

## Backroads of Japan - AJMS

12 days: Tokyo to Kyoto

### What's Included

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- Your Welcome Moment: Welcome Moment - Meet Your CEO and Group
- Your Discover Moment: Tokyo
- Modern Tokyo walking tour
- Zenkoji Temple visit (Nagano)
- Jigokudani Monkey Park visit (Matsumoto)
- Matsumoto Castle visit
- Hida No Sato folk village visit (Takayama)
- Sake street visit
- Kibi Plains bike ride (outside Kurashiki)
- Fushimi Inari Taisha shrine visit
- Visits to Kiyomizu and Chion-in temples
- Japan Rail (JR) pass (7 days)
- All transport between destinations and to/from included activities

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and G Adventures. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

**VERY IMPORTANT:** Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

**VALIDITY:** Valid for all trips departing January 1st, 2018 and onwards

### Itinerary

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**NOTE:** Accommodations vary per departure and are subject to change until tour start date; they are not final and should be used as examples only. Travellers may login to the G Adventures App to view accommodations specific to their departure.

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#### Day 1 Tokyo

Arrive at any time.

There are no activities planned until an evening welcome meeting.

#### **Your Welcome Moment: Welcome Moment - Meet Your CEO and Group**

18:00

Your opportunity to meet your CEO and fellow travellers, and learn more about your tour. Opt to join the group for a local meal afterwards. Don't forget to see the notice in the lobby (or ask reception) for the official time and place to meet up with the group.

#### Day 2 Tokyo

Take a CEO-led walking tour of eclectic modern Tokyo from the hub of Shinjuku to Shibuya through Yoyogi Park and Harajuku.

#### **Orientation Walk**

Tokyo

Let your CEO guide you around eclectic and modern Tokyo.

#### **Free Time**

Tokyo Afternoon

Explore more of sprawling Tokyo.

## **Optional Activities - Day 2**

### **Harajuku Visit**

Tokyo

Free

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

## **Day 3 Tokyo**

Enjoy a free day to experience the city or venture out to Mt Fuji.

### **Your Discover Moment**

Tokyo Full Day

There's plenty to see and do in Tokyo, and we wanted to make sure that you had some time to take it all in. Feel free to relax or try optional activities like visiting the Tsukiji Fish Market, checking out Ueno Park, and visiting Tokyo Skytree. Your CEO has more ideas if you need them. Just ask!

## **Optional Activities - Day 3**

### **Yoyogi Park Visit**

Shibuya-ku

Free

Take advantage of Yoyogi Park's picnic areas, bike rental shops and bike paths; this is one of the largest parks in the city and a perfect place to spend an afternoon. Both locals and travellers are drawn to the park in the warmer months during cherry blossom season to see the delicate pink blossoms.

### **Sensō-ji Temple Visit**

Asakusa

Free

Explore Sensō-ji Temple, a colourful Buddhist temple and the oldest temple in the entire city. Leading up to the temple the street is lined with shops selling yummy food and great souvenirs.

### **Meiji Shrine (Meiji Jingū) Visit**

Tokyo

Free-1000JPY per person

Visit this shrine dedicated to the 123rd emperor of Japan, Emperor Meiji and his wife. The shrine is a great place to escape the bustle of the city and wander the grounds along the wide walking paths.

### **Mt Fuji Day Trip**

Mount Fuji

5200JPY per person

Escape the city and take a day trip to Mt Fuji. Explore the area around the mountain, stop to take some photographs, and if the weather cooperates maybe even see the peak.

### **Tsukiji Fish Market**

Tokyo

Free

Visit the Tsukiji Fish Market, formerly known as the biggest fish and seafood market in the world, to get an idea of how important this industry is in Tokyo.

## **Day 4 Tokyo/Nagano**

Journey to the Japanese Alps and Nagano, host city of the 1998 Winter Olympics. Visit the historic Zenkoji Temple.

### **Bullet Train**

Tokyo - Nagano 3h

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

### **Zenkō-ji Temple**

Nagano

Visit the Buddhist temple of Zenkō-ji, one of the last remaining pilgrimage sites. Built in the 7th century, the city of Nagano was built around the already standing structure.

