



## OFF-BEAT JAPAN

Go Beyond Tour | 14 Days | Physical Level 3

TOKYO – FUJI FIVE LAKES – YUDANAKA – NAGANO – TAKAYAMA  
– KYOTO – KOYASAN – HIMEJI – OSAKA

On this exhilarating tour, delve deeper into Japan's rich and fascinating past, present and future. Trek at the foot of Mount Fuji, experience the robot restaurant and stay at a traditional Buddhist lodge. You will also see the classic highlights of Japan.

- Learn the art of Taiko drumming
- Hike around the base of Mt Fuji
- Search for the fascinating Snow Monkeys
- Relax in a traditional Onsen
- Experience the speedy bullet train
- Chant with Buddhist Monks in Koyasan

To book call **0800 936 3998** or visit your local travel agent

Visit [wendywutours.co.nz](http://wendywutours.co.nz)

## TOUR MAP

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### OFF-BEAT JAPAN TOUR INCLUSIONS:

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- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as stated on your Itinerary
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escorts (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with IATA

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, meals not included, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

### GO BEYOND TOURS:

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Venture off the beaten track to explore fascinating destinations away from the tourist trail. You will discover the local culture in depth and see sights rarely witnessed by other travellers. These tours take you away from the comforts of home but will reward you with the experiences of a lifetime. These tours include:

- Unique cultural experiences and encounters
- Off the beaten track destinations
- More evenings at leisure for independent exploration

### PHYSICAL LEVEL 3:

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Our tours come with a physical rating to guide you in selecting a holiday that suits your comfort level. Joining any of our tours involves independent mobility and the ability to stay active throughout the day, which is essential for fully enjoying the unique charm of each destination.

'Off-Beat Japan' is rated as a physical level 3 tour. A good level of fitness is required as you need to be comfortable walking for 2-3 hours and covering longer distances. Walking or other activities will be at a gentle pace and will involve straightforward terrain.

- Sightseeing will often be for extended periods of time on foot and occasionally at an incline
- Trekking around the base of Mt Fuji will be for approximately 3 hours

Our National Escort is dedicated to providing a high level of service and support throughout your journey. However, their primary role is to manage the daily aspects of the tour. They are unable to offer extensive personal physical assistance. We kindly ask our travellers to be prepared for the physical aspects of the tour to ensure a comfortable and enjoyable experience for everyone. If you require any more information about the pace of the tour, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

### JOINING YOUR TOUR:

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The tour is 14 days in duration including international flights. Please note, due to flight schedules passengers may depart/arrive on Day 2.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only', the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to Reservations.

Join the tour on Day 2 in Tokyo and end the tour on Day 13 in Osaka Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

### ITINERARY CHANGES:

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It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate; in these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

- *Please note Edo Tokyo Museum is undergoing renovation. The visit will be replaced by a visit to Tokyo National Museum.*

## DETAILED ITINERARY

### Day 1-2: Fly to Tokyo

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Fly to Tokyo, the capital of Japan and transfer approximately 1 and a half hours to your hotel. The remainder of your day is at leisure.

*Please note: Early check in is not included. If your flight arrives in the morning and you wish to arrange this, please speak to your reservation's consultant. You will be transferred by shared coach with other passengers who are not part of a Wendy Wu Tour. If you are on a shared bus transfer, you may have to walk for a few minutes to get to your hotel. Transfers will differ depending on group size.*



### Destination Information

**Tokyo** – One of the world's most cutting-edge capital cities, Tokyo is a city of contrasts, famous for its neon-lit landscape, towering skyscrapers, peaceful shrines and lovingly tended gardens. Although long the political and cultural centre of Japan, Tokyo became the official capital when the Meiji Emperor moved it to Tokyo in 1867.

### Day 3: Japanese Drumming

Meals: B

Begin your tour of Tokyo immersing yourself in the local culture by taking part in a traditional Japanese drumming (Taiko) class, where you will learn how to beat the 'wadaiko' with 'baichi'.

Next, visit the Meiji Shrine and continue to the vibrant district of Harajuku before stopping by the famous Shibuya Crossing. Enjoy the rest of the day at leisure to further explore the city on your own.



### Destination Information

**Taiko** – Using large drums, Taiko is an ancient Japanese form of percussion which has become a popular musical art form involving tightly choreographed movements.

