



# AUDLEY

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New Mill, our offices in the Windrush Valley on the edge of the Cotswolds



Daily Telegraph  
**BEST SMALL  
TOUR OPERATOR  
2009**



*We are proud to have received a number of awards over recent years. We have been the Daily Telegraph Ultra Travel Best Small Tour Operator winner and runner-up for the previous two years and, similarly, have been the winner or runner-up of the Guardian and Observer's Best Small Tour Operator award for the past four years as well as featuring in Wanderlust magazine's Top 10 Tour Operators for the past eight years.*

*These awards are widely recognised as being the most respected in the travel industry as they are professional surveys of the publications' readerships. With over 500 tour operators for you to choose from in the UK alone, we hope you find these awards are an additional reassurance of the quality of service you can expect from Audley.*

\* \* \*

# 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 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 shrine gate on picturesque Miyajima island, take in the sombre surrounds of Hiroshima's Peace Park and Memorial Museum and visit a UNESCO World Heritage site at Shirakawago.

During the tour you will be able to learn more about traditional culture through taking part in a calligraphy and origami class with a locally run women's association. You will also discover more about Japanese cuisine when as you take part in a noodle making lesson in the Japanese Alps and dine in the company of a trainee geisha in an historic Kyoto restaurant.

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.

## TOUR GUIDE & LEADER

You will be accompanied on your tour by one of Audley's western tour leaders who has experience of leading our 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. Spring and autumn 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)

# MAP OF THE REGION



# DAY BY DAY SUMMARY OF TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

DAY	DATE	ITINERARY IN BRIEF	ACCOMMODATION AND MEAL ARRANGEMENTS
1	<b>Tuesday 27 March 2012</b>	Fly from London to Tokyo, arriving the following day.	Overnight on the aircraft
2	<b>Wednesday 28 March 2012</b>	At Narita airport you are met by your tour leader and guide and once the full group has assembled, transfer to Tokyo by airport limousine bus. Tonight the group meets for a relaxed, informal welcome dinner to get to know the tour manager, local guide and fellow travellers.	Keio Plaza Hotel, Shinjuku, Tokyo Superior Room Breakfast and dinner are included
3	<b>Thursday 29 March 2012</b>	Today we explore some of the main sights of Tokyo, including Meiji-jingu shrine, Asakusa and Harajuku.	Keio Plaza Hotel, Shinjuku, Tokyo Superior Room Breakfast is included
4	<b>Friday 30 March 2012</b>	A couple of hours' drive away from Tokyo is the seaside town of Kamakura, celebrated for its ancient bronze Great Buddha. We continue on to Hakone National Park in the afternoon and the small village of Miyanoshita.	Fujiya Hotel, Miyanoshita, Hakone Flower Palace Wing Breakfast is included
5	<b>Saturday 31 March 2012</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.	Fujiya Hotel, Miyanoshita, Hakone Flower Palace Wing Breakfast and dinner are included
6	<b>Sunday 01 April 2012</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.	Hotel Associa, Takayama Standard twin Breakfast is included
7	<b>Monday 02 April 2012</b>	We explore Takayama on foot today, including the Sanmachi merchant area and Festival Float Museum.	Hotel Associa, Takayama Standard twin Breakfast is included

DAY	DATE	ITINERARY IN BRIEF	ACCOMMODATION AND MEAL ARRANGEMENTS
8	<b>Tuesday 03 April 2012</b>	Between Takayama and today's destination, Kanazawa, lies the secluded village of Shirakawago, a UNESCO World Heritage Site home to a unique, traditional building style known as <i>gassho-zukuri</i> . 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.	ANA Crowne Plaza Kanazawa Standard twin room Breakfast and lunch are included
9	<b>Wednesday 04 April 2012</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.	ANA Crowne Plaza Kanazawa Standard twin room Breakfast is included
10	<b>Thursday 05 April 2012</b>	**Main luggage sent from Kanazawa to Kyoto**  We take the express and bullet trains from Kanazawa to Hiroshima. On arrival we visit the moving Peace Park and Memorial Museum on foot.	ANA Crowne Plaza Hotel, Hiroshima Standard room Breakfast is included
11	<b>Friday 06 April 2012</b>	From Hiroshima it is a short train and scenic ferry ride across to Miyajima Island. We will be spending the night in a Japanese style hotel, with traditional "banquet" style cuisine served in the evening. The island is also very serene in the evening and pleasant to stroll round in your "yukata" - cotton Japanese robe - after dinner.	Miyarikyuu Hotel, Miyajima Island Japanese Ocean View room Breakfast and dinner are included
12	<b>Saturday 07 April 2012</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.	Kyoto Okura Hotel, Kyoto Standard room Breakfast is included
13	<b>Sunday 08 April 2012</b>	Enjoy a full day tour to soak up the unique atmosphere of the city.	Kyoto Okura Hotel, Kyoto Standard Room Breakfast is included

