



Celebrations International Travel, Inc.



## *Culinary & Cultural Heritage of Japan*

**Day 1: Depart United States for Tokyo, Japan.**

**Day 2: Tokyo**

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You will arrive in Tokyo at Narita International Airport where your English speaking guide will greet you and lead you to your luxury tour coach where you will be briefed on the tour and given your Japan Rail Pass, and will have a chance to ask any questions you may have. The ride from Narita Airport to our 4-star hotel located in the centre of Tokyo will take approximately 90 minutes.

Once your guide has ensured a smooth check in, you will have time to freshen up and prepare for your first night on the town.



Your guide will meet you in the lobby of the hotel that evening and take you on a short walking orientation tour of the area surrounding your hotel. You will be taken to an upscale Yakitori restaurant for a Welcome Dinner where the chef will prepare premium breeds of chicken as well as beef and vegetables grilled right before your eyes over piping hot charcoal. Your guide will explain the importance of these restaurants in relation to Japanese business culture while you sip on a frosty pint of Japan's famous Sapporo or Asahi beer.

After dinner, your guide will lead you back to your hotel, and you can either continue exploring the area on your own, or turn in for the night.

**Accommodation: Keio Plaza Hotel \*\*\*\* (2 Nights)**

### Day 3: Tokyo



Today will be a full day of sightseeing by public transportation with your tour guide. At 5:00 a.m. this morning, your guide will take you by Tokyo Transit to the Tsukiji Fish Market to observe the frenzy of activity. You will be given free time to weave your way through the stalls

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and aisles to see the day's fresh catches and experience the excitement of the marketplace. Feel free to stop in to one of the sushi restaurants located within the market to buy a few pieces of the freshest and best cuts of sushi. **Note: To visit Tsukiji Market, please ensure that you wear washable boots/shoes if possible.** Return to the hotel for breakfast.

**PLEASE NOTE:** *As of January 2009 the Tsukiji Market re-opened to tourists and visitors with the condition that flash photography not be used. Attending auctions are not permitted. Inspectors from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government supervise all activity within the Market area to enforce Food Hygiene Laws and ensure public safety. In the unlikely event that the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and/or the Tsukiji Fish Market deem it necessary to close the Market to the public, the following will substitute for the market visit:*

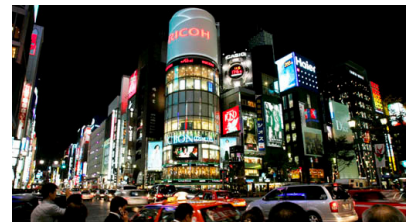
You will be taken by Tokyo Metro to the Akihabara where you will be astounded by the latest and greatest in electronics. Akihabara gained some of its fame for having the first shops dedicated to personal robots and robotics. Browse and buy the newest in computers, cell phones, televisions, cameras and home appliances. There are also some Duty Free shops in the area, should you be interested. After visiting the Akihabara, your guide will take you for lunch in the Tsukiji Fish Market Area, where you will get to learn from a Sushi Master and try your hand at rolling your own sushi. Enjoy your creation as your lunch! After lunch we will continue on as per the original itinerary.



After breakfast, your guide will take you by Tokyo Metro for a guided tour of the Imperial Palace (formerly "Edo Castle," built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century) with free time to enjoy the grounds. The Imperial Palace was the residence of the Shogun in the 1400's, and functioned as the military capital during the Edo period of Japanese history. After restoration, it became the Tokyo Imperial Palace.

Mid-afternoon we will head to a sushi restaurant to learn from a seasoned Sushi Chef. Watch the Sushi Chef and observe his technique closely as he explains the different methods of slicing, rolling, and the art of sushi presentation. Try your hand at making sushi and enjoy your creation as your lunch!

After a delicious lunch, your guide will take you to the Ginza for some time to shop in one of Tokyo's famous districts. Here you can find a variety of fantastic restaurants to choose from, shop in some of the largest department stores in the world, or browse the high end fashion boutiques that line the Ginza. Be sure to visit the lower level of the department stores to try some traditional Japanese sweets. You will have the option of taking the Tokyo Metro to the hotel in the late afternoon, or spending the rest of the day in the Ginza area at your leisure and finding your own way back to the hotel, either on foot or by Tokyo metro. Maps will be provided.



