



## Japan Family Journey: From Ancient to Modern Times - AJTNF

11 days: Tokyo to Kyoto

### What's Included

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- Your Journeys Highlight Moment: Okinawa Cooking Class, Tokyo
- Your Journeys Highlight Moment: Kembu Masters, Kyoto
- Your Family Journeys Moment: Traditional Taiko Drumming Class, Tokyo
- Your Family Journeys Moment: Sumo Wrestling Class, Tokyo
- Your Foodie Moment: Wasabi Farm Visit, Matsumoto
- Your Family Journeys Moment: Ramen Making Class, Kyoto
- Tour of Tokyo including Meiji Jingu Shrine, Asakusa and Harajuku districts
- Traditional taiko Japanese drumming class
- Sumo class led by a former wrestler
- Sleep in a ryokan (traditional Japanese inn) and enjoy a kaiseki dinner
- See wild snow monkeys at the Jigokudani Monkey Park
- Visit the Buddhist temple of Zenkō-ji
- Visit Matsumoto castle
- Visit a local wasabi farm
- Walk through the Nishiki Market and Gion Geisha District with your CEOs
- Visit the iconic Fushimi Inari Taisha Shrine
- Take part in a ramen making class
- Tour Nara including visits to the Tōdaiji Temple, Kasuga Grand Shrine and the Naramachi district
- Visit the famous Kiyomizu-dera Temple
- Japan Rail (JR) pass (7 days)
- All transport between destinations and to/from included activities

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and G Adventures. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

**VERY IMPORTANT:** Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

**VALIDITY:** Valid for all trips departing March 6th, 2019 and onwards

### Itinerary Notes

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**Prices are based on double occupancy; all other room configurations are on request and cannot be guaranteed. We will accommodate triples/quads whenever possible. Please call for further details. Family Journeys are designed for groups traveling with children between the ages of 7 and 17. Your group must include a child in order to book, and anyone under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult. There are new Health & Safety Protocols for National Geographic Journeys tours. Please see [here](https://www.gadventures.com/health-safety-journeys/) for full details and up-to-date requirements as they may change.**

### Itinerary

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**NOTE:** Accommodations vary per departure and are subject to change until tour start date; they are not final and should be used as examples only. Travellers may login to the G Adventures App to view accommodations specific to their departure.

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## Day 1 Tokyo

Arrive in time to meet your fellow travelers for a welcome gathering this evening. Your arrival transfer is included.

On our tours in Japan we use public transport, making use of Japan's world famous transportation system. From the super fast Shinkansen Bullet Train to Kyoto's extensive local bus network, we ride with the locals.

As well, there is a lot of walking on this trip, every day - please ensure you have an average level of fitness and can walk unaided for long periods of time. A good pair of walking shoes are highly recommended.

Please note: We will use a baggage transfer service, which is included in the cost of your tour, so you will not have to worry about carrying your bags on and off trains as we travel. As such, you will not have access to your bags during the transfers from city to city, and will not be reunited with your luggage until the following day. On these days, we recommend using an overnight bag for anything you may need, including valuables.

Luggage size restriction - Effective from May 2020 onwards

All G Adventures tours in Japan use the world-famous Shinkansen bullet trains, which have a restriction on maximum luggage size. Any luggage brought on board the train must be less than 160cm in total. This is roughly the size that most airline companies consider as "carry-on baggage" and allow in overhead storage compartments.

As this tour includes city-to-city luggage transfers, this restriction affects your carry-on luggage on board the train.

### Arrival Day and Welcome Meeting

1h

The adventure begins tonight. Feel free to explore before your welcome meeting, but make sure you're back in time to meet the group. Check for the meeting time on the welcome note at the hotel. After introductions, your CEO will review the details of your tour. Please note that normal check-in times apply at our start hotels, but you can usually store your luggage for the day if you arrive early.

### Airport Transfer

Narita International Airport - Tokyo

You will be transferred from the airport to your start hotel.

### Accommodation

#### Hotel Gracery Shinjuku (or similar)

Hotel

## Day 2 Tokyo

Today, we'll see Tokyo from a local's perspective, traveling by public transit. We start from a traditional Japanese taiko drumming class. Hear how these traditional wooden drums are made and learn three different playing techniques. Put your newly acquired skills to the test during a group performance together with a professional Wadaiko drummer. Later a visit to the serene Meiji Jingu shrine, dedicated to the spirit of Emperor Meiji. Then hit the streets of the buzzing Harajuku district, where kitschy-cute street fashion and candy-colored wigs are the order of the day.

Wear your comfortable shoes - today we will get around by public bus, metro and on foot.

### Metro

Tokyo

Get around underground via public transit.

### Meiji Shrine (Meiji Jingū) Visit

Tokyo

Visit this shrine dedicated to the 123rd emperor of Japan, Emperor Meiji and his wife. The shrine is a great place to escape the bustle of the city and wander the grounds along the wide walking paths.

