



# JAPAN FAMILY JOURNEY: FROM ANCIENT TO MODERN TIMES

11 days, Tokyo to Kyoto

Trip code AJTNF

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Your Welcome Moment: Welcome Moment - Meet Your Expedition Leader and Group
- Your Family Journeys Moment: Traditional Taiko Drumming Class, Tokyo
- Your Family Journeys Moment: Okinawa Cooking Class, Tokyo
- Your Family Journeys Moment: Sumo Wrestling Class, Tokyo
- Your Foodie Moment: Miso Foodie Experience, Nagano
- Your Family Journeys Moment: Ramen Making Class, Kyoto
- Your Family Journeys Moment: Kembu Masters, Kyoto
- Tour of Tokyo including Meiji Jingu Shrine, Asakusa and Harajuku districts
- Traditional taiko Japanese drumming class
- Sumo class led by a former wrestler
- Sleep in a ryokan (traditional Japanese inn) and enjoy a kaiseki dinner
- See wild snow monkeys at the Jigokudani Monkey Park
- Visit the Buddhist temple of Zenkō-ji
- Visit Matsumoto castle
- Visit a local miso experience
- Walk through the Nishiki Market and Gion Geisha District with your National Geographic Expedition Leader
- Visit the iconic Fushimi Inari Taisha Shrine
- Take part in a ramen making class
- Tour Nara including visits to the Tōdaiji Temple, Kasuga Grand Shrine and the Naramachi district
- Visit the famous Kiyomizu-dera Temple
- 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 December 6th, 2022 and onwards

## ITINERARY

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### Itinerary Notes

Prices are based on double occupancy; all other room configurations are on request and cannot be guaranteed. We will accommodate triples/quads whenever possible. Please call for further details. Family Journeys are designed for groups traveling with children between the ages of 7 and 17. Your group must include a child in order to book, and anyone under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

**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

Welcome to Tokyo—your arrival transfer to the hotel is included. Check in and get excited to meet your fellow travelers during a welcome meeting this evening where all families can bond before the Journey ahead.

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

As well, there is a lot of walking on this trip, every day - please ensure you have an average level of fitness and can walk unaided for long periods of time. A good pair of walking shoes are highly recommended.

Please note: We will use a baggage transfer service, which is included in the cost of your tour, so you will not have to worry about carrying your bags on and off trains as we travel. As such, you will not have access to your bags during the transfers from city to city, and will not be reunited with your luggage until the following day. On these days, we recommend using an overnight bag for anything you may need, including valuables.

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. Any luggage brought on board the train 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.

As this tour includes city-to-city luggage transfers, this restriction affects your carry-on luggage on board the train.



### ACCOMMODATION

The Gate Hotel Ryogoku by HULIC (or similar) Hotel



### TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY

Your opportunity to meet your National Geographic Expedition Leader 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.

Airport Transfer **Tokyo**

You will be transferred from the airport to your start hotel. Please note your arrival transfer is included from both Haneda and Narita Airports.

Day 2

## TOKYO

Today, we'll see Tokyo from a local's perspective, traveling by public transit. We start from a traditional Japanese taiko drumming class. Hear how these traditional wooden drums are made and learn three different playing techniques. Put your newly acquired skills to the test during a group performance together with a professional Wadaiko drummer. Later a visit to the serene Meiji Jingu shrine, dedicated to the spirit of Emperor Meiji. Then hit the streets of the buzzing Harajuku district, where kitschy-cute street fashion and candy-colored wigs are the order of the day.

Wear your comfortable shoes - today we will get around by public bus, metro and on foot.



### Meals included

Breakfast



### ACCOMMODATION

The Gate Hotel Ryogoku by HULIC (or similar) Hotel



### TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Metro Tokyo

Get around underground via public transit.

Meiji Shrine (Meiji Jingū) Visit Tokyo

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.

Harajuku Visit Tokyo

The Harajuku district is known as the centre of Japanese youth culture and fashion. Here, find dozens of shopping and dining options including independent boutiques and larger international luxury stores.

