

escorted
ESCAPES

With you every step of the way

15 Day Japan Cherry Blossom

THE ESCORTED ESCAPES INCLUSIONS

- ✓ AIRFARES INCLUDED*
- ✓ FULLY ESCORTED HOLIDAYS*
- ✓ VISAS, TRANSFERS & TIPPING INCLUDED*
- ✓ SMALL GROUPS*
- ✓ INCLUSIVE SIGHTSEEING*

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS:

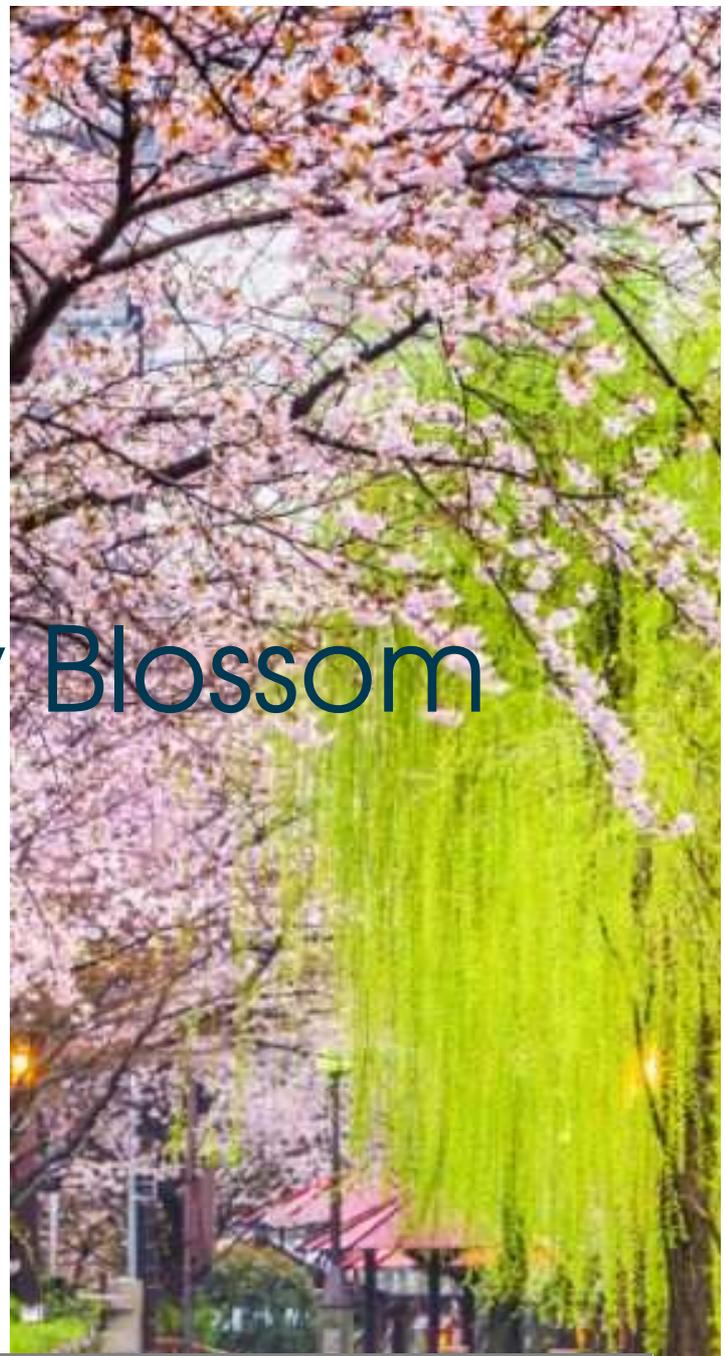
- ✓ See the magnificent cherry blossoms at Kenroku-en gardens in Kanazawa
- ✓ Marvel at spectacular Mt Fuji and Fuji Hakone National Park
- ✓ Wander the historic streets of Takayama, one of Japan's most atmospheric townscapes
- ✓ Discover Matsumoto Castle, the oldest existing castle in Japan, and wander the grounds which come alive in colour with the blooming cherry blossoms
- ✓ Enjoy a walk through the Geisha districts of Kyoto, including Gion
- ✓ Explore the beautiful island of Miyajima, famous for its floating shrine and stunning scenery
- ✓ Visit the peace park, atomic dome and museum at Hiroshima
- ✓ Travel in style on Japan's world-famous bullet trains
- ✓ Refine your culinary skills at a Sushi making class