### Harajuku Visit

Tokyo

The Harajuku district is known as the centre of Japanese youth culture and fashion. Here, find dozens of shopping and dining options including independent boutiques and larger international luxury stores.

### Your Family Journeys Moment: Traditional Taiko Drumming Class

Take part in a Taiko drumming class facilitated by a professional Wadaiko drummer. Learn how wadaiko is made, the history of Taiko, how to stand (posture), kamae instruction (the stance), and how to hold the drumsticks. Learn and practice three different styles and then perform together as a group.

**Meals included: Breakfast****Accommodation****Hotel Gracery Shinjuku (or similar)**

Hotel

**Day 3 Tokyo**

Learn Japanese secrets to longevity in a cooking class on Okinawa cuisine, originating from the Japanese island reputed to have the highest life expectancy in the world. Prepare a selection of dishes using typical ingredients and learn about the beneficial qualities of each. Savour your creations for a nutritious lunch and spend the rest of the day discovering Tokyo at leisure.

Wear your comfortable shoes - today we will get around by public bus, metro and on foot.

**Metro**

Tokyo

Get around underground via public transit.

**Your Journeys Highlight Moment: Okinawa Cooking Class**

Learn about the Okinawan diet and lifestyle during a hands-on cooking class and demonstration. Residents of this Japanese island are known for their long lifespans; adopting their practises might improve your quality of life and help you avoid the onset of common diseases as you age. Prepare a selection of dishes and learn about the typical foods in this diet.

**Free Time**

Tokyo Afternoon

Enjoy some time to explore the city on your own. Opt to visit Ueno Park or head to the top of the Tokyo Tower and take in stunning views of the city.

**Optional Activities - Day 3****Ueno Park Visit**

Tokyo

Free

As Japan's most popular city park, Ueno is known for its museums and cherry blossoms. Stroll the pathways, admire the thousands of trees, including approximately 800 Somei-yoshino cherry trees, look for lotus on the pond, or opt to visit the temples and museums (entrance fees).

**Tokyo Tower Visit**

Tokyo

900-2800JPY per person

Completed in 1958, the Tokyo Tower symbolized the rebirth of Japan as a post war economic power. Standing 13 metres taller than the Eiffel Tower, it has 2 observation decks which offer stunning views of Tokyo and the surrounding area. On a clear day, if you're lucky, you can even catch a glimpse of Mount Fuji!

**Meals included: Breakfast | Lunch****Accommodation****Hotel Gracery Shinjuku (or similar)**

Hotel

**Day 4 Tokyo/Nagano (area)**

This morning, take a crash course in Japan's national sport: sumo wrestling! Get initiated into this explosive martial art, which originated as a religious ritual more than a thousand years ago. Learn about the wrestlers' rigorous routine and mindboggling calorie intake, earn basic technique and watch Sumo wrestling. After the class, explore the traditional side of the city. Later, journey to Nagano, the beautiful mountain city that hosted the 1998 Winter Olympics. Settle into our historic ryokan — or traditional Japanese inn — located just outside the city, in the hot springs town of Shibu Onsen.

Ryokan are traditional Inns found across Japan. Featuring tatami floors (soft mats of woven straw), futon beds, Japanese-style baths, cotton kimono (casual robe worn to lounge around), and kaiseki meals (often served in the comfort of your own room); a ryokan is the perfect place to experience traditional customs and local immersion. The Ryokan is a simple, traditional Inn with few amenities and shared facilities, have fun and enjoy this relaxing opportunity to learn more about Japan's unique customs.

Wear your comfortable shoes - today we will get around by public bus, metro, train and on foot.

**Metro**

Tokyo

Get around underground via public transit.

**Your Family Journeys Moment: Sumo Wrestling Class**

Learn all about the history of sumo with a former Sumo wrestler. Wearing a traditional Sumo belt, go through sumo training and learn basic moves of this ancient martial art.

### **Asakusa Walk**

Tokyo

Discover this historic entertainment district on a guided orientation tour of the area with your CEO. Take in one of Tokyo's iconic sites with a stop at Sensoji temple.

### **Bullet Train**

Tokyo - Nagano 3h

Get to your next destination faster than the speed of light (ok maybe not that fast) aboard a high-speed train.

### **Local Train**

Nagano - Shibu Onsen 1h

Climb aboard, take a seat, and enjoy the ride.

### **Free Time**

Shibu Onsen Evening

Enjoy some free time to wander through this traditional hot springs town.

### **Meals included: Breakfast | Dinner**

#### **Accommodation**

#### **Issa no Komichi Biyu no Yado (or similar)**

Ryokan

### **Day 5 Nagano**

Nagano is home to the Japanese macaque, or snow monkey — one of the only primate species that can survive below freezing temperatures. Venture to Jigokudani Yaen Koen (Snow Monkey Park) to watch these furry simians scampering about the rocks or taking a soak in one of the thermal pools, fed by natural hot springs. Then head into Nagano city to explore the 7th-century Buddhist temple of Zenkoji, home to the very first Buddha statue brought to Japan.

