



## **Back Roads of Japan**

11 days, Tokyo to Kyoto

Trip code AJBR

### **What's included**

- Your G for Good Moment: Hagi Community Homestay, Hagi
- Your Welcome Moment: Meet Your CEO and Group

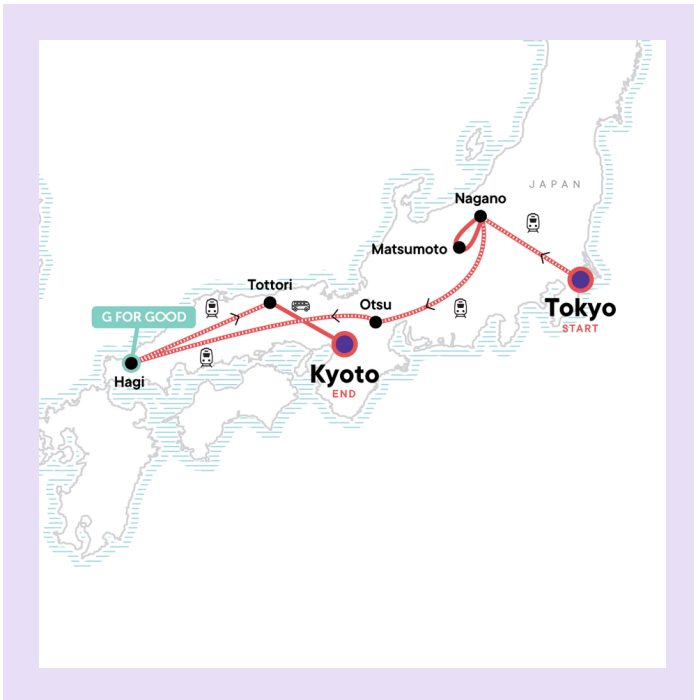
- Your Hands-On Moment: Traditional Paper-making Lesson, Mihomisumi
- Modern Tokyo walking tour
- Zenkoji Temple visit (Nagano)
- Jigokudani Monkey Park visit (Nagano)
- Matsumoto Castle visit
- Hagi Community Homestay welcome ceremony
- Hagi cycling tour
- Tottori sand dunes visit
- Tottori fish market visit
- Fushimi Inari Taisha shrine visit
- Japan Rail (JR) pass (7 days)
- All transport between destinations and to/from included activities

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and G Adventures. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

**VERY IMPORTANT:** Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

**VALIDITY:** Valid for all trips departing January 1st, 2022 and onwards

# Itinerary



## Itinerary Notes

Luggage size restriction –  
Effective from May 2020  
onwards

All G Adventures tours in Japan use the world-famous Shinkansen bullet trains, which have a restriction on maximum luggage size. Your luggage must be less than 160cm in total. This is roughly the size that most airline companies consider as "carry-on baggage" and allow in overhead storage compartments.

We strongly recommend bringing a day pack or backpack to use during the day, in addition to your carry-on sized luggage. Please see "What to take" under Tour details for more information.

**NOTE:** Accommodations vary per departure and are subject to change until tour start date; they are not final and should be used as examples only. Travellers may login to the G Adventures App to view accommodations specific to their departure.

Day 1

## Tokyo

Arrive to your start hotel before 4:00 pm and join your group and CEO for a Welcome Meeting in the evening around 6:00 pm.

There are no activities planned today until your evening welcome meeting. Please ensure you arrive on time for the welcome meeting and bring your passport so your CEO can collect the required information for your train tickets. Refer to your voucher for the most up to date welcome meeting time.

The most convenient way to get around Japan is by public transportation and on foot. The country's train system is often considered one of the best in the entire world so the majority of our trips utilize this efficient train network. In this tour, you will need to be able to spend the majority of the day on your feet and carry your luggage through busy train stations and streets. On average, tours in Japan walk about 15,000 steps a day. Please ensure you are fit enough to carry your own luggage and spend most of the day on your feet.



### Accommodation

Hotel En Michi (or similar)

Hotel



### Today's Activities

#### ACTIVITY

Your opportunity to meet your CEO and fellow travellers, and learn more about your tour. Opt to join the group for a local meal afterwards. Don't forget to see the notice in the lobby (or ask reception) for the official time and place to meet up with the group.

Day 2

## Tokyo

Take a CEO-led walking tour of eclectic modern Tokyo from the hub of Shinjuku to Shibuya through to Harajuku.

Please note that the new JR Pass validation policy asks travellers to come to the office counter to activate their JR Pass.



### Accommodation

Hotel En Michi (or similar)

Hotel



### Today's Activities

Orientation Walk

Tokyo

Join your group for a guided orientation walk as you explore eclectic and modern Tokyo.