## **Day 5 Nagano/Matsumoto**

Discover the world-famous Jigokudani Monkey Park and watch Japanese snow monkeys bathing in the natural hot springs. Continue to Matsumoto.

Matsumoto is a quaint castle town featuring one of Japan's most treasured castles.

### **Jigokudani Monkey Park Visit**

Nagano

Visit the Jigokudani Monkey Park, where wild snow monkeys can be seen bathing in the natural hot springs. The pool where most of the monkeys soak is man made, fed by the hot springs. Along the walking paths up to the pools other monkeys tend to stop and watch visitors curiously.

### **Bullet Train**

Nagano – Matsumoto 1h30m-2h

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

### **Day 6 Matsumoto/Takayama**

Explore Matsumoto's breathtaking 'Black Crow' Castle and continue to the traditional alpine market town of Takayama, known as 'Little Kyoto'.

Visit one of Japan's most treasured castles maintaining its original wooden interior and stone exterior. Explore the castle where 16th century samurai once roamed.

Continue past the mountains, rice fields and traditional homes to Takayama. Discover the traditional Japanese way of life in a family-run guesthouse.

### **Matsumoto Castle**

Matsumoto

Stop at the castle of Matsumoto one of Japan's most treasured castles, maintaining its original wooden interior and stone exterior. Explore this castle where 16th century Samurai once roamed before venturing out with the group to wander Matsumoto's ancient streets and or dine in a traditional storehouse.

### **Local Bus**

Matsumoto – Takayama 3h

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

### **Free Time**

Takayama Evening

Start exploring Takayama.

### **Optional Activities - Day 6**

#### **Japanese Onsen (Hot Spring) Visit**

Takayama

Free

A feature of the inn we are staying at – don't miss a visit to the traditional onsen. Delight in a restorative soak in the healing waters.

### **Day 7 Takayama**

Visit the Hida No Sato traditional folk village, sake breweries and craft shops. With free time walk through the forest, go for a bike ride or relax at an onsen spa.

Visit the 'Praying Hand' houses, huge thatched homes and well-preserved Edo samurai era dwellings nestled beneath the mountain peaks. From the Hida No Sato Folk Village to sake tasting at local traditional brewery Takayama offers a great opportunity for exploration.

With free time in the afternoon opt to walk a forested trail, go for a bike ride, have a nap on the Tatami mats at the Ryokan or relax in a Japanese Onsen (hot spring) before enjoying a traditional dinner together as a group.

### **Hida no Sato (Hida Minzoku Mura Folk Village) Visit**

Takayama

Visit the Hida Folk Village, an outdoor museum where various buildings from the 1600s are open to tour. The steep, thatched roofs of the farmhouses are said to resemble praying hands. Take a peek inside to see tools and furniture from the original village.

### **Sake Street Visit**

Takayama

Stroll down this quaint road, lined with sake breweries and vendors, and learn more about this typical Japanese beverage made from fermented rice. Have a sample or two to test it out.

### **Free Time**

Takayama Afternoon

Get out and explore or head to the hot springs for a relaxing soak.

### **Optional Activities - Day 7**

**Biking**

Takayama

200-1000JPY per person

Hop onto a bike and explore the landscape and rural streets.

**Japanese Onsen (Hot Spring) Visit**

Takayama

Free

A feature of the inn we are staying at – don't miss a visit to the traditional onsen. Delight in a restorative soak in the healing waters.

**Meals included: Dinner****Day 8 Takayama/Kurashiki**

Travel to picturesque Kurashiki, retaining its old world charm with black and white buildings.

Get a real glimpse of old Japan at Kurashiki, a picturesque town in central Japan which has retained much of its old world charm with beautifully preserved black and white walled merchants' homes and storehouses.

Many of the storehouses have been converted into museums, souvenir stores, boutiques and cafés. Most famous among the museums are the Ohara Museum of Art and the Museum of Folkcraft.

