

Overseas Adventure Travel[®]

THE LEADER IN PERSONALIZED SMALL GROUP ADVENTURES SINCE 1978

Your O.A.T. Adventure Travel Planning Guide[®]



Japan's Cultural Treasures

2026

Japan's Cultural Treasures

YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

BEGIN YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

3 nights in *Tokyo: Ancient & Modern Traditions*

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Day 2 Arrive in Tokyo, Japan

Day 3 Explore Tokyo • Visit Bonsai Garden
• Tsukiji Outer Market visit

Day 4 Tokyo • Explore Yanaka district •
Visit Ueno Park

Day 5 Tokyo • Optional Kamakura tour •
Begin main trip

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Afternoon/Evening: Depart the U.S. today on your overnight flight to Tokyo, Japan.

Day 2 Arrive Tokyo, Japan

- Destination: Tokyo
- Accommodations: Shizutetsu Hotel Prezio Tokyo Tamachi or similar

Afternoon: An O.A.T. representative will greet us at the Tokyo airport upon arrival and assist with your transfer to our hotel in Tokyo. There we'll meet our Trip Experience Leader and fellow travelers, including those who took our optional *Tokyo: Ancient & Modern Traditions* pre-trip extension and those who arrived early in Tokyo before the main adventure.

Dinner: On your own tonight. Your Trip Experience Leader will be happy to recommend a few of his or her favorite local restaurants to try.

Evening: On your own. This is a great chance to begin getting acquainted with the city, or you may choose to stay in and eat at the hotel and rest after your flight.

Day 3 Explore Tokyo • Meet former sumo wrestler

- Destination: Tokyo
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Shizutetsu Hotel Prezio Tokyo Tamachi or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll meet with our Trip Experience Leader for an orientation walk after breakfast. Then, we'll return to our hotel for a Welcome Briefing.

After the briefing, we'll drive to witness a demonstration of sumo wrestling by two former wrestlers, beginning with a ritual of purification and eventually engaging in combat. Sumo has been the most popular form of sports entertainment in Japan for the last 1,000 years, making it integral to local culture. During an

interactive demonstration, which we'll have the opportunity to participate in if we would like, we'll learn about the history of sumo, the rules, as well as its connection to the Shinto religion. Throughout our conversation, we'll have the opportunity to ask questions of these impressive athletes and learn about their own perspectives on the sport.

Lunch: We'll stay on at the sumo house and enjoy *Chanko*, a hot pot dish traditionally consumed by sumo wrestlers to maintain their competitive physique. This hearty soup typically features a chicken broth base, large quantities of protein, and vegetables such as daikon and bok choy. To increase the calorie intake, wrestlers typically pair this meal with large quantities of rice. This is a unique opportunity to eat the food of choice for sumo wrestlers right alongside them and ask any questions we may have.

Afternoon: After lunch, we'll sit down with one of the former wrestlers to discuss his experience and to learn sumo traditions—an exclusive O.A.T. feature.

Next, we'll visit Meiji Shrine, a Shinto holy place. The shrine was erected in honor of Emperor Meiji, who came into power in the 19th century when the shogunate powers fell. It was under his leadership that Japan adopted modern customs and became a serious world power. As we explore the tranquil surroundings, we may even witness one of the shrine's daily Shinto ceremonies.

After our explorations here, we'll head back to the hotel, and you'll have the remainder of the afternoon free to explore as you wish. Perhaps you'd like to get a taste of different sections of the city, in which case you may want to join the 14 million Tokyo residents who use the subway. Ask your Trip Experience Leader how you can obtain a pre-paid pass called "*Suika*." For a more relaxed afternoon, perhaps you'd

like to learn a few Japanese phrases from your Trip Experience Leader and try them out as you wander in and out of shops.

Dinner: On your own this evening. Your Trip Experience Leader will be happy to provide recommendations.

Evening: You may choose to join your Trip Experience Leader for an elective walk to visit a local Izakaya, a casual Japanese bar that also serves snacks (if a local Izakaya is not within comfortable walking distance of the hotel, your Trip Experience Leader will recommend that you enjoy an Izakaya experience on another evening of your adventure).