### Optional Activities - Day 2

Sensō-ji Temple Visit

Asakusa

Free

Explore Sensō-ji Temple, a colourful Buddhist temple and the oldest temple in the entire city. Leading up to the temple the street is lined with shops selling yummy food and great souvenirs.

Meiji Shrine (Meiji Jingū) Visit

Tokyo

Free-1000JPY

Visit this shrine dedicated to the 123rd emperor of Japan, Emperor Meiji and his wife. The shrine is a great place to escape the bustle of the city and wander the grounds along the wide walking paths.

Journey to Nagano, located in the Japanese Alps and host city of the 1998 Winter Olympics. Discover the world-famous Jigokudani Monkey Park and watch Japanese snow monkeys bathing in the natural hot springs.

While we ride the bullet train, your main luggage will be sent on Japan's takkyubin service (luggage transfer) to the next destination. Please note, you will NOT have access to your main luggage for approximately 24 hours. You must pack an overnight bag with everything you'll need until you're reunited with your luggage the following day. Only one bag per passenger is permitted on the luggage transfer. If you have more, there will be an additional charge at the traveler's expense.



## Accommodation

Hotel Nagano Avenue (or similar)

Hotel



## Today's Activities

Bullet Train

Tokyo - Nagano

3h

Get to your next destination faster than the speed of light (ok maybe not that fast) aboard a high-speed train.

Jigokudani Monkey Park Visit

Nagano

Visit the Jigokudani Monkey Park, where wild snow monkeys can be seen bathing in the natural hot springs. The pool where most of the monkeys soak is man made, fed by the hot springs. Along the walking paths up to the pools other monkeys tend to stop and watch visitors curiously.

Day 4

## Nagano

Enjoy a day-trip to quaint Matsumoto and visit one of Japan's most treasured castles. Return to Nagano and explore historic Zenkoji Temple.

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### Accommodation

Hotel Nagano Avenue (or similar)

Hotel

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### Today's Activities

Local Train

Nagano - Matsumoto

1h30m-2h

Climb aboard, take your seat, and get around like the locals do.

Matsumoto Castle

Matsumoto

Stop at the castle of Matsumoto one of Japan's most treasured castles, maintaining it's original wooden interior and stone exterior. Explore this castle where 16th century Samurai once roamed before venturing out with the group to wander Matsumoto's ancient streets and or dine in a traditional storehouse.

Local Train

Matsumoto - Nagano

1h30m-2h

Climb aboard, take your seat, and get around like the locals do.

Zenkō-ji Temple

Nagano

Visit the Buddhist temple of Zenkō-ji, one of the last remaining pilgrimage sites. Built in the 7th century, the city of Nagano was built around the already standing structure.

Day 5

## Nagano/Otsu

Travel to Otsu in Shiga prefecture, located on the banks of Lake Biwa, Japan's largest freshwater lake. Settle in and relax with a stroll around this picturesque lake before heading out to enjoy a delicious bowl of Ramen for dinner.

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### Meals included

Dinner

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### Accommodation

Biwako Otsu Prince (or similar)

Hotel

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### Today's Activities

Train

Nagano - Ōtsu

4h30m

Climb aboard, take a seat, and enjoy the ride.

Grab a quick breakfast before heading off, on a long travel day. In the late afternoon, arrive in the quaint city of Hagi, a former castle town that boasts feudal architecture. Take part in a welcome ceremony with the local residents, and meet your host family at a community homestay, a G Adventures for Good project. Get to know each other as you cook dinner together.

Please note that before leaving Ōtsu, you'll need to prepare your day pack/overnight bag for a two-night stay in Hagi, as your main luggage will be sent on to Tottori. Remember to include comfortable clothing for a cycling excursion and two nights at the homestay. If you're travelling during the cold weather season, please refer to your Packing List. Only one bag per passenger is permitted on the luggage transfer. If you have more, there will be an additional charge at the traveler's expense.



## Meals included

Breakfast | Dinner



## Accommodation

Homestay in Hagi (or similar)

Homestay



## Today's Activities

Train

Ōtsu - Hagi

6h30m

Climb aboard, take a seat, and enjoy the ride.

### ACTIVITY

Get to know a local family at this G Adventures for Good-supported community homestay in Hagi, a farming, fishing and historical heritage town. In recent years, due to the rapidly aging population and limited income opportunities in many of the rural areas of Japan, many community members have had to leave Hagi in order to make a living. Learn about local history and customs, and help make a home-cooked meal with your hosts.

Day 7

## Hagi

Explore rural Hagi on a guided morning cycle, spotting samurai architecture along the way. On return, experience authentic Japanese countryside life. Return to your homestay in the late afternoon and enjoy dinner with your host family.

