SAMURAI TOURS

Adventures in Discovering Traditional Japan

www.samuraitours.com

Golden Route



9 Days / 8 Nights

Golden Route

Tour Overview

The Golden Route tour includes the "must see" sights for first-time visitors to Japan, or for someone who has only a short time to visit Japan. This tour roughly follows the Tokaido Highway, one of the main highways connecting Tokyo and Kyoto during the Edo Period (1603 to 1868). This highway was used by travelers, merchants, and even feudal lords and samurai to travel to and from Edo, the present day Tokyo.

Destinations

Tokyo, Hakone, Kyoto, Osaka

Tour Factors

Cultural Immersion
★★★★★

Pace
★★★☆☆

Physical Activity
★★★☆☆

Tour Details

You could easily spend a lifetime exploring Tokyo and never run out of places and things to discover. From Asakusa’s ancient temple to the Ginza’s ultra-modern department stores and shops, the sheer energy level of Tokyo will sweep you away. Tokyo is not just a destination – it’s an experience.

Steeped in history and tradition, Kyoto has in many ways been the cradle of Japanese culture. A stroll through Kyoto today is a walk through 11 centuries of Japanese history. For many, just the name of Kyoto conjures up the classic images of Japan: streets of traditional wooden houses, the click-clack of geta (wooden sandals) on the stone-paved roads, geisha in a flourish of brightly colored silks and a tea master warming water and making tea.

In addition, you will visit the natural area of Hakone, where, weather permitting, you will get a close-up view of Japan’s iconic Mt. Fuji. And Osaka, the foodie destination of Japan.

Map



Destinations



Tokyo

Tokyo Skytree, Ginza District, Asakusa (Nakamise-dori, Sensoji Temple, Asakusa Shrine), Tsukiji Outer Fish Market, Sushi Lunch, Shibuya Crossing



Kyoto

Nijo Castle, Kinkakuji (Golden Pavilion), Nishiki Koji, Tea Ceremony, Fushimi Inari Shrine, Higashiyama District, Yasaka Shrine, Gion Geisha District



Hakone

Lake Ashi Sightseeing Boats, Hakone Ropeway



Osaka

Dotonbori-dori, Hozenji Temple

Itinerary

Day 1 Arrive in Tokyo

After clearing customs and immigration, you will be met at Tokyo's Narita Airport by a Samurai Tours meeting staff member. They will then purchase a limousine bus ticket for you and help you board the bus to the hotel. After checking in, the evening is free. No meals are included.

Travel: 1-1/2 Hours; Walking: Light

Day 2 Tokyo – Tokyo Skytree, Ginza, Asakusa

After breakfast, you will start the day with a Welcome/Orientation meeting. Next, the licensed, English-speaking guide will escort you to the Tokyo Skytree for a birds-eye view of Tokyo. Next we will travel to the nearby Asakusa area. Here we will tour the Nakamise-dori, Senso-ji Buddhist Temple and the Asakusa Shrine where you will learn about Buddhist and Shinto Japanese religious practices. Afterwards, we will travel to the famous Ginza district. The Ginza is recognized by many as one of the most luxurious shopping districts in the world, attracting visitors and regulars alike from across the globe. We will return to the accommodations, where we will go through the train tickets for the rest of the tour. Breakfast at the accommodations and lunch at a local restaurant included.

Travel: 1 Hours; Walking: Heavy

Day 3 Tokyo - Tsukiji Outer Fish Market, Sushi Lunch, Shibuya Crossing

We will be visiting the outer market of Tsukiji Market. We will wander through many of the shops selling numerous items needed for Japanese cooking. Many professionals visit Tsukiji Outer market to purchase ingredients and cooking tools. You can see many authentic tools and try various foods easily while browsing the market. After this, we will go to a sushi restaurant near the market for a sushi lunch. After lunch, we will travel the short distance by subway to Shibuya. Shibuya is a center for youth fashion and culture, and its streets are the birthplace of many of Japan's fashion and entertainment trends. We will cross the Shibuya Crossing, which is said to be the busiest pedestrian crossing in the world. The intersection is heavily decorated by neon advertisements and giant video screens and gets flooded by pedestrians each time the crossing light turns green, making it a popular photo and movie filming spot. After this short explanation of the Shibuya area and the hotspots, the guide will give you a map and allow you to have some free time in Shibuya. You can return to the hotel with the guide or stay in Shibuya and return on your own. Breakfast at the hotel and lunch at a local restaurant is included.