**Bullet Train**

Takayama – Kurashiki 5h30m-6h30m

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

**Free Time**

Kurashiki Afternoon

Start exploring this charming city.

**Optional Activities - Day 8****Kurashiki Museum of Folkcraft**

Kurashiki

700JPY per person

Visit the first museum to be created in one of Kurashiki's converted storehouses and learn more about Japan's history. The museum displays everyday items from across Japan including textiles, ceramics and lacquerware.

**Ohara Museum of Art Visit**

Kurashiki

1300JPY per person

Take a tour of The Ohara Museum of Art, the first permanent collection of western art in Japan. The museum exhibits paintings from the Italian Renaissance and the Dutch and Flemish painters of the 17th century. 20th century art is included in the pieces on display.

**Meals included: Breakfast****Day 9 Kurashiki**

Enjoy a bike tour through the Kibi Plains, surrounded by rice fields and ancient burial grounds. On this scenic ride, glide past shrines and temples and get a glimpse of rural Japanese life.

**Bicycle Tour of the Kibi Plains**

Kurashiki 4h 20km

Head out by bicycle through the Kibi Plains. This amazingly scenic bicycle route passes by rice fields, ancient burial grounds, shrines and temples.

**Free Time**

Kurashiki Afternoon

Spend more time wandering the quaint riverside streets of Kurashiki.

**Day 10 Kurashiki/Kyoto**

Travel to Kyoto for two nights in the traditional heart of Japan. Arrive in the afternoon and hike up Fushimi Inari through 10,000 stunning torii gates.

Journey to Kyoto and visit some of the most magnificent temples in the country, dating back centuries. There are said to be 2,000 temples, shrines, palaces, museums and traditional gardens in Kyoto.

**Bullet Train**

Kurashiki – Kyoto 2h30m-3h

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

### **Fushimi Inari Taisha Shrine Visit**

Kyoto

Visit the Fushimi Inari shrine, located just outside of Kyoto. Walk under the thousands of iconic torii gates (as seen in the film *Memoirs of a Geisha*) and enjoy the peaceful atmosphere. The shrine itself is at the base of the Inari mountain but includes many trails up to smaller shrines in the area.

### **Day 11 Kyoto**

Visit the impressive Kiyomizu-dera, and take in the breathtaking Chion-in temple. This afternoon, enjoy free time in this lovely city. Experience some of the many great walks through zen gardens, teahouses, shrines and shops and maybe even spot a real-life geisha.

Spend the morning discovering Buddhist, Zen, and Shinto nuances in some the beautiful Kiyomizu Temple (Love Temple) and the breathtaking Chion-in Temple.

Opt to explore more zen gardens, palaces, and temples in Kyoto or venture to nearby Osaka. Another option further afield is to visit the peaceful gardens and ancient temples of Nara, home of Japan's largest Buddha.

### **Kiyomizu Temple Visit**

Kyoto

Visit the Kiyomizu Temple, a Buddhist temple in Kyoto and part of Kyoto's UNESCO listed sights. Originally built in 798, the current structures were built in 1633 without the use of a single nail.

### **Chion-in Temple Visit**

Kyoto

The Chion-in Temple is the headquarters of the Jodo-Shu Sect of Buddhism. Visit the temple to marvel at the beautiful architecture and learn more about this form of Buddhism.

### **Free Time**

Kyoto Afternoon

Explore the city or head further afield.

### **Optional Activities - Day 11**

#### **Gion Walk**

Kyoto

Free

Walk through Gion, Kyoto's most famous geisha district. Visit shops, restaurants and ochaya (teahouses), where geiko (Kyoto dialect for geisha) and maiko (geiko apprentices) entertain.

#### **Philosopher's Walk**

Kyoto

Free

This stone path through the northern part of Kyoto's Higashiyama district follows a canal lined by hundreds of cherry trees. These trees come to life during a period known as "Hanami", generally from the end of March to early May. Their iconic pink blossoms are one of the most famous symbols of Japan.