ACTIVITY RATING

This tour requires an adequate level of fitness and mobility to participate

It is essential that all passengers are able to:

- Walk 2-3km at any one time unaided
- Walk an incline and climb stairs unassisted
- Get in and out of transport including coach, train and public transport unassisted
- Manage your own luggage





AIRFARES INCLUDED

Economy class airfares are included from Australia (Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne or Adelaide) plus all internal flights as per the group itinerary. We travel with Qantas or Singapore Airlines for our Japan Cherry Blossom Tours.

DAY 1	Australia	Tokyo (NRT)
DAY 15	Tokyo (NRT)	Australia

* These are proposed flights only and may change depending on your departure city if they will be direct or fly via another city onto Tokyo.

You have three options available to join your host and group:

1. Travel with your host from host departure city
2. Meet your host in Tokyo if you are using an alternative airline or if you have pre tour arrangements.

Upgrades and extensions are available on request please contact your travel agent for further information and availability.

FULLY ESCORTED HOLIDAYS

Your Escorted Escape is personally hosted from Australia by an experienced travel professional.

Our hosts have travelled extensively themselves and have a passion for exploring our wonderful world. We are there to liaise with the local operators to ensure you relax and enjoy your holiday while we take care of the details.

VISAS, TRANSFERS & TIPPING

Passports

All information provided is based on Australian Passport holders only – please advise your travel consultant as soon as possible if you will be travelling on a different passport. Australian passport holders must have a minimum of 6 months validity on their passport from the date they return home, and a minimum of four (4) blank pages.

Visas

No Visas are required for Australian Passport holders.

Transfers

We believe travel should be simple and easy for you, which is why we include transfers from your home to the airport to the value of \$100 per person. Your transfers will be arranged by your travel agent to ensure the best available option for your needs. Should your transfers exceed \$100 per person, you may choose to pay the difference, or alternatively, if you wish to make your own way to the airport your agent can deduct the transfer value from the total cost of your trip.

Tipping

Our Escorted Escapes are designed to make travel easier for you, so we take care of tipping for all of our group activities and meals, as well as for your tour leader, local guides and drivers.

You will be responsible for tipping any services or meals outside of the group inclusions, including during your free time.

SMALL GROUPS

We offer a small-group experience on all of our tours. We believe travelling in smaller groups will ensure a more personalised and comfortable group travel experience for everyone.

This tour will run with a minimum of 12 Passengers and a maximum of 20 (plus your tour host).

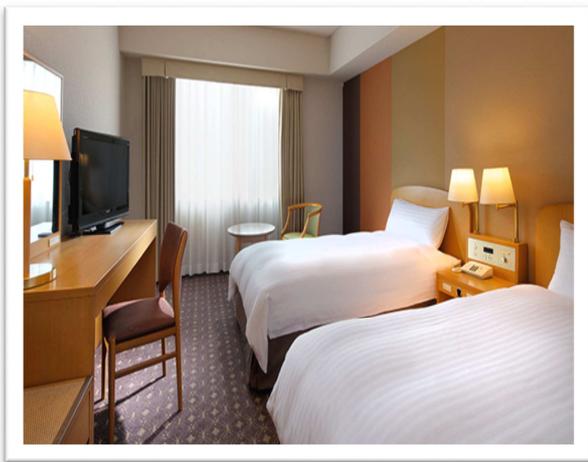
INCLUSIVE SIGHTSEEING

At Escorted Escapes we pride ourselves on including the very best sightseeing on offer in each location. Our sightseeing highlights on this trip include:

