

# Sample Itinerary: 18-Night Central Japan

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Day 1	Airport meeting Transfer · Private car to hotel Orientation Palace Hotel (3 Nights)
Day 2	Full-day private tour of Tokyo with local transport Evening at leisure in Tokyo
Day 3	Day at leisure in Tokyo
Day 4	Overnight luggage transfer: Tokyo - Shuzenji Full-day private tour of Kamakura with private car Kishi-ke (2 Nights)
Day 5	Day at leisure in Kamakura
Day 6	Transfer · Private car to Asaba Ryokan Asaba Ryokan (2 Nights)
Day 7	Day at leisure in Shuzenji
Day 8	Overnight luggage transfer: Asaba Ryokan - Matsumoto Transfer · Private car to station Rail · Ticket: Mishima Station to Matsumoto Station Transfer · Private car to hotel Matsumoto Hotel Kagetsu (3 Nights)
Day 9	Day at leisure in Kamikochi
Day 10	Day at leisure in Matsumoto
Day 11	Transfer · Private car to Takayama Half-day private tour of Takayama with private car Ryokan Hidatei Hanaougi (2 Nights)
Day 12	Full-day private tour of Takayama with local transport
Day 13	Full-day private tour of Shirakawago with private car Kanazawa Maki no Oto (2 Nights)
Day 14	Full-day private tour of Kanazawa with private car
Day 15	Overnight luggage transfer: Kanazawa - Kyoto Transfer · Private car to station Rail · Ticket: Kanazawa Station to Kyoto Station Half-day private tour of Kyoto with local transport Four Seasons Hotel Kyoto (4 Nights)
Day 16	Full-day private tour of Kyoto with private car
Day 17	Day at leisure in Nara

- Day 18Activity: Tea ceremony with kimono session and traditional lunch<br/>Afternoon at leisure in Kyoto
- Day 19 Transfer · Private car to airport

### Day 1

# Airport meeting

After clearing immigration, you will be met by a member of staff and escorted to your private car.

# Transfer · Private car to hotel

**Departure Location** Airport Arrival Location Palace Hotel

#### Notes

• You will be transferred to your hotel by private car.



In order for your holiday to be as enjoyable and stress-free as possible, we have included a private and personalised orientation session, where you will be given everything you need to travel confidently in Japan.

One of our English-speaking staff members will meet you in the lobby of your hotel and will go through your itinerary with you, day by day, and answer any questions you may have. You'll also receive your "welcome pack" of additional information, such as tourist maps of each destination, suggested walking routes, and detailed information on any special activities you may have booked, as well as a Japanese phrase sheet, which should help you travel in Japan more easily!





3:00 PM	12:00 PM	3 Nights
Check In	Check Out	Singlits

The Palace Hotel enjoys one of Tokyo's most prestigious addresses, right next to the central Imperial Palace. Initially founded in 1947, the hotel reopened in May 2012 after a complete refurbishment taking three years. The selection of restaurants here is particularly good - the management's ambition is to collect as many Michelin stars as possible! Japan's first Evian Spa is worth a visit too.

Overlooking the Imperial Palace Gardens and Wadakura Fountain Park, the Palace Hotel is the only one of Tokyo's luxury hotels to offer rooms with balconies, which are lovely to sit on and enjoy a drink in the evening, enjoying the views.

#### **Room Selection**

**Room Category** Deluxe King with Balcony

#### **Room Description**

45 sqm. Facing south, Deluxe Rooms with Balconies look out on to scenic Wadakura Fountain Park and the Imperial Palace Plaza. At night, the expansive views unveil a twinkling skyline stretching from Marunouchi to Toranomon and beyond.

Beautifully appointed with a separate seating area that can be used as either a dining table or a work space, the greatest appeal is undeniably the balcony - offering travellers the rarity of private outdoor space in bustling Tokyo.

Breakfast included





Spend today exploring some of Tokyo's highlights with your guide.