### **Day Trip to Osaka**

Kyoto - Osaka

Take a train excursion to the creative, funky and bustling metropolis of Osaka. The city is known for its friendly locals and delicious cuisine. Head to the Osaka Aquarium, one of the best in the world, or visit the castle Osaka-jō.

### **Day Trip to Nara**

Kyoto - Nara

Take a train excursion to the peaceful gardens and ancient temples of Nara, home of Japan's largest Buddha, and a number of cute and docile deer that are the sacred symbol of the Kasuga Taisha shrine.

### **Nijo Castle and Gardens Visit**

Kyoto

600JPY per person

Visit the Nijo Castle, the residence of the first shogun of the Edo Period built in 1603. Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the property is divided into three areas: the Honmaru (main circular fortification), Ninomaru (secondary circle of defense), and the gorgeous gardens that surround both.

### **Kinkaku-ji Golden Pavilion Visit**

Kyoto

500JPY per person

Explore Kinkaku-ji or the Golden Pavilion, named for the temple's top two floors that are covered in gold leaf. The temple is surrounded by trees and sits on a reflective pond, making this must-see in Kyoto a perfect place for photos. While the temple can be busy, there are gardens around the area to explore once you've had enough of the view.

#### **Meals included: Breakfast**

#### **Day 12 Kyoto**

Depart at any time.

#### **Departure Day**

Not ready to leave? Your CEO can help with travel arrangements to extend your adventure.

#### **Meals included: Breakfast**

### **What's Included**

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Your Welcome Moment: Welcome Moment - Meet Your CEO and Group

Your Discover Moment: Tokyo. Modern Tokyo walking tour. Zenkoji Temple visit (Nagano). Jigokudani Monkey Park visit (Matsumoto). Matsumoto Castle visit. Hida No Sato folk village visit (Takayama). Sake street visit. Kibi Plains bike ride (outside Kurashiki). Fushimi Inari Taisha shrine visit. Visits to Kiyomizu and Chion-in temples. Japan Rail (JR) pass (7 days). All transport between destinations and to/from included activities.

### **Highlights**

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Experience the bustle of modern Tokyo, visit the Zenkoji temple in the Japanese Alps, discover the snow monkeys bathing in the hot springs, cycle the Kibi Plains, explore Kyoto's temples.

### **Dossier Disclaimer**

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### **Itinerary Disclaimer**

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While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.

### **Important Notes**

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#### **1. Japan Rail Pass**

Please note that only foreigners traveling as a tourist are able to use a Japan Rail Pass. If you are a Japanese citizen/resident or traveling on a student/business/military/diplomatic visa, please advise us at time of booking as you will not be able to take advantage of the rail pass.

#### **2. Tattoos**

Tattoos are not common or widely accepted in Japan. There is no cause for concern, but do your best to cover your tattoos when possible and note that you may not be permitted to enter public spas or onsens (hot springs).

### **Group Leader Description**

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All G Adventures group trips are accompanied by one of our Chief Experience Officers (CEO). The aim of the CEO is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will

provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We also use local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting - we think it's the best of both worlds.

## Group Size Notes

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Max 15, avg 12

## Meals Included

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3 breakfasts, 1 dinner

## Meals

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Eating is a big part of traveling. G Adventures understands the importance of breakfast to start your day, we strive to include a basic breakfast wherever possible. Included breakfasts will usually be asian style consisting of noodles or congee (rice porridge) or bread and eggs. Vegetarians will be able to find a range of different foods, although in some areas the choice maybe limited. Should breakfast not be included, your CEO can suggest some local options.

Travelling with G Adventures you experience the vast array of wonderful food that is available out in the world. Generally meals are not included in the trip price when there is a choice of eating options, to give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat. It also gives you more budgeting flexibility, though generally food is cheap. Our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though. Your CEO will be able to suggest favourite restaurants during your trip. While trekking in remote regions food is included, plentiful and made of fresh local ingredients.

For all trips please refer to the meals included and budget information for included meals and meal budgets.

## Transport

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Bus, bullet train, local train, bicycle, walking.

