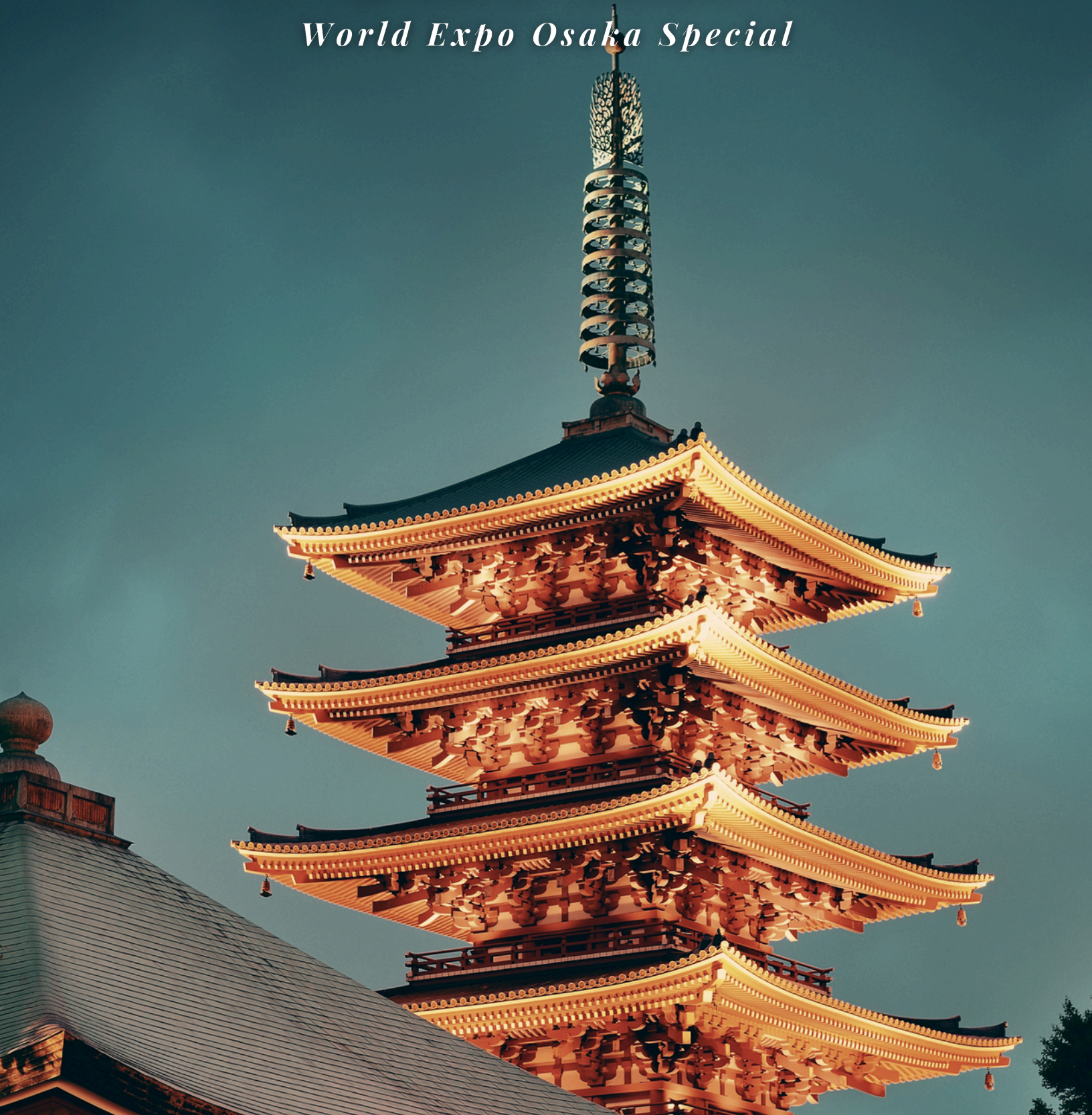


*Tradition & Modernity*

# JAPAN

*World Expo Osaka Special*

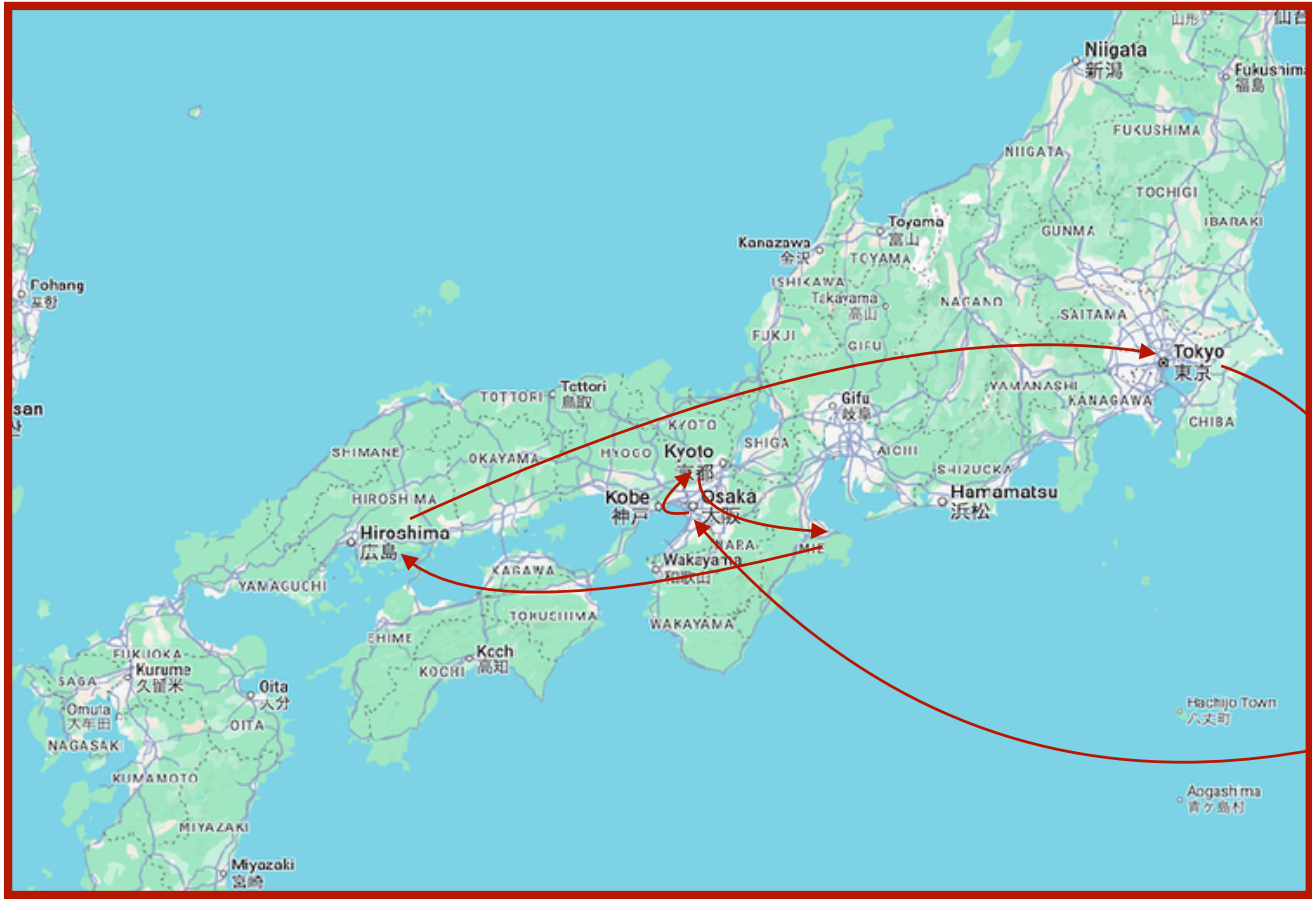




# ITINERARY

<b>DAY 1</b>	<b>Thu, Oct 9, 2025</b>	Leave USA	
<b>DAY 2</b>	<b>Fri, Oct 10, 2025</b>	Arrive in Osaka	Osaka
<b>DAY 3</b>	<b>Sat, Oct 11, 2025</b>	Visit World Expo Osaka	Osaka
<b>DAY 4</b>	<b>Sun, Oct 12, 2025</b>	Visit Nara - Miho Museum	Kyoto
<b>DAY 5</b>	<b>Mon, Oct 13, 2025</b>	Kyoto sightseeing	Kyoto
<b>DAY 6</b>	<b>Tue, Oct 14, 2025</b>	Kyoto sightseeing	Kyoto
<b>DAY 7</b>	<b>Wed, Oct 15, 2025</b>	Train to Ise - Toba Onsen	Toba
<b>DAY 8</b>	<b>Thu, Oct 16, 2025</b>	Nagoya - Hiroshima	Hiroshima
<b>DAY 9</b>	<b>Fri, Oct 17, 2025</b>	Hiroshima sightseeing	Hiroshima
<b>DAY 10</b>	<b>Sat, Oct 18, 2025</b>	Miyajima - Fly to Tokyo	Tokyo
<b>DAY 11</b>	<b>Sun, Oct 19, 2025</b>	Tokyo sightseeing	Tokyo
<b>DAY 12</b>	<b>Mon, Oct 20, 2025</b>	Tokyo sightseeing	Tokyo
<b>DAY 13</b>	<b>Tue, Oct 21, 2025</b>	Tokyo sightseeing	Tokyo
<b>DAY 14</b>	<b>Wed, Oct 22, 2025</b>	Departure	