Day 4 Tokyo • Taiko drumming experience

• Explore Asakusa

- Destination: Tokyo
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Shizutetsu Hotel Prezio Tokyo Tamachi or similar

Activity Note: Because of limited space, we recommend you pack an overnight bag on Day 4 for the next two nights in Hakone. On Day 5, the rest of your luggage will be transferred to the following hotel in Kanazawa. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for details.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll begin our day with a culturally immersive experience: riding the Tokyo subway. We'll join residents of the city on their morning commutes, participating in one of the world's busiest public transportation systems. Our journey will take us to a local taiko studio.

Taiko are traditional drums that have been used throughout Japan's history—from setting the beat for marching armies to adding a tempo to boisterous festivals. Upon arrival, we'll be greeted by the taiko drum master. We'll learn from the master about the significance of

this musical instrument in local culture, and later observe a short performance. We'll even get to try our hand at drumming with a short intensive introduction to the art form followed by time to perform patterns and rhythms on our own, as well as within the group. After our immersive musical experience, we'll then hear from the drum master about their personal relationship with drumming, as well as the concerns about keeping this longstanding tradition alive.

Next, we'll walk around the well-known district of Asakusa. As we explore this part of the city, we'll see where old meets new. While the appearance of Asakusa retains its historical charm, we'll find modern innovations in the district's shopping area. We'll stroll down streets that host more than 100 shops, which sell everything from kitchen appliances to hand-cut glass. We'll also visit the Asakusa Temple, the oldest temple in Tokyo, which will give us some architectural and cultural insight to this ancient city.

Lunch: On your own in Asakusa. Your Trip Experience Leader will provide recommendations for some local spots to grab a bite.

Afternoon: You have the option to continue exploring Asakusa with your Trip Experience Leader, or return to the hotel by subway. For those who stay in Asakusa, you might choose to visit one of the many historical shrines and temples in the area or perhaps visit a nearby rice cracker shop.

Dinner: We'll gather for a Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant, featuring traditional Japanese food such as *sashimi*, local vegetables, *tempura*, and more (menu may change depending on location of our Tokyo hotel).

Evening: Free to spend as you'd like.

Day 5 Travel overland to Hakone • *A Day in the Life of Ashigara*

- Destination: Hakone
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel Recove Hakone or similar

Activity Note: Please pack a smaller, carry-on size bag for our two nights in Hakone. Our larger luggage will be sent to Kanazawa ahead of us as the bullet train we will take on Day 7 has limited space.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll drive to the mountain region of Hakone, located about 55 miles southwest of Tokyo.

Along the way, we'll make a stop in Ashigara, where we'll participate in *A Day in the Life*. This is a great chance to see what life is like in the Japanese countryside, where day-to-day rhythms continue on much as they have for decades. Our first stop is to a local market run by the town, where we'll get a sense of the various types of fruits, vegetables, and traditional snacks that are sold there.

We'll next continue on to the Seto Community House. The house previously belonged to the Setos, a Samurai family that helped lead and protect the town for more than 300 years. Under the Samurai system, locals were required to pay a "resident rice tax" to the Samurai family in exchange for this protection. In 1955, a descendent of the Seto family donated the house to Ashigara, and since then it has been used as a community center. The grounds feature a children's playground and watermill, and the house often hosts seasonal festivals and local artists' exhibitions. Despite these changes in function, you can see still a prominent vestige of the house's past: a special front gate,

beyond which no one besides the Samurai and his family were allowed to pass. Happily, today the center is now open to all.

During our time here, we'll be greeted by a group of local women and given a tour of the house. Then, it's time to roll up our sleeves learn how to make a traditional Japanese meal. With the local women as our instructors, we'll learn how to properly wash and cook rice using firewood, and then prepare our very own rice balls. We'll also help make an authentic miso soup—all in the 300-year-old kitchen of Seto Community House.

Lunch: We'll sit down with our hosts for a lunch of rice balls and miso soup, served with fresh and pickled vegetables. With the help and translation of our Trip Experience Leader, we'll chat with the women about their childhoods in Ashigara, their daily routines now, and their concerns about the town's traditions fading away in the face of modernity. Our small group size allows us this in-depth, culturally immersive experience.

Afternoon: After lunch, we'll enjoy some free time to explore the grounds and the village beyond it. You might pause to pay your respects at the village temple and graveyard, or simply admire the scene of a quiet country rice paddy.

