

Japan & Our Lady of Akita



JAPAN | KYOTO | TOKYO | OSAKA | HIROSHIMA
March 1 - March 12, 2024 (12 Days)

Highlights:

Apparition Site of Our Lady of Akita • Meiji Jingu Shrine • Asakusa Sensoji temple • Hakone • Takayama • Hida Folk Village • Fushimi Inari Shrine • Kinkakuji • Itsukushima Shrine • Genbaku Dome • Todaji Temple • Dōtonbori • Nara •



Amazing Catholic Journeys

...we create the experience that will transform you!

FOR REGISTRATION & MORE INFO

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Day 1 (March 1) Depart USA

Upon arrival into Tokyo, please make your own way to the starting point hotel. Take the evening to relax after your flight and prepare for your first full day of touring tomorrow.

Day 2 (March 2) Visit to the Apparition site of Our Lady of Akita

Embark on a journey from Tokyo at 7:00 AM, traveling via the efficient bullet train. Arrive at Our Lady of Akita by 12:00 PM, where you'll have the opportunity to visit the Chapel of the Apparitions at 12:30 PM. Afterward, enjoy a delicious lunch at a nearby restaurant at 1:30 PM. Immerse yourself in the spiritual and historical significance of the region by exploring the Museum of Our Lady of Akita at 2:30 PM. Finally, at 3:30 PM, return to Tokyo, concluding a day filled with cultural discovery and meaningful experiences.

Our Lady of Akita is a Catholic and Vatican approved Marian Apparition located in the city of Akita, Japan. It is approximately 400 kilometers away from Tokyo. The most convenient way to travel to Akita from Tokyo is by train. You can take the Shinkansen bullet train from Tokyo Station to Akita Station, which takes around 4 hours.



Day 3 (March 3) Tokyo

After breakfast this morning your English-speaking guide will meet you to begin your full-day coach tour of Japan's ultramodern capital - Tokyo. Our exploration of Tokyo begins with a visit to Asakusa Sensoji temple—the oldest temple in Tokyo—famous for its huge lantern hung at the Kaminarimon gate (Thunder Gate). We'll drive-by the Imperial Palace, the primary residence of the Emperor of Japan. Previously home to samurai warriors, it's a sprawling complex with beautiful 17th-century parks in the heart of the city.

Next, we'll venture into the vibrant neighbourhood of Shibuya, allowing you some time to explore at your leisure and discover a delightful local eatery for lunch (at your own expense). Nearby, we will visit the Meiji Jingu Shrine. Surrounded by green trees it's a great place to escape the crowds and enjoy some peaceful time exploring before retiring to our hotel for an evening at leisure.

Day 4 (March 4) Tokyo Sightseeing

Today is a full free day in Tokyo. There is no end to the spectacular sightseeing and activities available to you, as Tokyo truly has something for everyone. Take as much time as you like to relax at your leisure, explore the city, shop for souvenirs and eat the delectable cuisine. Be sure to ask your guide for recommendations on more must-see spots around the city.

***OPTIONAL TOUR - CALLIGRAPHY CLASS**

Today, learn the Shodo - the way of writing. Experience the traditional Japanese calligraphy - from the preparation of the ink, to the writing with a brush.

Start time approx.: 10:30am

Finish time approx.: 12:00pm

***OPTIONAL TOUR - HALF DAY ATAMI TOUR BY SHINKANSEN**

Escorted by your tour leader, take a short Shinkansen ride to Atami (including transfers to and from the station). Atami is a famous resort town surrounded by mountains and the sea. You'll enjoy a walking tour around one of the main streets along with sweet and craft shops and you will enjoy a seafood lunch at a local restaurant (included in the cost).

Start time approx.: 9:00am

Finish time approx.: 4:00pm

Day 5 (March 5) Tokyo - Hakone

After breakfast today we depart Tokyo and travel to Hakone. Away from the hustle and bustle of Tokyo, Hakone offers tranquillity among stunning natural scenery. Upon arrival at Hakone, enjoy a boat trip across the serene Ashinoko Lake, followed by taking a cable car up the mountains to the sulphur vents of Owakudani. You'll have spectacular views, and on a clear day, you can catch a glimpse of Mt Fuji in the distance.

Day 6 (March 6) Tokyo - Takayama

Our journey continues to Takayama, a charming Edo period town located in the Japanese alps. Upon arrival in Takayama, take a walk with your leader who will point out examples of beautiful traditional architecture as you explore the old part of town. During the walk, you will visit a local sake brewery and try different kinds of sake. You also learn how the town's isolated location caused it to develop a unique culinary scene. The area is particularly famous for Hida beef, which comes from a black-haired Japanese cattle breed that has been raised in the Gifu Prefecture for at least 14 months. Stop off on your tour to sample delicious Hida beef sushi or skewers (own expense).

Day 7 (March 7) Exploring Hida Folk Village: Traditional Houses of the Hida Region

Before leaving Takayama this morning we'll visit the Hida Folk Village, also known as Hida no Sato, which serves as an open-air museum that showcases over 30 traditional houses from the Hida region. Creating a charming village-like ambiance, the museum encompasses various structures including a former village leader's residence, logging huts, storage buildings, and numerous gassho-zukuri farmhouses. The term "gassho-zukuri" translates to "hands folded in prayer," aptly describing the steep thatched roofs resembling hands joined in prayer. These distinctive farmhouses were transported from nearby Shirakawago, a location renowned for its gassho-zukuri houses, which contributed to the region's recognition as a World Heritage site. Then, we travel to Kyoto where the afternoon is at leisure.

