

# DISCOVER JAPAN

## Grand Autumn Tour

Small Group Escorted Tour 2019 (11 to 25 November)



*Let Shoji Australia be your pathway to discover Japan.*

Local knowledge is the key to the most rewarding travel experiences and this tour has been custom designed to offer you an amazing experience of Japan. The tour traverses six prefectures of Japan to offer an impressive range of locations, landscape, cuisine, and experiences. Accommodation will include western style hotels and traditional *ryokans* (Japanese inns). Transportation in Japan will include private coaches, subways, local trains, and *shinkansen* (bullet trains).

**This tour is for adults only and is especially suitable for the traveller with no Japanese language ability who is looking for a comprehensive introduction to this unique country.** The Japan tour will be coordinated and accompanied by an escort who will provide you with all the information you need to understand the culture and enjoy your trip. A detailed information booklet will provide information about locations visited and a background in aspects of Japanese history and culture.

*"It's taken me a few days to recover from our amazing adventure. Thank you for all your fabulous organisation and thoughtful guiding. Most of all thanks for your consideration, thoughtfulness, great sense of humour and sincere friendship. It was wonderful to share the last two weeks with you." – Margaret*

*"What a smorgasbord of experiences! We were certainly given a unique opportunity to sample the delights that Japan has to offer. Thank you! On reflection it is amazing how many things we managed to do, see, and taste." – Georgina*

*"I would like to thank you for an amazing introduction into the wonder of Japan. What a diverse itinerary you provided ... every day seemed to be something completely new and exciting." – Ute*