**Meiji Shrine** – Meiji Shrine is a Shinto shrine dedicated to the Emperor Meiji and his wife Empress Shoken. The shrine is located in an evergreen forest within in the busy city and consists of 120,000 trees which were donated by people from all over Japan when the shrine was established.

**Harajuku** – A district in Shibuya, buzzing Harajuku is the centre of teenage fashion and cosplay culture.

**Day 4: Discover Tokyo**

Meals: B

Tokyo is the ultimate metropolis, perfectly blending modern technology with beautifully serene backstreets and old temples.

Embark on a Tokyo city tour, starting with a stroll through the Imperial Palace East Garden and a visit to the 2nd observatory of the Tokyo Skytree for panoramic views over the city.



Head to the Asakusa district, stopping at the atmospheric Sensoji Temple along Nakamise shopping street, arguably one of Tokyo's most popular and photographed temples and the oldest Buddhist temple in the capital. Home to a five-storey pagoda and the iconic large red Kaminarimon Thunder Gate lantern, the Sensoji Temple is a must-see.

Go on to explore the Tokyo National Museum and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure. You will spend 3-4 hours on foot today.

*Sumo: Tickets to a Sumo tournament are included in the afternoon to some of our departures travelling in May and September. The ritual involved in the performance is just as fascinating to watch as the sport itself. Please note that the tickets are subject to availability.*

**Destination Information**

**Imperial Palace East Garden** – The Imperial Palace East Gardens are part of the inner palace area. They are the former site of Edo Castle's innermost circles of defense.

**Tokyo Skytree** – The tallest structure in Japan, Tokyo Skytree is predominantly a television and radio broadcast tower and is earthquake resistant.

**Sensoji Temple** – An ancient Buddhist Temple and the oldest in Tokyo, the Sensoji temple was originally founded in the 7th century. The temple adorns an image of the Buddhist Goddess Kannon, who was said to have been rescued by two fishermen from the Sumida River in Tokyo.

**Tokyo National Museum** - Located in Ueno Park, the Tokyo National Museum is Japan's oldest museum. Here you'll find the world's largest collection of Japanese art, including ancient pottery, Buddhist sculptures, samurai swords, colourful woodblock prints, eloquent kimonos and much, much more.



**Day 5: Mount Fuji**

Meals: B,D

This morning, transfer 2 and a half hours to Mt Fuji and the Fuji Five Lakes area. The region is spectacular with the calm waters of the five lakes, formed by past volcanic eruptions, reflecting Fuji's picture-perfect cone.

Take a 3-hour easy walk around the base of this iconic mountain, through alpine forest. Take a short transfer to your hotel and check in for your overnight stay.



*For May departures only: A visit to the Fuji Shibazakura Festival has been included. This is the best time of the year and one of the most scenic places in Japan to see the pink moss phlox in full bloom. Please note, the flowers' bloom is weather dependant. In the Fuji Five Lakes area we use a selection of hotels, some of which are more traditional in style. The rooms in these hotels typically feature Japanese elements. You may sleep on a futon with the mattress lying directly on a tatami mat floor and experience the Japanese culture.*

*Overnight accommodation: stay overnight in a ryoken with onsen facilities. Here you will find a futon placed on top of a tatami mat.*

**Destination Information**

**Mount Fuji** – At 3,776m, Mount Fuji is the highest of Japan's mountains and an iconic symbol of the country. Mount Fuji is notoriously shy and is often enveloped by clouds.

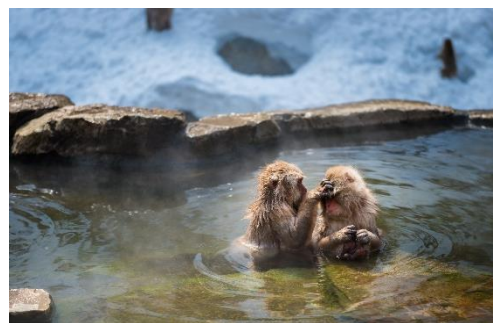
**Fuji Five Lakes** – Formed by previous Mount Fuji eruptions, the Fuji Five Lakes is a region at the base of Mount Fuji made up of five beautiful lakes.

**Day 6: Snow Monkeys**

Meals: B

Travel to Matsumoto, a journey of 3 hours 30 minutes and explore the magnificent 16th-century Matsumoto Castle, also known as 'Crow Castle', due to its intense black exterior.

You will have to remove your shoes before walking along some of the wooden floors and there are some steep wooden steps to reach certain areas.



From the coach parking to castle, it is around 15 minutes walk on flat road.