DAY	DATE	ITINERARY IN BRIEF	ACCOMMODATION AND MEAL ARRANGEMENTS
14	<b>Monday 09 April 2012</b>	<p><b>**Main luggage sent from Kyoto to Tokyo**</b></p> <p>This morning we visit nearby Nara, former capital of Japan and home to Todaiji temple, the largest wooden structure in Japan. In the afternoon we return to Kyoto to take part in a calligraphy and origami lesson with the Women's Association of Kyoto.</p> <p>Tonight we dine at a local restaurant, which includes a dance performance by a maiko, a trainee geisha.</p>	<p>Kyoto Okura Hotel, Kyoto Standard Room Breakfast is included</p>
15	<b>Tuesday 10 April 2012</b>	<p>We transfer back to Tokyo by high-speed bullet train and the afternoon is at leisure. Tonight's farewell dinner is at Gonpachi, a lively restaurant in the bustling Ginza area of the city.</p>	<p>Keio Plaza Hotel, Shinjuku, Tokyo Superior Room Breakfast and dinner are included</p>
16	<b>Wednesday 11 April 2012</b>	<p>Transfer by shared limousine bus to Narita airport, for the return flight back to the UK.</p>	



## TOUR PRICE

Itinerary reference: Japan Old & New 27 March 2012. *Please quote this on any correspondence*

Arrangements as specified per person	£5,200
Single supplement	£910
<b>Flight upgrades are available on request</b>	
Per person deposit required to confirm these arrangements	£765

### 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 14) is included at your hotel and dinner is included on four occasions, either at the hotel 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".

be required. We can also offer travel insurance outside of these age brackets. Please call for further details

# WHY TRAVEL WITH US?

## REPUTATION & QUALITY

Well over 80% of our clients have travelled with us in the past or have had Audley recommended to them. 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. Our service has been recognised by the readers of well-known publications including the Guardian & Observer, the Daily Telegraph and Wanderlust magazine, where we have consistently featured in their 'best tour operator' awards for a number of years.

## 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 team of specialists for that region and a professional administration and management team.

From the moment you contact us, we are here to answer your questions accurately and honestly, be they about specific arrangements or any more general queries you may have. We are experienced travellers with a thorough and in-depth knowledge of our specialist destinations, and 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.

## QUALITY SERVICE WHEN YOU ARE TRAVELLING

We take a good deal of care when choosing our travel partners overseas, taking into account their quality of service, guides and vehicles. We have built up many long-standing relationships, 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.



First class guides

## A SMOOTH JOURNEY

We have procedures in place for dealing quickly and efficiently with mishaps from minor flight time alterations to more fundamental changes. If problems do 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. 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.

## DETAILED TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Approximately two to three weeks before you travel we will send you all your travel documents presented in a convenient travel organiser. As well as your full itinerary and air tickets, there will also be additional information such as recommended restaurants and practical tips. A few days before you travel your specialist will call you to have a final talk through your itinerary and answer any last minute questions you may have.

## RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

We have a firm commitment to minimising the environmental and social impact of travel, and strive to ensure that a visit from an Audley client has a positive effect on the destination. We have a firm commitment to the principles of 'responsible travel' and have been awarded AITO 5 star status (the highest achievable) for our policies and practises. We continue to work with AITO, and a number of other bodies, to improve our policies. For more details please refer to our website ([www.audleytravel.com/rt](http://www.audleytravel.com/rt)) where you will find details of our responsible travel 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: [laura.morris@audleytravel.com](mailto:laura.morris@audleytravel.com)



## LEGAL LIABILITY

We are a UK company and hence must fully comply with English 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. You may not find you have this level of reassurance if you make your own travel arrangements independently.

## CHARITY SUPPORT

Audley has been supporting carbon reduction projects through Friends of Conservation since 2005 and in addition to this each individual department also supports a charity of their choice with a yearly financial donation. This charity is one that is close to their hearts and the team often chooses to fundraise to add to this amount. Please ask your specialist if you would like to find out more as in most instances they will have visited the charity themselves, or one of their colleagues will have.

