

Wonders of Japan

See Tokyo, Kanazawa, Takayama, and Kyoto!

November 3-13, 2027



Enjoy the best of Japan, from the busy streets of Tokyo to the castles of Kanazawa and the ancient shrines and temples of Kyoto. We'll see sword making demonstrations and see Geisha's perform, and even ride the bullet train!

Wednesday, November 3, 2027 – We're on our way!

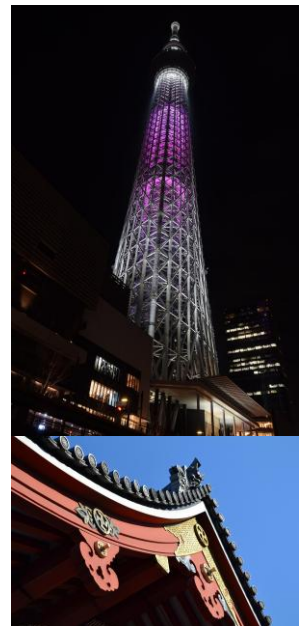
Meet your tour directors at the St Louis Airport for our flights to Japan. Try to get some sleep on the plane, tomorrow we wake up in the Land of the Rising Sun! Traveling from somewhere other than St Louis? Let us know and we can arrange other flight options! **(Meals on plane)**

Thursday, November 4, 2027 - Tokyo e yokoso! (Welcome to Tokyo!)

Upon arrival in Tokyo we will proceed through passport control and customs and meet our local representative, who will lead us to our private motorcoach to head to the hotel. Take a moment to freshen up and relax after the flight before our welcome dinner. **(Meals on plane, Dinner)**

Friday, November 5, 2027 Travelin' round Tokyo

After breakfast our tour of Tokyo begins in earnest. First stop is the famous **Tokyo Skytree**, one of the newest additions to the skyline. This massive broadcast tower rises 2,080 feet in the air – it's the third tallest structure in the world! We then have traditional bento box lunch meal and a show as we watch the traditional sport of **Sumo**, which for over 2000 years has been a test of strength and resolve – it even plays a major role in traditional Shinto mythology as the gods wrestled for control over the land! This afternoon we head to the districts of **Asakusa and Senso-ji**, which rose to fame as the entertainment district 400 years ago. Heavily damaged during World War II, it was completely rebuilt afterwards and now boasts one of the best examples of traditional Japanese architecture! After a busy day we return to the hotel for free time and dinner on your own. **(Breakfast, Lunch)**



Are We There Yet? Tours

5616 Columbia Ave
St. Louis, MO 63139

Phone: (314) 304-3508
Email: Info@AreWeThereYetDea.com

Or on-line at AreWeThereYetDea.com

Saturday, November 6, 2027 – Riding the bullet train to Kanazawa!

After breakfast, we take the famous “**bullet train**” to **Kanazawa**, a journey of 292 miles in just 2.5 hours, with a top speed of 160 mph! When we arrive, we will meet our guide and coach, drop the bags at the hotel to be delivered, and then it’s off on our adventure! Our first stop is **Kanazawa Castle**, once a powerful fortress rising up above the plain, it suffered numerous fires and was used as a residence and barracks for the army, among other things. And while only a few buildings survived the many fires over the years, much of the rest of the site has been lovingly restored starting in 2001, using traditional methods and tools of the 1850s. We then head to **Kenrokuen Park** where we dine in a garden designated as one of the **Three Great Gardens of Japan**. After lunch we learn about the ancient art of **Kaga Yuzen**, or silk dyeing. See this incredible artistry at work as they use five basic colors to create amazing scenes from nature. We then return to the hotel where the evening is free. Hyatt Centric Kanazawa will be our home for the next two nights. **(Breakfast, Lunch)**

Sunday, November 7, 2027 – Samurai and Geisha districts!

After breakfast we head out for our tour of Kanazawa, known as the Golden Marsh due to the gold flakes that would float down the river. Our first stop is **Nagamachi, the Samurai district**. Nagamachi was home to many middle- and high-ranking Samurai, and the district retains the traditional feel with its canals and narrow streets. Learn about the role the Samurai played in the Edo period as we see the way they lived and trained. After lunch, we learn about the **technique of gold leaf** that developed due to the ease of obtaining gold. Then we head to the district where **the art of Geisha** developed. Geisha means “Performer of Art” and from a young age they were trained to be masters of the art of song and dance, setting them apart from the courtesans. This evening we will have a **Geisha performance with dinner**. **(Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)**

Monday, November 8, 2027 – Gokayama hidden gems

After breakfast we bid farewell to Kanazawa and head to **Gokayama**. A UNESCO World Heritage site due to its traditional gasshō-zukuri houses, which survived due to being located high upon the Shōgawa river. It has also preserved much of its cultural heritage as well, such as the **making of washi paper**. This paper is made with the tough fibers of local plants, and was used to make toys, garments, and even repair walls! Due to being more durable than paper made of pulp, washi paper has also been used to repair books at the Louvre and the Vatican. We then continue to our hotel for the next two nights, the Mercure Hida in **Takayama**. Dinner is at our hotel. **(Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)**