We'll bid our hosts goodbye and continue on to Hakone, checking into our hotel upon arrival. You'll have some free time to relax and settle in before dinner. Perhaps you'd like to enjoy the on-site *onsen*, a traditional Japanese bathing facility featuring hot spring water.

Dinner: At the hotel, featuring traditional dishes.

Evening: The evening is free for your own discoveries.

Day 6 Hakone • Boat ride on Lake Ashi • Wood workshop visit • Controversial Topic: Unraveling the mystery of the Japanese geisha

- Destination: Hakone
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel Recove Hakone or similar

Activity Note: Alternative activities may be substituted for some of today's visits depending on weather conditions.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: This morning, we'll drive to Lake Ashi, a scenic crater lake situated along a wall of the Mount Hakone caldera. This caldera is a complex volcano which last erupted approximately 1,000 years ago. The lake and surrounding area draw many visitors each year for a number of recreational activities, such as hiking, boating, camping, and of course, fishing. We'll set out on a boat ride (weather permitting) to admire the mountain scenery and learn about important landmarks in the area, such as the sacred Kuzuryu Shrine.

Afterwards, we'll disembark and board the bus for a short ride to *Hamamatsuya*, a workshop specializing in wooden handicrafts. There, we'll meet with the owner of the shop, who is the fourth generation in his family to carry on this well-established business. We'll see the creation of the elaborate woodwork of *Hakone Yosegi Zaiku*, a special product of Hakone featuring complex inlaid designs using varying shades of wood. After the demonstration, we'll have the opportunity to ask the owner any questions we may have about this exquisite artistry.

Lunch: At a local restaurant in Hakone.

Afternoon: After lunch, we'll walk to a nearby hotel. Here, we'll meet a local madam, or "mother" — a woman responsible for the management and development of a group of local geisha. She will share with us the intricacies of the world of geisha during this **Controversial Topic**. While some Westerners confuse geisha with prostitutes, our speaker will break down these misconceptions and stereotypes. A geisha is a woman who is highly trained in the arts of music, dance, and entertaining. We will learn how women wishing to become a geisha must spend many years learning to play various traditional instruments, sing, and dance, as well as the art of being the perfect hostess—which includes storytelling and attentiveness.

Our speaker will tell us the history of the geisha and how its popularity as a profession has dwindled in recent years. The population of active geisha in Japan has decreased from around 17,000 in the 1970s to just around 500 today. During this presentation, we'll have the opportunity to ask the mother geisha any questions we may have. Afterwards, we'll enjoy a performance of traditional geisha dancing.

Then we'll drive to our hotel, where we'll enjoy free time for the remainder of the afternoon. Check with your Trip Experience Leader for ideas. Of course, you're in the land of hot springs, so should you be interested in a soak, Hakone is a wonderful place to indulge in this relaxing pastime.

Dinner: We'll regroup at the hotel restaurant for dinner.

Evening: After dinner, your Trip Experience Leader will provide introductions to Japanese culture through practices such as *origami* (the art of paper folding), *kendama* (a traditional toy game), and *shuji* (Japanese calligraphy). If time permits we may even have the chance to learn a local dance from your Trip Experience Leader.

Day 7 Hakone • Overland to Tokyo • Bullet train to Kanazawa

- Destination: Kanazawa
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel Kanazawa or similar

Activity Note: Find the rest of your luggage waiting at our hotel in Kanazawa this afternoon.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll leave our hotel and drive to the train station in Tokyo, where we'll board a bullet train—the legendary high-speed train service that revolutionized travel in Japan.

The Japanese call this train the *shinkansen*. It is one of the world's finest quick-transit trains, and still among the fastest trains in the world, traveling at speeds of up to 200 mph. Prior to boarding, you will need to stand at a precise location indicated by your coach and seat accommodations. The train stops exactly where indicated and sure enough, your coach will be right in front of you. After boarding the bullet train at Tokyo Station, we'll enjoy views of Japan's rolling countryside and modern cityscapes on our journey to Kanazawa.

Lunch: On your own today at your convenience. We suggest doing as the Japanese do: Buy a packed lunch (called *eki-ben*) in the station and enjoy it on the train. *Eki-ben* lunches are one of the attractions of train travel in Japan and usually include rice or noodles, vegetables, and sushi or meat.