Next, stop in Yudanaka in search for the snow monkeys (Japanese Macques) at Jigokudani Yaen-Koen Monkey Park.

There is around a 30-minute walk through the forested valley along paths, occasionally on an incline, from the bus park to the main pool where the monkeys bathe.

Accustomed to humans, the monkeys can be observed upclose, and they almost completely ignore their human guests. Please keep in mind that the snow monkeys are wild, not domestic animals and sighting them is never guaranteed, particularly during the breeding season which runs from late September through to November.

### Destination Information

**Matsumoto Castle** – Known as the ‘Crow Castle’ due to its dark black exterior, the Matsumoto Castle dates back to the 16th century and is the oldest wooden castle in Japan.

**Nagano** – The host city of the 1998 Winter Olympics, Nagano is the main access point for the Japanese Alps.

**Jigokudani Yaen-Koen** – Home to Japanese Macaques, also known as Snow Monkeys, Jigokudani literally means ‘hell’s valley’. It is named this because of the steam and boiling water that bubbles out of small crevices in the ground. It is in the baths of this hot water that the resident Japanese Macaques like to soak. The monkeys live in large social groups, and it can be quite entertaining to watch their interactions.

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### Day 7: Japanese Alps

Meals: B, D

This morning, travel 2 hours to Hotaka to ride the Shin-Hotaka Ropeway into the Japanese Alps. You will reach the observation platform at 2,156 metres high to get stunning views of the surrounding mountains.

Drive 1 and a half hours to Takayama, where you will have some free time to explore Kamisannomachi Street and sample the street food on offer (at your own expense). This evening, enjoy dinner in your ryokan.



*Please note the ropeway may be closed due to strong winds, if this is the case, you will continue directly to Takayama where alternative sightseeing will be arranged.*

*Overnight accommodation: stay overnight in a ryokan with onsen facilities. Here you will find a futon placed on top of a tatami mat.*

### Destination Information

**Takayama** – Boasting one of Japan’s most atmospheric townscapes, the layout of Takayama dates back to the 17th century and is home to much Meiji architecture.

### Day 8: Bullet train to Kyoto

Meals: B

Today, take the bullet train to Kyoto. The journey consists of two trains, first the Limited express, which takes around 2 hours and 20 minutes to Nagoya, before changing to the Shinkansen bullet train for a 40-minute journey to Kyoto.

On arrival this afternoon, visit the Fushimi Inari Shrine. You will walk up part of the mountain and the incline allows a steady-paced walk around 15 minutes with flat road and steps to reach torii gates.



Due to the limited space of Fushimi Inari Shrine coach parking, you may need to walk from coach parking for 15 minutes.

Also visit Kiyomizu Temple. Next, take a stroll around the old neighbourhoods of Higashiyama and Gion, the geisha district with a stop at Gion Corner

*Please note: Your luggage will be transferred separately and will not arrive until the following day, so you will need to pack a separate overnight bag for your first night in Kyoto.*

### Destination Information

**Kyoto** – Kyoto was the ancient capital of Japan for approximately 1,000 years until 1867 when it was moved to Tokyo. Many national treasures can be found in Kyoto and in nearby Nara, including old shrines and temples, screen paintings, beautiful gardens, and statues of Buddha.

**Fushimi Inari Taisha** – Famous for its brilliant red traditional torii gates, Fushimi Inari shrine sits at the base of the mountain also called Inari and is the head shrine for 40,000 Inari shrines throughout the country.

**Kiyomizu Temple** – Meaning ‘Pure Water Temple’, Kiyomizu is one of the most celebrated temples of Japan and houses the Jishu Shrine dedicated to the deity of love. A highlight is the Hondo’s veranda which is perched over the hillside, offering spectacular woodland vistas.



**Day 9: Japanese Tea Ceremony**

Meals: B

Start the day with a visit to Ryoanji, the 'temple of the peaceful dragon' and the famous Kinkakuji, also known as the 'Golden Pavilion' due to its gold-like exterior.



You will need to remove your shoes at both temples.

Continue to the Arashiyama district where you will have some free time to explore the Bamboo forest as well as enjoying a rickshaw ride.

Later, witness the rituals involved in the preparation and pouring of matcha tea in a traditional tea ceremony. Due to the nature of the cultural experience, you will be required to remove your shoes before entering the venue. Sightseeing on foot will be approximately 3-4 hours on foot today.