## Tour Details

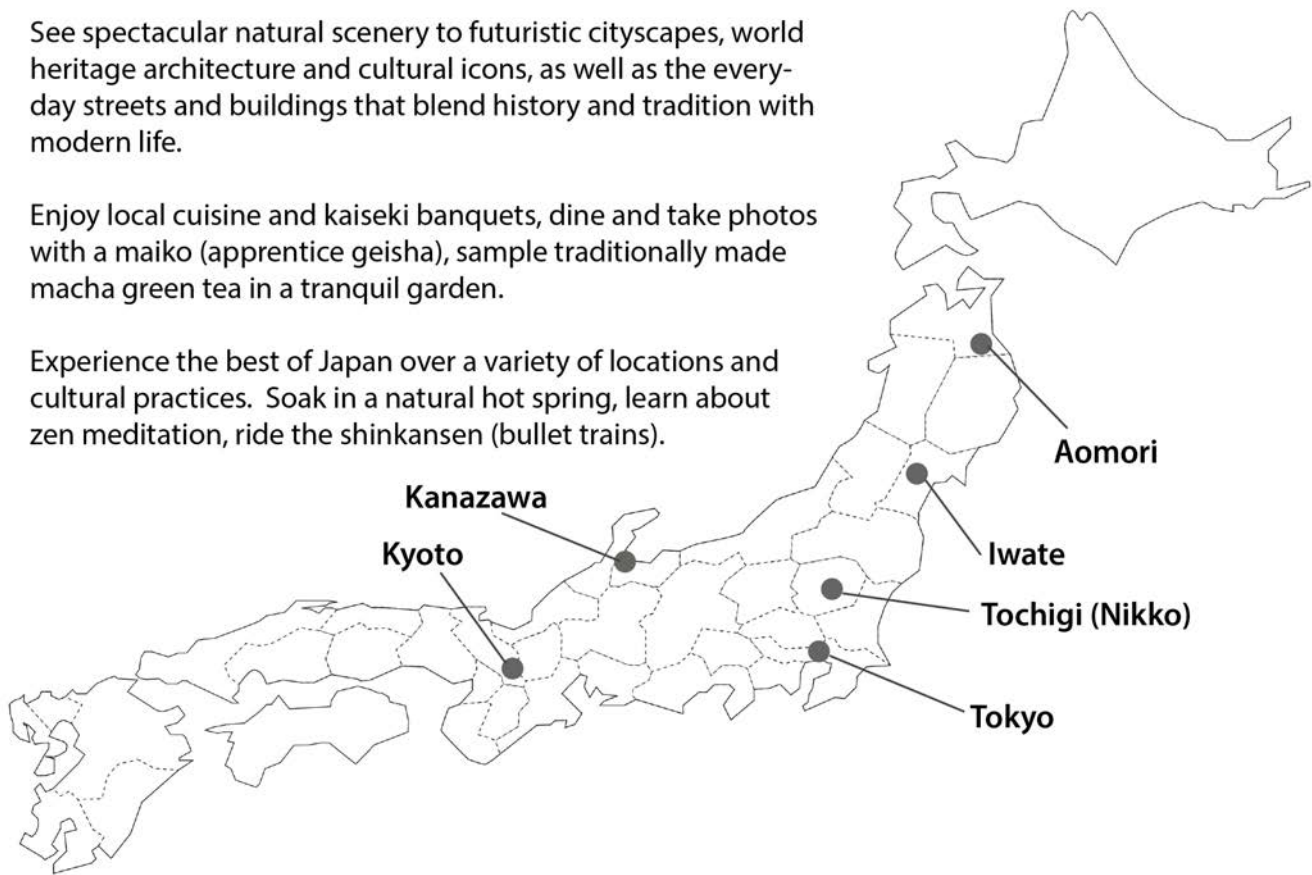
<b>Dates</b>	Meeting in Tokyo <b>Monday 11 November 2019</b> Finishing in Kyoto <b>Monday 25 November 2019</b> <i>14 nights stay in Japan</i>
<b>Price</b> (per person in AUD)	<b>\$7,300</b> (Twin Share) <b>\$8.300</b> (Single)
<b>Destinations</b>	Tokyo, Aomori, Iwate, Nikko, Kanazawa, Kyoto, Tokyo
<b>Package Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully escorted from arrival at hotel in Tokyo to the end of tour in Kyoto</li> <li>• All accommodation at standard city hotels or traditional Japanese Inns</li> <li>• Daily breakfast, 1 lunch, &amp; 11 dinners including <i>kaiseki</i> (Japanese banquet dinner) with a <i>geisha</i> or apprentice</li> <li>• All transportation for itinerary: includes 14 day Japan Rail Pass (ordinary class), subway and train fares, private coaches (as per itinerary), local buses, and taxi transfers</li> <li>• Admission fees for specified itinerary</li> <li>• 2 Luggage transfers</li> <li>• Self-guided advice &amp; information for free time</li> <li>• Support from your friendly tour leader</li> <li>• Pre-departure documents including a detailed information booklet</li> </ul>
<b>Highlights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tokyo cultural and modern icons</li> <li>• Tea experience at tranquil garden teahouse</li> <li>• Traditional ryokan stay with a dinner featuring an Aomori Nebuta Matsuri festival show and hot spring at Hoshino Resort Aomoriya</li> <li>• Private coach tour of autumn foliage in Hachimantai Towada National Park, Aomori</li> <li>• Historic town of Hiraizumi in Iwate</li> <li>• Traditional river boat ride through the dramatic natural scenery of Geibikei Gorge.</li> <li>• Paper making activity</li> <li>• UNESCO World Heritage Toshogu Shrine &amp; autumn scenery in Nikko</li> <li>• A recreated Edo Village and movie set showcasing <i>samurai</i>, <i>ninja</i>, and <i>geisha</i></li> <li>• Multi course banquet dinner at ryokan inn</li> <li>• One of Japan's top 3 landscape gardens</li> <li>• Kanazawa old samurai residence and streets</li> <li>• Kyoto UNESCO World Heritage temples &amp; shrines &amp; gardens</li> <li>• Bamboo forest in Kyoto</li> <li>• Private dinner with a <i>geisha</i> or <i>maiko</i> (apprentice <i>geisha</i>)</li> </ul>

## Destinations

See spectacular natural scenery to futuristic cityscapes, world heritage architecture and cultural icons, as well as the everyday streets and buildings that blend history and tradition with modern life.

Enjoy local cuisine and kaiseki banquets, dine and take photos with a maiko (apprentice geisha), sample traditionally made matcha green tea in a tranquil garden.

Experience the best of Japan over a variety of locations and cultural practices. Soak in a natural hot spring, learn about zen meditation, ride the shinkansen (bullet trains).