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### Meals included

Breakfast | Dinner

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### Accommodation

Homestay in Hagi (or similar)

Homestay

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### Today's Activities

Hagi Cycling Excursion

3h

Explore Hagi on a cycling excursion led by your CEO. Enjoy the slow pace of life as you pedal past the city's samurai era architecture, and cycle along the Japanese Sea.

#### ACTIVITY

Get to know a local family at this G Adventures for Good-supported community homestay in Hagi, a farming, fishing and historical heritage town. In recent years, due to the rapidly aging population and limited income opportunities in many of the rural areas of Japan, many community members have had to leave Hagi in order to make a living. Learn about local history and customs, and help make a home-cooked meal with your hosts.

Day 8

## Hagi/Tottori

Bid farewell to your host family after enjoying breakfast together. Later, travel to Miho-misumi by train, taking in scenic views along the way. Learn the art of making "washi," a UNESCO-recognized traditional Japanese paper, then enjoy a Japanese lunch along the beautiful coastline before continuing to the seaside town of Tottori.



### Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch



### Accommodation

New Otani Tottori (or similar)

Hotel



### Today's Activities

Bullet Train

Hagi - Mihomisumi

2h

Get to your next destination faster than the speed of light (ok maybe not that fast) aboard a high-speed train.

#### ACTIVITY

Learn the traditional art of "washi" paper making. Take home your handmade washi as a memento.

Bullet Train

Mihomisumi - Tottori

4h

Get to your next destination faster than the speed of light (ok maybe not that fast) aboard a high-speed train.

Day 9

## Tottori/Kyoto

Spend the morning exploring Tottori's scenic sand dunes, some reaching 50m (164 ft) in height. After, visit the local fish market and opt for a fresh seafood lunch. In the late afternoon, travel to Kyoto for two nights in the traditional heart of Japan.

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### Accommodation

Prince Smart Inn Kyoto Shijo Omiya (or similar)

Hotel

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### Today's Activities

#### Tottori Sand Dunes Visit

Located along the coast of the Sea of Japan, the Tottori Sand Dunes (or "Tottori Sakyu") were formed thousands of years ago when sand was washed away from a nearby river. Walk amongst the dunes and opt to climb one to take in scenic views of the coastline.

#### Tottori Fish Market Visit

Check out Tottori's harbour fish market, home to fresh seafood and some of Japan's best crab. Walk amongst the stalls and watch the locals in action. Opt to try a tasty dish in the market's restaurant section.

Train

Tottori - Kyoto

3h

Climb aboard, take a seat, and enjoy the ride.

Day 10

## Kyoto

Visit the iconic Fushimi Inari Taisha Shrine, famed for an impressive 10,000 red torii gates. This afternoon, enjoy free time in this picturesque city. Opt to experience zen gardens, teahouses, shrines, and local gift shops – and maybe even spot a real-life geisha.

Kyoto is home to over 2,000 temples, including some of the most magnificent in the country, dating back centuries. Use free time to continue exploring, the options are endless – the city also boasts museums, castles, and traditional gardens – or opt to visit neighbouring Nara or Osaka.



### Accommodation

Prince Smart Inn Kyoto Shijo Omiya (or similar)

Hotel



### Today's Activities

Fushimi Inari Taisha Shrine Visit

Kyoto

Visit the Fushimi Inari shrine, located just outside of Kyoto. Walk under the thousands of iconic torii gates (as seen in the film *Memoirs of a Geisha*) and enjoy the peaceful atmosphere. The shrine itself is at the base of the Inari mountain but includes many trails up to smaller shrines in the area.

Free Time

Kyoto

Explore more of this cultural hub.



### Optional Activities - Day 10

Gion Walk

Kyoto

Free

Walk through Gion, Kyoto's most famous geisha district. Visit shops, restaurants and ochaya (teahouses), where geiko (Kyoto dialect for geisha) and maiko (geiko apprentices) entertain.

Kiyomizu Temple Visit

Kyoto

400JPY

Visit the Kiyomizu Temple, a Buddhist temple in Kyoto and part of Kyoto's UNESCO listed sights. Originally built in 798, the current structures were built in 1633 without the use of a single nail.

Nijo Castle and Gardens Visit

Kyoto

600JPY

Visit the Nijo Castle, the residence of the first shogun of the Edo Period built in 1603. Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the property is divided into three areas: the Honmaru (main circular fortification), Ninomaru (secondary circle of defense), and the gorgeous gardens that surround both.

Kinkaku-ji Golden Pavilion Visit

Kyoto

500JPY

Explore Kinkaku-ji or the Golden Pavilion, named for the temple's top two floors that are covered in gold leaf. The temple is surrounded by trees and sits on a reflective pond, making this must-see in Kyoto a perfect place for photos. While the temple can be busy, there are gardens around the area to explore once you've had enough of the view.

