

Small Group Tours by **EMBARK**

15 DAY HOSTED TOUR BY MICHELLE BARKER

LAND ONLY: 2 - 19 OCTOBER 2026

AIR INCLUSIVE: 1 - 20 OCTOBER 2026

JAPAN





Let's explore Japan together!

Discover the very best of Japan on this unforgettable 15-day hosted small group journey. Travelling with no more than 20 guests, you'll enjoy a relaxed, immersive experience that blends iconic highlights with authentic cultural moments. From the dazzling neon energy of Tokyo to the timeless traditions of Kyoto, the breathtaking beauty of Mt Fuji, and the beautifully preserved old towns of Takayama and Kanazawa, each destination reveals a different side of Japan. Experience the thrill of riding the world-famous bullet train, reflect at Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park, and soak up the vibrant food culture of Osaka. Along the way, enjoy carefully selected local meals and hands-on activities that showcase Japan's remarkable heritage, from centuries-old temples to culinary traditions recognised by UNESCO.

Travelling in October offers another special highlight – the chance to witness Japan's spectacular autumn foliage. Fiery red maples and golden ginkgo trees transform gardens, temples and mountain landscapes into postcard-perfect scenes. It's one of the most beloved seasons for locals, who celebrate "koyo" (autumn leaf viewing) much like cherry blossom season in spring.

Highlights

- Take in a Sumo Show in Tokyo and enjoy their traditional lunch
- Visit the Koshu Valley, Japan's renowned wine-producing region
- Walk a section of the historic Nakasendo route.
- Participate in a Gold Leaf Pasting Experience
- Enjoy a special Maiko dinner in Kyoto

And so much more!

Itinerary Overview

- 4 nights' Tokyo
- 2 nights Mt Fuji/Hakone area
- 1 night Gero
- 2 nights Takayama
- 2 nights Kanazawa
- 2 nights Kyoto
- 2 nights Hiroshima
- 1 night Okayama
- 1 night Osaka

Want to stay on longer and explore further? Arrive earlier to visit Tokyo Disneyland or stay on later for Universal Studios. Perhaps add on a cruise or a unique hiking tour. We can tailor make any additional arrangements to suit you.





1st October 2026: *Air Inclusive Package Only*

If you've chosen the air inclusive package, you will be transferred from Newcastle/Hunter to Sydney airport for your fellow travel companions. Our flight will depart in the evening, travelling overnight to Tokyo - via Hong Kong.

2nd October 2026: **Day One (B)**

If you've chosen the *air inclusive* package, you will be transferred from the airport to our city centre accommodation in Tokyo. For the land only package, you will need to make your own way to the hotel.

We will be staying in the heart of Tokyo's vibrant Shinjuku district, one of the city's most exciting and convenient areas. Known for its dazzling neon skyline, endless shopping, and incredible dining scene, Shinjuku perfectly captures the energy of modern Japan. By day, explore department stores, underground food halls and peaceful green spaces like Shinjuku Gyoen National Garden. By night, discover tiny laneway bars in Golden Gai, lively izakayas, and some of the best city views from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building's free observation deck.

Tonight, we'll have a welcome dinner included at a local restaurant.

3rd October 2026 : **Day Two (B, L)**

After breakfast at the hotel, we will set out to discover some of Tokyo's most iconic sights, blending tradition and modern energy in one unforgettable day.

Begin with a visit to the Imperial Palace Double Bridge (Nijubashi), a much-photographed symbol of Japan's imperial heritage. Set against manicured gardens, stone walls and tranquil moats, this elegant bridge marks the entrance to the Imperial Palace grounds, the primary residence of Japan's Emperor. The peaceful setting, right in the heart of the city's business district, offers a fascinating contrast between historic tradition and contemporary Tokyo.

Continue to Shibuya Crossing, one of the busiest pedestrian intersections in the world. When the lights change, hundreds of people move in every direction at once — an extraordinary yet perfectly choreographed scene that captures the dynamism of modern Japan. Nearby, see the statue of Hachiko, Tokyo's beloved loyal dog, and soak up the electric atmosphere of giant video screens and neon lights.

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant, savouring authentic Japanese flavours and regional specialities.

In the afternoon, visit Meiji Jingu, a serene Shinto shrine dedicated to Emperor Meiji and Empress Shoken. Enter through towering wooden torii gates and stroll along forested pathways shaded by over 100,000 trees. The calm, spiritual ambience provides a peaceful retreat from the city's bustle and offers insight into Japan's enduring traditions and rituals.