## About our Transportation

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

## Solo Travellers

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We believe single travellers should not have to pay more to travel so our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers joining group trips are paired in twin or multi-share accommodation with someone of the same sex for the duration of the trip. Some of our Independent trips are designed differently and single travellers on these itineraries must pay the single trip price.

## Accommodation

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Hotels and traditional guesthouses/onsens (9 nts), traditional inns (2 nts, shared facilities).

## About Accommodation

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

Ryokan are traditional inns found across Japan. Featuring tatami floors (soft mats of woven straw), futon beds, Japanese-style baths, cotton kimono (casual robe worn to lounge around or to head to the bath), and elaborate meals (often served in the comfort of your own room), a ryokan is the perfect place to experience traditional customs and hospitality. As ryokan are usually top tier accommodations, most guests stay only one night, often to celebrate a special occasion or holiday. Don't be intimidated by the formalities inherent to a stay at a ryokan, your hosts will welcome you the same way they do all their guests. Have fun and enjoy this relaxing opportunity to learn more about Japan's unique customs.

Minshuku are Japan's answer to the Western bed and breakfast. Similar to ryokan, they have traditional features like tatami floors, futon beds, and Japanese-style baths. Minshuku are often family-run, and as

such they offer a great opportunity to interact with local people and learn more about the nation's customs. More affordable and simpler than ryokan, minshuku tend to have smaller guestrooms, shared bathroom facilities, and any included meals (traditional, local, and delicious) are served in a communal dining room.

Please note that some of the traditional Japanese inns used on this tour only offer shared bathing facilities. This means that individual shower stalls will not be available, instead several shower stations are available in an open, same-sex bathing area. Shared bathhouses and onsen (hot springs) are an essential part of Japan's culture, traditionally serving as a place for men or women to gather, relax, and discuss the days happenings.

## **Joining Hotel**

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For details of your joining hotel please refer to your tour voucher, G Account, the G Adventures App or contact your travel agent.

## **Joining Instructions**

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Getting to the Candeo Hotel Ueno Koen:

When you arrive to Narita International Airport, you will have several options to get to our main hotel, Candeo Hotel Ueno Koen. We always recommend printing out the address of the hotel (in the native language as well as English if available), to show to your taxi driver.

It takes approximately 65 minutes by train from Narita International Airport to Nippori station and then change train to Uguisudani Station. Then, 3mins walk to hotel , Exit the South Exit, take the bridge on the left side of the station. You will be able to see the hotel from the bridge. After you cross the bridge, go downstairs and continue along the road. You will come to an intersection, turn left. After your turn left keep going straight.

It takes approximately 45 minutes by train from Haneda Airport to Hamamatsucho station and change to Uguisudani Station. Then, 3mins walk to hotel , Exit the South Exit, take the bridge on the left side of the station. You will be able to see the hotel from the bridge. After you cross the bridge, go downstairs and continue along the road. You will come to an intersection, turn left. After your turn left keep going straight.

Getting to the Hotel B Ikebukuro:

Nearest station is Ikebukuro Station East Exit – Approximately 3 minutes walk to hotel B Ikebukuro. Take the east exit and turn left. You will see a Bic Camera and Yamada Denki on your left. Continue follow the road on Meiji Street a little farther on and you should see the Hotel on your left. It takes about 3 minutes from the station.

From Narita Airport, please take JR Narita Express for approximately 1 hour 30 minutes to JR Ikebukuro Station East Exit, or From Narita Airport You can also take Keisei Skyliner for approximately 1 hour 35 minutes to Nippori Station and transfer to JR Yamanote Line and get off JR Ikebukuro Station East Exit and walk for 3 mins.

From Haneda Airport – please take Keikyu Airport Ltd. Express to Shinagawa Station and then transfer to JR Yamanote Line and get off at Ikebukuro Station East Exit and walk for 3 mins to hotel.

Please note that Day 1 is an arrival day and no activities have been planned for that day other then your welcome meeting in the evening, so you can arrive at any time. Similarly the last day is a departure day during which no activities have been planned.