Start your day at the Hamarikyu Garden. Located right by Tokyo Bay, it features tidal seawater ponds, as well as a tea house on an island, where visitors can take a rest and enjoy the scenery. The traditionally styled garden stands in stark contrast to the skyscrapers of the next door Shiodome district. From there you can take a boat along the Sumida River to Asakusa to see Senso-ji, Tokyo's oldest and most famous Buddhist temple.

From Asakusa head to Kappabashi, Tokyo's restaurant-supply district, a wonderful area for souvenir shopping for all things cooking-related. Convincingly realistic plastic replicas of Japanese foods, the likes of which you may have seen displayed in restaurant windows, can also be found here.

- Guided
- Transport: Local transport



If you are still feeling energetic this evening, we suggest a visit to Tokyo Skytree, one of the tallest structures in the world. From the top you can enjoy stunning views of the metropolis below as the day turns into night.

Unguided

#### Day 3



Spend today exploring independently at leisure.

We suggest starting your day at Meiji Jingu, Tokyo's most important shrine, situated in a large, forest-area in amongst the bustling city. From here venture over to the trendy nearby districts of Harajuku and Omotesando: the former is the centre of Japanese teen culture, bursting with life, and the latter boasts more buildings by great modern architects than anywhere else.

In the afternoon perhaps explore Shibuya, one of Tokyo's busiest, most colourful districts, and home to the famous 'Shibuya Crossing.' The area has many great arcades where you can try Japanese-style games and make some memories in the amazing '*purikura*' photo booths.

Famous for shopping and nightlife as well as unparalleled people watching, Shinjuku Station is the busiest station in the world and is surrounded by department stores, restaurants, and izakaya. You could then end the day trying out one of the most famous Japanese pastimes, karaoke. There is no shortage of karaoke venues in the city, and it's easy to simply walk in and request a private room to sing the night away!

Unguided

### Day 4

# Overnight luggage transfer: Tokyo - Shuzenji

To allow you to travel comfortably your luggage will be sent from Tokyo to Shuzenji overnight. We suggest packing a small overnight bag as you will be without the bulk of your luggage for your stay in Kamakura.



Leave your hotel for Kamakura this morning. Your guide and driver will meet you at your hotel.

In Kamakura, enjoy a private tour of some of the highlights. About 50km south west of Tokyo, the lovely seaside town is known for its large variety of shrines and temples, as well as a giant bronze Buddha. The second largest Buddha in Japan was once housed in a grand temple, but a tsunami tore down the building in the 15th century, and the statue has since weathered the elements from a quiet clearing in the trees.

There's much to see but in addition to the Daibutsu Buddha, we particularly recommend the Hachiman-gu Shrine as well as the Hase-dera Temple.

At the end of the tour you will be dropped off at your accommodation.

- Guided
- Transport: Private
  car

Check In



Check Out

Built using materials from an old samurai house, Kishi-ke creates a wonderful blend of the traditional and the modern. This stunning luxury ryokan invites guests to enjoy its beautiful garden and carefully selected array of 'wabi-sabi' furniture, adornments and decoration across the property.

Breakfast is a divine plant-based shojin (Buddhist cuisine) assortment, and is made using only the freshest ingredients.

Kishi-ke also offers a number of experiences led by masters of their art, including tea, chisoku, zazen meditation, Buddhist cuisine, private chef, katana practice, water sports and creating a zen garden.

A stay here is certain to leave you feeling refreshed and revitalised, yet more in touch with nature and with your inner self.

#### **Room Selection**

### Room Category

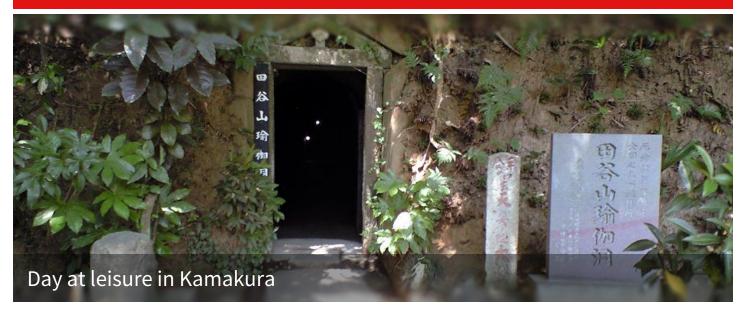
Luxury Washitsu (Japanese Room)

#### **Room Description**

Enjoy ocean views from the panoramic window on one side of the room. and gorgeous views of the Japanese garden from the other. A stay in this room is an education in the stunning details of luxury Japanese accommodation. Furnished with the best quality tatami mats and made using wood and other materials salvaged from a samurai house over 100 years old, one can feel the history and culture of Kamakura through this incredible room.