Day 8 (March 8) Tokyo - Kyoto (Fushimi Inari Shrine)

We'll see the sights of ancient Kyoto this morning, starting with Kyoto's famed Fushimi Inari Shrine - known throughout the world as the 'Path of the Red Gates.' Take time to appreciate the quieter corners of the shrine, and if you're feeling fit, a walk to the halfway point provides stunning city views. We'll continue onto some of Kyoto's most iconic sites, like Kinkakuji (Golden Pavilion). This is a Zen temple and UNESCO World Heritage Site, with two floors covered entirely in thin layers of pure gold, set within a beautiful classical Zen garden. This afternoon, you have free time to explore the city on your own.



OPTIONAL TOUR - GREEN TEA CEREMONY

Also called Chado, "the way of tea" is the traditional and ceremonial preparation and presentation of Matcha. You will be shown how to prepare the tea and be able to experience preparing it as well. Your guide will be able to provide you with directions to the venue.

Start time approx: 3:00pm

Finish time approx: 4:00pm

OPTIONAL TOUR - FLOWER ARRANGING IN KYOTO

Today, experience Ikebana - the Japanese art of flower arrangement that dates back to the 7th century. The tradition believes that by arranging the flowers you give a new life to the flowers - Ike (live) Hana (flower). Head to a master's classroom where you will be able to try hands-on the art of flower arrangement in Japan

Start time approx: 4:00pm

Finish time approx: 5:00pm

OPTIONAL TOUR - IZAKAYA NIGHT TOUR IN KYOTO

Tonight, enjoy your experience of an Izakaya - a typical Japanese casual pub where Japanese go for a drink after work. You will be picked up from your guide at your hotel and will head to a local Izakaya to try the life style of a local while enjoying different type of alcoholic beverages and traditional Japanese pub food.

Start time approx: 6:00pm

Finish time approx: 8:00pm

Day 9 (March 9) Tokyo - Hiroshima & Miyajima

After breakfast this morning, we spend the day travelling to Hiroshima. Upon arrival in Hiroshima, visit Miyajima, an island known for its forests and ancient temples. Just offshore, there's a 'floating' torii, which becomes partially submerged at high tide. It marks the entrance to the Itsukushima Shrine, which was first built in the 12th century. Later, check in your hotel and relax in the evening. You might want to try a local famous dish okonomiyaki, a savoury pancake of egg, cabbage, soba noodles, and meat or seafood.

Day 10 (March 10) Hiroshima Peace Memorial and Museum (Gen Baku Dome)

This morning we'll visit the Atomic Bomb Dome, otherwise known as the Genbaku Dome, or the Hiroshima Peace Memorial and Museum. A shell of a building that was one of very few left standing after the United States bombed Hiroshima in 1945. In Hiroshima today, locals have mixed feelings about the UNESCO World Heritage-listed structure: some see it as a reminder of war, while others consider it a tribute to the lost that ensures we'll never forget the tragic events that took place here. Afterwards, we continue our Japan adventure to Osaka. Upon arrival, you have free time to explore Osaka.



Day 11 (March 11) Tokyo - Osaka & Nara

Today we enjoy a coach tour with our guide, beginning by driving by the spectacular Osaka Castle, before making our way to Nara. Our first stop will be to the impressive Todaji Temple, which holds a world record as the largest wooden building in the world, and houses one of Japan's largest buddha statues. You'll then have some time to stroll Nara Park amongst the wild roaming holy deers, where you'll then have some time to enjoy lunch (at your own expense). We'll also enjoy a walking tour of the Dōtonbori area. One of Osaka's most popular tourist destinations, this street runs parallel to the Dōtonbori canal and is a hugely popular destination for shopping, street food, bars and entertainment. At night the streets here are illuminated by hundreds of colourful neon lights and mechanised signs, including the famous running Glico Man sign and the Kani Doraku crab sign.

OPTIONAL TOUR - IZAKAYA AND KARAOKE

Celebrate the end of your Japan adventure with a casual meal at Izakaya, followed by a visit to a karaoke bar for that quintessential Japanese experience!

Start time approx: 6:00pm

Finish time approx: 9:00pm

Day 12 (March 12) Homebound

Today marks the end of your incredible tour through Japan. Departure and check out: There are several ways to travel from your hotel to either Osaka International Airport (ITM) or Kansai International Airport (KIX), from shuttle buses to trains and taxis. Transport to the airports can cost between 250 Yen to 21,000 Yen depending on the form of transport you choose. Your Tour Leader will be able to assist you arrange the most convenient way to the airport on the last day of the trip.

Travellers will be departing at various times throughout the day. Standard hotel check-out is from 10am-12pm. You are welcome to leave your luggage at hotel reception and spend your final moments of free time exploring the area or alternatively please speak with hotel staff if you would like to extend your check-out time. Please note this service is subject to availability and will likely come at an additional cost.

Included in Main Tour

- To Be Determined

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