

Cultural Treasures of Japan

Oct 24 - Nov 6, 2027



Immerse yourself in the ancient & modern cultures of Japan!

ChmieBell  **TOURS**

Day 1: Overnight Flight

Get ready to explore ancient and modern Japanese culture firsthand. You'll discover peaceful temples and technological marvels set against unimaginable natural beauty.

Day 2: Tokyo

Welcome to Japan, the "Land of the Rising Sun." Arrive in the electrifying city of Tokyo, where pop culture is turned all the way up and traditions are rich and long kept.

Day 3: Tokyo

Amid a lush forest outside of Tokyo, visit the Meiji Shrine, dedicated to Emperor Meiji and his wife, Empress Shoken. Feel the excitement start to build as you pass by the grounds of the Imperial Palace and see the Niju Bridge, the well-known symbol of the Imperial Palace. Later, walk through Ginza, one of the most elegant and luxurious streets in the world, where modern landscape meets rich history. Enjoy shopping at some of the most renowned "department stores" in Japan.

Day 4: Tokyo

Begin the day exploring Asakusa, Tokyo's oldest Geisha district. Visit the famous Buddhist temple, Senso-ji, the colorful temple famous for the red chochin (lantern) hanging at the entrance gate. Experience the long-standing tradition of the Japanese tea ceremony, dating back to the 15th century. During your free time, explore the Nakamise Shopping Arcade and feel the energy of the oldest shopping street in Japan. Then, head to Tokyo National Museum to learn about the fascinating history and culture of Tokyo. The museum displays artwork and antiques from Japan and the surrounding area.

Day 5: Hakone

Journey to the lakeside resort of Hakone, renowned for its hot springs. In the shadow of Mt. Fuji (UNESCO), this scenic town hugs the shorelines of Lake Ashi. Make a stop at Owakudani, located in an active volcanic zone. The Owakudani crater was created some 3,000 years ago, when Mt. Hakone erupted. Climb aboard the Hakone Ropeway, an aerial cable car descending from Owakudani for a breathtaking view* of Mt. Fuji. Next, take to the deep-blue waters of Lake Ashi on a cruise where you'll see epic views of the local mountains before stopping in the charming town of Moto-Hakone.

Day 6: Takayama

This breathtaking day begins in Matsumoto at Matsumoto Castle, known as the "Crow Castle" because of its striking black exterior. Later, you'll step back in time in the rural Edo-period town of Takayama, nestled in the Japanese Alps. Well known to the locals for its connection to sake, this is the perfect place to gather for a visit to one of Japan's 200-year-old sake breweries. Afterward, experience a true Japanese epicurean treat – traditional rice wine paired with a special Hida beef dinner.



Day 7: Takayama

The ancient cultures of Takayama come alive during a guided walk in the town's historic district. Stroll through the morning market, a 600-year-old open air market with locally grown and produced products, located along the Miyagawa River. Circuit the winding streets, where the town's traditional charms are preserved in the inns and houses. Here, it's your choice! Choose to glimpse into the past at the 19th-century Takayama Jinya, a former government building -OR- visit the Matsuri Yatai Kaikan and view



intricate, traditional, hand-carved floats used in festivals. This afternoon, relish some free time to continue your exploration of Takayama on your own before enjoying a traditional multi-course kaiseki dinner.

Day 8: Kanazawa

Today, embrace the unique charms of Shirakawa-go (UNESCO). Hidden away in the mountain, this harmonious village is famous for its gassho-zukuri-style houses – thatched-rooftops designed to resemble two hands joined in prayer. Journey to Kanazawa, the origin of gold-leaf making since the 16th century. Visit the Geisha quarters of Kanazawa, the Higashi Tea district, and then onto the beauty of Japan’s most stunning gardens, where more than 25 acres of absolute beauty awaits you at Kenroku-En – Garden of Six Qualities.

Day 9: Kanazawa

Visit the Samurai district where we will enter the former home of the Nomuras, a wealthy samurai family who served the ruling Maeda family. Dive into the ancient craft of gold leaf making during a hands-on lesson in decorating your own lacquer box! In the center of town, take in the action of the Omicho fish market before venturing out on your own to really immerse yourself in Kanazawa’s dynamic culture.

Day 10: Kyoto

Visit the Samurai district where we will enter the former home of the Nomuras, a wealthy samurai family who served the ruling Maeda family. Dive into the ancient craft of gold leaf making during a hands-on lesson in decorating your own lacquer box! In the center of town, take in the action of the Omicho fish market before venturing out on your own to really immerse yourself in Kanazawa’s dynamic culture.

Day 11: Kyoto

This morning, visit Kinkaku-ji Temple (UNESCO), known as the Golden Pavilion for its top two floors that are completely covered in gold leaf. Enjoy the remainder of your day to explore more of Kyoto at leisure.



Day 12: Kyoto

All aboard the Shinkansen bullet train to Hiroshima. Upon arrival, board a ferry for the short trip to Miyajima Island, or “Shrine Island” (UNESCO). Afterwards, head into Hiroshima city to visit the Peace Memorial Park, and pause to see the ruined Atomic Dome (UNESCO). Reflect at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. As this long and moving day comes to a close, return to Kyoto by the Shinkansen bullet train.

Day 13: Kyoto



Today, visit the home of the first Shogun, Nijo Castle (UNESCO), and see intricate woodcarvings, wall paintings, and the Ninomaru Garden, designed by Kobori Enshu, a landscape architect and tea master. Next, learn about the ancient craft of stenciling during a hands-on lesson. This afternoon, spend some time relaxing or set out to explore Kyoto on your own. Fully immerse yourself in Japanese culture tonight during a special farewell dinner and maiko show.

Day 14: Tour Ends / Flight Home

Your tour comes to a close in this fascinating land. As you depart and head to the airport, reflect on its beauty and all you have learned about its rich history and culture.

Price Includes:

- Round-trip Airfare Mpls/St.Paul Int’l (other cities & states call for pricing)
- 5 Handpicked Accommodations / 18 Meals
- All Highlights Listed

Must-See Inclusions:

- Visit Fushimi Inari Taisha, made famous by the movie *Memoirs of a Geisha*
- Visit multiple UNESCO sites including Shirakawa-go, Nijo Castle, Itsukushima Shinto Shrine and Hiroshima Peace Memorial
- Explore Takayama’s beautiful old town, nestled in the Japanese Alps

Highlights & Inclusions:

- *Tokyo *Ginza *Asakusa Sensoji Shrine *Tea Ceremony *Hakone *Lake Ashi Cruise *Matsumoto Castle *Takayama
- *Bullet Train *Sake Tasting and Hida Beef Dinner *Choice on Tour: Takayama Jinya or Takayama Matsuri Yatai Kaikan
- *Kyoto *Kaiseki Dinner *Shirakawa-go *Kanazawa *Hiroshima *Maiko Show



Personally
Hosted Together
By:
Patty Chmielewski
& *Michael Bell*