Wear your comfortable shoes - today we will get around by public bus, metro, train and on foot.

### **Jigokudani Monkey Park Visit**

Nagano

Visit the Jigokudani Monkey Park, where wild snow monkeys can be seen bathing in the natural hot springs. The pool where most of the monkeys soak is man made, fed by the hot springs. Along the walking paths up to the pools other monkeys tend to stop and watch visitors curiously.

### **Local Train**

Shibu Onsen - Nagano 1h

Climb aboard, take a seat, and enjoy the ride.

### **Zenkō-ji Temple**

Nagano

Visit the Buddhist temple of Zenkō-ji, one of the last remaining pilgrimage sites. Built in the 7th century, the city of Nagano was built around the already standing structure.

### **Free Time**

Nagano Evening

Enjoy some time to explore the city on your own.

### **Meals included: Breakfast**

### **Day 6 Nagano**

Travel to Matsumoto for a visit to one of Japan's most treasured castles. Known as the "crow castle" for its imposing black exterior, the Matsumoto fortress dates to the 16th century and was once a stronghold of the samurai, Japan's elite military class. Later, we make our way to a wasabi farm to learn all about this fiery Japanese condiment and its laborious cultivation. Opt to taste a variety of wasabi products, including wasabi-flavored pickles, crackers, noodles, juice — even wasabi ice cream and chocolate. If you're brave enough, take a nibble of wasabi in its purest form: fresh!

Wear your comfortable shoes - today we will get around by train, taxi (to/from the Wasabi Farm) and on foot.

### **Local Train**

Nagano - Matsumoto 1h30m-2h

Climb aboard, take your seat, and get around like the locals do.

## **Matsumoto Castle**

Matsumoto

Stop at the castle of Matsumoto one of Japan's most treasured castles, maintaining it's original wooden interior and stone exterior. Explore this castle where 16th century Samurai once roamed before venturing out with the group to wander Matsumoto's ancient streets and or dine in a traditional storehouse.

## **Your Foodie Moment: Wasabi Farm Visit**

Visit a wasabi farm and learn all about how it's grown. Nagano is considered one of the best places in the world to cultivate wasabi and try it fresh due to the clear, flowing water from the Northern Alps. Get a chance to try a variety of wasabi related treats.

## **Local Train**

Matsumoto - Nagano 1h30m-2h

Climb aboard, take your seat, and get around like the locals do.

## **Meals included: Breakfast**

## **Day 7 Nagano/Kyoto**

Hop on the bullet train to Kyoto, which served as Japan's imperial capital for more than a millennium. Delve into the aromatic alleys of Nishiki Market, one of the most popular food markets in the city. Opt to sample local specialties like barbecued quail, soy milk donuts, sesame ice cream, and more, taking your taste buds on a culinary roller coaster. This evening, venture to Gion, Kyoto's renowned geisha district. As you wander its lantern-lit streets, you might catch a glimpse of a geisha — traditional female entertainers recognizable by their distinctive makeup.

As the Imperial capital, Kyoto is an essential part of any visit to Japan. Kyoto has some of the most magnificent temples in Japan which date back centuries. There are said to be 2,000 temples, shrines, palaces, museums and traditional gardens in Kyoto. Wander past huge wooden structures and multi-storied pagodas, all linked with famous walkways.

Wear your comfortable shoes - today we will get around by train and on foot.

## **Bullet Train**

Nagano - Kyoto 5h

Get to your next destination faster than the speed of light (ok maybe not that fast) aboard a high-speed train.

## **Nishiki Market Visit**

Kyoto 1h

Take a walk with your CEO through the famous Nishiki Market renowned as the best place to get your hands on Kyoto's most famous street food.

## **Gion Walk**

Kyoto

Walk through Gion, Kyoto's most famous geisha district. Visit shops, restaurants and ochaya (teahouses), where geiko (Kyoto dialect for geisha) and maiko (geiko apprentices) entertain.

## **Meals included: Breakfast**

## **Accommodation**

## **THE GENERAL KYOTO Takatsuji Tominokoji (or similar)**

Hotel

## **Day 8 Kyoto**

This morning, pay a visit to the Fushimi Inari shrine, located just outside of Kyoto. Dedicated to the Shinto god of rice, this beautiful temple is known for its Senbon Torii — a stunning walkaway of vermilion-colored gates. Later, dive into another fun-filled cooking class, rolling up your sleeves to make a steaming bowl of ramen noodles.

Wear your comfortable shoes - today we will get around by public bus, metro and on foot.