Conclude the day with a walk through nearby Harajuku, famous for its colourful street culture and trendsetting fashion. Wander along Takeshita Street, lined with quirky boutiques and sweet treat stalls, and explore Omotesando's tree-lined avenue, often described as Tokyo's Champs-Élysées. With its mix of creativity, youth culture and cutting-edge style, Harajuku delivers a lively and memorable end to your day.

4th October 2026 : Day Three (B, L, D)

This morning you have a choice of hands-on activity, with both options giving you a souvenir to return home with.

The first option is a visit to 'Ann Fragrance' to make your own signature scent. The location is a treat in itself! At the top of a crimson staircase, you'll discover a "secret chamber," as if stepping into a scene from a film. This top-floor atelier, occupying an entire level, is adorned with deep navy carpets and soft pink tones in the fragrance-blending room. The scent-selecting booth, bathed in a soft glow reflected off white stucco walls, is where beauty and tranquility resonate in harmony. It is a gateway to another world—one where you gently step away from daily life to encounter a fragrance that is yours alone.

Alternatively, learn how to make your own wooden chopsticks from scratch, with step-by-step guidance from a skilled artisan! During the session, you can find out fascinating insights about the cultural meaning of chopsticks, before making your own personalized pair, using traditional techniques.

Please note that numbers are limited for each activity. Please nominate your choice of activity as early as possible for us to confirm your preferred option.

Travel to our morning activities will be by Tokyo's efficient and easy-to-use public transport system, allowing you to experience the city just like a local. For your convenience, a Suica card has been included for every member of the group, with all fares covered as part of your tour. It's these thoughtful inclusions that ensure your journey is smooth, seamless and completely stress-free.

Afterwards, we will rejoin as a group to dive into the fascinating world of sumo wrestling! Our interactive experience will be led by retired sumo wrestlers. Learn about sumo history, techniques, and daily life, watch live sparring matches, and even step into the ring yourself for a friendly skirmish. Complete your experience with a delicious meal of Tonkatsu and Chanko Nabe, the traditional meal of Sumo wrestlers.

In the afternoon, visit Asakusa, often regarded as Tokyo's spiritual heart and home to the city's oldest and most significant temple district. Begin at the iconic Kaminarimon (Thunder Gate), instantly recognisable by its विशाल red lantern and imposing guardian statues. From here, stroll along bustling Nakamise Street, a lively shopping arcade that has served temple visitors for centuries. Browse traditional souvenirs and sample classic Japanese snacks such as rice crackers and sweet ningyoyaki cakes as you soak up the atmosphere.





In the evening, enjoy an included Izakaya street-hopping experience, travelling by public transport for an authentic introduction to Tokyo's vibrant after-dark dining scene. Izakayas are Japan's answer to the tapas bar — relaxed, welcoming venues where colleagues and friends gather to unwind over shared plates and drinks. You'll hop between a selection of local favourites, sampling a variety of small dishes such as yakitori (chargrilled chicken skewers), karaage (crispy fried chicken), fresh sashimi, edamame, and seasonal specialties, all perfectly paired with Japanese beer, sake or highballs.



Many of these tiny eateries are tucked beneath train lines or hidden down lantern-lit laneways, seating just a handful of guests and creating a lively, intimate atmosphere. Street-hopping is a beloved Tokyo tradition, allowing you to experience different flavours and neighbourhood vibes in one evening — a fun and delicious way to dine like a local.

5th October 2026 : Day Four (B, snacks, D)

Today take a closer look at the fascinating world of sushi, extending from the ocean to your plate - starting with the famous outer Tsukiji fish market. We'll tour one of the world's largest seafood markets with a guide as you learn how fish is caught, distributed, and sold.



Afterwards, we'll turn our attention to the art of sushi making, one of Japan's most iconic culinary traditions. Under the guidance of a skilled instructor, you'll learn the fundamentals — from preparing perfectly seasoned sushi rice to shaping nigiri and rolling maki with precision and care. Discover the importance of balance, knife technique and presentation, all of which are central to this time-honoured craft. Then, sit down to enjoy the fruits of your labour, savouring your freshly made creations for a delicious and rewarding hands-on dining experience.



We'll continue to TeamLABS, an immersive digital art museum where light, water, mirrors and sound blend to create a unique interactive experience.