Day 11

## Kyoto

Depart at any time.

We highly recommend booking post-nights to explore more of this beautiful city.

For travellers flying out of Kansai International Airport (KIX), please find the public transit options below (please note that taxis can become quite expensive in the late hours)

- 1) By train - departing from Kyoto station, the limited express "Haruka" Train goes directly to the airport. The last train to the airport leaves Kyoto station at 20:30.
- 2) By bus - departing from Kyoto station, with several stops along the way. The last bus to the airport leaves Kyoto station at 22:10.

Timetable Reference: <http://www.hyperdia.com>



## Today's Activities

Departure Day

Not ready to leave? Your CEO can help with travel arrangements to extend your adventure.

## What's included

- Your G for Good Moment: Hagi Community Homestay, Hagi
- Your Welcome Moment: Meet Your CEO and Group
- Your Hands-On Moment: Traditional Paper-making Lesson, Mihomisumi
- Modern Tokyo walking tour
- Zenkoji Temple visit (Nagano)
- Jigokudani Monkey Park visit (Nagano)
- Matsumoto Castle visit
- Hagi Community Homestay welcome ceremony
- Hagi cycling tour
- Tottori sand dunes visit
- Tottori fish market visit
- Fushimi Inari Taisha shrine visit
- Japan Rail (JR) pass (7 days)
- All transport between destinations and to/from included activities

## What are the main highlights of this trip?

Spot snow monkeys in Nagano, Explore a 16th-century samurai castle, Cycle through the rural town of Hagi, Experience a homestay in a traditional Japanese community.

## Itinerary Notes

Luggage size restriction – Effective from May 2020 onwards

All G Adventures tours in Japan use the world-famous Shinkansen bullet trains, which have a restriction on maximum luggage size. Your luggage must be less than 160cm in total. This is roughly the size that most airline companies consider as "carry-on baggage" and allow in overhead storage compartments.

We strongly recommend bringing a day pack or backpack to use during the day, in addition to your carry-on sized luggage. Please see "What to take" under Tour details for more information.

## What are the main highlights of this trip?

Spot snow monkeys in Nagano, Explore a 16th-century samurai castle, Cycle through the rural town of Hagi, Experience a homestay in a traditional Japanese community.

## **Is there a disclaimer I should read before booking this trip?**

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**VERY IMPORTANT:** Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

## **Is there a travel disclaimer for my itinerary I should review before booking this trip?**

While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.

## **Are there Itinerary notes?**

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We strongly recommend bringing a day pack or backpack to use during the day, in addition to your carry-on sized luggage. Please see "What to take" under Tour details for more information.

## What important notes should I be aware of before the trip?

1. The most convenient way to get around Japan is by public transportation and on foot. The country's train system is often considered one of the best in the entire world so the majority of our trips utilize this efficient train network. In this tour, you will need to be able to spend the majority of the day on your feet and carry your luggage through busy train stations and streets. On average, tours in Japan walk about 15,000 steps a day. Please ensure you are fit enough to carry your own luggage and spend most of the day on your feet.

### 2. Japan Rail Pass

Please note that only foreigners traveling as a tourist are able to use a Japan Rail Pass. If you are a Japanese citizen/resident or traveling on a student/business/military/diplomatic visa, please advise us at time of booking as you will not be able to take advantage of the rail pass.

### 3. Tattoos

Tattoos are not common or widely accepted in Japan. There is no cause for concern, but do your best to cover your tattoos when possible and note that you may not be permitted to enter public spas or onsens (hot springs).

### 4. Overnight Bag

While we ride the bullet train, your main luggage will be sent on Japan's takkyubin service (luggage transfer) to the next destination. Please note, you will NOT have access to your main luggage for approximately 24-48 hours. You must pack an overnight bag with everything you'll need until you're reunited with your luggage the following day. Only one bag per passenger is permitted on the luggage transfer. If you have more, there will be an additional charge at the traveler's expense.

### 5. Luggage size restriction - Effective from May 2020 onwards

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We strongly recommend bringing a day pack or backpack to use during the day, in addition to your carry-on sized luggage. Please see "What to take" under Tour details for more information.

### 6. ACCOMMODATION NOTE:

Please be aware that properties we stay in with only two stories may not have elevators installed and climbing the stairs with your luggage will be necessary.

## What is the group leader like?

All G Adventures group trips are accompanied by one of our Chief Experience Officers (CEO). The aim of the CEO is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We also use local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting - we think it's the best of both worlds.

## How large will the group be?

Max 15, avg 12

## What meals are included in this trip?

3 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 3 dinners

## What are the meals like on this trip?

Eating is a big part of traveling. G Adventures understands the importance of breakfast to start your day, we strive to include a basic breakfast wherever possible. Included breakfasts will usually be asian style consisting of noodles or congee (rice porridge) or bread and eggs. Vegetarians will be able to find a range of different foods, although in some areas the choice maybe limited. Should breakfast not be included, your CEO can suggest some local options.