# MAP TRAJECTORY





# HIGHLIGHTS

**World Expo 2025 Osaka**

**Great Buddha in Historic Capital of Nara**

**Miho Museum**

**Kyoto - with its Palaces, Temples and Bamboo Forest**

**Kyoto style Royal Dinner**

**Japanese Tea Ceremony**

**Ise Grand Shrine & Okabiki Festival**

**Mikimoto Pearl Island**

**Japanese Onsen - Hot Spa Experience**

**Toyota Museum**

**Shinkansen - Bullet Train**

**Mazda Museum in Hiroshima**

**Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park**

**Miyajima Island**

**Lunch at a Sumo Restaurant**

**Fish Market in Tokyo**

**Digital Art Museum**

**Shibuya Crossing**

## INCLUDED

**Hotel accommodation with daily breakfast.**  
**Arrival and departure transfers for suggested flights.**  
**Meals as indicated in the itinerary.**  
**All entry fees for places indicated in the itinerary.**  
**Private English speaking guides in each location.**  
**Private transportation with driver.**  
**Bullet train and domestic air tickets.**  
**Service charges for included meals and hotels.**  
**Local taxes.**

## NOT INCLUDED

**International airfare.**  
**Drinks with included meals, except drinking water and tea or coffee for breakfast.**  
**Gratuities for guides and drivers.**  
**Personal expenditures like phone calls, laundry, medical expenses.**  
**Travel insurance.**