A G Adventures Representative will organize a short meeting on Day 1, during which you will meet other tour participants and receive information about general and specific aspects of the trip. A welcome note will be handed to you upon check in the hotel so you have all the necessary information regarding the meeting time. If you arrive late, s/he will leave you a message detailing what time and where you should meet the next morning.

## **Arrival Complications**

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We don't expect any problems, and nor should you, but if for any reason you are unable to commence your trip as scheduled, as soon as possible please contact your starting point hotel, requesting that you speak to or leave a message for your CEO (CEO) (if you are not on a group tour please refer to the emergency contact details provided in this dossier). If you are unable to get in touch with your leader, please refer to our emergency contact details.

## **Emergency Contact**

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Should you need to contact us during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call either the G Adventures Local Representative (if one is listed below) or our G Adventures Local Office. If for any reason



you do not receive an immediate answer, please leave a detailed message and contact information, so they may return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

#### EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

G Adventures Local Office (Japan)

During office hours, Mon-Fri (Excluding national holidays) 9:00-18:00 Local Time

From outside Japan: 1st contact +81 3-6659-9074 (2nd contact +81 80 6779 1851)

From within Japan: 1st contact +81 3-6659-9074 (2nd contact +81 80 6779 1851)

After office hours emergency number

Primary phone: +81 80 6779 1851 (from within Japan: 080 6779 1851)

If you are unable for any reason to contact our local office, please call the numbers listed below which will connect you directly with our Sales team who will happily assist you. Hours of operation by region can be found [here](#).

Toll-free, North America only: 1 888 800 4100

Calls from UK: 0344 272 0000

Calls from Germany: 0800 365 1000

Calls from Australia: 1 300 796 618

Calls from New Zealand: 0800 333 307

Outside North America, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and the UK: +1 416 260 0999

## What to Take

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We suggest that you pack as lightly as possible as you are expected to carry your own luggage. Our trips in Japan use public transport and most transport has limited luggage storage space. You will also be walking with your luggage in busy public train stations to catch connecting trains, so it is highly recommended that you travel light and have easy to handle luggage and are capable of walking up and down the stairs with your luggage without any assistance.

We recommend keeping the weight of your bags between 10-15kg/22-30lb. Suitcases are not recommended for G Adventures trips. Most travellers carry a backpack or rolling bag of small to medium size. A large bag will be an inconvenience to you and will slow you down! You will also need a day-pack/rucksack to carry daily essentials like water, cameras, passport, i-pods etc.

Takuhaibin - Japan's takuhaibin service is a convenient and reliable way to transfer luggage from one location to another throughout the country. Pick-up/drop-off/delivery dates and times can be easily scheduled (usually overnight) and costs are moderate. Service can be arranged at most hotels and airports. Using Takuhaibin to send your luggage between hotels, or from hotel to airport, is a great way to travel light and avoid hauling large bags on crowded trains or up and down stairs – just be sure to pack an overnight bag with everything you'll need until you're reunited with your luggage the following day.

## Packing List

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#### Cold Weather:

- Long-sleeved shirts or sweater
- Scarf
- Snow Boots
- Warm gloves
- Warm hat
- Warm layers
- Warm waterproof jacket

#### Conservative Dress:

- Modest clothing that covers knees and shoulders (Long pants, long skirts, shirts that cover shoulders)
- Shawl or scarf (for temple visits)

#### Documents:

- Flight info (required) (Printouts of e-tickets may be required at the border)
- Insurance info (required) (With photocopies)
- Passport (required) (With photocopies)
- Vouchers and pre-departure information (required)
- Visas or vaccination certificates (With photocopies)

#### Essentials:

- Toiletries (required) (Shampoo, bodywash, soap, etc.)
- Binoculars (optional)
- Camera (With extra memory cards and batteries)
- Cash, credit and debit cards
- Day pack (Used for daily excursions or short overnights)

