

FLAG  
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*Travel*

# JAPAN

A SAMPLE ITINERARY

ANYTHING. ANYTIME. ANYWHERE.



# TOKYO



# RECOMMENDED ITINERARY

## 14th September - Day One

19:00 - Departure Heathrow

## 15th September - Day Two

14:40 - Upon arrival to Tokyo's Haneda Airport, you will be met and transferred to your private car, which will be waiting to transport you into the city.

Your English speaking guide will also provide you with a Japan Transport PASMO Card, for use on public transport, pre-loaded with a value of 1,500 JPY.

Check into your Deluxe King Room at The Palace Hotel, with a balcony and breakfast included. The remainder of your first day is reserved for you to enjoy at leisure and acclimatise to your new surroundings!

<https://en.palacehoteltokyo.com/>





16th September - Day Three

## Sumo Wrestling

Take an peek behind the scenes of one of Japan's best-loved and most iconic sports - sumo wrestling! Spend a morning at an authentic sumo 'stable', the building where the wrestlers live, train, eat and sleep. Watch as the massive athletes go through their daily training rituals, and learn about this important facet of Japanese culture.

Today's activity will begin at 07:45 - have the cameras ready, as this experience of sumo training in Tokyo will be simply unforgettable! Meet with a local guide and journey to the Ryogoku district, the centre of Japan's sumo world. The neighbourhood is home to the main Kokugikan Sumo Stadium, and a large number of sumo stables.

Enter one of the stables, or *heya* as they're called in Japanese, a sacred space where the *rikishi* (wrestlers) train - and enjoy a privileged opportunity to observe various exercises and training routines going on in the stable. Take note that while some *rikishi* undergo training, lower ranked acolytes take care of household chores such as cleaning and cooking in order to learn the arts of discipline and patience. Rituals and customs are an integral part of the sumo world, as they are in wider Japanese culture!

Witness higher ranking wrestlers as they prepare for their next match - training sessions last a couple of hours, starting with a warm up, followed by technique practice. The highlight of the training is a game of 'King of the Castle', where two battlers spar nonstop until one is eventually defeated. While silence is critical when inside, the guide will provide insightful commentary beforehand to help explain the various rules and activities in advance.

After enjoying this intimate look at the training of Japan's sumo wrestlers, transfer back to your Hotel by private car. The entire experience typically lasts around 3 hours.



## Tokyo Street Food Tour

Enjoy a true Tokyo food experience! Hit the streets at night to seek out the finest cuisine and authentic street food in the Japanese capital. You will visit a variety of venues, from tiny pubs to sidestreet stalls, each distinctive in their atmosphere and food offerings. Rub elbows with the locals while sampling Japan's favourite dishes and drinks.

Today's tour will begin at 17:00. Be sure to bring an appetite - your taste buds are about to receive a treat! You will meet with a local, food-loving guide at the train station and set off into the streets for a Japanese-style food crawl.

Veer off into the maze of laneways that fill the capital, passing street carts selling exotic snacks and diners perched on small metal stools. Stop to sample some of the delights on offer, from barbequed meats to sweet desserts.

Next, enter an *izakaya* for a distinctly Japanese cultural experience! These small Japanese style pubs are popular gathering places for friends and colleagues to gather after work for a beer. The food on offer is meant to be shared, and is thus served in a manner akin to Spanish tapas. The guide will order a few traditional *izakaya* favourites such as fried chicken wings or cold edamame. Sample the dishes and wash them down with a cold, Tokyo-brewed beer alongside the locals!

Whilst dining, learn more about Japan's culinary culture by observing the lively surroundings and hearing the guide's personal stories. During the evening, stop at four or five venues, each with a distinctive style. The venues do not take reservations so the exact route may change, but the guide will ensure there is plenty to eat!

Following an evening of culinary and cultural indulgence, return to the Hotel for a good night's sleep!

This experience is organised to start at 17:00, and will last approximately 3 hours or more.

