

From
\$8,626 USD

Single Room

\$10,116 USD

Twin Room

\$8,626 USD

Prices valid until
30th December 2022

10 days

Duration

Japan

Destination

Level 2 - Moderate

Activity

Japan History by Rail – Small Group Tour

Apr 01 2023 to Apr 10 2023

Explore Japan's History by Rail in a small group tour

Odyssey offers easy, convenient, and relaxed escorted small group tours across Japan and beyond. We explore Japan's natural and metropolitan beauty and Imperial heritage, its World Heritage Sites, and world famous cities, all with some truly spectacular scenery along the way. This and more is all waiting to be explored on one of Odyssey's small group tours of Japan, designed for the senior traveller, and led by experienced, and enthusiastic like minded people

Japan History by Rail – Small Group Tour

<https://www.odysseytraveller.com.au>

27-May-2022

Join Odyssey Traveller's **Japan History by Rail** small group tour as we cross the country on the world-renowned Japanese railway system to explore several destinations in Japan.

We will travel on the shinkansen—Japan's high-speed trains or "bullet trains"—an efficient, safe, and comfortable railway system used to travel between Japan's cities. Japan's trains depart and arrive to the second, allowing us to maximise our time in the capital.

On this tour, we will stay close to Tokyo's Shinjuku East area, just minutes from the subway stations. We will visit the Imperial Palace, residence of the Japanese Emperor and Empress, surrounded by a beautiful water-filled moat and tree-covered grounds.

After that brief but precious taste of nature within the bustling metropolitan city, we will visit the breathtaking Mt. Fuji and the Tokyo gardens of Koishikawa Korakuen, which incorporates both Japanese and Chinese design; Shinjuku Gyoen, originally a residence of the feudal lord Naito and his family during the Edo Period; and Hama Rikyu, a traditionally styled garden in the middle of the city.

We will also visit Nikko in the forests northwest of Tokyo, where several generations of shoguns, including Tokugawa Ieyasu, were enshrined; and Shimoda, the port city where Commodore Matthew Perry docked and forcibly opened Japan to Western trade.

We then take the Nozomi Shinkansen for a scenic, 140-minute ride to the ancient imperial capital of Kyoto and Hiroshima, a major urban centre in the 1870s during Japan's imperial period, and a city destroyed in an instant in August 1945 with the dropping of the atomic bomb during World War II. Hiroshima made an impressive recovery after the war, and is now home to more than two million people.

You can learn more about Japan with our country profile and check out all the other departures. Odyssey Traveller also offers other small group tours by rail

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- French History by Rail tour which goes through Paris and the other cities of France; [we have a 21-day tour and a shorter 11-day tour](#)
- You can explore [Paris, Bordeaux and Provence by Train](#) in 22 days
- [Journey through Mongolia and Russia with the Trans-Siberian Rail](#) in 30 days
- Travel from [Helsinki to Irkutsk](#) on the Trans-Siberian Rail or do the reverse tour ([Irkutsk to Helsinki](#))
- Take the Trans-Siberian Rail from [Vladivostok to Krasnoyarsk](#)

For more details about this tour, click the 'Top 5' or 'Itinerary' buttons above! If you're keen to experience this tour, [please call](#) or [send an email](#). Or, to book, simply fill in the form on the right hand side of this page.

Articles about Japan

These articles by Odyssey Traveller or carefully selected external sources are aimed to maximise our senior travellers knowledge and enjoyment of this Japan tour.