Afternoon: We arrive at Kanazawa station and transfer to our hotel. After checking in, we'll take an orientation walk. Then, the rest of your afternoon is free for your own discoveries.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: We'll return to our hotel, after which you are free to explore the surrounding area on your own or head back to your room to retire for the night.

Day 8 Kanazawa • Visit Kenrokuen Garden • Explore Omicho Market • Visit gold leaf factory

- Destination: Kanazawa
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel Kanazawa or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We begin our exploration of Kanazawa with a panoramic tour of this historic city.

Between the 16th and 18th centuries, Kanazawa was a prosperous castle town in the domain of Kaga, ruled by the Maeda Family, and it has been one of the cultural centers of Japan ever since. Located on the coast of the Japan Sea, Kanazawa was spared much of the destruction that World War II brought to the country. It is famous today for its unique architecture, exquisite Kaga-style handcrafts—including silk-dyeing and lacquerware—delicate regional cuisine, and the Kenrokuen Garden, one of the most treasured in Japan. We start our tour with a visit to this very garden, opened to the public in 1875 and one of the most visited garden spots in all of Japan. Here, we'll have the opportunity to admire garden landmarks such as the mid-18th century Kaisekito Pagoda, the two-legged stone lantern of Kotoji Touro, and the placid waters of Kasumi Pond.

Then, it's on to the Omicho Market. This spacious, indoor market is comprised of stalls selling fresh produce, seafood, meat, and various specialty dishes. We'll peruse the offerings, sample local cuisine, and mix and mingle with local shoppers.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: After lunch, we'll walk around the Higashi Chaya District, a traditional neighborhood known for its teahouses. We'll then head to our next destination to experience one of Kanazawa's most famous art traditions—gold leaf. We'll visit the headquarters of Hakuichi, a local company famous for its gold leaf production—and we'll meet one of the experts who will give us an introduction to this intricate craft. We'll then get a hands-on lesson and learn how to apply the shimmering foils ourselves, creating postcards to take with us. Afterwards, we'll visit Hakuichi's showroom to view the gold-leaf artworks on display, including an impressive golden Samurai costume.

You have the rest of the afternoon to make your own discoveries. One site you may want to visit for the remainder of the afternoon is 16th-century Kanazawa Castle, the former headquarters of Kaga Domain, a feudal estate in Edo period Japan. The castle is built on the highest ground between the Sai and Asano Rivers, giving it a strategic advantage in times of defense.

Dinner: On your own tonight—your Trip Experience Leader will recommend some of his or her favorite local restaurants.

Evening: You're free to make your own discoveries. Perhaps you'll observe the local nightlife on an evening stroll, take advantage of the hotel amenities, or retire early to rest up for tomorrow.

Day 9 Kanazawa • Optional Gokayama tour

- Destination: Kanazawa
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hotel Kanazawa or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today you have the freedom to spend a day in Kanazawa as you wish, making your own discoveries in this historic city. Or you can join us for an optional full-day excursion to Gokayama, a mountain village—and a UNESCO World Heritage Site—in the forested countryside outside of Kanazawa.

Because of its relative isolation, this area developed independently of the rest of Japanese society, resulting in a unique culture and lifestyle. In addition to creating their own dances, festivals, and traditions, residents developed a distinctive architectural style known as *gassho-zukuri*. Characterized by steeply pitched thatched roofs that are both striking and functional, these dwellings are considered to be some of the most efficient farmhouses in Japan—and we'll discover why as we explore the 20 or so houses of the Ainokura district this morning.

After our discoveries here, we'll learn the art of *mochitsuki*, the traditional ceremony of rice-cake making, using a wooden hammer to achieve the correct texture. *Mochi* is made of mochigome, a short-grain glutinous rice and can be served in a variety of flavors. Afterward, we'll enjoy our hard work and indulge in this national delicacy. Then, we'll visit a workshop and local community center to see how *washi*—a thick, fibrous paper made from mulberry bark—is created. This traditional paper is known to last 1,000 years. After learning how it's done, we'll try our hand at creating *washi* paper postcards, personal creations we'll be able to take home with us.

Lunch: For those who do not take the optional tour, lunch is on your own today. Be sure to check with your Trip Experience Leader beforehand for suggestions. For those who do join the optional tour, we'll enjoy a traditional lunch of *soba* (buckwheat noodles) at a local restaurant.