### 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. Located in the country's capital, the foundation conducts outreach work in and around Ulaan Bataar offering housing for poor and single parent families as well as medical care, shelter and schooling for street children. In 1997 the foundation established a permanent centre here with the aim of creating a stable home for as many orphaned children as possible. Today the charity's 'Sunshine Ger Village', boasts a number of residential gers (the traditional felt tent of the Mongolian people) and other facilities which serve as a stable home for 60 children and young adults ranging in age from 2 to 24 years old. Each residential ger is staffed by an adopted ger mother, often a single parent herself, who creates a loving home for all of the children within her care. 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.



Children from the ger sunshine village going to school

### OUR CONTRIBUTION

As part of their outreach work in the capital CNCF administer the 'Give a Ger' fund, an emergency fund established to provide families in danger of becoming homeless with a secure and comfortable place to live. This has proved an essential lifeline for many in a country which is renowned for its particularly harsh winters where temperatures drop as low as  $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$ , conditions which often drive whole families beneath the city's streets as they find refuge in central heating pipes and vents. In 2008 our department made a £500 donation to the charity which bought a ger for a nomadic family who had been living in what can only be described as a primitive hut in the heart of the city's slum district.

In 2009 we decided to strengthen our support for the charity by committing our annual donation to sponsor a child through the remainder of his secondary education. Our fundraising efforts on behalf of the foundation continued with a staff barbeque funding fuel and winter provisions for the family.

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 specialist or visit [www.cncf.org](http://www.cncf.org)



Traditional Geisha

## YOUR ITINERARY IN DETAIL

**Tuesday, 27  
March 2012**

### LONDON HEATHROW TO TOKYO NARITA

Virgin Atlantic Airways flight - Flt No: VS900 - Dep: 1300 - Arr: 0955 - (next day)  
Economy class; Non-stop flight;

**Wednesday, 28  
March 2012**

### Japan Introduction

In the archetypal image of the sleek bullet train gliding past snow-capped Mount Fuji, the magic of Japan is encapsulated in one freeze frame: natural and modern beauty merging in harmony. Japan's four main islands contain a wealth of variety and spectacle, from the thronging cities of Tokyo, Osaka and Hiroshima to the provincial spa towns, neatly-tended farming regions and rugged wilderness beyond. Delve into Japan's rich cultural heritage in Kyoto and Takayama to witness traditional ceremonies, dress and theatre, and take a glimpse into the closed world of the Geisha. Enjoy, too, the delectable cuisine, taking time to sample the numerous local and seasonal delicacies to be found in every city and town. The appeal of Japan encompasses all tastes and ages, whether your interest lies in embracing modern pop-culture, discovering ancient spirituality in secluded Buddhist retreats or communing with nature in steamy jungles or high mountain peaks. Relax on star-sand beaches in southerly Okinawa or whale-watch in wintry Hokkaido, the scope of experience is truly immense. In Japan a striking backdrop of mountain scenery and crystal lakes, neon-lit skyscrapers and landscaped gardens, steaming volcanoes and traditional architecture forms a magical world that will amaze you each step of your journey.

### 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.



Young women in kimono

## 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*

Held at a local restaurant or the hotel restaurant, this welcome dinner is an opportunity to get to know your fellow travellers and tour leader a little better.

 Keio Plaza Hotel, Shinjuku, Tokyo  
Breakfast and dinner are included

**Thursday, 29  
March 2012**

## TOKYO CITY TOUR

### *group excursion with your tour leader and local 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.

Our tour today takes in the best of Tokyo, combining both the modern and the ancient attractions. We begin our day with a visit to Meiji-jingu shrine, in Yoyogi Park. The shrine 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 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 the 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, the youth-dominated, shopping Mecca of the city. From here we take the coach to the Imperial Palace Gardens, stopping here briefly and then on Sensoji temple in Asakusa, one of Tokyo's most important sights. The temple is in quiet contrast to the hustle of the city surrounding it, although it does attract many visitors both domestic and from abroad. After lunch we continue on to the Hinode Pier to cruise along the bay to Odaiba, a man-made island across Tokyo Bay, offering some great scenery of the cityscape. Returning to the mainland by driverless mono-rail train, the tour makes its way to Roppongi Hills. There are wonderful night views from the top of the skyscraper complex here, a fitting end to our exploration of the city.



