

Tour Code: JTK11



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11-Day Best of Honshu Tour

Tokyo, Mt. Fuji, Matsumoto, Shirakawago, Kanazawa, Kyoto, Nara, Osaka

Departure Dates: (2023) 1/28, 2/25, 3/25, 4/22, 5/27, 6/24

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS:

- The best tour lets any vacationers especially first-time Japan travelers to admire the most natural beauty of Honshu and its world-famous attractions and to experience the rich history, culture and architecture that are uniquely Japanese.
- Take in the majestic views of Mt. Fuji and Lake Yamanaka on the panoramic ropeway and the lovely amphibious bus called Kaba.
- Visit the fairy-tale villages of Shirakawago and Gokayama, and understand what the traditional gassho-zukuri architectural style entails.
- Explore Kenrokuen Garden, one of Japan's three most famous and beautiful gardens with typical strolling-style Japanese landscape.
- Visit the dramatic Matsumoto Castle for its unique architectural arts and history.
- Explore the ancient city of Kyoto, which offers a glimpse into the rich history and culture with its historic buildings, top UNESCO-listed temples and shrines - Kiyomizu Temple, Kinkakuji Temple and Todaiji.
- Enjoy a relaxing therapeutic hot spring bath at Okuhida Shin Hotaka Onsen.
- Experience the exciting nightlife and discover the irresistible street foods and bargains in the world-famous bustling entertainment centre in Tokyo and Osaka.
- Taste the freshest sashimi and sushi at Japan's largest and busiest seafood markets, Tsukiji Market and Omicho Market.
- Enjoy distinctive Japanese Kaiseki cuisines (traditional multi-course meal), Hida Beef Sukiyaki and shabu shabu, tempura, sushi, etc.
- Accommodate at convenient 4-star upscale hotels and onsen resort with daily breakfast
- Experienced and professional bilingual tour leader offering attentive services.

ADMISSIONS INCLUDED:

- Kaba of Lake Yamanaka
- Mt. Fuji Panoramic Ropeway
- Shinhotaka Ropeway

Itineraries:

1 Hometown > Tokyo, Japan

2 Tokyo (Narita International Airport)

Hotel: Sunshine City Prince Hotel or similar

Upon arrival, take shuttle bus to hotel and proceed to self check-in.

3 Tokyo – Sensoji Temple – Asakusa Nakamise Street – Tsukiji Market – Ginza – Shinjuku – Kabukicho (B/D: Japanese Set Dinner)

Hotel: Sunshine City Prince Hotel or similar

Sensoji Temple: With history over thousands of years, it is the oldest temple in Tokyo and one of the designated cultural properties of Japan, drawing over 30 million visitors every year. Apart from the iconic huge red lantern at the entrance gate, there are many famous historic architectures, like Hozo-mon Gate, Five-storied Pagoda, etc. which visitors should never miss.

Asakusa Nakamise Street: Next to Sensoji Temple, it is the first shopping street and now one of the busiest ones in Tokyo lining with traditional food stalls, toys and souvenir shops. Definitely a great spot to try Tokyo's traditional snacks and street foods!

Tsukiji Market: Once the largest fish market in the world, Tsukiji Market is well-known for its variety of fresh seafood and popular restaurants which are frequently sought after by gourmets and visitors. Although the on-site wholesale market has been relocated to Toyosu Market in 2018, there are still many restaurants, snack bars and shops selling kitchen supplies, grocery, snacks, souvenirs, etc. at the Outer Market. It is always a top tourist attraction recommended by Tokyo travel guides.

Kabukicho: A world famous entertainment and redlight district in Shinjuku, with many trendy shops, restaurants, night clubs and bars, theatres, etc. Always the best place to experience Japan's night life!

4 Tokyo – Oshino Hakkai - Kaba of Lake Yamanaka – Mt. Fuji Panoramic Ropeway — Kawaguchiko Tenjozan Park – Oishi Park (B/D: Kaiseki cuisine)

Hotel: Hotel Mystays Fuji Onsen Resort or similar

Oshino Hakkai: Located in the peaceful Oshino village at northwest of Lake Yamanaka, Hakkai is actually eight ponds formed by the melted snow flowing out of Mt. Fuji. With crystal-clear water and unique characteristics of each pond, this is a designated national natural scenic area in Oshino and one of the "Selected 100 Exquisite and Well-Conserved Waters" in Japan. Visitors can buy fresh bottled spring water and buckwheat noodles made of the spring water there.