Travel: 1 Hours; Walking: Heavy

Day 4 Free morning in Tokyo; Travel to Hakone

The morning is free to enjoy the world-class city of Tokyo. Go shopping for that perfect souvenir, visit the Meiji Shrine dedicated to the Japanese emperor of the 19th century, or wander through the trendy Shibuya or Harajuku districts where you will more than likely see interesting and far-out fashions. In the afternoon, we will meet at a pre-determined time, and then travel to Hakone. We will be staying overnight at the Hakone Yumoto Onsen. In the morning, we will be sending our overnight bags ahead to Kyoto. You will need enough items for two night and one day. Breakfast at the hotel and dinner at the ryokan is included.

Travel: 1 1/2 Hours; Walking: Light

Day 5 Tour Hakone - Hakone Ropeway, Hakone Lake Ashi Sightseeing Boats; Travel to Kyoto

Hakone is famous for its natural beauty and the view of nearby Mt. Fuji (weather permitting). We will be taking many different forms of transportation (electric train, funicular, gondola and bus) around Hakone including the Hakone Sightseeing Boats on Lake Ashi. In good weather, you can get an excellent view of Mount Fuji, and enjoy Hakone's rich scenery reflected on the lake's calm surface. After returning to Hakone Yumoto and picking up our overnight bags, we will continue on to Kyoto. Breakfast at the ryokan is included.

PLEASE NOTE: High winds and/or heavy rain can, and will often cause cessation of services on the Sightseeing Boat cruise and/or ropeway. Should this occur, we will not be able to operate the itinerary as listed above, and will replace it with the best possible alternative given the weather conditions. Also, in the case of bad weather, even if the boats are still operating, we may alter the itinerary for your comfort and safety as Mt. Fuji will more than likely not be visible anyway.

Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Medium

Day 6 Kyoto – Nijo Castle, Kinkakuji (Golden Pavilion), Nishiki Koji, Tea Ceremony

Before leaving for the day, you will need to prepare your main luggage to be sent forward to the airport. If you would prefer to keep your luggage, you can do so. If you will be sending the luggage, you will need to keep enough items for three days/two nights. The luggage transfer forms will have been provided to you prior to this day, and you are responsible for paying for this transfer. After breakfast, we will start the day at the Nijo Castle. Built in 1603, it was the Kyoto home of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first Tokugawa Shogun. The ostentatious style of construction was intended as a demonstration of Ieyasu's prestige, and to signal the demise of the emperor's power. The finest artists of the day filled the castle with delicate transom woodcarvings and paintings by the Kano School on sliding doors. One of the castle's most intriguing features is the so-called "nightingale" floors. To protect the Shogun from real or imagined enemies, these floorboards creak when stepped on. Next we will visit Kinkaku-ji. Kinkaku-ji, also known as the Golden Pavilion, is one of Kyoto's, as well as Japan's, most recognizable attractions. The gleaming building covered in gold leaf seems to float on the aptly named Mirror Pond, especially on a sunny day. After lunch you will have some free time at Nishiki Koji. Nishiki Koji is a narrow, five block long shopping street lined by more than one hundred shops and restaurants. Known as "Kyoto's Kitchen", this lively retail market specializes in all things food related, like fresh seafood, produce, knives and cookware, and is a great place to find seasonal foods and Kyoto specialties, such as Japanese sweets, pickles, dried seafood and sushi. Following this free time, we will participate in an authentic tea ceremony. The regimented discipline of the tea ceremony has been practiced for more than 400 years, and at one time was considered mandatory for Samurai as an aid to train the mind. After the tea ceremony, we will return to the ryokan. Breakfast at the ryokan and lunch at a local restaurant included.

