAN - TRIP CODE JPH

DISCOVERY

### Why book this trip?

From the bright lights of Tokyo to the tranquil temples of Kyoto, this fast-paced tour explores Japan's highlights. We take time to reflect at Hiroshima, site of the world's first atomic attack before visiting the holy island of Miyajima, dotted with beautiful temples and free roaming deer. In Osaka we try street food and in Kyoto we relax in perfectly manicured Zen gardens.

- **Tokyo** - Explore the traditional temples of Asakusa
- **Kyoto** - Discover the temples and gardens of Japan's Imperial Capital
- **Jigokudani Onsen** - Watch the famous snow monkeys bathing in the hot springs



**INCLUDED MEALS**  
Breakfast: 7  
Dinner: 3



**TRIP STAFF**  
Explore Tour  
Leader  
Local Guide(s)



**TRANSPORT**  
Train



**ACCOMMODATION**  
7 nights  
comfortable hotel



**TRIP PACE:**  
Moderate



**GROUP SIZE:**  
10 - 16

## Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

### DAY 1 - Tour begins in Tokyo

Arrive in Tokyo, the ultra-modern capital of Japan.

For those arriving on time our Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 6.30pm for the welcome meeting. After this we have dinner included at a nearby local restaurant where you will have the chance to sample various types of 'izakaya' style Japanese cuisine. There are no other activities planned today, so you are free to arrive in Tokyo at any time. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive into Haneda Airport (HND) or Narita Airport (NRT). The city centre is around an hour away from Haneda Airport and an hour and a half from Narita. Should you miss the welcome meeting, your Leader will inform you of any essential information as soon as you catch up.

If your flight arrives earlier in the day, we recommend taking the train one stop or walking along the Sumida River and then crossing over to see the Edo Tokyo Museum (it takes approximately 20 minutes to get here). This fascinating architectural structure gives a great history of Japan's capital and it is next to the sumo stadium so there is the chance to spot a sumo wrestler in the area. Also nearby is the Hokusai Museum which displays woodblock prints of Japan's most famous artist. Alternatively you can wander around the Asakusa area and explore the back streets. You will find sword shops, street food, goldfish scooping, rickshaws and plenty more just a few minutes' walk from the hotel.



**ACCOMMODATION:**  
Hotel Sunroute Asakusa (or similar)

**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**





SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: DINNER

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## DAY 2 - Explore Tokyo's neon streets and peaceful gardens

Over one-quarter of the Japanese population live within a 50 km radius of the centre of Tokyo, making it the most populous metropolitan area in the world. The result is a bustling and exciting city - the economic powerhouse of Asia. However, scratching its neon-clad surface reveals a city bursting with history and tradition. A morning stroll to Tokyo's oldest temple, Sensoji, will introduce us to Tokyo's unique culture. We then board a boat for a short journey along the Sumida River. Gaining a totally different perspective of the city, we drift past high rise apartments, secluded gardens and busy warehouses. Arriving in the heart of the city near Hamarikyu Gardens, you may wish to board a train and visit the Meiji shrine and Shinjuku area, where the latest electronic gadgets dazzle from glowing shop-fronts.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Sunroute Asakusa (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 3 - Travel on the bullet train to Nagano and meet the snow monkeys of Jigokudani

No trip to Japan would be complete without a journey on a high speed train and this morning we leave Tokyo and board the Shinkansen. The bullet trains are known for the extremely punctual service, comfortable carriages and the lack of noise as you travel at speeds of up to 300 kilometres per hour. Alighting at Nagano in the Japanese Alps, we make our way this morning by private coach to Jigokudani Onsen, home to Japan's famous snow monkeys. Here the indigenous macaques descend from the hills to bathe and play in the hot springs, a unique behaviour not found anywhere else in the world. Despite their wintry moniker, the monkeys can be observed in and around the pool throughout the year. Our walk to the spring takes 30 minutes along a pretty forest trail which is mostly flat. Once at the spring we spend around an hour observing the monkeys before returning along the same path.

