

JAPAN TOURS – all inclusive!

TOKYO:

May 16th

Tokyo City Tour with Imperial Palace Plaza (short photo stop), Hamariky Garden, Sumida River Cruise, Asakusa Kannon Temple

Visit four of Tokyo's popular sightseeing spots on this 1-day tour: Tokyo Tower, Sumida River Cruise, and Asakusa Kannon temple. Includes bus, guide and all admission fees. Does not include lunch.

May 17th

NIKKO:

Home to the UNESCO-designated World Heritage site of Nikko Toshogu Shrine, Nikko is located within a day's trip away from Tokyo. This shrine is home to the mausoleum of Japan's Shogun, filled with ornate structures decorated with remarkable carvings such as the Three Wise Monkeys, depicting the well-known Japanese proverb, "See no evil, speak no evil, hear no evil," and the Imaginary Elephants, a strange depiction of elephants created by an artist who carved the pictures without ever having seen a real elephant. Nikko is an absolutely



gorgeous destination and a great day trip for those interested in escaping from the bright lights of Tokyo. We will visit the Toshogu Shrine, the temple and mausoleum of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder of the mighty Tokugawa Shogunate. Gaze over the beautiful Chuzenji Lake and finish with a visit to the Kegon Falls, one of Nikko's most impressive waterfalls. <http://www.veltra.com/en/asia/japan/tokyo/a/100036>

May 18th

Free day with some suggested options.

With so many options in Tokyo I think it's a good idea to set you guys free so you can find a tour that you're really interested in. Since this is our last day in Tokyo you will likely have made some connections within our group and you can buddy up. I am particularly interested in the cycling tour listed below which was a hit on our last Tokyo trip.

CYCLING TOUR: We'll do this 3-hour tour <http://www.veltra.com/en/asia/japan/tokyo/a/126862> The tour operator is giving us a 20% discount. Normally 5500 yen, for us it will be 4400 (about \$40). Here is Hirotoishi's direct website. You can RSVP to me and I will give him our final numbers. You can pay directly the day of.

Hop on Hop off <http://www.veltra.com/en/asia/japan/tokyo/a/101943>

Take the train to Kawagoe, located about 30 minutes by train from central [Tokyo](#) and is suitable as a day trip destination. Its main street, lined with [Kurazukuri](#) (clay-walled warehouse-styled) buildings, retains an ambience reminiscent of an old town from the [Edo Period](#) (1603-1867) and allows us to imagine the streets from past centuries. Thereby, Kawagoe became known as "Little Edo".

May 19th

Bullet Train to Kyoto with tour of Mt. Fuji

Today we will board the bullet train to Kyoto. On our way we will visit Mt Fuji, Japan's tallest mountain and active volcano. We will also experience the Komagatake Ropeway before getting on our bullet train.

KYOTO TOURS

Full day Kyoto highlights and Nara

May 20th

Discover the history and religions of ancient Japan during this 10-hour exploration of Kyoto and Nara. See Kyoto's **UNESCO World Heritage**-listed Kinkaku-ji and Nijo Castle, along with its Imperial Palace. Then drive from Kyoto to Nara to explore its own World Heritage site, Todai-ji Temple (including Great Buddha Hall), plus Kasuga Shrine. You'll also visit Nara's deer park and have a chance to feed and pet wild deer. Your Nara and Kyoto visit includes a guide, coach transport and all entrance fees (excluding treasure hall).



Highlights

- Full-day sightseeing tour of the ancient sites of Kyoto and Nara
- Visit Kyoto's top cultural attractions: Nijo Castle, Kinkakuji (home to the Golden Pavilion), Sanjusangendo Travel to the city of Nara to see the Great Buddha of Todaiji temple complex and Kasuga Taisha Shrine
- Admire the 3,000 bronze lanterns in the Kasuga Shrine, and feed the wild deer in Nara Park

May 21st

Eastern Kyoto Full Day



Philosopher's Path (90 minutes)

The Philosopher's Path starts just outside the approach to Ginkakuji and follows a canal. It is especially beautiful during the cherry blossom season. The southern end of the path disappears into residential neighborhoods, so look for and follow the signs to Nanzenji.



Keage Incline (30 minutes)

A trail leads off to the right from behind Nanzenji's brick aqueduct along a small canal to the Keage Incline. This tree lined slope is most beautiful in spring when it becomes one of the best cherry blossom places to visit.



Higashiyama Streets (1 hour)

Upon exiting Kodaiji, continue south along the historic shopping streets of the Higashiyama District. Continue past the Ninenzaka and Sannenzaka Steps until you reach the approach to Kiyomizudera Temple.



Eikando

Eikando is a large temple near Nanzenji that is especially nice to visit in autumn when the leaves change. Extremely popular evening illuminations are also held during the fall season.

May 22nd

Arashiyama and Sagano

Arashiyama is a pleasant, touristy district in the western outskirts of [Kyoto](#). The area has been a popular destination since the [Heian Period](#) (794-1185), when nobles would enjoy its natural setting. The [Togetsukyo Bridge](#) is Arashiyama's well known, central landmark. Many small shops, restaurants and other attractions are found nearby, including [Tenryuji Temple](#), Arashiyama's famous [bamboo groves](#) and pleasure boats that are available for rent on the river.

North of central Arashiyama the atmosphere becomes less touristy and more rural, with several small temples scattered along the base of the wooded mountains. The area north of the Togetsukyo Bridge is also known as Sagano, while the name "Arashiyama" technically just refers to the mountains on the southern bank of the river but is commonly used to name the entire district.

One of the most enjoyable and convenient ways to travel around the Sagano area is by rental [bicycle](#), which are available for around 1000 yen near the train stations. Cycling through rural residential areas and past fields while traveling between temples can be one of the most enjoyable parts of a visit to Arashiyama. There is also an attractive [preserved town area](#) near the [Adashino Nenbutsuji Temple](#).

During the summer months, traditional [cormorant fishing](#) is practiced on the Hozu River for tourists to watch. Another good time to visit is during December's [Hanatoro](#) illumination, when lanterns line the streets and [bamboo groves](#).

Monkey Park Iwatayama

Located in the Arashiyama mountains, the entrance to the monkey park can be found just south of the [Togetsukyo Bridge](#). After hiking uphill for about ten minutes, visitors will find an open area with over a hundred monkeys roaming freely. There are also nice views down onto the city.



The [Saga Scenic Railway](#) runs seven kilometers from Arashiyama to nearby Kameoka, mostly alongside the pretty Hozu River. The trains travel at a maximum speeds of about 25 km/h during their 25 minute journey, so passengers can enjoy the scenery without it rushing by too quickly. **Saga Scenic Railway** ([more details](#))

See [Saga Scenic Railway](#) page for hours and fares



Saga-Toriimoto Preserved Street

Much of this street along the way to the [Adashino Nenbutsuji Temple](#) has been preserved in the style of the [Meiji Period](#) (1868-1912). Many of the buildings are traditional machiya ("town houses") that served as private residences but have since been converted into shops and restaurants.

COST: \$80. Includes bus, guide and admission fees. Lunch is not included. This tour is selling for \$79 on [Viator](#) and does not include most of the things that we are doing!

May 23rd

I will head up a nice hike up to the [Fushimi Inari Shrine](#) where you can enjoy a torii path across the mountain (When the wish is fulfilled the torii that wrote the name was built). Fushimi Inari Shrine is famous for its thousands of vermilion [torii gates](#), which straddle a network of trails behind its main buildings. The trails lead into the wooded forest of the sacred Mount Inari, which stands at 233 meters and belongs to the shrine grounds.

Fushimi Inari is the most important of several thousands of shrines dedicated to Inari, the [Shinto god](#) of rice. Foxes are thought to be Inari's messengers, resulting in many fox statues across the shrine grounds. Fushimi Inari Shrine has ancient origins, predating the capital's move to [Kyoto](#) in 794. It's a beautiful trail winding up a hill past several small temples. We'll take public transportation.

May 24th

FREE DAY

There are a ton of other excursions to be had in Kyoto so we figured we list some ideas and give you some free time. For ideas, look at this link: <http://www.viator.com/Kyoto/d332-ttd>

This bike ride sounds like fun: <https://www.kyotobiketour.com/> Closer to our trip I'll see how many are interested

You might be interested in seeing the Imperial Palace, which we did leave off of our itinerary for a number of reasons - logistics, crowds, plus we learned that you can't actually see inside the palace. The [reviews are mixed](#) on Tripadvisor. If you still want to go it is advised to book your spot in advance as the slots fill up in advance. Here is the link to book your spot:

<https://sankan.kunaicho.go.jp/english/index.html>