- [A history of Tokyo](#)
- [Shoguns of Japan](#)
- [Around the world in six coffees](#)
- [Forest bathing in Japan](#)
- [Celebrating the Cherry Blossom; Hanami](#)
- [Travel tips for travellers to Japan](#)
- [Ten of the best books on Japan](#)

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- [Japan's UNESCO World Heritage sites](#)
- [Japan by Marianna Zanetta; travel tips and advice](#)
- [Story of Modern Japan; Dr. Christopher Harding](#)

Other Japan Tours with Odyssey Traveller

Each year, Odyssey Traveller [offers a number of escorted Japan tours](#) particularly tailored for small groups of active senior travellers. Each has a different focus. Typically, they have an educational theme, providing access to the country's rich cultural and natural wonders. [This link takes you to all Odyssey Travellers small group tours in Asia](#)

Our [Contemporary Japan](#) tour will take you through modern life in this East Asian jewel. This contemporary tour is an expedition through Japan's major urban areas. This 21-day tour begins and ends in Japan's tantalising capital, Tokyo. For the first 12 days we get our fill of Tokyo fashion, technology, culture, and sights. With Japan's long history, ancient traditions sit side-by-side with fast-paced urban living, and so we spend time as well in the ancient capital of Kyoto, exploring its gardens and temples. We visit the coastal city of Shimoda and spend a day on the art island of Naoshima.

Our [Exploring Japan](#) tour is a journey that will take you from Japan's imperial city of Kyoto to the neon-lit capital of Tokyo, tracing nearly 2,000 years of history and culture of the Land of the Rising Sun. We will learn about Shintoism and Buddhism, visit temples and other UNESCO-protected World Heritage Sites, admire the country's natural scenery, and immerse ourselves in Japan's rich culture.

Our [Walking Japan small group tour](#) is perfect for the active, mature traveller, whether travelling solo or as a couple. Beginning in Tokyo and ending in the ancient capital of Kyoto, professional guides ensure access to the extraordinary. This tour journeys around the northeast region of Japan, while following in the footsteps of the famous 17th century poet, Matsuo Basho. Recommended for active travellers, highlights include joining a Japanese prayer service on Mt. Haguru at sunrise, and visits to temples and museums in both urban and rural

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locations.

All our tours include an English-speaking tour guide to introduce you to the rich heritage of this incredible nation. Odyssey Traveller's escorted tours of Japan remain very popular, with scheduled departures in the next year. Follow the links above to learn more and see the full itineraries! To read our blog post with tips about travelling in Japan, [click here](#).

Other articles of possible interest is this [two-part](#) post filled with travelling tips for seniors, an article on the many [nifty gizmos and gadgets](#) you can bring on your trips, and an important article about [practicing responsible travel](#).

Tour Notes

- Itineraries may change if flight schedules, site availability, and other inclusions have to be amended prior to departure
- Group size limited to 16.

Highlights

1. Enjoy overnight stays in the historic cities of Kyoto and Shimoda on the pretty Izu peninsula.
2. Reflect on the terrible destruction caused by war at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Dome.
3. Experience everyday life as Tokyoites do, from your apartment.
4. Explore historic and present day Japan. Journey by rail to regions and great cities to learn about their historical significance.
5. Discover the most beautiful Japanese gardens in Tokyo and Kyoto, and learn more about the philosophy they represent.

Itinerary

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Day 1

Locations: Arrive at Tokyo

Overview:

Upon arrival in Tokyo make your own way to our accommodation.

We settle in our apartments and meet in the early evening for a briefing of the trip followed by our welcome dinner at a local restaurant.

We will be based in a Tokyo apartment located in a central district.

(D)

Accommodation:

05 nights at Citadines Shinjuku in twin or double apartments or similar

Day 2

Locations: Tokyo – Imperial Palace

Overview:

Breakfast at your leisure. Please make your own breakfast at your apartments.

In 1603, when Tokugawa Ieyasu became Shogun, Tokyo was to be the seat of national power in Japan. He installed his court in the same location which today is the Imperial Palace. We get a guided tour of the perimeter of the imperial compound. On the western side of the moat is today's Diet and Government area.

The Imperial Palace, where their Majesties the Emperor and Empress reside, is situated in the centre of Tokyo. The palace is surrounded by a water-filled moat and tree-covered grounds – a precious taste of nature within the bustling metropolitan city. Kokyo Gaien (Imperial Palace Outer Garden), Kokyo Higashi Gyoen (Imperial Palace East Garden) and Kita-no-maru-koen Park are all open to the public free of charge.

