

Please note that the following itinerary is subject to change. Your guide or Brand g hosts will inform you of any changes as soon as possible. If you have any questions or concerns about any aspects of the itinerary, please discuss it with your local guide or Brand g hosts. We will do our absolute best to provide accommodation if necessary. If you arrive early in Tokyo and need dinner or site seeing recommendations, please consult the hotel concierge.

Itinerary

Sunday, May 18 - Tokyo (Dinner)

10:00pm – 3:00pm: There will be a Brand g hospitality desk located in the reception lobby of the Hotel Groove Shinjuku. Please stop by to say hello to your Brand g hosts, Mike and Ronnal. They will provide you with your name badges, luggage tags and any other program materials. They will also answer any questions you may have.

6:30pm – 8:00pm: Join your hosts and fellow guests and meet your local guide at a welcome reception and dinner on the 17th floor of the hotel in JAM 17 Space East.

Monday, May 19 (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

7:00am – 10:00am: Breakfast is included in JAM17 Dining at Hotel Groove on the 17th floor – served buffet style.

8:45am: All guests gather in the lobby, ready to depart for our full-day tour of Tokyo including:

- Tokyo Skytree
- Sensoji Temple & Nakamise Street
- Lunch at The Dining Chinois, serving Chinese and French Fusion. 2 drinks of wine, beer, soft drinks, or tea are included.
- Shibuya Meiji Shrine – Shinto shrine was dedicated to Emperor Meiji and Empress Shoken, and is surrounded by a forested area offering tranquility in the heart of Shibuya. The setting is known for its tranquil forested area in the heart of Tokyo.
- Shibuya Crossing – we'll visit the iconic pedestrian crossing surrounded by neon lights, bustling with pedestrians from all directions. This is a symbol of modern Tokyo.

5:00pm: Approximate return to the hotel.

Note: Tomorrow night's dinner is on your own. You may wish to make reservations this afternoon. If you need assistance, please ask your local guide or the hotel concierge. We anticipate being back at the hotel around 7:30pm.

6:00pm: All guests gather in the hotel lobby, ready to depart for a Foodie Tour in the backstreets of Shinjuku, where a local guide will explain about Japanese nightlife, local food and drink, and culture and traditions. We'll split into two groups and each group will visit two restaurants. There will be a variety of dishes to try as well as two beverages at each spot.

8:30pm: Expected return to the hotel.

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Tuesday, May 20 – Tokyo/Nikko/Tokyo (Breakfast, Lunch)

7:00am – 10:00am: Breakfast is included in JAM17 Dining at Hotel Groove on the 17th floor – served buffet style.

8:50am: All guests gather in the lobby, ready to depart for our full-day tour to Nikko including:

- Nikko Toshogu Shrine
- Lunch at the historic Kanaya Hotel including two beverages of wine, beer or soft drinks.
- Kanmangafuchi Abyss

7:30pm: Expected return to the hotel in Tokyo for an evening at leisure and dinner on your own. **Hotel Bill Settlement** – to expedite our departure in the morning, we suggest all guests pay any incidental expenses with the hotel this evening.

Wednesday, May 21 – Tokyo/Hakone (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

7:00am – 8:15am: Breakfast is included in JAM17 Dining at Hotel Groove on the 17th floor – served buffet style.

Your checked luggage will be transferred directly to the next hotel. You will not see this luggage again until you check in to the Hakone Kowakien TEN-YU Hotel at approximately 5:00pm. Please attach the Brand g luggage tag (provided by your Brand g hosts at the hospitality desk) on each piece of luggage intended for transfer to the next hotel. Bring these tagged items to the lobby no later than **8:15 am**.

Plan to pack a separate small daypack containing your passport, valuables, and any other items needed for the train and subsequent bus trip to the hotel. Bring this bag to the lobby when checking out and take it with you to the bus.