## SUGGESTED FLIGHTS

Suggested flights are on **UNITED** and partner airlines:

**09 Oct UA 1768** Houston to San Francisco dep: 7:20 am / arr: 9:43 am  
Layover in SFO 1h 7m

**09 Oct UA 35** SFO to Osaka International dep: 10:50 am / arr: 2:50 pm on 10 Oct

**22 Oct UA 6** Tokyo Narita to Houston dep: 5:00 pm / arr: 2:55 pm

**Economy class: \$1,950 per person**

**Business class: \$8,900 per person**

**Including taxes, surcharges and fees as of March 20, 2025.**

**Fares may change based on availability.**

Preferred Travel Partner



October 9 -22, 2025  
14 Days / 12 Nights

# ACCOMMODATIONS

Month, 2025  
55 Days / 33 Nights

**Hotel Monterey Le Frere**

Osaka

[hotelmonterey.co.jp](http://hotelmonterey.co.jp)



**Rihga Gran Kyoto**

Kyoto

[rihga.com/gran-kyoto](http://rihga.com/gran-kyoto)



**Todaya Onsen Hotel**

Toba

[Todaya Hotel](http://Todaya Hotel)



# ACCOMMODATIONS

## Hotel Granvia Hiroshima

Hiroshima

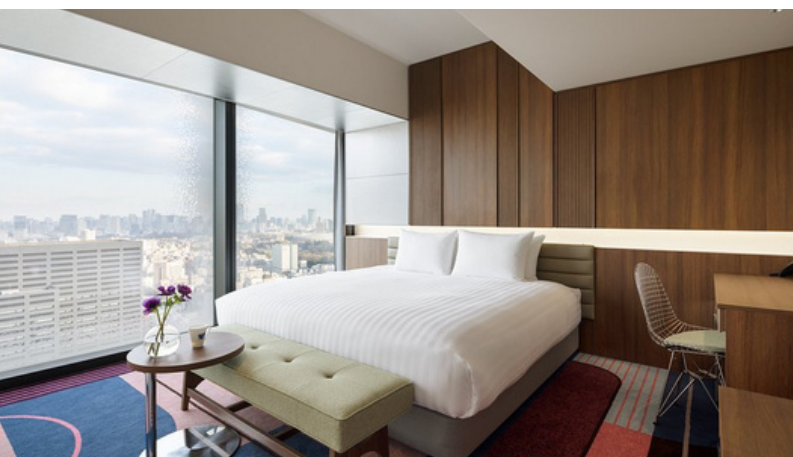
[hgh.co.jp](http://hgh.co.jp)



## Hotel Groove Shinjuku

Tokyo

[hotelgroove.jp/en/](http://hotelgroove.jp/en/)



October 9 -22, 2025  
14 Days / 12 Nights



## PROGRAM DETAILS

**Day 1: Thursday, October 9, 2025**

**Leave USA**

---

We will leave USA for Osaka, Japan.

**Overnight en route**

**Meals: -**

**Day 2: Friday, October 10, 2025**

**Osaka**

---

We will arrive in Osaka in the afternoon.  
On arrival, we will be transferred to our hotel in Osaka

**Overnight in Osaka**

**Meals: Non included today**



**Day 3: Saturday, October 11, 2025**

**Osaka**

Today is our day to embark on an unforgettable journey to **World Expo 2025**, a spectacular global event set on the futuristic **Yumeshima Island** in Osaka Bay. This full-day tour offers an unparalleled opportunity to witness cutting-edge innovations, cultural showcases, and visionary concepts shaping the future of society.

The day begins with a comfortable transfer from our hotel in Osaka to the EXPO site. Upon arrival, our knowledgeable guide will provide an insightful introduction to Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, highlighting its theme, *“Designing Future Society for Our Lives,”* and its focus on sustainability, health, and technological advancements. With this brief overview, you’ll gain a deeper understanding of the EXPO’s significance before setting off to explore at your own pace.

With an entire day to discover the vast exhibition grounds, you can immerse yourself in a diverse range of experiences. Over 150 countries will present their visions for the future through unique pavilions, each showcasing the best of their culture, technology, and innovations. Stroll through the Thematic Pavilions, where groundbreaking concepts in AI, robotics, and space exploration come to life. Be inspired by the Future Life Experience Zones, where futuristic living, mobility, and sustainability solutions are on display.

For those interested in global culture, the EXPO offers a rich program of performances, interactive exhibits, and culinary delights. Experience live demonstrations of traditional arts from around the world, sample authentic cuisine from various nations, and engage with thought-provoking installations that challenge conventional ideas about the future.

As the day comes to an end, we gather at a designated location for our return transfer to the hotel.

**Overnight in Osaka**

**Meals: B –L- D**

Leaving Osaka in the morning, we set out for **Nara**, Japan's first permanent capital, established in 710 AD. As we drive, our guide will share fascinating insights into Nara's role in shaping Japan's early history, from the introduction of Buddhism to the flourishing of art and literature.

Upon arrival, we step into the spiritual grandeur of **Todai-ji Temple**, home to the *Great Buddha (Daibutsu)*—one of the largest bronze statues of Buddha in the world. This magnificent structure, originally built in the 8th century, stands as a testament to Japan's deep-rooted Buddhist heritage.