- Ear plugs
- First-aid kit (should contain lip balm with sunscreen, sunscreen, whistle, Aspirin, Ibuprofen, band-aids/plasters, tape, anti-histamines, antibacterial gel/wipes, antiseptic cream, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, rehydration powder, water purification tablets or drops, insect repellent, sewing kit, extra prescription drugs you may be taking)
- Flashlight/torch (Headlamps are ideal)
- Fleece top/sweater
- Footwear
- Hat
- Locks for bags
- Long pants/jeans
- Moneybelt
- Outlet adapter
- Personal entertainment (Reading and writing materials, cards, music player, etc.)
- Reusable water bottle
- Shirts/t-shirts
- Sleepwear
- Small travel towel
- Sunglasses
- Swimwear
- Watch and alarm clock
- Waterproof backpack cover
- Windproof rain jacket

#### Health & Safety:

- Hand sanitizer (required)
- Face masks (Clients will be only be required to wear a face mask where it is mandated by local regulations.)
- Pen (Please bring your own pen for filling out documents.)
- Quick Covid Test/Antigen Test

#### Warm Weather:

- Sandals/flip-flops
- Shorts/skirts (Longer shorts/skirts are recommended)
- Sturdy water shoes/sandals
- Sun hat/bandana
- Swimwear

Note: During the colder months (Nov-Apr) the mountains can be very cold, so please make sure you pack warm clothes. During summer (Jun-Sep) temperatures be very hot and humid. Lightweight breathable clothing is recommended.

## Laundry

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Laundry facilities are offered by some of our hotels but this is very expensive. Your leader can show you self service coin laundries in larger cities. There will be times when you may want to or have to do your own laundry so we suggest you bring non-polluting/biodegradable soap.

## Visas and Entry Requirements

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All countries require a valid passport (with a minimum 6 months validity). Contact your local embassy or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements, or see your travel agent. It is your own responsibility to have the correct travel documentation. Visa requirements for your trip will vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as far as possible, but rules do change and sometimes without warning. While we provide the following information in good faith, it is vital that you check the information yourself and understand that you are fully responsible for your own visa requirements.

Visa information specific to your destination and nationality can be found in our Important Pre-Departure Information page [here](#)

## Detailed Trip Notes

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Travel in Japan is easy, clean, fast and efficient, however please be aware that English is still not widely spoken, however a lot of patience, a sense of humour and a respect for the local culture goes a long way in any Asian country and will greatly enrich your experience.

## Spending Money

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Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider

your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

## Money Exchange

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As currency exchange rates in Asia fluctuate often we ask that you refer to the following website for daily exchange rates: [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com). As of April 2011 the exchange rate for JAPAN was 1 USD = 80 (Japanese Yen).

Every Post Office and 7-11 Convenience store has an ATM machine that accepts Visa, Mastercard and Debit Cards. At times, Maestro/Master Card/Cirrus have been problematic at these machines, so please bring a back-up card.

Credit Cards should not be relied upon for purchases as they are not widely accepted, except in some restaurants and department stores. Money can be exchanged at Post Offices and some banks and hotels in major cities, however it can be a very slow process.

## Emergency Fund

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Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional USD \$200 (or equivalent) as an 'emergency' fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (ex. a natural disaster) require a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence!

## Departure Tax

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Departure Tax is included in all International and Domestic tickets.

## Tipping

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Tipping is not practiced in Japan. Leaving money at restaurants, in taxis etc will simply cause confusion!

Also at the end of each trip if you felt your CEO did an outstanding job, tipping is highly appreciated. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however as a guideline \$5 USD per person, per day can be used.

