Walking with sightseeing in Japan



Trip style:	Destination:	Walking Grade	Carbon Footprint:
Walking with sightseeing	Japan	4	3420kg CO2

HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Let us take you on an unforgettable journey through Japan, a land where spiritual sanctuaries and timeless traditions sit seamlessly alongside bold, neon-lit cities with one foot in the future. We'll experience tech-fuelled Tokyo before journeying to a land of samurai, sake, and haiku-inspiring scenery. Visit Kyoto's tranquil zen gardens, walk along one of Japan's oldest roads, follow Asuka's ancient monuments trail, and take in a wealth of beauty spots such as Arashiyama – home to the famous bamboo forest. Cherry blossom dates with special itinerary including Mt Fuji available in 2027. (see itinerary tab for full details).

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Marvelling at Japan's modern side in Tokyo and Osaka
- Walking the historic Nakasendo Way and Yamanobe-no-michi trail
- Exploring temples and shrines in ancient Kyoto, Nara, and Asuka
- Spotting snow monkeys at Yudanaka Onsen's hot springs
- Lunch at Dawn Avatar Robot café, a social enterprise in Tokyo employing people who cannot participate in a traditional workplace
- Private tea ceremony in Kyoto

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Local Tour Manager who leads walks and sightseeing
- 13 nights' accommodation in multiple locations
- One night in a Japanese Royokan (hot spring inn)
- 13 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 12 dinners
- All sightseeing and entrance fees (as per itinerary)
- All transport to and from walks
- Luggage transfers when train travel is included
- Return flights from London with baggage and transfers (if booked)

ITINERARY - ITINERARY

Day 1 **Depart the UK**

Depart the UK on an overnight flight to Tokyo.

Day 1 **Main Season**

Cherry Blossom season is one of the highlights of visiting Japan; however, any time of year is perfect, and we have many dates to choose from. If you are looking for colourful displays then Japan's landscapes of Maple, ginkgo, and beech trees create dazzling displays along the historic Nakasendo Trail, while Osaka Castle and Kyoto's streets are framed by autumn leaves. Join one of our autumn tours from the end of October to end of November and experience Japan during the season of golden light and fiery colour.

Day 2 **Arrival in Tokyo**

Your Local Tour Manager will meet the group on arrival at Haneda airport and transfer you to your hotel. Depending on flight arrival times there is a welcome dinner tonight or tomorrow evening to celebrate the beginning of a wonderful adventure and to provide an opportunity to meet your fellow travellers

Day 3 **Tokyo**

Explore Japan's present-day capital on a subway and walking tour that begins with Meiji Shrine which honours the deified spirits of Emperor Meiji and Empress Shoken, who led Japan's modernization. A forest of 100,000 trees donated by the Japanese people provides a large tranquil green space in the otherwise busy city. From here we take the subway to the Ginza area where we will explore the old and the new side by side with upscale department stores alongside traditional craft shops. From here we will head to a very special lunch experience at the Dawn Avatar Robot Café which provides employment for housebound people who are unable to work in a traditional way but pilot your robot waiters remotely. By dining at the café, we are supporting this unique use of technology to employ people rather than remove jobs. After lunch we take the subway to Nihonbashi historic district looking out for traditional shrines and bridges. For a great view of the city, we head to the Tokyo Tower, a Red and white lattice structure, reminiscent of the Eiffel Tower.

This evening, we head to the chaotic Shibuya Scramble – the busiest pedestrian crossing in the world. At night this crossing is electrifying with massive screens and neon lights. We will also visit the Hachiko bronze statue of an Akita dog renowned for his exceptional loyalty, as he waited daily for his deceased master outside the Shibuya station for a decade. From here it is a short walk to dinner at Kaikyaya by the sea.

Day 4 Yudanaka Onsen and the Snow Monkeys

Distance: 3.5 miles (6 km)

Travel by coach from Tokyo to the traditional hot spring village of Yudanka Onsen, nestled in the mountains of Nagano, stopping along the way for lunch at a local restaurant. We'll visit Jigokudani Monkey Park where we hope to spot the famous snow monkeys. The park is open all year round however, the monkeys don't always bathe in the hot springs. It is dependent on the temperature. Your Tour Manager will be checking the movements of the monkeys before our visit. There is a lovely 30 minute walk through a cedar and pine tree forest to get to the entrance of the park. There is also a café and a gift shop.