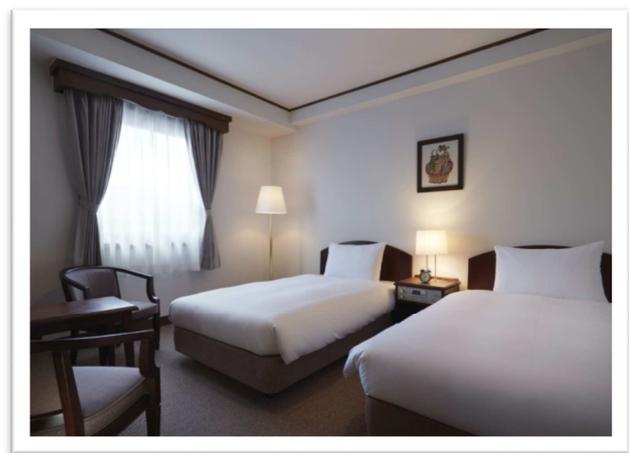
- Full day Tokyo Sightseeing by private coach including the Asakusa Temple and Hamarikyu Garden
- Cruise along Tokyo's Sumida River
- Tokyo Tower, where if it's a clear day you might catch your first glimpse of Mt. Fuji!
- Visit Matsumoto Castle, one of the few remaining castles in Japan
- Entrance to Hida Folk Village
- Visit Nomura House in the samurai quarter as well as the Ninja Temple
- Entrance to the Nijo Castle and the Silver Temple
- Witness a Tea Ceremony in Koto
- Experience the Miyako Odori Dance show
- Ferry ride across to Miyajima & visit the Itsukushima shrine
- Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and Museum
- Pirate boat cruise on Lake Ashi
- Sushi making class
- Entrance to Kenroku-en gardens – one of the best known locations to marvel at the magnificent Cherry Blossoms.
- Traditional Japanese dinner experience including Kimono

ACCOMMODATION

We use a range of quality hotel accommodation. All of our accommodation includes private en-suite facilities.



New Miyako Hotel



Matsumoto Hotel Kagetsu

DESTINATION	
Tokyo	Mitsui Garden Ginza/Mitsui Garden Ueno
Matsumoto	Matsumoto Hotel Kagetsu
Takyama	Best Western Takayama
Kanazawa	Hotel Nikko Kanazawa
Kyoto	New Miyako Hotel
Hiroshima	Hotel Sunroute Hiroshima
Hakone	Kagetsuen Hotel

TRANSPORT

Our main transport throughout the itinerary will be via coach & bullet Train. We will use different coach sizes depending on the location and accessibility. We also use local public transport in some locations. Please note: vehicles pictured below are an indication only, exact vehicles may vary.



LUGGAGE

Our Escorted Escapes baggage recommendation is one suitcase with a maximum size of 76 x 53 x 28cm (30 x 21 x 11 inches) and a maximum weight of 20kg. You may also carry a small backpack or overnight bag as carry on luggage - Escorted Escapes provide you with a suitably sized daypack ideal for use as carry on luggage and throughout the trip.

As we travel via Bullet train on our itinerary you will be required to pack a smaller bag for stays up to 2 nights while your main luggage is transported to our next location. You may also be required to carry your own luggage at airports and hotels.

Individual airlines also have their own limits, for this trip they are as follows*:

Qantas Airways – 30kg of checked luggage per person (this can be distributed over 2 bags) + 7kg carry-on luggage.

Singapore Airlines– 1 x 30kg checked luggage per person + 7kg carry-on luggage.

*Airline baggage limits listed above are based on our included, economy class flights. If you have upgraded your flights your baggage limits may change.

Please keep in mind you will be required to manage your own luggage at times throughout the tour, so we recommend bringing luggage that is of a size and weight that you can comfortably handle.

On this trip, excess luggage is not allowed. Due to size constraints of our vehicles, your main luggage must not exceed one piece of luggage at 20kg (+ carry on luggage).

Liquids in carry on luggage – You are allowed to bring ONE plastic zip lock bag containing **liquids, aerosols, gels, creams or pastes** (e.g. lipstick) in your carry-on bag and through security checkpoints. These are limited to travel-sized containers that have a maximum size of 100mL or less per item. At certain airports these may need to be removed from your hand luggage to be screened, so we recommend keeping them close at hand.

