

COMFORT TOUR

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2024 AUTUMN LEAVES TOUR OF JAPAN

This tour is ideal for those who enjoy a higher level of comfort and easier pace. It offers comprehensive cultural insights, diverse landscapes and a variety of authentic experiences of Japan.

“...In a lifetime of travelling this would be by far the best organised experience overall.”
— Brian & Cheryl Palliser



DURATION

14 days



THEME

Autumn Tours



GROUP SIZE

Min 4 - Max 8



TOP TOUR HIGHLIGHTS



Kyoto's western suburb, Arashiyama

Enjoy this very photogenic part of Kyoto, especially in autumn on rickshaw.



Kenroku-en Japanese Garden

Arguably the best Japanese garden in Japan, Kenroku-en is located in central Kanazawa.



Tokyo

One of the biggest cities in the world, Tokyo has so much to see and do.



Mount Fuji and Hakone

Very relaxing resort town of Hakone is a great place to enjoy arts, nature and views of Mt Fuji.



Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park

Take your time and absorb the solemn feeling of the atomic bomb site and it's informative museum.



Private dinner party with Maiko

Enjoy having a private conversation with an apprentice geisha to get an insight of this age old profession.

 [SEE FULL TOUR ITINERARY](#)

TOUR OVERVIEW

Stroll through Japan's iconic sites under the gorgeous coloured autumn leaves. Japan in autumn is like a dream, and this tour is paced to give you the time to savor the dream.

The **2024 Autumn Leaves Tour of Japan** takes you to iconic destinations including Tokyo, Hakone, Kanazawa, Shirakawa-go, Kyoto, Hiroshima and Miyajima.

In particular, the tour visits many Japanese gardens renowned for their display of autumn leaves such as **Rikugi-en Garden** and **Nezu Museum of Art** in Tokyo, **Hakone Museum**, and one of Japan's best gardens – **Kenroku-en** in Kanazawa. Selected gardens in **Kyoto** and **Arashiyama** will also be at the peak of their autumn colours at the time of your visit.

This **14-day** tour includes the comfort of 4+ star western style accommodation and a mix of public (bullet train) and private transport.

ITINERARY

 [DOWNLOAD FULL ITINERARY](#)

▼ Day 1: Arrival in Tokyo

Welcome to Japan! On arrival at **Narita** or **Haneda International Airport**, you will be met by a Journey to the East guide and escorted to your hotel by private transport.

Today is an arrival day and no group program is scheduled. Your hotel is located right in the middle of Tokyo near glitzy **Ginza**. Why not take a stroll, relax and be ready to start the first full day of your **2024 Autumn Leaves Tour of Japan**.

*Many of our guests arrive a day or so early to settle in before the tour starts. We can arrange your additional nights accommodation in the same room as the tour.



- Tokyo (Gate Hotel Tokyo or similar)
- None

► Day 2: Tokyo

▼ Day 3: Tokyo



You start the day when you travel by a private minivan to **Meiji Shrine**, located in the heart of Tokyo's fashion district, **Harajuku**. Surrounded by a forest of evergreen trees and stroll gardens, this impressive Shinto shrine complex provides a peaceful oasis of Japanese autumn leaves in an otherwise bustling city.

From the shrine you walk along the fashionable tree-lined boulevard of **Omotesando**. Here the world's super-brands sit comfortably alongside edgy Japanese designers, avant-garde architecture and Harajuku's teen pop-culture.

After lunch, you will visit **Nezu Museum of Art** for its sublime collection of Japanese and Asian art as well as its magnificent garden in the autumn colours. On a way back to your hotel, you will drop by the **golden coloured avenue of Ginko Trees** in Aoyama.

This evening you will try more casual dining experience near your hotel.

- Tokyo (Gate Hotel Tokyo similar)
- Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

▼ Day 4: Hakone

Take an overnight trip to Hakone. Hakone is a **scenic hot-spring holiday destination** located in the mountains near **Mt Fuji** and renowned for its natural beauty and world-class art museums.

The garden at **Hakone Museum** is spectacular with its Japanese maple trees in red autumn leaves at this time of the year. A visit to **Narukawa Art Museum** is an opportunity for you to see modern-day Japanese paintings and experience the exquisite view of Mt Fuji across **Lake Ashi**.

Tonight you will have your first chance to experience an authentic **kaiseki-style banquet** and a soak in a hot-spring **onsen bath**. Your guide will talk you through the ritual and etiquette of the Japanese bath and explain why a visit to an onsen remains one of the nation's most popular pastimes.