All food is included during your street food tour (set menus), as is your English speaking guide, and transfer to/from your Hotel in a private car.

## 17th September - Day Four

Today is free to explore Tokyo using your PASMO card but we can arrange a full day of activities or a guided tour, if you prefer. Simply let us know of any particular areas of interest, and we can assist you from here.

We are able to arrange tickets to watch a professional sumo wrestling match this evening at the Ryogoku Kokugikan stadium - we can organise great seats.



## 18th September - Day Five

This morning your guide will meet you at your Hotel for a full day of sightseeing in Tokyo, utilising the city's highly efficient train system!

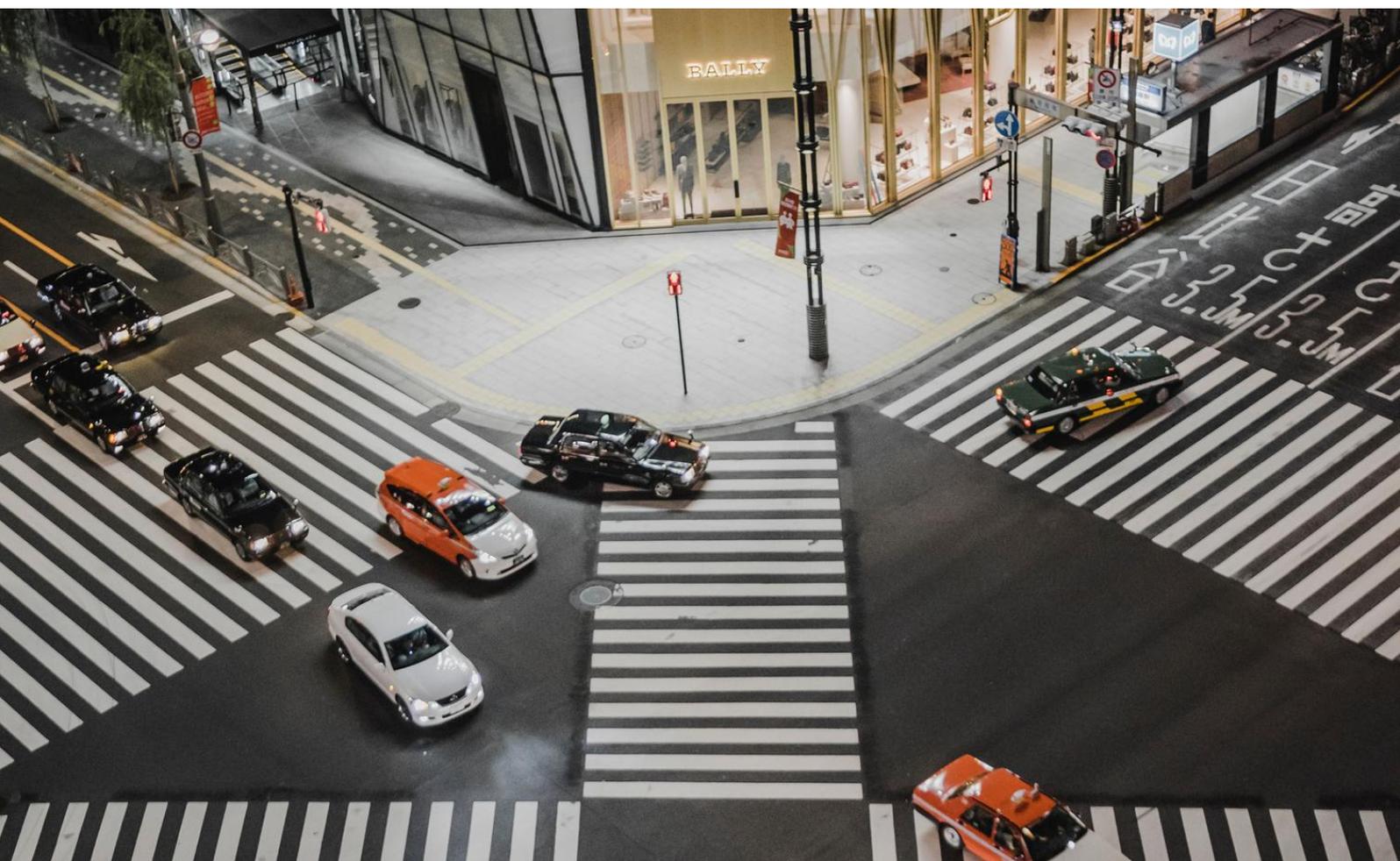
The day will begin with a stroll through Hama-Rikyu Teien, the former private garden of an Edo-Period feudal lord. Take a break in the tea house known as 'Nakajima No Chaya' which stands elegantly in the park's lake. Here you will have the chance to taste matcha - Japanese green tea - a revelation!