CLIMATE & SEASONAL INFORMATION

The weather in Japan in spring (March – May) sees a lot of the country ablaze with beautiful white and pink cherry blossom. Temperatures begin to rise, however it is not yet the hot rainy season. The country also now changes into a haven of red and scarlet leaves which contrast strikingly against the deep blue skies.

Temperature Averages – Minimum to Maximum

CITY	MARCH	APRIL
Tokyo	6° to 14°	11° to 19°
Kanazawa	3° to 11°	7° to 17°
Kyoto	4° to 13°	9° to 19°
Hiroshima	5° to 13°	11° to 19°

PACKING TIPS

Ensure you pack comfortable shoes as you will spend extended periods on your feet exploring! Also, as is Japanese custom, shoes will often need to be removed upon entering buildings, so something that is easy to slip on and off is best!

Japan's spring season has cool mornings and nights so we advise layers of clothing to keep you comfortable. The dress code throughout the tour is casual. We do suggest you include clothing which covers both your shoulders and knees. It may get a little cool in the mountain areas so we do suggest you bring a warm jacket.

Please ensure you also pack a smaller overnight bag for the days we travel via bullet train you will be required to take a separate bag for up to a two (2) night stay. You may wish to use your included Escorted Escapes backpack for this purpose; alternatively a small overnight bag with wheels would be suitable.

RECOMMENDED:

- Personal medical kit. We recommend you carry items such as mild pain killers, electrolytes and bandaids, as well as your own prescribed medication
- A camera with good zoom for capturing priceless memories!
- A good book, journal or music playing device for the longer travel days
- A copy of your travel insurance policy
- A hat & sunscreen
- Travel size wet wipes
- Two (2) pairs of comfortable walking shoes
- Small fold out umbrella (must be in your checked luggage)
- Reusable Water bottle

CURRENCY & MONEY MATERS

Japanese currency: Yen

Before you depart don't forget to notify your bank that you will be travelling overseas. You will need to advise the country you will be travelling to. In this case it will be **Japan**.

While credit cards are becoming increasingly popular in Japan, they are not as commonly used for making purchases as they are in western countries so you are best to pay in cash where possible.

Avoid cash machines at banks as these do not normally accept foreign-issued cards. Instead use the Post Office and store chain 7-Eleven cash machines from which you will be able to take out money using Visa cards, MasterCard, Cirrus or Maestro.

WI-FI

The majority of hotels in Japan offer free internet in their guest rooms. A few hotels, typically some higher-end Western chains, charge for internet access based on 24 hour periods. Access is usually provided as wired internet via LAN cable or as a wireless network.

Both paid and free wireless (Wi-Fi) hotspots are available in Japan. Laptops and mobile devices can connect to publicly accessible hotspots found around airports, train stations, hotels, restaurants, coffee shops and bars.

TIME ZONES

Time:

Japan is 1 hour behind AEST (Australian Eastern Standard Time).

POWER OUTLETS

Escorted Escapes supply you with a universal adapter - this also has 2 USB ports for charging phones etc

Voltage:

Standard voltage is 100 volts. Primary sockets generally require flat 2-pin plugs (Type A), similar to those in North America. We recommend that you pack the universal travel adaptor we provide with your documents.

SAFETY

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe-keeping of your passport, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Your host and Tour Leader will accompany you on all included activities, however during your trip you'll have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. Please use your own good judgement when selecting your free time activities and exercise due caution when you are out and about exploring. Ensure you carry your host's phone number and ideally the address and phone number of your hotel as well.

Please also note that your Tour Leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it's deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

FOOD & DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Please advise us if you have any specific dietary requirements upon booking your trip. This information can be provided on our standard booking form.

Japanese cuisine has been influenced by the food customs of other nations, but has adopted and refined them to create its own unique cooking style and eating habits.

They prefer using fresh, seasonal foods for their meals, buying it the same day it will be cooked.

The Japanese eat three main meals a day. The main ingredient in all three, generally, is rice (or sometimes noodles). *Miso* soup and pickles are often served as well. Meals eaten early in the day tend to be the simplest. A typical breakfast consists of rice, *miso* soup, and a side dish, such as an egg or grilled fish.