## Optional Activities

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Tokyo

- Harajuku Visit (Free)
- Meiji Shrine (Meiji Jingū) Visit (Free-1000JPY per person)
- Tsukiji Fish Market (Free)

Shibuya-ku

- Yoyogi Park Visit (Free)

Asakusa

- Sensō-ji Temple Visit (Free)

Mount Fuji

- Mt Fuji Day Trip (5200JPY per person)

Takayama

- Japanese Onsen (Hot Spring) Visit (Free)
- Biking (200-1000JPY per person)

Kurashiki

- Kurashiki Museum of Folkcraft (700JPY per person)
- Ohara Museum of Art Visit (1300JPY per person)

Kyoto

- Gion Walk (Free)
- Philosopher's Walk (Free)
- Day Trip to Osaka
- Day Trip to Nara
- Nijo Castle and Gardens Visit (600JPY per person)
- Kinkaku-ji Golden Pavilion Visit (500JPY per person)

## Safety and Security

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Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while

travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage. When travelling on a group trip, please note that your CEO has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. Your CEO will accompany you on all included activities. During your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your CEO will assist you with options available in a given location please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and we offer no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time. Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during night time excursions.

**Protests and Demonstrations-** Protests and demonstrations, even those that are well intended, have the potential to turn violent with no warning. Counter protests can also turn violent. Action by security forces to disperse demonstrators and protesters may occur at any time. If you are in an area where demonstrators or protesters are gathering, avoid the temptation of staying for a good photo opportunity and leave the area immediately.

Water based activities have an element of danger and excitement built into them. We recommend only participating in water based activities when accompanied by a guide(s). We make every reasonable effort to ensure the fun and adventurous element of any water based activities (in countries with varying degrees of operating standards) have a balanced approach to safety. It is our policy not to allow our CEOs to make arrangements on your behalf for water based activities that are not accompanied by guide(s).

Swimming, including snorkeling, is always at your own risk.

We take all prudent measures in relation to your safety. For ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling, please visit:

[www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/](http://www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/)

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## A Couple of Rules

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for our travellers. Our philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make the world the special place it is. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our CEOs have the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

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## Travel Insurance

**Travel Insurance:** Travel insurance is compulsory in order to participate on any of our trips. When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance has been sighted by your CEO, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy please bear in mind that all clients must have medical coverage and that we require a minimum coverage of USD 200,000 for repatriation and emergency rescue. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. If you have credit card insurance we require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

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## Planeterra Foundation - the non-profit partner of G Adventures

Planeterra International Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to turning travel into impact by helping local communities earn an income from tourism. Planeterra connects underserved local communities to the benefits of tourism by developing and supporting small community-owned businesses. These businesses support Indigenous people, empower women, grant youth access to employment opportunities, and protect the environment. Planeterra also works to ensure these businesses have a thriving customer base by integrating their projects into G Adventures' itineraries globally.

G Adventures is Planeterra's largest corporate donor, covering all operating costs, so 100% of your donation will bring opportunity to people in need.

G Adventures Dollar-a-day Program - Make Every Day Count - Turn your travel into impact with [Planeterra Foundation](http://PlaneterraFoundation.org).

Did you know? Most communities around the world do not benefit from tourism. Give back to the places you visit on your travels by creating opportunities for local people to earn an income, and protect the environment.

Make every day count by donating \$1/day for the length of your trip, and join us in empowering the communities you will visit when you travel. 100% of your donation goes directly to Planeterra projects.

## Feedback

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After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us that we'll give you 5% off the price of your next G Adventures trip if your feedback is completed on-line within 30 days of finishing your trip. Your tour evaluation will be e-mailed to you 24 hours after the conclusion of your trip. If you do not receive the tour evaluation link in the days after your tour has finished, please drop us a line at [customersolutions@gadventures.com](mailto:customersolutions@gadventures.com) and we will send it on to you.

## Newsletter

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Our adventure travel e-newsletter is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from G Adventures, subscribe at [www.gadventures.com/newsletters/](http://www.gadventures.com/newsletters/)

Stay current on how our company invests in our global community through our foundation – Planeterra. Sign up for [Planeterra's monthly news](#) to learn more about how to give back and support the people and places we love to visit.

## Minimum Age

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You must be 18 to travel unaccompanied on a G Adventures tour. For minors travelling with a guardian over 21 years old, the minimum age is 12.

## International Flights

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Check-in times and baggage allowances/restrictions vary by airline and can change at any time. For the most up-to-date information for your flight, please contact your airline. We recommend checking in online in advance to avoid potential delays at the airport.