SAMURAI TOURS

Adventures in Discovering Traditional Japan

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Tokaido Highway Train Cruise



15 Days/14 Nights

Tokaido Highway Train Cruise

Tour Overview

Many people use the Tokaido Highway Shinkansen. They speed through the countryside at hundreds of kilometers per hour, but few people take the time to stop and see the unknown, significant, and best of all, uncrowded sights along the way. In our Train Cruise tours that focuses on the quiet, out-of-the-way sights, we travel along the Tokaido Highway Shinkansen between Tokyo and Kyoto.

📍 Destinations

Atami Onsen, Izu Peninsula, Shuzenji Onsen, Shizuoka, Sekigahara Battlefield, Hikone, Omi-Hachiman, Kusatsu, Otsu

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Tour Details

In addition to the beautiful coastlines, mild climate, and scenic mountainous interior, there are numerous spots from which to get a view of the nearby Mt. Fuji (weather permitting) from the Izu Peninsula. We will visit the Sunpu Castle, the home of Tokugawa Ieyasu before moving to today’s

Tokyo.

We will stop at the Sekigahara Museum and Battlefield. Here we will learn about the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600. It was the most consequential and bloody battles in Japanese history. We will also stop at Hikone Castle, one of the 12 remaining original castles in Japan.

We will stop at the city of Katsura, a stop along the original Tokaido Highway. Here we will learn more about the original Tokaido Highway. And we will stop at two famous temples in the city of Otsu. Before continuing on to Kyoto, the final destination, we will visit Hieizan. Hieizan is a mountain overlooking Kyoto, home to a well known temple with its army of warrior monks. The temple was attacked by Oda Nobunga in 1571, and most of the inhabitants were killed.

And much, much more.

Destinations



Atami Onsen



Izu Peninsula

Jogasaki Coast



Shuzenji Onsen



Mt Fuji



Shizuoka

Sunpu Castle, Toshogu Shrine, Hiroshige Museum



Sekigahara

Sekigahara Battlefield and Museum



Hikone

Hikone Castle, Genkyuen Garden, Castle Road



Omi-Hachiman

Adzuki Castle Ruins. Omi-Hachman, Omi-Hachiman Ropeway. Omi-Hachiman Shrine



Kusatsu

Kusatsujuku Honjin, Tokaido Museum



Otsu

Ishiyamadera, Midera

Ogoto Onsen



Hieizan

Enryakuji

Kyoto



Free Day

Itinerary

Day 1 Arrive in Japan

After clearing customs and immigration, you will be met at Narita Airport by a Samurai Tours meeting staff member. They will then purchase a train ticket for you and help you board the train to the hotel. Or, if you arrive at Haneda Airport, we will arrange for a taxi to meet you at the airport and take you to the hotel, After checking in, the evening is free. No meals are included.

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

Day 2 Atami Onsen - Atami Beach, Kiunkaku Former Ryokan, Atami Castle

Before leaving Tokyo, you will send your main luggage ahead to Shuzenji Onsen. You will travel to Atami and Shuzenji with an overnight bag only. You will need enough items for three days and two nights. We will travel to Atami Onsen by Shinkansen. After dropping off the overnight bags at the hotel, we will start our tour of Atami by starting at Atami Beach. Next, we will visit Kiunkaku Ryokan. Kiunkaku is a well preserved former residence that hosted many illustrious guests during the years when it served as a ryokan. We will end the day by taking the ropeway to Atami Castle. There are different exhibitions on each floor of the castle tower as well as an observatory with panoramic views of Atami city on the top floor. Breakfast and dinner at the hotel.

Travel: 45 minutes; Walking: Heavy

Day 3 Izu Peninsula - Jogasaki Coastline

We will take a relaxing stroll along the Jogasaki Coastline, a beautiful section of coastline along the Izu Peninsula’s eastern coast. In the afternoon, we will return to Atami Onsen. Breakfast and dinner at the hotel.

Travel: 2 Hours; Walking: Heavy

Day 4 Travel to Shuzenji Onsen - Mt Fuji Panorama, Travel to Shuzenji Onsen

After breakfast we will travel by Shinkansen, local train, and bus to Shuzenji Onsen. On the way to Shuzenji, we will stop at the Mt Fuji Panorama Park, From here, you will get an excellent view of the iconic Mt. Fuji (weather permitting). Shuzenji Onsen s one of the oldest and most famous hot spring resort towns on the Izu Peninsula.Shuzenji Onsen was named after Shuzenji Temple at the town center. Kobo Daishi, one of Japan’s most important religious persons, founded the temple about 1200 years ago.Breakfast and dinner at the ryokan is included.