Next, we wander through Nara Park, where friendly deer—considered sacred messengers of the gods—roam freely. Amidst the lush greenery, we visit *Kasuga Taisha Shrine*, an architectural masterpiece adorned with hundreds of bronze and stone lanterns, creating an ethereal atmosphere that transports visitors back in time.

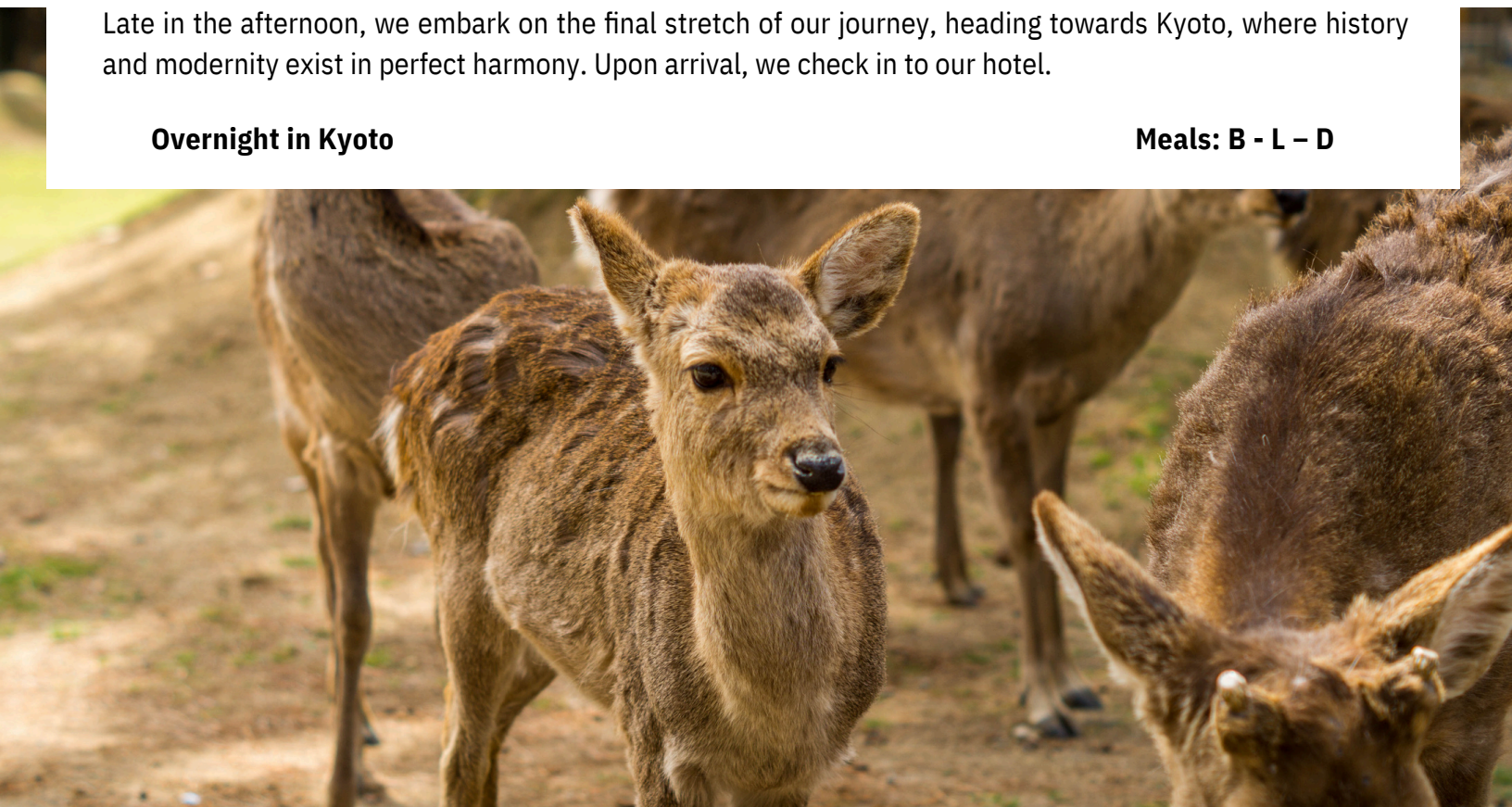
Continuing our journey, we drive to **Wazuka**, a picturesque town renowned for its exquisite green tea plantations and rolling hills. Here, we pause for a delightful lunch, savoring locally sourced cuisine while taking in the breathtaking landscapes that have made Wazuka the heart of Uji tea cultivation for over 800 years. This tranquil setting offers a moment to unwind and appreciate Japan's deep connection to nature and tradition.

In the afternoon, we make our way to the **Miho Museum**, an architectural gem nestled in the Shiga Prefecture mountains. Designed by the legendary *I. M. Pei*, this museum seamlessly blends with its natural surroundings, creating an immersive experience before one even steps inside. The museum houses an exceptional collection of Japanese and international antiquities, each piece carefully curated to celebrate beauty and cultural exchange across civilizations.

Late in the afternoon, we embark on the final stretch of our journey, heading towards Kyoto, where history and modernity exist in perfect harmony. Upon arrival, we check in to our hotel.

**Overnight in Kyoto**

**Meals: B - L - D**



Step into the heart of **Kyoto**, where centuries of history, refined traditions, and artistic excellence converge to create an unforgettable experience.