## Day 4: Tokyo – Osaka

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After breakfast, you will ride the JR Super Express Train from Tokyo to Osaka. This trip will take 3 hours in total. Before arriving on the platform, take a few moments to browse the train station for a traditional Japanese Bento Box. These boxes are frequently purchased by commuters and are a fantastic lunch for train travelers!



Once in Osaka, you will experience a full day sightseeing tour that includes Sumiyoshi Taisha Shrine, Osaka Kaiyukan Aquarium and the floating Garden observatory of the Umeda Sky Building. Lunch will be provided. Early evening you will be transferred back to your hotel and have the evening at leisure. Your hotel is within walking distance of the Dotonbori (*in the Namba District*), which has wonderful restaurants and is a hot-spot for night life.

**Accommodation: Swisshotel Nankai Osaka \*\*\*\* (2 Nights)**

## Day 5: Osaka

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Today will be a full day of sightseeing in Osaka by public transportation. After breakfast, your guide will take you to Yodoyabashi where you will cruise the Yodo River by boat to Tenmabashi. Upon arrival in Tenmabashi, we will travel by Metro to Osaka Castle where you will have a guided tour. Osaka Castle is one of Japan's most famous castles and played a major role in the unification of Japan in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Castle grounds cover 15 acres and

contain 13 structures. It is a very popular location during festivals. Osaka castle is 5 stories on the outside, but 8 stories on the inside. After the tour, you will have free time to enjoy the grounds, relax in the shade of the cherry-blossom trees, or take some photos.



After leaving the castle, we will go by Metro to the Namba area to visit the Dotonbori. Here we will find out why Osaka is known as “the nation’s kitchen”. Our first stop will be to an Okonomiyaki restaurant. Okonomiyaki literally translated means “grilled as you like it”. Each table is fitted with a table-top grill, where you will make an Okonomiyaki to your liking. Each starts as a savoury pancake, and where it goes from there is entirely up to you!

Choose from a variety of toppings ranging from squid to soba noodles and everything in between.



Afterwards, we will take a walk down the Dotonbori to experience the unique shops, neon signs, and street food that has made the Dotonbori famous. See how Takoyaki is made, watch Udon being prepared and try out a Kaiten-Zushi bar (rotating sushi bar). Feel free to spend the evening at your leisure in the Dotonbori, walking around the nearby canal, or be taken by coach back to your hotel.

## Day 6: Osaka-Hiroshima

After breakfast, your Goway guide will bring you to the Shin-Osaka Train Station to take the JR Super Express Train from Osaka to Hiroshima. This trip will take 80 minutes in total. Once at Hiroshima Station, a guide will take you to the Peace Memorial Museum and the Atomic Bomb Dome. Your luggage will be safely stowed on the coach for you. Your guide will give you a tour of the grounds, the remaining Atomic Bomb Dome Epicenter, as well as the Peace Bell in Peace Memorial Park.

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After spending some time in Peace Memorial Park, you will enter the Peace Memorial Museum to view at your own pace. The museum collects and displays belongings left by victims, photos and other material to convey the magnitude and impact of the event itself. Afterwards, you will meet your guide at the exit of the museum and will be taken to the city centre to have lunch, discover the city and relax for the rest of the day.

### Accommodation: Rihga Royal Hotel Hiroshima \*\*\*\* (1 Night)

*Note: Baggage will be transported separately from Osaka directly to Kyoto. You will not have your baggage for the night in Hiroshima, so be sure to pack a simple overnight bag for the night and next morning.*

## Day 7: Hiroshima – Kyoto

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After breakfast, your guide will take you by coach to the Hiroshima Rail Station where you will catch the JR Super Express Train to the old city of Kyoto (2 hours). Your guide will meet you upon arrival at Kyoto Station and take you on a sightseeing tour of Kyoto by coach.

You will then be taken to your Ryokan (a typical Japanese-style hotel dating back to the Edo period) for check-in. This hotel is a unique experience for the traveler who wants to experience all Japan has to offer. The rooms are minimal, a futon mattress on a tatami mat floor, a low table and tea supplies.