A popular photo spot is located in front of the beautiful Niju-bashi Bridge that stretches over the moat in the outer gardens near Tokyo Station. In the vast Imperial Palace East Garden stands a stone wall that has been there since the time when the Imperial Palace was known as Edo Castle, a place where samurai warriors lived from the 17th to 19th centuries. A great favourite among tourists is the viewing of the garden's seasonal flowers, such as azaleas and hydrangeas. In the

Sannomaru-Shozo-kan (Museum of the Imperial Collections) where Emperor Hirohito's art collection is exhibited, you will see beautiful kimonos and Japanese paintings.

Lunch at a local restaurant.

(L)

Accommodation:

Citadines Shinjuku in twin or double apartments or similar

Day 3

Locations: Mt Fuji

Overview:

Breakfast at your leisure. Please make your own breakfast at your apartments.

Time to tackle (visually) Mount Fuji, Japan's iconic Holy Mountain, and the nearby resort of Hakone, in which lake the majestic surrounding landscape is reflected. This has long been a popular playground of the Japanese aristocracy.

Owakudani- Where volcanic fumes still bear a trace of the Hakone Volcano.

Lake Ashi- Created in the crater of the Hakone Volcano.

Lunch at local restaurant.

(L)

Accommodation:

Citadines Shinjuku in twin or double apartments or similar

Day 4

Locations: Tokyo - Gardens (L)

Overview:

Breakfast at your leisure. Please make your own breakfast at your apartments.

A specialist guide leads our tour of one of the highest achievements of Japanese culture: its gardens. We visit the ancient garden of

Koishikawa Korakuen, Shinjuku Gyoen and Kyu-Hamarikyu-teien, helping us to understand Japanese philosophy.

Koishikawa Korakuen Garden- The construction of this park was started in 1629 by Mr. Yorifusa Mito, the Daimyo (Japanese feudal lord) of Mito Tokugawa family, and was completed by his successor, Mr. Mitsukuni Mito, a very famous Daimyo in the early Edo period.

Mitsukuni adopted an opinion of a Chinese scholar and named this garden “Koraku-en” (Koraku means “enjoying afterwards”) after a Chinese teaching of “a governor should worry before people and enjoy after people”. This garden is full of Chinese flavour under the influence of Mitsukuni. Korakuen was appointed as the Special Place of scenic beauty and the Special Historic Site based on the Cultural Properties Protection Law of Japan. All through Japan, there are only seven premises which enjoy double appointments by this Law. They are Kinkakuji, Ginkakuji, Sampo-in of Dogoji all in Kyoto, the trace of Nibon-miya in the third line of Heijyokyou left city in Nara, Isukushima shrine in Hiroshima and Hamarikyuu and Korakuen in Tokyo.

Lunch at the garden’s rest area, Kanttokutei. (traditional Japanese lunch)

Shinjuku Gyoen-South of the downtown area around the East Exit is Shinjuku-gyoen National Garden, completed in 1906, it features European gardens designed by a French engineer. This garden park surrounds you in luscious greenery and exudes serenity, completely secluded from the hustle and bustle of metropolitan Tokyo. It is renowned as the best site in the city for viewing flowers and wild birds.

Hamarikyu Garden-Hamarikyu, is a large, attractive landscape garden in central Tokyo. Located alongside Tokyo Bay, Hama Rikyu features seawater ponds which change level with the tides, and a teahouse on an island where visitors can rest and enjoy the scenery. The traditionally styled garden stands in stark contrast to the skyscrapers of the adjacent Shiodome district.

(L)

Accommodation:

Citadines Shinjuku in twin or double apartments or similar

Day 5

Locations: Nikko

Overview:

Breakfast at your leisure. Please make your own breakfast at your apartments.

