

SIGNATURE TOUR

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2025 AUTUMN COLOURS SPECTACULAR TOUR OF JAPAN

One of our most comprehensive and popular trips, this tour offers you the journey of a lifetime at one of the most magical times to visit Japan – autumn!

"It was the best organised tour I have ever done..."
— Gay Buckingham



DURATION
14 days



THEME
Autumn Tours



GROUP SIZE
Min 2 - Max 8

TOP TOUR HIGHLIGHTS



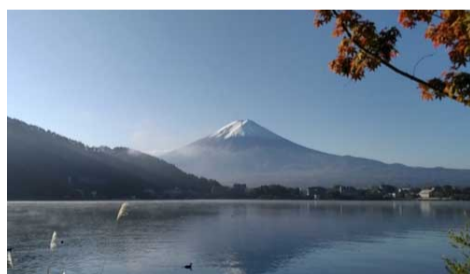
Guided walking tour of ever popular capital Tokyo

Walk through the backstreets of Tokyo to enjoy autumn colours in the city



The UNESCO World Heritage site of Nikko

Be surrounded by the best autumn sceneries in Japan



Mt Fuji from Five Lake District

Enjoy your first ryokan (Japanese-style inn) experience including onsen spa overlooking the magnificent Mt Fuji



Ancient capital Kyoto

Visit carefully selected best autumn gardens in Kyoto



Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima

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



Historic town of Takayama

Travel through central Japan and gain insights of rural life



TOUR OVERVIEW

The Autumn Colours Spectacular Tour of Japan offers a great blend of Japan's 'must see' and 'off the beaten track' sites, which is sure to exceed your expectations of Japan.

This 15-day journey is designed to show you the best of Japan at autumn's peak. On this carefully curated trip, you will experience the Japanese culture up close to both history and modern Japan. It is your perfect introduction to Japan as you travel the diverse landscapes, iconic sites and many hidden treasures with some of Japan's best tour guides.

As in most Journey to the East group tours, this tour runs with a maximum of 8 travellers which allows you to access locally owned boutique accommodation, restaurants, small temples and craft shops that large groups can't access. It travels at a reasonable pace with guided excursions in the backstreets on foot.

Our most comprehensive autumn tour visits iconic sites in Tokyo, Kyoto, Nikko, Mt Fuji, Hiroshima and Miyajima as well as providing rural experiences in Matsumoto and Takayama.

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 an airport shuttle or Narita Express train.

Today is an arrival day and no group program is scheduled. Your hotel is located near the glitzy Ginza and the famous Tsukiji Market. Why not take a stroll and relax, ready to start the first full day of your 2025 Autumn Colours Spectacular 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 night's accommodation at the tour hotel and pre-tour activities if you wish.

 Tokyo (Park Hotel Tokyo or similar)

 No meals

▼ Day 2: Tokyo



After a brief orientation with your guide, you begin your exploration of Tokyo.

Our guided tours focus on finding hidden gems as you walk through the backstreets rather than just visiting crowded famous spots in each city. In Tokyo on the first day, you visit the **Marunouchi** area in between the beautifully restored 100-year-old Tokyo Station and Imperial Palace Plaza. Marunouchi means inside wall or moat, and it was originally the inner sanctum of Edo Castle, now the **Emperor's Palace**. It is the oldest and elitist office area in Japan, where all the top Japanese companies have headquarters, and a great spot to see the physical blend of history and modernity. In Marunouchi you will see;

- The Imperial Palace Plaza with 2,000 impressive black pine trees, the world away from the business district of Marunouchi,
- Tree-lined Marunouchi streets to see impressive heritage buildings that marked the modernization of Japan in the 19th century, and
- The red-brick façade of Tokyo Station, one of the city's most striking pieces of architecture, against the glass and steel of neighbouring skyscrapers.

After the walking tour of Marunouchi, you will have lunch at a local restaurant amongst Japanese office workers.

In the afternoon, you will head to **Ginza**, perhaps one of the most famous neighbourhoods in Japan. You will see the big international brands lining the main streets, however, we will take you to the backstreets to find traditional craft shops and food retailers. You will have some free time here, too.



Tonight you will get together for a welcome **dinner of modern Japanese cuisine** at a restaurant near your hotel.

 **Tokyo (Park Hotel Tokyo or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 3: Nikko



Nikko is arguably **the most popular autumn destination in Japan**. Today you will make a day visit to this **UNESCO World Heritage-listed site** on Japan's impressive bullet train – the Shinkansen.

Nikko's origins go back to a mountain hermitage for a Buddhist priest in the 8th century and rose to fame in the 17th century when it was chosen as the site for the mausoleum of the powerful shogun, Tokugawa Ieyasu who unified Japan in 1603.