Travel: 2 Hours; Walking: Heavy

Day 5 Shuzenji Onsen

After breakfast, we will take a walking tour of Shuzenji Onsen In the afternoon, you will have free time to relax and enjoy the onsen, Breakfast and dinner at the ryokan.

Travel: N/A; Walking: Heavy

Day 6 Shizuoka - Toshogu Shrine, Kakegawa Tea Fields

Before leaving after breakfast we will ship the main luggage ahead to Hikone. We will travel by local train and Shinkansen to the city of Shizuoka. Sometimes referred to as Japan's riviera, Shizuoka Prefecture is located along the Pacific coast in the south of the Chubu Region. Mount Fuji and the Izu Peninsula are part of Shizuoka Prefecture. Tea is the prefecture's most famous product.After arriving in Shizuoka city, we will visit the Toshogu Shrine. Kunozan Toshogu is a shrine dedicated to the famous leader Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616) who brought a long period of civil wars to an end and united all of Japan. Of the many Toshogu shrines dedicated to Ieyasu throughout Japan, Shizuoka's is second in importance only to Nikko's Toshogu. In the afternoon, we will visit the Kakegawa area. Kakegawa is a small city known primarily as a center of tea production within Shizuoka Prefecture; which itself is the number one producer of tea in Japan. We will stay overnight in Shizuoka. Breakfast at the ryokan is included.

Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Heavy

Day 7 Sekigahara Battlefield and Museum

We will travel by Shinkansen to Nagoya, and then take a chartered van to Sekigahara. Sekigahara is a small town in the southwest of Gifu Prefecture, and the site of a major battle fought on October 21, 1600 between forces loyal to the warlord Tokugawa Ieyasu (the "eastern army") and a coalition of his enemies led by Ishida Mitsunari (the "western army"). The battle had a significant impact on Japanese history, leading to the beginning of the Tokugawa Shogunate which would rule a unified Japan for the next two and a half centuries. The battle was one of the bloodiest battles in the history of the world. The battle lasted only 6 hours, but about 30000 were killed. We will first visit the museum, which chronicles the progress of the battle. In the afternoon, we will tour the battlefield to visit the important locations. We will overnight at the city of Hikone. Breakfast at the ryokan.

Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Heavy

Day 8 Hikone - Hikone Castle, Genkyoen Garden, Castle Road

We will start the day at Hikone Castle,.After a construction period of 20 years, Hikone Castle was completed in 1622. The hilltop castle served as the seat of the Ii clan until the end of the feudal age in 1868. Hikone Castle is an original castle, i.e. its castle keep has survived the post-feudal era intact. Next, we will visit Genkyoen Garden. Genkyuen Garden is a landscape garden with a central pond and a circular walking trail. Designed after a palace garden from Tang China, it was built on the grounds of Hikone Castle in 1677 by the local lord for the entertainment of his guests and family. There are four small islands scattered across the pond, connected by bridges. Hikone Castle's main keep stands on the hill behind the garden, serving as "borrowed scenery". Yume Kyobashi Castle Road is a road just outside Hikone Castle's outer moat, which has been redesigned in a style combining the look and atmosphere of a former castle town with a pleasant, modern shopping street. Breakfast at the hotel is included.

Travel: N/A; Walking: Heavy

Day Travel to Omi Hachiman - Omi Hachiman Canal Area, Ropeway, Omi Hachiman Shrine, Shinmichi Street

Omi Hachiman rose to prominence during the feudal era as the base of the local merchants, the Omi merchants, whose trade activities were famed across the country and provided them with great wealth.The town was originally developed in the late 1500s when a nephew of Toyotomi Hideyoshi built a castle there. The castle was demolished only a decade later after Hideyoshi ordered his nephew to commit ritual suicide for allegedly plotting a coup; however, the town prospered as a business hub in partly due to its location along two of the most important trade routes of the era: the Nakasendo Highway which connected Kyoto with Tokyo (then Edo), the

Tokaido Highway which connected the same important cities, and the shipping route that connected the Sea of Japan via Lake Biwa with Kyoto.Breakfast and dinner at the hotel.

Travel: 30 minutes; Walking: Heavy

Day 10 Shiga Prefecture - Koka House and Ninja Village, Tanuki-mura

After breakfast, we will travel into Shiga Prefecture, and start at the Koka Ninja House. Koka's Ninja House is close to 300 years old and used to be a home of ninja. It appears like an ordinary house from the outside; inside however, it is equipped with many ingenious traps and devices, designed to prevent intruders and to provide a means of escape in times of need. Visitors are allowed to explore the house and discover its various trapdoors and secret passages. Next, we will travel to the Koka Ninja Village. Other interesting features at the village include a shuriken (throwing star) throwing range and a nine stage obstacle course in which one can, for example, try to walk on water or scale walls with tools devised by the ninja. There is also a simple museum at the village displaying various manuals and tools utilized by the Koka Ninja in the past.The village is remote, rural and has a somewhat rundown compound housing a collection of old dwellings in a forest. In one of the houses, a staff demonstration is given to illustrate its various trapdoors and hidden compartments. Next, we will visit the Tanuki Village. Later in the afternoon we will travel to the city of Kusatsu where we will stay overnight. Breakfast at the hotel and lunch at a local restaurant is included.

