



# **Insider's Japan**

## **2027**

*It's a land of delicate art and bustling commerce, of rich traditions and dizzying modernity; a jumble of sights, sounds, and tastes that for visitors are truly foreign – and truly fascinating. This well-crafted tour features the highlights of Tokyo and Kyoto, engages us in local life, and takes us off the beaten path to the lovely historic cities of Takayama and Kanazawa.*

### **Itinerary**

Created on Jan 22, 2026

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## Day-by-Day Itinerary

### DAY 1: Depart U.S. for Tokyo, Japan

### DAY 2: Arrive Tokyo

Upon arrival in Tokyo, Japan's financial, commercial, and political capital, we transfer to our hotel. As guests' arrival times may vary, we have no scheduled activities or meals planned.

### DAY 3: Tokyo

After a briefing about the journey ahead, we set out to discover a small part of this amazing city that covers a staggering 847 square miles. Our sightseeing features the Meiji Shrine, a peaceful enclave of Shinto temples and gardens, and a tour of the trendy Shibuya district with its famous scramble crossing, as well as endless shopping, entertainment, and dining options for lunch on our own. This afternoon, we can stay to explore as we wish or return to our hotel for time at leisure. Tonight, we gather for a welcome dinner at our hotel.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

### DAY 4: Tokyo

Our tour of Tokyo continues this morning at the Buddhist Asakusa Kannon, Tokyo's oldest temple (c. 645 CE). We also visit the gallery of preeminent calligrapher Koshun Masunaga, where we learn about this ancient art of artistic writing and browse the collection. After lunch on our own, our final stop today is at the newly reopened Edo Museum. Fresh off a four-year renovation, the museum celebrates Tokyo's history through intricate scale models and replicas of famous structures. After today's touring, dinner tonight is on our own in this city with endless dining options.

*Meals:* Breakfast

### DAY 5: Tokyo/Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park/Hakone

Japan's pastoral side is on tap as we leave Tokyo for Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park. Here sits imposing Mt. Fuji, a dormant volcano (it last erupted in 1707) with a perfectly symmetrical cone that rises to 12,388 feet. We learn about environmental and conservation efforts on the mountain at the Mt. Fuji World Heritage Center, then visit the nearby Itchiko Kubota Art Museum, housed in the former home of this artist famed for reviving a long-lost style of Japanese textile design. Then we travel to the town of Hakone, where we spend the night at a *ryokan*, a traditional Japanese inn where we take off our shoes upon entering, enjoy a Japanese-style *Kaiseki* dinner, and sleep on a futon.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 6: Hakone/Takayama**

Today we take advantage of Japan's train system, one of the finest in the world, as we travel first by bullet train then by Wide View Hida express train. Our destination is lovely Takayama in the Japanese Alps, considered one of the country's most attractive places with its beautifully preserved Old Town and historic buildings. Our explorations center on three narrow streets in the San-machi-suji district of Takayama where, in feudal times, merchants lived amidst the authentically preserved small inns, teahouses, and *sake* breweries. This afternoon we attend a traditional Japanese tea ceremony here, a historic ritual of form, grace, and spirituality.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 7: Takayama**

We pay an early visit to the riverside Miyagawa Morning Market, a blaze of dazzling colors and foodstuffs. Then, we gather for a cooking class of local specialties at a nearby site. After enjoying the fruits of our labors, we embark on a walking tour, visiting Takayama Jinya, a historic government house; the local *sake* brewery; and Takayama's Old Town, whose well-preserved buildings and homes date to the Edo Period (1600–1868)

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch

## **DAY 8: Takayama/Shirakawa-Go/Kanazawa**

We leave Takayama this morning for the UNESCO World Heritage site of Shirakawa-Go Gassho-zukuri Village. Comprising buildings relocated from authentic villages nearby that were razed for a dam, the village is also a vibrant community whose residents work together to preserve the Gassho style architecture here. This unique traditional building style features simple lines supporting a steeply pitched thatched roof; 'Gassho' translates approximately to 'praying hands', and the angle of the roof's eaves are said to represent two hands coming together in Buddhist prayer. Then we visit Gokayama Village to see how traditional Japanese *washi* paper is made. Late this afternoon we reach the castle town of Kanazawa, an alluring coastal city that survived the ravages of World War II. We dine tonight at a local Japanese restaurant.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## **DAY 9: Kanazawa**

Today's tour of culturally rich Kanazawa begins with Hakukokan, a museum celebrating the art and craft of gold leaf technology. Next, we visit the Kutani Kosen Kiln, the famed, 150-year-old ceramics workshop where artists fashion prized, highly decorated pottery. We continue to Omicho Market — Kanazawa's largest food market — before our touring concludes at Kenrokuen Garden, a landmark traditional garden dating to 1676.

*Meals:* Breakfast

## **DAY 10: Kanazawa/Kyoto**

We depart this morning by train for Kyoto, formerly Japan's Imperial Capital and now the country's cultural and artistic center with more than 1,600 temples, hundreds of shrines, artful gardens, and historic architecture. Upon arrival, visit Nijo-jo Castle (ca. 1603), the extravagant residence of the *shoguns* who ruled Japan for some 250 years. Featuring imposing stone walls and deep moats, the castle has many interior security measures as well, including hidden rooms for the *shogun*'s bodyguards and "nightingale floors" which purposely squeak when stepped on to alert occupants of intruders. We dine together at our hotel this evening.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 11: Kyoto**

More of Kyoto is on tap today, with visits to the otherworldly Arashiyama Bamboo Grove, where the stalks of bamboo reach three stories into the air; Ryoan-ji, a Zen Buddhist temple whose acclaimed dry garden epitomizes the simplicity of Zen meditation; and Kinkaku-ji Temple, the beloved lakeside Temple of the Golden Pavilion, set on pillars suspended over the water. We are at leisure this afternoon, with dinner on our own in this traditional, yet modern city. *Kaiseki* cuisine has its roots here, and you're sure to find elevated Japanese restaurants to suit your taste, as well as a variety of *udon* shops, vegan offerings, and takeaway options.

*Meals:* Breakfast

## **DAY 12: Kyoto**

We continue our encounter with Kyoto today. On tap: the important Fushimi Inari shrine, with its trails straddled by some 1,000 red *torii* gates and Sanjusangendo Hall (c. 1266), an important Buddhist temple housing 1,000 statues of the Thousand-Armed Kannon deity. This afternoon, we visit the famous Gion theater district, where we enjoy a farewell dinner accompanied by a private Maiko (*geisha*) performance.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 13: Depart for U.S.**

This morning we travel by motorcoach to the Osaka airport, where we board our return flight to the United States.

*Meals:* Breakfast

This tour itinerary was generated for Insider's Japan on Jan 22, 2026. Please visit the Insider's Japan page at <https://www.odysseys-unlimited.com/tours/asia-the-far-east/insiders-japan-2/> for the latest and most accurate information.