In Nikko, you will see the stunning autumn-coloured foliage and;

- Cross over the red-arched **Shinkyo Bridge**, the most iconic image of Nikko,
- **Walk through an impressive avenue of giant cedar trees** at the **Toshogu** complex with its highly decorative shrine, which honours the powerful shogun, and
- Stroll along the **Kanmangafuchi Abyss** with **70 Gizo Statues**, a quiet pocket of Nikko and gorgeously photogenic in autumn.

In the late afternoon, you will take the train back to Tokyo.

 **Tokyo (Park Hotel Tokyo or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 4: Mt Fuji and Kawaguchi-ko



A **scenic train** takes you to Kawaguchiko, a town located in the **picturesque Fuji Five Lakes District** in the foothills of Mt Fuji. At Kawaguchiko, the highlights include;

- **Breathtaking views of Mt Fuji**, with the **lake and stunning autumn foliage** in the foreground,
- **A local specialty lunch**, hearty noodle soup "Hoto",
- See superb examples of **kimono art using the centuries-old "shibori" tie-dyeing technique** at Itchiku Kubota Art Museum,
- **Stay in a traditional Japanese inn** (ryokan) and sleep on the futon bedding in your traditional tatami-mat room,
- **Authentic traditional banquet for dinner**, kaiseki-style meal, and
- Soaking in a **hot spring onsen bath** with **dramatic views of Mt Fuji** across the lake. Japanese ryokan hospitality at its best!

 **Kawaguchiko (Fuji Ginkei or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 5: Matsumoto



You start the day with another new experience, a **traditional Japanese-style breakfast** – a beautifully presented and nutritious, it is an experience in itself!

Aboard an **express train**, you head for Matsumoto in Nagano Prefecture, in the **heartland of the Japan Alps**. During Japan's feudal period, **Matsumoto became an important castle town** ruled by a powerful local clan. Today the city is popular for its cosmopolitan atmosphere, **galleries, and stunning alpine settings**. After arriving in Matsumoto, you will;

- Visit **Japan's oldest wooden castle**, and one of the nation's five castles designated as national treasures, the impressive **Matsumoto Castle**,
- **Walk through the well-preserved old merchant district**, Nakamachi and Nawate-Dori, to **see the Namako-walled homes**,



- Browse through shops selling **Japanese traditional crafts** and food items such as **pottery, timber ware and sake**, and
- Enjoy dinner at a small local 'Italian' restaurant showcasing Nagano's fresh produce.

 **Matsumoto (Matsumoto Marunouchi Hotel or similar)**

 **Breakfast (Japanese-style), Dinner**

▼ Day 6: Shirakawa-go and Takayama



This morning, a private minivan will take you across an **autumn-coloured mountain pass** to the **UNESCO World Heritage Site of Shirakawa-go**. You will spend a couple of hours exploring this **charming rural village surrounded by mountains and autumn colours**. The village's famous thatched-roof farmhouses are known as **gassho-zukuri** (meaning "hands clasped together in prayer"). Their steeply slanted roofs are built to withstand the region's heavy snowfalls. You will **go inside one of the heritage houses** to study the interior and learn about their history and the life of the snowbound countryside.

After a soba lunch, which this area is famous for, you will reach today's final destination, **Takayama**. Here, you will slide back in time as you wander through Takayama's beautifully **preserved streets of old timber merchant houses** in this most atmospheric and compact of towns – best explored on foot with your specialist guide.

 **Takayama (Tokyu Stay Hida Takayama Musubi no Yu or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 7: Takayama



This morning you visit **Takayama's 200-year-old Morning Market**, to check out its farm-fresh produce and handmade crafts. **Hida region** where Takayama is located retains many **rural features** outside the town centre, and that is where you spend the rest of today.

After a morning guided tour covering the historic sites of Takayama, you will have **some free time** to enjoy Takayama at your own pace. There are many attractive streets to take photographs, small galleries and museums, and traditional crafts and food item shops. For active people, there are options for walking and cycling. Your guide will point you in the right direction depending on your interests.

 **Takayama (Tokyu Stay Hida Takayama Musubi no Yu or similar)**

 **Breakfast**

▼ Day 8: Kyoto



This morning you will take an express train to Kyoto. **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 ancient temples and Shinto shrines**, contemplative gardens, traditional craft shops and refined restaurants.

Upon arrival, you will **explore the historical Gion area on foot with your guide**. The guide will take you through atmospheric backstreets to discover Kyoto's traditional culture and architecture. You may spot a geisha or two on the way to their performance engagement.

 **Kyoto (Cross Hotel Kyoto or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Dinner**

▼ Day 9: Kyoto (Arashiyama)





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;

- Take a **rickshaw ride** to go through Arashiyama's famous **Bamboo Grove**,
- **Away from the tourist crowds**, explore deeper into rural **Sagano** and fully experience the rustic **simplicity and serenity of mountain temples**, and
- Sample Kyoto's traditional **tofu cuisine**, a local specialty that has its roots in Kyoto's Buddhist vegetarian past for lunch.