Tuesday, November 9, 2027 - Touring Takayama

After breakfast, we head out to explore **Takayama**. Takayama is Japan’s largest city by area, spanning more than 840 square miles! Takayama is in the shadow of Mount Norikura, a dormant volcano that soars nearly 10,000 ft, and in 2017 Lonely Planet Magazine listed it as one of the 10 ten Asian cities to visit. During our walk through Old Town learn about the **Shinto religion**, **Takayama’s morning market**, and even a **sake brewery**! **(Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)**

Wednesday, November 10, 2027 - Kyoto

Today we head out to **Kyoto**, the ninth largest city in Japan and was the seat of power of Japan for eleven centuries! Much of Kyoto’s traditional buildings were spared during the second World War, and as such it is widely considered the cultural capital of Japan, both for traditional culture as well as modern day phenomena – the video game company Nintendo is based in Kyoto. After lunch at a local favorite, we tour the **Kyoto Sword Museum**. See how traditional Japanese swords are made, including the famous *Katana*, the one-sided blade. The Good Nature Hotel Kyoto is our home for the next three nights **(Breakfast, Lunch)**

Thursday, November 11, 2027 - Exploring Kyoto

After breakfast, it’s time to see the sights of Kyoto. We start with a visit to the **Fushimi Inari Shrine** a stunning Shinto shrine due to the paths that wander through thousands of vermillion torii gates. Next we stop at the **Kiyomizu-dera Temple**, built at the base of the Otowa waterfall which gives the “pure water monetary” its name. Built with traditional methods, this entire complex, a part of the Kyoto UNESCO World Heritage Site, was built without a single nail! We will then travel by foot through the **Higashiyama**



District, one of Kyoto's best-preserved historic neighborhoods. After lunch, we visit the **Kinkaku-ji Temple**, the "Temple of the Golden Pavilion." The top-two stories of this Zen temple are covered in gold leaf to mitigate and purify the negative thoughts of the visitor. Originally built in 1399, the pavilion survived countless disasters, wars and fires, only to be set aflame in 1950 by a monk suffering from mental illness. The tragedy inspired both a novel and a ballet. The pavilion and the statues inside have been rebuilt and restored according to the original specifics, including regilding the walls with the original thickness of traditional gold leaf, a shocking 0.5 µm gold leaf weighing 20 kg (44lb!) We then return to the hotel, where the evening is yours to enjoy. **(Breakfast, Lunch)**

Friday, November 12, 2027 – Kyoto Free Day and Gion Night Tour

Today after breakfast you have a free day to explore Kyoto or just relax at the hotel. This evening we have a **Kyoto Gion** night tour, where we explore this exciting district with amazing restaurants and shops lining the narrow streets and willow-lined canals. We'll have dinner at a local favorite. **(Breakfast, Dinner)**

Saturday, November 13, 2027 – Farewell to Japan

After breakfast, we head to the nearby city of Osaka for our first leg of our flight back to the US. Thank you for traveling with us! **(Breakfast, meals on plane)**



Tour includes:

- ✓ Round trip flights to Japan – coming from somewhere other than St Louis? Let us know and we can check airfare!
- ✓ See the best of Japan, including Tokyo, Kyoto, Kanazawa, Takayama and more!
- ✓ Private Motorcoach transportation, plus a ride on the bullet train!
- ✓ Visit numerous historic sites including from historic castles to Shinto shrines, and Buddhist and Zen Temples.
- ✓ Demonstrations of ancient traditional crafts such as washi paper, swords, Kaga Yuzen silk painting, and gold-leaf
- ✓ Local guides to give us great history and modern info, plus whisper ears so they can guide us almost everywhere!
- ✓ Enjoy **21** included meals (9 Breakfasts, 7 Lunches, 5 Dinners), including a dinner and Geisha show!
- ✓ All other Activities as indicated
- ✓ Baggage Handling
- ✓ Professional Tour Directors with you from St Louis to Japan and back again
- ✓ All gratuities including step-on guides, included meals, driver and director

Please note: Any notice of fuel surcharges imposed by carriers and/or attractions will be disclosed at least 30 days prior to tour departure. Itinerary is subject to change due to uncontrollable circumstances.

\$12,100 per person, double \$13,371 pp single

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Make your reservation with a \$5,000 non-refundable deposit per person. Once this tour fills, a wait list will be formed. Please send a check or call with a credit card along with your name, address, phone number, and all roommates' names if sharing a room and any dietary or walking restrictions. This is a 5-Sneaker tour. If you have any questions about your ability to fully enjoy the tour, refer to our blue pamphlet or call the office. Remember, that is the highest level of activity. You may choose to sit out any events that may incur too much walking. We encourage all travelers to purchase travel protection and pay with initial deposit. Please remember benefits are time sensitive. Plans help provide coverage for unexpected circumstances and help protect your trip and your investment. We offer several 3rd party insurance plans that we believe are the best available in the industry.

Balance on base tour price is due February 20, 2027, and per state insurance regulations we are unable to provide any refunds after that time. If you purchase travel protection and need to cancel after making your non-refundable deposit, you must file a claim with the insurance company. As we utilize a 3rd party insurance company, they are responsible for processing the claim, which typically takes 6-8 weeks. Restrictions on coverage apply, and we encourage you to read over the policy as well as call them directly with any questions prior to buying coverage, regardless of which insurance company you select.