

The Golden Route Japan Tour Winter (Reverse): Kawazu Cherry Blossom Festival Tour 2017 - 2/26

Perfect introduction for first time visitors with limited time.

Tour Code: GTW169696

Tour Information

Land cost: from USD \$2398

Single supplement: USD \$480

Tour duration: 7 days 6 nights

Destination:

Nara / Uji / Kyoto / Kawazu / Atami / Hakone / Mt Fuji / Tokyo

Tour cost includes:

- 5 nights Western style and 1 night Japanese style accommodation
- Meet and greet upon arrival at Osaka Kansai Airport
- Airport transfers on arrival and departure
- Private coach transfers between destinations in Japan
- Comprehensive escorted with AJT professional English speaking tour guide
- Gratuities

Meals

- Breakfast everyday
- 3 lunches and 2 dinners

Admission fees and activities

- All entry fees to sites, activities listed in the itinerary

Dates & Price

2017

| Start Date | End Date | Twin / Triple | Start City | End City | Style | Status |
|-------------------|------------------|---------------|------------|----------|--------|---------------------------|
| Sun. Feb 26, 2017 | Sat. Mar 4, 2017 | USD \$2398.00 | Osaka | Tokyo | Deluxe | View Tour |

Itinerary

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Day 1 Osaka Kansai Airport

Welcome to Osaka! An AJT representative will meet you at the arrival gate and direct you to the hotel.

Hotel:

Hotel Nikko Kansai Airport or similar class

Hotel Elserine Osaka or similar class (NOTE 1 & 2)

NOTE 1: If you wish to stay in the center of Osaka for the first night instead of Hotel Nikko Kansai Airport, we can arrange for you to stay at Hotel Elserine Osaka (or similar class). In this case, airport transfer is not included, but we will provide you directions to get to your hotel in advance.

NOTE 2: If you will be flying into Itami Airport (ITM) instead of Kansai International Airport (KIX), we can arrange for you to stay in the center of Osaka (Hotel Elserine Osaka or similar class) instead of Hotel Nikko Kansai Airport. In this case, airport transfer and meet-and-greet are not included, but we will provide with full instructions to get to the hotel in advance.

NOTE 3: The meet and greet is ONLY available for flights arriving in Terminal 1 after 11:00 AM. For guests arriving in Terminal 2, airport pickup is not included, but we will provide you with directions to get to your hotel in advance.

NOTE 4: If you wish to stay extra nights before the tour starts, please contact us to book hotel accommodations.

Day 2 Nara (Todai-ji Temple / Nara Deer Park), Uji (Green Tea Ceremony), Kyoto (Gekkeikan Sake Museum / Fushimi Inari Shrine)

In the morning you will travel to Nara, the oldest capital city of Japan, by private coach. We will visit Todaiji Temple, the largest wooden building in Japan. The temple also houses the largest bronze statue of Buddha at 16.3 meters high, and the surrounding park is filled with over 1,000 Sika deer. We will continue our tour to Uji where you can experience a traditional Japanese tea ceremony. Then, visit a sake museum in the scenic and historic Fushimi district, which is home to more than twenty breweries and is considered one of the brewing capitals in Japan. At the Gekkeikan Okura Sake Museum, you will be introduced to the fascinating history of sake brewing with its nostalgic buildings, tasting experience, and valuable collection of traditional brewing tools. Then a visit to the stunning vermilion colored Fushimi Inari Shrine, whose 4km long tunnel of scarlet torii gates was featured in the film *Memoirs of a Geisha*. This complex wraps around a bamboo wilderness that includes mountains, streams, and ponds, the perfect backdrop for a scenic hike. We will stay two nights in Kyoto.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch

Hotel:

Grand Prince Hotel Kyoto or similar class

Day 3 Kyoto (Nijo Castle / Nishijin Kimono Show / Golden Pavilion / Kiyomizu Temple / Gion)

Today we will continue our tour of Kyoto, once the capital of Japan and still considered its cultural center. First is a visit to the Nijo Castle, built in the early 17th century. Ninomaru-goten, renovated in 1626, is a building renowned as a priceless example of the architectural style of that period. At the Nishijin Textile Center, you can view displays of kimonos and even watch a kimono fashion show. Visit the Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion) covered with 18 carat gold leaf. This three story structure was originally built by the Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu in 1397. Next is a visit to Kiyomizu Temple, best known for its wooden stage that juts out from its main hall, 13 meters above the hillside below. The stage affords visitors a nice view of the numerous cherry and maple trees below that erupt in a sea of color in spring and fall, as well as of the city of Kyoto in the distance. Lastly, we will tour Gion, the old Geisha Quarter, and Pontocho, whose cobblestone alleys vibrate with night life.

