

Cultural Treasures Of Japan – AAA Tour

14 Days • 18 Meals

Tokyo, Hakone, Matsumoto, Takayama, Shirakawa, Kanazawa, Kyoto, Hiroshima

starting at **\$5,799**

Immerse yourself in the ancient and modern cultures of Japan. Learn the art of the tea ceremony, and stand before the famous Senso-ji Buddhist temple. Tour Matsumoto Castle, known as the “Crow Castle” for its black exterior. Taste legendary Hida beef and sip sake at a local brewery. Delve into Kyoto, the marvelous cultural capital of Japan. Board the Shinkansen “bullet” train to travel to Hiroshima to visit Shrine Island and the Peace Memorial Museum. Absorb the beauty of the Golden Pavilion and the majesty of Nijo Castle. Japan slowly draws you into its eclectic culture and charm, revealing incredible moments every step of the way.

Day 1 - Overnight Flight

Explore ancient and modern Japanese culture firsthand. Discover peaceful temples and technological marvels set against unimaginable natural beauty.

Day 2 - Tokyo, Japan - Tour Begins

Grand Nikko Daiba, Tokyo

Welcome to Japan, the "Land of the Rising Sun." Begin 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

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.

Grand Nikko Daiba, Tokyo

Breakfast Included

Amid a lush forest outside of Tokyo, visit the Meiji Shrine, dedicated to Emperor Meiji and his wife, Empress Shoken. 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. Today breakfast will be included.

Day 4 - Tokyo

Try your hand at the centuries-old art of the Japanese tea ceremony, gold leaf decorating and stenciling.

Grand Nikko Daiba, Tokyo

Breakfast, Dinner Included

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. Today breakfast and dinner will be included.

Day 5 - Tokyo - Hakone

Take in magnificent views of Mt. Fuji from the Hakone Ropeway.

Odakyu Hotel de Yama, Hakone

Breakfast, Dinner Included

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.

The view of Mt. Fuji from the Hakone Ropeway is weather dependent.

Day 6 - Hakone - Matsumoto - Takayama

Enjoy a sake tasting at a local sake brewery followed by a Hida beef dinner.

Takayama Green Hotel, Takayama

Breakfast, Dinner Included

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.

Takayama Green Hotel, Takayama

Breakfast, Dinner Included

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 - Takayama - Shirakawa-go - Kanazawa

Embrace the unique charms of Shirakawa-go (UNESCO).

Kanazawa Tokyu Hotel, Kanazawa

Breakfast Included

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.

Kanazawa Tokyu Hotel, Kanazawa

Breakfast Included

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 - Kanazawa - Kyoto

Participate in a sushi-making and origami class.

Hotel Nikko Princess Kyoto

Breakfast, Dinner Included

Today, Kyoto awaits! Explore Fushimi Inari Taisha for a tour of the most revered shrine of Inari. Follow the spectacular rows of orange torii (made famous in the movie *Memoirs of a Geisha*) that weave through the forest, leading you to the inner shrine. The former Imperial capital of Japan is now one of the nation's top cosmopolitan cities. At the same time, Kyoto's connection with its past is strong; you won't need to look far to see one of its 2,000 temples and shrines. Later, visit the Women's Association of Kyoto in a traditional Kyoto town house. Here, delve into a wide array of enlightening Japanese activities, guided by your knowledgeable hostess. Try your hand at making sushi and learn to fold intricate origami shapes.

Day 11 - Kyoto

Visit the Kinkaku-ji Temple (UNESCO), known as the Golden Pavilion.

Hotel Nikko Princess Kyoto

Breakfast Included

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 - Bullet Train - Hiroshima - Kyoto

Shinkansen bullet train to Hiroshima & Hiroshima

Hotel Nikko Princess Kyoto

Breakfast Included

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

Visit the home of the first Shogun, Nijo Castle (UNESCO), where you can see intricate woodcarvings, wall paintings, and the Ninomaru Garden.

Hotel Nikko Princess Kyoto

Breakfast, Dinner Included

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 - Kyoto - Tour Ends

Breakfast Included

Your tour comes to a close in this fascinating land. As you depart, reflect on its beauty and all you have learned about its rich history and culture. Today breakfast will be included.