## **Fushimi Inari Taisha Shrine Visit**

Kyoto

Visit the Fushimi Inari shrine, located just outside of Kyoto. Walk under the thousands of iconic torii gates (as seen in the film *Memoirs of a Geisha*) and enjoy the peaceful atmosphere. The shrine itself is at the base of the Inari mountain but includes many trails up to smaller shrines in the area.

## **Your Family Journeys Moment: Ramen Making Class**

Learn about the history and cultural aspects of Ramen during a lunch time cooking class. This includes, Japanese life and Ramen, Ramen types and variety, brief explanation about the ingredients used and the cooking procedure, a "Ramen Making Experience" (making ramen from scratch under guidance of one or two guides depending on the group size) which includes: making/draining the noodles, making chashu. The best part? Enjoy your creation for lunch! and you will get a recipe later !

### **Free Time**

Kyoto Afternoon

Enjoy some time to explore the city on your own.

### **Optional Activities - Day 8**

#### **Kinkaku-ji Golden Pavilion Visit**

Kyoto

400JPY per person

Explore Kinkaku-ji or the Golden Pavilion, named for the temple's top two floors that are covered in gold leaf. The temple is surrounded by trees and sits on a reflective pond, making this must-see in Kyoto a perfect place for photos. While the temple can be busy, there are gardens around the area to explore once you've had enough of the view.

#### **Tofukuji Temple Visit**

Kyoto

400-800JPY per person

This Zen temple located south-east of Kyoto City was founded in 1236 by the Fujiwara clan during the Kamakura period. While this is one of the most popular temples to visit in Kyoto at any time of the year, it's particularly popular when the autumn colours are at their finest!

### **Meals included: Breakfast | Lunch**

#### **Accommodation**

**THE GENERAL KYOTO Takatsuji Tominokoji (or similar)**

Hotel

### **Day 9 Nara**

Spend the day discovering ancient Nara, where Japan's first capital was established in the early 8th century. Immerse yourself in the ornate halls of the Todaiji temple, and gaze upon the largest bronze Buddha statue in the world, standing nearly 50 feet tall. At Kasuga Taisha, Nara's most celebrated shrine, stroll romantic walkways lined with hundreds of bronze and stone lanterns, and wander amid the gardens of Nara Park, where herds of semi-domesticated deer roam free. Check out the shops and galleries of the Naramachi district before returning to Kyoto.

Wear your comfortable shoes - today we will get around by public bus, metro and on foot.

#### **Local Train**

Kyoto - Nara 1h15m

Climb aboard, take a seat, and enjoy the ride.

#### **Tōdai-ji Buddhist Temple Complex**

Nara

Explore the famed Tōdaiji Temple which features the largest bronze Buddha in the world.

#### **Kasuga Grand Shrine**

Nara

Visit this Shinto shrine originally built in 768 AD by the Fujiwara family. This stunning shrine is famed for its hundreds of bronze and stone lanterns.

### **Free Time**

Nara 2h Afternoon

Enjoy some time to explore the city on your own.

#### **Local Train**

Nara - Kyoto 1h15m

Climb aboard, take a seat, and enjoy the ride.

### **Meals included: Breakfast**

#### **Accommodation**

**THE GENERAL KYOTO Takatsuji Tominokoji (or similar)**

Hotel

### **Day 10 Kyoto**

Unleash your inner warrior this morning with a lesson on samurai swordplay. Learn how to wield a Japanese sword and witness an unforgettable performance by masters of kembu, or sword dance. In the afternoon, explore the picturesque Kiyomizudera temple, perched on a hilltop near a sacred waterfall.

There is much to keep you busy here: ring giant prayer bowls, sip holy water — said to have wish-fulfilling qualities — or muster the courage to walk through the Tainai Meguri, a lightless underground tunnel that symbolizes the visitor's journey to enlightenment. This evening, celebrate your Japan adventure at a farewell dinner.

Wear your comfortable shoes - today we will get around by public bus, metro and on foot.

### **Your Journeys Highlight Moment: Kembu Masters**

Gain an understanding of kembu, an ancient art form that honours the culture of the Japanese warrior class, the samurai. Watch kembu masters practice this delicate artform and learn for yourself the basic moves of properly using a Japanese sword. It's said that in feudal times, samurai would perform these traditional routines to build courage and improve concentration, thereby expressing the spirit of the warrior.

### **Kiyomizu Temple Visit**

Kyoto

Visit the Kiyomizu Temple, a Buddhist temple in Kyoto and part of Kyoto's UNESCO listed sights. Originally built in 798, the current structures were built in 1633 without the use of a single nail.

### **Meals included: Breakfast | Dinner**

#### **Accommodation**

#### **THE GENERAL KYOTO Takatsuji Tominokoji (or similar)**

Hotel

### **Day 11 Kyoto**

Depart any time.

There are no planned activities today and you are free to depart at any time.

