

Rural Family Adventure: Treasures of Japan's heartland

SMALL-GROUP GUIDED TOUR

家族旅行

Our tour offers a fascinating insight into the Kansai area, heartland of Japan's culture and history. It offers a whole range of experiences from the urban sights of imperial Kyoto to rural immersion in the communities of Asuka and Sasayama. Our family adventure draws on Oku Japan's strong links with local people and the individuals we know personally.

We include destinations and experiences which will delight children - Japanese drumming, feeding the free-roaming deer of Nara Park, creating their own pottery

and paper lantern. But all of these are fun for adults, too! The scenic boat ride along the Hozu River complements these destinations and activities. Sharing wonderful moments with local people, families will create memories to be cherished forever. We want families to enjoy unique opportunities for family bonding, experiencing the warmth of rural Japan.

DETAILS

DATES & PRICES

Please see website

TOUR LENGTH

8 days

TYPE AND LEVEL OF TRIP

Moderate - 8 days of countryside exploration with various physical and craft experiences: pottery making, learning the techniques of Wadaiko Japanese Taiko drumming, etc.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Full-time services of an English-speaking tour guide; 7 nights in hotels and Japanese-style inns (Ryokan and Minshuku); Daily breakfast, 1 lunch and 6 dinners; All transportation between tour locations; Entrance to museums, temples and other sights on the group's itinerary; Forwarding of one item of luggage on two occasions.



HIGHLIGHTS

Visit some of the best rural regions and old capitals of Japan; Meet free-roaming animals - Japanese deer and macaques; Explore the peaceful countryside of the first capital of Japan; Harvesting seasonal vegetables with local farmers; Pottery making experience at one of the ancient kilns in the rural community; Scenic boat ride along the Hozu River down to Arashiyama in Kyoto; Make your own paper lantern at the oldest studio in Kyoto; A thrilling Taiko drumming lesson with a famous professional team

- 1 Arashiyama bamboo forest
- 2 Kushi dango skewered sweet
- 3 Walking in the peaceful Japanese countryside
- 4 Children sleeping on futon in tatami-mat room
- 5 Wadaiko Japanese Taiko drumming
- 6 Thatched-roof house in Sasayama
- 7 Vermilion torii gates at Fushimi Inari Taisha

ITINERARY

DAY 1 > Meet in Nara

Arrive in Nara. Feed the free-roaming deer in Nara Park. Meet your tour guide and other group members at the tour hotel. There will be a Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant.

Accommodation: Hotel

DAY 2 > Explore Nara and travel to Asuka

This morning, we spend time exploring Nara, known for its free-roaming deer and historically important sites such as Todai-ji Temple, which houses the world's largest bronze Buddha statue.

Later, we travel by train to Asuka, a peaceful rural community in Japan's countryside and explore the village with its picturesque scenery and surrounding countryside. We divide into smaller groups for our overnight stay in charming, small Minshuku (family-run inns) in Asuka. Our Minshuku are traditional Japanese homes with tatami-mat rooms and we stay for two nights. Dinner and breakfast are delicious home-made cuisine using local ingredients.

Accommodation: Minshuku (Family-run guesthouse)

DAY 3 > Harvesting and lunch in a traditional home with a local farmer

We join a young farming family in Asuka and help them harvest seasonal organic vegetables. Harvesting is great fun and a fascinating experience. After this good exercise, we enjoy lunch at a charming traditional home. After lunch we have a fun Taiko drumming lesson with the local professional team. The team has given more than 1500 live performances in 38 countries around the world.

Accommodation: Minshuku (Family-run guesthouse)

DAY 4 > Travel to Sasayama and make our own Tambayaki pottery

Today we travel by train and bus to Sasayama, an ancient castle town which flourished as a transportation hub linking western Japan with Kyoto. We stop at a Tambayaki pottery village famous for



some of the oldest kilns in Japan. The Noborigama ascending kilns are unique to the location. We visit a small private pottery studio and try our hand at pottery making. In the afternoon, a short bus ride takes us to Sasayama town. Our accommodation tonight is a delightful traditional local guest house.

Accommodation: Minshuku (Family-run guesthouse)

DAY 5 > Sightseeing in Sasayama

There is so much to see in Sasayama! There is the site of Sasayama Castle, originally built in 1609 as part of an offensive against rebels based in Osaka. We begin our own exploration of the town in the area where the Samurai warriors used to live. We'll also see inside one of the fascinating old merchant houses and explore the town's atmospheric streets on foot. There'll be some free time for you to wander by yourselves, too - the town is full of interesting shops and cafes.



Accommodation: Hotel

DAY 6 > By boat to Arashiyama

This morning we travel to Kameoka and then enjoy a scenic two-hour boat ride along the Hozu River down

to Arashiyama in Kyoto. Arashiyama is a lovely area of western Kyoto famous for its bamboo groves. We visit the monkey park on Mount Arashiyama, with its Japanese macaques and stunning views over Kyoto city. We walk through the atmospheric bamboo forest and stroll through the village.

Accommodation: Hotel

DAY 7 > Vermilion Gates in Kyoto

This morning we visit Fushimi Inari Grand Shrine and walk through thousands of beautiful vermilion gates which line the paths on Mount Inari. We continue to a traditional Japanese paper lantern studio and try our hand at making a small paper lantern to carry home as a souvenir. There will be free time in the afternoon and a Farewell Dinner at a local restaurant in the evening.

Accommodation: Ryokan (Travellers Inn)

DAY 8 > Tour ends

Our tour ends after breakfast at the tour hotel in Kyoto. Your guide will offer advice on your journey to the airport for your homeward flight, or on onward travel in Japan if you are extending your stay.

