



# *A Town & Country Tour of Japan*

April 1 ~ April 14, 2020

Escorted by JOHN O'REGAN, CTC



#### **April 1: Depart for Japan**

You will begin your journey today from North America to Japan crossing the international dateline enroute to arrive on April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

#### **April 2: Arrive Japan**

Welcome to Japan. Upon arrival at Narita New Tokyo Airport, you will be met in the arrivals hall and transferred to our airport hotel. For logistical reasons we are having the group assemble here at an airport hotel close to Tokyo Narita airport before the 2 hour drive into Tokyo the following day. It will provide a convenient place to rest after the journey across the pond and allow you to choose the airline and schedule that fits your needs.

**Hotel: NIKKO NARITA Phone 011 81 476-32-0032**

#### **April 3: Narita / Tokyo**

Following a leisurely breakfast, assemble in the hotel lobby at 10:30am for our transfer into Tokyo. We have planned a very easy first day for you with leisure time to get oriented to Tokyo. This evening please plan on joining John for a visit to the Tokyo Tower and our Welcome to Japan Dinner.

**Hotel: HYATT REGENCY TOKYO Phone 011 81-3-3348-1234**

**Meals (Breakfast/Dinner)**

#### **April 4: Tokyo Sightseeing**

Embark on a city tour of Tokyo. Visit the Imperial Palace, formally known as Edo Castle, surrounded by its original innermost moat and star attraction, the Meiji Shrine, located in a forest that covers an area of 700,000 square meters. During lunch, enjoy a cooking class where you will learn how to make sushi, a local specialty, in the famous Ginza district. Continue to Sensoji, the Asakusa Kannon Buddhist temple. It is one of Tokyo's most colorful and popular temples. The temple was completed in 645, making it Tokyo's oldest temple. Visit Nakamise, a shopping street over 200 meters long that stretches from the outer gate to the temple's second interior gate. Alongside typical Japanese souvenirs such as yukata and folding fans, various traditional local snacks from the area are sold. This evening is at your leisure.



**Hotel: HYATT REGENCY TOKYO Phone 011 81-3-3348-1234**

**Meals (Breakfast/Lunch)**

#### **April 5: Mt. Fuji and Hakone Sightseeing**

After breakfast we depart by train to Mt. Fuji. Upon arrival, we proceed to the Five Lakes District dominated by majestic Mt. Fuji. At 3776m, it is Japan's highest mountain and most recognizable icon. Ascend to the 5th Station of Mount Fuji to enjoy some spectacular views at 2,300m (weather permitting). After enjoying lunch at a local restaurant continue Lake Ashi. Visit the beautiful town of Hakone, where the cherry blossoms are noted sights in this area; in the spring this is known as Sakura and in autumn the Susuki. Take a boat ride on the crystal-clear blue waters of Lake Ashi and see the grandeur of Mount Fuji in the distance. Dinner is included tonight in our spa hotel which sits on Lake Ashi.

**Hotel: YAMANO Phone 011 81 460-83-6321** ..... **Meals (Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner)**

#### **April 6: Tokyo / Matsumoto / Takayama**

Drive north this morning to visit Matsumoto Castle one of the most complete and beautiful of Japan's original castles, with its unique timber and stone structure. The castle was the home of the last Shogun. After the Visit of the Castle you may also visit the Matsumoto city museum. This afternoon we enjoy a typical lunch of soba noodles with wasabi. We continue our journey through the breath-taking Japanese Alps to the beautiful hill town of Takayama. A city in the mountainous Hida region of the Gifu prefecture, it has retained a traditional touch like few other Japanese cities, especially in its beautifully preserved old town with Edo-style streets. Takayama gained importance as a source of high quality timber and highly skilled carpenters during the feudal ages.