- Hakone (Hakone Nanase)
- Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

▼ Day 5: Hakone



This morning you try a traditional Japanese breakfast – a nutritious, protein-rich mix of grilled fish, miso soup, tofu, rice and pickles.

Walking through the **Hakone Open-Air Museum** you will come upon amazing sculptures from the likes of Henry Moore and Rodin.

After a leisurely morning relaxing in Hakone's ambience and nature, you travel back to **Tokyo** by bullet train. Upon arrival back in Tokyo, the rest of the day is at your leisure. Why not venture out to shop at nearby **Ginza** to find a special piece of Japanese art and craft? Your guide will make some suggestions and directions too!

Dinner tonight is at hotel.

- Tokyo (Gate Hotel Tokyo or similar)
- Breakfast (Japanese style), Lunch, Dinner

▼ Day 6: Kanazawa

You board Japan's impressive shinkansen (bullet-train) and head to our next destination, **Kanazawa**, located on the Sea of Japan coast.

Kanazawa's historical lineage, as a wealthy castle town steeped in samurai culture, offers an impressive range of architectural and cultural attractions and beautifully preserved streetscapes. In Kanazawa, you visit;



- **Kenrokuen Garden**, a castle garden dating back to the 17th century and regarded as one of three best gardens of Japan, and
- **An authentic tea house** to experience a **Japanese style tea ceremony**

For dinner tonight, enjoy premium **wagyu beef** cooked in front of you at a **Teppanyaki** restaurant.

 **Kanazawa (Hotel Nikko Kanazawa)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ **Day 7: Shirakawago**



A day-trip by private minivan takes you to **the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Shirakawago**. This is a charming **rural village** surrounded by mountains and blazing autumn coloured leaves.

The village's famous **thatched-roof farm houses** known as gassho-zukuri (meaning “hands clasped together in prayer”) are the main attraction. Their steeply-slanted roofs were built to withstand the region's heavy snowfalls. You will hear about their fascinating history and construction.

Your lunch today is a warm bowl of **soba noodle**, the local specialty, and dinner is at a Michelin star restaurant back in Kanazawa.

 **Kanazawa (Hotel Nikko Kanazawa)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ **Day 8: Kanazawa**



This morning, you set out to explore the beautifully preserved **Nagamachi samurai resident district** and visit one of the former samurai houses which is now a museum. The museum-house showcases the great architecture and the might and wealth of samurais in this area during the heyday of the feudal era.

You then visit **Omicho Market**, a lively working market. As you walk through the market the guide will point out some unique products of west coast Japan. The market houses many little local restaurants, one of at which you have **lunch today**.

There is a great variety of things to see in Kanazawa and this afternoon and evening have been set aside especially for you to make your own selection.

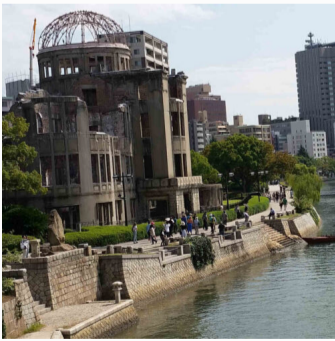
Kanazawa is well-known for its superb level of art and craft including pottery, lacquerware, silk and gold leaf. You can also participate in a culinary activity such as a **cooking class** or **sake tasting**.

Please ask Journey to the East for more information.

 **Kanazawa (Hotel Nikko Kanazawa)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch**

▼ **Day 9: Hiroshima**



After a few days exploring Japan's central regions, you board an express train and shinkansen bullet train to whizz down to Japan's western regions to visit the iconic sites of **Hiroshima** and **Miyajima**.

At Hiroshima, we visit the **Peace Memorial Park** and its informative and sobering **Atomic Bomb Museum**, contemplating the devastating impact of the world's first atomic bomb attack in August 1945. Despite this history, present-day Hiroshima remains a very welcoming and vibrant city, characterized by wide boulevards and attractive leafy parks.

After dinner at our hotel, you will have the opportunity to visit **Shukkeien Garden** where the coloured autumn leaves are illuminated and you feel like you're in a fantasy land.

 **Hiroshima (Sheraton Grand Hiroshima)**



▼ Day 10: Miyajima



A minivan and short ferry ride take you to the picturesque island of **Miyajima**, best known for the **vermillion-red floating torii gate** of **Itsukushima Shrine** (a UNESCO World Heritage Site). After admiring the gate, you begin a tour of this unusual shrine.