Back at the hotel, you will have a fun-filled **cooking class**. Learn how to make some popular Japanese dishes to recreate them at home.

 **Kyoto (Cross Hotel Kyoto or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 10: Kyoto



Today, a minivan will take you to an **outer suburb of Kyoto** to further enjoy select temple gardens ablaze in autumn colours, the perfect images of the ancient capital.

Back in Kyoto, you will have a **free evening** to try out an endless choice of restaurants in Kyoto. Our guide will be there to help with your selection.

 **Kyoto (Cross Hotel Kyoto or similar)**

 **Breakfast**

▼ Day 11: Hiroshima



Once again onboard the Shinkansen, you travel to Hiroshima. The first stop is 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 1945.

Despite this history, present-day **Hiroshima remains a very welcoming and vibrant city**, characterized by wide boulevards and attractive leafy parks.

After lunch, you will take a short train and **ferry ride to the island of Miyajima**. The island is best known for the **vermillion-red floating torii gate of Itsukushima Shrine** (a UNESCO World Heritage Site).

Tonight you will **stay on the island overnight**, and enjoy the evening quiet after the day-trippers have left and to perhaps capture a photo of the famous torii gate at sunset.

 **Miyajima (Miyajima Villa or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Dinner**

▼ Day 12: Miyajima



First thing in the morning, before day trippers arrive, your guide will take you through the **Itsukushima Shrine**, originally **constructed in 593** when the island was designated a sacred island only to be inhabited by the gods. The shrine's **unique pier-like structure (which appears to float above the tides)** was restored to its present state in 1168.

Miyajima is impossibly charming and you will enjoy a guided tour and some free time before heading to your final destination, **Osaka** by Shinkansen.

Upon arrival at Osaka, you will venture out to the town centre for a casual dinner and feel the bigger-than-life spirit of Osaka.

 **Osaka (Hotel Intergate Osaka Umeda or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

▼ Day 13: Osaka



This morning you will head to the downtown district of Namba and have a walking guided tour including the 'kitchen tool' street of **Doguyasuji**, the **electric goods street**, and **shops for modern culture like anime**. It is a **haven for those who love Japanese cuisine**. You will find anything from delicate Japanese lacquerware, to a takoyaki griddle, the perfect set of chopsticks or a high-end Japanese knife.

After some free time in the afternoon, you will gather together for one last time. A **farewell Japan dinner tonight** is a teppanyaki of mouthwatering Wagyu beef.

 **Osaka (Hotel Intergate Osaka Umeda or similar)**

 **Breakfast, Dinner**

▼ Day 14: Bon Voyage

This morning after breakfast, your **2025 Autumn Colours Spectacular Tour of Japan** concludes. You can return to Tokyo by bullet train 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 on the Private Tour page to get some inspiration!

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



DATES & PRICES

2025 Autumn Colours Spectacular Tour of Japan



Show Prices in:

Australian Dollars (AUD\$) ▾

| TOUR CODE | START DATE | START CITY | AVAILABLE PLACES | CURRENCY | PP TWIN SHARE | SINGLE SUPPLEMENT | | |
|-----------|------------|------------|------------------|----------|---------------|-------------------|----------------|----------|
| GAC-25a | 17/11/2025 | Tokyo | Available | AUD\$ | \$10,250 | \$2,500 | ASK A QUESTION | BOOK NOW |
| GAC-25b | 18/11/2025 | Tokyo | Available | AUD\$ | \$10,250 | \$2,500 | ASK A QUESTION | BOOK NOW |

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
- ✓ 6 lunches and 10 dinners
- ✓ Exclusive activity access
- ✓ Airport meet & greet
- ✓ Hotel transfer by public transport on arrival
- ✓ All local transport (train, bus and private minivans)
- ✓ Transport IC card pre-loaded with starter credit
- ✓ 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 visit the best locations on the Honshu Island of Japan at the **peak of autumn**
- ▶ Wish to cover all the **"must visit" places** of the Honshu Island in 15 days
- ▶ Enjoy strolling through **backstreets** with your guide and find **hidden gems** avoiding the tourist traps
- ▶ Like tours **designed with healthy 55+** travellers in mind
- ▶ Be up close and **interact with locals** through public transport
- ▶ Experience a **variety in style**, and typically 4-star **boutique accommodation** with a private bathroom





I enjoyed my first springtime tour with JttE so much I came back ! I w recommend it to anyone! My second tour in autumn was even better weather and timing of autumn colours just perfect). Thanks JttE!



Trip date: November 2023

Beverley Peacock - VIC, Australia

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

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