You will next have an opportunity to see Tokyo from an alternative angle as you take a boat-cruise along the Sumida River.

Next stop will be Asakusa, a part of Tokyo's shitamachi, or old town. Asakusa is the city's oldest Geisha district and also home to Senso-ji Temple, Tokyo's oldest Buddhist temple. The streets around Senso-ji feature many traditional shops that sell Japanese crafts and souvenirs and are a delight to wander through.

In the afternoon, head across Tokyo to Omotesando, commonly referred to as Tokyo's Champs-Elysee. This broad, tree-lined avenue boasts a multitude of fashion flagship stores designed by internationally renowned architects. Before the tour ends, take time to explore Meiji Shrine, which is Tokyo's most famous shrine, dedicated to the spirit of the late Emperor Meiji.

This experience will last approximate 8 hours, including transfer times to and from your Hotel.





# HAKONE



## 19th September - Day Six

Today you will check out of your Hotel and transfer to Hakone at 09:00, where you will check into a Matsu Japanese Style room at Gora Kadan or Gora Tensui (if available). Enjoy a day of touring the Hakone National Park, with a guide and private car.

Your adventure will begin with a ride on the Guinness World Record-holder ropeway, heading to the peak of Mount Owakudani, the source of the hot water in Hakone's hot springs.

There will be a brief stop to enjoy the opportunity to taste one of Hakone's specialities - the *kuro-tamago*, a tasty egg hard-boiled in the sulphuric hot springs! Head back to the cable car and continue the ride all the way to Togendai. Here, a majestic replica pirate ship will sweep across Ashinoko, a lake that was formed by a volcanic eruption 3,000 years ago.

After the cruise, the next stop will be the Hakone Open Air Museum, which creates a harmonic balance of nature and art by exhibiting various sculptures on its spacious grounds. Beside the sculptures, the Hakone Open Air Museum also features various indoor galleries, including a sizable Picasso Collection!

Throughout the day, there will be a number of chances to catch a glimpse of Mount Fuji, provided the sky is clear enough!