Originally constructed in 593 when the island was designated a sacred island only to be inhabited by the gods, the **Itsukushima Shrine** is also famous for its **unique pier-like structure which sits above the tides**.

You will visit pretty **Momijidani Park** to see its trademark **maple trees ablaze in autumn leaves**. Miyajima is home to several important Buddhist temples and pavilions, as well as a popular shopping street near the waterfront with its restaurants and souvenir shops.

In the afternoon you return to your hotel in Hiroshima and enjoy Hiroshima specialty food, **Okonomiyaki** for dinner.



Hiroshima (Sheraton Grand Hiroshima)



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

▼ Day 11: Kyoto



You leave Hiroshima this morning on the shinkansen to **Kyoto**, the most iconic of cities.

With 17 World Heritage listed sites, Kyoto is the cultural heart of Japan and the guardian of many of its ancient traditions. Originally made capital in 794, present day Kyoto offers an endless range of traditional craft shops, refined restaurants, ancient temples and Shinto shrines. It will be a mass of autumn leaves at this time of the year.

After stopping for a quick lunch, you will walk through some of the iconic sites of Kyoto including;

- **Nijo Castle, a UNESCO World Heritage listed site**, which display the best autumn colours at the time; and
- Kinkakuji, Golden Pavilion beautifully framed by autumn leaves

Our dinner tonight is at a **shabu shabu** restaurant serving wagyu beef. A **maiko** (apprentice geisha) will join us for a private performance. You have the unique opportunity to engage with her in person and learn more about this centuries-old art form and the life of a modern-day geisha.



Kyoto (The Celestine Kyoto)



Breakfast, Dinner

▼ Day 12: Arashiyama (Kyoto)



In **Arashiyama** at the foot of the mountains to Kyoto's west, once again you will immerse yourself in magnificent autumn scenery against the backdrop of exemplary temples and gardens. Today, you will;

- Visit **Tenryuji Temple**, one of the best examples of formal and informal Japanese gardens,
- Take a **Rickshaw** ride to go through Arashiyama 's famous **Bamboo Grove**,
- Explore deeper into rural **Sagano** and fully experience the rustic simplicity and serenity of mountain temples away from the tourist crowds, and
- Sample Kyoto's traditional **tofu cuisine**, a local specialty which has its roots in Kyoto's Buddhist vegetarian past for lunch.

Your evening is free to explore Kyoto and sample its many restaurants.



Kyoto (The Celestine Kyoto)



▼ Day 13: Kyoto



A minivan takes you to the southern part of Kyoto to visit one of Kyoto's most famous Shinto shrines, **Fushimi-Inari** Taisha. A vast shrine complex, it's best known for the thousands of vermilion-red torii gates that frame the pilgrim paths winding through the woods of Mt Inari.

After another magnificent temple garden, you will visit **Nishiki Market**, dubbed as Kyoto's kitchen. A 400 meter narrow passage is packed with more than 100 venders selling pickles, vegetables, seafood to cookware, ceramics and paper products.

This afternoon you have some **free time** to explore Kyoto. Why not explore Kyoto's bustling food and textile markets? Or, you may prefer to wander around Kyoto's great range of craft shops and department stores for that something special to take home.

Tonight, we will gather one more time for our "Farewell Japan" dinner.



Kyoto (The Celestine Kyoto)



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

▼ Day 14: Bon Voyage

This morning after breakfast, your **2024 Autumn Leaves Tour of Japan** concludes.

You can return to **Tokyo** by train or air to fly home, or depart from Osaka's **Kansai International Airport**. Perhaps you might like to linger in Japan for a little longer. We will be delighted to plan your personal post-tour extension to show you a different part of Japan. Please see our Model Extension Itineraries for inspirations!

Note: The cost of an escorted transfer to your departure airport is not included in our Small Group Tours (as we found many guests choose to stay in Japan a bit longer), but we will be happy to arrange your transfer to next destination or to exit airport. Please see our FAQ for more details.



