GO AHEAD TOURS



Cherry Blossoms in Japan: Tokyo to Kyoto

10 days | 12 days with Osaka & Hiroshima extension

Japan seamlessly merges centuries-old history with a modern way of life. On this tour, hues of pink and aromatic scents fill city streets and lush parks as cherry blossoms bring new life to an already vibrant country. See ancient temples alongside modern architecture while experiencing the beauty celebrated each year during the Japanese cherry blossom season.



Your tour package includes

8 nights in handpicked hotels
8 breakfasts
1 lunch
3 dinners with beer or wine
1 sake tasting
9 sightseeing tours
Expert Tour Director & local guides
Private deluxe motor coach
1 train ride

Included highlights

Cherry blossoms
Meiji Shrine
Mount Fuji
Hakone Open-Air Museum
High-speed bullet train ride
Golden Pavilion
Guided meditation session
Nara
Kuromon Ichiba Market

Tour pace

On this guided tour, you'll walk for about 2.5 hours daily across mostly flat terrain, including paved roads and gravel paths, with few hills. You may need to climb stairs when visiting temples.

Group size

15–35

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Overnight Flight → 1 night

Day 1: Travel day
Board your overnight flight to Tokyo today.

Tokyo → 3 nights

Day 2: Arrival in Tokyo
Included meals: welcome dinner
Welcome to Japan! Get settled in to your hotel before meeting your Tour Director and fellow travelers at tonight's welcome dinner.

Day 3: Sightseeing tour of Tokyo
Included meals: breakfast
Join a local guide and embark on your first tour of Japan's bustling capital.

- Make a photo stop and view the iconic Shibuya crossing from overhead as you drive through the central part of the city
- Set off on a short walk from Yoyogi Park to the Meiji Shrine, final resting place of Emperor Meiji
- Wander through the shrine's Inner Garden, home to irises that bloom in springtime and the spiritually powerful Kiyomasa's Well
- Stroll through the colorful Harajuku neighborhood, where Tokyo's history and present-day pop culture intertwine
- See the beautiful cherry blossoms at Ueno Park
- Explore Tokyo's old town, including the ancient Asakusa Kannon Temple, the city's oldest and most sacred temple
- Peruse a vibrant variety of handmade crafts and local fare at the centuries-old Nakamise Shopping Arcade

Spend a free afternoon enjoying the views of the cherry blossoms throughout Tokyo or add an excursion.
+ Japanese Cooking Class & Dinner

Day 4: Free day in Tokyo
Included meals: breakfast
Enjoy a free day in Tokyo or add an excursion.
+ Kamakura

Mount Fuji Region → 1 night

Day 5: Sightseeing tour of Tokyo & transfer to Mount Fuji Region
Included meals: breakfast, dinner
Today, follow your Tour Director on another guided sightseeing tour of vibrant Tokyo before continuing on to the Mount Fuji Region.

- View the Imperial Palace and its impressive grounds
- Head to the top of the Metropolitan Government Building to get a bird's-eye view of the city
- Walk along the banks of the Meguro River to view the cherry blossoms

Later, make your way to Hakone, a resort town in the Ōwakudani Valley that's known for its hot springs.

- Make a photo stop at Mount Fuji, which stands an imposing 12,388 feet high
- Take in panoramic views of nearby lakes and villages from the midway-point observatory

Sit down for an included dinner this evening followed by free time to relax in the hotel's hot springs.

Kyoto → 4 nights

Day 6: Mount Komagatake, Lake Ashi & train to Kyoto
Included meals: breakfast
This morning, take a guided tour of Mount Komagatake and Lake Ashi.

- Enjoy a ropeway ride up to the top of Mount Komagatake, admiring spectacular views from the cable car as you go
- Embark on a cruise on Lake Ashi, formed after Mount Hakone erupted 3,000 years ago
- Take in surreal views of Mount Fuji looming in the background
- Pay a visit to the Hakone Open-Air Museum, with endless sculptures over its 17 acres and a gallery with more than 700 works by Picasso
- Soak in the annual beauty that the cherry blossoms bring to the city

This afternoon, board a high-speed bullet train to Kyoto.

Day 7: Sightseeing tour of Kyoto & Zen meditation class
Included meals: breakfast
Join a local guide on a tour of Kyoto, the city that served as the capital of Japan for more than 1,000 years—and is still considered its spiritual capital.

