



# My Own Japan

-for solo travellers-

Discover the highlights of Japan with this superb itinerary for single travellers who want to explore the beauty of Japan on their own. You can also experience a number of activities that will allow you to meet local people and get in touch with the Japanese culture. Our My Own Japan independent tour is the perfect tour for solo travellers as Japan is one of the safest places to travel in the world. An ideal destination for single travellers who are looking for a country that mixes ultramodern and old culture. You will start your adventure in the bustling metropolis of Tokyo, departing after few days in order to enjoy the peaceful and historical atmosphere of Hiroshima. A short trip away is Miyajima island, where you will have the opportunity to visit the beautiful shrine Itsukushima-Jinja and the famous vermilion gate. You then explore the vibrant city of Osaka. Head to sacred Koya-San, where you can experience a night in temple lodgings, and take part in morning prayers with Buddhist monks, and visit the mountain and its treasures. Next on the list is Kyoto, the cultural nucleus of Japan where you will find a great variety of temples, shrines, gardens, and cultural activities in general. Last but not the least, from your base in Kyoto, you will take a day trip to Nara, ready to meet the awesome Great Buddha of Japan.

## Tokyo

One of the biggest metropolises in the world, Tokyo is a city that certainly never sleeps. Bursting with life and the latest styles and fashions, this energetic capital is a vibrant and stimulating place. Despite its ultramodern appearance, Tokyo embraces the ancient soul of Japan as well. Home to different shrines and temples, it's not hard to find different neighbourhood festivals throughout the year. If you are looking for a city like no other, Tokyo offers you a syncretism of modern and ancient Japanese culture: Akihabara, the hub of pop-culture and a non-stop "electric town", the flamboyant old downtown area of Asakusa filled with restaurants and shops, the neon-flashing Shinjuku, and the city's top Meiji Shrine.



## Kyoto



Once the former imperial capital of Japan, Kyoto is often referred to as the "soul of Japan". The historical legacy of its past is well expressed by numbers: 17 UNESCO World Heritage Sites and more than 2000 Buddhist Temples and Shinto shrines. It's not difficult to walk around the Gion area and come across few geishas walking in the streets while shopping at the traditional craft shops. My own Japan tour will allow you to visit the great variety of Kyoto's heritage sites. Some things you must see: Kinkaku-ji, Ginkaku-ji and Kiyomizu Temples. Another famous spot not to be missed is one of the most photographed Shinto shrines, Fushimi-Inari Taisha, with more than 10,000 vermilion torii gates forming a path that leads you up the mountain.

## Hiroshima & Miyajima Island

Hiroshima is an attractive, cosmopolitan city which has risen from the ashes of the world's first atomic bomb attack on 6 August 1945. The hypocentre of the explosion is now the Peace Memorial Park, a beautiful expanse of greenery housing monuments to the tragedy. The Park is flanked by the A-Bomb Dome, the former Industrial Promotion Hall which is the only surviving building from the blast, and the Peace Memorial Museum which tells of the bomb and the devastation of Hiroshima. Take a short ferry ride and visit the nearby island of Miyajima, with its photogenic vermilion gate and the summit of Mount Misen, offering a panoramic view across the island.



## Osaka & Koya-San



Known as the "kitchen of Japan", Osaka is renowned for its warm-hearted, lively locals. From Osaka you can access the peaceful temple town at the top of Koya-San, one of Japan's holiest mountains and the centre of Shingon Buddhism in Japan. Koya-San is the perfect place to experience a Buddhist monk's way of life as you have the chance to stay in temple lodgings and eat special monks' cuisine known as shojin ryori. Not to be missed is a walk through Okunoin Cemetery, Japan's largest and one of the most sacred.

## Nara

The first permanent capital of Japan, Nara is city that cannot be beaten when it comes to Japanese cultural and historical heritage. This very picturesque city is home to 8 UNESCO world heritage sites and is considered by many to be where the Japanese civilization was born. If you are looking for Japan's biggest Great Buddha, you will find him in the largest wooden building in the world, the outstanding Todai-ji Temple.