Palace bridge & Keep, Tokyo

 Keio Plaza Hotel, Shinjuku, Tokyo  
Breakfast is included

**Friday, 30  
March 2012**

## TOKYO TO HAKONE, VIA KAMAKURA

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

This morning we drive on from Tokyo by private coach 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 hotel in the heart of 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, 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

**Saturday, 31  
March 2012**

## EXPLORING HAKONE

*group excursion using public transport with your tour leader and local 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 the volcanic rim, which leads on to a gondola cable car and a bus journey through the scenic mountains. There is also a lake crossing at Lake Ashinoko upon a quirky and kitsch replica pirate ship! We end the day at the excellent Open Air Sculpture Museum in Chokokunomori.

Mt Fuji can be spotted 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 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, providing some lovely views across Lake Ashi. Disembarking the cable-car we board the boat across Lake Ashi 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. 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 indoor collection as well.



Lake Ashi, Hakone

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

**Sunday, 01  
April 2012**

## 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.

### 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 specialties 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**  
Breakfast is included

**Monday, 02  
April 2012**

## EXPLORING TAKAYAMA

*group excursion with your tour leader and local guide*

The morning is spent strolling among the atmospheric merchant houses and markets 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 some of these fascinating floats up close at the Festival Float Museum and learn a little more about the history of the festival. We also visit the Governor's House and enjoy a short performance at the Marionette Museum. The afternoon is free for you to further explore the old streets of this pretty town.



Old Street, Takayama

 **Hotel Associa, Takayama**  
Breakfast is included

**Tuesday, 03  
April 2012**

## 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 *gassho-zukuri*, 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 including 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, the fascinating Myoryuji 'Ninja' temple and the Gold Leaf Museum amongst others.

 [ANA Crowne Plaza Kanazawa, Kanazawa](#)  
Breakfast and lunch are included

**Wednesday, 04  
April 2012**

### KENROKU-EN AND KANAZAWA CITY TOUR

*group excursion with your tour leader and local 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.

After lunch why not take stroll around the nearby Nagamachi samurai district with your guide and tour leader?



Kenroku-en Garden, Kanazawa

 [ANA Crowne Plaza Kanazawa, Kanazawa](#)  
Breakfast is included

**Sunday, 03  
April 2011**

*\*Luggage sent ahead to Kyoto, smaller bag needed for Hiroshima and Miyajima*

### **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.

### **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.



View of atomic bomb dome, Hiroshima Peace Park

### **HIROSHIMA CITY TOUR**

*group excursion with your tour leader and local 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 crane 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 it. 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, 04  
April 2011**

### **HIROSHIMA TO MIYAJIMA BY BOAT**

*shared boat transfer accompanied by your tour leader and local guide*

We take a boat from Hiroshima's Peace Park, along the river and into the Inland Sea to cross over to 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 a troupe of wild monkeys.



Sunset over Miyajima

### EXPLORING MIYAJIMA ISLAND

#### *group excursion accompanied by 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, 05  
April 2011**


### 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 wander around the 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.

### 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 as well as palaces, castles, 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 kimono 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.

 **Kyoto Okura Hotel, Kyoto**  
Breakfast is included

**Wednesday, 06  
April 2011**

### KYOTO CITY TOUR

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

Today 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 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 of the most famous landmarks in the city and 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! There is also time today to visit a yuzen dyeing workshop, which is the traditional form of dyeing kimono materials; a very highly refined skill.



Nishiki Market, Kyoto

 **Kyoto Okura Hotel, Kyoto**  
Breakfast is included

**Thursday, 07  
April 2011**

### **MORNING VISIT TO NARA**

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

Like nearby Kyoto, Nara was once the Japanese capital and a source of enormous cultural and religious outpourings. Unlike its more celebrated neighbour, 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.

### **CALLIGRAPHY & ORIGAMI LESSON**

*group excursion with your tour leader and local guide*

This morning 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. Gradually it 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 fully fledged Geisha. They learn skills such as dance, singing and 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, 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 Nijo-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.



Geisha with Wisteria, Kyoto


**Friday, 08  
April 2011**

## KYOTO TO TOKYO BY BULLET TRAIN

### *shared transfer accompanied by your tour leader and local guide*

The journey back to Tokyo takes around 2 and half hours by shinkansen bullet train, passing under the shadow of Mt Fuji en-route. We will try and book seats for the group on the left hand side of the carriage for the best views of the mountain (weather permitting).