Tonight you are in for a special treat. Staying at a typical ryokan is a traditional Japanese cultural experience not to be missed, and it is not like staying at a Western-style hotel. Ryokans have been a part of Japanese culture for centuries. Some of the earliest ryokans were (and some still are) located on the Tokaido Highway which connected the capital city of Edo (current day Tokyo) and the Imperial Palace in Kyoto. A typical ryokan guest room contains the "agari-kamachi" (after opening the door guests step into this small area and take off their shoes), "shoji" (sliding paper doors), "tatami" mat flooring (reed floor matting), low wooden tables, "zabuton" (sitting cushions), futon (sleeping quilts), and an "engawa" (a glass enclosed sitting area separated from the room by a shoji). We dine in the Ryokan this evening.

**Hotel: HIDEI HANAOGI RYOKAN Phone 011 81-577-36-2000 Meals (Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner)**

#### **April 7: Takayama Sightseeing**

Begin your walking tour of Takayama, known as 'Little Kyoto', filled with amazing attractions. Explore the Old Town, stopping at some of the traditional houses and delightful local museums and wander through a vibrant Asaichi open-air flower and fruit market. Later enjoy a Highlight Lunch of Japanese Hida beef at a local restaurant. Hida-gyu (Hida Beef) is the specific name given to beef from a black-haired Japanese cattle breed, it is known as one of the finest quality varieties of beef. After lunch, continue to Takayama Jin'ya. Takayama Jin'ya was a former government outpost that was established in order to bring the Hida Province under the direct control of the Edo Bakufu (Shogunate) in 1629. Continue to the Kami-Sannomachisu District where you will find skillfully renowned local artisans. Take time to sample Sake, a delicious rice wine. Walk through the narrow streets and admire the ancient Japanese wooden architecture. Dinner is in the Ryokan this evening.

**Hotel: HIDEI HANA OGI RYOKAN Phone 011 81-577-36-2000 Meals (Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner)**



**April 8: Takayama / Shirakawago / Kanazawa / Kyoto**

Take a step back in time with a Local Expert during a visit to the peaceful mountain village and UNESCO World Heritage site of Shirakawago. Here you'll find the Gasshozukuri houses built of wooden beams combined to form a steep thatched roof that resembles two hands together. Later continue towards the coast to Kanazawa, a historic castle town which boasts beautifully preserved Samurai districts. On arrival, take time to see the Nagamachi District with old Samurai houses. Stop to visit the Normura house, an elegant Samurai mansion with beautiful small gardens belonging to a high-ranked Samurai family. Continue to the gardens of Kenrokuen, rated as one of the top 3 most beautiful landscaped gardens in Japan. Late this afternoon we will depart by train to Kyoto arriving just after 8:00pm. We will then proceed to our centrally located hotel and enjoy a relaxing evening.



**Hotel: KYOTO HOTEL OKURA Phone 011-81 75-211-5111**

**Meals (Breakfast/Lunch)**

**April 9: Kyoto Sightseeing**

Explore Kyoto today. This delightful city has an abundance of fine architecture in its shrines and temples, gardens, and variety of art and craft shops. See Nijo Castle, the old Shogun residence, the Kinkakuji Temple famous for its Golden Pavilion. This afternoon, enjoy a special Be My Guest lunch at a traditional Ryokan nestled in the peace and quiet of Mt. Yoshida. Enjoy the pleasures of a truly flavorful and unique dining experience of kaiseki cuisine, crafted from the very freshest of seasonal delicacies. Later continue to Heian Shinto Shrine with its beautiful inner garden and Nishikikoji market to purchase last minute souvenirs with hundreds of local shops to explore. Tonight, we will enjoy our exclusive private traditional Japanese Kaiseki Highlight Dinner with Geisha music and dance performance.

**Hotel: KYOTO HOTEL OKURA Phone 011-81 75-211-5111**

**Meals (Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner)**

**April 10: Kyoto / Nara / Kyoto**

Proceed this morning to Nara city for sightseeing, visiting the Todaiji Temple with the Great Buddha. Todaiji is one of Japan's most famous and historically significant temples, constructed in AD 752; the massive building houses one of Japan's largest bronze statues of Buddha. The 15 meters tall, seated Buddha represents Vairocana and is flanked by two Bodhisattvas. Continue on to Kasuga Taisha Shrine, among the most celebrated in Japan. It was established at the same time as the capital and is dedicated to the deity responsible for the protection of the city.