8:15am: By this time, please be checked-out with the front desk and have paid any incidental charges you may have incurred during your stay. Before boarding the coach bound for Hakone, please ensure you have handed your “checked luggage” to your Brand g hosts or local guide so they are aware of the number of pieces being sent ahead to the next hotel.

8:30am: Depart for Hakone.

10:30am: Visit the Hakone Shrine, which is famous for its picturesque torii gate that stands in Lake Ashi, the shrine is known for its beautiful setting and spiritual significance.

12:10 – 12:35pm: The Hakone Lake Ashi Cruise is a popular tourist activity in the Hakone region of Japan, known for its scenic beauty and views of Mount Fuji. Lake Ashi, also known as Ashinoko, was formed in the caldera of Mount Hakone after the volcano’s last eruption about 3,000 years ago.

1:00 – 2:30 pm: Lunch at Hakone Retreat fore with 2 drinks of wine, beer, soft drinks, or tea included.

3:00 pm: Visit the Shinsenkyo Garden at the Hakone Museum of Art. Explore the serene Hakone Shinsenkyo Garden, where traditional Japanese landscapes belnd seamlessly with vibrant seasonal blooms. Stroll through lush paths, tranquil ponds, and sculpted rock formations, all set against the stunning backdrop of Hakone’s mountains.

5:00 pm: Check into the Hakone Kowakien TEN-YU Hotel

7:00pm- 9:00pm: Dinner

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Thursday, May 22 – Hakone (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

7:00am – 9:00am: Breakfast is included.

8:45am: All guests meet in the hotel lobby, prepared for our full-day tour:

9:00am: Hakone Open-Air Museum. This outdoor museum features a vast collection of sculptures and art pieces, set against the backdrop of the beautiful Hakone mountains.

12:00 – 1:30 pm: Lunch at Hyatt Regency Hakone Resort and Spa. Beef Burger with Fries, and 2 glasses of wine, beer, soft drinks or tea.

1:30pm: Hakone Ropeway – We'll enjoy a cable car ride that offers stunning views of Owakudani and Mount Fuji, connecting Togendai and Sounzan stations. After, we'll visit the active volcanic valley with hot springs and sulfur vents, known for its black eggs that are boiled in the hot springs.

4:30pm: Return to the hotel

6:30pm: Meet in the hotel lobby for dinner at the Fujiya Hotel in the Henry's Room Restaurant, where we'll be served French cuisine and free flowing beverages.

Friday, May 23 – Hakone/Kyoto (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

7:00am – 9:00am: Breakfast is included

Your checked luggage will be transferred directly to the next hotel. You will not see this luggage again until you check into the Mitsui Hotel in Kyoto this afternoon. Please be certain you still have a Brand g luggage tag on each piece of checked luggage clearly identifying it with your name and bring this luggage to the lobby by the time communicated during the program. You should plan to pack a separate small daypack containing your passport, any valuables, and any other items you'll need for the day. Bring this bag to the lobby with you when you check out of the hotel and take it with you on the bus.

9:15am: By this time, please be checked-out with the front desk and have paid any incidental costs you may have incurred during your stay.

9:30am: Meet in the lobby for a 9:45am departure. We'll board a bus that will transfer us to the Odawara station, where we'll take the bullet train to Kyoto.

At the train station, we recommend purchasing a ekiben box or other food to take on the train and enjoy lunch during the ride. Ekiben are special bento boxes sold at train stations that are designed to be enjoyed on long train rides while showcasing the cuisine of the region they're from.

11:35am – 2:34pm: Bullet Train to Kyoto (Green Class).

3:00pm: Expected arrival and check-in at the Mitsui Hotel, where you are free to relax until dinner.

***Note:** Tomorrow night's dinner is on your own. We suggest making reservations in advance through the hotel concierge or our local guide.*

5:30pm: Meet in the hotel lobby, ready to depart for dinner.

6:00pm – 8:00pm: Dinner where we will be entertained by Maikos, performing their renowned Kyo-mai, Japanese dance. Select free-flow drinks are offered during dinner.

