

AUTHOR TRAVEL AGENCY

GO TO STAR

JAPAN

2023



About travel

Go to Star author travel agency invites you to Japan

Japan is the only country in the world where ultramodern technologies do not contrast with ancient traditions but seamlessly intertwine and coexist harmoniously. This is the art of Japanese life: zen meditation after a busy day in a Tokyo skyscraper, extravagant street fashion and tea ceremonies with centuries of history, the best technology in the world and Buddhist temples with stone gardens, where time stands still.

During the trip we will get acquainted with an amazing, super modern, technological and self-sufficient country, which cherishes its traditions and does not succumb to the trend of globalization. We will see two sides of Tokyo — a modern metropolis and an ancient city with an

Imperial Palace and an ancient garden with cherry trees. We will watch sumo wrestling and have dinner with geisha, learn how Japanese samurai took care of their spirit and body by dipping into hot springs of onsen in a traditional ryokan dwelling, and relieve stress in a multi-step Japanese bath and yumeiho massage. We will also discover the gastronomic secrets of Japan: drink the best matcha tea at the famous Tsukiji fish market, where fishermen bring 300-kilogram tuna early in the morning, try real sushi, ramen and other dishes of national cuisine, which is included in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list. And of course, let's not forget about shopping: you can buy the most beautiful ceramics and kitchen knives.

Japan





Day 01

Arrival in Tokyo. Hotel accommodation, local walk.



Day 02

Tour of Tokyo — introduction to the history of the city. We will visit the square in front of the Imperial Palace and walk through the preserved part of the old Tsukiji market. Lunch with sushi at a restaurant in the fish market. Hamarikyu Garden. Walking and shopping in the Ginza quarter.



Day 03

Excursion - Explore modern Tokyo. Museum of Digital Art Planets. Lunch. Options: 1. A stroll through the Omotesando district — the Champs-Élysées of Tokyo, with masterpieces of modern architecture, boutiques and galleries. 2. Museum of Modern Art, where more than 12 thousand paintings, sculptures and engravings are collected. Excursion to the nightlife districts of Kabukicho, Golden Gai, and Omoide Yokote.



Day 04

Transfer to Kyoto by train. Kenninji Temple, the oldest Zen Buddhist shrine in Kyoto with a beautiful garden. Walk through geisha quarter, Yasaka shrine. Dinner with geishas.



Day 05

Tour of Kyoto: stone gardens of Daitokuji Temple, Golden Pavilion symbol of Kyoto, Teramachi shopping district with shops with great history and modern shops of Japanese designers.



Day 06

Continuation of the tour through Kyoto's gardens and temples, or a private meeting with one of Japan's martial arts masters, Noh theater, or a tea ceremony/meditation/ calligraphy master class by the abbot of a Zen monastery.



Day 07

Early morning ascent to Fushimi Inari shrine. Departure for an excursion to Nara city. Visit Todaiji temple, Big Buddha statue, and deer park. Strolling through the ancient quarter. Return to Kyoto.



Day 08

Transfer to Osaka. Tour of Osaka Castle, free stroll around the city or guided tour of Tadao Ando's architecture. Transfer to Kansai airport, flight home.



Hamarikyu Garden

A picturesque landscaped park in the center of Tokyo, on the shores of Tokyo Bay, an oasis amidst skyscrapers where you can't hear the noise of the big city. The traditionally styled garden contrasts sharply with the business district of Shiodome. The Hamarikyu has a long history: it used to be the site of falconry, it was the residence of feudal lords in the 18th century, then it became the property of the imperial family and since 1946 it has been open to the public.

To commemorate the past, hunting shows and exhibitions of falcons are still held in the park. But the main reason to come here is the picturesque, peaceful scenery: the garden is full of plants, and each month has its own charm, in May it's luxurious peonies. A stroll among the flowers and century-old pine trees (the oldest and largest in Tokyo is 300 years old) is worth concluding with a cup of matcha on the island, at the Nakajima-no-otaya Tea House.



Tsukiji Fish Market

Japan's most famous fish market dates back to the Edo period, when the country was ruled by the Tokugawa clan and fishermen provided provisions for the capital and traded their catch on the Nihonbashi Bridge. The market was moved to a new location in the early 20th century, after the Kanto earthquake, and so Tsukiji was born, known primarily for fish auctions — in the early morning, Japan's best restaurateurs buy thousands of types of seafood from wholesalers, among them the king is tuna.

As of 2018, the fish auctions have moved to a market on Toyosu Island in Tokyo Bay. But the old part of Tsukiji is still open, and it's a veritable realm of fish and seafood, from huge tuna carcasses and pink salmon to octopus and sea urchins. Tsukiji isn't just a fish market, but also a restaurant serving freshly-caught fish for sushi and sashimi, along with the finest matcha tea in town.

Japan



Tokyo Museum of Contemporary Art

The drab gray facade of the museum in Kitanomaru Park hides one of the world's best collections of modern Japanese art. There are over 12,000 paintings, prints, drawings, video installations and sculptures, and the Crafts Gallery boasts masterpieces of Japanese textiles, ceramics and lacquer art. Foreign artists such as Bacon, Chagall, Modigliani, Picasso, Gauguin, are represented as well, but the exhibition highlights include works by Japanese artists dating from the Meiji era (1868-1912).