- Tour the 17th-century Nijo Castle, which boasts intricate architecture and a unique alarm system: floors that sound like a nightingale when walked on
- Take a stroll on the Philosopher's Walk, a pedestrian pathway along a canal that's dotted with cherry blossoms
- See one of Japan's most famous temples, the glittering Golden Pavilion
- Tap in to your unconscious mind during a guided Zen meditation session
- Sit down to sip Matcha green tea alongside a traditional Japanese sweet

Please note: Today's guided Zen meditation session may take place in the morning depending on the schedule.

Day 8: Sightseeing tour of Nara
Included meals: breakfast, lunch
Journey to the former capital city of Nara for a guided tour led by a local guide today.

- Tour UNESCO-listed Buddhist Todaiji Temple, site of the world's largest bronze Buddha statue
- Enter Kasuga-taisha to see the many bronze and stone lanterns in and around the Shinto shrine
- Stroll through Nara Park, home to more than 1,200 wild deer considered sacred by locals
- Enjoy an included lunch

Spend a free evening in Kyoto or add an excursion.
+ Traditional Japanese Tea Ceremony

Day 9: Free day in Kyoto
Included meals: breakfast, liquor tasting, farewell dinner
Enjoy a free day in Kyoto or add an excursion. Tonight, join your fellow travelers at a farewell dinner in Kyoto, where you'll enjoy a sake tasting and enjoy traditional *shabu-shabu* (hot pot).
+ Arashiyama District & Okochi Sanso Garden

Flight Home

Day 10: Transfer to Osaka, sightseeing tour & departure
Included meals: breakfast, tasting
Continue on to Osaka, the birthplace of many of Japan's well-known arts, such as Kabuki theater and the tea ceremony. Today's guided tour, led by your Tour Director, offers a look inside the city's historic sights.

- Make a photo stop at the massive Osaka Castle, which was built by legendary leader Toyotomi Hideyoshi
- Stroll through Kuromon Ichiba Market, famous for its selection of fresh fish, vegetables, fruit, and other Japanese specialties

This afternoon, transfer to the airport to board your flight home or choose to continue your adventure with a visit to Hiroshima.
Please note: If you are joining the tour extension in Hiroshima and Osaka, you will spend the evening of day 10 in Osaka.

+ Osaka & Hiroshima extension

We have Osaka to thank for some of Japan's most well-known arts, like Kabuki theater and the tea ceremony. Drink it all in, then take a high-speed train to Hiroshima to remember one of the most infamous moments in history. Get to the heart of both cities, and marvel at UNESCO-listed Himeji Castle, on sightseeing tours alongside local experts.

Osaka → 1 night

Day 10: Sightseeing tour of Osaka
Included meals: breakfast, lunch
Continue on to Osaka, the birthplace of many of Japan's well-known arts, such as Kabuki theater and the tea ceremony. Today's guided tour, led by your Tour Director, offers a look inside the city's historic sights.

- Make a photo stop at the massive Osaka Castle, which was built by legendary leader Toyotomi Hideyoshi
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Hiroshima → 1 night

Day 11: Train to Hiroshima & sightseeing tour
Included meals: breakfast
Board a high-speed bullet train to Hiroshima and get to know this world-renowned "City of Peace" on today's guided sightseeing tour.

- Visit Peace Memorial Park to see the Peace Memorial Museum and the Atomic Bomb Dome, which was the only structure to withstand the infamous atomic bombing of the city during World War II
- Take a short ferry ride to Miyajima Island to view the 12th-century, UNESCO-listed Itsukushima Shrine

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Osaka → 1 night

Day 12: Osaka via Himeji
Included meals: breakfast
Travel back to Osaka, stopping in the city of Himeji along the way.

- Step inside the UNESCO-listed Himeji Castle, the largest castle in Japan
- Walk through Otemon Gate and view the castle's striking white architecture
- Climb a series of narrow staircases to the top floor, which offers stunning views of the beautiful roofs, defensive walls, and the city below
- Enjoy free time to explore Kōko-en, a stunning garden that's designed to be aesthetically pleasing through all four seasons

Continue on to Osaka and spend a free evening in the city or add an excursion.
+ Osaka by Night: Cruise & Dinner

Flight Home

Day 13: Free morning in Osaka & departure
Included meals: breakfast
Enjoy a free morning in Osaka. Then, transfer to the airport to board your flight home.