Leaving Nagano behind we head for Kanazawa, until 150 years ago the 4th largest city in Japan. The city

has shunned mass industrialisation and retains the charm of winding back streets, delicate tea shops and the beautiful autumn maples and spring cherry blossoms of Kenrokuen Gardens. Once ruled by the Maeda Clan, one of the most powerful Samurai families in Japan, the city has several traditional samurai districts and, along with Kyoto, is one of Japan's cultural capitals.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Garden Hotel Kanazawa (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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#### DAY 4 - Explore Kanazawa

As the town was not targeted during World War II, much of Kanazawa consists of old buildings and gives a sense of what Japan was like in the 19th century. We'll spend some time wandering around the colourful stalls at the town's Omicho market, where fresh fish and crab are brought daily from the Sea of Japan along with vegetables from the surrounding countryside. A great dish to try here, particular to the region, is chirashi-zushi, which consists of pieces of sushi piled on the top of rice and often garnished with shredded egg. We also visit Kenrokuen Gardens which took nearly two centuries to complete and translating from their original Japanese as the 'Garden of the Six Sublimities'.

This afternoon, we travel train once more to the city of Osaka. Japan's second city is famed for its modern architecture, buzzing nightlife and tasty street food. We'll take a street food tour around the Namba area, one of Osaka's most vibrant and interesting districts where miles of covered arcades criss-crossed by canals and rivers open up to back streets filled with history and small shops. We'll get to try a few local delicacies such as Takoyaki - also known as Octopus balls, Okonomiyaki - a type of savoury cabbage-based pancake filled with pretty much whatever you like, Kushikatsu - skewered meat and vegetables that are deep fried, and ramen - pulled noodles served in a meat or fish-based broth, often flavored with soy sauce or miso.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Rihga Place Higobashi (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & DINNER

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### **DAY 5 - Travel by train to Hiroshima and experience the poignant Peace Park and Peace Museum**

A couple of morning train journeys take us to Hiroshima, where we will spend the morning exploring this thought-provoking city in our own time. Completely destroyed on 6th August 1945, when it was the target of the first atomic bomb to be used in wartime, Hiroshima has literally risen from the ashes, and is now a thriving, friendly city. You will have time to visit the Peace Memorial Park and the well-presented museum on the site of the 1945 A-bomb hypocentre. Whilst serving as poignant reminders of the nuclear holocaust, their over-whelming message is of hope that such horrors will never reoccur. Travel around the city is easy, thanks to the provision of colourful street trams, brought in from all over Japan after the war. Just off the coast of Hiroshima is the tiny island of Miyajima. The relaxed feel of this island is enhanced by the deer that roam freely through the streets. As you arrive on the ferry you can take in the famous view of the floating torii gate. Considered to be one of the most beautiful sights in Japan, these red gates appear to float on the water with the hills of the island forming a spectacular backdrop. Take time to explore some of the islands many shrines before we take the ferry back to the mainland.



ACCOMMODATION:

Washington Hotel Hiroshima (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 6 - Take the Bullet train to Kyoto and explore Nijo Castle**

After breakfast we make our way back to the train station for the journey to Kyoto, which takes around two hours. The imperial capital for more than 1000 years has more than 2000 temples and shrines, many set in perfectly manicured landscaped, tranquil gardens.

We will start exploring this fabulous city this afternoon with a visit to Nijo Castle. Built in 1603 as a Shogun palace, it is a great example of the sumptuous setting in which the Shogun would have held audiences with his samurai warriors. The extensive gardens and gates are impressive, but the real ingenuity of the castle are the nightingale floors, so called because they are designed to make a chirping noise when walked upon, thus making it impossible to sneak up on the castle's inhabitants.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Elcient Kyoto (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & DINNER

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### **DAY 7 - Explore Kyoto's temples and gardens**

We spend today visiting some of the cities many temples.