Kaba of Lake Yamanaka: Kaba is a bus, but also a ship. This lovely amphibious bus offers extraordinary experience of driving through the stunning forest and into picturesque Lake Yamanaka. You will be immersed in the spectacular nature with warm sunlight, gentle breeze, lush forest and splashing water.

Kawaguchiko Tenjozan Park: It is the best spot to admire Mr. Fuji and Lake Kawaguchiko by taking the cable car up to the top of Mt. Tenjo in just 3 minutes. The heart-shaped bell there has witnessed romantic vows of many couples.

5 Lake Kawaguchiko - Matsumoto - U-Pick Fruit Farm (Local Winery instead in Dec) - Matsumoto Castle - Daio Wasabi Farm - Okuhida Shin Hotaka Onsen (B/D: Hida Beef Sukiyaki Kaiseki cuisine)
Hotel: Okuhida Yakushi No Yu Honjin or similar

Lake Kawaguchiko: Of the five lakes near Mr. Fuji, Lake Kawaguchiko is the second largest with longest shoreline and lowest altitude. On a still, clear day, you can see a perfect mirror image of Mt. Fuji reflected in the lake. Many visitors especially outdoors enthusiasts are attracted for relaxing getaways, hot spring, fishing, etc. It was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2013 as part of the Mt. Fuji cultural site.

Matsumoto Castle: Also known as "Crow Castle" because of its black exterior, this classical 5-storey castle being surrounded by a still intact defense moat is the best example of wooden construction of an original Japanese style castle. With history dating back from the late 16th century, it is the oldest surviving castle tower in Japan and should never be missed.

Daio Wasabi Farm: Located in rural Azumino City, the Farm is one of Japan's largest wasabi farms, with total area of 15 hectares. It uses flowing snow water to plant the wasabi and can constantly harvest 150 tons of wasabi each year. It also organizes some special events, develops many wasabi-related products and promote ecotourism, making it one of the most popular tourist destinations in Azumino.

6 Okuhida Shin-Hotaka Onsen — Shinhotaka Ropeway Takayama - Takayama Jinya — Sanmachi Suji (B/D: Hida Beef Shabu Shabu)

Hotel: Wat Hotel & Spa Hida Takayama or similar

Shinhotaka Ropeway: The only operating double-decker cable car in Japan and one of the most popular attractions in Okuhida. Climbing up over 3000 meters to the observation deck, you will enjoy the best panoramic views of the Okuhida region. There are also a number of easy hiking trails to explore the nature around the station.

Takayama Jinya: Hida's provincial governer/migistrate's office serving administration, policing and justice duties during Edo period (1692-1868) and Meiji period (1868-1912). The main building was still used as a government office until 1969 it was restored to its original appearance in the Edo period and open to public. Designated as a national historic landmark in 1929.

Sanmachi Suji: Mainly covering three major streets named Ichi-no-machi, Ni-no-machi and San-no-machi, in Takayama, it is a once bustling hub drawing expert artisans, farmers and merchants from the district. The dull gray of the alleys contrasting with the dark brown of private homes and inns, with their wooden fronts and latticed windows offer Takayama a timeless feel of quaint historic district and perfectly preserves the traditional aesthetic of brilliant Edo period.

7 Takayama - Shirakawago - Gokayama - Kanazawa - Ohmicho Market (B/L: Tempura Set)
Hotel: ANA Crowne Plaza Kanazawa Hotel or similar

Shirakawago: At the foot of the sacred Mt. Hakusan, Shirakawa-go is one of Gifu's must-visit destinations. Recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, this beautiful fairy-take village with traditional thatched-roof houses is the definition of picture-postcard perfect. It rewards repeating visits as the changing seasons bring out different sceneries. Together with the neighboring Gokayama, their gassho-zukuri style settlement was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1995.

Gokayama: This UNESCO-listed mountainous rural village in Toyama Prefecture is full of charm and simplicity with its well-preserved traditional gassho-zukuri structures and offers rare opportunities to experience distinctive Japanese culture.

Omicho Market: One of Ishikawa Prefecture's top seafood markets for over 300 years, Omicho Market offers the freshest catch of seafood and shellfish from the Sea of Japan to locals and tourists every day. There are a numbers of sushi restaurants and over 170 stores selling deli, produce, ice cream, sake, etc.