Travel: 2 1/2 Hours; Walking: Heavy

Day 11 Kusatsu-juku, Kaido Koryukan, Kusatsu-juku Honjin, Tokaido Highway

Kusatsu flourished as a "post town" during the Edo period. Post towns were officially founded on the highway as the transportation base for travelers' lodging, goods and mail. Among them, Kusatsu was a place for branching and merging with the two major highways, the Tokaido and the Nakasendo connecting Kyoto and Edo (Current Tokyo). We will visit the Kusatsu-juku Kaido Koryukan, a museum documenting the Tokaido Highway. We will also visit the Kusatsu-juku Honjin. The Honjin was where the feudal lords would stay when traveling along the highway. Each post town had one. Breakfast at the hotel included.

Travel: 30 minutes; Walking: Heavy

Day 12 Otsu - Ishiyamadera, Miidera, Travel to Ogoto Onsen

We will start the day at Ishiyamadera. Ishiyamadera Temple is a gorgeous temple complex that played a major role in the history of Japan. It was constructed around 747 and takes its name "stone mountain" from the unusual stone outcropping on which it is built.This is where a full moon inspired Murasaki Shikibu to begin writing her book, "The Tale of Genji," in 1004, giving Japan, and perhaps the world, its first novel. The temple maintains a room and statues in her honor. Next we will visit Miidera. Prince Yota Okimi built Onjoji Temple at the foot of Mount Hiei in 672 to mourn the death of his father. The temple was called Miidera Temple because of the sacred spring that was used as the birthplace of three historical figures: Emperors Tenchi and Temmu, and Empress Jito. The main hall was built in 1084, but the warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi destroyed the building in the late 1500s. It was rebuilt in 1599. In the afternoon, we will check into our ryokan in Ogoto Onsen. Breakfast at the hotel and dinner at the ryokan.

Travel: 1 Hour; Walking: Heavy

Day 13 Hieizan; Travel to Kyoto

Before leaving for the day, a staff member will pick up and take the luggage to the hotel in Kyoto. We will visit Hiei-zan. located in Kyoto’s eastern mountain range on Mount Hieizan. Enryakuji is one of the most important monasteries in Japanese history and the headquarters of the Tendai sect of Japanese Buddhism. Many influential monks studied at Enryakuji, including the founders of a number of later sects, such as the Pure Land, Zen and Nichiren sects. Enryakuji was founded in 788 by Saicho, the monk who introduced Tendai Buddhism from China. At its peak, Enryakuji had as many as 3000 subtemples and a powerful army of warrior monks who often engaged in power struggles with other monasteries and political leaders. Later in the afternoon, we will continue on to Kyoto. Breakfast at the ryokan included.

Travel: 2 Hours; Walking: Heavy

Day 14 Free Day in Kyoto; Sayonara Dinner

The day is free to enjoy Kyoto. In the evening, we will enjoy the Sayonara Dinner. Breakfast included at the hotel and dinner included at a local restaurant.

N/A;; Walking: TBD

Day 15 Travel to the Airport; Fly Home

t’s time to say “sayonara” (Goodbye). The group will depart at around 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 Kyoto 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.

Travel: 3 Hours; Walking: Light

Map



Dates and Prices

Dates	Price (land only) / Single Supplement (All prices are per Person)	Status
Oct 31, 2027 - Nov 14, 2027	$6,077.00/ $1,133.00	Available

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 – $175
75-79 – $375
80-84 – $700
85+ – $1,175
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.

Meeting service at Tokyo's Narita Airport or Tokyo's Haneda Airport and transfer to the hotel in Tokyo

Sending service to the Kyoto train station

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.
Reserved seat tickets on the train to Osaka's Kansai Airport, Tokyo's Narita Airport, or Tokyo's Haneda 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 14 nights in Japanese-style hotels or ryokans and western style hotels

Meals

Japanese-style or Western-style breakfast every morning (Please Note: Some ryokans offer Japanese breakfasts only.)
1 Japanese-style or Western-style lunch
7 Japanese-style or Western-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 (Itinerary specifics subject to change)
Electronic version of itinerary
Sayonara dinner at the end of the tour

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

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

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