Travel: 1 Hours; Walking: Heavy

Day 7 Kyoto – Fushimi Inari Shrine, Higashiyama District, Yasaka Shrine, Gion Geisha District

After breakfast, we are off by train to the nearby city of Fushimi, one of the largest sake producing regions of Japan. Here we will visit the Fushimi Inari shrine. This Shinto Shrine, established in the 8th century, is famous for the long tunnels of vermilion torii gates straddling a network of trails leading to the top of the heavily forested Mt. Inari. We will then travel to the Higashiyama District. This area of narrow, cobblestone alleys with its temples, shrines, numerous shops and restaurants

is truly enjoyable and relaxing. We will stop for lunch in the Higashiyama District. We will then visit the Yasaka Shrine, also known as the Gion Shrine. This shrine, built over 1350 years ago, is one of the most famous shrines in Kyoto. The shrine's main hall combines the honden (inner sanctuary) and haiden (offering hall) into a single building. Next, we will walk to the famous Gion Geisha District. Here, you will see where the Geiko (in Kyoto they call themselves Geiko, not Geisha) and Maiko live and work. You may even see one on their way to one of their appointments. Breakfast at the ryokan and lunch at local restaurants are included.

Travel: 1 Hours; Walking: Heavy

Day 8 Free Morning in Kyoto; Travel to Osaka; Osaka - Dotonbori-dori, Hozenji Temple, Ebisu-bashi Bridge, Sayonara Dinner

The morning is free to enjoy Kyoto. In the afternoon, we will travel to the nearby city of Osaka. The numerous large, neon signs and the hawkers and pachinko parlors of the Dotonbori-dori area combine to create an audio-visual overload. You will visit the Hozenji Temple and Yokocho, an area that retains an old-time atmosphere and where so many locals come to pour water over the temple s statues, they are now covered in moss. In contrast, you will also visit the Ebisubashi Bridge next to Dotombori Street. With its towering neon signs, a visit to the Ebisubashi Bridge is like stepping into the movie Bladerunner. The walking tour will end with an Okonomiyaki dinner for the group's Sayonara Dinner.Breakfast at the ryokan and dinner at a local Japanese restaurant included.

Travel: 1 Hour; Walking: Heavy

Day 9 Return Home

It's time to say "sayonara" (Goodbye). The group will depart at 8:00 am unless we have determined you need to leave earlier (in which case you will not be provided sending service). You will be escorted to the Shin-Osaka train station, where you will return on your own to Tokyo's Narita airport, Tokyo's Haneda airport or Osaka's Kansai airport by train. (If you are flying out of Narita or Haneda Airport, be sure to schedule a flight after 15:00 to allow yourself enough time to catch your flight.)

Retrieve your main luggage in the departure lobby of the airport (map in appendix)

Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Light

Walking level descriptions:
Light – 0 to 2 miles on level ground
Medium – 2 to 4 miles on level ground or 0 to 2 miles on hilly ground
Heavy – 4 to 6 miles on level ground or 2 to 4 miles on hilly ground

Dates & Pricing

Dates	Price (land only) / Single Supplement (All prices are per Person)	Status
Mar 24, 2027 - Apr 1, 2027	$3,936.66/ $379.04	Available
May 12, 2027 - May 20, 2027	$3,671.95/ $379.04	Available
Jun 16, 2027 - Jun 24, 2027	$3,568.95/ $379.04	Available
Jul 14, 2027 - Jul 22, 2027	$3,455.65/ $379.04	Available
Oct 13, 2027 - Oct 21, 2027	$3,671.95/ $379.04	Available

Add-On Tours

Our tours and tour itineraries are the best, but as the saying goes, “you can’t make everyone happy all of the time”. There may a specific destination or a specific experience you may want to include in your visit to Japan that may not be included your tour. Choose from our Add On tours to include your interests and make your Japan tour even better.

