JAPAN & THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS

22 March 2027 - 7 April 2027

Tour Cost ($AUD): $16,990

Tour Duration: 17 days

Single Supplement ($AUD): $2,900





OVERVIEW

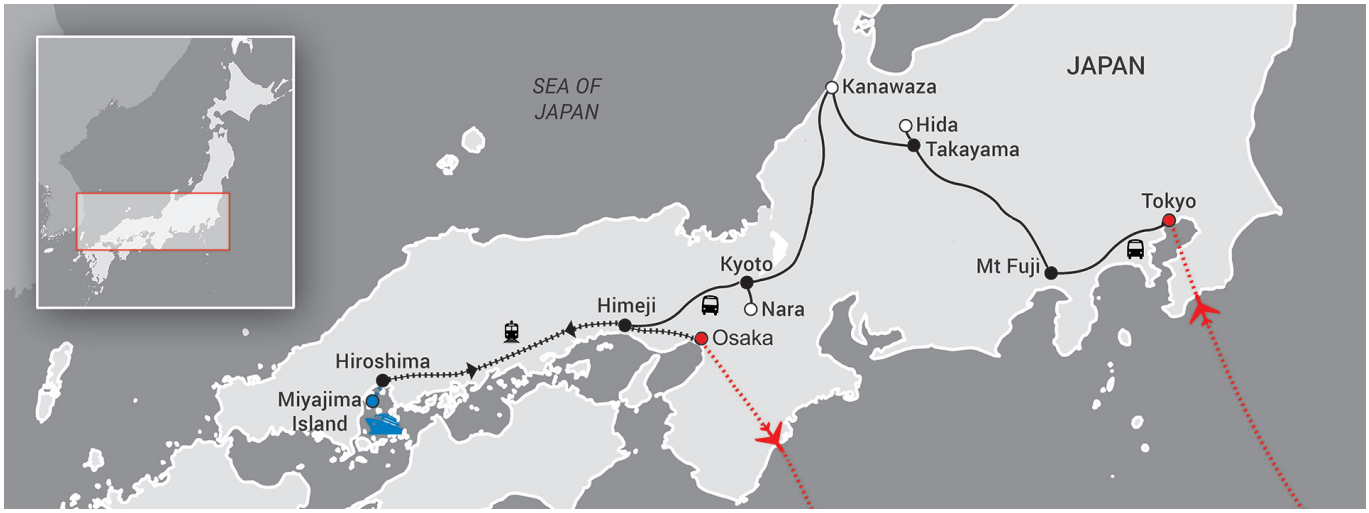
‘Japan & the Cherry Blossoms’ is a remarkable 17-day journey to the iconic cities, heritage sites, mountains and lakes of Japan’s largest island, Honshu, when the landscape is bathed in the pink hue of the springtime cherry blossoms. Though undoubtedly a visual feast, this tour is much more than just a ramble through the candy floss canvas of central Honshu. The tour begins in Tokyo with a three-night stay in the dazzling capital before driving to Mt Fuji for an overnight stay beside the sparkling lakes lying in the shadow of the iconic mountain. We then drive north-west to Takayama, nestled at the foot of the Hida mountain range. Here we explore the small atmospheric towns and villages that were isolated from the rest of Japan for hundreds of years, and tell the story of the country’s ancient past. In this beautiful mountainous region the landscape is dotted with shrines and temples, and cherry blossom trees adorn the river banks. We then move south for a three-night stay in the ancient capital of Kyoto which boasts more than a dozen UNESCO World Heritage sites and is home to Japan’s largest population of geisha. Continuing south-west via the great ‘White Heron’ castle of Himeji, we arrive in the sobering city of Hiroshima, where the cataclysmic events of 6 August 1945 etched the city’s name permanently in the history books. Yet through the sadness, our exploration of Hiroshima focuses on the amazing resurgence and resilience of the city and its inhabitants. Finally we take a bullet train to Osaka for a two-night stay in the city known as 'Japan's kitchen'. This tour is a fascinating exploration of the history and culture of Japan set against the beautiful backdrop of pink and white cherry blossoms.