### **Meals included: Breakfast**

## **What's Included**

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Your Journeys Highlight Moment: Okinawa Cooking Class, Tokyo

Your Journeys Highlight Moment: Kembu Masters, Kyoto

Your Family Journeys Moment: Traditional Taiko Drumming Class, Tokyo

Your Family Journeys Moment: Sumo Wrestling Class, Tokyo

Your Foodie Moment: Wasabi Farm Visit, Matsumoto

Your Family Journeys Moment: Ramen Making Class, Kyoto. Tour of Tokyo including Meiji Jingu Shrine, Asakusa and Harajuku districts. Traditional taiko Japanese drumming class. Sumo class led by a former wrestler. Sleep in a ryokan (traditional Japanese inn) and enjoy a kaiseki dinner. See wild snow monkeys at the Jigokudani Monkey Park. Visit the Buddhist temple of Zenkō-ji. Visit Matsumoto castle. Visit a local wasabi farm. Walk through the Nishiki Market and Gion Geisha District with your CEOs. Visit the iconic Fushimi Inari Taisha Shrine. Take part in a ramen making class. Tour Nara including visits to the Tōdaiji Temple, Kasuga Grand Shrine and the Naramachi district. Visit the famous Kiyomizu-dera Temple. Japan Rail (JR) pass (7 days). All transport between destinations and to/from included activities.

## **Highlights**

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Take part in a traditional taiko drumming class, Learn about the health benefits of the Okinawan cuisine, Meet and train with a former sumo wrestler, Watch wild snow monkeys bathe in hot springs, Learn all about how wasabi is grown, Delve into delicious Japanese cuisine while creating your own ramen, Encounter fearless deer in the gardens of Nara Park, Learn about the legendary swordsmanship of the samurai

## **Dossier Disclaimer**

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**VERY IMPORTANT:** Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

## Itinerary Disclaimer

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While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.

## Itinerary Notes

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Prices are based on double occupancy; all other room configurations are on request and cannot be guaranteed. We will accommodate triples/quads whenever possible. Please call for further details.

Family Journeys are designed for groups traveling with children between the ages of 7 and 17. Your group must include a child in order to book, and anyone under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

There are new Health & Safety Protocols for National Geographic Journeys tours. Please see [here](#) for full details and up-to-date requirements as they may change.

## Important Notes

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### 1. TATTOOS

Tattoos are not common or widely accepted in Japan. There is no cause for concern, but do your best to cover your tattoos when possible and note that you may not be permitted to enter public spas or onsens (hot springs).

### 2. RAIL PASS

Please note that only foreigners traveling as a tourist are able to use a Japan Rail Pass. If you are a Japanese citizen/resident or traveling on a student/business/military/diplomatic visa, please advise us at time of booking as you will not be able to take advantage of the rail pass.

### 3. FAMILY INSURANCE

Options for family travel insurance are available. Please enquire with your Family Trip Specialist for more information.

### 4. Luggage size restriction - Effective from May 2020 onwards

All G Adventures tours in Japan use the world-famous Shinkansen bullet trains, which have a restriction on maximum luggage size. Any luggage brought on board the train must be less than 160cm in total. This is roughly the size that most airline companies consider as "carry-on baggage" and allow in overhead storage compartments.

As this tour includes city-to-city luggage transfers, this restriction affects your carry-on luggage on board the train.

5. Please note that on all Family Adventures one adult can only accompany up to two minors. If you have over two minors planning on travelling then a second adult will be required to attend.

6. (Valid as of August 22, 2022) Japan is in the process of reopening and has set up some new regulations for tourists and tour operators. These are subject to change at any time. As per current guidelines:

- Travellers must be with a tour guide at all times, including meals outside of hotels, all activities and to and from the airport.

- Independent exploration by travellers is not permitted; travellers must remain with the tour group.

- Upon arrival, you will be required to sign a Japan Tourism Agreement Form acknowledging your agreement to follow current tourism regulations in Japan.

We will unfortunately not be able to offer pre/post tour accommodation while these restrictions remain in place.

## Group Leader Description

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All National Geographic Family Journeys with G Adventures group trips are accompanied by two of our group leaders. The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense; you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We also use local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting- we think it's the best of both worlds.



## Group Size Notes

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20

## Meals Included

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10 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 dinners

## Meals

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Eating is a big part of traveling and we encourage you to experience the vast array of wonderful food that is available out in the world. Its important to remember, that food may be different from what you are used to at home and that some things may not be available in other countries.

Some meals are included in the trip price, while others are not, to allow flexibility and choice to you and your family. For non-included meals our CEOs will still make arrangements for the group to eat together, which allows you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though. For all trips please refer to the meals included and budget information for included meals and approximate budget (per person) for meals not included.

Throughout this trip, breakfast is included daily (ranging from continental to buffet depending on the trip), as are healthy, local snacks. Tap water is safe and drinkable everywhere. Please remember to bring your own refillable bottle and refill at the start of each day.