Click HERE **to view all of the Add-On Tours.**

Or, use the arrows to scroll though the recommended list of Add-On Tours for this tour.















Inclusions

- Local, licensed, English-speaking, Japanese guides
- **Travel insurance from Travel Guard**, one of the world's largest travel insurance providers, will be provided to everyone from the United States. All others will receive a $100 per person credit and will be responsible for obtaining their own travel insurance in their own home country. (The insurance provided by Samurai Tours will cover the land portion only. Insurance to cover airfare and other additional expenses is the tour member's responsibility.)
  - Exact coverage dependent on state
    - For residents of the following states please click here for your available plan. FL, KS, MN, MO, MT, NY, and WA
    - For all other states and the District of Columbia click here
  - **Travel Insurance Surcharge:** Depending on your age at the time the travel insurance is purchased, you may be subject to the following surcharge for your travel insurance. Travel insurance surcharges will be due at the same time as your tour deposits. (the surcharge itself is not insured)
    - Up to 69 – $0
    - 70-74 – $50
    - 75-79 – $100
    - 80-84 – $200
    - 85+ – $300
  - **Travel Insurance Opt-Out:** If you would prefer to opt out of the travel insurance, please note this at the time of registration. You will receive a $100 credit per person, which will be reflected on your invoice. In the event that you would need to cancel your tour, cancellation penalties may apply. See the Terms and Conditions page for the Cancellation Fees Schedule.

- Reserved seat train tickets where applicable

- Meeting service at Tokyo's Narita Airport or Tokyo's Haneda Airport and transfer to the accommodations in Tokyo
  - The meeting service will meet you at the airport and provide you a transfer to the accommodations in Tokyo
  - Meeting service can only be provided between 8am and 9pm. If you arrive at a time outside of these hours, we will need to provide alternative directions for you to get to the ryokan on your own.

- Sending service to the Kyoto train station and transfer to Tokyo's Narita Airport, Tokyo's Haneda Airport or Osaka's Kansai Airport. (Transfers to Itami Airport are not included)
  - The sending service will escort you to the Kyoto train station and make sure you board the correct train. The sending service will not accompany you to the airport.

For those requiring meeting or sending services on other than the scheduled arrival/departure dates, there will be a $100 fee for the meeting service from the airport into Tokyo or the sending service to the Kyoto train station.)

- Lodging for 8 nights in Japanese-style ryokans or western-style hotels

- Meals
  - Japanese-style or Western-style breakfast every morning (Please Note: Some ryokans offer Japanese breakfasts only.)
  - Four Japanese-style or western-style lunches
  - Two Japanese-style dinners

- The appropriate amount of free time to allow you to explore and discover your own personal Japan.
- All transportation costs when traveling with the group. (Transportation costs during scheduled free times are the tour member's responsibility.)

- Admission fees to the destinations and activities listed in the Tour Highlights column on the right. (Itinerary specifics subject to change)
- Electronic version of itinerary
- Use of audio tour guide system (must provide own headphones)
- Sayonara dinner at the end of the tour
- Baggage transfer from the accommodations in Tokyo to the accommodations in Kyoto (one bag only)

Each tour member receives an electronic copy of our tour handbook. This handbook is full of tips and suggestions taken from our Japan travel experiences that allow you to better plan and prepare for your trip, and therefore enjoy your trip even more. The tips and suggestions included cover everything from how to save while exchanging money, what to pack, some basic Japanese-language tips, general etiquette do's-and-don'ts, ryokan customs, etc.

Exclusions

- Airfare is NOT included.
- A printed itinerary is not included
- Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks and desserts are NOT included

Thank you for downloading this PDF version of our tour. Please visit our website at www.samuraitours.com/tours for the most current dates, prices and information.

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