Tour Fitness Level: Moderate

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TOUR MAP



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ITINERARY

22/03/2027 Australia – Singapore

Check-in at your chosen Australian airport for the flight to Singapore.

23/03/2027 Singapore – Tokyo (D)

Depart Singapore SQ 632, 08.05

Arrive Tokyo Haneda 15.35

After completing customs and immigration formalities at Tokyo transfer to your hotel.

Grand Nikko Tokyo Daiba (or similar)

Tokyo

24/03/2027 Tokyo (BLD)

Visiting Japan's capital for the first time is a fascinating experience. Very different from Western cities and with an expanding population of more than 12 million within 1300 sq kms, Tokyo is Japan's largest and most densely populated city. Always safe, Tokyo is perhaps the only city in the world that could make New York look like a sleepy town! Today we spend the whole day exploring this exciting metropolis including the Tsukiji Market which is one of the world's largest fish markets, handling more than 2,000 tons of marine products per day. We enjoy a sushi lunch at one of the local restaurants inside the market itself.

25/03/2027 Tokyo (BLD)

Today we start with a visit to Asakusa where 'old Tokyo' still exists and the atmosphere conjures up images of days long gone. We walk through a network of charming streets before taking a cruise on the Sumida River which provide a wonderful viewing platform of cherry blossoms from water.

26/03/2027 Tokyo – Mt Fuji (BLD)

Japan's iconic Mt Fuji is our destination today. After breakfast we board our coach for the two and a half hour drive to Lake Ashi, which sits to the south of this sacred mountain. We take a boat cruise on beautiful Lake Ashi, and enjoy a ride on the Owakudani cable car. At this time of year the sky is usually clear which provides a stunning vista of Mt Fuji.

The Prince Hakone Lake Ashinoko (or similar)

Mt Fuji

27/03/2027 Mt Fuji - Takayama (BLD)

Our drive today takes us north through Fujigoko – the Fuji Five Lakes area – passing beside the stunning Kawaguchi Lake, as we head into the heart of Honshu and the beautiful Hida Mountains. The wonderfully atmospheric town of Takayama dates back to the 16th century. Shrines and temples dot the hillsides and a river running through its centre complete an idyllic setting. We arrive mid-afternoon and commence a walking tour of the town, exploring its wealth of narrow winding streets, galleries and museums.

Ryu Resort & Spa (or similar)

Takayama

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28/03/2027 Takayama – Shirakawa-go – Takayama (BLD)

Shirakawa-go and the surrounding area was isolated from the rest of Japan for hundreds of years, and as a result it has fostered a distinctly different culture from the rest of Japan. Visiting Japan's 'hidden gem' is like stepping back in time, as we witness a simple lifestyle were locals fish in the rivers and grow vegetables and rice. Surrounded by forest and rice terraces, the architecture is a result of generations of 'master builders' or highly skilled carpenters and the town now provides a fascinating mirror into rural life of previous centuries.

29/03/2027 Takayama – Kanazawa (BLD)

This morning we take a short drive to Kanazawa. Located between the alps and the Sea of Japan, this great castle town escaped any war devastation and has never suffered any significant natural disasters. Thus, Kanazawa is wonderfully preserved and is considered the cherry blossom capital of Japan. At its heart is the amazing Garden of Kenrokuen, sitting opposite the castle. Formerly a feudal lord's garden, and covering more than 11 hectares, Kenrokuen is one of the best place to see cherry blossoms. When in full bloom delicate soft flowers line the streets creating an incredible pink hue all over the city.

Kanazawa New Grand Hotel Prestige (or similar)

Kanazawa

30/03/2027 Kanazawa – Nara – Kyoto (BLD)

After breakfast we begin our journey south to Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan for 1,000 years until 1867 when Tokyo took the crown. Surrounded by mountains, Kyoto is the city that touches the heart of the Japanese in a way that no other place can. Ancient customs and heritage have continued here as Geisha and Maiko scurry between appointments in tiny alleys lit by traditional lanterns. En-route we visit Nara Park, a serene place of natural beauty and infinite treasures, and home to around 1,200 freely roaming deer. Among the historic buildings within the park are Todaiji Temple, the world's largest wooden structure, which houses the 'Giant Buddha' that soars 16 metres in height. After our visit here we continue on to Kyoto.