ACTIVITY

Take part in a Taiko drumming class facilitated by a professional Wadaiko drummer. Learn how wadaiko is made, the history of Taiko, how to stand (posture), kamae instruction (the stance), and how to hold the drumsticks. Learn and practice three different styles and then perform together as a group.

Asakusa Walk Tokyo

Discover this historic entertainment district on a guided orientation tour of the area. Take in one of Tokyo's iconic sites with a stop at Sensoji temple.

Day 3

## TOKYO

Learn Japanese secrets to longevity in a cooking class on Okinawa cuisine, originating from the Japanese island reputed to have the highest life expectancy in the world. Prepare a selection of dishes using typical ingredients and learn about the beneficial qualities of each. Savour your creations for a nutritious lunch and spend the rest of the day discovering Tokyo at leisure.

Wear your comfortable shoes - today we will get around by public bus, metro and on foot.



### Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch



### ACCOMMODATION

The Gate Hotel Ryogoku by HULIC (or similar) Hotel



### TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Metro Tokyo

Get around underground via public transit.

#### ACTIVITY

Learn about the Okinawan diet and lifestyle during a hands-on cooking class and demonstration. Residents of this Japanese island are known for their long lifespans; adopting their practises might improve your quality of life and help you avoid the onset of common diseases as you age. Prepare a selection of dishes and learn about the typical foods in this diet.

Free Time Tokyo

Enjoy some time to explore the city on your own. Opt to visit Ueno Park or head to the top of the Tokyo Tower and take in stunning views of the city.



### Optional Activities - Day 3

Ueno Park Visit

Tokyo

Free

As Japan's most popular city park, Ueno is known for its museums and cherry blossoms. Stroll the pathways, admire the thousands of trees, including approximately 800 Somei-yoshino cherry trees, look for lotus on the pond, or opt to visit the temples and museums (entrance fees).

Tokyo Tower Visit

Tokyo

1200-3000JPY

Completed in 1958, the Tokyo Tower symbolized the rebirth of Japan as a post war economic power. Standing 13 metres taller than the Eiffel Tower, it has 2 observation decks which offer stunning views of Tokyo and the surrounding area. On a clear day, if you're lucky, you can even catch a glimpse of Mount Fuji!

This morning, take a crash course in Japan's national sport: sumo wrestling! Get initiated into this explosive martial art, which originated as a religious ritual more than a thousand years ago. Learn about the wrestlers' rigorous routine and mindboggling calorie intake, earn basic technique and watch Sumo wrestling. After the class, journey to Nagano, the beautiful mountain city that hosted the 1998 Winter Olympics. Settle into our historic ryokan – or traditional Japanese inn – located just outside the city, in the hot springs town of Shibu Onsen.

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), and kaiseki meals (often served in the comfort of your own room); a ryokan is the perfect place to experience traditional customs and local immersion. The Ryokan is a simple, traditional Inn with few amenities and shared facilities, have fun and enjoy this relaxing opportunity to learn more about Japan's unique customs.

Wear your comfortable shoes - today we will get around by public bus, metro, train and on foot.

Also, please note, you will not have access to your main luggage for approximately 24 hours, as we utilize Japan's takkyubin service to conveniently and reliably transfer luggage from Tokyo to Nagano 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 per passenger is permitted on the luggage transfer. If you have more, there will be an additional charge of approximately \$20USD per bag at the traveler's expense.



## Meals included

Breakfast | Dinner



## ACCOMMODATION

Issa no Komichi Biyu no Yado (or similar) Ryokan



## TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Metro **Tokyo**

Get around underground via public transit.

## ACTIVITY

Learn all about the history of sumo with a former Sumo wrestler. Wearing a traditional Sumo belt, go through sumo training and learn basic moves of this ancient martial art.

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.

Local Train **Nagano - Shibu Onsen** 1h

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

Free Time **Shibu Onsen**

Enjoy some free time to wander through this traditional hot springs town.