DATES & PRICES

2024 Autumn Leaves Tour of Japan

Tour Code	Starts	Departs From	Available Places ?	Currency	PP Twin Share	Single Supplement ?		
GAL-24	Nov 16, 2024	Tokyo	Fully Booked	AUD\$	10,500	2,850	ASK A QUESTION	WAIT-LIST



TOUR CODE	STARTS	DEPARTS FROM	AVAILABLE PLACES ?	CURRENCY	PP TWIN SHARE	SINGLE SUPPLEMENT ?		
GAL-24a	Nov 09,	Tokyo	Fully Booked	AUD\$	10,500	2,850	ASK A QUESTION	WAIT-LIST



INCLUSIONS

Each guest is personally looked after with one-on-one interactions with our hand-picked, expert tour guides. As part of your investment, this tour includes:

- ✓ First-class wisdom and higher standard of individual care and attention
- ✓ 13 nights' accommodation (including traditional Japanese inns)
- ✓ All breakfasts
- ✓ 10 lunches (2 free choice lunches)
- ✓ 10 dinners (2 free choice dinners)
- ✓ Airport meet & greet on arrival
- ✓ Hotel transfer by private transport on arrival
- ✓ All local transport (train and private minivans)
- ✓ Pre-loaded Suica card
- ✓ Expert English speaking tour guides (Locally licensed)
- ✓ Cultural activities and entry fees included in itinerary
- ✓ Luggage transfers (1 piece per person)

DISCLAIMER: Unless otherwise stated, this tour does not include the costs of international and domestic airfares, transfers on the last day, travel insurance, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, transport during free time, personal expenses (laundry, internet, telephone, coin lockers etc.) and Visa (if required).

WHO THIS JAPAN TOUR IS FOR...

This is a perfect tour for people who:

- ▶ Want to be in Japan at the peak of **autumn colours**
- ▶ Wish to cover **must-visit** cities at **slower pace** (multiple days in each location)
- ▶ Enjoy comfortable accommodation (4 star +) including **ryokans but all with western beds**
- ▶ Prefer an organised tour with most **activities and meals included**
- ▶ Like the use of **minivan** which gives you greater access and comfort



WOW! What an experience. Waking up to see the sunrise over Mt Fuji and an onsen bath as the sun crept higher. The accommodation was a unique experience from the moment we arrived to the time we departed. The traditional rooms with futon bedding, the yukata, the traditional meals and number of courses – all were beyond what we believed.

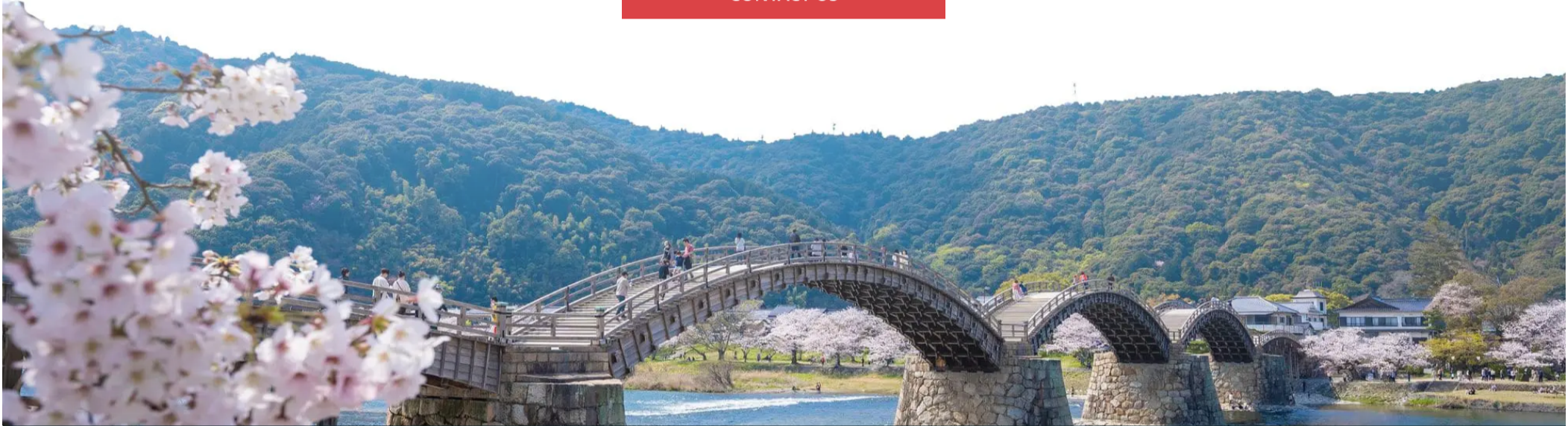


Trip date: 2017

Katie & Alexander Walshe – Australia

Have a question about this tour? Get in touch with our staff directly.

CONTACT US



INFORMATION

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BLOG

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- [Northern Kansai Region of Japan](#)
- [Top 5 unusual things you can find in Japan](#)
- [Japanese home cooking recipes Vol.5 – Okonomiyaki](#)
- [Unique accommodation in Japan](#)

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