Note that any special meal requirements or dietary restrictions need to be specified at time of booking.

## Transport

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Bullet train, express train, local train, ferry, metro, taxi, public bus, walking

## About our Transportation

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On our tours in Japan we use public transport, making use of Japan's world famous transportation system. From the super fast Shinkansen Bullet Train to Kyoto's extensive local bus network, we ride with the locals.

## Solo Travellers

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We believe solo travellers should not have to pay more to travel so our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a single supplement. Odd number adult travellers in your family will be paired in twin accommodation with another adult traveller of the same sex for the duration of the trip.

## Accommodation

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Hotels (9 nts), traditional Inn (1 nt)

## My Own Room

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Please note that if you have booked the "My Own Room" option for this tour, you will receive your own single room for all night stops

## About Accommodation

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Rooming is based on double occupancy (2 passengers / 2 beds per room); all other room configurations are on request and cannot be guaranteed. We will try to accommodate triples/quad requests whenever possible and it's important to note that rooming configuration can change from city to city and 2 single beds are the standard configuration in a room.

Please remember that hotel/lodge standards can be different from what you are used to in your home country, which is part of the appeal of adventure travel.

Japan is one of the most populous countries in the world and space is at a premium. Therefore, hotels rooms are small! Additionally, most Japanese hotels do not have designating non smoking rooms. Therefore, we ask hotels to deoderize rooms before check in.

## Joining Hotel

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For details of your joining hotel please refer to your tour voucher, G Account, the G Adventures App or contact your travel agent.

## Joining Instructions

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An arrival shuttle bus is included when you arrive on Day 1, or if you arrive up to three days prior provided that you have booked your pre-accommodation through National Geographic Journeys in our joining hotel. Due to customer experience and quality considerations, all services related to the tour must be continuous.

Our local representative will be waiting for you with a sign with your name on it outside of the luggage hall.

Emergency Phone number : +81(0)479-85-7522

Transfer time from the airport to the hotel is approx 75 minutes, depending on the number of stops.

Luggage restrictions on the included shuttle bus:

Maximum 2 suitcases or boxes per person are allowed to be accommodated free of charge except below items:

- Ski equipment
- Golf set
- Snowboard

Please note that Day 1 is an arrival day and no activities have been planned, so you may arrive at any time. Similarly the last day is a departure day in which no activities are planned.

Your CEO will contact you at the hotel on Day 1 and make sure you are settled comfortably. If you arrive late, they will leave you a message detailing what time and where you should meet the next morning. Your CEO will organize a short meeting soon after arrival, during which you will meet other tour participants and receive information about general and specific aspects of the trip.

## Arrival Complications

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We don't expect any problems, and nor should you, but if for any reason you are unable to commence your trip as scheduled, please refer to the emergency contact details provided in this dossier and contact us as soon as possible. If you have a pre-booked transfer, and you have not made contact with our representative within 30 minutes of clearing customs and immigration, we recommend that you make your own way to the Starting Point hotel, following the Joining Instructions. Please apply to your travel agent on your return for a refund of the transfer cost if this occurs.

## Emergency Contact

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Should you need to contact us during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call either the G Adventures Local Representative (if one is listed below) or our G Adventures Local Office. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please leave a detailed message and contact information, so they may return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

### EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

Arrival shuttle bus representative: +81(0)479-85-7522

G Adventures Local Office (Japan)

During office hours, Mon-Fri (Excluding national holidays) 9:00-18:00 Local Time

From outside Japan: 1st contact +81 3-6659-9074 (2nd contact +81 80 6779 1851)

From within Japan: 1st contact +81 3-6659-9074 (2nd contact +81 80 6779 1851)

After office hours emergency number

Primary phone: +81 80 6779 1851 (from within Japan: 080 6779 1851)

If you are unable for any reason to contact our local office, please call the numbers listed below which will connect you directly with our Sales team who will happily assist you. Hours of operation by region can be found [here](#).

Toll-free, North America only: 1 888 800 4100

Calls from UK: 0344 272 0000

Calls from Germany: 0800 365 1000

Calls from Australia: 1 300 796 618

Calls from New Zealand: 0800 333 307

Outside North America, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and the UK: +1 416 260 0999

## What to Take

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You will be on the move a lot, so our advice is to pack as lightly as possible. Your baggage should be clearly labelled and restricted to one soft compact suitcase, sports bag, or backpack. A daypack is also essential for carrying everyday items. There is a limit of one main piece of luggage per person. Porters may not always be available, so be prepared to carry your own bags (at hotels).

It's essential to pack as lightly as possible for rail travel in Japan. All G Adventures tours use the world-famous Shinkansen bullet trains, which have a restriction on maximum luggage size.

Any luggage brought on board the train must be less than 160cm in total (calculated as the sum of the height + width + depth of your luggage). This is roughly the size that most airline companies consider as "carry-on baggage" and allow in overhead storage compartments. As this tour includes city-to-city luggage transfers, this restriction only affects your carry-on luggage on board the train.