Day 5

## NAGANO

Nagano is home to the Japanese macaque, or snow monkey – one of the only primate species that can survive below freezing temperatures. Venture to Jigokudani Yaen Koen (Snow Monkey Park) to watch these furry simians scampering about the rocks or taking a soak in one of the thermal pools, fed by natural hot springs. Then head into Nagano city to explore the 7th-century Buddhist temple of Zenkoji, home to the very first Buddha statue brought to Japan.

Wear your comfortable shoes - today we will get around by public bus, metro, train and on foot.



### Meals included

Breakfast



### ACCOMMODATION

Hotel Metropolitan Nagano (or similar) Hotel



## TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

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.

Local Train

Shibu Onsen – Nagano

1h

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

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.

Free Time

Nagano

Enjoy some time to explore the city on your own.

Day 6

## NAGANO

Travel to Matsumoto for a visit to one of Japan's most treasured castles. Known as the "crow castle" for its imposing black exterior, the Matsumoto fortress dates back to the 16th century and was once a stronghold of the samurai, Japan's elite military class. Later, visit Ishii Miso, founded in 1868 at the end of the Edo era, and see how they are still producing miso by a unique traditional method. Check out massive wooden barrels and learn about Miso— a soybean paste and essential ingredient in Japanese cuisine. Nagano Prefecture is known as the top producer of miso in Japan. Let's have a taste of Miso soup and even Miso ice cream!

Wear your comfortable shoes - today we will get around by train and on foot (to/from the Miso Foodie Experience).



### Meals included

Breakfast



### ACCOMMODATION

Hotel Metropolitan Nagano (or similar) Hotel



### 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 its 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.

#### ACTIVITY

Miso Foodie Experience is where we can learn all about why Miso is so important in Japanese culture, food & health in Japan. In National Geographic Traveller Magazine, Nat Geo agrees in the article Five

Ways with Miso that Miso is quintessentially Japanese yet it is super versatile. Miso is fermented food so it is very healthy. In this foodie experience, suitable for all ages, taste delicious Miso soup straight from the source and see for yourself how great this Japanese specialty is. We'll even try Miso ice cream. In Japanese, we say "oishii" when something is delicious!

Local Train

Matsumoto - Nagano

1h30m-2h

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

Day 7

## NAGANO/KYOTO

Hop on the bullet train to Kyoto, which served as Japan's imperial capital for more than a millennium. Delve into the aromatic alleys of Nishiki Market, one of the most popular food markets in the city. Opt to sample local specialties like barbecued quail, soy milk donuts, sesame ice cream, and more, taking your taste buds on a culinary roller coaster. This evening, venture to Gion, Kyoto's renowned geisha district. As you wander its lantern-lit streets, you might catch a glimpse of a geisha – traditional female entertainers recognizable by their distinctive makeup.

As the Imperial capital, Kyoto is an essential part of any visit to Japan. Kyoto has some of the most magnificent temples in Japan which date back centuries. There are said to be 2,000 temples, shrines, palaces, museums and traditional gardens in Kyoto. Wander past huge wooden structures and multi-storied pagodas, all linked with famous walkways.

Wear your comfortable shoes - today we will get around by train and on foot.

Also, please note, you will not have access to your main luggage for approximately 24 hours, as we utilize Japan's takkyubin service to conveniently and reliably transfer luggage from Nagano to Kyoto 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 per passenger is permitted on the luggage transfer. If you have more, there will be an additional charge of approximately \$20USD per bag at the traveler's expense.



### Meals included

Breakfast



### ACCOMMODATION

Holiday Inn Kyoto Gojo by IHG (or similar) Hotel



### TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Bullet Train

Nagano - Kyoto

3h

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

Nishiki Market Visit **Kyoto** 1h

Take a walk through the famous Nishiki Market renowned as the best place to get your hands on Kyoto's most famous street food.

Gion Walk **Kyoto**

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.