Our journey through this ancient imperial city begins with a visit to **Nijo-jo Castle**, an exquisite example of feudal-era architecture and a UNESCO World Heritage site. Built in 1603 as the residence of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first shogun of the Edo period, the castle's lavish interiors feature intricate wood carvings, gold leaf décor, and the famous "nightingale floors", which emit a soft chirping sound when walked upon—an ingenious security feature to deter intruders.

Next, we explore the **Kyoto Imperial Palace**, once home to Japan's emperors until the capital was moved to Tokyo in 1869. The palace complex, set within the serene **Kyoto Gyoen National Garden**, showcases the refined simplicity of classical Japanese architecture, with elegant halls, tranquil courtyards, and beautifully landscaped grounds that embody the spirit of Kyoto's imperial past.

As midday approaches, we indulge in a traditional Kyoto-style lunch at Ryotei Yachiyo, an elegant restaurant specializing in Kyoto's famous tofu cuisine. Here, we experience the delicate flavors and artistry of Kyoto's dishes, with tofu prepared in various exquisite forms—a culinary tradition deeply rooted in Zen Buddhist philosophy.

Refreshed from lunch, a short stroll leads us to **Kodaiji Temple**, a Zen Buddhist temple founded in 1606 by the widow of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, one of Japan's great unifiers. Here, we partake in a traditional **Japanese tea ceremony**, a moment of quiet reflection in a setting that exudes tranquility. The Japanese tea ceremony (Sadō) is much more than just drinking tea—it is a ritual of grace, mindfulness, and hospitality, embodying the principles of harmony (wa), respect (kei), purity (sei), and tranquility (jaku). Under the guidance of a tea master, we learn the meticulous art of preparing and serving matcha green tea, appreciating the beauty of simplicity in every movement.

Our journey through Kyoto's cultural wonders continues with a visit to **Kiyomizu-dera**, one of the city's most celebrated temples. Perched on a hillside, its iconic wooden stage, constructed without nails, offers breathtaking views over Kyoto. Founded in 778, the temple is dedicated to Kannon, the goddess of mercy, and is surrounded by cherry blossoms in spring and vibrant maple leaves in autumn, making it a must-see in every season.

As the evening unfolds, we step into the world of Kyoto's performing arts at **Gion Corner**, a renowned theater showcasing seven classic Japanese art forms in a single performance. To bring this extraordinary day to a close, we indulge in a **Kaiseki dinner**, the pinnacle of Japanese haute cuisine. More than just a meal, Kaiseki is an art form, where each dish is meticulously prepared to reflect the season, using the finest ingredients sourced locally. Served in a multi-course format, Kaiseki embodies the philosophy of balance, harmony, and aesthetics, with dishes presented in a way that enhances their natural flavors and visual appeal. Every course—from delicate appetizers to seasonal sashimi, simmered dishes, and beautifully arranged desserts—offers a sensory journey through the elegance of Japanese culinary tradition.

Today's journey starts with a visit to one of Kyoto's most iconic landmarks, **Kinkaku-ji**, the famed Golden Pavilion. Originally built in 1397 as a retirement villa for Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, the temple was later converted into a Zen Buddhist sanctuary. Its striking gold-leaf exterior, which glistens brilliantly against the surrounding pond and lush gardens, symbolizes harmony between nature and architecture, making it one of Japan's most photographed sites.

From here, we continue to **Ryoan-ji**, home to Japan's most famous Zen rock garden. Established in 1450, this UNESCO-listed temple is a masterpiece of wabi-sabi aesthetics, embodying simplicity and imperfection. The 15 carefully placed stones on a bed of white gravel create a meditative space designed to inspire contemplation. Whether interpreting the stones as islands in a sea, mountains above the clouds, or something entirely personal, Ryoan-ji offers a moment of quiet reflection in the heart of Kyoto.

Next, we visit Ninna-ji, a historic temple complex that has served as an imperial residence since its founding in 888 AD. With its five-story pagoda, exquisite fusuma (sliding screen) paintings, and a stunning garden that changes with the seasons, Ninna-ji provides a deeper insight into Kyoto's aristocratic Buddhist traditions.

By midday, we take a break to indulge in a gourmet dining experience at a renowned Kyoto restaurant that fuses traditional Japanese flavors with French culinary artistry.

In the afternoon, we head to the enchanting Arashiyama district, a picturesque area on the western outskirts of Kyoto known for its stunning natural scenery, historic temples, and bamboo groves. Our first stop is Tenryu-ji, a UNESCO World Heritage Zen temple founded in 1339, celebrated for its stunning landscaped garden designed by the renowned priest Muso Soseki. The pond garden, framed by rugged mountains and maple trees, remains unchanged for centuries, offering a serene escape from the modern world.

From Tenryu-ji, we step into the mesmerizing **Arashiyama Bamboo Grove**, where towering bamboo stalks create a mystical atmosphere. The swaying bamboo, accompanied by the gentle rustling of leaves, transports visitors into a scene straight out of a classical Japanese painting. To complete the Arashiyama experience, we take part in an unforgettable rickshaw ride, gliding through the district's charming streets and along the scenic **Hozu River**. Pulled by skilled rickshaw drivers, this ride offers a unique perspective of Kyoto's natural beauty, providing a glimpse into the city's past when such transportation was a common sight. As the day winds down, we return to our hotel, bringing an end to a day filled with history, art, nature, and exquisite cuisine.