## Tour Notes

### The itinerary:

You will receive a more detailed itinerary with your departure information. There may be some schedule changes to allow for bookings that cannot be confirmed until closer to the departure date and when numbers are finalised, and possibly some variations and/or additions to what is offered. Sometimes venue information changes and things become unavailable. We also always check for new events or opportunities. The Tour Leader is authorised to amend the itinerary if it becomes necessary. Personal time in Japan may be extended for additional costs.

### Applications:

To confirm a place on the tour we require:

1. **A completed Application form** (available on request). As we are travelling in a small group we require some personal information in case of emergency where support may be needed. All information will be treated as confidential.
2. **A copy of the bio-data page of your passport** for processing bookings and for our records.
3. **A deposit of \$500.**

### Payments:

Payments can be made by cheque, direct bank transfer, or by credit card (please note that credit card payments incur a fee of 1% and only Visa or Master card are accepted). The balance payment is due 75 days prior to the tour commencement (26 August 2019).

### Visas:

All travel documents are the responsibility of the traveller. Australian passport holders do not need a visa to enter Japan for up to 90 days.

### Your health and fitness:

To have authentic experiences, travelling in Japan will involve quite a lot of walking between public transport and venues, through stations, around towns, around gardens and temple grounds, and up and down stairs. You do need to be in reasonable physical health and have an average level of fitness ... and have good walking shoes! There

will be places where you need to take off your shoes to enter and occasions when sitting on or close to the floor is necessary.

#### **Travel insurance:**

All tour participants must have travel insurance that at least covers medical expenses and emergency repatriation, although we recommend comprehensive coverage. We will require a copy of the insurance document before departure. We do offer travel insurance with Covermore Insurance.

#### **The Tour Leader:**

Your friendly Tour Leader will meet you at the airport (group arrival) and escort the tour through the itinerary until departure. The Tour Leader is not a guide but will provide information on Japanese culture during the trip, etiquette for venues and events while travelling, and information about the places visited. You will also have a comprehensive information booklet. The Tour Leader can also generally assist you and provide information for any free time sightseeing, shopping, meals, etc.

#### **Group dynamics:**

Small group tours usually have a maximum of 12 participants. Travelling in a small group has a lot of advantages but does require consideration of other participants and responsibility to the group (for example being on time when requested to arrive at a meeting point). The Tour Leader is there to support you but is also responsible for facilitating the itinerary as planned and looking after the group as a whole. Participants are expected to comply with all reasonable requests when following the itinerary and to always treat the Tour Leader and others with respect.

#### **Cultural Respect:**

Tour participants are expected to show sensitivity to the Japanese culture and traditions as advised by the Tour Leader and to be considerate guests of accommodation, transport services, restaurants, and other venues.

#### **Accommodation:**

Hotels in the itinerary above are yet to be confirmed and subject to change. The western style hotels used in the cities may be compact but will be en-suite and provide you with everything needed (e.g. TV, fridge, tea making facilities, hairdryers, & complimentary toiletries). In a Japanese style inn (*ryokan*) the rooms tend to be larger with *tatami* (woven mat) flooring. The bedding there is usually *futon* mattresses on the floor.

#### **Your luggage:**

It is best to travel light and choose your luggage wisely. You will be expected to be responsible for your own luggage through transport, stations, and to accommodation. There will be some specified luggage transfers during the tour (you will need to have an overnight bag between sending and receiving luggage). Another consideration is that the Japanese hotels may not have much storage space to lay out luggage. Most hotels offer a laundry service and many have coin operated washers and dryers for guests.

#### **Money for your trip:**

You will need money for meals not specified on the itinerary and possible admissions to some venues of personal choice. Japan is traditionally a country that runs on cash. Carrying foreign currencies is not advised as they may be difficult to exchange. International credit cards may be used at hotels and larger restaurants or stores but is not guaranteed. ATMS that accept Cirrus and Maestro cards are widely available in post offices and convenience stores for withdrawing cash but it is common to carry enough Japanese Yen for the trip. Most hotels provide safety deposit at reception or in-room safes.



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