**Destination Information**

**Kinkakuji Temple** – Kinkakuji Temple is a Buddhist temple and is an excellent example of Japanese garden design. The structure is a brilliant golden hue colour and is very minimalistic.

**Ryoanji Temple** – Ryoanji Temple is a Zen temple renowned for its garden, which features a dry, sand landscape with large rocks and smooth pebbles.

**Arashiyama** – Famed for its Bamboo grove, Arashiyama is a district of Kyoto filled with temples and shrines.

**Day 10: Kyoto Culture & Koyasan**

Meals: B, D

This morning, explore the craft of Kimono creation at Nishijin Textile Centre, then continue your tour learning the art of Origami. This afternoon, travel by road to Koya-san for your overnight stay in a 13th century temple in a traditional tatami room. The journey is approximately 3 hours.



*The temple where you will lodge tonight is staffed by monks who generally do not speak English. Accommodation is traditional and basic; single mattresses known as futons will be laid on traditional tatami mats, tatami mat floors are not hard and, mattresses are designed for comfortable sleep. The doors to rooms are made from rice paper so noise will travel, and they cannot be locked. Rooms are individually heated but hallways are not. There will be shared bathrooms with shower and toilet facilities. Please note that the showers are open-plan with no screens. In the morning there is no hot water for showering or use of the public bath. The evening meal is a Buddhist vegetarian dinner, known as Shojin Ryori and is served promptly at 18:00. The evening is free for quiet reflection in your room, please note there are no TVs on the premises.*

### Destination Information

**Koyasan** – Known primarily as the centre of the Shingon sub-section of Buddhism, Koya-san sits in the mountains and is the ideal spot to get a glimpse of Japan's traditional religious life.

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#### Day 11: Morning Prayers

Meals: B

Rise early this morning to join the monks in their daily morning prayers before a traditional breakfast.

Take an hour walking tour of Koya-San before visiting Kongobuji Temple. Afterwards, travel by chartered coach to visit Okunoin. Here, sightseeing will be approximately 4 hours on flat but rough terrain.



This afternoon, continue your journey 2 and a half hours to Osaka and check in to your hotel for the next 2 nights.

### Destination Information

**Kongobuji Temple** – Dating back to 16th century, the Kongobuji Temple is the head temple of the Shingon Buddhist sect. The interior of the building is adorned with paintings of cranes and there are sliding doors throughout.

**Okunoin Cemetery** – Home to Kobo Daishi's mausoleum (founder of Shingon Buddhism), Okunoin Cemetery is the largest cemetery in Japan, with over 200,000 tombstones, as many wished to be buried near Kobo Daishi.

**Osaka** – Osaka, formerly known as Naniwa, is Japan's third-largest city and remains the economic powerhouse of the Kansai Region. The city is famed for its delicious food and is often referred to as the culinary capital. The city also boasts vibrant colours that surround each street, rich history and culture.

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#### Day 12: Himeji Castle & Sake Brewery

Meals: B, D

Today, drive 2 hours to Himeji to visit the 17th century Himeji Castle. The castle is largely in its original condition, so please use common sense and be mindful of your step when strolling around the castle.

You will have to remove your shoes before walking along some of the wooden floors and there are some steep wooden steps to reach certain areas.



After the reopening in March 2015, Himeji Castle has welcomed a large number of visitors.

As such, they now issue numbered tickets to visitors in order to limit the number of people who can enter the Main Keep, reducing congestion, waiting time, and to protect the cultural properties. Please note that this means that there may be cases where some visitors are not allowed to enter the Main Keep.

Continue on to a sake brewery to learn about the brewing process and enjoy some tasters. Travel back to Osaka, stopping at the bright lights of the Dotonbori district, where you will enjoy some free time before taking the coach back to the hotel. In the evening, enjoy a farewell dinner.

### **Destination Information**

**Himeji** – Himeji is the second largest city of Hyogo Prefecture after Kobe, with approximately half a million inhabitants. It is most famous for its magnificent castle.

**Himeji Castle** – Widely considered Japan’s most magnificent castle for its imposing size and beauty, the well-preserved Himeji castle is both a national and world heritage listed treasure. Himeji Castle has never been destroyed by war, earthquake or fire and survives to this day as one of the country's twelve original castles.

**Sake Brewery** – Sake is the national alcohol of Japan; a tour of the brewery offers the chance to learn about the manufacturing processes from the 1950’s to the present day.