### Notes:

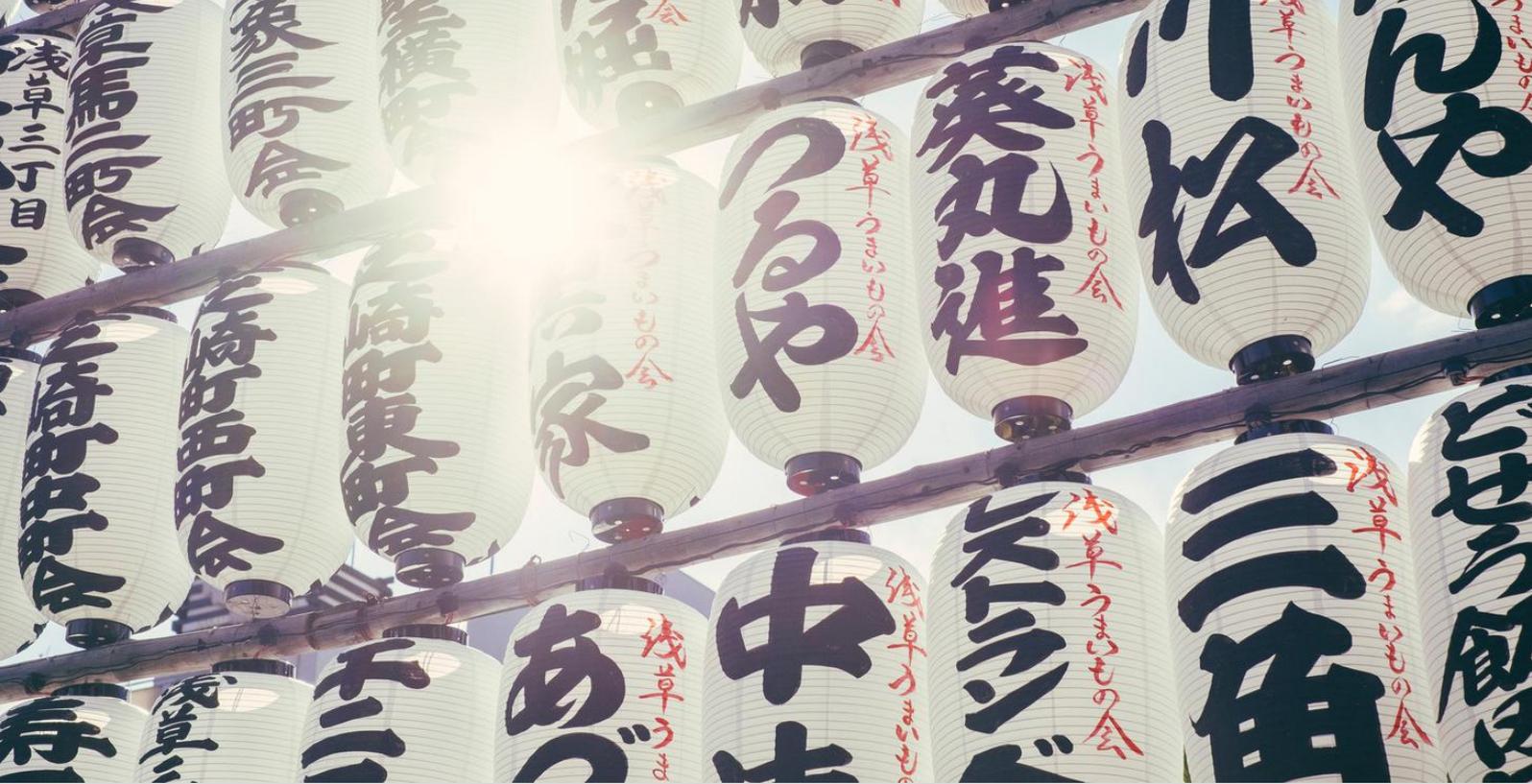
- An English speaking guide for the full day of 8 hours, with all transfers in a private car included, as are all entrance fees for the day
- Pickups and transfers from Central Tokyo to your Hotel in Hakone are also included
- A two day Hakone Free Pass is included, valid from Odawara Station

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# KYOTO





## 20th September - Day Seven

A taxi will collect you this morning to transfer you to Odawarra Station on the mainline branch, ready to catch the bullet train to the majestic city of Kyoto.

Kyoto is home to around 2,000 shrines and temples, including 17 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and is considered to be the spiritual, traditional and cultural centre of Japan. Upon arrival, you will be met by a driver and transferred to your Hotel - the Hyatt Regency - where you will check into your Standard King Room.

In the evening, you will have the chance to delve into the world of Geisha culture. Start with an insightful walk through the atmospheric streets of Gion, the Geisha district, with an expert English speaking guide. You will then dine in the company of a *Maiko*, an apprentice, enjoying fascinating conversations, dances, and lively local drinking games.

