

Japan Vacation Specialists

**AJT**  
All Japan Tours

# Winter Highlights Snow Monkey & Kawazu Cherry Blossom Festival Tour

8 days 7 nights

**US\$2298.00**

**Tour Start Dates: 2014 – 2/16, 2/23**



**TOUR COST INCLUDES:**

5 nights Western style and 2 nights Japanese style accommodation  
Meet and greet upon arrival at Osaka Kansai Airport  
Airport transfers on arrival and departure  
Private luxury coach transfers between destinations in Japan  
Comprehensive escorted with AJT professional English speaking tour guide  
Gratuities

***Meals***

Breakfast everyday  
6 lunches and 3 dinners

***Admission fees and activities***

Entry fees to sites, gardens, and museums listed in the itinerary  
Green Tea Ceremony  
Nishijin Kimono Show  
Show Monkey  
Kawazu Cherry Blossom Festival  
Atami Plum Blossom Festival  
Hakone Ropeway  
Sumida River Cruise

All prices are per person, based on double or triple occupancy. International flights are not included on our tours -this allows you the flexibility to choose your own departure and get the best value for your money! We can arrange international flights for US customers if needed, please ask for details.

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# ITINERARY

## **Day 01: Osaka Kansai Airport**

Welcome to Osaka! Our tour guide will greet you and escort you to the hotel.

***Overnight: Hotel Nikko Kansai Airport or similar class***

***Overnight: ANA Crown Plaza Hotel Osaka or similar class or similar class (NOTE 1)***

NOTE 1: If you wish to stay in the center of Osaka for the first night, we can arrange for you to stay at ANA Crown Plaza Hotel Osaka or similar class instead of Hotel Nikko Kansai Airport for an additional \$50 per person. In this case, airport transfer is not included but we will provide you directions to get to your hotel in advance.

NOTE 2: If you wish to stay extra nights before the tour starts, please contact us to book hotel accommodations.

## **Day 02: Nara (Todaiji Temple / Deer Park), Kyoto (Kiyomizu Temple / Nishijin Kimono Show / Golden Pavilion / Gion)**

In the morning we will travel to Nara, the oldest capital city of Japan. We will visit Todaiji Temple, the largest wooden building in Japan. The temple also houses the largest bronze statue of Buddha at 16.3 meters high, and the surrounding park is filled with over 1,000 Sika deer. Then, we will continue on to Kyoto, a historical city that was spared from air raids and atomic bomb for its cultural and historical value during World War II. First is a visit to the famous Kiyomizu Temple, best known for its wooden stage that juts out from its main hall, 13 meters above the hillside below. The stage affords visitors a nice view of the numerous cherry and maple trees below that erupt in a sea of color in spring and fall, as well as of the city of Kyoto in the distance. Then proceed to the Nishijin Textile Center where you can view displays of kimonos and even watch a kimono fashion show. Next, visit the Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion) covered with 18 carat gold leaf. This three story structure was originally built by the Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu in 1397 and was rebuilt and restored over the years. Its history inspired the fiction book, The Temple of the Golden Pavilion, by Yukio Mishima. Lastly, we will tour Gion (the old Geisha Quarter) and Pontocho. These districts are known for the preservation of traditional architecture and entertainment.

***Overnight: Grand Prince Hotel Kyoto or similar class***

***Meals: Breakfast & Lunch***

## **Day 03: Kanazawa (Kenrokuen Garden / Seisonkaku Villa / Tea Ceremony at Gyokusenen), Yudanaka**

This morning our coach will depart to Kanazawa to visit Kenrokuen Garden, one of three most beautiful strolling gardens of Japan. The name Kenrokuen literally means a garden combining the 6 attributes of a perfect landscape: spaciousness, seclusion, artifice, antiquity, water features, and panoramas. Here, you'll find the oldest fountain in Japan and Kotoji-toro, the two-legged stone lantern that is the icon of Kenrokuen and Kanazawa. Next to Kenrokuen Garden is the beautiful Seisonkaku Villa, which was built in the last years of the Edo Period by a Maeda lord for his mother. It is one of the most elegant, remaining samurai villas in Japan. Kanazawa is also a cultural centre of Japan. Here, we have the opportunity to experience a traditional Japanese tea ceremony. Then, from Kanazawa we cross the Japan sea coast to Yudanaka. Tonight, we will stay at an onsen ryokan, a traditional Japanese inn where you can soak in the therapeutic waters of a spa bath and feast on a traditional Japanese Kaiseki banquet dinner.

***Overnight: Ryokan Biyu no Yado or similar class***

***Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner***

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### **Day 04: Yadanaka Onsen (Snow Monkey), Matsumoto (Matsumoto Castle), Mt Fuji**

This morning in Yudanaka gives us the chance to see the famous snow monkeys as they enjoy hot spring baths. From Yudanaka, our coach departs for Matsumoto where we will visit Matsumoto Castle. This castle is also known as "Crow Castle" because of its black exterior. Inside the castle, we can see the best example of wooden construction of a traditional Japanese style castle. This is a classical "flatland" castle surrounded by a still intact defense moat. From Matsumoto, we will travel to Mt. Fuji on our private luxury coach. Along the way, enjoy the changing scenery, from thick vegetation to lowlands to rolling clouds. We will stop at Mt. Fuji 5th station (depending on weather) to admire the world famous peak.