Later after lunch we return to Kyoto and visit Kiyomizu Temple. Located halfway up Otowa Mountain in the eastern part of Kyoto City, Kiyomizu-dera is an historic temple that was established in 778, even before Kyoto became the capital of Japan. Before returning to your hotel, visit the Sanjudsangendo Temple. Sanjusangendo is the popular name for Rengeo-in, a temple in eastern Kyoto which is famous for its 1001 statues of Kannon, the goddess of mercy. In the evening, enjoy a walking tour of Gion District. Later enjoy dinner at a local Indian restaurant.

**Hotel: KYOTO HOTEL OKURA Phone 011-81 75-211-5111**

**Meals (Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner)**

**April 11: Kyoto / Osaka**

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast this morning and free time before our late morning hotel check-out. We will enjoy lunch in a local restaurant before heading to Osaka. On arrival we will proceed to our hotel and have the balance of the day and evening at leisure.

**Hotel: THE WESTIN HOTEL OSAKA Phone 011 81 6-6440-1111 Meals (Breakfast/Lunch)**

**April 12: Hiroshima**

We have an early start this morning for our full day trip to Hiroshima by bullet train. Upon arrival we will tour both Hiroshima and Miyajima Island. We will begin in Hiroshima with a visit to the Atomic Bomb Dome followed by the Peace Memorial Museum. We then have lunch at local restaurant before proceeding to Miyajimaguchi Island by ferry. We will visit the Itsukushima Shrine and enjoy a leisurely stroll on the island. We will arrive back at the Hiroshima rail station in time for you have an early dinner at one of the rail stations many restaurants or to grab something to have a picnic on the bullet train back to Osaka, We plan on arriving to the Westin just after 8:30pm.

**Hotel: THE WESTIN HOTEL OSAKA Phone 011 81 6-6440-1111 Meals (Breakfast/Lunch)**

**April 13: Osaka sightseeing**

Set out on a half day sightseeing tour of Osaka, the third largest city in Japan with a population of over 17 million people in its greater metropolitan area. Visit the Osaka Castle, one of Japan's most famous castles which played a major role in the unification of Japan during the sixteenth century. The Castle grounds, which cover approximately 15 acres, contain thirteen structures which have been designated as Important Cultural Assets by the Japanese government. Afternoon at leisure. After our visit of Osaka Castle we will enjoy lunch at a Japanese Teppanyaki & Okonomiyaki ~ known as "Japanese Soul Food". This evening please plan on joining John for our Farewell Dinner.

**Hotel: THE WESTIN HOTEL OSAKA Phone 011 81 6-6440-1111 Meals (Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner)**

**April 14: Osaka / Home**

Today is at leisure until your transfer from the hotel to the airport. John will advise you of the exact transfer time the day prior to your departure. Note that you will be recrossing the international dateline to arrive back in North America on the same day as you leave Japan.

**Hotel: THE WESTIN HOTEL OSAKA Phone 011 81 6-6440-1111 Meals (Breakfast)**

**Trip Cost:**

**\$9290.00 per person double occupancy**

**Tour Reservations: Require a non-refundable deposit of \$2000.00 per person.**

**Non-refundable final payment is due 90 days prior to departure.**

**Tour Inclusions:**

Twin room accommodation inclusive of tax and service charge as applicable.

12 breakfasts, 10 lunches and 7 dinners are included.

Transfers inclusive of baggage handling and portage of 1 suitcase per person.

Transport services by private air-conditioned Coach & Tourist class reserved seating on all train segments.

Bottled water will be provided daily on all coach services.

All guided sightseeing and admissions as per itinerary.

**Not Included:**

Any meals not listed, items of a personal nature such as telephone calls, laundry, beverages, gratuities to guides/drivers (which are discretionary in nature) and international airfare to Tokyo-Narita returning from Osaka