Day 5 Nakasendo path to Tsumago

Distance: 3 miles (4.5 km)

Ascent: 400ft (120m)

This morning we travel into the remote Kiso Valley with the Japanese Alps nearby, an area of high peaks and volcanoes, fertile valleys, mountain and ski resorts, and traditional villages. Over the next two days we walk from village to village, staying in a hotel nestled in the highlands of Mount Kisokoma. Our luggage will be sent ahead to Kyoto, and we'll carry a daypack with overnight items. We start near Nagiso, one of eleven post towns along the Kiso Valley section of the Nakasendo. Post towns were resting places where travellers could find accommodation and food as they walked between Kyoto and Edo (as Tokyo was then called). Forested trails lead us to the charming post town of Tsumago, one of the prettiest and best-preserved in the area.

Day 6 Nakasendo path to Magome

Distance: 5 miles (8 km)

Ascent: 1,200ft (365m)

Descent: 590ft (180m)

We'll continue our walk to the village of Magome over the Magome Pass, stepping through cedar forests and ascending hilly terrain.

In Magome, you'll have some free time to explore and have lunch – we recommend you try the Gohei mochi. Later, we journey by coach and train to Kyoto, the western end of the Nakasendo Path, and transfer to our accommodation.

Day 7 Around Kyoto

The once-upon-a-time capital of Japan, Kyoto is bursting with must-see historic buildings and gardens. Walk along the Philosopher's Path, a delightful canal-side walk lined with cherry trees and a number of temples. We'll end up at Nanzen-ji temple, home to an excellent example of a zen garden, with time to explore independently.

Then we explore Gion, Kyoto's best-known geisha district, where hopefully we'll see a geisha/geiko or maiko (apprentice geisha) making their way through the narrow streets.

Day 8 Arashiyama

Today we travel by coach to the north-western area of Arashiyama, designated by the Japanese government as a Place of Scenic Beauty.

Our walk begins at the Adashino Nenbutsu-ji Temple, continuing through temple precincts, past local craft shops and gorges, and through the famous bamboo grove to Tenryu-ji, Arashiyama's most significant temple.

Day 9 Independent Exploration of Kyoto

Today is free to explore Kyoto independently until later this afternoon when we will attend a private tea ceremony.

Kinkaku-ji (the Golden Pavilion) – surrounded by a Japanese garden, this temple was originally built by the Ashikaga Shogun at the end of the 14th century.

Ryoan-ji – a UNESCO World Heritage Site with a famous rock garden.

Fushimi Inari shrine – on the southern fringes of the city you'll find this Shinto shrine, where hundreds of torii gates snake up the hillside. It's easily reached by light rail.

Nijo castle – a fascinating UNESCO site, which provides some insight into the days of the shogun in Kyoto.

Higashiyama district – in addition to the beautiful 'Yasaka pagoda', these atmospheric back lanes offer a wonderful opportunity to shop for traditional crafts and souvenirs.

Private Tea Ceremony

In the afternoon we'll meet back at the hotel and travel to the charming Ninenzaka district for a private tea ceremony where we'll learn about the history and philosophy of this ancient practise, plus the health benefits of matcha. We'll watch a demonstration, make our own matcha and then sample it with a traditional sweet.

Day 10 Nara

Our luggage is sent ahead as we'll travel by train to Nara, Japan's first permanent capital. It's home to wow worthy UNESCO World Heritage temples and shrines, including Todai-ji Temple, which we'll visit after winding our way along the shops and, if time and the schedule allows, stopping to see mochi being made the traditional way. Spend time in Nara Park, too, where tame deer wander freely.

Day 11 Walking the Yamanobe-no-michi

Distance: 10 miles (16km)

Explore the area around Nara, walking along a section of one of Japan's oldest roads. Celebrated in the Nihon-shoki – the ancient histories of Japan, similar to the Domesday Book – the Yamanobe-no-michi skirts the mountains and meanders through villages past ancient temples and shrines. Walking on a mixture of paved and dirt trails and village roads, we'll step into another element of Japan's fascinating heritage.

Day 12 Asuka Ancient Monuments Trail

Distance: 8 miles (13 km)

Ascent: 1,375ft (420m)

Descent: 1,390ft (425m)

We travel by train to Asuka, known as the spiritual home of the Japanese people. Our walk explores the village and surroundings, introducing us to its important landmarks, including ancient burial mounds. We then continue by train to our hotel in Osaka.

Day 13 Osaka

See all the sights in Osaka, known as the working heart of Japan. Visit the Shitenno-jo Temple, one of the oldest in Japan, followed by Osaka Castle. Once we've built up an appetite, it's time to head out on a street food tour around the famous Dotonbori area, known for its neon lights and vibrant nightlife – as well as tasty treats like Takoyaki, lightly fried pieces of batter-covered octopus.

Day 14 Bullet Train to Tokyo

We return to Tokyo today, travelling on the famous Shinkansen – bullet train. You'll have time to yourself before meeting up for our final dinner together, and a look back on our adventures in the Land of the Rising Sun.

Day 15 Departure Day

After breakfast, we transfer to the airport.

DAILY WALK OPTIONS



Gentle walking grade 4

The most active Gentle grade, with longer walks, some ascent, and possible steps, stiles, or off-path uneven ground. Typically, 6-7 miles (10-12km) with around 1,000ft (300m) of ascent.

ACCOMMODATION

Hotel Nikko Nara - Nara - Japan - 2026/2027

Hotel Nikko Nara offers 330 guest rooms with bright and relaxing interiors. Guest rooms offer both air-conditioning and heating facilities. Each room is equipped with a fridge, an electric kettle, free WiFi and a flat-screen TV with satellite channels. Tōdai-ji temple and the Nara Park can be reached within a 30-minute walk from the hotel. A public bath, gym, spa and massage facilities are available for guests, and bicycle rental is available. The property offers Japanese-style breakfast featuring local specialities.

Biyu no Yado Ryokan, Yudanaka Onsen - Japan 2026/2027

A relatively large ryokan with just under 50 guest rooms, Biyu no Yado is just a 10-minute walk from Yudanaka station. Most appealing here are the spacious onsen (natural hot springs) complete with gender-specific indoor and outdoor communal baths which are open round the clock. All rooms have en-suite bathrooms, tatami matting, and on-floor futons. Dinner is a multi-course kaiseki affair with dishes created using fresh and local ingredients. A Japanese breakfast is served in the dining room.

Hotel Groove Shinjuku - Tokyo 2026

Part of the Park Royal collection this 4-star hotel has stylish rooms which feature unique art and music inspired décor. At the top of the hotel is the Tenku Spa where you can relax and rejuvenate after the hustle and bustle of Tokyo. Rooms come equipped with all mod cons and the rain shower adds that extra touch of relaxation. What's more, the

hotel's location in the centre of Tokyo puts you right next door to the most popular shops and restaurants.

Morino Hotel – Nakasendo - Japan 2026/2027

Nestled in the highlands of Mount Kisokoma, Morino is a 3-star hotel surrounded by natural beauty. There is an indoor public bath house and a sauna situated in the forest, plus a relaxing lounge area where you can enjoy tea or coffee. There's also a garden where you can take in the stunning views of the surrounding mountains. Rooms have a refrigerator and digital TV.

Holiday Inn – Kyoto Gojo - Japan 2026/2027

This 4-star is a new addition to Kyoto and is well positioned for many of the cultural heritage sites. Located in the lively Gojo district known for its well-preserved machiya (traditional wooden townhouses), the Holiday Inn puts you in easy reach of chic cafes, art galleries, and a museum. Rooms are modern and comfortable with free Wi-Fi, a smart TV and a pillow menu.

Hotel Onyado Nono Nara – Nara - Japan - 26 March, 2 April, 19 and 28 October 2027 only

This 3-star ryokan onsen style hotel has a fully equipped natural hot spring bath and a sauna. Tastefully decorated rooms with light wood fixtures have free Wi-Fi and a refrigerator, and all promise a comfortable nights' sleep. In the morning, enjoy breakfast that is a combination of Japanese and Western dishes.

Miyako City Osaka Tennoji – Osaka - Japan 2026

Conveniently located near a metro station, this 4-star hotel is a good base for exploring Osaka. The Sky Restaurant Etoile on the top floor of the hotel has fabulous panoramic views of the city and there is a lobby lounge and café where you can unwind and enjoy snacks and sweet desserts. Rooms are classically decorated and have humidifiers and air purifiers. Breakfast is a buffet with Japanese and Western dishes served in the Sky Restaurant Etoile.

Karaksa Hotel Grandé Shin-Osaka Tower – Osaka – Japan 2027

With easy access to shops, cafés and restaurants, the location of this stylish modern hotel is one of its many merits. Comfortable, soundproofed rooms overlook Osaka's city skyline and offer air-conditioning, mini fridge, TV and free Wi-Fi. Bathrooms have shower alcoves or showers over small baths. Complimentary drinks including coffee, tea, juices and sodas are available in the Gochisou-SUN restaurant area from afternoon until late evening and there is also is a sauna and public bath area.

Sheraton Miyako Hotel Tokyo - Japan 2027

Part of the Marriott collection, this stylish 4-star hotel pairs traditional Japanese design with modern comfort. On-site, you'll find a Japanese garden, plus a fitness centre and pool, ideal for unwinding after a busy day of sightseeing. Spacious rooms come well-equipped while the hotel's several restaurants and bars serve everything from Japanese favourites to international dishes. Set in one of Tokyo's most upmarket neighbourhoods, the hotel is surrounded by plenty of greenery and is well placed for visiting all the area's cultural highlights.

SAFETY ON YOUR HOLIDAY

Safety information

Please inform us of any medical situation which may affect your enjoyment of the holiday. This is important because our leaders must consider both group and individual safety at all times.

Whilst out with the group, we respectfully request that you:

- Please listen to any safety instructions and other directions from the leader
- Keep group members in view, especially if weather or visibility is poor
- Please stay where you are if you become separated from the group. The leader will retrace their steps to find you.

Each leader carries a first aid kit but is not allowed to supply any medication including aspirin, paracetamol, antihistamines and antiseptic cream. You may wish to bring these items with you in your own kit (see Suggested Kit List).

In the unlikely event that your leader is incapacitated, please use any emergency kit in their rucksack and call emergency services.. Please then call our emergency number (sent in your final dispatch) and let us know there is a problem.

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Dietary requirements for Japan Guided Walking Holiday

Most meals will be Japanese cuisine and it is unlikely western dishes will be widely available. Vegetarian options are available, but limited. Strict vegetarian diets, vegan diets, or gluten free diets may not be accommodated due to the pervasiveness of the fish-based stock dashi and the use of soy sauce and miso in Japanese cuisine.

Please note that cross contamination cannot be guaranteed and removing elements such as dashi or bouillon is generally not possible. Of course, we will request special diets at all accommodations, however these must be received at the time of booking and you should be aware that certain dietary requirements may limit your dining options in Japan.

If you have dietary restrictions due to religious reasons then please let us know. Please note it may not be possible to offer any special meals to clients who inform us of this on arrival.

Please contact us as far in advance as possible if you have any specific dietary requirements and we will do our best to meet your needs.

If you require a specific meal on the flight, please let us know as soon as possible, and no later than 96 hours before travel.

Please note that the Morino Hotel used on Day 5 of the tour cannot provide allergy substitutions; they remove the restricted ingredients and serve only the remaining portions of the meal. Guests with dietary restrictions are permitted to bring their own food if necessary.

VACCINATIONS & HEALTH

Vaccinations & health information for Japan

Before booking, you should check with your doctor to see if any health precautions are needed.

The following websites provide a wealth of information on travelling and health:
http://www.travelhealthpro.org.uk or www.redplanet.travel/mdtravelhealth

Vaccines: Tetanus vaccination is recommended.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

Passport & Visa information for Japan

The visa waiver system was reactivated from 11 October 2022, which means that short-term visitors with British Citizen passports no longer need to obtain a visa prior to travelling. This includes those coming for business, tourism, and to visit family and friends. Visas are still required for long-term stays and other purposes; please consult your nearest Japanese Consulate for guidance and how to apply.

Prior to travelling to Japan, you must submit information to the Japanese authorities before you fly via the Visit Japan Web site.

Further details can be found in the section on vaccination status below, on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website and Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare website including the Q&A

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Packing list

Japan's weather varies greatly by season, requiring layers for mild spring/autumn, light breathable fabrics for hot/humid summers (May-Oct), and warm layers/jackets for cooler winters (Nov-Apr) with potential snow in some areas.

Essentials

- Lightweight clothing in warmer months
- Insulated jacket/tops for cooler months
- Walking clothing
- Walking socks (plus spares)
- Sunhat for warmer months
- Gloves/mitts and warm hat only in cooler months
- Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity)
- Headtorch
- High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30)
- Insect repellent
- Sunglasses
- Rucksack (15-30 litres)
- Mobile phone
- Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.)
- Passport
- Visa (if applicable)
- Copy of your travel insurance policy

Recommended

- Camera
- Collapsible walking poles if you prefer to use them
- Snacks for bus journeys

Optional extras

- Small mat to sit on during rest breaks on walks

JOINING INSTRUCTIONS (WITH FLIGHTS)

With flights

Book your holiday 'with flights' and you can choose to depart from selected UK airports* to your destination. For latest flight times and prices please call us on 0203-974-8865 or email reservations@hfholidays.co.uk

If you choose to book your flights with us, we automatically include return transfers between the destination airport and hotel.

JOINING INSTRUCTIONS (WITHOUT FLIGHTS)

Travel independently

If you prefer to book the holiday without flights and make your own travel arrangements you will still be able to make use of the return group transfers between the airport and hotel, which are included in the cost of your holiday. You must contact us on +44 (0)20 3974 8865 or email reservations@hfholidays.co.uk at least 8 weeks before your holiday start date to provide your flight details if you wish to join the transfers. If you do not contact us, we will assume you are making independent travel arrangements.

If you are arriving ahead of the group, and are meeting them at the first hotel, please leave a message at the hotel reception for the HF Holidays' leader or local leader, detailing your room number, and a mobile telephone number if possible. The leader will contact you once the group arrives. If you are arriving after the group, a message will be left for you at the hotel reception, welcoming you and giving details of the time and place to meet the group.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so before you travel.

For more information about healthcare and its costs, please visit: https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/

Modest dress

On your trip we advise you to dress modestly and respectfully. Both men and women should aim to cover their shoulders and knees, especially if visiting religious sites or rural areas. Opt for loose-fitting and conservative clothing to show respect for local customs and traditions.

Language Information for Japan Guided Walking Holiday

Japanese is the national language and spoken by more than 125 million people.

Japanese pronunciation is relatively easy to master for English speakers as many of its sounds are also found in English. Your local guide will happily help you learn some common phrases, but to get you started here are some basics:

'Kon-ni-chi-wa' – Hello
'Sa-yo-na-ra' – Goodbye
'Hai'/'I-e' – Yes/No
'Ku-da-sai' – Please (when asking)
'Do-zo' – Please (when offering)
'A-ri-ga-to' – Thank you
'It-a-tak-i-mas' – I gratefully receive (when receiving a meal)
'Go-chi-so-sa-ma-des-ka' – Thank you for the feast (when you have finished eating)
'Su-mi-ma-sen' – Excuse me (to get attention)
'Go-men-na-sai' – Sorry
'E-go ga ha-na-se-mas ka?' – Do you speak English?

LUGGAGE

Luggage information for Japan Guided Walking Holiday

Luggage allowance

1 piece checked-in luggage (max 30kg)

Please check details of your airline's baggage allowance, as shown on your e-ticket. Remember to also check any connecting flights you may have booked.

Please note we only include the baggage delivery for one bag or suitcase per person. This must be no more than 160cm in total size (L + W + H) and weigh no more than 25kg. Extra bags may be sent but are subject to an extra charge payable locally: this approx. ¥2,000 per bag, per transfer. In cases where luggage is oversized on collection, you will be required to divide the contents across two bags and pay for the additional bag.

Lost/damaged luggage

If your bag or its contents are damaged or lost while in the airline's care, this should be reported to the baggage service agents at the airport on arrival. They will assess the damage; in some cases, the airline may decide to settle your claim immediately.

You will be given a reference to quote to your insurance company if an immediate settlement is not possible - in many cases, baggage claims can only be accepted in writing. A baggage claim form must be obtained from the airport.

LOCAL CURRENCY

Local currency for Japan

The unit of currency in Japan is the yen (¥). Japan is very much a cash-based society and it is quite safe to carry around a lot of cash. However, credit and debit cards are now becoming much more widely accepted, particularly in hotels and restaurants, so definitely worthwhile carrying with you.

Spending money advice for Japan

We suggest that you will need around ¥5,000 per person, per day to pay for meals which are not included in the cost of your tour, plus any drinks with meals, snacks and any small gifts or souvenirs you may wish to buy.

LOCAL TIME

Local time for Japan

GMT/UTC +9 hours

ELECTRICITY

Electricity information for Japan

Japanese electricity supply is an unusual 100V, flat 2 pin plugs.

ATM AVAILABILITY

ATM availability for Japan

It can be difficult to find ATM machines that accept foreign-issued credit cards, although it is becoming easier in Tokyo. However, Postal ATMs which you can find in almost all post offices do accept most international networks.

TRIPNOTE VALIDITY

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred. In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary. The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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