8 Kanazawa – Kenrokuen Garden - Higashi Chaya District – Kyoto (B/D: Japanese Western) Hotel: RIHGA Royal Hotel Kyoto or similar

Kenrokuen Garden: One of Japan's three most famous gardens, Kenrokuen Garden is the focal point of Kanazawa and has a long and celebrated history over the span of several hundred years by the Maeda family, and today is one of the best examples of a strolling-style Japanese landscape garden. The garden offers something to enjoy whatever the season. "Kenrokuen" means "garden that combines six characteristics" which are spaciousness, seclusion, artifice, antiquity, water sources and magnificent views. Not every garden in Japan can combine all of these features but Kenrokuen does.

Higashi Chaya District: Kanazama's must-visit historic tea-house district where the geisha still entertains there today. It is the largest among the three well-preserved historic geisha districts in Japan. Just feel free to stroll through this traditional townscape, stop by for Japanese tea or sweets in traditional tatami rooms and shop for some gold-leaf specialty products.

9 Kyoto - Kiyomizu Temple - Kinkakuji Temple - Arashiyama - Togetsu-kyo Bridge - Sagano Bamboo Forest Trail - Fushimi Inari Taisha (B/D: Japanese Bento Set)

Hotel: RIHGA Royal Hotel Kyoto or similar

Kiyomizu Temple: An independent Buddhist temple in eastern Kyoto built in 778 and one of the three best known ancient temples in Kyoto. With unique ancient construction methods, the Temple was exquisitely built using wooden pillars but without a single nail. It is part of the Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto UNESCO World Heritage site since 1994 and a must-visit tourist icon in Kyoto.

Kinkakuji Temple: Also known as the Golden Pavilion, this Zen Buddhist temple was built in 1397 and is a World Heritage Site with two floors covered entirely in thin layers of pure gold, set within a beautiful, classical Zen Garden. The detailed architecture incorporates three distinct architectural styles — Shinden, Samurai, and Zen, and attracts many visitors every year. The reflection of the Temple over the Mirror Pond is also an iconic landscape of Kyoto.

Togetsu-kyo Bridge: A 155-meter bridge built across the Katsura River, spanning the scenic beauty of Kyoto's countryside. Its name Togetsu, meaning moon crossing, originates from a legend that Kamakura period Emperor Kameyama who saw the moon moving slowing from one side to the other right above the bridge in

a night with clear sky. The Arashiyama region around Togetsu-kyo Bridge is also a scenic spot for viewing cherry blossoms in spring and red maple leaves during autumn.

Sagano Bamboo Forest Trail: This 500-meter-long quaint trail in the Bamboo Forest is one of the iconic attractions in Arashiyama, Kyoto. Passing through the forest leads to the World Heritage Site Nomiya Shrine. Along the way you will hear the sound of wind blowing through the bamboo leaves, which is classified as one of the 100 Soundscapes of Japan.

Fushimi Inari Taisha: The head shrine of Inari, the God of Rice. Farmers and merchants have traditionally worshipped Inari for safeguard, harvest and prosperity. The shrine is very famous for its magnificent thousand torii gate and is one of Japan's designated cultural assets.

10 Kyoto - Nara - Todaiji - Deer Park - Osaka - Shinsaibashi - Doutonbori - Free at Leisure (B/L: Sushi Set) Hotel: Hotel Nikko Osaka or similar

Todaiji: Founded in 738, Todaiji is a Buddhist temple that was once one of the Seven Great Temples in Japan. Its main hall is the world's largest wooden structure which houses the world's largest bronze statue of the Buddha Vairocana. It was listed as an UNESCO World Heritage Site as part of the "Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara".

Deer Park: Established in 1880, Deer Park is one of the oldest parks in Japan. Covering over 500 hectares, the park houses the famous Todaiji Temple, Kōfukuji Temple and some historical buildings and museums, integrating natural sceneries and ancient structures. There are about 1200 adorable wild deer and feeding the deer is definitely a fun experience to every visitor.

Shinsaibashi & Doutonbori: The most iconic business and entertainment district in the centre of Osaka and one of the oldest and busiest shopping streets in Japan. The Glico neon billboard on Dotonbori is the most famous outdoor billboard in the world and a significant landmark in Osaka.

11 Osaka > Hometown (B)

After breakfast, transfer to airport for return flight to hometown.