**Dotonbori district** – Historically a theatre district and still a popular entertainment area today the Dotonbori district offer an eccentric and electric atmosphere.

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### **Days 13-14: Depart Osaka**

Meals: B

Transfer around 1 hour to the airport, per your international flight departure. Any time before your flight is at leisure.

*Please note: Only breakfast is included today. Late check-out is not included in our Off-Beat Japan tour. If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day in Osaka, please contact our reservations department who can confirm additional pricing and make this arrangement for you, subject to availability at the hotel.*

*Transfers: In the event that your flight departs outside of the majority group departure time, you will be transferred to the airport by a shared coach (not with other Wendy Wu Tours passengers). If you are on a shared coach transfer, you may have to walk for a few minutes to get to the coach.*

## JAPAN - TRAVEL INFORMATION

### VISAS:

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Visas are not required for New Zealand passport holders for entry into Japan for stays of up to 90 days. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into New Zealand.

At the time of booking Visa conditions may have changed, currently no visa is required for New Zealand Passport holders. Your travel consultant will inform you if any changes are applicable prior to your departure.

### INSURANCE:

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We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original

### AIRPORT TRANSFERS:

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As we offer our customers a variety of airlines to suit your needs, clients will arrive/depart in Japan at different times during the day. Depending on the number of customers arriving/departing on the same flight as yourself, the type of transfer to your hotel/airport will vary.

You will always be met on arrival by English-speaking staff and transferred all the way to your hotel either by:

- Direct shared bus (shared with other passengers, not just Wendy Wu Tours clients),
- Shared bus plus taxi from the nearest bus stop to the hotel (maximum 5 minutes' walk),
- Chartered coach (if there are more than 8 Wendy Wu Tours passengers arriving at the same time).

On the departure day, all passengers will be met by English-speaking staff at the hotel and transfer by one of the three ways as above. For those passengers using a shared bus or shared bus plus taxi to the airport, the guide services end when they drop you off at the bus stop, and you will need to check in at the airport on your own. If you have paid extra for a private transfer, the above does not apply.

You will meet your national escort at the welcome dinner or, if arriving late, the following morning after breakfast at the welcome meeting.

Please ensure your Wendy Wu Tours luggage tag is visible on your suitcase/hand luggage, as this may also assist your guide in identifying you.

### **EVENINGS AT LEISURE:**

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To give you more flexibility and choice when travelling on this tour, we have carefully balanced special highlight meals with evenings at leisure so that you can explore the many culinary delights that Japan has to offer. Alternatively, you can use this time to enjoy the facilities of your hotel. Your National Escort will be happy to provide you with advice about good places to eat and assist in the booking of transportation to get you there (at your own expense).

### **EATING IN JAPAN:**

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For Go Beyond tours most meals are included (excluding drinks), please see your day-to-day itinerary for details on which meals are included.

On all Group tours, Extensions and Pre & Post Stays, no refund will be given for any meals missed due to your flight timings, or personal choice.

Japanese cuisine is delicious, colourful and healthy. Meals are usually served with a bowl of rice and a bowl of miso soup and consist usually of fish, pickled vegetables and meat. Japan's other main staple is noodles, the most famous being Udon and Soba. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our fully inclusive group tours from the groups' arrival until the day of departure.

Our schedule of meals is designed so that you can experience the local dishes; their individual flavours as well as different ways they are prepared and cooked throughout Japan. Food is an important element of Japanese culture. It is a time for families and friends to come together and much of family life revolves around the dinner table. Most food is eaten with chopsticks – Western cutlery is not always available at restaurants.

Breakfast will mostly be buffet-style but may be a set menu. Lunches are mostly pre-set options as is custom in many local restaurants. Dinner is usually buffet-style, featuring a wide selection of high-quality Japanese and Western dishes, but may occasionally be a set menu. We usually find this style of dining suits the wide and varied tastes of our customers on tour. These are also pre-booked in advance by your guides. This will provide greater flexibility and allow you to sample a broad range of local cuisines and dishes.

All beverages will be at your own expense and are readily available. Please note: if you have any dietary requirements, you must inform us before your tour starts, and please be aware that restaurants may not always be able to accommodate these. Gluten-free food may not be as readily available as in the New Zealand.

On some days where lots of sights are covered, dinner times may be early and your tour group may head directly to the restaurant after sightseeing without stopping at your hotel to freshen up.



### ACCOMMODATION:

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Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. In the Fuji area, hotels tend to be more traditional in style and culture. In this area, you may be asked to take your shoes off at the door and store them in a secure locker – this is very traditional Japanese culture.

Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the New Zealand and Japan.

Please note that in Japan, hotel rooms and bathrooms are renowned for being small. Standard single rooms are usually smaller than a standard double or twin room, contain one small double bed (or one single bed), and are designed for one person to use.

All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Hotels in Japan often do not have porters and you will be required to carry your own luggage. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/local guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

### PORTERAGE:

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Please be aware that portering is not included on our tours in Japan. You will therefore need to be able to handle your own luggage within the hotel and when using transportation like trains and coaches.

### AIRPORT TRANSFERS:

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As we offer our customers a variety of airlines to suit your needs, clients will arrive/depart in Japan at different times during the day. Depending on the number of customers arriving/departing on the same flight as yourself, the type of transfer to your hotel/airport will vary.

You will always be met on arrival by English-speaking staff and transferred all the way to your hotel either by:

- Direct shared bus (shared with other passengers, not just Wendy Wu Tours clients),
- Shared bus plus taxi from the nearest bus stop to the hotel (maximum 5 minutes' walk),
- Chartered coach (if there are more than 8 Wendy Wu Tours passengers arriving at the same time).

On the departure day, all passengers will be met by English-speaking staff at the hotel and transfer by one of the three ways as above. For those passengers using a shared bus or shared bus plus taxi to the

airport, the guide services end when they drop you off at the bus stop, and you will need to check in at the airport on your own. If you have paid extra for a private transfer, the above does not apply.

You will meet your national escort at the welcome dinner or, if arriving late, the following morning after breakfast at the welcome meeting.

Please ensure your Wendy Wu Tours luggage tag is visible on your suitcase/hand luggage, as this may also assist your guide in identifying you.

### TRANSPORT:

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**Coaches:** Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Roads in Japan are extremely well maintained and are comparatively smooth compared with the rest of Asia. Coaches and minibuses do not have onboard toilet facilities; however, frequent bathroom stops are made for passengers comfort.

**Bullet trains:** Second-class reserved seats are booked for our groups on bullet trains; there will be toilet facilities on board. Due to the limited space on bullet trains, a separate luggage transfer service will be arranged for all suitcases (1 case per person). You will need to pack a separate overnight bag to carry on the train as your suitcase will not arrive until the following day after a bullet train journey. Your guide will indicate when you will need to prepare for this throughout your tour.

### DEVELOPMENT IN JAPAN:

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Japan is a developed country and as such matches the west in modernity and technological advances. Japan is an extremely safe country and takes great responsibility in maintaining high safety standards.

### GROUP SIZE:

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Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a national escort. There will usually be no more than 18 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). A national escort will accompany each group of 10 or more. However, at our discretion, we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so.

### TIPPING POLICY:

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Although tipping in Japan is not customary, if you feel you have received an excellent service, please feel free to tip your guide at your discretion.

### **CULTURAL DIFFERENCE:**

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Japanese society and culture are built on intricate social etiquette and customs. As foreigners, we are not expected to be knowledgeable about all etiquette, but it will make your time in Japan more enjoyable if you are respectful of local customs.

Some examples of scenarios you may encounter include removing your shoes and hats when entering a temple or house (some restaurants as well). You may be supplied with slippers at some places, but please come prepared with plenty of spare socks, and shoes that are easy to take off for the fairly regular occasions when they must be removed.

Your National Escort will advise you of some of these other customs at the beginning of your tour.

### **LUGGAGE:**

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All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable.

### **PERSONAL EXPENSES AND OPTIONAL TOURINGS:**

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Personal Expense - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you.

Optional Tours - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available.

Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

### **CLIMBING STEPS:**

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Sightseeing at nearly all the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defence against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails.

Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

### VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

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We recommend that you contact either your Doctor or Health centre for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Safetravel has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful [www.safetravel.govt.nz](http://www.safetravel.govt.nz)

### BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

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We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with [www.safetravel.govt.nz](http://www.safetravel.govt.nz) as in the event of an emergency, New Zealand Consular assistance will be more readily available.

Up until the day you travel, it is vital you keep up to date and familiarised with the entry requirements as these can change at short notice. You are personally responsible for completing any entry forms, conducting any covid tests (if necessary), etc and adhering to countries' specific entry requirements.

You can also access the New Zealand Government's travel advisory service for up-to-date information about your destination on the same website.

### AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

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Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice including a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

Updated: May 2024