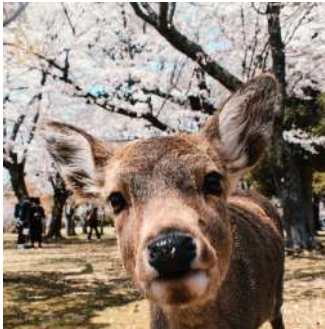
This evening, dinner is included at a local restaurant. Our last evening in Tokyo!

6th October 2026 : Day Five (B, L, D)

After breakfast, check out of your hotel and depart Tokyo by private coach, leaving the city skyline behind as you journey into the scenic countryside.



Travel to the beautiful Koshu Valley, one of Japan's premier wine-producing regions and home to the indigenous Koshu grape. Surrounded by rolling vineyards and mountain backdrops, visit 98 WINES for a guided experience that highlights the harmony between local craftsmanship and the natural environment. Learn about Japan's emerging wine industry, the unique characteristics of the region's terroir, and the philosophy behind small-batch production that reflects both innovation and tradition.



Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant, savouring regional specialities that showcase the fresh produce and flavours of Yamanashi Prefecture.

In the afternoon, continue to the Fuji Five Lakes region and picturesque Lake Kawaguchi, one of the best vantage points for viewing majestic Mt. Fuji. On clear days, the mountain's perfectly symmetrical cone is reflected in the lake's tranquil waters — a truly iconic Japanese scene. Visit Arakurayama Sengen Park, famed for its panoramic views of Mt. Fuji framed by the striking red Chureito Pagoda — one of the country's most photographed landscapes, particularly beautiful in autumn.

This evening, arrive at your hotel and settle in before enjoying dinner, reflecting on a day filled with stunning scenery, regional flavours and unforgettable views of Japan's most sacred mountain.

7th October 2026 : Day Six (B, D)

Begin your day in the stunning Hakone region, part of the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park and one of the best places to admire Japan's most iconic peak. Visit Lake Ashi, a serene crater lake formed more than 3,000 years ago by volcanic activity. On clear days, enjoy unforgettable views of Mt. Fuji rising gracefully beyond the lake's tranquil waters — its near-perfect cone a sacred symbol of Japan and an active volcano that last erupted in 1707. A scenic Hakone cruise offers sweeping vistas of forested hills, red torii gates standing along the shoreline, and, weather permitting, postcard-worthy views of Fuji itself.

Continue by Hakone Ropeway, gliding high above dramatic valleys and steaming vents created by ancient volcanic eruptions. Arrive at Owakudani, a striking geothermal valley where sulphur vents and bubbling hot springs reveal the raw power beneath the earth's surface. Here, you may wish to sample the famous black eggs boiled in the mineral-rich waters — said to add seven years to your life according to local legend — and capture photos of the otherworldly landscape.

Enjoy lunch (at leisure-not included) before visiting the Hakone Open-Air Museum, an inspiring space where contemporary sculptures are displayed against a backdrop of mountains and open sky. This unique blend of art and nature provides a memorable conclusion to your day. In the evening, return to the hotel for dinner, relaxing after a day immersed in spectacular scenery and volcanic landscapes.

8th October 2026 : Day Seven (B, D)

Today is one of our longer travelling days by coach as we journey deeper into Japan's countryside. To ensure a relaxed and enjoyable pace, the drive is thoughtfully broken up with a memorable walk along one of the country's most historic routes.

Your experience begins in Tsumago-juku, a beautifully preserved post town along the former Nakasendo Highway, which once connected Kyoto and Edo (modern-day Tokyo) during the samurai era. With its wooden inns, narrow lanes and traditional façades free from modern signage, Tsumago offers a step back in time.





From here, set out on a rewarding 2–3 hour walk to neighbouring Magome-juku, following a scenic section of the Nakasendo trail. The path winds through peaceful forest tracks, gentle mountain passes, waterfalls and stone-paved sections once travelled by feudal lords, merchants and pilgrims. Arriving in Magome, perched on a hillside with sweeping rural views, you'll gain a vivid sense of Japan's Edo-period travel life — a refreshing and culturally rich break in the journey.



Tonight we are staying in Gero - situated in the Chūbu region, nestled in a valley with the Hida River and Maze River running through it. Gero is all about the onsen! The area is renowned for its high-alkaline water (pH 9.2), often referred to as "beauty water" for its skin-smoothing properties. Our accommodation will be traditional Japanese style with Tatami mats - giving us a truly local experience (just for one night!)