# My Own Japan

## The Itinerary

### Day 1: Arrival in Japan, Meet & Greet at Narita Airport (Tokyo)

Welcome to Japan! Our friendly Meet & Greet service representative will be waiting in the Arrivals lobby and holding a sign with your name on. The Meet & Greet will direct you to the Narita Express train or limousine bus bound for Tokyo. Check in to your clean and comfortable 3\* or 4\* hotel in the fantastic neon-filled district of Shinjuku for 3 nights.

### Day 2: Tokyo

A city that offers an infinity of possibilities. Thanks to its excellent transportation system, Tokyo is a safe and easy city for solo travellers. Explore Tokyo's past in the lively, traditional Asakusa district, shop in the fashionable districts of Shibuya and Harajuku and dine on Japan's finest cuisine. Tokyo is relatively straightforward to navigate, and our Information Pack will make travelling around the city a breeze.

#### Optional guided excursion

Enjoy a full day of sightseeing by coach in Tokyo, with lunch included and the opportunity to meet other travellers. Your guide will show you the highlights of this vast metropolis, from the Imperial Palace and serene Meiji Shrine to the 'Electric City' of Akihabara.

### Day 3: Tokyo

Enjoy a further day of exploring in Tokyo, or use your Japan Rail Pass to venture further afield to Kamakura, a former capital of Japan.

#### Optional guided excursion

Join a fantastic, guided excursion to Nikko, a beautiful temple town in the mountains north of Tokyo. You will visit Toshogu Shrine,

a mausoleum to one of Japan's most famous shoguns, and drive through the picturesque countryside to Lake Chuzenji and Kegon Waterfall before heading back to Tokyo.

### Day 4: Tokyo to Hiroshima

Depart Tokyo in the morning and board the Bullet Train, Hiroshima bound. You will arrive at Hiroshima in the afternoon, with plenty of time to visit the Peace Memorial Museum. The museum is located inside the Peace Memorial Park. You will be staying for two nights in a 3\* or 4\* hotel in Hiroshima.

### Day 5: Miyajima at leisure

A short trip from Hiroshima will take you to the island considered to be the "Island of Gods". Miyajima offers lovely scenery and fantastic views of the o-torii gate at Itsukushima Shrine. It seems to be floating on top of the water, making it one of most famous sights in all Japan. Spend a relaxing day exploring Miyajima island and head back to Hiroshima during late afternoon.

### Day 6: Hiroshima to Osaka

Embark on the Bullet train and head to Osaka. Explore Dotonbori district for shopping, entertainment, and eating. You will stay one night in a 3\* or 4\* hotel in the heart of Osaka.

### Day 7: Osaka to Mount Koya

Leave early in the morning to get to Koyasan. One of the holiest mountains of Japan and a World Heritage Site, it is the base of the Shingon sect of Japanese Buddhism. At Koya-san you will be staying in a temple lodging, and will taste the vegetarian cuisine, known as *shojin ryori*, prepared by the Buddhist monks. You can attend the early morning prayer service tomorrow: a nice opportunity to immerse yourself in the monks' way of life.

### Day 8: Mount Koya to Nara

After breakfast, you have plenty of time to discover the Okunoin cemetery where many feudal lords, samurai, and famous monks found their final resting place. A walk through the cemetery will lead you to the mausoleum of the founder of the Shingon sect, Kobo Daishi, and its Torodo Hall with 10,000 lanterns eternally lit. Later in the afternoon head to Nara for one night. You will check in a comfortable 3\* or 4\* hotel.

### Day 9: Nara to Kyoto

Whilst smaller than Kyoto, Nara boasts a wealth of monuments, with 8 UNESCO world heritage sites. Among them, you will be impressed by the Japan's biggest Great Buddha statue in the Todai-ji Temple. Other essential sights include Yakushi-ji and Horyu-ji Temples, all at a walkable distance from Nara-koen and its sacred deer. In the evening make your way to Kyoto. You will stay in a comfortable, superbly located 3\* or 4\* star hotel in the heart of Kyoto for 4 nights.

### Day 10: Kyoto

The former imperial capital gives you a better understanding of Japan's ancient history of religion, art, and craft, making it, together with Nara, the capital of the traditional Japanese culture. There are plenty of temples, shrines, and gardens around Kyoto. We suggest you visit Kiyomizu-dera and Ginkaku-ji in the hills to the east of the city. After that, make sure to visit the Nijo Castle, a seventeenth-century palace which was the residence of Tokugawa Ieyasu, a shogun (military governor) whose clan ruled Japan for 260 years. Next, you might want to check the wonderful craft shops and wooden teahouses in Gion, the old geisha quarter.



