

# HARVARD

ALUMNI TRAVELS



## **JAPAN FAMILY ADVENTURE TEMPLES, GARDENS & ENDURING TRADITIONS**

**JUNE 22–JULY 3, 2024**

### **PROGRAM SCHEDULE**

This journey embraces Japan's frenetic cities, revered natural environment and enduring traditions that coexist in unique harmony. It begins in Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan. It then continues to Hiroshima, a city that is now at the center of an international peace movement. Visit the island of Miyajima, a UNESCO World Heritage site, considered to be one of Japan's "three most beautiful places" with its red torii standing in the ocean during high tide. Toyota City provides insight into the latest manufacturing technology, while Hakone's geothermal forces provide natural hot springs for healing and relaxation. The journey culminates in Tokyo, one of the world's must-see cities. Everywhere one turns, there are shops of every sort, tantalizing food stalls, incongruous shrines, and flashing neon lights.

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

- Explore Japan with Professor Ted Gilman, Executive Director of the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs.
- Engage in multiple cultural activities, learning about Japan's tea ceremony, calligraphy, Samurai sword fighting, Taiko drumming, and a sushi cooking class.
- Marvel at the beauty of Japan's temples, shrines, and gardens, including the Fushimi Inari Shrine, Kinkakuji (the Golden Pavilion), Itsukushima Shrine, Sensoji Temple, and the East Garden of the Imperial Palace.
- Immerse yourself in modern day Japan's Toyota City, and Tokyo's Shinjuku and Akihabara Districts.
- Delight in the bamboo forest and monkeys in the Arashiyama Mountains, the deer of Miyajima Island and the natural hot springs of Hakone.
- Appreciate art and tradition at the Hakone Open-Air Museum and Tokyo National Museum.

# SCHEDULE BY DAY

*B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner*

## SATURDAY–SUNDAY, JUNE 22–23

DEPART THE U.S., ARRIVE OSAKA /  
KYOTO

Depart the United States on an overnight flight to Japan.

Upon arrival in Osaka (either Kansai International Airport or Itami Domestic Airport), proceed to the arrival area where a local representative will meet you and assist you with your airport shuttle to your hotel in Kyoto.

Overnight: *Hotel Okura, Kyoto*

## MONDAY, JUNE 24

KYOTO

After breakfast and a brief orientation meeting, begin your exploration of Kyoto, starting in Southern Higashiyama, packed with first-rate sights.

Begin at the magnificent Fushimi Inari Shrine, where a pathway covered by more than 2,000 red painted torii gates stretches nearly two miles up the hillside to the main shrine. Then walk along Chawanzaka, the quaint old lane jam-packed with handicraft and pottery shops. From here, continue to the side entrance of Kiyomizudera, the temple of "pure water." While many other famous temples are the preserves of certain sects, Kiyomizudera belongs to everyone. For over 1,000 years pilgrims have climbed the slope to pray to the temple's 11-headed Kannon image and drink from its sacred spring. The main hall's verandah, a nail-less miracle of Japanese joinery, offers wonderful views of Kyoto.

Afterwards, participate in a traditional Japanese tea ceremony at the small and tranquil temple, Gesshin-in. Founded in 1617, this temple has miraculously survived fires and natural disasters and still stands in its original building. The Japanese tea ceremony, also called the Way of Tea, involves the ceremonial preparation and presentation of matcha (powdered green tea).

End your day at the Nishiki market, a narrow shopping street lined with more than 100 shops where various kinds of food, including many Kyoto specialties, are sold. This market has a history of several centuries, and many stores have been operated by the same families for generations.

Return to your hotel with time to relax and freshen up before a wonderful "Welcome Dinner."

Overnight: *Hotel Okura, Kyoto* (B, L, D)

## TUESDAY, JUNE 25

KYOTO

Begin today with a visit to Kinkakuji (the Golden Pavilion), one of the most famous temples in Kyoto, with its authentic and exquisite Japanese-style garden. Its three-storied pavilion is entirely covered in gold foil with a golden phoenix perched on the roof. The original temple dating from 1397 was built by the Shogun Yoshimitsu as a retirement villa. In 1950, Kinkakuji was deliberately burnt to the ground by one of its young priests who was obsessed with it. An exact replica was erected.

Next, venture west to the base of Kyoto's western Arashiyama Mountains. Walk through the bamboo forest to the base of Mt. Ogura to Okochi Sanso, the exquisite former villa of Denjiro Okochi, one of Japan's greatest silent screen stars. Stroll the villa's five-acre grounds along winding, wooded paths that Okochi-san spent the last 30 years of his life creating. Continue to Monkey Park Iwatayama where about 150 wild monkeys can be observed, roaming freely in the wooded mountains. The park is a steep 15-to-20-minute walk up the mountain from Togetsukyo Bridge and it offers spectacular views of Kyoto.

Conclude the day with a special Taiko Drum lesson. Taiko is a Japanese drum with a long history, first used as a means of communication and later incorporated into performance arts such as Kabuki and Noh. It is still used in this fashion today. Your private Taiko drum lesson is a fun and participatory activity for all ages.

Dinner is on your own tonight.

Overnight: *Hotel Okura*, Kyoto (B, L)

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26

### KYOTO / HIROSHIMA

Today, partake in a Japanese calligraphy class, or shodo, "the way of calligraphy."

Afterwards, depart Kyoto on the bullet train for Hiroshima.

Once there, visit Peace Memorial Park, with its museum displaying relics and photos of the A-bomb devastation.