8:15pm: Expected arrival to the Mitsui Hotel.

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Saturday, May 24 – Kyoto (Breakfast, Lunch)

7:00am – 10:00am: Breakfast is included at Forni – Japanese/Western Style buffet.

8:45am: All guests meet in the lobby of the hotel, ready to depart for our full-day tour in Kyoto, including:

- Kinkakuji Temple – The Golden Pavilion is covered in gold leaf and reflects on a pond surrounded by lush gardens. Originally built in 1397 as a retirement villa for a shogun, Kinkaku-ji Temple today is considered one of Kyoto's most important locations.
- Arashiyama District – Tenryuji Temple, Bamboo Grove, Togetsu Bridge. Arashiyama is a scenic district on the western outskirts of Kyoto known for its natural beauty and historic temples. The iconic Bamboo Grove is a tranquil forest path lined with towering bamboo stalks, leading to Tenryu-ji Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its Zen garden and pond. Visitors can also enjoy panoramic views from Monkey Park Iwatayama, where Japanese macaques roam freely.
- Visit to Okochi Sanso Villa
- Lunch at Shigetsu – Enjoy shojin ryori (Zen vegetarian cuisine) at Shigetsu, a large temple-style restaurant surrounded by the natural beauty of Tenryu-ji's World Heritage gardens. Shojin ryori has its origins in Chinese Zen, and was brought to Japan together with the Zen teachings during the thirteenth century.

Zen Vegetarian Cuisine [Shigetsu] As natural parts of everyday life, cooking and eating have always been regarded in Zen as forms of spiritual practice. Shojin ryori manifests this outlook in a cuisine that harmonizes with Buddhist ideals, creating satisfying, nourishing meals from fresh seasonal vegetables, herbs, and wild plants while depriving no animals of life. Enjoy cuisine at Shigetsu that both sustains the body and provides a true taste of Zen.

3:00pm: Estimated return to the hotel, where you are free for the remainder of the day and for dinner on your own.

Sunday, May 25 - Kyoto (Breakfast)

7:00am – 10:00am: Breakfast is included at Forni – Japanese/Western Style buffet.

9:30am: All guests participating in the half-day temples tour optional excursion meet in the hotel lobby ready to depart.

10:30am: All guests participating in the Obanzai Cooking Class optional excursion meet in the hotel lobby ready to depart.

Day at Leisure: If you are not participating in the optional excursions, you have a day at leisure to enjoy Kyoto. You may wish to consult with your local guide for suggestions.

Lunch: is on your own (except for those participating in the optional cooking class).

Dinner: is on your own.

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Monday, May 26 – Kyoto/Himeji/Hiroshima (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

7:00am – 10:00am: Breakfast is included at Forni – Japanese/Western Style buffet.

7:00am: Luggage Out - your checked luggage will be transferred directly to the next hotel. You will not see this luggage again until you check into the Sheraton Hotel in Hiroshima this afternoon. Please be certain you still have a Brand g luggage tag on each piece of checked luggage clearly identifying it with your name and leave this luggage just outside your room door for porters to collect.

You should plan to pack a separate small daypack containing your passport, any valuables, and any other items you'll need for the day. Bring this bag to the lobby with you when you check out of the hotel and take it with you on the bus.

7:45am: By this time, please be checked-out with the front desk and have paid any incidental costs you may have incurred during your stay.

8:00am: We depart the hotel bound for Himeji.

10:00am – 12:30pm: Tour of Himeji Castle and free time to explore the nearby gardens.

1:00pm – 3:00pm: Lunch at Kobe Beef Steak Kawamura Himeji including two glasses of wine, beer, soft drinks, or tea.

3:46pm – 4:42pm: Bullet train Nozomi 71 to Hiroshima (Green Class)

5:00pm: Expected arrival to Sheraton Grand Hiroshima Hotel for check-in and time at leisure until dinner.

7:00pm: Dinner.