9th October 2026 : Day Eight (B, D)

Travel into the heart of the Japanese Alps toward the beautifully preserved town of Takayama. Often referred to as "Little Kyoto of the Alps," Takayama flourished during the Edo period (1603–1868) as a prosperous merchant town, renowned for its skilled carpenters and craftsmen. Thanks to its remote mountain setting, much of its historic character remains wonderfully intact.



We are very lucky to be in Takayama during their annual festival time. We may change the order of our itinerary here to take advantage of being part of the festivities.

On arrival, enjoy a stroll through Kamisannomachi Old Town, where narrow streets are lined with dark wooden merchant houses, sake breweries and traditional shops that date back centuries. Many buildings still feature latticed windows and cedar façades, offering an authentic glimpse into Japan's past. Takayama is also famous for its high-quality Hida beef and centuries-old sake brewing tradition, made possible by the region's pure mountain water.



Enjoy lunch at leisure, perhaps sampling local specialties. In the afternoon, visit the Matsuri Yatai Kaikan (Festival Float Exhibition Hall), home to the elaborate floats used in Takayama's famous biannual festivals, considered among the most beautiful in Japan. These intricately carved and gilded floats, some over 300 years old, are a testament to the town's exceptional craftsmanship and artistic heritage, showcasing detailed woodwork, textiles and mechanical puppets that still perform during festival celebrations today.

Dinner this evening is included at a local restaurant.

10th October 2026 : Day Nine (B, L)

After breakfast, step into local life with a visit to the lively Miyagawa Morning Markets, held along the banks of the clear Miyagawa River.



Dating back more than 200 years, these markets began as a place for local farmers to sell surplus produce and are now a beloved Takayama tradition. Browse stalls brimming with seasonal fruits and vegetables, pickles, handmade crafts and regional delicacies, while enjoying the friendly atmosphere and mountain-town charm.

Takayama holds a unique place in Japan's history. During the Edo period, it was placed under direct control of the Tokugawa Shogunate due to the region's valuable timber and highly skilled carpenters — craftsmen so respected they were commissioned to work on temples and castles across the country. This prosperity helped shape the refined merchant culture you still see today.

We are very lucky to be in Takayama during their annual festival time. We may change the order of our itinerary here to take advantage of being part of the festivities.

After lunch, visit a traditional sake brewery to learn about Takayama's centuries-old brewing heritage. Thanks to the pure alpine water and cold mountain winters, the town produces some of Japan's finest sake. Discover the careful brewing process and, if you wish, enjoy a tasting of this locally crafted rice wine before continuing to Takayama Jinya. This remarkably preserved former government office offers fascinating insight into the town's administrative and samurai-era history, providing a deeper understanding of Takayama's important role during the Edo period.

11th October 2026 : Day Ten (B, L)

Travel into the mountains to Shirakawago Village, a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its distinctive gassho-zukuri farmhouses. These remarkable thatched-roof homes, some more than 250 years old, are designed to resemble hands in prayer — a practical architectural style created to withstand heavy winter snowfall in this alpine region. Once home to farming families who cultivated mulberry trees and raised silkworms, the village offers a fascinating glimpse into rural life in centuries past. Enjoy time to wander the peaceful lanes, step inside selected historic houses, and capture postcard-perfect photographs of this timeless setting.

Enjoy lunch in or near Shirakawago before continuing to the elegant city of Kanazawa. Visit Omicho Fish Market, Kanazawa's bustling culinary heart for over 300 years. With more than 170 stalls, it is famous for exceptionally fresh seafood sourced from the nearby Sea of Japan — particularly sweet shrimp, crab and seasonal sashimi. The lively calls of vendors and colourful displays make this a vibrant introduction to the city's food culture.

Continue to the atmospheric Nagamachi Samurai District, where narrow lanes, earthen walls and traditional gates transport you back to the feudal era. Once home to high-ranking samurai and their families, this beautifully preserved neighbourhood reveals how these warrior clans once lived in service to the powerful Maeda lords, who ruled Kanazawa during the Edo period. Today, the district offers a rare and evocative glimpse into Japan's samurai heritage.