We start with a traditional tea ceremony and take time to explore Kyoto's charming streets, soaking up the unique atmosphere. Accompanied by a professional local guide we will head on to Ryoan-ji Temple with its beautiful Zen gardens and famous rock garden. The exact history of the gardens is unknown, but it is thought the temple was converted from an aristocrat's villa in 1450. Whilst in the gardens try testing out the theory that at least one of the rocks is hidden from every vantage point. We then explore the famous Golden Pavilion. The temple is a three-storey building with the top two tiers covered in gold leaf. Set in a lake the building appears to float on the water and the reflections, coupled with the background of forest make it worthy of its place on many Japanese postcards.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Elcient Kyoto (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 8 - Tour ends in Kyoto**

The trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Kyoto.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Kyoto at any time. If your flight is departing later in the day luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel, while you head out for some last minute shopping or sightseeing. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you need to depart from Kansai International Airport (KIX), which is around one and a half to two hours away, or Osaka International Airport (ITM) which takes around an hour.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## Trip information

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### Country information

#### Japan

##### Climate

Japan's climate is mostly temperate, with five distinct seasons. Summer is from June to September with temperatures reaching 30°C, although it can vary from warm to very hot. After mid-July. July and August can be humid. Spring and Autumn are mild throughout Japan. Winter, October to April, is cold with snowfall. The main rainy season is June. Japan can be prone to short, tropical cyclones in August to October. October November although cooler is a great time to see the Autumn colours.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+9	2 Pin Flat	Buddhism, Christian and Shinto	Japanese

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### Budgeting and packing

#### Clothing

Rain gear is essential all year. You will need warm clothing from October through until April when temperatures drop, especially at night. December until February are particularly cold so bring extra layers if you are travelling at this time.

#### Footwear

Comfortable shoes, and sandals for relaxing.

#### Luggage

20kg

#### Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack. Your main luggage will be transferred directly from Tokyo to Kyoto therefore you will need to use your daypack to carry everything you need for the overnight stay in Kanazawa.

Japan's rail network has a policy that requires passengers with oversized baggage to reserve a specific seat in an oversized baggage area. This relates to baggage with overall dimensions of over 160cm (taken by adding the height+width+depth measurements). These overall dimensions are around the same for which oversized baggage fees are charged on international airlines, so it's unlikely that you will be bringing a suitcase of this size. However, it is worth checking the dimensions and then repacking with a smaller case if necessary. Due to the complexities of booking these seats, if you arrive with an oversized bag, our team in Japan will ship the luggage from one place to the next from the beginning to the end of the tour, at an additional cost.

## Tipping

### Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. You may however, want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend between £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

## Japan

### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£8	£15-20	£4	£1.00 - 2.00

### Foreign Exchange

Local currency	Recommended Currency For Exchange
Yen.	It is preferable to take money in Yen or traveller's cheques.

### Where To Exchange

Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

### ATM Availability

All post offices have international ATMs. Some other ATMs do not accept Western bank/credit cards. Your tour leader will advise you locally.

### Credit Card Acceptance

In major restaurants and stores.

### Travellers Cheques

It should be noted that outside of the major cities it is difficult to change traveller's cheques. Where available it takes 30-45 minutes, the best places to exchange them is at the airport on arrival.



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## **Transport, Accommodation & Meals**

### **Transport Information**

Train

### **Accommodation notes**

On this tour we spend one night in a traditional Japanese Inn, known as a Ryokan. Thick futon mattresses are laid out on woven tatami mats and the rooms are very simple. Typically ryokans do not offer en suite accommodation and therefore bathrooms will be shared. Due to the small nature of ryokans a single room cannot be offered.

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## **Essential Information**

### **Government Travel Safety Advice**

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

### **Under 18 immigration guidance**

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

### **Price Guarantee**

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

### **Visa and Passport Information**

Japan: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens.

Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

## Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

## Transfers

Find out more about [Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions](#) before you book.

### Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

### Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

## Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

## Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them here.

### Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## Japan

### Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory. We recommend protection against typhoid, tetanus, infectious hepatitis and polio. The use or possession of Vicks inhalers and some other common prescription and over-the-counter medicines (e.g. for allergies and sinus problems or even certain mild painkillers, such as those containing certain levels of codeine) are banned under Japan's strictly enforced anti-stimulant drugs law. Customs officials may not be sympathetic if you claim ignorance about these medicines. If in any doubt about customs procedures for such items, you should check with the nearest Japanese Embassy before visiting Japan. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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### Additional Information



Highlights of Japan

# Reviews

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AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS



PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE



AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS