



# AUDLEY

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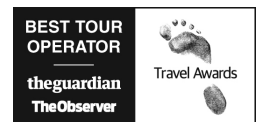
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# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE JAPAN OLD & NEW TOUR

## TOUR

There are few places in the world as fascinatingly foreign as Japan. This is an unforgettable tour of contrasting images, in a country where ancient and modern, natural and man-made, merge like nowhere else on earth.

For convenience and comfort the group will travel by a mixture of private coach and also use Japan's ultra-modern transport system: speeding between cities on the famous 'shinkansen' bullet and limited express trains. Whilst the aim is to explore all sides of the paradox - from the towering skyscrapers of Tokyo, to the secluded temples and shrines of Kyoto and Kamakura - the focus is on Japan's traditional past. You will experience the refined world of Kanazawa's gardens and museums, linger in the shadow of the great torii gate on picturesque Miyajima island and visit a UNESCO World Heritage site at Shirakawago.

Please note that in the majority of cases we will book you a twin room unless you specifically request a double room. Twin rooms are far more common in Japanese hotels and also tend to be larger. Single rooms are generally very small in Japan.

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## TOUR GUIDE & LEADER

You will be accompanied on your tour by one of Audley's western tour leaders who has experience of leading groups in Japan, and a national Japanese guide who has years of experience and excellent English ability. We have found this to be the best combination for a smooth running tour.

## CLIMATE

Due to the length of the archipelago, covering 20 degrees of latitude, Japan's climate varies greatly, ranging from Scandinavian in the north island of Hokkaido to sub-tropical in Okinawa in the far south. Essentially, Japan's four seasons resemble our own, but conditions are more pronounced, with a significantly colder and snowier winter and a much hotter summer. Autumn and spring are generally considered the best times to travel, with the wonderful cherry blossom or turning leaves adding a beautiful hue to the scenery.

## WHAT TO PACK

Spring in Japan often presents a wide range in temperatures, from a chilly 5 or 6C in the mountains or early mornings, to a warm 20C or so in Hiroshima and Kyoto sometimes. Taking layers is essential, as is a waterproof and sturdy shoes. There can sometimes be lingering snow in areas such as Takayama, so a scarf and gloves by also be useful, although hopefully not necessary.

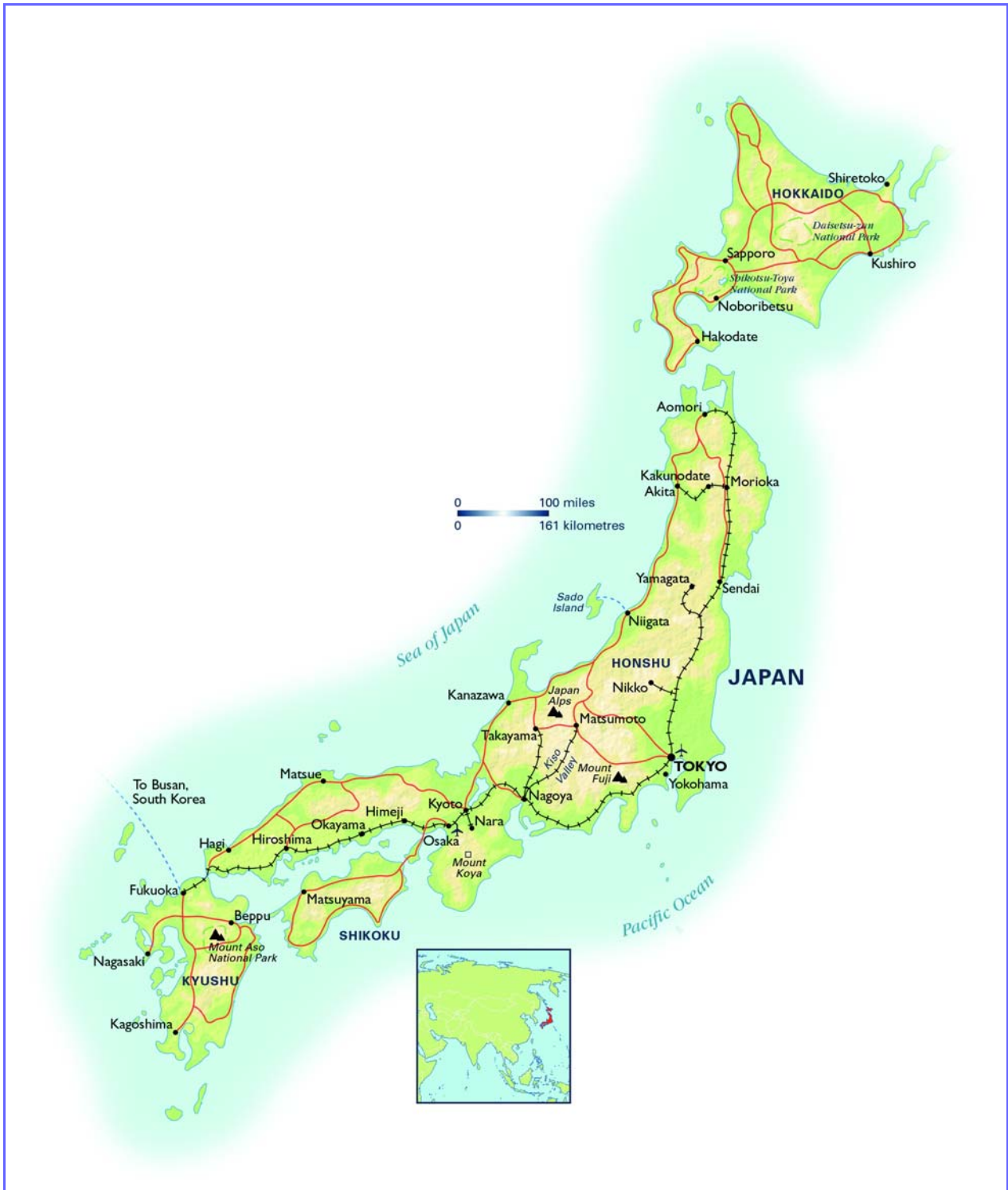
## JAPAN TEAM AT AUDLEY

Each member of the team has lived and worked in Japan for a number of years, each in a different region of the country and for varying lengths of time. We have pooled our collective knowledge, from the mountainous Alps, to the hot-springs of northern Honshu and the lush rice paddies of southern Kyushu, to create a trip that we think reflects the very best of Japan, along with drawing on experiences and feedback from past group tours. Your initial enquiry will be handled by one of our team, who will then be your main point of contact until you return from the tour. Please feel free to contact them at any time.



If you are interested in booking a place on the tour please contact our Japan team on 01993 838 210 or e-mail [JAPANGROUPTOUR@AUDLEYTRAVEL.COM](mailto:JAPANGROUPTOUR@AUDLEYTRAVEL.COM)

# MAPS OF THE REGION



# DAY BY DAY SUMMARY OF TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

DAY	DATE	ITINERARY IN BRIEF	ACCOMMODATION ARRANGEMENTS
1	<b>Thursday 01 April 2010</b>	Fly from London to Tokyo on flight JL402, departing Heathrow at 19.15 and arriving into Japan the following afternoon.	On-board the aircraft
2	<b>Friday 02 April 2010</b>	At Narita you are met by your tour leader and guide and once the full group has assembled, transferred to Tokyo by airport limousine bus. Tonight the group meets for a relaxed, informal welcome dinner in the hotel to get to know the tour manager, local guide and fellow travellers. (B,D)	Keio Plaza Hotel, Shinjuku, Tokyo Superior Room Breakfast is included
3	<b>Saturday 03 April 2010</b>	Today we explore some of the main, more modern sights of Tokyo, including Meiji-jingu shrine and Harajuku. (B)	Keio Plaza Hotel, Shinjuku, Tokyo Superior Room Breakfast is included
4	<b>Sunday 04 April 2010</b>	Our second full day in Tokyo contrasts the modern with a more traditional side to the city. This includes Asakusa Sensoji temple Imperial Palace gardens and Ueno Park.  Tonight's group dinner is at Gonpachi restaurant in the bustling nightlife area of Ginza. (B,D)	Keio Plaza Hotel, Shinjuku, Tokyo Superior Room Breakfast is included
5	<b>Monday 05 April 2010</b>	A couple of hours' drive away from Tokyo is the seaside town of Kamakura, Japan's government seat from 1192 until 1333 and celebrated for its ancient bronze Great Buddha. We continue on to Hakone National Park in the afternoon and the small village of Miyanoshita. (B)	Fujiya Hotel, Miyanoshita, Hakone Flower Palace Wing Breakfast is included
6	<b>Tuesday 06 April 2010</b>	Hakone is best explored using a variety of public transportation, including a cable car, funicular railway and local bus. The loop around the park is scenic and provides several Mt Fuji viewing spots along the way, weather permitting. We also pay a visit to the excellent Open Air Museum, which houses sculptures by Henry Moore and Picasso, amongst others. (B,D)	Fujiya Hotel, Miyanoshita, Hakone Flower Palace Wing Breakfast and dinner are included
7	<b>Wednesday 07 April 2010</b>	This morning we transfer by private coach through the Japan Alps, stopping to pay a brief visit to Matsumoto, home to Japan's oldest five tier castle. We continue on to the small city of Takayama. (B)	Hotel Associa Takayama Resort, Takayama Standard Twin Breakfast is included

DAY	DATE	ITINERARY IN BRIEF	ACCOMMODATION ARRANGEMENTS
8	<b>Thursday 08 April 2010</b>	We explore Takayama on foot today, including the Sanmachi merchant area and Festival Float Museum. (B)	Hotel Associa Takayama Resort, Takayama Standard Twin Breakfast is included
9	<b>Friday 09 April 2010</b>	Between Takayama and today's destination, Kanazawa, lies the secluded village of Shirakawago, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and home to a unique, traditional building style known as Gassho-zukuri. You have the opportunity to try your hand at Japanese cookery today as we will be making soba buckwheat noodles for lunch. We continue on to Kanazawa in the afternoon. (B,L)	Excel Tokyu Hotel, Kanazawa Standard Room Breakfast is included
10	<b>Saturday 10 April 2010</b>	The first stop today is Kanazawa's most celebrated attraction, the Kenroku-en garden, rated as one of the three finest stroll gardens in Japan. The afternoon is spent exploring some more of this convivial city. (B)	Excel Tokyu Hotel, Kanazawa Standard Room Breakfast is included
11	<b>Sunday 11 April 2010</b>	We take the express train from Kanazawa to Osaka and then change to the super-fast Nozomi bullet train to Hiroshima. On arrival we take taxis to the hotel before commencing a walking tour to the moving Peace Park and Memorial Museum, both powerful commemorations to the events of 6th August 1945. (B)  **Main luggage sent to Miyajima Island from Kanazawa**	ANA Crowne Plaza Hotel, Hiroshima Standard Room Breakfast is included
12	<b>Monday 12 April 2010</b>	This morning we make a leisurely crossing by tram and ferry to Miyajima Island, one of Japan's top three most scenic spots. We will be spending the night in a Japanese style hotel, comprising of futon beds on thick tatami mat floors, with traditional "banquet" style cuisine served in the evening. This is a great opportunity to experience traditional Japanese hospitality. The island is also very serene in the evening and pleasant to stroll round in your "yukata" - cotton Japanese robe - after dinner. (B,D)  **Main luggage sent on to Kyoto from Miyajima Island**	Miyarikyu Hotel, Miyajima Island Standard Ocean View Room Breakfast and dinner are included
13	<b>Tuesday 13 April 2010</b>	Using the ferry, local train and bullet train, we transfer to Kyoto today. For centuries Kyoto was the cultural heart of Japan and it was here that many of the finest aspects of the culture developed and flourished: the arts and crafts; the beautiful temples, palaces and gardens; and, perhaps most famously, the refined world of the Geisha. The afternoon is at leisure. (B)	Westin Miyako Hotel, Kyoto Deluxe Room Breakfast is included

<b>DAY</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>ITINERARY IN BRIEF</b>	<b>ACCOMMODATION ARRANGEMENTS</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Wednesday 14 April 2010</b>	Enjoy a full day tour to soak up the unique atmosphere of the city. (B)	Westin Miyako Hotel, Kyoto Deluxe Room Breakfast is included
<b>15</b>	<b>Thursday 15 April 2010</b>	This morning we visit nearby Nara, former capital of Japan. We visit Todaiji temple, the largest wooden structure in Japan and there is time to stroll through the surrounding deer park. The afternoon is at leisure. (B)	Westin Miyako Hotel, Kyoto Deluxe Room Breakfast is included
<b>16</b>	<b>Friday 16 April 2010</b>	This morning we visit a local home to participate in an origami and calligraphy lesson. The class is run by the Kyoto Women's Association and will be a great way to learn more about these traditional pastimes. In the afternoon we pay a visit to Shisendo temple and Sanjusangendo Hall.  Tonight for our farewell dinner, we dine at a local restaurant, which includes a dance performance by a Maiko, a trainee Geisha. (B,D)	Westin Miyako Hotel, Kyoto Deluxe Room Breakfast is included
<b>17</b>	<b>Saturday 17 April 2010</b>	This morning we transfer to the airport by private coach to connect with return flights to the UK, via Tokyo Narita. (B)	



Hanami cherry blossom picnics

## TOUR PRICE

Itinerary reference: Japan Old & New 01April 2010. *Please quote this on any correspondence*

Arrangements as specified per person	£4,800
Single supplement	£850
<b>Flight information</b>	
Per person Japan Airlines Business Class upgrade (return)	£2,350
Per person Japan Airlines Premium Economy upgrade (return)	£440
Per person reduction for arranging your own flights	-£700
Per person deposit required to confirm these arrangements	£720

### TOUR HEALTH & FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

To ensure that all participants get the most out of the tour, it is important that you are fully aware of the level of activity and fitness and medical health required to successfully complete this itinerary. Please read this dossier carefully prior to confirming your place on the tour, and having established the facts, it is your responsibility to contact us with any concerns regarding individual levels of fitness, health or ability. Please be aware that our tour leaders have the right to exclude customers from the tour if they feel they are not sufficiently fit, healthy or able to complete the tour without affecting its safety, comfort or smooth progress. If you would like to discuss any of these issues further please the Japan team on 01993 838 210 to discuss in more detail.

### ACTIVITY LEVEL – LOW/MEDIUM

A medium level of fitness is required for this trip but you should be physically active. You should be aware and prepared for all or any of the following on this trip:

- To carry your own luggage through airports and from the vehicles to hotels and vice versa. However, some portering is included as are luggage transfers when travelling by train.
- Walking up and down stairs to access train platforms.
- To join all day walking tours of cities, monuments and historic sites. (All of these are optional).
- To declare any food allergies or requirements prior to departure so that these can be incorporated into the itinerary where necessary.

### MEAL ARRANGEMENTS

Breakfast every day (x 15) is included at your hotel and dinner is included on six occasions, either at the hotel (where stated) or at a local restaurant. Lunch is included on one occasion. Your tour leader and guide will be able make suggestions for dining where this is not included.

# BOOKING INFORMATION

## HOW TO BOOK

If you are happy with the arrangements outlined within this itinerary and would like to book, please forward your completed booking form and the deposit specified above, **plus any applicable insurance premiums**. This can be paid by cheque, bank transfer or credit / debit card.

## PAYMENT BY CREDIT CARD

Please note, we do not charge a credit card fee on deposits, however, a credit card fee is charged on the balance of the price of your current trip or if full payment is made. Credit card fees are detailed within the enclosed information booklet. Please note we charge a credit card fee due to the high fees charged to tour operators by the credit card companies. We have chosen to make this transparent rather than including it within the trip price. You may therefore wish to pay the balance by bank transfer, debit card or personal cheque.

## NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

- Meals other than those stated in the itinerary
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, drinks, etc.
- Tips for your guide/ tour leader. We suggest around £40-50 per couple for the whole trip. Tips for the drivers have been included in the tour price.
- Any camera or video fees at any sites.
- Entrance fees and other costs when on 'free time'
- Future Fuel Surcharges.
- Travel Insurance

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

We believe that safety and enjoyment are equally important when travelling. It is therefore strongly recommended that you have adequate travel insurance in place before you travel; cover should include emergency medical expenses, personal accident and repatriation. In addition, we strongly recommend that you include baggage, personal liability and cancellation cover.

Audley has partnered with Endsleigh Insurance Services Limited to offer you a range of excellent policies. This is a change to the information provided in the Important Information leaflet which accompanies the printed copy of your itinerary or can be found within your online itinerary.

The Endsleigh policy includes:

- Emergency medical expenses
- Personal accident
- Repatriation
- Baggage
- Personal liability
- Overseas legal expenses
- Cancellation or curtailment charges

This policy will also cover over 80 sports and activities standard and you can add cover for more adventurous activities such as white water rafting up to grade 4, trekking up to 6,000m and scuba diving up to 40m to name a few.

This is only a summary of the cover provided. The policy document can be read in full on Endsleigh's website, which can be accessed by following the link at the bottom of the page.

It is advisable to take out your travel insurance at the time of booking your trip as cover will commence for pre-departure cancellation from the policy issue date. This will, therefore, provide cover should you have to cancel your trip for an insured reason such as illness or serious accident preventing you from travelling.

To access the Travel Insurance website please follow this link [www.endsleigh.co.uk/AudleyTravel](http://www.endsleigh.co.uk/AudleyTravel) or alternatively call the dedicated team on 0800 328 5366 and quote "Audley Travel".

# WHY TRAVEL WITH US?

## PERSONAL SERVICE

We are committed to offering you a very personal service, with all your arrangements being handled by one country specialist. They will remain your one point of contact and will take responsibility for the smooth operation of your trip. They are supported by a professional administration and management team.

## REPUTATION & QUALITY

Well over 80% of our clients have travelled with us in the past or have had Audley recommended to them. Repeat business and recommendations are an essential part of our business. When you book with us you are assured of quality arrangements if only for the fact that we simply cannot afford to risk our excellent reputation.



## RECOGNITION

We are Wanderlust magazine's 2008 Best Tour Operator and have been ranked in their Top 10 Tour Operators for the last five years. We are also the Guardian and Observer's 2008 Best Small Tour Operator – with 98.9% of the 784 people who voted for us rating us as excellent. These two awards are widely recognised as being the most respected in the travel industry as they are professional surveys of the publication's readerships. Additionally, in recognition of our enlightened staff policies we are in the Sunday Times' 100 Best Small Companies To Work For.

## COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE

In the vast majority of cases we handle all our clients' arrangements. Your visas will be processed well in advance of travel and air tickets are typically issued 2-3 weeks before travel. We are used to dealing with problems from minor flight time alterations to more fundamental changes. When problems occur we will rapidly rearrange your itinerary to make best use of your time given the changed circumstances, not simply cancel part of your trip or leave you sitting in an airport waiting for hours for a rescheduled flight. Importantly, in these situations we will do everything possible to minimise any extra costs involved – in the vast majority of cases no extra charges will be made.

## QUALITY LOCAL REPRESENTATION

We take a good deal of care when choosing our local agents, taking into account their quality of service and vehicles. We have built up many longstanding relationships with these agents, ensuring that they deliver the level of service demanded by Audley clients. Our local guides and drivers, where appropriate, are the people you will meet. In many cases we know them personally, in all cases we ensure that they are of the highest calibre. They are there to do much more than show you specific sights and provide factual information. They will be able to tell you about local life, culture, cuisines and customs; and, where applicable, act as translator. In certain parts of the world a specialist guide is more appropriate, for example, a wildlife expert.

## EXPERIENCE & ACCURACY

From the moment you contact us, we are here to answer any questions about the specific arrangements or more general queries you may have about the region. We have spent many years leading group tours, researching new trips and travelling privately. The benefit of this experience is yours throughout. When we do not know the answer to a question we will endeavour to find out and get back to you as soon as possible.

## HONESTY

The travel industry generally has a bad reputation when it comes to the provision of accurate and clear advice. Our specialisation and extensive on the ground experience means that advice given to you over the telephone and in our pre-departure literature is as up-to-date, accurate and relevant as it can be.

## DETAILED ITINERARIES

We work hard to prevent problems occurring in destinations that may be very difficult to deal with and make a point of highlighting any irritations you could experience en-route such as flight delays. Our itineraries are designed to be comprehensive and clear whilst the level of detail within this itinerary is intended to allow you to make an informed choice about the journey and to have a clear understanding of what is and is not included in the price.

## MISHAPS EN-ROUTE

If a problem does occur while you are travelling you can contact us on our 24 hour number. We will do everything in our power to rectify the problem immediately rather than allow it to spoil your trip.

## LEGAL LIABILITY

We are a UK company and hence must fully comply with UK law. When booking with us you can rest assured that your arrangements are carefully planned as we have a reputation to maintain and are legally liable for any omissions or negligent acts.

## RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

As an extension of the passion we have for the countries we specialise in, we have a firm commitment to the principles of Responsible Travel. We have been awarded AITO Responsible Travel 5 star status (the highest achievable) and continue to work with AITO and a wide variety of other bodies to improve our policy. We try to include a wide range of RT initiatives in our itineraries, from homestays and craft shops to locally owned hotels and eco-lodges, to ensure the sustainability of tourism in the destinations we operate in. For more details, please refer to our website, where you will find details of our RT policy and also our Travellers' Code. If you are particularly interested in these issues and wish to incorporate them into your itinerary, please do not hesitate to contact your country specialist:



# CHRISTINA NOBLE CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION

## AUDLEY TRAVEL AND RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Audley's responsible travel policy has recently seen a significant change; whilst the company as a whole has been supporting carbon reduction projects through Friends of Conservation since 2005, each individual department has now also been given the opportunity to support a charity of their choice with a yearly financial donation. Here in the North and Central Asia Department we have researched many different charities and, after much discussion, have elected to support the Christina Noble Foundation, working with children in Mongolia.

## THE CHRISTINA NOBLE CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION AND AUDLEY'S CONTRIBUTION

The Christina Noble Children's Foundation (CNCF) is dedicated to helping children in need with education, medical care, social opportunities, and job placement. Set up by patron, Christina Noble in 1997, when she visited Mongolia, the foundation helps impoverished children, especially street children, orphans and prison children in the capital, Ulaan Bataar. By setting up and maintaining schools, training young people in traditional skills, so that they can become self-sufficient in a variety of both traditional and modern environments and by providing sanitation, housing, and safe community spaces, CNCF touches the lives of many disadvantaged families in Mongolia.



Child in Mongolia

In September 1997, the Foundation established a shelter for street children and orphans in Ulaan Baatar. The shelter consists of six residential gers (the traditional felt tent of the Mongolian peoples), one guard ger, an office ger, two joined gers acting as cookhouse and dining room, and one large community ger. In addition, a 40-foot container, which was sent from Ireland full of clothes and medical supplies, has been transformed into a shower house with showers, toilets, hand basins and a laundry area.

Each residential ger is staffed by a ger Mother, often a single parent herself, who creates a loving home for the children. Older children help to care for the younger and assist their ger mother with simple domestic chores. At school age the children are enrolled alongside their peers at the local district school: learning within the community and gaining vital qualifications for later adult life. Children below school age attend the Foundation's kindergarten, constructed in 2002 on land adjacent to the ger village. The kindergarten also serves the wider community and provides invaluable pre-school education to children of local families.

The ger village is on the outskirts of Ulaan Baatar and is enclosed with a large 'Hasha' (fence), which helps create a small community atmosphere. CNCF doctors visit several times per week, and a team of two Managers, both themselves qualified doctors, are constantly on-hand to advise, protect and encourage the children. Wherever possible the Foundation seeks to reunite children with their families and assist the family to face the future together.

## OUR CONTRIBUTION

The Sunshine Ger Village proved so successful that CNCF set up the Give a Ger fund, which is an emergency fund established to provide families in danger of becoming homeless, or otherwise inadequately or dangerously accommodated, with a home. Many of these families live on the street, in appalling conditions. A ger, with basic furniture, can be purchased in Mongolia for USD900. IN 2003 the fund purchased gers for 51 families in Ulaan Baatar and in 2004 the campaign was extended to include the countryside, with a total of 53 families being assisted with ger housing. The gift of a ger does far more than simply remove children from squalid and

unhealthy living conditions. It gives them a new start and hope for a better future. Our department will make a £500 annual donation to CNCF and this will buy a new ger for a family. Further donations will help to furnish the ger and provide essential items for the children. We will receive progress reports about the families in the gers and look forward to letting you know about how they are getting on with their education and welfare.

It is exciting to be able to see how our money will be put into positive action. We are looking forward to inviting clients who travel with Audley to visit the gers and in particular the Sunshine Ger Village and meet those children helped by CNCF.



If you would like further information please speak to your North and Central Asia Country Specialist or have a look at: <http://www.cncf.org>



Geisha in Kyoto

## YOUR ITINERARY IN DETAIL

**Thursday, 01  
April 2010**

### LONDON TO TOKYO

Japan Air Lines flight - Flt No: JL402 - Dep: 1915 - Arr: 1500 - (next day)  
Economy class; Non-stop flight;

**Friday, 02  
April 2010**

### JAPAN INTRODUCTION

There are few places in the world as fascinatingly foreign as Japan. This is an unforgettable country of contrasting images, where ancient and modern, natural and man-made, merge like nowhere else on earth.

### Tokyo Introduction

Tokyo is a city that is hard to introduce. If you speak to people who have either lived in or visited the city, each person will have a very different impression from the others. Some will use words like 'amazing' and 'fantastic', while others will be more cautious, warning of crowded trains and perpetual hustle and bustle. However all will share one thing in common, the experience of seeing one of the world's most diverse and exciting cities, where the ultra-modern vies for attention with the historical past, Michelin starred restaurants sit alongside back-street noodle bars and smoky temples are nestled between glittering skyscrapers. Tokyo is a city of juxtaposition and contradiction and one certainly not to be missed.

### WELCOME MEETING AT AIRPORT AND TRANSFER TO TOKYO

*with your tour leader and local guide*

After passing through immigration and claiming your baggage, make your way to the Arrivals Hall to be met by your tour leader and guide. They will be carrying a sign clearly indicating the name Audley Travel. The transfer to Tokyo will be by shared limousine bus and is a journey of around two hours, during which your tour leader will give you a short briefing on the tour details. Please note there will be non-Audley passengers on this coach.

### INTRODUCTORY EVENING MEAL

*group dinner*

In the evening, as you may well still be tired after the long flight, we have dinner booked in the hotel. This is a low-key affair and an opportunity to all get together on the first night and get to know the tour leaders and your fellow travellers.

 **Keio Plaza Hotel, Shinjuku, Tokyo**  
Breakfast is included

**Saturday, 03  
April 2010**

### TOKYO CITY TOUR

*group excursion with your tour leader and guide*

Japan's modern capital has no single central point, rather it is an amalgamation of many individual districts, each with its own unique character and highlights.

Today we focus on the modern side of the city, but beginning our day with a visit to Meiji-jingu shrine, in Yoyogi Park. Meiji-jingu was first built in 1920 in memory of Emperor Meiji, who reigned until 1912. Emperor Meiji's rule was one of the most important in Japanese history and saw political, social, and industrial revolution to turn Japan into one of the great world powers. Meiji also opened up the country to international trade and commerce.

A detailed account of the State Funeral in the New York Times concluded with an observation: "The contrast between that which preceded the funeral car and that which followed it was striking indeed. Before it went old Japan; after it came new Japan". Meiji shrine is therefore a poignant starting point for our Old & New tour of Tokyo. We continue from here to Harajuku and Shibuya, two areas of the city dominated by the weird and wonderful youth culture of Tokyo, pausing to watch the spectacle of hundreds of people crossing at once at the busy Hachiko pedestrian crossing outside Shibuya train station. From Shibuya we make our way to Tokyo Tower, constructed in bright red iron. There are great views of the Tokyo cityscape from the top of the tower, ascended by high-speed lift. To top off our modern view of Tokyo, we then take the driverless mono-rail train to Odaiba, a man-made island across Tokyo Bay, with some interesting sights and fun attractions.



Asakusa shrine, Tokyo

 **Keio Plaza Hotel, Shinjuku, Tokyo**  
Breakfast is included

**Sunday, 04**  
**April 2010**

### **TOKYO CITY TOUR DAY TWO**

***group excursion with your tour leader and guide***

Our second day in Tokyo sees us contrasting some of the modern sights of the previous day with more traditional attractions. We start with a visit to the East Gardens of Tokyo's Imperial Palace, official residence of the current Emperor and Empress. Most of the palace is closed to the public but the gardens are attractive and hint at the grandeur within. From here we make our way to Asakusa, home to the smoky and iconic Sensoji temple, Tokyo's largest. The wafting incense and clanging bells create a wonderful sense of Edo (the old name for Tokyo in the 1800s) and years gone by. There is time to browse the souvenir stalls that line the walkway to the temple before heading to Hinode Pier to board a sightseeing cruise along the Sumida river. The cruise ends at Hamarikyū Gardens where we can stop for a cup of strong green *macha* tea, time permitting. The coach then returns to the hotel where there is time to freshen up before convening for dinner in the stylish area of Ginza and at one of our favourite Tokyo restaurants.

 **Keio Plaza Hotel, Shinjuku, Tokyo**  
Breakfast is included

**Monday, 05**  
**April 2010**

### **TOKYO TO HAKONE, VIA KAMAKURA**

***transfer by private coach accompanied by your tour leader and guide***

This morning we drive on from Tokyo to the nearby town of Kamakura. Just an hour south of Tokyo, this pretty seaside town was briefly the seat of the feudal government in the 12th Century, and though its importance soon faded, the remnants of its former glory are still visible in the Great Bronze Buddha and the many interesting temples and shrines that are dotted throughout town. The great image of Buddha is the principal attraction for all visitors to Kamakura, and a photographer's delight. Situated in the precincts of Kotokuin Temple, the Daibutsu is a bronze statue depicting Buddha in a seated meditative pose. It measures 11.4m in height. Leaving the town in the afternoon we drive on to our final destination, our historical classic hotel in Miyanoshita, a small village in the Hakone countryside, stopping in briefly at the Honma marquetry Museum at Odawara.

## Hakone Introduction

The Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park spreads over a large region to the south of Tokyo, encompassing the Izu Peninsula, Hakone, Mt Fuji and Fuji Five Lakes. Commonly referred to as simply the Hakone National Park, "Hakone" is the gateway to a scenic sightseeing loop, best visited utilising the good value Hakone Free Pass ticket. On a clear day there are several Fuji viewing spots in the park, which is serviced by various modes of public transportation. The park encompasses several main areas; Odawara, Hakone Yumoto, Miyanoshita, Gora, Sengokuhara, Moto Hakone and Hakone Machi with accommodation spread around all these areas.

 **Fujiya Hotel, Miyanoshita, Hakone**  
Breakfast is included

**Tuesday, 06  
April 2010**

## EXPLORING HAKONE

*group excursion using public transport with your tour leader and guide*

We will be using the Hakone Free pass ticket during our sightseeing trip around the park, which allows unlimited access to the local scenic train line, the bus network, a funicular train up Mt Kami which leads on to a gondola rope-way and a bus journey through the scenic mountains. There is also a lake crossing at Lake Ashinoko, but we will be foregoing this in order to spend more time at the Open Air Sculpture Museum in Miyanoshita.

Mt Fuji can be sighted from various points around the park, weather permitting. We begin our full circuit of the park by heading off on the Tozan railway to the small village of Gora at the foot of the mountain. From Gora we take the funicular railway ("cable car" in Japanese) up Mt Kami. Alighting here at Owakudani "Hell Valley" we walk through the bubbling sulphur vents and stop to try one of the famous black eggs, cooked in the heat of the natural thermal activity. The route continues by cable-car ("rope-way" in Japanese), providing some lovely views across Lake Ashi. Disembarking the cable-car we board a public bus to Moto-Hakone, the main small town in the region, to see the Edo era checkpoint and ancient cedar avenue. We then take the bus on to the excellent Open Air Sculpture museum at the village of Chokokunomori, around 10 minutes from the Fujiya hotel. The museum houses sculptures by Henry Moore, Picasso, Rodin and Miro and was the first open air museum in Japan, opening in 1969. The museum has over 100 sculptures (often in rotation) and an extensive indoor collection as well.



Open Air Sculpture Park, Hakone

 **Fujiya Hotel, Miyanoshita, Hakone**  
Breakfast and dinner are included

**Wednesday, 07  
April 2010**

## HAKONE TO TAKAYAMA, VIA MATSUMOTO

*transfer by private coach accompanied by your tour leader and guide*

This morning we drive by private coach through the Japan Alps into mountainous Nagano Prefecture, host to the 1998 Winter Olympics. We pay a brief visit to Matsumoto, gateway to the Japanese Alps and home to Japan's oldest five tier castle, built in 1593, before continuing on to the Alps town of Takayama. Today is the longest transfer of the tour, taking around 8 to 9 hours in total, including stops.



Matsumoto Castle

## Takayama Introduction

Nestled in the Japanese Alps, Takayama is only a small city, but of significant historic importance in the Hida district. The built up area around the station belies the hidden charm of the streets to the east of Miwagawa river, which give way to the Sanmachi District, a warren of traditional shops, museums, galleries and sake breweries, all retaining their character in a country that otherwise has embraced the modern age. The oldest buildings that remain are some storehouses (kura in Japanese) built in the 17th century. Most of the buildings in the Sanmachi District are from the late 19th century, although they retain the charm of times gone by. That said, Takayama has lost some of its charm over the past 20 years or so but the local architecture, ebullient atmosphere and culinary specialities keep visitors coming back year after year. Takayama also has an extensive wooded park and numerous shrines in the Teramachi district, which has often led to comparisons with Kyoto.

 **Hotel Associa Takayama Resort, Takayama**  
Breakfast is included

**Thursday, 08  
April 2010**

## EXPLORING TAKAYAMA

*group excursion with your tour leader and guide*

Our day is spent enjoying strolling through the atmospheric merchants' houses and museums of the Sanmachi District. Twice a year, Takayama plays host to a busy festival, with a procession of "yatai" festival floats through the centre of the town over two consecutive evenings. We will be able to see these fascinating floats up close at the Festival Float Museum and learn a little more about the history of the festival.

 **Hotel Associa Takayama Resort, Takayama**  
Breakfast is included

**Friday, 09  
April 2010**

## TAKAYAMA TO KANAZAWA VIA SHIRAKAWAGO

*transfer by private coach accompanied by your tour leader and guide*

Between Takayama and our destination, Kanazawa, lies the secluded village of Shirakawago, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and home to a unique, traditional building style known as Gassho-zukuri. We also stop in another of the Shokawa valley villages, where we will be making our own soba noodles for lunch. After passing through the mountains we arrive into Kanazawa.

For most of their history, the villages in this region have lain hidden in the deep, snowbound valleys of the northern Alps, under the shadow of sacred Mt Hakusan. The traditional style of housing, the Gasshozukuri, designed with steep, thatched roofs to withstand the weight of snow, has survived in this area long after it has disappeared from other, more accessible, areas. The region was opened up in the 1960's when the river upstream from the villages was dammed, and the subsequent highway into the mountains constructed. It was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1995, and consequently

the number of visitors, and gift shops, has increased dramatically. That said, the village of Shirakawago is still a fascinating remnant of an older Japan.


The journey passes through parts of the Hida Tunnel, which opened in summer 2008. This tunnel is a feat of Japanese engineering and the second longest tunnel in the country.

### Kanazawa Introduction

From the 15th century onwards, thanks to the wealth brought through local rice production and trade, Kanazawa has been one of Japan's foremost cultural centres. Located at the south-western base of the Noto Peninsula, just inland from the Sea of Japan, Kanazawa is the prefectural capital and quite a large, sprawling town. There are a number of interesting cultural sites that can be reached easily using the excellent bus service. These include the much-celebrated Kenroku-en Garden, ranked together with those in Mito and Okayama as the three best in Japan, the Nagamachi Samurai District, a silk-dyeing centre and the Traditional Craft Museum amongst others. You can try your hand at local Kutani pottery or visit the fascinating Myoryuji or "Ninja" temple. More recently the 21st Century Art Museum has been completed and makes a very well worthwhile detour for those wishing to view contemporary art.



Kenrokuen Garden

 [Excel Tokyu Hotel, Kanazawa](#)  
Breakfast is included


**Saturday, 10  
April 2010**

### KENROKU-EN AND KANAZAWA CITY TOUR

*group excursion with your tour leader and guide*

The first stop today, and the most important on any visit to Kanazawa, is the town's most celebrated draw, the serene Kenroku-en garden. The town is also renowned for its craftwork and we'll explore the shops and traditional stores, as well as some of Kanazawa's other attractions during the remainder of the day.

Kanazawa's number one attraction, ranked by the Japanese as one of the top three gardens in Japan, is a must-see for any visitor to Kanazawa. It is located right in the middle of town, within easy walking distance of the main shopping district and many of the other tourist sites of interest. The name Kenroku-en refers to the six attributes traditionally considered vital in the creation of the perfect garden, all of which are said to exist here. One of these, seclusion, may seem a little hard to come by at certain times of year but with a bit of luck we will be able to time our visit to enjoy in peace the beautiful combination of ponds, streams, old trees and teahouses that have made the garden justifiably famous. On one edge of the garden is the Seisonkaku Villa, formerly the residence of the local feudal lord's mother, and now open to the public as a museum.

 [Excel Tokyu Hotel, Kanazawa](#)  
Breakfast is included

**Sunday, 11  
April 2010**

## **KANAZAWA TO HIROSHIMA BY TRAIN**

***shared transfer with your tour leader and local guide***

Taking the train from Kanazawa to Osaka, we connect with the famous shinkansen bullet train and head westwards, skirting the Inland Sea, to Hiroshima, the city that has risen from the ashes of the first atomic bomb. On arrival we transfer to the hotel and enjoy an afternoon exploring the Peace Park and its museum. Total journey time will be around four hours. Please note as luggage space is limited on the bullet train we pre-book an overnight luggage transfer service, meaning your main cases will be sent on ahead to Miyajima Island, arriving the following day. You will need an overnight bag for the night in Hiroshima.

### **Hiroshima Introduction**

Hiroshima is a city which has risen from the ashes since the horrific events of August 1945 and although these events are justifiably and sensitively commemorated, the city is now one with an energetic and cosmopolitan feel. The wide tree lined avenues, castle (reconstructed), Shukkei-en gardens and of course the moving Peace Park and Memorial Museum ensure that the visitor has plenty to see and do over a couple of days here.

Nearby Miyajima Island, or Itsuku-shima as it was formally known, has been sacred to the Japanese since the inception of the first shrine on the island over fifteen hundred years ago. The present incarnation of the Itsukushima-jinja shrine is one of the island's greatest attractions, and the "floating" red torii gate that stands in the shallow waters of the bay when the tide is in remains one of the most photographed views in Japan.



Atomic bomb dome, Hiroshima

### **HIROSHIMA CITY TOUR**

***group excursion on foot by with your tour leader and guide***

Our sightseeing will focus on the powerful Peace Park and Memorial Museum, which commemorate and explain the tragic events of 6th August 1945. The A-Bomb Dome is one of the most prominent reminders of the atrocity and was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1996. From the A-Bomb Dome we cross into Heiwa-koen (Peace Park), which is dotted with various memorials, including the Children's Peace Memorial which was inspired by a young leukaemia sufferer's wish to fold 1000 origami cranes before she died. Sadly her wish was not fulfilled, but her classmates folded the rest and sparked a nationwide campaign. Strings of cranes are kept at the memorial to this day and regularly added to. We also pay a visit to the museum, which explains more about the history of nuclear warfare and goes into more detail about 6th August 1945.

 **ANA Crowne Plaza Hotel, Hiroshima**  
**Breakfast is included**

**Monday, 12  
April 2010**

## HIROSHIMA TO MIYAJIMA BY TRAM AND FERRY

*shared transfer with your tour leader and local guide*

We take the efficient city tram from the hotel to Miyajima-guchi station for the short JR ferry crossing to the beautiful Miyajima Island. The journey will take around an hour in total.

### Miyajima Island Introduction

Miyajima, or Itsuku-shima as it was formally known, has been sacred to the Japanese since the inception of the first shrine on the island over fifteen hundred years ago. The present incarnation of the Itsukushima-jinja shrine is one of the island's greatest attractions, and the "floating" red torii gate that stands in the shallow waters of the bay when the tide is in remains one of the most photographed views in Japan. The small town has a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere, particularly in the evenings and early mornings once the day-trippers have returned to the mainland. There are several other smaller temples and shrines dotted around the island that are well worth a visit and Mt Misen (530m) offers great views from its summit and is also home to troupes of wild monkeys.



Sunset over Miyajima

### EXPLORING MIYAJIMA ISLAND

*group excursion with your tour leader and local guide*

We begin our sightseeing with a visit to the shoreline to see the 'torii' gate- at its most photogenic when the tide is high but also interesting when the waters have receded and you can walk up to the huge structure and admire it close up. After some time here we explore some smaller temples dotted about the island before walking up and through to Momiji-dani valley. Please note the valley becomes slightly hilly in parts. Towards the top of the valley we reach the cable car station for the ascent up to Mt Misen (a two-stage cable car). On a clear day the views from the top are spectacular. Look out for the wild monkeys at the top of the summit; they are not tame but generally ignore the visitors milling about.

 **Miyarikyū Hotel, Miyajima Island**  
Breakfast and dinner are included

**Tuesday, 13  
April 2010**

## MIYAJIMA TO KYOTO VIA HIROSHIMA BY FERRY AND TRAIN

*shared transfer with your tour leader and local guide*

We return to Miyajima-guchi station by ferry from the island and then take a local train to Hiroshima station. Here, we board the high speed Nozomi bullet train to Kyoto, covering the 380km distance in just over an hour and half. At Kyoto station we have a short time to explore the station building itself - a striking modern design in stark contrast to the ancient temples and shrines elsewhere in the city, before taking taxis to our hotel in the Higashiyama area. Please note, as with the transfer from Kanazawa main suitcases will be forwarded from Miyajima to Kyoto and so you will require an overnight bag for the first night in Kyoto.

## Kyoto Introduction

Kyoto was the capital of Japan for over one thousand years and remains the most culturally important city in Japan. The city houses about 1,700 Buddhist temples and 300 Shinto shrines, palaces and castles, and canals and gardens. Here, modern buildings stand side by side with buildings steeped in history. Walking down narrow alleyways you can still see Japan of yesteryear with women wearing kimonos and tatami mats being hand-made. Kyoto is one of the most entertaining cities in the world with some of the best restaurants in Japan, excellent shopping and a host of cultural shows that serve to amuse and inform. No visit to Japan is really complete without seeing Kyoto.

 [Westin Miyako Hotel, Kyoto](#)  
Breakfast is included

**Wednesday, 14  
April 2010**

## KYOTO CITY TOUR

*group excursion with your tour leader and guide*

Today we enjoy a fascinating introduction to the refined delights of Kyoto. We visit some of the city's most celebrated sights, including Kinkakuji temple, Nijo Castle and the iconic Ryoanji zen garden. The precise itinerary of the day may vary somewhat, depending on conditions on the day, and any local markets or events that may be worth a diversion. Kinkakuji temple, otherwise known as the Golden Pavilion, is one most famous landmarks in the city it can get very crowded in the spring and autumn. However, it is very photogenic and a must see of the city. Nijo Castle also sees a lot of visitors but is slightly more spacious than Kinkakuji. The castle is perhaps best known for its inventive "nightingale" floors, which were fitted with a device to make them squeak, thus safeguarding the castle's occupants from intruders. The palace garden is also beautiful, designed and executed by tea master and architect Kobori Enshu. We also pay a visit to Ryoanji, close to Kinkakuji. The dry raked gravel of the Zen garden here is a collection of 15 rocks, 14 of which are visible at any one time. There has never been an explanation of the garden's design, but gazing on it may well bring enlightenment, one day!



Golden Pavilion, Kyoto

 [Westin Miyako Hotel, Kyoto](#)  
Breakfast is included

**Thursday, 15  
April 2010**

Morning at leisure

## AFTERNOON EXCURSION TO NARA

*excursion by private coach with your tour leader and guide*

Like nearby Kyoto, Nara was once the Japanese capital and a source of enormous cultural and religious outpourings. Unlike its more celebrated neighbour, however, Nara has survived relatively untouched by modern advances and remains a relaxed town dotted with temples, shrines and parkland. From the fifth and sixth centuries onwards this region was Japan's cultural heartland, and successive rulers displayed their devotion to the recently introduced Buddhist faith by building splendid temples and commissioning grand works of art. Many of these remain today, including the most famous, Todai-ji Temple, home to the great bronze Buddha housed in the world's largest wooden structure. The park is also a playground for hundreds of tame deer, which roam at will through the grounds of Todai-ji Temple.

 [Westin Miyako Hotel, Kyoto](#)  
Breakfast is included

**Friday, 16  
April 2010**

## CALLIGRAPHY & ORIGAMI LESSON

### *group excursion with your tour leader and guide*

Today you have the opportunity to learn more about two traditional Japanese pastimes- Calligraphy and Origami. The course is organised by the Women's Association of Kyoto, whose members are proud of their skills and have become masters of these crafts over 10,15 or even 20 years. They are more than happy to share these skills with you. This is a very personal experience and one which will hopefully stay with you for many years to come.

Calligraphy is a beautiful art form in Japan and for centuries was used as a practice for finer writings in everyday use. However gradually it was developed to an art and appreciated for its intricacy and varying styles. Brush strokes, including the pressure used and the direction painted, are important indications of the artists' expression and skill. You will learn to paint a Japanese character of your choice.

Origami is paper folding, usually learnt at a young age but developed to create fantastic shapes including animals or decorative boxes. The most well known origami shape is that of the crane, tens of thousands of which can be seen at the Peace Park in Hiroshima, donated by visitors over the past 60 years as a symbol of peace and in memory of a young girl called Sadako who died of leukaemia ten years after the A-bomb was dropped on the city.

## DINNER AT A LOCAL RESTAURANT INCLUDING MAIKO PERFORMANCE

### *group excursion with your tour leader and guide*

Maiko are trainee Geisha (Geiko in Kyoto dialect) who train for six years before becoming full fledged Geisha. They learn skills such as dance, singing, instrument playing as well as how to entertain guests with conversation. They attend functions at discrete tea houses throughout Kyoto and live and work in five "hanamachi" (literally flower towns) in the city. There are fewer than 2000 Geisha and Maiko in Japan today; in the 1920s there were as many as 80,000. As such a time spent in the company of a Maiko is now a rare and unique experience, open only to a select few.

Maiko perform at Ganko Nijio-en, a traditional restaurant located near to the Kamogawa River in central Kyoto, with an ornate landscaped garden dating back over 400 years. We will be dining here on a sushi and kaiseki (banquet) set menu. Please advise your specialist if you have any food allergies or special requests.

 **Westin Miyako Hotel, Kyoto**  
Breakfast is included

**Saturday, 17  
April 2010**

## PRIVATE TRANSFER FROM HOTEL TO AIRPORT

### *transfer by private coach accompanied by your tour leader*

Convene in the lobby of the hotel at a pre-arranged time (your tour leader will give you this information the night before) for the transfer to Kansai International airport. Your luggage is checked in here all the way through to London and you do not have to clear customs or re-check your bags at Narita.

## OSAKA KANSAI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TO TOKYO NARITA

Japan Air Lines flight - Flt No: JL52 - Dep: 0840 - Arr: 1005 - (same day)  
Economy class; Non-stop flight;

## TOKYO TO LONDON

Japan Air Lines flight - Flt No: JL401 - Dep: 1200 - Arr: 1635 - (same day)  
Economy class; Non-stop flight;

## IMPORTANT NOTES

- Flight times and the daily order of sightseeing are subject to change.
- Transfer times are approximate and subject to local conditions at the time of travel.
- All flight times are local.

## ACCOMMODATION INFORMATION

Your accommodation is described below. Please do not hesitate to call us if you require any further information about any of the properties. Upgraded (or simpler) options and rooms are available in many places, particularly in the main towns and cities.

### OUR ACCOMMODATION GRADING SYSTEM

<b>Basic:</b>	Very primitive accommodation where we are not aware of anything better.
<b>Simple:</b>	Clean and simple but limited facilities.
<b>Medium:</b>	A good standard of accommodation, reasonable range of facilities.
<b>First Class:</b>	A high standard of accommodation with a wide range of facilities.
<b>Deluxe:</b>	Superb accommodation with facilities and service to match.
<b>Opulent:</b>	The world's most unashamedly luxurious hotels and resorts.

The above classifications are for your guidance only; they are the opinions of our staff and are quite subjective.

### KEIO PLAZA HOTEL, SHINJUKU, TOKYO

#### *First Class*

This popular hotel is located in the heart of Tokyo's business district, just a few minutes' walk from bustling Shinjuku Station. The rooms are conventional in style and décor and many have great views of the impressive cityscape. This 1450 room hotel has a large selection of restaurants, boasting cuisine from around the world. During the summer the hotel's outdoor pool opens, and unusually for Japan, is free for guests.

Our opinion: One of Tokyo's better 'International Hotels' in Shinjuku, the capital's most vibrant locality.



Superior room

### FUJIYA HOTEL, MIYANOSHITA, HAKONE

#### *Medium*

The first Western style hotel in all Japan, the Fujiya was originally built for foreign travellers at the end of the nineteenth century, and is now made up of several different buildings all constructed at various times over the past 100 years. Each of the four wings has a character unique to the period, but we have identified the Flower Palace (built in the 1930s) as the most pleasant, with large rooms furnished with classic solid teak furniture. However the newer Forest Lodge is also comfortable and large. The hotel has indoor and outdoor pools, two restaurants, a famous tea lounge and even more famous curry! The current manager has translated information about the hotel and the surrounding area into English.



Fujiya Hotel, Miyanoshita

Our opinion: The emphasis here is on faded charm and the Fujiya is definitely in need of a face-lift. However, a sense of history permeates the entire hotel and it is a good characterful choice for those who don't mind a little shabbiness.

Please note: There is a cover charge for the hotel bar.

## HOTEL ASSOCIA TAKAYAMA RESORT, TAKAYAMA

### *First Class*

Set back from the town in the deep forests and high mountains of the Japan Alps, the Associa Hotel offers luxurious facilities in a peaceful and secluded location. The hotel has a couple of fine restaurants, and like many Japanese resort hotels has excellent indoor and outdoor onsen bathing facilities, an integral part of any Japan experience. The rooms are spacious and tastefully decorated, and on a clear day offer spectacular views over the Japan Alps. The hotel runs a regular complimentary shuttle service from Takayama Station, or alternatively you can jump in a taxi (approx 8 mins, JPY 2,000) for the short run into the hills.

Our opinion: Though slightly out of town, the hotel has good facilities, and is a great place to relax and unwind away from the hustle and bustle of the town.

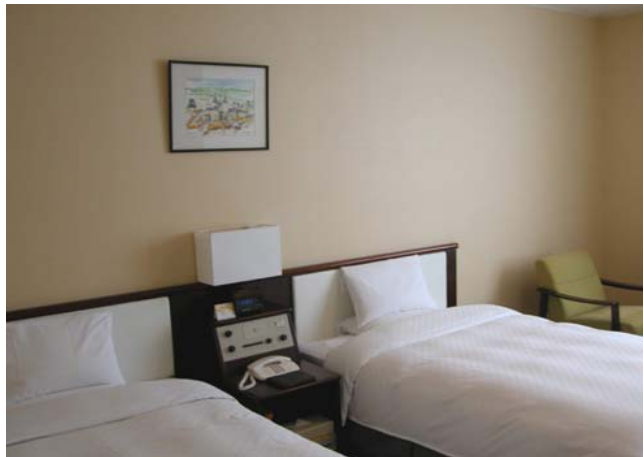


View from standard room at the Hotel Associa, Takayama Resort

## EXCEL TOKYU HOTEL, KANAZAWA

### *Medium*

The Excel hotels are the most upmarket of the Tokyu hotel chain, and the Kanazawa hotel lives up to this billing. Rooms, although basic and slightly dated, are clean and the beds are very comfortable. The hotel is well located in the centre of the action, with the main shopping areas and sightseeing highlights right on the doorstep. There are plenty of restaurants around the hotel and the famous Kenroku-en garden is only 500m away.



Standard room, Excel Tokyu Hotel, Kanazawa

## ANA CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL, HIROSHIMA

### *First Class*

The ANA Crowne Plaza, as with all hotels in the ANA group, offers fine quality accommodation in a good central location. The hotel is located on Peace Boulevard, a wide tree-lined street, and within easy walking distance of the Peace Park and museum has convenient transport links to the tram network. The emphasis is on simple elegance and the hotel was recently renovated with chic and modern decor throughout and flat-screen TVs in the rooms. Staff are very helpful and professional and there are stunning views out to the island-studded Inland Sea. Japanese and western cuisine is served in the restaurant and there is a swimming pool available, however you need to pay a fee to enter.



Twin room, ANA Hotel

## Miyarikyū Hotel, Miyajima Island

### *First Class*

Situated on the shore of the Seto Inland sea within a few minutes walk of the ferry terminal, the Miyarikyū Hotel enjoys not only some of the best views on the beautiful, historic island of Miyajima but also one of the most convenient locations.

While the ryokan is fairly modern, with the benefit of a coffee shop, bar and ensuite bathrooms, the guest rooms are spacious and decorated in traditional Japanese style with tatami, shoji sliding screens and, in most cases, sea views.

The hotel has a wonderful onsen (hot spring bathing) up on the 5th floor, the use of which is included in the price. The baths have views over the shrine gate in the bay making it a very memorable experience.

Our opinion: The Miyarikyū is within a comfortable stroll of all of the major sights of Miyajima and benefits from the best of traditional Japanese hospitality and Western convenience. Dressed in your yukata after enjoying a relaxing hot bath and Japanese meal, why not slip on your "geta" sandals and take a short stroll among the stone lanterns and sacred deer to watch the sun set behind the "floating" torii gate, symbol of this ancient and sacred island.



Deluxe ocean view room, Miyarikyū Hotel, Miyajima Island

## Westin Miyako Hotel, Kyoto

### *Deluxe*

Located in the Eastern Hills and surrounded by the many temples and shrines that crowd this part of town, the recently refurbished Westin Miyako offers perhaps the finest international style accommodation in Kyoto. The hotel is a short taxi ride from the Gion and Pontocho entertainment districts, and close to the Keage subway station for exploration further afield. There are a good range of restaurants, and overall levels of service and comfort are excellent. The hotel is very large and has a Japanese style annex in which Prince Charles and Princess Diana once stayed, and also its own jogging/walking trail behind this annex.



Deluxe Room, Westin Miyako Hotel, Kyoto

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## FINANCIAL PROTECTION

We hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence (ATOL) issued by the Civil Aviation Authority (ATOL number 4817). When you buy an ATOL protected air inclusive holiday\* from us, you will receive a confirmation invoice from us (or via our authorised agent through which you booked) confirming your arrangements and your protection under our ATOL. In the unlikely event of our insolvency the CAA will ensure that you are not left stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid to us for an advance booking.

\*The air inclusive holidays we arrange are ATOL protected providing either the person who pays for the booking is present in the UK when the booking is made or the first leg of any flight or flights we arrange for you commences in the UK. For further information, visit the ATOL website at <http://www.atol.org.uk>



Please note: Not all holiday or travel services offered and sold by us will be protected by the ATOL scheme – these arrangements are protected by a separate financial protection scheme. For further details visit [www.audleytravel.com/protect](http://www.audleytravel.com/protect)

Please ask us to confirm what protection will apply to your booking.

## HEALTH

It is essential that you see your GP or a travel clinic before travelling to make sure that you have taken all the necessary health precautions. Some vaccinations require more than one visit with a period of weeks between injections. You should visit your GP at least six weeks before departure. For up to date medical advice you may wish to call the Medical Advisory Service for Travellers Abroad (MASTA).

### ***MASTA Traveller's Health Line***

Before travelling abroad, you can telephone 0906 550 1402 (premium rate call 60p/minute) to obtain a 'Health Brief' specifically tailored to your journey. Your brief will give information about immunisation and malaria as well as any Foreign Office advice and the latest health news. Their lines are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Health Briefs are also available online at [www.masta.org](http://www.masta.org)

### ***Deep vein thrombosis (DVT)***

The majority of international airlines now issue advice on how to lessen the risk of DVT, however, if you have any concerns, we recommend that you consult your doctor.

### ***Pre-existing medical conditions/Disabled passengers***

It is essential that you advise us before booking if you have any disability or pre-existing medical conditions that you feel may be relevant. The nature of many of the destinations featured within our brochures means that in the majority of cases they are unsuitable for those who are wheelchair bound or have a lack of mobility. We will be delighted to discuss the feasibility of creating a tailor-made itinerary for you that takes into consideration your level of mobility. On our escorted group tours the Tour Leader is, unfortunately, unable to offer additional assistance to passengers with limited mobility as this may compromise the level of attention they would be able to offer the rest of the group. We may request that you provide a letter from your doctor confirming your fitness to travel.

### ***High altitude***

Your itinerary may include sections where the altitude exceeds 10,000 feet (3,048 metres). If you suffer from circulation, heart or respiratory problems we advise that you consult with your doctor before confirming your booking.

## SMOKING

The vast majority of airlines do not permit smoking on the aircraft. At the request of the majority of our clients we do not allow smoking on any form of transport used for our escorted group tours. Stops are regularly made where you will be able to smoke. For smokers travelling on a tailor-made tour we request that you check with your driver or guide whether smoking is permitted in the vehicle.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS

Each country has its own regulations and enforcement levels relating to health and safety standards. These do not always match the very high standards we are used to in the UK. We therefore recommend that you follow a few precautionary safety procedures. Always check where the nearest fire exit is and how to raise the fire alarm. Do not enter a swimming pool before checking the water depth first. For more suggestions please see the Important Information section in your Travel Organiser.

## TRAVEL ADVICE

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office Travel Advice Unit monitors all overseas destinations and offers safety advice to British travellers. You can contact the service on 0845 850 2829 or visit [www.fco.gov.uk/travel](http://www.fco.gov.uk/travel)

## PASSPORT AND VISA INFORMATION FOR BRITISH CITIZENS

Passengers must hold a passport which is valid for at least six months following the return date of your holiday. British passport holders (full British Citizens) currently require visas, in advance of travel, for the following destinations featured in our brochures: Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Burma, China, Cuba, Egypt, Gabon, Georgia, Jordan, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Russia, São Tomé & Príncipe, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Tibet, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Vietnam and Zambia (visitors to Libya must obtain an official invitation. Please ask for details at the time of booking).

We are able to obtain visas on your behalf, please ask for details at the time of booking. **Non-British passport holders should check with the relevant embassies as visa requirements may be different to that of British passport holders. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the correct documentation and visa stamp(s).**

## FLIGHTS AND AIRLINES

The difference between a direct flight and a non-stop flight can cause confusion. To clarify, on a direct flight no change of aircraft is scheduled but touchdowns will be made en route either to refuel or to board or disembark. On non-stop flights no change of aircraft is required and no stops are made en route. Virtually all of the flights that we use are direct and many are non-stop. Exact details will be given with your itinerary.

### *Premium economy, business and first class*

If you require business or first class flights these can be arranged on most airlines at very competitive rates. Premium economy can be arranged on certain airlines, please call us for details.

### *Specific seat requests*

We will do all we can to try to reserve a specific seat for you, if you have a preference. However, whilst airlines may allow us to request seats, they will not guarantee any specific seat reservation. If this is important to you, it is always best to arrive for your flight early, regardless of having made this request in advance. Please make it clear on your booking form if you have a specific request.

### *Flight amendments*

We generally use special 'inclusive tour' fares when we purchase your air tickets from the airlines. While these fares are very good value they are inflexible in terms of changes and offer no refunds once the tickets are issued. Once your flight is confirmed the airlines will charge an amendment fee or insist on the purchase of a completely new ticket if you make changes.

### *Internal flights*

Smaller local airlines are often more likely to change their schedule at short notice. We will endeavour to inform you of any changes in advance of travelling but this may not always be possible.

### *Frequent flyer clubs*

If you collect points through any of the airline frequent flyer clubs please provide your membership details on the booking form and we will ensure that these are recorded against your flight reservation. Please note that on some of our specially negotiated 'inclusive tour' fares points are not always awarded.

## HOTEL INFORMATION

There is frequently confusion over the terminology used for bed arrangements in hotel rooms. A 'double' is recognised as meaning a room with a double bed, this may be two single beds pushed together. A 'twin' is a room with two single beds. Please note that all rooms are allocated at the discretion of the hotel and cannot be guaranteed.

### *Single rooms*

Single rooms tend to be smaller than double or twin rooms, however, many hotels do not have single rooms, in which case you will be allocated a twin or double room.

## BROCHURE AND ITINERARY ACCURACY

We thoroughly check all the information that is included within our brochures and individual tour itineraries, however, changes do occur. Airlines may change their schedules, roads may close and government regulations may alter. Should there be any changes to the travel arrangements you have booked we will do our best to keep you informed of the situation prior to departure.

## SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Special diets should be requested on the booking form; however, it is unrealistic to expect special diets to be catered for in some of the destinations we feature. We will advise the hotels and airlines of your request but we cannot guarantee their availability.

## UK AIRPORT HOTELS, CAR PARKING AND LOUNGES

We are able to arrange airport hotel accommodation, car parking, meet and greet services and airport lounge access in the UK. To arrange any of these services please call our Reservations Administration Team on 01993 838 051.

## DATA PROTECTION ACT

We will hold your name, address and any other details you supply us with on our database. This information will be used to make your travel arrangements and to send you information about Audley Travel. In order to make your travel arrangements we will need to pass your details to companies and individuals outside the EC where less stringent data protection controls may be in place. We will not pass on your details to third parties for any other purposes.

## TRAVEL IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

Many of our destinations are in the developing world where attitudes, infrastructure, priorities, lifestyles and cultures are very different from our own. This is often the very reason to visit the destination but certain aspects may be frustrating. We always advise that the first thing you should pack is your sense of humour. This can prove invaluable when travelling over rougher roads, waiting for a delayed aircraft and communicating with hotel staff whose first language is not English.

# AITO QUALITY CHARTER

## THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT TOUR OPERATORS

AITO is the association for independent and specialist holiday companies. Our member companies, usually owner-managed, strive to create overseas holidays with high levels of professionalism and a shared concern for quality and personal service. The Association encourages the highest standards in all aspects of tour operating.

## EXCLUSIVE MEMBERSHIP

AITO sets criteria regarding ownership, finance and quality which must be satisfied before new companies are admitted to membership. All members are required to adhere to a Code of Business Practice which encourages high operational standards and conduct.

## FINANCIAL SECURITY

An AITO member is required to protect money paid by customers to the member for any holiday sold under the AITO logo. This protection applies to customers who are in the UK at the time of booking or to overseas customers who have booked directly with the member. Members have to comply with UK Government Regulations in this respect. Members submit details of their bonding and guarantee arrangements to the Association on a regular basis

## ACCURATE BROCHURES AND WEB SITES

All members do their utmost to ensure that all their brochures and other publications, print or electronic, clearly and accurately describe the holidays and services offered.

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AND CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENTS

All members are committed to high standards of service and believe in regular and thorough training of employees. Members continually seek to review and improve their holidays. They listen to their customers and always welcome suggestions for improving standards.

## MONITORING STANDARDS

AITO endeavours to monitor quality standards regularly. All customers should receive a post-holiday questionnaire the results of which are scrutinised by the Association.

## RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

All members acknowledge the importance of AITO's Responsible Tourism guidelines, which recognise the social, economic and environmental responsibilities of tour operating. Those demonstrating their achievements beyond the pure acceptance of this principle are recognised by the award of 2 or 5 star status.

## CUSTOMER RELATIONS

All members endeavour to deal swiftly and fairly with any issues their customers may raise. In the unlikely event that a dispute between an AITO member and a customer cannot be settled amicably, AITO's low-cost Independent Dispute Settlement Service may be called upon by either side to bring the matter to a speedy and acceptable conclusion.

Audley is a member of the Association of Independent Tour Operators. To contact the Association, visit [www.aito.co.uk](http://www.aito.co.uk) or call 020 8744 9280.