Day 8

## KYOTO

This morning, pay a visit to the Fushimi Inari shrine, located just outside of Kyoto. Dedicated to the Shinto god of rice, this beautiful temple is known for its Senbon Torii – a stunning walkaway of vermilion-colored gates. Later, dive into another fun-filled cooking class, rolling up your sleeves to make a steaming bowl of ramen noodles.

Wear your comfortable shoes - today we will get around by public bus, metro and on foot.



### Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch



### ACCOMMODATION

Holiday Inn Kyoto Gojo by IHG (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.

#### ACTIVITY

Learn about the history and cultural aspects of Ramen during a lunch time cooking class. This includes, Japanese life and Ramen, Ramen types and variety, brief explanation about the ingredients used and the cooking procedure, a “Ramen Making Experience” (making ramen from scratch under guidance of one or two guides depending on the group size) which includes: making/draining the noodles, making chashu. The best part? Enjoy your creation for lunch! and you will get a recipe later!

Free Time Kyoto

Enjoy some time to explore the city on your own.



## Optional Activities - Day 8

Tofukuji Temple Visit

Kyoto

500-1000JPY

This Zen temple located south-east of Kyoto City was founded in 1236 by the Fujiwara clan during the Kamakura period. While this is one of the most popular temples to visit in Kyoto at any time of the year, it's particularly popular when the autumn colours are at their finest!

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 9

## NARA

Spend the day discovering ancient Nara, where Japan's first capital was established in the early 8th century. Immerse yourself in the ornate halls of the Todaiji temple, and gaze upon the largest bronze Buddha statue in the world, standing nearly 50 feet tall. At Kasuga Taisha, Nara's most celebrated shrine, stroll romantic walkways lined with hundreds of bronze and stone lanterns, and wander amid the gardens of Nara Park, where herds of semi-domesticated deer roam free. Check out the shops and galleries of the Naramachi district before returning to Kyoto.

Wear your comfortable shoes - today we will get around by public bus, metro and on foot.



### Meals included

Breakfast



### ACCOMMODATION

Holiday Inn Kyoto Gojo by IHG (or similar) Hotel



### TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Local Train Fushimiinari-eki - Nara 1h15m

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

Tōdai-ji Buddhist Temple Complex Nara

Explore the famed Tōdaiji Temple which features the largest bronze Buddha in the world.

Kasuga Grand Shrine Nara

Visit this Shinto shrine originally built in 768 AD by the Fujiwara family. This stunning shrine is famed for its hundreds of bronze and stone lanterns.

Local Train Nara - Kyoto 1h15m

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

Unleash your inner warrior this morning with a lesson on samurai swordplay. Learn how to wield a Japanese sword and witness an unforgettable performance by masters of kembu, or sword dance. In the afternoon, explore the picturesque Kiyomizudera temple, perched on a hilltop near a sacred waterfall. There is much to keep you busy here: ring giant prayer bowls, sip holy water – said to have wish-fulfilling qualities – or muster the courage to walk through the Tainai Meguri, a lightless underground tunnel that symbolizes the visitor's journey to enlightenment. This evening, celebrate your Japan adventure at a farewell dinner.

Wear your comfortable shoes - today we will get around by public bus, metro and on foot.



## Meals included

Breakfast | Dinner



## ACCOMMODATION

Holiday Inn Kyoto Gojo by IHG (or similar) Hotel



## TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

### ACTIVITY

Gain an understanding of kembu, an ancient art form that honours the culture of the Japanese warrior class, the samurai. Watch kembu masters practice this delicate artform and learn for yourself the basic moves of properly using a Japanese sword. It's said that in feudal times, samurai would perform these traditional routines to build courage and improve concentration, thereby expressing the spirit of the warrior.

Kiyomizu Temple Visit Kyoto

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.

Day 11

## KYOTO

Depart any time.

There are no planned activities today and you are free to depart at any time.