Righa Royal Hotel (or similar)

Kyoto

31/03/2027 Kyoto (BLD)

One of the best places to see cherry blossoms in Kyoto is along the Philosopher's Walk – a pleasant stone path running beside a canal lined with hundreds of cherry trees. From here we continue our exploration of Kyoto with a visit to the Silver Pavilion, set amongst a beautiful moss garden and a unique dry sand garden, known as the 'Sea of Silver Sand'. We also visit Kiyomi Zu Temple, an architectural marvel and one of Japan's most celebrated landmarks, which offers sweeping views of Kyoto alongside hundreds of cherry and maple trees.

01/04/2027 Kyoto – Fushimi Inari – Kyoto (BLD)

After breakfast we drive to Fushimi Inari Shrine in southern Kyoto. It is famous for its thousands of vermilion torii gates, which straddle a network of trails that lead into the wooded forest of the sacred Mount Inari (233m). Fushimi Inari is the most important of several thousands of shrines dedicated

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to Inari, the Shinto god of rice. We also explore the historic Nijo Castle with its beautiful gold-leaf sliding doors and famous ‘nightingale floors’, which squeak to deter intruders

02/04/2027 Kyoto – Himeji – Hiroshima (BLD)

Today we take a short bus ride to Himeji Castle, also known as The White Heron because of its elegant, white appearance. This is Japan's most imposing castle and its beautiful gardens, especially in cherry blossom season, create a wonderful backdrop to the white edifice. The castle, which like Kanazawa, was never destroyed by war, earthquake or fire, survives to this day as one of the country's twelve original castles. After our visit here we board our bullet train for the two-hour journey to Hiroshima.

Hotel Granvia Hiroshima Southgate (or similar)

Hiroshima

03/04/2027 Hiroshima (BLD)

On 6 August 1945, the world’s first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. The tremendous impact of the bomb obliterated everything within a 2km radius, and immediately killed more than 80,000 people, with tens of thousands more dying from radiation exposure. After the war, despite some predictions that the city would be uninhabitable, Hiroshima was reconstructed quickly and a large park was built in the centre of the city. This morning we visit Peace Park and Peace Park Museum which provide a powerful reminder of the worst day in Hiroshima’s history. We also see the A-Bomb Dome, now a UNESCO World Heritage site, which remains the last visible link and iconic image of this cataclysmic day.

04/04/2027 Hiroshima – Miyajima Island – Osaka (BLD)

The so-called ‘Island of the Gods’, Miyajima Island, is on the beautiful Seto Inland Sea. One of the most picturesque spots in Japan, this romantic and historical island is laced with virgin forest as well as numerous Shinto shrines, temples and monuments. After breakfast we board a ferry for the short trip to the island, which is famous for its beautiful display of cherry blossoms during the season. We take a cable car to the top of Mt Misen for breathtaking views of Hiroshima and the surrounding islands before reboarding our ferry back to Hiroshima. Mid afternoon we board our bullet train for the 90-minute journey to Osaka.

Sheraton Miyako Hotel (or similar)

Osaka

05/04/2027 Osaka (BLD)

Osaka is celebrated as ‘Japan’s kitchen’, due to its legendary street food, including okonomiyaki (savory pancakes) and Takoyaki (octopus balls). We have the opportunity to soak up the atmosphere of the street food stalls, and taste some of the delicious offerings. We also enjoy a city tour of Osaka, taking a cruise on the Osaka River including a photo stop at Osaka Castle, before visiting the extraordinary Umeda Sky Building.

06/04/2027 Osaka - Singapore (B)

This morning is at leisure. Early afternoon we transfer to the airport for our flight to Singapore.

Depart Osaka, Singapore Airlines SQ 621,

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17.25

Arrive Singapore 22.55

On arrival in Singapore we connect with the flight to our chosen Australian airport.

07/04/2027 Singapore – Australia

We arrive home in Australia today.