Breakfast included

### Day 5



Spend your day at leisure. You may wish to enjoy some of the various experiences on offer at Kishi-ke - please let us know if you would like us to book any for you.

If you would rather venture out, we suggest heading to the Taya Caves, where, roughly between 1200 and 1700, Shingon Buddhist monks carved an underground maze of tunnels behind a temple as a site for spiritual training.

• Unguided

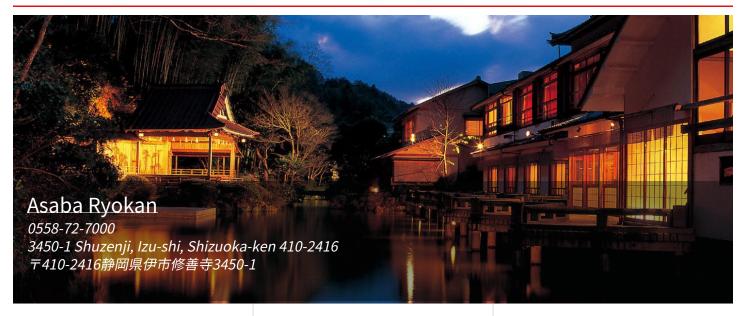
### Day 6

# Transfer · Private car to Asaba Ryokan

**Departure Location** Kishi-ke Arrival Location Asaba Ryokan

#### Notes

- After breakfast you will be transferred to Asaba Ryokan by private car.
- This journey will take around 2 hours.



# 2:30 PM Check In

# 11:30 AM Check Out

# 2 Nights

A few minutes from a sacred river, Asaba submerges you in the Japan of legends. Enjoy the pleasures of this wonderful setting in an open-air bath filled with spring water. The restaurant serves traditional dishes with delightful combinations of sweet and savoury flavours. In the lounge, relax in a chair designed by famous Italian-American Harry Bertoia and in the garden, be inspired by the sweet fragrances of nature.

#### **Room Selection**

Room Category Fuji

#### **Room Description**

This 61sqm room faces the pond and garden, with views of sakura trees from the terrace seating. Feel a world-away in the traditional Japanese indoor bath.

Day 7



Spend the day exploring independently at leisure. We suggest discovering the beautiful onsen town of Shuzenji. Visit Shuzenji's small, beautiful bamboo grove and the zen Buddhist temple.

Spend the afternoon relaxing in the onsen at your ryokan.

Unguided

### Day 8

# Overnight luggage transfer: Asaba Ryokan - Matsumoto

To allow you to travel comfortably your luggage will be sent from Asaba Ryokan to Matsumoto overnight. We suggest packing a small overnight bag as you will be without the bulk of your luggage for your arrival evening in Matsumoto.

# Transfer · Private car to station

**Departure Location** Asaba Ryokan Arrival Location Mishima Station

#### Notes

• After breakfast you will be transferred to Mishima Station by private car, ready to board your train.

# Rail · Ticket: Mishima Station to Matsumoto Station

**Train Type** Japan Rail Shinakansen, Local Line & Limited Express Train

#### Notes

- Take the bullet train to Shin-Yokohama Station.
- Change to a local line train bound for Hachioji Station.
- Take a limited express train from Hachioji Station to Matsumoto Station.

# Transfer · Private car to hotel

**Departure Location** Matsumoto Station Arrival Location Kagetsu Hotel

#### Notes

• On arrival in Matusmoto you will be met and transferred to your hotel by private car.