Gain an in-depth and exclusive understanding of Geisha culture as your guide explains the intricacies of *Geiko*, the localised Kyoto form of Geisha, and their *Maiko*. Explore the atmospheric streets, walking past local shops and restaurants on the way to the Yasaka shrine. From here you will continue to Hanami-koji, where lavish tea shops line the roadside.

Continue to a local theatre, where *Geiko* and *Maiko* perform traditional dances, before crossing Kyoto's famous Tatsumi Bashi Bridge, passing a legendary teahouse and small street shrine along the way. Arrive at Shirawaka Canal for a walk along the streets, which are lined with cherry trees and brimming with charm.

After the walking tour, enter a local restaurant for a memorable dinner in the company of a *Maiko*. Dine on a traditional, multi-course meal called *kaiseki ryori*.



Interact with your hostess, learning about her craft and the world of the Geisha. During dinner, the Maiko will entertain by performing graceful traditional dances and teaching you popular Japanese drinking games. She will be more than happy to join you for photos which will no doubt make great mementos of your trip!

At the end of the night she will bid you farewell, before you are transferred back to your Hotel!

**Notes:**

- Your English speaking guide is included
- Shinkansen tickets from Odawara Station to Kyoto Station (direct, green class, approx. 3 hours)
- Pre-arranged taxi from your accommodation in Hakone to Odawara Station
- Private transfers from Kyoto Station to your Hotel
- Dinner included

<https://kyoto.regency.hyatt.com/en/hotel/home.html>

**21st September - Day Eight**

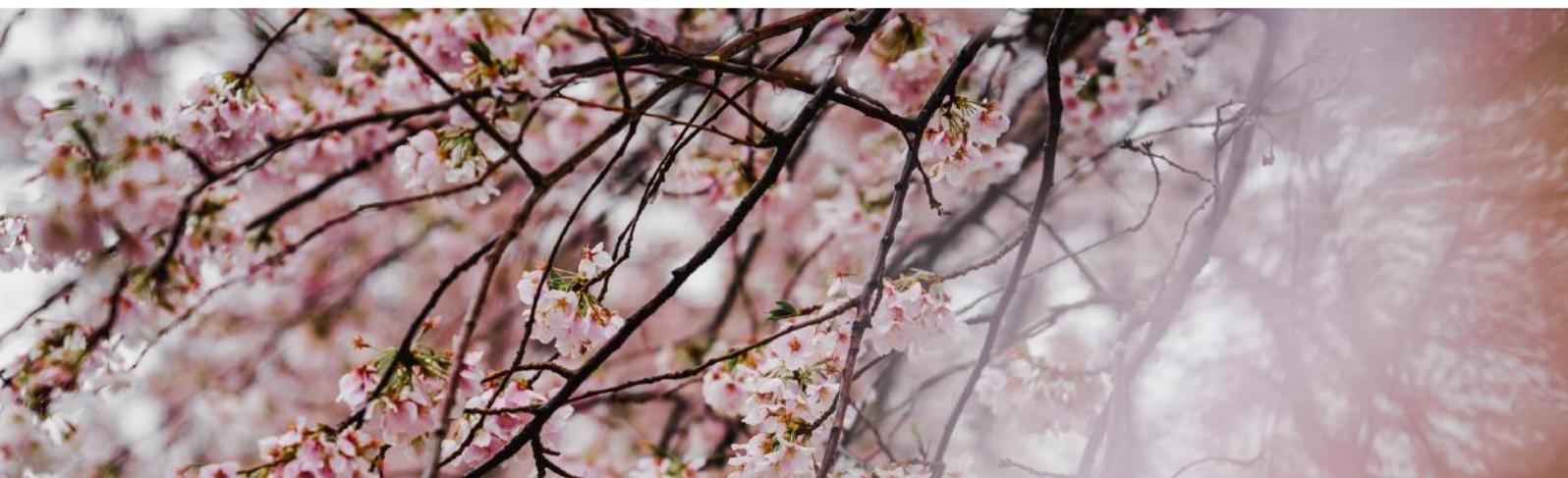
Today's tour of Kyoto begins with a visit to Nijo Castle, an ornamental castle originally built to serve as the private villa of a powerful feudal lord. The main building was completed in the early 1600's, and has since then been renowned for its Momoyama-style architecture, decorated sliding doors, and 'chirping nightingale' floors.