Meals:

Breakfast / Dinner

Hotel:

Grand Prince Hotel Kyoto or similar class

Day 4 Shinkansen Bullet Train Ride, Kawazu (Kawazu Cherry Blossom Festival / Nanadaru Falls)

After breakfast, we will travel to Atami by Shinkansen Bullet Train, which can reach speeds of up to 300 km/hr. Enjoy the famous Kawazu Cherry Blossoms Festival. Kawazu cherry blossoms are known as one of the earliest to bloom in Honshu region. They are different from Somei Yoshino cherry blossoms (the most common kind of sakura in Japan) in that Kawazu cherry blossoms are pink and last longer in full bloom. During the festival, more than one million people visit the town to see cherry trees lined along the Kawazu River in full bloom. Next is a visit to the Nanadaru Falls, or Seven Waterfalls, Kanidaru, Odaru, Kamadaru, Ebidaru, Hebidaru, Shokeidaru and Deaidaru. The falls differ in sizes with the smallest one, Kanidaru, just 3 feet wide and 6 feet tall. The largest waterfall, Odaru, is about 20 feet wide and 100 feet high. Tonight, we will stay at the Onsen Hotel at Atami Onsen, where you can soak in the therapeutic waters of a spa bath and feast on a traditional Japanese Kaiseki banquet dinner.

Meals:

Breakfast / Dinner

Hotel:

Atami New Akao Hotel or similar class

Day 5 Hakone (Hakone Ropeway / Owakudani), Mt Fuji (Lake Kawaguchi / Kubota Itchiku Art Museum), Tokyo (Shinjuku)

After enjoying a Japanese breakfast at the ryokan, we will travel to Hakone and take a 20 minute ropeway from Togendai to Owakundani. Much of the area here is considered an active volcanic zone since its creation from the eruption of Mount Hakone some 3,000 years ago. There, you can experience hot springs and hot rivers, where sulfurous fumes still linger. Owakundani also has splendid views of Mount Fuji in good weather. From Hakone we will proceed to Mt. Fuji on our private coach. Along the way, enjoy the changing scenery, from thick vegetation to lowlands to rolling clouds. At one of shores of Lake Kawaguchi is the Itchiku Kubota Art Museum. The museum displays the beautiful kimonos done by Itchiku Kubota with the tsujigahana dyeing technique. His unfinished masterpiece called the "Symphony of Light," is a kimono 80-piece set depicting the four seasons and his own universe. Currently 40 of the 80 set pieces were completed by Itchiku, the rest was continued by his children. In the afternoon we will travel to Tokyo. Our last visit for this day is Shinjuku, Japan's largest and wildest red light district, with department stores, subterranean malls, and electronic shops surrounding the Shinjuku Station.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch

Hotel:

Tobu Hotel Levant Tokyo or similar class

Day 6 Tokyo (Asakusa Sensoji Temple / Tokyo Edo Museum / Imperial Palace / Tokyo Tower / Odaiba)

In the morning you will be taken to Asakusa Kannon Temple, an active place of worship where you can see the largest paper lantern in Japan. Here, discover the difference between a Shinto Shrine and a Buddhist Temple, then explore Nakamise Market, which resembles a traditional style shopping street of a bygone era. Next is a visit to Edo Tokyo Museum, where you can learn the history of Tokyo from the time when it was a small village called Edo. The museum also offers many good picture taking opportunities, for example with vehicles and items which were used in the past. Then we will proceed to the Imperial Palace, the former site of Edo Castle. You can explore the park, surrounded by moats and stone fortifications, in the heart of the city. In the afternoon, we will visit the the world's tallest self supporting steel tower. At 333 meters high, Tokyo Tower is 13 meters taller than its model, the Eiffel Tower. We will go up 150 meters to the main observatory deck and get a bird's eye view of Tokyo. From there we will cross the Rainbow Bridge, and be treated to stunning views of Tokyo Bay. We will travel to the man made islands of Odaiba and see cutting edge architecture, as well as the night view of Tokyo Tower and Rainbow Bridge.

Meals:

Breakfast / Lunch

Hotel:

Narita Excel Hotel Tokyu or similar class

Tobu Hotel Levant Tokyo or similar class (NOTE 5 & 6)

NOTE 5: If you wish to stay in the center of Tokyo for the last night instead of Narita Excel Hotel Tokyu, we can arrange for you to stay at Tobu Hotel Levant Tokyo (or similar class). In this case, airport transfer is not included, but we will provide full instructions for you to get to the airport in advance.

NOTE 6: If you will be flying out from Haneda Airport (HND) instead of Narita Airport (NRT), we can arrange for you to stay at Tobu Hotel Levant Tokyo (or similar class) instead of Narita Excel Hotel Tokyu. In this case, airport transfer is not included but we will provide full instructions for you to get to the airport in advance.

Itinerary

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Day 7 Tour End

After breakfast, our tour officially ends. Checkout time is 11 am and Narita Airport can be reached by hotel shuttle bus.

Meals:
Breakfast

NOTE 7: If you would like to stay longer in Japan, please contact us to book hotel accommodations.