Afternoon: After lunch, those on our optional tour continue on to a local *Gasshō-zukuri*-style house in the area, known for its thatched, steeply slanted roof. During our visit here, we'll learn more about the history and culture of Gokayama, and enjoy a traditional dance performance called *Kokiriko*, given by a local family. Our group will be welcomed and encouraged to participate.

The remainder of the day is free for your own discoveries.

Dinner: On your own tonight. Perhaps you'd like to browse the surrounding area to seek out a local specialty.

Evening: You're free to spend the evening as you wish.

Day 10 Kanazawa • Home-Hosted Visit: Tea with a local family • Train to Kyoto

- Destination: Kyoto
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel Vista Premio Kyoto Nagomitei or similar

Activity Note: Accommodations in Kyoto are quite small and often not wide enough to fully open a suitcase. Today's **Home-Hosted Visit** will not include lunch with the family, lunch will be included at a local restaurant following our visit.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: After breakfast, we'll depart for a **Home-Hosted Visit** with local families who live in various sections of the city. This is a rare opportunity to witness the everyday lives of typical residents of Kanazawa and glimpse authentic Japanese culture. Some of our hosts are accomplished tea ceremony masters, are skilled in Japanese calligraphy, cultivate *bonsai* trees, or fold *origami*, and will be happy to share these talents with you.

During our enlightening cultural exchange, we'll have the opportunity to browse family photos, learn about our hosts, and converse about various Japanese traditions over a cup of tea, a tradition that is central to Japanese culture. Your hosts may or may not speak some English, but you will find that some forms of communication are universal. Get creative with hand gestures, or perhaps employ some of the new phrases you learned during your time in Japan.

We'll then take taxis to Kanazawa train station.

Lunch: At a local restaurant in the station.

Afternoon: After lunch, we'll embark on the train ride to Kyoto. Kyoto was Japan's imperial capital from the eighth to 19th centuries. It remains an important cultural center—and has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site—and we'll have five full days to explore its many wonders.

After settling in to our hotel, you may join our Trip Experience Leader for an orientation walk around the hotel's vicinity.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: After dinner, you're free to make your own discoveries or retire to your room.

Day 11 Kyoto • Arashiyama Bamboo Grove • Kinkakuji • Nijo Castle

- Destination: Kyoto
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel Vista Premio Kyoto Nagomitei or similar

Activity Note: Arashiyama Bamboo Grove, Kinkakuji Temple, and Nijo Castle are popular sites and can be crowded.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll head to Arashiyama today. Upon arrival, we'll set off on walk through Arashiyama Bamboo Grove, where we'll see massive bamboo stalks. This is one of the most photographed sites in the city, and visitors come from all over the world to be dwarfed by these towering plants. Our morning visit will give us an opportunity to enjoy the grove during a quieter time of day with fewer crowds.

We'll next drive to visit Kinkakuji Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The striking architecture of Kinkakuji, also known as the Temple of the Golden Pavilion, dates from 1397, when it was built by the third shogun (military commander) of the Ashikaga Shogunate. The reflection of the pavilion on the water of the adjacent pond produces an iconic view.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: After lunch, we'll step back into Japan's feudal past during a visit to Nijo Castle (Nijō-jō), a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Nijo Castle was built in 1603 as the Kyoto residence of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first shogun of the Edo Period, a shogunate dynasty that would rule Japan for the next two and a half centuries. Being so close to the might of the Emperor in the nearby Imperial Palace, Ieyasu didn't rely on just walls and moats to fortify his castle. As insurance against treachery, he had "nightingale floors" installed, floorboards that would creak when walked upon by intruders, along with concealed alcoves where his bodyguards could keep watch. The 400-year-old buildings and gorgeous gardens of Nijo Castle offer a rare glimpse into the early Edo period.

Dinner: On your own—check with your Trip Experience Leader for restaurant recommendations.

Evening: Free to make your own discoveries. One activity that may interest you is heading to Gion, the famous entertainment district and geisha quarter. A great way to experience this area is to stroll through the 17th-century-style streets in the early evening, taking notice of the traditional tea houses and lantern decoration.