12th October 2026 : Day Eleven (B, D)

Begin your day with a visit to Kenrokuen Garden, ranked among Japan's three most celebrated landscape gardens. Established in the 17th century by the powerful Maeda clan, Kenrokuen is designed according to the six classical attributes of a perfect garden — spaciousness, seclusion, artifice, antiquity, water features and panoramic views. Wander along winding paths past tranquil ponds, graceful stone lanterns and meticulously pruned pine trees, each carefully shaped to reflect the changing seasons. In autumn, vibrant maple leaves transform the garden into a tapestry of red and gold, while winter's famous yukitsuri (rope supports protecting tree branches from snow) create an equally striking scene.

Continue to nearby Kanazawa Castle Park for a short walk through the impressive grounds of what was once the seat of the Maeda lords, one of the wealthiest feudal families in Japan. Although the original castle suffered several fires over the centuries, beautifully reconstructed gates and turrets now stand proudly, offering insight into traditional castle architecture and Kanazawa's important role during the Edo period.

Enjoy lunch at leisure (own expense) before exploring the charming Higashi Chaya District, one of Japan's best-preserved geisha quarters. Dating back to 1820, this atmospheric neighbourhood is lined with elegant wooden teahouses (chaya), where geisha would once entertain guests with music, dance and refined conversation. Many of the buildings are now boutiques, galleries and sweet shops, yet the historic ambience remains wonderfully intact.

Later, take part in a memorable Gold Leaf Pasting Experience (approximately 1–1.5 hours). Kanazawa produces more than 99% of Japan's gold leaf, a craft that flourished here due to the Maeda clan's wealth and patronage of the arts. Under expert guidance, try your hand at applying delicate sheets of gold leaf to create your own keepsake — a hands-on introduction to one of the city's most celebrated artistic traditions.

Dinner will be included in a local restaurant this evening.

13th October 2026 : Day Twelve (B, L)

After breakfast, check out of your hotel and journey toward Kyoto, Japan's former imperial capital and the cultural heart of the nation for more than 1,000 years. From 794 to 1868, Kyoto served as the residence of the Emperor and the centre of politics, religion and the arts. Today, it remains one of Japan's most treasured destinations, home to over 1,600 temples, 400 Shinto shrines and 17 UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Visiting Kyoto is essential to understanding Japan's traditions, aesthetics and enduring spiritual heritage.

Upon arrival, enjoy lunch at leisure near Kyoto Station, a striking example of modern architecture that contrasts beautifully with the city's ancient landmarks.



In the afternoon, visit Kiyomizu-dera, one of Kyoto's most celebrated temples and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Founded in 778, the temple is best known for its vast wooden stage that juts out from the main hall, constructed entirely without nails. From here, enjoy sweeping panoramic views across Kyoto, particularly stunning during autumn when maple trees blaze in brilliant shades of red and gold. The temple's name means "Pure Water Temple," inspired by the sacred Otowa Waterfall flowing beneath the hall, where visitors drink from its streams for health, longevity and success.



Continue to a traditional Tea Ceremony experience near Gojo, offering a deeper insight into one of Japan's most refined cultural practices. Guided by an experienced host, observe the precise, graceful movements involved in preparing matcha green tea and learn about the philosophy of harmony, respect, purity and tranquillity that underpins the ritual. More than simply serving tea, this centuries-old practice embodies the spirit of Japanese hospitality and mindfulness — a fitting introduction to the timeless elegance of Kyoto.

14th October 2026 : Day Thirteen (B, L, D)

After breakfast, depart the hotel for a full day exploring more of Kyoto's timeless beauty and cultural treasures.

Begin in the picturesque district of Arashiyama with a traditional rickshaw ride through the enchanting Bamboo Forest. Sitting back as your knowledgeable puller guides you along shaded pathways, you'll glide beneath towering bamboo stalks that sway gently overhead, creating a serene and almost otherworldly atmosphere. Arashiyama has been a favoured retreat since the Heian period (794–1185), when nobles would visit to enjoy its natural beauty and seasonal colours.



Continue to Tenryu-ji Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of Kyoto's most important Zen temples. Founded in 1339, Tenryu-ji is renowned for its exquisite landscape garden, which has remained largely unchanged for over 700 years. Designed to incorporate the surrounding mountains into its composition, the garden is a masterpiece of borrowed scenery, reflecting Zen principles of harmony and simplicity.