Discovery of the holy site of Nikko, in the forests northwest of Tokyo. The first shrine was established in the 8th century. Several generations of Shoguns were enshrined here, including Tokugawa Ieyasu. We also visit the Imperial Villa where emperor Hiro Hito resided during the firebombing of Tokyo.

Nikko lies at the foot of Mt. Nyoho-san in the western part of Tochigi and it has developed as the temple town of Futara-san-jinja Shrine, Toshogu Shrine and Rin-no-ji Temple. These temples are recognized as a UNESCO world heritage site. There runs the Nikko-Suginamiki-Kaido (Nikko's Japanese- cedar-lined Road), which is designated as a natural monument. And the city forms a part of the Nikko National Park.

Toshogu Shrine is where the famous Shogun of the Edo Period in the 17th century, Tokugawa Ieyasu, was worshiped after his death. It became as luxurious and elaborate as it looks today when the grandson of Ieyasu, the third Shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu, reconstructed it. The engravings on the Yomei-mon Gate are especially overwhelming, provided with every luxury imaginable and redolent in gorgeous colors. The engravings of the three monkeys in Shinkyu-sha and Nemuri-neko, the sleeping cat, are also well known.

The buildings in Mt. Nikko-san and the forest areas in the surroundings are registered as a World Cultural Heritage site and as a cultural property where nature and buildings are united.

Please note: Nikko is going through an extensive renovation until 2019. The gate is covered by scaffolding, but the shrine with its wealth of buildings and carvings is still worth a visit.

Lunch at local restaurant.

(L)

Accommodation:

Citadines Shinjuku in twin or double apartments or similar

Day 6

Locations: Tokyo - Shimoda

Overview:

Breakfast at your leisure. Please make your own breakfast at your apartments.

We leave early to the far end of the beautiful and mountainous Izu peninsula. Our destination is the small town of Shimoda where in 1854 Commodore Perry forced Japan to open itself to foreign trade, thus ending 250 year of self imposed isolation. The local buddhist temple of Gyokusen-ji was vacated to serve as the first American Consulate in Japan. Overnight in Shimoda

Bento box lunch in bullet train.

Shimoda is known as the port city that an American fleet known as Kurofune, the Black Ships, entered in the 19th century demanding the establishment of trade with Japan, which was then under the national isolation policy that cut off any type of exchange with foreign countries. Located in the city is Ryosen-ji Temple, where the then U.S.

Naval Officer Perry and Daigaku Hayashi, ambassador plenipotentiary, concluded the Treaty of Peace and Amity between the United States and the Empire of Japan (Kanagawa Treaty). A sketch of the treaty signing ceremony remains at the temple.

(L, D)

Accommodation:

02 nights at Pasto Elegante Shimoda in twin or double rooms (single room not available, must be twin share), or similar.

Day 7

Locations: Shimoda

Overview:

We visit the museum dedicated to Okichi Saito, who's tragic life was the inspiration for the Giacomo Puccini Opera Madam Butterfly. We walk through some paddies where rice cultivation has not much changed

since hundreds of years.

(B, D)

Accommodation:

Pasto Elegante Shimoda in twin or double rooms (single room not available, must be twin share), or similar.

Day 8

Locations: Shimoda - Kyoto

Overview:

We take the Nozomi Shinkansen for a 140 minutes ride to the “Western Capital”, Kyoto. We follow our expert to Kiyumisudera and other fabulous ancient temples and gardens. We stay overnight in a traditional Ryokan, a typical old style guesthouse.

Lunch at local restaurant or bento box on bullet train

Kiyomizu Temple- Established in 778, this temple has continuously attracted worshippers from among the populace since the Heian Period as “Kiyomizu-Kannon.” The temple contains buildings from the 15th to 17th centuries, including Jishu – jinja Shrine. The Main Hall (Hondo), built in the “stage” style, is noted for its beautiful background scenery which changes with the four seasons – including the cherry blossoms and greenery of spring, and the leaves of autumn. Built atop a precipice, the main hall, which is a National Treasure, is famous as the “Kiyomizu Stage” – affording a magnificent view of the city below. The temple precincts contain fifteen buildings designated as Important Cultural Properties, including the inner Temple (Okunoin), Amida Buddha Hall (Amidado), and the three-tiered pagoda.