Enjoy free time in the afternoon to explore the area around the Ryokan, or venture into the Gion, Kyoto's famous Geisha area. Here you will find some wonderful restaurants specializing in Syabu-Syabu, a cook-it-yourself meal consisting of Kobe beef, pickled vegetables, and soup.

**Spring/Summer Activity:** Early evening, your guide will take you to the beautiful city of Arashiyama. At dusk, you will board a boat and head out on the water to witness traditional cormorant fishing by the Ukai fishermen. This 1300-year-old style of fishing is done in the dark of night by fire-light. Cormorant birds are used to catch the fish that are drawn to the surface by the light of the fire and are reeled in by the fisherman.



**Winter/Fall Activity:** Enjoy a river boat cruise down the Hozu River from Kameoka to Arashiyama. Visit the Iwatayama Monkey Park and the Tenryuji Temple.

Tonight, you will be driven by taxi for a home visit and dinner. Learn Japanese-style home cooking and sit with the family for dinner. After dinner, you will return by taxi to your Ryokan.

**Accommodation: Yoshi-Ima Ryokan (2 Nights)**

**Day 8: Kyoto**



After breakfast, your Goway guide will take you on a full day tour, visiting the Kinkakuji Temple, the Sanjusangendo Temple, Nijo Castle, Kiyomizu Temple, and the Gion district. (Lunch is included after the Sanjusangendo Temple.) You will return to the Ryokan for a Kyoto-style

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Kaiseki Dinner. This will be no ordinary meal! You will be able to experience and enjoy the Kaiseki style of Japanese dining. A traditional Kaiseki meal has a variety of courses that are catered to the aesthetic diner. Meals are often modeled after the four seasons and are presented on many small plates, making up a variety of courses. A great amount of time and skill are involved in creating these meals. Everything from the garnish to the serving pieces are chosen to enhance the senses. Enjoy the rest of the evening at leisure.

**Day 9: Kyoto – Tokyo**

After breakfast, your guide will take you to Kyoto Station for your JR Super Express Train back to Tokyo (2 hours). Your guide will meet you at Shinagawa Station to take you to the Harajuku Area for a tour of the Meiji Shrine. Spend the evening exploring Harajuku at your leisure, shopping in the unique boutique-style stores, having a delicious dinner and taking photos of the extreme fashion culture the Harajuku area is famous for and make your own way back to the hotel by Tokyo Metro, or after viewing the Meiji Shrine be taken back to the hotel by your guide via Tokyo Metro.

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**Accommodation: Keio Plaza Hotel \*\*\*\* (3 Nights)**

**Day 10: Tokyo**



After breakfast, travel by coach to Sensoji Shrine, also known as Asakusa Kannon Temple. This Buddhist Temple was completed in 645 A.D., making it Tokyo's oldest temple. Explore the shrine and the Nakamise, a 200-meter shopping corridor leading to the gates of the Temple, for the morning. Here you will find traditional Japanese souvenirs such as fans, yukatas, kimonos and delicious local snacks. There are some great restaurants in the area for lunch.

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This afternoon, you will be driven by coach to the Asakusa Boat Terminal where you will embark on a 40-minute boat ride along the Sumida River. Take to the top deck of the boat for some great photo opportunities of the legendary Asahi Beer Hall Building, the beautiful bridges and the stunning

cityscape as you pull into the Odaiba Pier. Once you have docked, you will board your coach and head to see the Panasonic Center, and afterwards head to Sake Plaza for a sake tasting experience.. Here you will learn about the traditional and modern methods of the sake brewing process including: rice polishing, soaking, cultivating, fermenting, preparation, and skimming. At the end of the tour you will be invited to sample various kinds of sake.



After we make our way back into the heart of Tokyo, we will head out to our Farewell Dinner.

### **Day 11: Tokyo**

Enjoy Tokyo at your leisure today. This is the perfect time to do some shopping on the Ginza, explore the department stores in-depth, visit the Akihabara for electronics and souvenirs, or take in another shrine or temple.



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### **Day 12: Tokyo**

This morning after breakfast, your guide and tour coach will pick you up and transfer you to Narita International Airport for your flight home.

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*Tour Offered Exclusively By:*



Celebrations International Travel, Inc.

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**For more information on Culinary Tours, visit**

**[www.celebrationsinternationaltravel.com](http://www.celebrationsinternationaltravel.com)**