This evening, dinner is at an okonomiyaki restaurant, a local specialty, sometimes described as a savory pancake.

Overnight: *Rihga Royal Hotel*, Hiroshima (B, L, D)

## THURSDAY, JUNE 27

### HIROSHIMA / MIYAJIMA

This morning, transfer to the port and take the ferry to Miyajima Island, a World Heritage site considered by many Japanese to be one of Japan's "three most beautiful places."

Once on the island, visit Itsukushima Shrine and Senjokaku (Pavilion of 1,000 Mats), built in 1587. Next to the Senjokaku stands a five-story pagoda that predates the pavilion by 180 years. Visit Daisho-in, a beautifully situated temple at the foot of the wooded Misen. At 1,744 feet, it is the highest peak on the island and can be reached by ropeway or walking path. The summit offers views of the wooded island and the Seto Inland Sea, which has been partially designated as a national park.

Overnight: *Rihga Royal Hotel*, Hiroshima (B, L, D)

## FRIDAY, JUNE 28

### HIROSHIMA / NAGOYA

After breakfast, depart Hiroshima by train for Nagoya. The world headquarters and original factory of the Toyota Motor Corporation is located an hour's drive east of Nagoya, in Toyota City.

Arriving at Nagoya Station, embark on a visit to the Toyota Kaikan Exhibition Hall,

displaying Toyota's innovative technology and its evolving manufacturing engineering. Your tour ends with a visit to the Toyota plant\*, where cars are skillfully manufactured using the latest technology.

Overnight: *Nagoya Marriott Associa Hotel* (B, L, D)

\*Visit to Toyota Plant subject to restrictions in place in summer of 2024

## SATURDAY, JUNE 29

### NAGOYA / HAKONE

Today, take the bullet train to Odawara Station, gateway to Hakone, which has been a popular resort since the great warrior Toyotomi Hideyoshi discovered natural hot springs in the beautiful mountainous area in the 16th century. During the Edo Period, Hakone was also a very important checkpoint along the old Toakaido Road linking Edo (Tokyo) with Kyoto.

Explore Hakone by taking a cable car to get up close and personal with the steaming Owakudani Crater—it is considered lucky to eat an egg cooked in the boiling water, as it will add seven years to your life. From here, one can enjoy a spectacular view of Mt. Fuji (weather permitting). Take a boat ride across picturesque Lake Ashi. The big, colorful boats tend to be amusingly kitsch, sporting Disneyland-esque pirate themes and indulging the Japanese affinity for cartoon characters.

End your day with a visit to the fabulous Hakone Open-Air Museum (Chokoku-nomori). This world-renowned Outdoor Sculpture Garden focuses on the works of 19th- and 20th-century Japanese and Western Sculpture. Artists featured include Bourdelle, Despiau, Rodin and Moore. There is also a small indoor Picasso exhibition.

Overnight: *Hakone Kowakien Tenyu* (B, L, D)

## SUNDAY, JUNE 30

### HAKONE / TOKYO

In the morning, travel by bullet train on the short ride to Tokyo.

Once there, visit one of Tokyo's most traditional areas, Asakusa, where Sensoji

Temple and its adjacent shopping street, Nakamise, have been a Mecca for travelers and entertainers since the 1600's. The area remains vibrant and charming.

Continue to Ueno Park to visit the Tokyo National Museum. The museum exhibits a comprehensive collection of art works and antiquities from Japan and other Asian countries.

Overnight: *Imperial Hotel*, Tokyo (B, L, D)

## MONDAY, JULY 1 TOKYO

This morning, partake in a unique program and learn how to fight using a Samurai sword from a group of experts. First change into kimono and hakama (traditional skirt-like clothing), and then learn basic movements in sword fighting, such as drawing, posing, and swinging. Watch breathtaking sword fights by your instructors followed by practicing sword fighting yourself in pairs.

This afternoon, participate in a hands-on Japanese Cooking class focusing on sushi. Learn not only about the recipes and methods, but the history and stories related to Japanese cooking.

End your day in the Shinjuku District, one of Tokyo's most popular shopping and entertainment districts. This is the Tokyo of one's imagination with its large buildings, flashing neon advertisements, giant video screens and busy streets.

While in Shinjuku, stop in at the famous seven-floor department store of Isetan. With a history of over 100 years, Shinjuku Isetan is the most famous department store in Tokyo, if not Japan. Many of its window displays are created by leading artists and the basement food hall is filled with a variety of fresh, local foods and prepared meals.

Returning to your hotel, dinner is on your own tonight.

Overnight: *Imperial Hotel*, Tokyo (B, L)

## TUESDAY, JULY 2 TOKYO

Begin the day by visiting the East Garden of the Imperial Palace, the former site of Edo Castle's innermost circles of defense. None of the main buildings remain today, but the moats, walls, entrance gates, and several guardhouses still exist.

Continue to the Roppongi Hills complex, a redevelopment project, and a symbol of contemporary Japan. Tour the ground level art installations and view the city from the Observation Deck, overlooking Tokyo from 250 meters above sea level and providing a full 360-degree view.

End your day with an assault to your senses by exploring Akihabara, the biggest electronic district in Tokyo. Over the last decade, this "Electric Town" has transformed into more than just electronics. Stores specializing in manga (Japanese comics) and anime (Japanese animation) abound.

Return to your hotel to freshen up before tonight's "Farewell Dinner."

Overnight: *Imperial Hotel*, Tokyo (B, L, D)

## WEDNESDAY, JULY 3 TOKYO / DEPART

Today, transfer to the airport (Narita or Haneda) for your return flights home.

(B)