Next on the list is the serene Ryoan-ji Temple, which is famous for its well-maintained rock garden and is known to be the home of the Myoshinji School of the Rinzai Buddhist sect.

Just a short distance from Ryoan-ji is the stunning golden pavilion collectively known as Kinkaku-ji Temple. The temple grounds are smaller than that of most temples and shrines in Kyoto, but what is undoubtedly impressive is the pavilion, which is completely covered in handmade goldleaf!

A visit to Kiyomizu-dera Temple follows later in the day. The view from the 13-meter high building is indeed breathtaking and the fact that this verandah was built without using any nails or joiners is quite incredible and almost unbelievable! The tour ends with a stroll along the busy streets of the Higashiyama district, a collection of narrow alleyways lined with local stores, souvenirs, small eateries, and even pottery centres.





## 22nd September - Day Nine

Be charmed by the ancient capital city of Nara during a day trip from your base in Kyoto! Hear tales of the city's past whilst wandering by ancient shrines and traditional dwellings. Explore famous landmarks and iconic sites such as the 8th Century Todai-ji Temple and quiet back roads brimming with ambience - providing a exquisite glimpse into the incredible heritage of Japan.

Your tour will begin with collection at 09:00, before you spend the day exploring the wonders of Japan's prosperous 8th Century capital during this comprehensive trip. Hitting the streets of this charming city early in the morning will make the most of your time here!

Begin with a visit to Isui Garden, an incredible place to explore a while. Stroll around the immaculate grounds, admiring views of Mt. Wakakusayama in the background whilst learning about the unique history of Nara. After this, relax awhile with a cup of tea and some local sweets at a picturesque teahouse set amid the garden.

Your next stop will be Todaiji Temple, one of the most iconic landmarks in Nara. The guide will explain the history of this 8th Century monument, which was built to serve as Japan's most prominent Buddhist temple. Explore the temple compound and enter the Daibutsu-den building - the largest wooden building in the world - and admire the 15-metre Buddha statue found inside.

Continue to the gorgeous Nara Park, where friendly deer casually graze, and befriend some of these forthcoming local creatures. Pass small shops and traditional houses, gaining an appreciation for the blend of tradition and modernity that defines so many urban spaces in Japan!

The next stop is the Kasuga Taisha - a sacred Shinto shrine. Take note of the shrine's famous bronze and stone lanterns that hang from its roof, donated by the shrine's devotees. Although they are only lit during festivals in February and August, they are still an impressive sight!

Before departing Nara, take a walk through the Naramachi district. The streets of this former merchant neighbourhood are filled with restaurants, cafes, boutique stores and traditional inns. Many of the shopfronts are built in the traditional *machiya* style, which helps provide the district with its unique character and atmosphere.

Your day trip to Nara concludes with a transfer back to your Hotel in Kyoto!

**Notes:**

- English speaking guide included for full day
- Transfers for the day included

## 23rd September - Day Ten

Sadly an excellent trip has drawn to an end! Today you will depart and return home, starting with collection and private transfers from your Hotel.

- 04:00 - Private transfer to Kansai Airport
- 07:00 - Take ANA Flight NH94 to Haneda
- 08:10 - Land in Haneda
- 11:35 - Depart Haneda to London
- 16:10 - Arrive at Heathrow Airport

**\* END OF TRIP \***



A photograph of a traditional Japanese castle, likely Himeji Castle, featuring multiple tiers of dark, curved roofs and white walls. The castle is set against a dark, cloudy sky. In the foreground, there are lush green trees. The text "ENJOY YOUR TRIP!" is overlaid in the center in a white, sans-serif font, with two horizontal yellow lines above and below it.

ENJOY  
YOUR  
TRIP!