Travelling with G Adventures you experience the vast array of wonderful food that is available out in the world. Generally meals are not included in the trip price when there is a choice of eating options, to give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat. It also gives you more budgeting flexibility, though generally food is cheap. Our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though. Your CEO will be able to suggest favourite restaurants during your trip. While trekking in remote regions food is included, plentiful and made of fresh local ingredients.

For all trips please refer to the meals included and budget information for included meals and meal budgets.

## What are the modes of transportation on my trip?

Bus, bullet train, local train, bicycle, subway, walking.

## What transportation will we take on this trip?

On our tours in Japan we use public transport, making use of Japan's world famous transport system. From the super fast Shinkansen Bullet Train to Kyoto's extensive local bus network, we ride with the locals.

## Is there an extra cost for travelling solo?

We believe single travellers should not have to pay more to travel so our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers joining group trips are paired in twin or multi-share accommodation with someone of the same sex for the duration of the trip. Some of our Independent trips are designed differently and single travellers on these itineraries must pay the single trip price.

## Where will we stay during the trip?

Hotels (8 nts), Homestay (2 nts, multi-share).

## Will I get my own room?

Please note that if you have booked the "My Own Room" option for this tour, you will receive your own single room for all night stops

## What kind of accommodation can I expect on this trip?

Japan is one of the most populous countries in the world and space is at a premium. Therefore, hotel rooms are small! Additionally, many Japanese hotels do not have designated non-smoking rooms. Therefore, we ask hotels to deodorize rooms before check in. Please note rooms for couples usually still have two twin beds in Japan. Rooms with one large Queen or King bed are not common.

Ryokan are traditional inns found across Japan. Featuring tatami floors (soft mats of woven straw), futon beds, Japanese-style baths, cotton kimono (casual robe worn to lounge around or to head to the bath), and elaborate meals (often served in the comfort of your own room), a ryokan is the perfect place to experience traditional customs and hospitality. As ryokan are usually top tier accommodations, most guests stay only one night, often to celebrate a special occasion or holiday. Don't be intimidated by the formalities inherent to a stay at a ryokan, your hosts will welcome you the same way they do all their guests. Have fun and enjoy this relaxing opportunity to learn more about Japan's unique customs.

Minshuku are Japan's answer to the Western bed and breakfast. Similar to ryokan, they have traditional features like tatami floors, futon beds, and Japanese-style baths. Minshuku are often family-run, and as such they offer a great opportunity to interact with local people and learn more about the nation's customs. More affordable and simpler than ryokan, minshuku tend to have smaller guestrooms, shared bathroom facilities, and any included meals (traditional, local, and delicious) are served in a communal dining room.

Please note that some of the traditional Japanese inns used on this tour only offer shared bathing facilities. This means that individual shower stalls will not be available, instead several shower stations are available in an open, same-sex bathing area. Shared bathhouses and onsen (hot springs) are an essential part of Japan's culture, traditionally serving as a place for men or women to gather, relax, and discuss the days happenings.

## What are the joining instructions?

For details of your joining hotel please refer to your tour voucher, G Account, the G Adventures App or contact your travel agent.

If you would like to book an airport Arrival shuttle for your tour, please contact our Sales Team or your Travel Agent in advance of travel.

If you have paid in advance for an arrival shuttle, our driver will be waiting for you with a sign with your name on it outside of the luggage hall. If for any reason you are not met at the airport, please call Emergency Phone number: +81 90 1223 2336 or +81 80 6779 1851

Please note that day 1 is an arrival day and no activities have been planned on this day.

Upon arrival to your Joining Hotel (note that check-in time will be in the afternoon), join your group and CEO for a Welcome Meeting in the evening around 5:00 pm.

Please ensure you arrive on time for the welcome meeting and bring your passport so your CEO can collect the required information for your train tickets.

If you are arriving later and will miss the Welcome Meeting, your CEO will leave a note at reception for you with any information you may need, and with morning instructions for the next day.

## What happens if I experience problems when arriving?

We don't expect any problems, and nor should you, but if for any reason you are unable to commence your trip as scheduled, as soon as possible please contact your starting point hotel, requesting that you speak to or leave a message for your CEO (if you are not on a group tour please refer to the emergency contact details provided in this dossier). If you are unable to get in touch with your leader, please refer to our emergency contact details.