***Overnight: FIT Resort Club or similar class***

***Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner***

### **Day 05: Kawazu (Kawazu Cherry Blossom Festival / Nanadaru Falls), Atami (Atami Plum Festival)**

After enjoying Japanese breakfast at the ryokan, we will travel to Kawazu to enjoy its famous Kawazu Cherry Blossoms Festival. Kawazu cherry blossoms are known as one of the earliest to bloom in Honshu region. They are different from Somei Yoshino cherry blossoms (the most common kind of sakura in Japan) in that Kawazu cherry blossoms are pink and last longer in full bloom. During the festival, more than one million people visit the town to see cherry trees lined along the Kawazu River in full bloom. Next is a visit to the Nanadaru Falls, or Seven Waterfalls, Kanidaru, Odaru, Kamadaru, Ebidaru, Hebidaru, Shokeidaru and Deaidaru. The falls differ in sizes with the smallest one, Kanidaru, just 3 feet wide and 6 feet tall. The largest waterfall, Odaru, is about 20 feet wide and 100 feet high. In the afternoon, we will visit the Plum Blossoms Festival in Atami. Ume (Asian plums) blossoms can be viewed from late January to March in Honshu region. White or pink ume blossoms are beautiful in Baien Park. There are about 800 plum trees in the park and various events are held here during the festival.

***Overnight: Atami New Akao Hotel or similar class***

***Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner***

### **Day 06: Hakone (Hakone Ropeway / Owakudani), Kamakura (The Great Buddha / Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine)**

After breakfast, we will travel to Hakone and take a 20 minute ropeway ride from Togendai to Owakundani. Much of the area here is considered an active volcanic zone since its creation from the eruption of Mount Hakone some 3,000 years ago. There, you can view hot springs and hot rivers, where sulfurous fumes still linger. Owakundani also has splendid views of Mount Fuji in good weather. From Hakone we will proceed to Kamakura on our private luxury coach. Visit the Kamakura Daibutsu (The Great Buddha), one of the most famous icons of Japan. Next, proceed to Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine, Kamakura's most important Shinto shrine. It is the venue of many important festivals, and hosts two museums. At the left of its stairway stood a 1000-year old ginkgo tree, which was uprooted by a storm in March of 2010. The tree's stump and a section of its trunk were replanted nearby and have produced leaves. We then will travel to Tokyo on our private coach.

***Overnight: Tokyo Dome Hotel or similar class***

***Meals: Breakfast & Lunch***

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## **Day 07: Tokyo (Tokyo Tower / Imperial Palace / Ginza / Sumida River Cruise / Asakusa Sensoji Temple / Odaiba)**

In the morning you will be taken to Tokyo Tower, the world's tallest self supporting steel tower. At 333 meters high, Tokyo Tower is 13 meters taller than its model, the Eiffel Tower. We will go up 150 meters to the main observatory deck and get a bird's eye view of Tokyo. On a clear day you can see Mount Fuji in the distance. Next is a visit to the Imperial Palace, the former site of Edo Castle. In the heart of the city, you can explore the park, surrounded by moats and stone fortifications. Then we will proceed to Ginza for Tokyo's most famous shopping, dining, and entertainment district, which features designer department stores, boutiques, art galleries, cafes, restaurants, and night clubs. In the afternoon, board a cruise ship at Hinode Pier for a 40 minute ride along the Sumida River to Asakusa. At the Nakamise walkway, you can peruse the many stores that lead to Tokyo's oldest and most famous Buddhist Temple, Sensoji Temple. From there we will cross the Rainbow Bridge, and be treated to stunning views of Tokyo Bay. We will travel to the man made island of Odaiba and see cutting edge architecture, including the Fuji TV building, Panasonic Center, Toyota Mega Web Showroom, Venus Fort shopping complex, along with the biggest ferris wheel in Japan.

***Overnight: Narita Excel Hotel Tokyu or similar class***

***Overnight: Tokyo Dome Hotel or similar class (NOTE 3)***

NOTE 3: If you wish to stay in the center of Tokyo for the last night, we can arrange for you to stay at Tokyo Dome Hotel instead of Narita Excel Hotel Tokyu for an additional \$50 per person. In this case, airport transfer is not included but your tour guide will help you with directions to the airport.

***Meals: Breakfast & Lunch***

## **Day 08: Tour End**

After breakfast, our tour officially ends. Checkout time is 11 am and Narita Airport can be reached by hotel shuttle bus.

NOTE 4: If you would like to stay longer in Japan, please contact us to book hotel accommodations.

***Meals: Breakfast***

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