(B, L, D)

Accommodation:

01 night at Tazuru in traditional Japanese rooms, or similar.

Day 9

Locations: Kyoto - Hiroshima

Overview:

In the morning we visit the Imperial Palace where the Emperors resided for centuries until the Imperial restoration in 1869, and the court was moved to Edo, nowadays Tokyo. We have some time to meditate overlooking the Ryoan-ji Zen rock garden.

We board the Shinkansen for a 2 hour ride to Hiroshima

Kyoto Imperial Palace- Gain exclusive access to the former residence of the Emperor of Japan, which oversaw many important functions until the capital was moved to Tokyo in 1869.

Ryoanji- This Zen temple was built in 1450 by Hosokawa Katsumoto, who had taken possession of a villa of Tokudaiji Temple. The karesansui (dry landscape) rock garden (designated as a special place of scenic beauty), which lies on the south side of the Hojo (quarters of the chief priest), is famous as "Tora-no-ko Watashi." The white sand rectangular garden, surrounded on three sides by an oil earthen wall, measures 25 meters east and west and more than 10 meters north and south. The garden comprises fifteen rocks in five groupings. The name of the artist who created the garden is unknown, though a number of theories exist as to his intent. The garden is famous an expression of symbolism, which reproduces nature.

(B, L, D)

Accommodation:

01 night at Oriental Hotel Hiroshima or similar.

Day 10

Locations: Hiroshima

Overview:

Hiroshima, a name heavy to bear. We are guided through the monuments reminding us the terrible destruction of conflict. Our expert explains why Japan entered the war and how they lost, paying a high

price.

Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park

Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park is dedicated to the legacy of Hiroshima as the first city in the world to suffer a nuclear attack, and to the memories of the bomb's direct and indirect victims (of whom there may have been as many as 140,000). The location of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park was once the city's busiest downtown commercial and residential district. The park was built on open field that was created by the explosion. Today there are a number of memorials and monuments, museums, and lecture halls, which draw over a million visitors annually. The purpose of the Peace Memorial Park is to not only memorialize the victims, but also to establish the memory of nuclear horrors and advocate world peace.

Genbaku Dome (A-Bomb Dome)

The A-Bomb Dome is the skeletal ruins of the former Industrial Promotion Hall. It is the building closest to the hypocentre of the nuclear bomb that remained at least partially standing. It was left how it was after the bombing in memory of the casualties. The A-Bomb Dome, to which a sense of sacredness and transcendence has been attributed, is situated in a distant ceremonial view that is visible from the Peace Memorial Park's central cenotaph. It is an officially designated site of memory for the nation's and humanity's collectively shared heritage of catastrophe. The A-Bomb Dome is on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Peace Memorial Museum

The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum is the primary museum in the park dedicated to educating visitors about the bomb. The Museum has exhibits and information covering the build up to war, the role of Hiroshima in the war up to the bombing, and extensive information on the bombing and its effects, along with substantial memorabilia and pictures from the bombing. The building also has views of the Memorial Cenotaph, Peace Flame, and A-Bomb Dome.

Lunch at local restaurant.

Our tour concludes today upon completion of this tour.

(B, L)

Inclusions / Exclusions

What's included in our Tour

- 9 nights at accommodation
- Meals as specified in the itinerary.
- Transport, and field trips as indicated.
- Applicable entry fees and services of local guides.
- Gratuities and service charges.
- Services of a Tour Leader and translator/guide.
- Detailed preparatory material.

What's not included in our Tour

- International airfares and taxes.
- Comprehensive international travel insurance.
- Items of a personal nature, such as telephone calls and laundry.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.