## Who should I contact in case of an emergency?

Should you need to contact us during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call either the G Adventures Local Representative (if one is listed below) or our G Adventures Local Office. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please leave a detailed message and contact information, so they may return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

### AIRPORT TRANSFER

If you have purchased an arrival through G Adventures or if an arrival transfer is included in the cost of your tour, please note that:

Your arrival transfer has been arranged based on flight information provided to us. If you are advised of a flight schedule change or flight cancellation within 48 hours of your scheduled arrival time, please call the emergency contact number to advise of your new arrival flight information. If you do not, we will not be able to rearrange your arrival transfer and you will need to make your own way to the starting hotel at your own expense. If your arrival transfer does not arrive within 30 minutes after you have exited the arrivals area please take a taxi to your start point hotel.

### EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

G Adventures Local Office (Japan)

During office hours: Mon-Fri (Excluding national holidays) 9:00-18:00 Local Time

From outside Japan: 1st contact +81 3-6809-1212. (2nd contact +81 90 1223 2336 or +81 80 6779 1851)

From within Japan: 1st contact 03-6809-1212 (2nd contact 090 1223 2336 or 080 6779 1851)

After office hours emergency number

Primary phone: +81 90 1223 2336 or +81 80 6779 1851 (from within Japan: 090 1223 2336 or 080 6779 1851)

If you are unable for any reason to contact our local office, please call the numbers listed below which will connect you directly with our Sales team who will happily assist you. Hours of operation by region can be found [here](#).

Toll-free, North America only: 1 888 800 4100

Calls from UK: 0344 272 0000

Calls from Germany: 0800 365 1000

Calls from Australia: 1 300 796 618

Calls from New Zealand: 0800 333 307

Outside North America, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and the UK: +1 416 260 0999

## Are there any additional packing suggestions I should consider?

We suggest that you pack as lightly as possible as you are expected to carry your own luggage. You will be walking with your luggage in busy public train stations to catch connecting trains, so it is highly recommended that you travel light and have easy to handle luggage and are capable of walking up and down the stairs with your luggage without any assistance.

We recommend keeping the weight of your bags between 10-15kg/22-30lb. Suitcases are not recommended for G Adventures trips. Most travellers carry a backpack or rolling bag of small to medium size. A large bag will be an inconvenience to you and will slow you down! You will also need a day-pack/rucksack to carry daily essentials like water, cameras, passport, etc.

It's essential to pack as lightly as possible for rail travel in Japan. All G Adventures tours use the world-famous Shinkansen bullet trains, which have a restriction on maximum luggage size.

Any luggage brought on board must be less than 160cm in total (calculated as the sum of the height + width + depth of your luggage). This is roughly the size that most airline companies consider as "carry-on baggage" and allow in overhead storage compartments. We strongly recommend bringing a day pack or backpack to use during the day (for daily essentials like water, cameras, passport, etc.).

Please note that travellers who bring luggage that exceeds this restriction will be directly penalized by the Central Japan Railway Company. Any luggage between 160–250cm will require a fee of 1,000 JPY per luggage, for each leg of your train journey, and is strictly subject to availability. Any luggage over 251cm in total is prohibited on the Shinkansen trains.

If you absolutely must bring more than what fits into a single carry-on bag plus day pack, you may bring a second carry-on bag which also must be less than 160cm in total. Please note, however, that as with all G Adventures tours, you must be able to carry your luggage unassisted.

Please note, you will NOT have access to your main luggage for approximately 24 hours on this trip, as we utilize Japan's takkyubin service to conveniently and reliably transfer luggage from one location to another throughout the country and avoid hauling large bags on crowded trains. You must pack an overnight bag with everything you'll need until you're reunited with your luggage the following day. Only one bag is permitted to be sent on the luggage transfer. If you have more, there will be an additional charge at the traveler's expense.

# What should be on my packing list?

## Cold Weather:

- Long-sleeved shirts or sweater
- Scarf
- Warm gloves
- Warm hat
- Warm layers
- Warm waterproof jacket

## Conservative Dress:

- Modest clothing that covers knees and shoulders (Long pants, long skirts, shirts that cover shoulders)
- Shawl or scarf (for temple visits)

## Documents:

- Flight info (required) (Printouts of e-tickets may be required at the border)
- Insurance info (required) (With photocopies)
- Passport (required) (With photocopies)
- Vouchers and pre-departure information (required)
- Visas or vaccination certificates (With photocopies)

