

# JOURNEY TO *Japan*



## Highlights

- Tokyo City Tour
- Asakusa Kannon Shinto Temple
- Visit a local Japanese School
- Fuji - Hakone - Izu National Park
- Bullet Train to Kyoto
- Kyoto City Tour
- Kyoto Handicraft Center
- Nara City Tour

## Itinerary Tokyo (4), Kyoto (3)

**DAY 1** Board your flight and journey to Japan, crossing the International Dateline and ten time zones.

**DAY 2 TOKYO** *Konnichi Wa!* Welcome to the Land of the Rising Sun. You'll be greeted at the Narita Airport and transferred to your hotel. Relax, unpack, and prepare for a fabulous week.

**DAY 3 TOKYO** Explore one of the world's most fascinating cities on a full day Tokyo City Tour. See the Emperor's Imperial Palace, with the famous Nijubashi (double bridge) reflection in the Imperial Park, the landmark Tokyo Tower, and the sophisticated neon Ginza area, with chic shops, cafés, and *depatto meguri* (department stores). Visit Asakusa Kannon Shinto Temple and its bustling arcade of souvenir shops and the Tasaki Pearl Gallery where cultured pearls are made. Drive through Akihabara, the world-famous electric appliance discount center, and bustling Ueno, with its beautiful park and zoo.

**DAY 4 TOKYO** This morning is free to discover more of this dynamic city. Many of Tokyo's charms and beauties lie hidden beneath the surface, for this is primarily a city of small villages, each with its own Shinto shrine or Buddhist temple, and neighborhood festivals. You may wish to rise early and visit the 50 acre Tsukiji Fish Market (also known as "Tuna Hell") to see the auction of tuna, octopus, squid, and other fish sold to restaurants and retailers. This afternoon, visit a local school and experience what life is really like as a Japanese student.

**DAY 5 TOKYO** Travel by motorcoach to Hakone for a guided tour of the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park. The area is famous for its hot springs, outdoor activities, and natural beauty. Many *optional* activities are available such as a cable car ride above Owakudani (Great Boiling Valley) with its plumes of sulfurous

steam gushing upward, or a boat ride on Lake Ashi, well known for the inverted reflection of Mt. Fuji, Japan's tallest mountain.

**DAY 6 KYOTO** Board the famous Shinkansen "Bullet Train" with your Japan Rail Pass and journey to the ancient imperial city of Kyoto. Watch for a glimpse of Mt. Fuji! Kyoto was Japan's capital city for more than 10 centuries, and was spared from destruction by World War II bombs. Here, Geishas still entertain, elderly women wear kimonos, and 1,600 temples and several hundred shrines surround central Kyoto.

**DAY 7 KYOTO** Your Kyoto City Tour begins at ornate Nijo Castle, built in 1603. To emphasize his power, he decorated his castle in blatant ostentation. The sliding doors have magnificent paintings of forest scenes, and the wooden floors "sing" like nightingales to warn off intruders. See Kinkakuji, the Golden Pavillion. Also see the Heian Jingu Shrine built to mark the founding of Kyoto. Perched on a steep slope, Kiyomizu Temple will offer you both a fine view of the city and a breathtaking view of the valley below. Also visit the Kyoto Handicraft center.

**DAY 8 KYOTO** Take a coach to Nara, about 1 1/4 hours away. This old Imperial capital and the monasteries of the vicinity contain some of the best and most representative pieces of Japanese religious art. The tour of great temples begins in Nara Park. The main attractions in Nara are the Hall of the Great Buddha and the resplendent Todaiji Temple.

**DAY 9 DEPART** Transfer to Kansai Airport in Osaka for your return flight home with warm memories of the kind Japanese people you've met and the magnificent impressions of your journey to beautiful Japan.