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### **Meals included**

Breakfast

## What's included

- Your Welcome Moment: Welcome Moment - Meet Your Expedition Leader and Group
- Your Family Journeys Moment: Traditional Taiko Drumming Class, Tokyo
- Your Family Journeys Moment: Okinawa Cooking Class, Tokyo
- Your Family Journeys Moment: Sumo Wrestling Class, Tokyo
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- Visit the famous Kiyomizu-dera Temple
- All transport between destinations and to/from included activities

## What are the main highlights of this trip?

Take part in a traditional taiko drumming class, Learn about the health benefits of the Okinawan cuisine, Meet and train with a former sumo wrestler, Watch wild snow monkeys bathe in hot springs, Learn all about miso, Delve into delicious Japanese cuisine while creating your own ramen, Encounter fearless deer in the gardens of Nara Park, Learn about the legendary swordsmanship of the samurai

## Itinerary Notes

Prices are based on double occupancy; all other room configurations are on request and cannot be guaranteed. We will accommodate triples/quads whenever possible. Please call for further details.

Family Journeys are designed for groups traveling with children between the ages of 7 and 17. Your group must include a child in order to book, and anyone under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

## What are the main highlights of this trip?

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

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 view a final copy of your Trip Details 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?

Prices are based on double occupancy; all other room configurations are on request and cannot be guaranteed. We will accommodate triples/quads whenever possible. Please call for further details.

Family Journeys are designed for groups traveling with children between the ages of 7 and 17. Your group must include a child in order to book, and anyone under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

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

All parents/guardians are required to supervise their children at all times throughout the tour and may not leave their child under the supervision of the Expedition Leader, local guides, drivers, etc. Children are not to be left unattended.

Please note that on all Family Adventures one adult can only accompany up to two minors. If you have over two minors planning on travelling then a second adult will be required to attend.

### 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).

### RAIL PASS

A Rail pass is not included on this tour.

### LUGGAGE SIZE RESTRICTION

All G Adventures tours in Japan use the world-famous Shinkansen bullet trains, which have a restriction on maximum luggage size. Any luggage brought on board the train 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.

As this tour includes city-to-city luggage transfers, this restriction affects your carry-on luggage on board the train.

### 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 role of the group leader during this trip?

All National Geographic Family Journeys with G Adventures group trips are accompanied by two of our National Geographic Expedition Leaders. The aim of the Expedition Leader 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?

## **What meals are included in this trip?**

10 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 dinners

## **What are the meals like on this trip?**

Eating is a big part of traveling and we encourage you to experience the vast array of wonderful food that is available out in the world. Its important to remember, that food may be different from what you are used to at home and that some things may not be available in other countries.

Some meals are included in the trip price, while others are not, to allow flexibility and choice to you and your family. For non-included meals our Expedition Leaders will still make arrangements for the group to eat together, which allows you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though. For all trips please refer to the meals included and budget information for included meals and approximate budget (per person) for meals not included.

Throughout this trip, breakfast is included daily (ranging from continental to buffet depending on the trip), as are healthy, local snacks. Tap water is safe and drinkable everywhere. Please remember to bring your own refillable bottle and refill at the start of each day.

Note that any special meal requirements or dietary restrictions need to be specified at time of booking.

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

Bullet train, express train, local train, ferry, metro, taxi, public bus, 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 transportation 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 solo 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. Odd number adult travellers in your family will be paired in twin accommodation with another adult traveller of the same sex for the duration of the trip.

## **Where will we stay during the trip?**

Hotels (9 nts), traditional Inn (1 nt)

## **Will I get my own room?**

By request only.

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

Rooming is based on double occupancy (2 passengers / 2 beds per room); all other room configurations are on request and cannot be guaranteed. We will try to accommodate triples/quad requests whenever possible and it's important to note that rooming configuration can change from city to city and 2 single beds are the standard configuration in a room.

Please remember that hotel/lodge standards can be different from what you are used to in your home country, which is part of the appeal of adventure travel.