## Overnight in Kyoto

Meals: B - L - D





**Day 7: Wednesday, October 15, 2025**

**Kyoto - Ise - Toba: A Journey to Japan's Spiritual Heart**

---

Our day begins with a journey into the heart of Japan's spiritual heritage as we board the **Kintetsu Express train** from Kyoto to Ujiyamada, arriving at Ise-shi Station. This comfortable and scenic ride transports us to Ise, home to the revered Ise Grand Shrine, where we will witness one of its most sacred annual ceremonies.

Upon arrival, we experience the 54th Hatsuhobiki, a deeply symbolic ritual marking the presentation of the first harvest (hatsuho) of the year to the deities of Ise Grand Shrine. This time-honored event reflects Japan's profound connection between agriculture, spirituality, and tradition. As we observe this rare and moving ceremony, we gain insight into the Shinto belief in harmony with nature and gratitude for the bounty of the earth.

Following this spiritual experience, we explore the **Ise Grand Shrine**, the most important Shinto shrine in Japan and the spiritual home of the Japanese people. Dedicated to Amaterasu- Omikami, the sun goddess and ancestral deity of the Imperial Family, the shrine complex is nestled within a tranquil forest of towering ancient cedars. The shrine's pure and minimalist architecture, built without nails and reconstructed every 20 years, embodies the impermanence and renewal central to Shinto philosophy. From here, we take a step back in time as we stroll through Okage Yokocho, a charming district that recreates the vibrant atmosphere of the Edo and Meiji periods.

The streets are lined with traditional wooden buildings, artisan shops, and century-old restaurants, offering an opportunity to taste local delicacies such as Ise udon, fresh seafood, and traditional sweets. This lively yet nostalgic setting immerses us in the culture and hospitality that pilgrims have experienced on their way to the shrine for centuries. In the afternoon, we visit Mikimoto Pearl Island, the birthplace of the world's first cultured pearls. Founded by Kokichi Mikimoto in 1893, this island is a tribute to the art and science of pearl cultivation, showcasing exquisite pearl jewelry and the innovation that transformed the global jewelry industry.

A highlight of our visit is the traditional ama (female divers) demonstration, where these skilled free-divers, dressed in white, gracefully plunge into the sea to collect oysters—preserving a centuries-old tradition of pearl diving. As the day draws to a close, we check in to our hotel in Toba, a coastal area famous for its onsen (hot springs). Our hotel is renowned for its natural hot spas, offering the perfect opportunity to experience Japan’s cherished onsen culture. **The Onsen Experience: A Ritual of Relaxation and Renewal** For centuries, hot springs have played a vital role in Japanese culture, valued not only for their therapeutic properties but also as places of spiritual purification and social bonding. The mineral-rich waters of onsen are believed to ease fatigue, improve circulation, and promote overall well-being. Beyond the physical benefits, the act of soaking in an onsen embodies the Japanese philosophy of slowing down, appreciating nature, and achieving harmony between body and mind. Overnight in Toba

**Overnight in Toba**

**Meals: B - D**

**Day 8: Thursday, October 16, 2025**

**Galveston**

---

After checking out from our hotel, we board the Kintetsu Express train for a comfortable and scenic journey to Nagoya, Japan’s fourth-largest city and a dynamic hub of history, craftsmanship, and technological innovation. Upon arrival at Nagoya Station, we begin our exploration with a visit to the city’s most iconic landmark, **Nagoya Castle**.

Built in 1612 under the orders of Tokugawa Ieyasu, Nagoya Castle stands as one of Japan’s three great castles, alongside Himeji and Osaka Castles. Once the residence of the Owari branch of the Tokugawa family, the castle is renowned for its imposing stone walls, elegant interiors, and golden shachihoko (mythical tiger-fish) adorning the rooftop. As we explore its vast grounds, we gain insight into the Samurai legacy and feudal history that shaped Nagoya’s cultural identity.

Following our castle visit, we head to **Noritake Garden**, a historic site dedicated to Noritake porcelain, one of Japan’s most celebrated pottery brands. Nestled in a beautifully landscaped setting, this area is home to a gallery, historical buildings, and an interactive workshop where visitors can witness the intricate process of fine porcelain craftsmanship. For lunch, we dine at Restaurant Kiln, where the elegance of Noritake ceramics meets refined cuisine, offering a perfect blend of artistry and gastronomy.

In the afternoon, we delve into Japan’s modern industrial legacy at the **Toyota Commemorative Museum of Industry and Technology**. Before becoming a global leader in automobiles, Toyota was founded in the early 20th century as a manufacturer of automatic looms. This fascinating museum traces the company’s evolution from textile machinery to cutting-edge automotive engineering, providing an in-depth look at Japan’s spirit of innovation and technological advancement.

After an enriching day in Nagoya, we board the **Shinkansen (bullet train)** to Hiroshima, traveling in the luxurious Green Car class for a smooth and comfortable ride. Watching the landscape transition from urban skylines to serene countryside, we reflect on the seamless blend of tradition and modernity that defines Japan. Upon arrival at Hiroshima Station, we check in to our hotel.

**Overnight in Hiroshima**

**Meals: B - L - D**



## Day 9: Friday, October 17, 2025     Hiroshima: A Journey Through History, Innovation, & Resilience

---

Hiroshima, a city that has risen from the ashes of history, stands today as a symbol of peace, resilience, and innovation. Once a thriving castle town and military hub, Hiroshima's fate changed forever on August 6, 1945, when it became the first city in history to experience the devastation of an atomic bomb. Despite this tragic past, Hiroshima has transformed into a vibrant and forward-looking city, dedicated to spreading a message of peace to the world.