3:00 PM	11:00 AM	3 Nights
Check In	Check Out	Singlits

Established in 1887, Matsumoto Hotel Kagetsu is Matsumoto's oldest hotel. Rooms have gone through renovation works in April 2016, and feature classic furnishings. You'll find a 24-hour front desk, a public bath, free-use bicycles and free property-wide WiFi.

For leisure, guests can explore the town on a bike or enjoy massage services on request. Luggage storage and laundry services are available. Porter service is avaialble for guests staying in the annex building.

Kagetsu Hotel is a 5-minute bus ride from JR Matsumoto Station and a 5-minute walk from the historic Matsumoto Castle and Nawate Street.

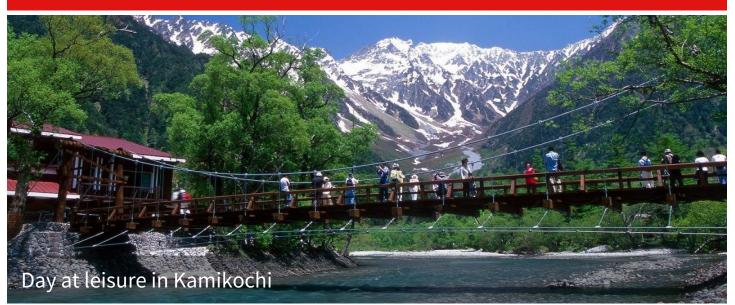
**Room Selection** 

Room Category Suite Room

#### **Room Description**

A spacious 50 square meter room for your relaxing stay while in Matsumoto. Unique to the suite room, enjoy an in-room theatre while you relax in your bed.

• Breakfast included



Part of the Chubu Sangaku National Park, Kamikochi has only been moderately developed with half a dozen hotels, a few souvenir shops, mountain huts and hiking trails. Private cars are banned from Kamikochi, and access is only possible by bus or taxi. In the centre of Kamikochi, a short walk from the bus terminal, stands the Kappabashi (Kappa Bridge). From the Kappabashi, hiking trails lead up and down the valley and towards the summits of the surrounding mountains. The simplest way to enjoy a day in Kamikochi is by hiking the trails along Azusa River from Taisho Pond to Myojin Bridge. It is a mostly flat terrain and requires no hiking experience and only a few hours of time.

The climbs to the surrounding peaks, however, are more challenging and only recommended between mid June and mid September. Kamikochi is particularly beautiful during the autumn foliage season, which usually peaks in mid October. A wide range of alpine flora can be viewed from May through October, with the best time being mid May through July. Among the wildlife to be observed are monkeys and various birds. Bears are rarely encountered.

Unguided





Spend the day exploring independently at leisure. Today we suggest visiting the beautiful "Crow Castle", Japan's oldest still standing and an excellent example of a plains castle, or "hira-jiro." The castle dates from Japan's warring states period, and

the steep stairways and hidden floors tell of Matsumoto's feudal past. The nearby Folklore Museum, included in the entrance to the castle, is highly recommended.

Not far from the castle, the old-fashioned streets of Nawate-dori and Nakamachi-dori contain a surprising mix of old and new, with shops selling ceramics, bonsai trees, and vintage kimonos next to traditional soba noodle restaurants and trendy cafes, all housed in picturesque wooden buildings. The wide, modernised Honmachi-dori also has a number of excellent places to pick up souvenirs without the big-city crowds.

• Unguided

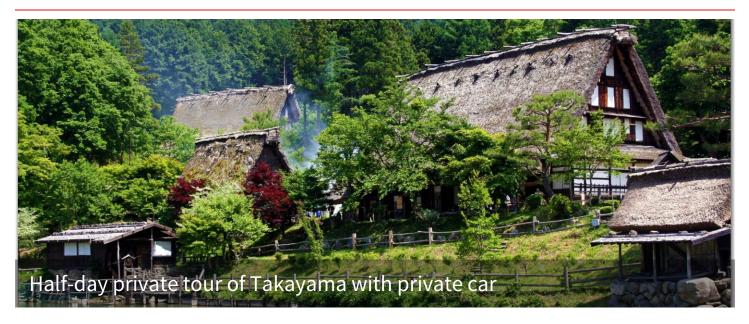
### Day 11

# Transfer · Private car to Takayama

**Departure Location** Matsumoto Kagetsu Hotel Arrival Location Takayama

#### Notes

- You will be transferred to your next location by private car this journey will take around 2 hours.
- On arrival in Takayama, your guide and driver will meet you for your half-day private tour.