This tour includes a city-to-city luggage transfer service known as "takuhaibin" in Japan, so you will not have to worry about carrying your large luggage on and off trains as we travel. Please note that you will not have access to your bags during the transfers from city to city, and will not be reunited with your large luggage until the following day. On these days, we recommend using an overnight bag (under 160cm in total) for anything you may need, including valuables.

## Packing List

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### Cold Weather:

- Long-sleeved shirts or sweater
- Scarf
- Warm gloves
- Warm hat
- Warm layers

### Conservative Dress:

- Modest clothing that covers knees and shoulders (Long pants, long skirts, shirts that cover shoulders)
- Shawl or scarf (for temple visits)

### Documents:

- Flight info (required) (Printouts of e-tickets may be required at the border)
- Insurance info (required) (With photocopies)
- Passport (required) (With photocopies)
- Required visas or vaccination certificates (required) (With photocopies)
- Vouchers and pre-departure information (required)

### Essentials:

- Binoculars (optional)
- Camera (With extra memory cards and batteries)
- Cash, credit and debit cards
- Day pack (Used for daily excursions or short overnights)
- Ear plugs
- First-aid kit (should contain lip balm with sunscreen, sunscreen, whistle, Aspirin, Ibuprofen, bandaids/plasters, tape, anti-histamines, antibacterial gel/wipes, antiseptic cream, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, rehydration powder, water purification tablets or drops, insect repellent, sewing kit, extra prescription drugs you may be taking)
- Flashlight/torch (Headlamps are ideal)
- Fleece top/sweater
- Footwear
- Hat
- Locks for bags
- Long pants/jeans
- Moneybelt
- Outlet adapter
- Personal entertainment (Reading and writing materials, cards, music player, etc.)
- Reusable water bottle
- Shirts/t-shirts
- Sleepwear
- Small travel towel
- Sunglasses
- Toiletries (Preferably biodegradable)
- Watch and alarm clock
- Waterproof backpack cover
- Windproof rain jacket

#### Health & Safety:

- Face masks (required)
- Hand sanitizer (required)
- Pen (Please bring your own pen for filling out documents.)
- Quick Covid Test/Antigen Test
- Rubber gloves

#### Warm Weather:

- Sandals/flip-flops
- Shorts/skirts (Longer shorts/skirts are recommended)
- Sun hat/bandana
- Swimwear

Note: During the winter months (Nov-Apr) the mountains can be very cold, so please make sure you pack warm clothes. During summer, (Jun-Sep) temperatures are very hot and humid. Lightweight breathable clothing is recommended.

It is important to pack clothes for warm days and cool evenings, as well as a light waterproof jacket. Layering is essential.

We're working with our accommodation partners to reduce single-use plastic on our tours by providing safe drinking water for refillable bottles wherever possible. Find out more about our Plastics Partnership Project [here](#).

## Laundry

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Laundry facilities are offered by some of our hotels for a charge or ask your CEO where the closest laundromat is. There will be times when you may want to or have to do your own laundry, so we suggest you bring non-polluting/biodegradable soap.

## Visas and Entry Requirements

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All countries require a valid passport (with a minimum 6 months validity). Contact your local embassy or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements, or see your travel agent. It is your own responsibility to have the correct travel documentation. Visa requirements for your trip will vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as far as possible, but rules do change and sometimes without warning. While we provide the following information in good faith, it is vital that you check the information yourself and understand that you are fully responsible for your own visa requirements.

Visa information specific to your destination and nationality can be found in our Important Pre-Departure Information page [here](#)

**IMPORTANT UPDATE (from Aug 22, 2022):** Japan has suspended its visa waiver. Depending on your nationality, you will either be eligible to apply online for an eVisa (with a turnaround of less than a week), or you will be required to apply with the Japanese consulate (turnaround time of up to 6 weeks). Please contact your local embassy or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements.

Within 3 business days of receiving all required information following confirmation of your tour, G Adventures will provide you with a certificate for completion of registration to the Entrants, Returnees Follow-up System (ERFS) along with a summary of your upcoming tour. These two documents are required as part of the visa process.

Upon arrival to Japan, you will be required to sign a Japan Tourism Agreement Form acknowledging your agreement to follow current tourism regulations in Japan.

## Spending Money

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Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

## Money Exchange

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As currency exchange rates in Asia fluctuate often we ask that you refer to the following website for daily exchange rates: [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com).

Every Post Office and 7-11 Convenience store has an ATM machine that accepts Visa, Mastercard and Debit Cards. At times, Maestro/Master Card/Cirrus have been problematic at these machines, so please bring a back-up card.

Credit Cards should not be relied upon for purchases as they are not widely accepted, except in some restaurants and department stores. Money can be exchanged at Post Offices and some banks and hotels in major cities, however it can be a very slow process.