Day 12 Kyoto • Nara • Matcha tea experience

- Destination: Kyoto
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel Vista Premio Kyoto Nagomitei or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today we'll join our Trip Experience Leader on a visit to Nara, which was the capital of Japan before Kyoto and Tokyo. While here, we will visit Todaiji Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

As we approach Todaiji Temple's Daibutsu-den Hall, you will perhaps first notice its massive size, as it is the largest wooden building in the world. It is also one of the major historic temples in Japan and contains valuable artifacts. Here, we'll admire the Daibutsu—an impressive 52-foot Buddha statue. As we continue to explore Todaiji, we'll likely notice another unique feature of its park area: its tame, free-roaming deer, which were traditionally regarded as the messengers of the Shinto god Kasuga. If you want a close-up introduction to them, you can purchase *shika senbei* (special biscuits) to feed them, but be prepared to be very popular with these lovely creatures when you offer them food.

Lunch: At a local restaurant in Nara.

Afternoon: Afterwards, we will drive to Uji Fukujuen and visit a local tea company, where we'll learn about Japanese tea culture. The

staff will demonstrate the intricate process of making green tea, showing us how to prepare the matcha for ourselves using a whisk. While enjoying our matcha with a sweet, we'll be able to ask further questions about the history and cultural significance of matcha tea in Japan.

We will then drive back to Kyoto. The remainder of your day is free for your own exploration.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: You're free to do as you wish.

Day 13 Kyoto • Visit Zen Temple

- Destination: Kyoto
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel Vista Premio Kyoto Nagomitei or similar

Activity Note: This day includes an uphill walk of 200 steps with a handrail to reach Senkoji Temple.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today we'll drive to Togetsu Bridge and then make our way to Senkoji Temple. At this 400-year-old temple, we'll have a chance to practice Zen meditation with a monk.

Zen is a branch of Buddhist thought that is built around the idea that divine wisdom resides in each person; meditation techniques are used to reveal this inner divine nature. Typically meditation consists of simple sitting and breathing practices that are meant to calm the mind and allow the practitioner's focus to shift away from the mundane.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: After lunch, you're free to enjoy the rest of the day on your own.

Dinner: On your own tonight—feel free to ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Evening: Free to do as you'd like.

Day 14 Kyoto • Visit Fushimi Inari Shrine • Meet a sushi chef

- Destination: Kyoto
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel Vista Premio Kyoto Nagomitei or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: This morning we will visit Fushimi Inari Shrine, one of Japan's most iconic sites. Comprised of a winding path of 10,000 vermilion *torii* (gates), the shrine snakes its way up a heavily forested mountain.

After our explorations here, we'll take a local train to Kyoto Station. Here, we'll meet a talented sushi chef and learn about his or her life. Sushi is perhaps the most iconic Japanese dish, usually prepared with rice, seaweed, raw fish, and various vegetables. While we learn about this culinary art form, we'll have an opportunity to ask any questions we may have about the art of sushi-making, and take part in a hands-on experience.

Lunch: Our small group will sit down to dine on the sushi we helped to prepare.

Afternoon: Continue to enjoy the rest of afternoon on your own. Kyoto is home to a tremendous number of religious sites—nearly 400 Shinto shrines and 1,700 Buddhist temples—for you to discover. Or, for a look at some of the artwork these ancient religions have inspired, you can view Shinto and Buddhist art at the Hosomi Art Museum.

Dinner: We'll celebrate our Japan travel experiences during a Farewell Dinner at a local restaurant.

Evening: You're free to continue making your own discoveries. Perhaps you want to continue celebrating your adventure with your group or retire to your room to rest before traveling the following day.

Day 15 Return to U.S. or begin post-trip extension

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: You will transfer to the airport in Osaka for your flight home.

If you're continuing on our optional post-trip extension to *Hiroshima: City of Peace*, you'll transfer by bullet train this morning, while travelers taking our optional *Osaka to Hiroshima by Bullet Train* post-trip extension will transfer to Osaka via private motorcoach.

END YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL POST-TRIP EXTENSION

3 nights in *Hiroshima: City of Peace*

Day 1 Bullet train to Hiroshima, Japan • Visit Peace Memorial Park

Day 2 Hiroshima • Optional *Islands of the Inland Sea* tour

Day 3 Hiroshima • Explore Miyajima

Day 4 Hiroshima • Return to U.S.