Your guide and driver will meet you on arrival.

Spend the afternoon enjoying the Hida Folk Village open-air museum. See over 30 traditional houses from the Hida region, the mountainous district of Gifu Prefecture around Takayama. The houses were built during the Edo Period (1603 - 1867) and were relocated from their original locations to create the museum in 1971. In a village-like atmosphere, the museum features buildings such as the former village head's house, logging huts, storehouses and a number of gassho-zukuri farmhouses.

Afterwards, perhaps head to the Hida Takayama Crafts Experience Centre and enjoy a workshop on local crafts such as sarubobo dolls (a popular local doll), wind chimes and ceramic cups.

At the end of the tour you will be dropped off at your accommodation.

- Guided
- Transport: Private car



2:00 PM	11:00 AM	2 Nights
Check In	Check Out	2 Nights

A beautifully designed ryokan in the heart of Takayama, the Hanaougi's wooden interior is a tribute to Takayama's most famous craft - carpentry.

Kaiseki meals make the most of seasonal mountain produce, with mountain vegetables, mushrooms, and char caught in mountain streams complimenting the area's pride: mouthwatering Hida-gyu beef.

Large communal hot springs baths are available both indoors and outdoors, and a private outdoor bath can be reserved by the hour. Some of the more luxurious rooms have private outdoor baths, perfect for moon viewing.

#### **Room Selection**

Room Category Twin Guest Room with Garden & Open Air Bath (Japanese Room)

#### **Room Description**

You hear a bird singing, breeze, and the rhythm of gushing springs. This room offers a very refreshing space like it's part of nature. This Japanese Twin features a Japanese Garden and Open Air Bath.

Hanaougi's architecture features Japanese famous timbers such as Jindai sugi (Japanese Cedar), Jindai keyaki (Japanese Zelkova), and Yoshino sugi cedar. It is said that trees have a natural relaxing "fluctuation effect" like breeze and sun light.



Accompanied by your guide, spend the day exploring Takayama.

Start early at the vibrant morning markets, which have an interesting mix of crafts and produce for sale, and make a great place to try local foods, people-watch, and shop for souvenirs.

There are two markets to visit; the Jinya-mae Market in front of the Takayama Jinya and the Miya-gawa Market on the east bank of Miya River, between Kaji-bashi bridge and Yayoi-bashi bridge. The latter is more attractive and larger, but both have farmer's stalls with local vegetables, old women selling pickles, and an interesting assortment of local handicrafts.

Head on to Teramachi, the temple district, which is home to over a dozen temples and shrines; exploring the buildings and precincts, and the pleasant walk between them is a good way to get to know one of Takayama's important districts.

Start the afternoon at Takayama Jinya, before visiting the San-machi Suji area of wooden merchant houses, many of which are now museums. The old town is full of sake breweries, which can be identified by the cedar balls hanging outside.

End the day with a visit to the Yatai Kaikan, where the huge, majestic and ornate floats used in the famous Takayama Festival are stored when not in use. Some of the floats date back to the 17th Century and are decorated with intricate carvings of gilded wood, and detailed metal-work, rich design, similar in style to art from Kyoto during the Momoyama period, and blended with elements from the early Edo period. Detailed carving, lacquering and beautiful decorative metal-works is found not only on the outside of the floats, but inside as well, under the roof and behind the panels, where the work is amazingly detailed.