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## Emergency Fund

Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional USD \$200 (or equivalent) as an 'emergency' fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (ex. a natural disaster) require a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence!

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## Departure Tax

Departure Tax is included in all International and Domestic tickets.

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## Tipping

Tipping is not practiced in Japan. Leaving money at restaurants, in taxis etc will simply cause confusion. However, at the end of your trip if you felt your two Chief Experience Officers did an outstanding job, tipping is appreciated. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however as a guideline; per CEO \$5 USD per person, per day can be used.

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## Optional Activities

Tokyo

- Tokyo Tower Visit (900-2800JPY per person)
- Ueno Park Visit (Free)

Kyoto

- Tofukuji Temple Visit (400-800JPY per person)
- Kinkaku-ji Golden Pavilion Visit (400JPY per person)

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## Health

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical information pertaining to the country you are travelling to well before departure. We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit and hand sanitizers / antibacterial wipes as well as a full supply of any personal medical requirements. In Asia, you will not find the same drugs as you get at home. Please be aware that sometimes we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities. Also note that for legal reasons our Leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc. When selecting your trip please carefully read the brochure and itinerary and assess your ability to cope with our style of travel. Please refer to the Physical and Culture Shock ratings for trip specific information. G Adventures reserves the right to exclude any traveller from all or part of a trip without refund if, in the reasonable opinion of the CEO, they are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group.

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## Safety and Security

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewelry at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage. When travelling on a group trip, please note that your group leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it deemed necessary, due to safety concerns. Your Chief Experience Officer (CEO) will accompany you on all included activities. During your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy and explore at your leisure. While your CEO will assist you with options available in a given location, please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and we offer no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgement when selecting an activity in your free time. Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during night time excursions.

Water based activities have an element of danger and excitement built into them. We recommend only participating in water based activities when accompanied by a guide(s). We make every reasonable effort to ensure the fun and adventurous element of any water based activities (in countries with varying degrees of operating standards), have a balanced approach to safety. It is our policy not to allow our CEOs to make arrangements on your behalf for water based activities that are not accompanied by guide(s).

Swimming, including snorkeling, is always at your own risk. [Read more about travel safety](#) for ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling.

## **Trip Specific Safety**

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We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

## **A Couple of Rules**

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Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for our travellers. Our philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter and in particular the local people who make the world the special place it is. The exploitation of people in the sex trade is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our CEOs have the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they utilize the services of paid sex workers, in any capacity.

## **Travel Insurance**

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Travel insurance is compulsory in order to participate on any of our trips. When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance has been sighted by your leader, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy we require that at a minimum you are covered for medical expenses including emergency evacuation and repatriation. A minimum coverage of USD200,000 is required. G Adventures can provide you with the appropriate coverage. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. Some tours include adventure activities that require extra coverage (e.g. crampon use); please review your itinerary and make sure that you are covered for all included activities. If you have credit card insurance we require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

## **Planeterra Foundation - the non-profit partner of G Adventures**

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Planeterra International Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to turning travel into impact by helping local communities earn an income from tourism. Planeterra connects underserved local communities to the benefits of tourism by developing and supporting small community-owned businesses. These businesses support Indigenous people, empower women, grant youth access to employment opportunities, and protect the environment. Planeterra also works to ensure these businesses have a thriving customer base by integrating their projects into G Adventures' itineraries globally.

G Adventures is Planeterra's largest corporate donor, covering all operating costs, so 100% of your donation will bring opportunity to people in need.

G Adventures Dollar-a-day Program - Make Every Day Count - Turn your travel into impact with [Planeterra Foundation](#).

Did you know? Most communities around the world do not benefit from tourism. Give back to the places you visit on your travels by creating opportunities for local people to earn an income, and protect the environment.

Make every day count by donating \$1/day for the length of your trip, and join us in empowering the communities you will visit when you travel. 100% of your donation goes directly to Planeterra projects.

## **Local Dress**

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In Japan, the dress standard is more conservative than it is back home. We ask that you dress respectfully and avoid very short shorts/skirts and singlets/tanktops when visiting temples, shrines or other religious sites. Ask your CEO for more specific advice.

## **Feedback**

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After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us that we'll give you 5% off the price of your next G Adventures trip if your feedback is completed on-line within 30 days of finishing your trip. Your tour evaluation will be e-mailed to you 24 hours after the conclusion of your trip. If you do not receive the tour evaluation link in the days after your tour has finished, please drop us a line at [customerservice@gadventures.com](mailto:customerservice@gadventures.com) and we will send it on to you.

## **Minimum Age**

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Minimum age of 7 years for this trip.

## **International Flights**

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Check-in times and baggage allowances/restrictions vary by airline and can change at any time. For the most up-to-date information for your flight, please contact your airline. We recommend checking in online in advance to avoid potential delays at the airport.