Japan is one of the most populous countries in the world and space is at a premium. Therefore, hotels rooms are small! Additionally, most Japanese hotels do not have designating non smoking rooms. Therefore, we ask hotels to deodorize rooms before check in.

## 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.

An arrival shuttle bus is included when you arrive on Day 1, or if you arrive up to two days prior provided that you have booked your pre-accommodation through National Geographic Journeys in our joining hotel. Due to customer experience and quality considerations, all services related to the tour must be continuous.

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

Luggage restrictions on the included shuttle bus:

Maximum 2 suitcases or boxes per person are allowed to be accommodated free of charge except below items:

- Ski equipment
- Golf set
- Snowboard

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), look for a note or bulletin board in the reception with a note from your Expedition Leader. This note will give the details of your Welcome Meeting on day 1 (usually between 5pm and 7pm), where you will get a chance to meet your Expedition Leader and other travellers, as well as learn more about how the tour will run. If you don't see a note, please ask reception for details!

If you are arriving later and will miss the Welcome Meeting, your Expedition Leader 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, please refer to the emergency contact details provided in this dossier and contact us as soon as possible. If you have a pre-booked transfer, and you have not made contact with our representative within 30 minutes of clearing customs and immigration, we recommend that you make your own way to the Starting Point hotel, following the Joining Instructions. Please apply to your travel agent on your return for a refund of the transfer cost if this occurs.

## 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?

You will be on the move a lot, so our advice is to pack as lightly as possible. Your baggage should be clearly labelled and restricted to one soft compact suitcase, sports bag, or backpack. A daypack is also essential for carrying everyday items. There is a limit of one main piece of luggage per person. Porters may not always be available, so be prepared to carry your own bags (at hotels).

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 the train 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. As this tour includes city-to-city luggage transfers, this restriction only affects your carry-on luggage on board the train.

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.

# 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 winter months (Nov-Apr) the mountains can be very cold, so please make sure you pack warm clothes. During summer, (Jun-Sep) temperatures are very hot and humid. Lightweight breathable clothing is recommended. It is important to pack clothes for warm days and cool evenings, as well as a light waterproof jacket. Layering is essential. We're working with our accommodation partners to reduce single-use plastic on our tours by providing safe drinking water for refillable bottles wherever possible. Find out more about our Plastics Partnership Project [here](https://www.gadventures.com/about-us/responsible-travel/plastics-partnership-project/).

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

Laundry facilities are offered by some of our hotels for a charge or ask your Expedition Leader where the closest laundromat is. 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 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 Expedition Leaders work hard to make your trip special. If you're happy with their service, a tip of \$8-\$12 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?

## Tokyo

- Ueno Park Visit (Free)
- Tokyo Tower Visit  
(1200-3000JPY per person)

## Kyoto

- Tofukuji Temple Visit  
(500-1000JPY per person)
- Kinkaku-ji Golden Pavilion Visit  
(500JPY 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 Expedition 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 Expedition Leader, 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 group leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it deemed necessary, due to safety concerns. Your Expedition Leader 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 and explore at your leisure. While your Expedition Leader 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 judgement 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. 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 Expedition Leaders 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. [Read more about travel safety](#) for ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling.

## What are the trip specific safety considerations?

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.

## 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 people in the sex trade is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our Expedition Leaders have the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they utilize the services of paid sex workers, in any capacity.

## Is travel insurance required for my trip?

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 leader, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy we require that at a minimum you are covered for medical expenses including emergency evacuation and repatriation. A minimum coverage of USD200,000 is required. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. Some tours include adventure activities that require extra coverage (e.g. crampon use); please review your itinerary and make sure that you are covered for all included activities. 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 should I dress to respect local customs during the tour?

In Japan, the dress standard is more conservative than it is back home. We ask that you dress respectfully and avoid very short shorts/skirts and singlets/tanktops when visiting temples, shrines or other religious sites. Ask your Expedition Leader for more specific advice.

## 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.

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

Minimum age of 7 years for this trip.

## 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 National Geographic Signature Specialist 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.