Farewell dinner at Gonpachi

 **Keio Plaza Hotel, Shinjuku, Tokyo**  
Breakfast and dinner are included

**Saturday, 09  
April 2011**

## LIMOUSINE BUS FROM HOTEL TO NARITA AIRPORT

### *shared transfer accompanied by your tour leader and guide*

Your tour leader and local guide will accompany you to the airport, which will be by shared limousine bus. There will be other pick-ups en-route to the airport.

## TOKYO TERMINAL: 2 TO LONDON HEATHROW

Virgin Atlantic Airways flight - Flt No: VS901 - Dep: 1130 - Arr: 1545 - (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 on the following pages. Please do not hesitate to call us if you require any further information about any of the properties. We classify accommodation into the following categories. These are for your guidance only, they are based on the opinions of our staff and are therefore quite subjective.

## OUR ACCOMMODATION GRADING SYSTEM

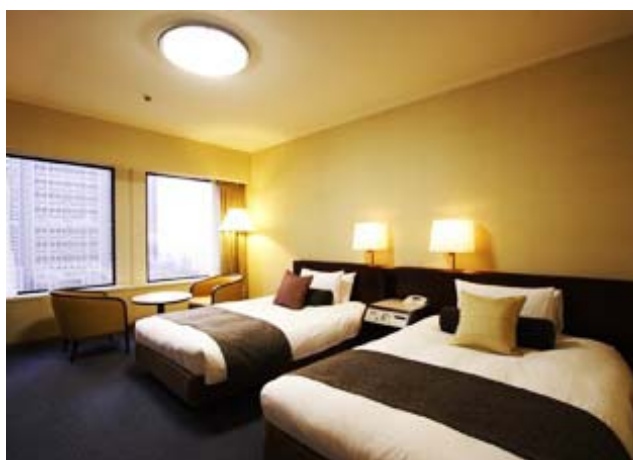
<b>Basic:</b>	Very primitive accommodation where we are not aware of anything better.
<b>Simple:</b>	Clean and simple but limited facilities.
<b>Medium:</b>	A good standard of accommodation, reasonable range of facilities.
<b>First Class:</b>	A high standard of accommodation with a wide range of facilities.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

### 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 (twin rooms only). 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, Patrick, has translated information about the hotel and the surrounding area into English, please do ask for it on arrival. The hotel is well located in Miyanoshita and central to the sightseeing loop.

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.



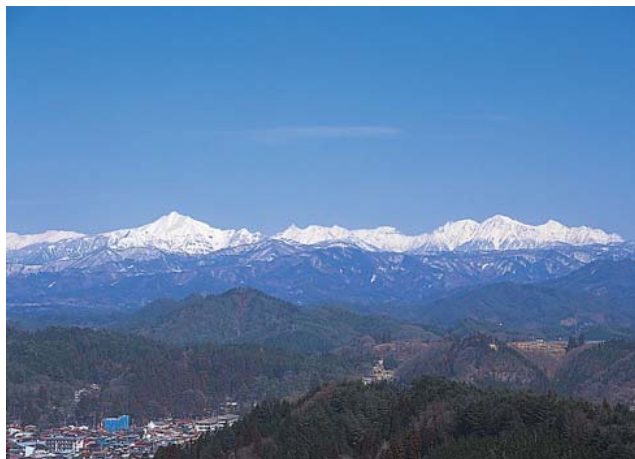
Fujiya Hotel, Miyanoshita

## Hotel Associa, Takayama

### *First Class*

Set back from the town in the deep forests and high mountains of the Japan Alps, the Associa Hotel offers a high standard of 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 open air baths on the top floor look out over the mountains and are particularly great for relaxation. Rooms are spacious and tastefully decorated, and on a clear day offer spectacular views over the Japan Alps.

Our opinion: Our opinion: Though slightly out of town, this makes the hotel a great place to relax and unwind away from the hustle and bustle of central Takayama.