### Optional guided excursion

Join a guided coach tour. As well as visits to Nijo Castle, Kinkaku-ji (The Golden Temple), Sanjusangendo Temple and Kiyomizu Temple, today's tour also includes a delicious buffet-style lunch.

#### Day 11: Kyoto

Start your third day in Kyoto at the Fushimi-Inari Taisha, a Shinto shrine in southern Kyoto. If you are feeling energetic, the hike to the highest peak of the mountain takes 2 to 3 hours. In the afternoon you will have plenty of time to visit the Kodai-ji Temple with its peaceful Zen gardens.

#### Day 12: Kyoto

For your final day in Kyoto, you may wish to venture out west to the leafy suburb of Arashiyama. Here you will find the magnificent bamboo forests and a hill-top monkey park where you can feed monkeys and enjoy a rewarding view of Kyoto.

#### Day 13: Depart Japan

Transfer from your hotel to Kansai International Airport (Osaka) from where you depart.

## Price Includes:

- 11 nights' accommodation in a Single room at 3\* or 4\* hotels in Tokyo, Kyoto, and Hiroshima on a bed & breakfast basis
- 1 night's accommodation in a temple lodging in Koya-san on a dinner, bed & breakfast basis.
- 14-day Japan Rail Pass allowing you unlimited travel on the entire Japan Rail network including
- Shinkansen (Bullet Train) services
- Airport transfers (utilising your Japan Rail Pass)
- Meet & Greet service on arrival at Narita International Airport (Tokyo)
- Detailed Japan Journeys Information Pack including detailed train schedules, maps, & brochures.
- Personalised Japan Journeys App to help manage your documents
- All Japanese sales taxes and service charge
- Full financial protection via Japan Journeys' membership of the Travel Trust Association through which your monies are held in a Trust Account until you return home (under Membership No. U3078)

## Not Included In Price:

- International airfare
- Meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Entrance fees
- Taxi, subway and tramway fees
- Insurance
- Optional excursions (see below)



### 3\* ACCOMMODATION

**from £2,295.00**

Hotels/Temple lodging per person.

### 4\* ACCOMMODATION

**from £2,695.00**

Hotels/Temple lodging per person.

### 5\* ACCOMMODATION

*On Request*

### Optional Guided Excursions:

**Tokyo:** £101.00 per person *full day, including lunch*

**Nikko:** £146.00 per person *full day, including lunch*

**Kyoto:** £109.00 per person *full day, including lunch*

All price estimates are based on current rates of exchange and are subject to availability. To make a booking, a deposit of **£250.00 per person** is required. The balance of the price of the trip must be made 12 weeks prior to departure.

## HOW OUR INDEPENDENT TOURS WORK

Enjoy independent travel but not the hassle of planning? One of our Independent Tours could be just the ticket. Carefully put together by our team of specialists, our excellent collection of sample itineraries are designed to inform and inspire your next Japan adventure. Every one of our Independent Tours is fully tailor made for you, ensuring your trip is everything you want it to be.

It's quite straight forward to travel independently in Japan. We will provide just the right amount of support and logistical planning to make you feel comfortable in a very foreign land. These itineraries are available for any departure date (with a few exclusions which coinciding with Japanese National Holidays and some weekends). We'll do all the work for you and provide you with an information pack to make your trip run smoothly. You can also add guided tours as indicated and if you do want your own personal guide we can arrange this too.

## WHAT NEXT?

If you're interested in this itinerary, please let us know the following and we will get back to you with a quote:

- Your proposed dates of travel
- Your preferred grade of accommodation (e.g. 3\*, 4\*, or 5\*)
- Your preferred room type (e.g. Double, Twin or Singles)
- How many adults and children this is for (and the age of the children at the time of travel)

## NOT FROM THE UK?

Don't worry! We deal with countless passengers from outside of the UK. You just need to let us know the information above (and you can arrange your own flights to Japan).

To find out more, call one of our specialists now on **020 7766 5267**.



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