- Guided
- Transport: Local transport

### Day 13

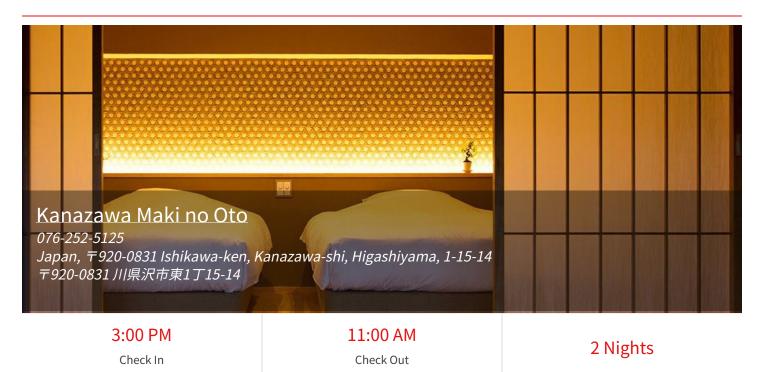


This morning leave Takayama for Kanazawa.

En route, enjoy a trip to visit the beautifully preserved area of Shirakawa-go, famous for steeply thatched gassho-zukuri houses. The largest village in the area is Ogimachi, which has a good look-out over the town. Many of the houses are open to the public as museums.

Depending on how much time you would like to spend in Shirakawago, you may have some time available for sightseeing upon arrival in Kanazawa. Your guide will be able to let you know what options are available and will be able to show you around some local highlights.

- Guided
- Transport: Private car



Newly opened in 2017, this tiny but charming ryokan hotel has but four rooms. Located in the Higashi Chaya Gai geisha district, a stay here puts you right in the heart of Kanazawa.

#### **Room Selection**

### Room Category

Higashi Western Room

#### **Room Description**

48sqm. This stunning room has a queen-size bed and a spacious sofa for 2 people. Enjoy an Axa Softbath where you can relax after a day of sightseeing.

• Breakfast included

### Day 14



Enjoy a full day tour of Kanazawa by private car. Start with a visit to the well-preserved samurai district of Nagamachi, where many of the houses are now museums giving a glimpse into Kanazawa's feudal past.

Continue on to Higashi Chaya-gai, one of Japan's best preserved geisha districts, and the old wooden buildings are a wonderful place to feel transported back centuries. Some of the traditional buildings are open as museums, and it is also here that you can visit the gold-leaf workshop which produces so much of Kanazawa's most famous product.

Visit the covered arcade of the Omicho Ichiba Markets - the heart of Kanazawa's impressive food culture and an excellent sport for lunching, snacking, or people watching.

Later, visit Teramachi, a collection of temples, the most famous of which is the Ninja Temple, where we are happy to make you a reservation to join the guided tours of. Nearby, the Kutani Kosen Gama Kiln still makes highly decorated functional pottery, and you can visit the workshop and see how the traditional ceramics are made here.

End the day with a visit to The 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, which contrasts impressively with Kanazawa's traditional feel, but the art housed there - and the frequently rotating exhibits - make it a must-see for those interested in contemporary art and culture.

- Guided
- Transport: Private car

# Day 15

Overnight luggage transfer: Kanazawa - Kyoto

To allow you to travel comfortably your luggage will be sent from Kanazawa to Kyoto overnight. We suggest packing a small overnight bag as you will be without the bulk of your luggage for your arrival evening in Kyoto.

# Transfer · Private car to station

**Departure Location** Maki no Oto Arrival Location Kanazawa Station

#### Notes

• After breakfast you will be transferred to the station by private car ready to board your train to Kyoto.

# Rail · Ticket: Kanazawa Station to Kyoto Station

**Departure Location** Kanazawa Station Arrival Location Kyoto Station Train Type Limited Express Train

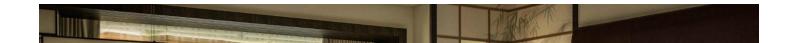
#### Notes

• Take the Thunderbird limited express train to Kyoto.



Accompanied by your guide, begin your afternoon at Kiyomizu temple, which looks out over the city from the hillside. From there, continue down the slope, past Kodai-ji temple to Yasaka-jinja Shrine and into Maruyama Park. Finish your tour in Gion where you can often catch a glimpse of Kyoto's apprentice Geisha on their way to their evening appointments.