**Essentials:**

- Toiletries (required) (Shampoo, bodywash, soap, etc.)
- Binoculars (optional)
- Camera (With extra memory cards and batteries)
- Cash, credit and debit cards
- Day pack (Used for daily excursions or short overnights)
- Ear plugs
- First-aid kit (should contain lip balm with sunscreen, sunscreen, whistle, Aspirin, Ibuprofen, bandaids/plasters, tape, anti-histamines, antibacterial gel/wipes, antiseptic cream, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, rehydration powder, water purification tablets or drops, insect repellent, sewing kit, extra prescription drugs you may be taking)
- Flashlight/torch (Headlamps are ideal)
- Fleece top/sweater
- Footwear
- Hat
- Headphones (Noise-cancelling recommended)
- Locks for bags
- Long pants/jeans
- Moneybelt
- Outlet adapter
- Personal entertainment (Reading and writing materials, cards, music player, etc.)
- Reusable water bottle
- Shirts/t-shirts
- Sleepwear
- Small travel towel
- Sunglasses
- Swimwear
- Watch and alarm clock
- Waterproof backpack cover
- Windproof rain jacket

**Health & Safety:**

- Face masks (Clients will be only be required to wear a face mask where it is mandated by local regulations.)
- Hand sanitizer
- Pen (Please bring your own pen for filling out documents.)

### **Warm Weather:**

- Sandals/flip-flops
- Shorts/skirts (Longer shorts/skirts are recommended)
- Sturdy water shoes/sandals
- Sun hat/bandana
- Swimwear Note: During the colder months (Nov-Apr) the mountains can be very cold, so please make sure you pack warm clothes. During summer (Jun-Sep) temperatures be very hot and humid. Lightweight breathable clothing is recommended. Note: Hand sanitizer is a rare commodity in Japan, so it is best to bring this with you.

## **When can I do my laundry on this trip?**

Laundry facilities are offered by some of our hotels but this is very expensive. Your leader can show you self service coin laundries in larger cities. There will be times when you may want to or have to do your own laundry so we suggest you bring non-polluting/biodegradable soap.

## **What are the visas and entry requirements for my trip?**

All countries require a valid passport (with a minimum 6 months validity). Contact your local embassy or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements, or see your travel agent. It is your own responsibility to have the correct travel documentation. Visa requirements for your trip will vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as far as possible, but rules do change and sometimes without warning. While we provide the following information in good faith, it is vital that you check the information yourself and understand that you are fully responsible for your own visa requirements.

Visa information specific to your destination and nationality can be found in our Important Pre-Departure Information page [here](#)

## **Where can I read detailed notes about this trip?**

Travel in Japan is easy, clean, fast and efficient, however please be aware that English is still not widely spoken, however a lot of patience, a sense of humour and a respect for the local culture goes a long way in any Asian country and will greatly enrich your experience.

## **What should I consider when planning my personal expenses and discretionary spending for this itinerary?**

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

## **What should I know about currency, credit cards, and exchanging money while on this tour?**

As currency exchange rates in Asia fluctuate often we ask that you refer to the following website for daily exchange rates: [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com).

Every Post Office and 7-11 Convenience store has an ATM machine that accepts Visa, Mastercard and Debit Cards. At times, Maestro/Master Card/Cirrus have been problematic at these machines, so please bring a back-up card.

Credit Cards should not be relied upon for purchases as they are not widely accepted, except in some restaurants and department stores. Money can be exchanged at Post Offices and some banks and hotels in major cities, however it can be a very slow process.

## **How much emergency money should I bring on this trip?**

Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional USD \$200 (or equivalent) as an 'emergency' fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (ex. a natural disaster) require a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence!

## **Do I need to pay a departure tax?**

Departure Tax is included in all International and Domestic tickets.

## **Should I be tipping on my trip?**

Tipping for service is not practiced in Japan. Leaving money at restaurants, in taxis etc will simply cause confusion.

Tipping within the travel industry is standard to recognize the guide for a great experience. Our CEOs work hard to make your trip special. If you're happy with their service, a tip of \$5-\$7 per day is a great way to say thanks, though the final amount is completely up to you.

## What activities are optional on this trip?

### Asakusa

- Sensō-ji Temple Visit (Free)

### Tokyo

- Meiji Shrine (Meiji Jingū) Visit  
(Free-1000JPY per person)

### Kyoto

- Gion Walk (Free)
- Nijo Castle and Gardens Visit  
(600JPY per person)
- Kinkaku-ji Golden Pavilion Visit  
(500JPY per person)
- Kiyomizu Temple Visit (400JPY  
per person)

## Are there any health considerations I should know before travelling?

Please note inoculations may be required for the country visited. It is your responsibility to consult with your travel doctor for up-to-date medical travel information well before departure.

We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit, hand sanitizer/antibacterial wipes, and a full supply of any personal medications. Always carry your prescription medication in original packaging with your doctor's prescription and ensure your medication is legal in Japan. In Asia, you will not find the same drugs as you get at home. Please be aware that sometimes we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities. Also note that for legal reasons our CEOs (tour leaders) are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc. When selecting your tour, carefully read the itinerary and note the physical demand rating and assess your ability to cope with the demands of the tour and travel style.