After lunch in Arashiyama, before visiting Kinkaku-ji, the iconic Golden Pavilion. Originally built as a shogun's retirement villa in the 14th century, the top two floors are covered in brilliant gold leaf, shimmering as they reflect across the mirror-like waters of Kyoko-chi Pond. Set against immaculately landscaped gardens, this is one of Japan's most photographed and recognisable landmarks.



After sightseeing, return to the hotel for time to refresh and relax before a truly special evening. Tonight, enjoy a memorable Maiko Dinner experience. A maiko is an apprentice geisha, trained in traditional dance, music and the art of refined conversation. During this rare cultural encounter, you'll gain insight into Kyoto's centuries-old entertainment traditions, watch a graceful performance, and appreciate the elegance and artistry that remain an important part of the city's living heritage.



15th October 2026 : Day Fourteen (B, D)

For your comfort and convenience, we recommend packing a small overnight bag for the next two nights. Your main luggage will be forwarded ahead to Okayama, allowing you to travel light and move easily between destinations.

This is because later today, we'll be taking the bullet train! But first, we'll travel to Nara, Japan's first permanent capital, established in 710. As the birthplace of much of Japan's early culture, religion and governance, Nara remains rich in historic treasures. Visit Nara Park, where over 1,000 friendly, free-roaming deer wander freely. Considered sacred messengers of the gods in Shinto belief, the deer have become a beloved symbol of the city and create a truly unique and memorable atmosphere.



Continue to Todai-ji Temple, one of Japan's most significant and awe-inspiring religious sites. This UNESCO World Heritage-listed temple houses the Great Buddha (Daibutsu), a विशाल bronze statue standing over 15 metres tall. The temple's main hall is among the largest wooden buildings in the world, a remarkable feat of traditional craftsmanship.



Enjoy lunch at leisure (own expense) before visiting Kasuga Taisha Shrine, famed for its atmospheric pathways lined with thousands of stone and bronze lanterns. Founded in 768, the shrine has deep ties to Nara's powerful Fujiwara clan and remains an important spiritual site to this day.

Later in the afternoon, bid farewell to the coach and transfer to Shin-Osaka Station to board the Shinkansen bullet train bound for Hiroshima. Travelling at speeds of up to 300 km/h, the Shinkansen is renowned for its punctuality, comfort and cutting-edge engineering — an unforgettable Japanese experience in itself. Upon arrival in Hiroshima, transfer to your hotel by local tram and check in for the evening.



16th October 2026 : Day Fifteen (B)

This morning, board the ferry to the sacred island of Miyajima, officially known as Itsukushima — often regarded as one of Japan's three most scenic views. As you approach by water, you'll see the island's most famous landmark: the striking vermilion torii gate that appears to float gracefully on the sea at high tide. This iconic sight has symbolised Japan for centuries.

Visit Itsukushima Shrine, a UNESCO World Heritage Site originally established in the 6th century. Built on stilts over the tidal flats, the shrine's elegant wooden corridors and pavilions seem to hover above the water, reflecting a deep Shinto reverence for nature. Set against the backdrop of forested Mount Misen, the harmony between architecture and landscape is truly breathtaking.



In the afternoon, return to Hiroshima and visit the Peace Memorial Park and Museum. Dedicated to the victims of the atomic bombing of 6



August 1945, the museum offers a powerful and moving insight into the events of that day and their lasting global impact. Walk through Peace Memorial Park, a place devoted to remembrance and hope, and view the Atomic Bomb Dome — preserved as it stood after the explosion and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This deeply reflective experience provides not only historical understanding but also a profound message of peace and resilience.

17th October 2026 : Day Sixteen (B, D)



Today you'll board a ferry bound for the inspiring island of Naoshima. Set in the tranquil waters of the Seto Inland Sea, Naoshima has transformed itself from a quiet fishing community into one of Japan's most celebrated contemporary art destinations, seamlessly blending cutting-edge creativity with natural beauty.

On arrival, enjoy a walking exploration of the island's renowned art sites. Discover striking outdoor installations set against coastal landscapes, including bold sculptures and thought-provoking works that interact harmoniously with sea, sky and architecture.