Customize your experience

Customize your tour by adding excursion options. Excursions offered on the same day will occur at different times, so there's no need to choose. Save $10 when you book your excursion up to three days before your tour departs.* Excursions requiring advance reservation only list this discounted price. Call or go online to customize your tour: **goaheadtours.com/JPC | 1-800-597-0350**

Day 3: Japanese Cooking Class & Dinner
$125 (3 hours, departs in the evening, dinner included)
Tonight, join an experienced chef at a local restaurant for a cooking lesson and dinner. Grab your apron and watch as the chef demonstrates how to make traditional Japanese cuisine such as gyudon, miso soup, cucumber pickles, or a chicken teriyaki bento box. Then, try your hand at crafting your own authentic meal before sitting down to enjoy the cuisine for dinner. Please note: It may not be possible to accommodate requests related to food allergies. This excursion requires advance reservation and must be booked at least 20 days prior to departure.

Day 4: Kamakura
$135 (8 hours, departs in the morning, lunch included)
Step aboard a local train in Tokyo and make your way to the seaside city of Kamakura, where you'll explore the countryside, temples, and shrines on a guided walking tour. Pay a visit to the city's famous Great Buddha and Hase Kannon Temples. Then, sit down for an included lunch and enjoy free time to peruse the arts and crafts for sale along Komachi Shopping Street before transferring back to Tokyo on the train. Please note: Travelers should expect to walk around 10,000 steps along even terrain. This excursion requires advance reservation and must be booked at least 20 days prior to departure.

Day 8: Traditional Japanese Tea Ceremony
$59 (2 hours, departs in the evening)
Since its introduction to Japan in the 700s, the love for tea has only grown. The beverage is celebrated by cafe-goers as much as it is by tea masters, and today you'll see why. Join a tea master to learn about the customs of a traditional ceremony and the function of the various utensils used during it. Then, discover the meaning of the symbolic gestures you'll make as you try matcha. This form of green tea is ground into a powder and known for its bright hue. As you sip some tea you'll snack on wagashi, Japanese sweets often made from red beans, which nicely balance the bitterness of the matcha tea. Please note: Depending on the number of travelers, you may be split into two groups. This excursion requires advance reservation and must be booked at least 20 days prior to departure.

Day 9: Arashiyama District & Okochi Sanso Garden
$119/$129* (6 hours, departs in the morning)
Depart from Kyoto and enjoy a short transfer as you travel west to Arashiyama. This historic district boasts stunning natural beauty, and you'll take it all in on a guided sightseeing tour. Step inside the UNESCO-listed Tenryū-ji Temple, which was originally constructed in the 12th century and is considered one of Kyoto's most important sites. Meander through the striking Bamboo Grove, where soaring stalks flank a singular pathway. Finally, see the rolling, tree-covered hills that surround the Hozu River and the Togetsukyo Bridge. Spanning almost 170 feet, the beautiful wooden bridge sits against the backdrop of Arashiyama mountain. Afterwards, head to the beautiful Okochi Sanso Garden located in the foothills of Mt. Ogura and was the former home to Japanese period film star Okochi Denjiro until 1962. Upon arrival, you'll enter the Okochi villa's tea house to enjoy a matcha drink tasting followed by a leisurely stroll through the gardens. Wander along winding paths surrounded by lush greenery and amazing views of Kyoto, the Kozugaway river, and the Arashiyama mountains. Please note: The walk through the garden is roughly one mile. Travelers who wish to not participate in the garden walk may remain at the tea house or explore the gardens on their own.

Extension excursion options

Day 12: Osaka by Night: Cruise & Dinner
$125/$135* (5 hours, departs in the evening, dinner included)
Hop aboard a river cruise and admire the glittering skyline as you float along Osaka Bay. Then, get a taste of local life as you follow a guide on a walking tour of the dynamic Dotonbori Riverfront. Explore Namba, a bustling neighborhood along the water with some of Osaka's best shops, restaurants, and entertainment before heading to a local restaurant to enjoy an included dinner. End the night with a subway ride back to your hotel.

*Optional excursions may be purchased up to three days prior to departure or while on tour. Pre-purchased optional excursions cannot be canceled within three days prior to departure or while on tour. Select optional excursions require advance booking and cannot be purchased or canceled after the advanced reservation deadline. GAT accepts payment by cash, Visa or MasterCard for optional excursions purchased on tour. Additional fees may apply for optional excursions purchased on tour. Excursions require a minimum number of participants to operate. Details and prices are subject to change. Due to seasonal hours of operation and availability, some excursions may not operate. If this occurs, you will be refunded any payments made for that excursion post-tour. Learn more at goaheadtours.com/terms