G Adventures reserves the right to exclude any traveller from all or part of a tour without refund if, in the reasonable opinion of the CEO, they are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group.

## What do I need to know to about safety and security on my trip?

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage. When travelling on a group trip, please note that your CEO has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. Your CEO will accompany you on all included activities. During your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your CEO will assist you with options available in a given location please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and we offer no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time. Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during night time excursions.

Protests and Demonstrations- Protests and demonstrations, even those that are well intended, have the potential to turn violent with no warning. Counter protests can also turn violent. Action by security forces to disperse demonstrators and protesters may occur at any time. If you are in an area where demonstrators or protesters are gathering, avoid the temptation of staying for a good photo opportunity and leave the area immediately.

Water based activities have an element of danger and excitement built into them. We recommend only participating in water based activities when accompanied by a guide(s). We make every reasonable effort to ensure the fun and adventurous element of any water based activities (in countries with varying degrees of operating standards) have a balanced approach to safety. It is our policy not to allow our CEOs to make arrangements on your behalf for water based activities that are not accompanied by guide(s).

Swimming, including snorkeling, is always at your own risk.

We take all prudent measures in relation to your safety. For ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling, please visit:

[www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/](http://www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/)

## What rules should I know before joining this trip?

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for our travellers. Our philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make the world the special place it is. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our CEOs have the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

## Is travel insurance required for my trip?

Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is compulsory in order to participate on any of our trips. When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance has been sighted by your CEO, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy please bear in mind that all clients must have medical coverage and that we require a minimum coverage of USD 200,000 for repatriation and emergency rescue. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. If you have credit card insurance we require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

## What is Planeterra?

Planeterra International Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to turning travel into impact by helping local communities earn an income from tourism. Planeterra connects underserved local communities to the benefits of tourism by developing and supporting small community-owned businesses. These businesses support Indigenous people, empower women, grant youth access to employment opportunities, and protect the environment. Planeterra also works to ensure these businesses have a thriving customer base by integrating their projects into G Adventures' itineraries globally.

G Adventures is Planeterra's largest corporate donor, covering all operating costs, so 100% of your donation will bring opportunity to people in need.

G Adventures Dollar-a-day Program - Make Every Day Count - Turn your travel into impact with [Planeterra Foundation](#).

Did you know? Most communities around the world do not benefit from tourism. Give back to the places you visit on your travels by creating opportunities for local people to earn an income, and protect the environment.

Make every day count by donating \$1/day for the length of your trip, and join us in empowering the communities you will visit when you travel. 100% of your donation goes directly to Planeterra projects.

## How can I share feedback about my trip experience?

Earn 5% off your next G Adventures Tour (up to \$100 USD)\*

After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us and to thank you for your time, we are pleased to offer a 5% discount (up to a maximum of \$100 USD) off your next G Adventures holiday. All you need to do is submit the form within 4 weeks of the completion of your tour, and you'll be able to join the thousands of travellers who have taken 2, 3, 4 or even 10 or more tours with us!

Discount cannot be combined with other offers or applied to 'Independent' style trips. Maximum discount value is \$100 USD (or equivalent currency). Valid for new bookings only. G Adventures reserves the right to withdraw or modify this offer at any time without notice. Limited to one discount per person.

## Does G Adventures have an email newsletter I can subscribe to?

Our adventure travel e-newsletter is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from G Adventures, subscribe at [www.gadventures.com/newsletters/](http://www.gadventures.com/newsletters/)

Stay current on how our company invests in our global community through our foundation – Planeterra. Sign up for [Planeterra's monthly news](#) to learn more about how to give back and support the people and places we love to visit.

## How old must I be to join this trip?

You must be 18 to travel unaccompanied on a G Adventures tour. For minors travelling with a guardian over 21 years old, the minimum age is 12.

## Are international flights included in this trip?

No, international flights are generally not included in the price of your tour.

However, on some combo tours travelling between two different countries, international flights are included as part of the itinerary and price of the tour. Please speak to your GCO or booking agent for further details.

In addition, check-in times and baggage allowances/restrictions vary by airline and can change at any time. For the most up-to-date information for your flight, please contact your airline. We recommend checking in online in advance to avoid potential delays at the airport.

## What should LGBTQ+ travellers know about safety and travel considerations on this trip?

The safety and well-being of all of our travelers is a priority at G Adventures and that includes our travelers who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. We recognize that there are specific concerns and questions you may have about your adventure in terms of safety and security. We encourage you to visit our [LGBTQ+ page](#) for useful resources to ensure you feel safe and comfortable throughout the duration of your trip. The Equaldex tool linked on this page can be of particular help when deciding where you may want to visit next.

## Dossier Disclaimer

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and the operator. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

**VERY IMPORTANT:** Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

## Itinerary Disclaimer

While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.