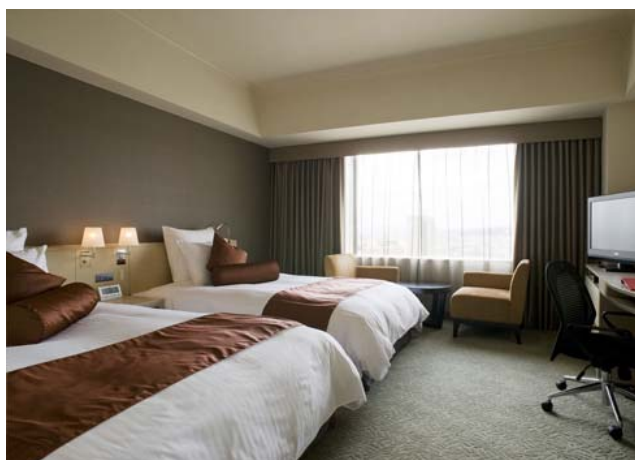


The Northern Japanese Alps viewed from the hotel

## ANA Crowne Plaza Kanazawa

### *First Class*

The ANA Hotel is a first class hotel located next to Kanazawa station, which is very convenient for early or late trains and also for the city centre. The rooms have been recently renovated and are comfortable and well-sized. The friendly staff provide the level of service you would expect from a quality hotel like this. Even if you don't eat there, it is worth popping into the Japanese restaurant on the fifth floor for a look at the garden. The famous Kenrokuen Garden and modern art museum are a short taxi ride from the hotel and the local bus also runs to the city centre from outside the train station.



Twin room, ANA Crowne Plaza

## 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.



Double room, ANA Crowne Plaza

## Miyarikyu Hotel, Miyajima Island

### *First Class*

Situated on the shore of the Seto Inland sea within a few minutes walk of the ferry terminal, the Miyarikyu 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 Miyarikyu 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, Miyarikyu Hotel, Miyajima Island

## Kyoto Okura Hotel, Kyoto

### *Deluxe*

From the outside this hotel is not much to write home about, but once inside our reasons for choosing the Okura Hotel as our preferred central hotel become more apparent. The rooms are pleasantly decorated and of a good size with views over the entire city. The hotel has a number of good dining options, including an excellent Teppanyaki restaurant. Please note that double rooms are far outnumbered by twins and are priced slightly higher than the twin bed rooms. Do let your specialist know which room type you would prefer. The main draw of the Okura is undoubtedly its location in the heart of Kyoto, convenient for the main entertainment and sightseeing districts. This deluxe hotel enjoys a wonderful reputation with the local Japanese, as the best for service and with fine food.

Our opinion: Despite its austere outer shell, the Kyoto Okura Hotel is a well run property with the best location of any hotel in the city. Modern rooms, friendly service and all the mod cons of a good international hotel.



Standard room

# 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 [www.atol.org.uk](http://www.atol.org.uk)

Not all holiday or travel services offered and sold by us will be protected by the ATOL scheme. Those arrangements which are not protected by our ATOL are covered by insurance arranged by the IGI insurance company. This insurance means your money will be refunded or you will be returned to the starting point of your contracted arrangements if already abroad in the unlikely event of our being unable to provide your holiday due to our insolvency. 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, 7 days a week. MASTA, 52 Margaret Street, London W1W 8SQ. Internet: [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 condition which may affect your holiday or any special requirements as a result of any disability or medical condition (including any which affect the booking process) so that we can assist you in considering the suitability of the arrangements and/or making the booking.

Full details must be confirmed in writing at the time of booking and whenever any change in the condition or disability occurs. You must also promptly advise us if any medical condition or disability which may affect your holiday develops after your booking has been confirmed. 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 and all such assistance will need to be provided by whoever the passenger is travelling with. 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

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.

## 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, Gabon, Georgia, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar (not necessary for 2009 travel), Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, Libya, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Russia, São Tomé & Príncipe, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Tibet, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Vietnam and Zambia. (Visitors to Syria can get visas on arrival but we will need to send your passport details prior to travel). Visas may be required for other countries but can be arranged on arrival.

We are normally 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 those of British passport holders. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the correct documentation and visa stamp(s). Failure or inability to obtain all required visas for whatever reason does not entitle you to cancel without paying the applicable cancellation charges.

## 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)

## CARBON OFF-SETTING

Please let your specialist know if you would like to carbon offset your flights. We work with Friends of Conservation and all offsetting payments are donated through them. For more details visit [www.audleytravel.com/offset](http://www.audleytravel.com/offset). The suggested amounts are in line with the DEFRA's current guidelines for the cost per tonne of carbon. If you wish to ensure that Gift Aid is included please donate directly via [www.audleytravel.com/offset](http://www.audleytravel.com/offset)

## 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 passengers. 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.

## 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, subject to availability. To arrange any of these services please call our Reservations Administration Team on 01993 838 051.

## HOTEL INFORMATION

There is frequent 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.

## 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.

## BROCHURE AND ITINERARY ACCURACY

We thoroughly check all the information that is included within our brochures and individual tour itineraries, however, changes do occur and errors are occasionally made. 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.

## 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.

## 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.

# 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.