Choosing exactly what to eat is made easier by well illustrated menus or plastic food displays at the doorway of most restaurants, in major cities you will also find plenty of Western-style restaurants.

Vegetarians should have very little issues finding meals in Japan but if you have any dietary requirements at all please advise your host.

Meals not included:

For meals not included, a budget of AUD 10 to AUD 30 per meal for a take-away lunch and AUD 20 to AUD 30 (dinner/main course) should be sufficient for most; of course these are indicative prices and will vary depending on your personal budget and preferences. Local "street" food may be less expensive, on the other hand if you want to try the finest food at the finest restaurants, you can expect meals to cost as much as in western countries.

Water:

The tap water in Japan is generally considered safe to drink, but as a precaution against stomach upsets you may want to drink bottled water, which is readily available from shops, hotels and restaurants.

MEDICAL & HEALTH

We suggest that you consult with your own physician prior to your trip to ensure your routine immunizations, such as tetanus, are up-to-date before travelling. Older travellers in particular may wish to consider preventive measures against influenza and pneumonia.

We also recommend consulting your local doctor, travel medical service or specialist vaccination clinic to ensure you are aware of any health requirements and recommended precautions relevant to your trip. Ensure you carry all necessary vaccination documents (e.g. proof of Yellow Fever vaccination, if required) on your trip.

It is advised to carry any personal medication in its original container and it should have a clearly printed label. Prescription and controlled medication must be accompanied by a prescription from the prescribing physician on letterhead stationery and include the medication's generic name.

Japan has strict rules governing the importation of medication, and what can be carried into the country by travellers for personal use. Please check the [Bringing Medicine into Japan](#) webpage found on the [Embassy of Japan](#) website.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is a condition of travelling with Escorted Escapes that you have a valid, fully comprehensive travel insurance policy for the whole duration of your travel arrangements.

It's important that you protect yourself in case of natural disasters, lost or delayed baggage and unforeseen medical expenses. We strongly recommend that the policy covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. Please make sure you bring a copy of your policy with you on tour.

If you lose any of your belongings while on tour you may be required to obtain a police report. Make sure you keep any receipts for anything you may wish to claim for on your return – i.e. medical receipts etc.

GROUP TOUR ETIQUETTE

We endeavour to make group travel with Escorted Escapes a truly enjoyable experience and showing respect to everyone we encounter will help ensure that the group travel memories you bring home are happy ones.

We ask you to remember that patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience.

Rules of tradition, superstitions and religion play a large role in day-to-day life in Japan, we ask that you listen and respect the tour leader and host when they address the group.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why does this tour require an adequate level of fitness?

Our tour is designed to be a more leisurely pace and majority of our sightseeing is using a private coach for your convenience, however the coach may not be accessible to all locations. This tour does involve a large amount of walking to be able to experience the cities and sights throughout Japan. In some instances you will be required to walk continuously without sitting due to limited seating availability.

As we travel via Bullet train on our itinerary you will be required to pack a smaller bag for stays up to 2 nights while your main luggage is transported to our next location. You may also be required to carry your own luggage at airports and hotels.

What kind of medical facilities are available?

Medical facilities across Japan are of a high standard. Medical facilities with English-speaking staff can be found in most major cities.

Are there laundry facilities?

There will be a few hotels along the way that will have coin laundry facilities, where the hotel does not have these facilities our tour leader will be able to help source facilities close by. We suggest this be done where we have 2 or 3 night stays.

What are the toilets in Japan like?

Toilets in Japan range from high-tech flushable toilets (with heated seats and a control panel) to squat toilets. Most public toilets and restaurants will provide both. Sometimes you may need to pay for toilet paper, which can be purchased from a vending machine nearby.

How much spending money will I need?

When it comes to spending money on the trip, every traveller is a little different. You know your spending habits better than we do so please budget a sensible amount for things like meals that are not included, drinks, shopping and optional activities. Don't forget to allow enough to treat yourself to a special meal and buy some souvenirs!