Our day begins with a visit to the **MAZDA Museum**, a testament to Hiroshima's spirit of innovation and craftsmanship. Founded in 1920, Mazda started as a cork manufacturer before evolving into one of the world's leading automobile brands. The museum showcases the evolution of Mazda's engineering prowess, from its early three-wheeled trucks to its breakthrough rotary engine technology and modern electric vehicles. Walking through the exhibits, we gain insight into the fusion of tradition and cutting-edge innovation that defines Hiroshima's industrial legacy.

For lunch, we indulge in Hiroshima-style **Okonomiyaki**, a beloved regional specialty. Unlike its Osaka counterpart, Hiroshima's Okonomiyaki (Japanese savory pancake) is layered rather than mixed, with ingredients such as cabbage, pork, seafood, noodles, and egg stacked together and grilled to perfection. Watching skilled chefs prepare this dish on an iron teppan is a delightful culinary experience, offering both flavor and entertainment.

The afternoon takes us to **Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park**, a deeply moving space dedicated to promoting world peace. Located at the epicenter of the atomic bomb explosion, the park houses the **Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum**, which presents a powerful and emotional account of the events of August 6, 1945. Through artifacts, photographs, and survivor testimonies, the museum offers a profound perspective on the horrors of nuclear warfare and the urgent call for disarmament.

Within the park stands the **Atomic Bomb Dome** (Genbaku Dome), one of the few structures that remained partially intact after the bombing. Preserved as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, this skeletal ruin serves as a stark reminder of the past and a beacon of hope for a nuclear-free future. Other poignant landmarks in the park include the Children's Peace Monument, adorned with colorful paper cranes symbolizing peace, and the Cenotaph for the A-bomb Victims, inscribed with the powerful words: "Let all the souls here rest in peace, for we shall not repeat the evil."

**Overnight in Hiroshima**

**Meals: B - L - D**

Today, we embark on a full-day exploration of **Miyajima**, one of Japan’s most picturesque and spiritually significant destinations. Known as the “Island of the Gods,” Miyajima is home to breathtaking scenery, historic temples, and one of the most famous torii gates in the world.

Our journey begins with a transfer to Miyajimaguchi, where we board a ferry boat for the short yet scenic ride across the Seto Inland Sea to Miyajima Island. As we approach the island, we are greeted by the iconic floating torii gate of Itsukushima Shrine, a UNESCO World Heritage site that has stood gracefully over the water for centuries.

Upon arrival, we visit **Itsukushima Shrine**, an architectural masterpiece that appears to float on the sea during high tide. Originally built in the 12th century, this Shinto shrine is dedicated to the goddess of the sea and storms, Ichikishimahime-no-Mikoto. The shrine’s unique structure, elevated on wooden stilts over the water, embodies the deep connection between nature and spirituality in Japanese Shinto belief.

From the shrine, we make our way to **Daisho-in Temple**, a serene Buddhist temple nestled on the slopes of Mount Misen. Founded in 806 AD by Kobo Daishi, the revered founder of Shingon Buddhism, Daisho-in features intricate prayer wheels, mystical caves, and rows of Buddha statues, each with a distinct expression. The temple’s tranquil setting, surrounded by towering maple and cherry trees, invites quiet reflection and spiritual contemplation. After a morning of exploration, we have free time to enjoy Miyajima’s renowned local cuisine at our own pace. The island is famous for its fresh oysters, grilled anago (saltwater eel), and Momiji Manju (maple-leaf-shaped cakes filled with sweet bean paste or other flavors). Whether dining at a cozy teahouse or a seaside eatery, the flavors of Miyajima provide a delightful taste of the region’s culinary heritage.

In the afternoon, we return by ferry to Miyajimaguchi and transfer to Hiroshima Airport, where we board a flight to Tokyo Haneda Airport. Upon landing in Tokyo, we transfer to our hotel, where we check in for the night.

**Overnight in Tokyo**

**Meals: B - D**



Tokyo, Japan's dynamic capital, is a city where centuries-old traditions coexist with cutting-edge modernity. Once a humble fishing village known as Edo, it became the political center of Japan when Tokugawa Ieyasu established his shogunate in 1603. Over the centuries, Edo transformed into a sprawling metropolis, eventually renamed Tokyo ("Eastern Capital") in 1868, when the imperial court moved from Kyoto. Today, Tokyo is one of the most vibrant and influential cities in the world, blending historic shrines, samurai-era architecture, and traditional arts with neon-lit skyscrapers, high fashion, and advanced technology.

Our exploration of Tokyo begins with a visit to Meiji Jingu Shrine, one of Japan's most revered Shinto shrines. Nestled in a lush 100-year-old forest in the heart of the city, this shrine is dedicated to Emperor Meiji and Empress Shoken, the visionaries behind Japan's modernization in the late 19th century. As we walk through the massive torii gates, we step into a realm of tranquility and spirituality, far removed from the urban energy of Tokyo. Visitors can participate in traditional purification rituals, admire the shrine's elegant architecture, and, if fortunate, witness a Shinto wedding ceremony.

Leaving the serenity of Meiji Jingu, we take a short stroll to Shibuya, a district that epitomizes Tokyo's fast-paced, high-energy lifestyle. At the world-famous Shibuya Crossing, we experience the exhilarating sight of hundreds of pedestrians moving in perfect rhythm across the multi-directional intersection, surrounded by towering LED billboards and bustling city life. A quick stop by the Hachiko Statue, honoring Japan's most loyal dog, provides a moment of cultural insight into the deep values of loyalty and devotion in Japanese society.