- Guided
- Transport: Local transport





Check In

12:00 PM Check Out

4 Nights

Opened in late 2016 in the scenic temple district of Eastern Kyoto, the Four Seasons Kyoto is one of the city's most luxurious hotels. Centred around an 800-year old ikeniwa (pool garden), the hotel offers guests a tranquil atmosphere in which to relax.

#### **Room Selection**

Room Category

Premier Room - Kyoto View

#### **Room Description**

Enjoy Kyoto city views or Myoho-in temple view. With clean-lined furniture, lantern-style light fixtures, dark hardwood floors and soothing purple and olive-green colours, feel at ease in a comfortable setting inspired by a Japanese home. Relax in the sitting area, which features a sofa for two, a coffee table and a desk area, all next to the floor-to-ceiling windows. Modern touches include powered curtains, ample charging stations for electronics, and an iPad to conveniently request Hotel services such as In-Room Dining.

• Breakfast included

### Day 16



Start the day by visiting some of the iconic sights in the North West of the city. You'll be seeing the stunning Golden Pavilion and Ryoan-ji Zen Garden before visiting the nearby Ninna-ji Temple, which houses one of Kyoto's loveliest gardens.

Spend the afternoon exploring Arashiyama, an area in the West of the city. The famous bridge here has been depicted for centuries in woodblock paintings. The area has an old-timey atmosphere, and is a popular spot for kimono wearing in the Spring and Autumn.

The area is also famous for its bamboo grove, located right by the stunning UNESCO Tenryu-ji Temple. It is here that you can see the picture-postcard view of the green towers of bamboo swaying in the breeze.

- Guided
- Transport: Private
  car

Day 17



Spend the day exploring independently at leisure.

We suggest visiting Nara - a great place to escape from modern Japan. See the impressive giant bronze Buddha - Japan's largest - housed in the famous all-wood Todai-ji temple. Then enjoy a walk through Nara-koen Park, which is home to very friendly local deer who will follow you hoping for tasty treats! The Kasuga Taisha Shrine, which dates from Nara's time as the capital of Japan, is also located in the park and is well worth a visit. Spend the afternoon enjoying the particularly beautiful Isuien, a very pretty Japanese garden close to Todai-ji Temple which dates back to the mid 17th century.

You might like to leave time to stop by Fushimi Inari on your way back into Kyoto. This is Japan's most famous shrine and is best explored by venturing up the mountainside through thousands of red torii gates. This is the perfect way to work up an appetite for Kyoto's wonderful cuisine!

• Unguided

#### Day 18



# Activity: Tea ceremony with kimono session and traditional lunch

Make your way to a traditional machiya townhouse, where you will first have a tour of the machiya before being dressed in kimono for your Tea Ceremony, perhaps the most enigmatic of the traditional arts. This will be followed by a light, Kyoto style lunch.

- Unguided
- Approx. 2 hrs duration
- Light lunch included





Spend the afternoon exploring independently at leisure.

We suggest a visit to nearby Nishiki Market, a long, narrow covered street packed with shops selling local specialities which is sometimes referred to as Kyoto's kitchen. Barrels of fresh and pickled vegetables spill out into the street, and the air is fragrant with the savoury smell of grilling *sembei* crackers and steaming fish dumplings. Many of the shops offer free samples, and the Nishiki Market is a wonderful way to stock up on very Japanese picnic supplies for lunch.

Next, we recommend heading to Nishijin Textile Centre, where you can learn about the fascinating process behind the manufacturing of the kimono. In addition, there are daily kimono shows, displaying the beauty and potential of this beautiful garment.

Perhaps finish your day with a visit to the UNESCO Site of Nijo Castle, former home of the Tokugawa Shogun. On exploring the beautifully decorated interior, you can walk on the 'nightingale floors', so-called because the design of the floorboards causes them to squeak when stepped upon - almost like a chirp. End your visit with a stroll around the lush gardens.

#### • Unguided

### Day 19

# Transfer · Private car to airport

Departure Location	Arrival Location
Four Seasons Kyoto	Kansai International Airport

#### Notes

• You will be transferred to the airport in good time for your flight home.