

JAPAN

Japan is a land of striking scenic beauty, complete with fascinating history, wonderful cuisine and gracious people. Here are some of our favourite special Japanese experiences to include in your journey.



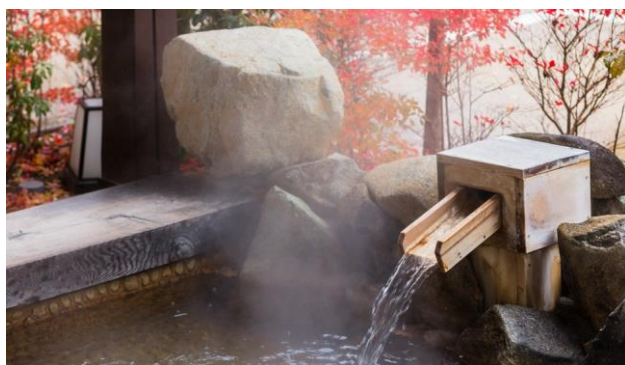
VISIT HIROSHIMA

Once flattened by an atomic bomb, the city of Hiroshima has since risen from the ashes and rebuilt itself as one of Japan's most vibrant cities. As well as being home to two World Heritage Sites, the A-Bomb Dome of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial, and the Itsukushima Shrine, the city is rich in museums, temples, hot springs, and historical monuments. Another gem is their okonomiyaki – a savoury pancake that is loved by our own staff!



YUDANAKA'S FAMOUS SNOW MONKEYS

Take a trip to Yudanaka's famous Snow Monkey Park to see wild Japanese macaques bathing in the steaming hot springs. Over two hundred of these curious creatures inhabit the surrounding conservation area, living in large social groups and gathering around the park's man-made pool for the perfect photo opportunities.



JAPANESE ONSEN

Get out your birthday suit and soak away the stress of everyday life in a traditional Japanese hot spring. Yudanaka, Takayama, and Hakone are all perfect locations to try a private onsen or to stay at a hot spring resort. If you're heading to the mountainous town of Hakone, you'll also be treated to stunning views of Mt Fuji across Lake Ashinoko.



THE NAKASENDO WAY

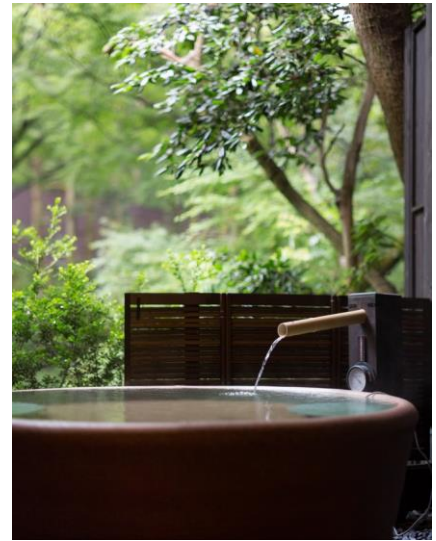
Walk through rural Japan on the Nakasendo Trail, a historic route used since the feudal times that links Kyoto and Tokyo through the central mountains of Japan. The Trail offers the perfect blend of culture, wonderful scenery, guesthouse lodging in minshukus or ryokans, and sumptuous cuisine.



HISTORIC VILLAGES

Takayama is a gateway to two of Japan's most treasured UNESCO World Heritage Sites – the villages of Shirakawa-go and Gokayama. Located near the mountains in the Shogawa River Valley, they are known for their gassho-zukuri houses that date back to the Edo period. Being the only examples of their kind in the country, they are an authentic slice of Japanese history. Takayama itself retains many traditional elements found in few other Japanese cities, and its old town also features many buildings and houses from the Edo Period... not to mention the famous Hida beef for the foodies!

TRAVEL TIPS



VENDING MACHINES

The abundance of vending machines in Japan is impossible to ignore! For those on the go, they sell all kinds of goodies, including hot food, hot drinks, sake, beer, candy, and more.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Japan has one of the most punctual train services in the world, so don't be late! The Japanese also find it rude to talk on your phone in public, so set yours to silent before boarding.

CHERRY BLOSSOM SEASON

Each spring, Japan's landscape is host to fragile pink and white sakura blooming; stunning colour that is celebrated throughout the entire country. Visit in late March or early April when cherry blossom festivities are in full swing during hanami season.

SHOE ETIQUETTE

Make sure you're wearing the right shoes! It's custom in Japan to remove footwear before entering a home, traditional inn, temple, or shrine. Hosts will often provide slippers for guests to wear instead. Likewise, in bathrooms you will find toilet slippers as a replacement. If the floor is Tatami (woven) mat, only bare feet or socks are allowed.

ONSEN ETIQUETTE

Soaking in a traditional onsen comes with its own set of rules – shower before you bathe, tie or wrap up any long hair so it doesn't get in the water... and no swimsuits allowed, you're going in the nude! Also, keep in mind that tattoos are frowned upon in Japanese society and prohibited in many hot springs. If yours is small enough, you should be able to cover it with a plaster.

CONTACT YOUR TRAVEL PROFESSIONAL