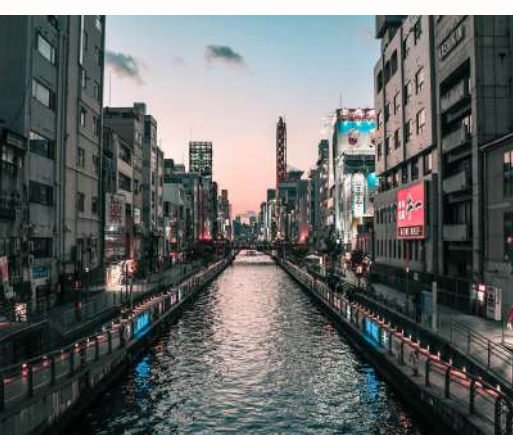
Naoshima is home to several acclaimed museums designed by world-famous architect Tadao Ando, whose minimalist concrete structures are works of art in their own right. The island's relaxed pace, sea breezes and imaginative atmosphere create a truly unique cultural experience unlike anywhere else in Japan.

Later, depart Naoshima by ferry and continue to Okayama, where your forwarded luggage will be reunited with you — a seamless end to a day of art, design and island serenity.

18th October 2026 : Day Seventeen (B, D)



After breakfast, travel to Himeji to visit Japan's most spectacular and best-preserved feudal castle. Known as the "White Heron Castle" for its elegant white façade that appears ready to take flight, Himeji Castle is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of only a handful of original castles to have survived wars, earthquakes and the passage of time. Inside, explore its maze-like defensive design, steep wooden staircases and panoramic views from the upper levels, offering fascinating insight into samurai-era architecture and strategy. Adjacent to the castle, stroll through Koko-en Garden, a beautifully landscaped complex of nine Edo-style gardens featuring koi-filled ponds, waterfalls and meticulously manicured greenery — a serene contrast to the fortress's imposing presence.



Continue onward to Osaka, Japan's culinary capital and a city known for its warm, outgoing personality. Explore the lively district of Dotonbori, where giant illuminated signboards, including the famous Glico Running Man, light up the canal-lined streets. The area is renowned for its street food culture — particularly takoyaki (octopus balls) and okonomiyaki (savory pancakes) — reflecting Osaka's reputation as "the nation's kitchen."

This evening, gather for a special Farewell Dinner at a local restaurant, celebrating the unforgettable experiences, cultural discoveries and friendships formed throughout your journey in Japan.

19th October 2026 : Day Eighteen (B)

Today the tour officially ends in Osaka out of breakfast and you will need to check out mid-morning.

Guests who have selected the *air-inclusive package* will be transferred to Osaka Airport mid-afternoon for the journey home. Your return travel is via Hong Kong, connecting onward on an overnight flight to Sydney. To enhance your comfort during transit, a Business Class lounge pass has been arranged for all guests in Hong Kong. This provides the opportunity to relax between flights, enjoy complimentary food and beverages, and refresh with shower facilities before boarding your onward service. It's a thoughtful addition designed to ensure your journey home is as comfortable and seamless as your time in Japan.

20th October 2026 : Air Inclusive Package Only

After landing in Sydney, you will be transferred back to Newcastle/Hunter.





Your 2026 Embark Tour includes

LAND ONLY PACKAGE - \$11,500 per person twin share / solo supplement on request

INCLUDES:

- 17 nights accommodation*
- Sightseeing and transport as per the itinerary - all entrance fees included
- Meals: Breakfast (B), Lunch (L) and Dinner (D) where indicated in the above itinerary
- Small Group of only 20 (plus guides and Embark Travel representatives)
- Embark Travel tour manager, travelling with you
- Local sightseeing experts throughout
- Pre-tour get together
- All tipping throughout
- Departure Pack (luggage tags, luggage straps, ticket wallet etc)

AIR INCLUSIVE PACKAGE - add \$1900 per person in economy class

INCLUDES:

- Return Transfers from Newcastle to Sydney
- Economy Class Flights ex Sydney to Japan (premium economy and business class upgrades available)
- Airport Transfers in Tokyo and Osaka
- Lounge Pass in Hong Kong Airport
- Welcome Home Pack

First deposit is \$2,500 per person (due within 7 days of booking)

Balance due 4 months prior to departure. All payments are non-refundable unless otherwise specified.

*Examples of hotels - Tokyo: Groove Shinjuku or similar; Hiroshima: Hilton Hiroshima

Please note that twin share option is only offered when you are booking with the person you are sharing with. If you are a solo traveller, the solo supplement must be paid. Please request full terms and conditions of our group tours for further details.



ARE YOU READY TO EMBARK?

TO SECURE YOUR PLACE, CALL
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OR EMAIL
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