For lunch, we indulge in a variety of Japanese flavors at a buffet-style restaurant offering an array of dishes, from seasonal delicacies to traditional hot dishes. This is an excellent opportunity to savor Japan's rich culinary heritage and enjoy a relaxed midday break.

In the afternoon, we travel back in time at the Fukagawa Edo Museum, an immersive museum that meticulously recreates a bustling neighborhood from the Edo period (1603-1868). As we walk through the life-sized townscape, complete with merchant houses, bathhouses, and lantern-lit streets, we gain a firsthand experience of daily life in Edo-era Tokyo. The museum offers an engaging glimpse into the past, where the sights and sounds of old Tokyo come alive.

Our next destination is the Sumida Hokusai Museum, a cultural tribute to one of Japan's most celebrated artists, Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849). Best known for his masterpiece "The Great Wave off Kanagawa," Hokusai's work has influenced artists around the world, from Impressionist painters to modern-day designers. The museum houses an extensive collection of his prints, sketches, and illustrated books, providing deeper insight into his artistic journey, innovative techniques, and immense contribution to the global art scene.

Today, we continue our exploration of Tokyo, a city that never ceases to amaze with its blend of cutting-edge technology, artistic creativity, and vibrant waterfront attractions. From the world of seafood markets to immersive digital art and the futuristic district of Odaiba, this day promises a mix of sensory delights and leisure.

Our morning begins at Toyosu Wholesale Market, Tokyo's modern seafood hub that replaced the famous Tsukiji Market in 2018. As one of the largest seafood markets in the world, Toyosu offers a fascinating glimpse into Japan's seafood culture and trade. Visitors can observe the action from dedicated viewing decks, watching early-morning tuna auctions and seafood vendors expertly handling the freshest catch of the day. The market's sleek and well-organized layout contrasts with the bustling energy of old Tsukiji, reflecting Japan's commitment to both tradition and modernization in its culinary industry.

From here, we step into the futuristic and dreamlike world of teamLab Planets, an immersive digital art experience unlike any other. Designed as a "body-immersive museum," teamLab Planets invites visitors to step into a series of mesmerizing, interactive spaces, where digital projections, water, mirrors, and LED installations blur the boundaries between art, nature, and technology. Walking barefoot through flowing water, floating flower gardens, and infinite light displays, this experience allows us to become part of the artwork itself, engaging all the senses in an unforgettable journey through creativity and innovation. For lunch, we indulge in a seafood buffet at "Iroha," where a delectable variety of freshly sourced seafood awaits. Here, we can sample sashimi, sushi, grilled fish, and other seafood samples, offering a taste of Toyosu Market's renowned seafood, expertly prepared for an authentic dining experience.

Afternoon will be at leisure to enjoy Tokyo on our own, or a meeting with a local organization will be arranged. Details will be available as we get close to tour date.

### Overnight in Tokyo

Meals: B - L - D



Today, we continue our discovery of Tokyo, a city where imperial history, traditional culture, and modern marvels coexist in perfect harmony. From the historic grounds of the Imperial Palace to the vibrant streets of Asakusa and the towering heights of Tokyo Skytree, this day offers a deep dive into the essence of Japan's capital.

Our morning begins with a visit to the **Imperial Palace**, the official residence of the Emperor of Japan. Standing on the former site of Edo Castle, this vast estate is surrounded by moats, ancient stone walls, and beautifully landscaped gardens, reflecting centuries of Japanese history. The original Edo Castle was built in the 15th century and became the seat of power for the Tokugawa shogunate in 1603, marking the beginning of the Edo period. After the fall of the shogunate in 1868, the Imperial Family relocated from Kyoto to Tokyo, and the castle grounds were transformed into the Imperial Palace. While the inner palace remains closed to the public, we can stroll through the Nijubashi Bridge area and the East Gardens, taking in the serene atmosphere and historical grandeur.

Next, we head to Asakusa, one of Tokyo's most well-preserved historic districts, for a sumo-themed lunch. Our meal takes place at a special sumo restaurant, where we experience the traditional hot pot dish enjoyed by sumo wrestlers. Sumo, Japan's national sport, dates back over 1,500 years, originating as a ritual dedicated to the Shinto gods.

After lunch, we take a leisurely stroll through **Asakusa**, an area that captures the spirit of Old Tokyo (Shitamachi). The highlight is a visit to Senso-ji Temple, Tokyo's oldest and most famous Buddhist temple, founded in 628 AD. As we pass through the majestic Kaminarimon (Thunder Gate), we walk along Nakamise Street, a lively shopping street lined with traditional souvenir stalls, street food vendors, and artisan crafts. Inside the temple, visitors can light incense, draw fortunes, and admire the grand pagoda, immersing themselves in centuries-old religious traditions.

As the afternoon unfolds, we ascend to **Tokyo Skytree**, the tallest structure in Japan at 634 meters (2,080 feet). This architectural marvel, completed in 2012, serves as both a broadcasting tower and an observation deck, offering panoramic views of Tokyo's sprawling metropolis, Mount Fuji on clear days, and the shimmering lights of the city at dusk. After a day filled with imperial history, sumo traditions, temple visits, and breathtaking views, we return to our hotel.

**Overnight in Tokyo****Meals: B - L**

Depending on our departure time, we will be transferred to Narita Airport.

**Meals: B**



wachouston.org  
travel@wachouston.org  
713-522-7811