Tuesday, May 27 – Hiroshima/Miyajima/Hiroshima (Breakfast, Dinner)

6:30am – 10:00am: Breakfast is included at Bridges on the 6th floor of the hotel.

8:45am: All guests meet in the lobby ready to depart.

9:00am – 3:00pm: Depart from the hotel for a full-day tour of Miyajima Island. We'll drive just over an hour to the ferry port, where we'll board our ferry to the island. Upon arrival we'll visit the Itsukushima Shrine among other highlights. Then you'll have free time to explore and have lunch on your own.

3:10pm: All guests meet at the designated meeting point, where we'll board the ferry back to the main island and our awaiting motor coach.

5:00pm: Expected arrival to the Sheraton in Hiroshima.

6:30pm: All guests meet in the reception lobby of the hotel, where we checked in, ready to depart for dinner.

7:00pm – 8:45pm: Dinner at Mitakiso Restaurant

9:30pm: Expected return to the hotel.

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Wednesday, May 28 – Hiroshima/Osaka (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

6:30am – 10:00am: Breakfast is included at Bridges on the 6th floor of the hotel.

7:30am: Your checked luggage will be transferred directly to the next hotel. You will not see this luggage again until you check into the Intercontinental Hotel in Osaka this afternoon. Please be certain you still have a Brand g luggage tag on each piece of checked luggage clearly identifying it with your name and bring your luggage to the lobby by 8 am.

You should plan to pack a separate small daypack containing your passport, any valuables, and any other items you'll need for the day. Bring this bag to the lobby with you when you check out of the hotel and take it with you on the bus.

8:30am: By this time, all guests should be checked out and have paid any incidental expenses.

8:45am – 12:00pm: We depart the hotel and have a somber yet meaningful tour of Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park and Museum.

12:30pm – 2:00pm: Arrival to Hiroshima's Ekie Train Station. Your local guide will give you an orientation of the numerous lunch options, including shop's overflowing with bento box options to suit every taste. You'll then be free to purchase your lunch to bring on the train or eat at the station as you wish.

2:43pm – 4:04pm: Bullet Train Nozomi to Osaka (Green Class).

4:45pm: Expected arrival to the Intercontinental Osaka Hotel for check-in, and time at leisure until we meet for dinner.

6:30pm: Meet in the lobby, ready to depart.

7:00pm – 9:00pm: Dinner

9:15pm: Expected return to the hotel.

Thursday, May 29 - Osaka (Breakfast, Dinner)

6:30am – 10:00am: Breakfast is included in the Noka Roast and Grill Restaurant on the reception level of the hotel.

10:15am: All guests meet in the lobby, near reception, ready to depart for a tour of Osaka's Dotonbori neighborhood and typically "downtown" area of Osaka. Following the tour, you will have free time for lunch on your own and a chance to shop for souvenirs. Your guide will be happy to assist you with finding restaurants and shopping opportunities.

2:00pm: Bus departs to return to the hotel.

5:45pm: All guests meet in the lobby of the hotel, near reception, ready to depart.

6:30pm – 8:30pm: Tonight is our farewell dinner at Kyo Sakuranomiya Kokaido a unique venue, Standing gracefully on the banks of the majestic Okawa River. Tonight's dinner includes select free-flow beverages.

9:00pm Estimated return to the Intercontinental Hotel.

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Friday, May 30 – Osaka Departure (Breakfast)

6:30am – 10:00am: Breakfast is included in the Noka Roast and Grill Restaurant at the hotel.

Departures: If you would like assistance with your luggage, please contact reception and they will collect your luggage and bring it to the street level lobby for safe keeping. Please meet your transfer (and collect your luggage) in the street level lobby of the Intercontinental, according to the departure transfer details provided to you by your Brand g hosts towards the end of the trip.

Thank you so much for joining us! We hope you enjoyed your time in Japan and hope to see you again soon. We plan to follow up in a day or two by email with a post-trip survey. We value your opinion and hope you'll take a few minutes to share your honest feedback.