A stroll through the galleries on the fourth and second floors will showcase Japan's difficult historical periods through the eyes of its most renowned artists: Ai-Mitsu, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Ei-Kyu, and Kagaku Murakami. Of particular note is an impressive collection of 8,000 ukiyo-e Japanese prints, the very genre that inspired European impressionists.





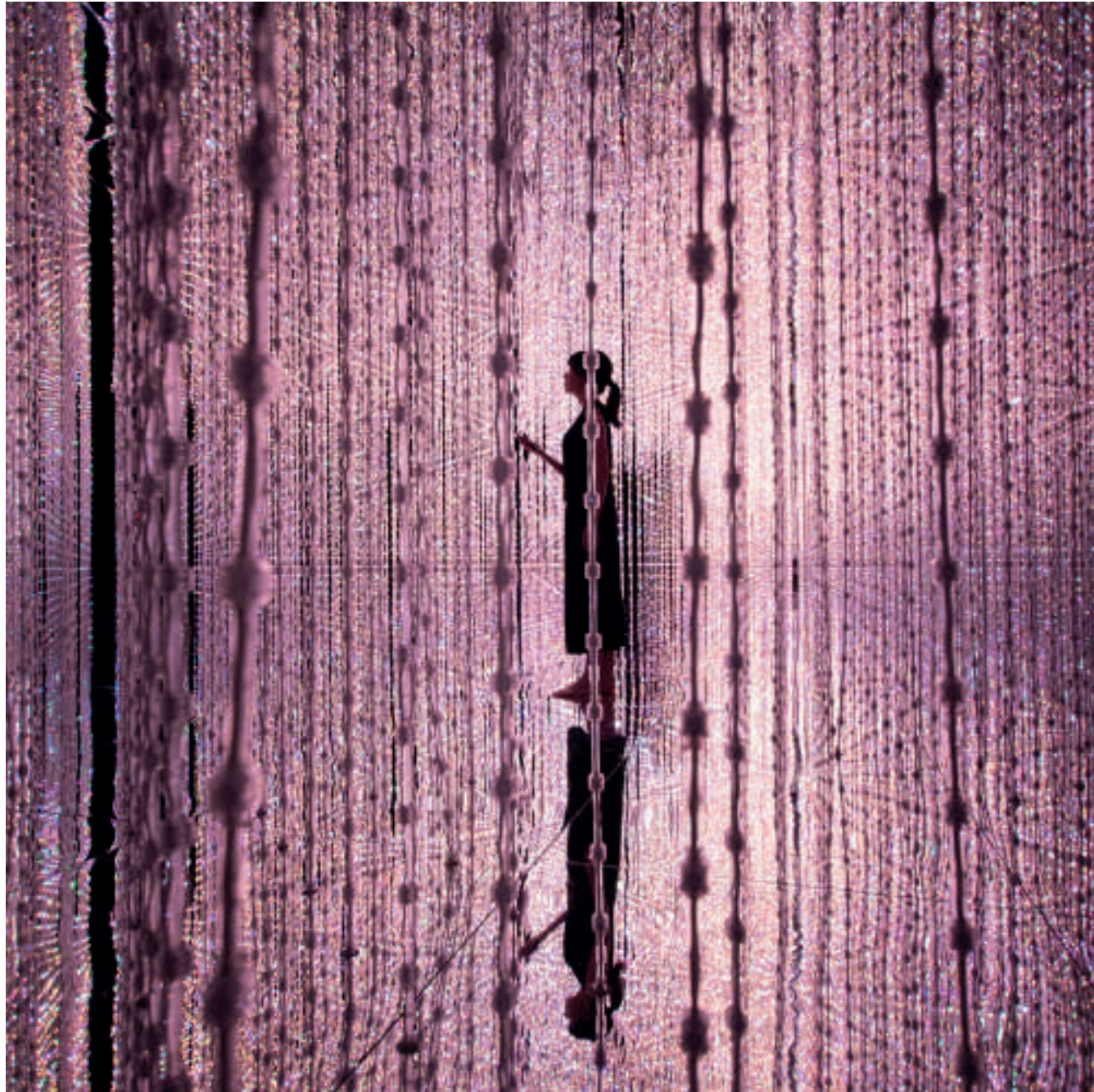
Geisha Quarter

There's not much of a true geisha, or geiko, in Japan; you're more likely to see actresses playing the role on the streets. Around a thousand modern geisha, who have been carefully selected and trained for the art, live and work in Gion Quarter, Kyoto. Dining with a gecko is not for everyone; it is an exclusive experience which allows you to immerse yourself in the traditions of Japanese hospitality, culture and art.

Gion is an amazing place that the authorities have preserved as it was centuries ago: low wooden buildings in traditional Japanese style, 17th century restaurants, kaburenjo music theaters, tea houses and narrow atmospheric streets







Planets Digital Art Museum

Forget everything you knew about digital art and immersive exhibitions: teamLab Planets TOKYO gallery is a whole new immersive art space experience. The artists, programmers, engineers, computer animators, mathematicians and architects of Japan's most famous creative studio teamLab have created 4 halls of incredibly realistic art installations on over 10,000 square meters.

"When the boundary between the body and the artwork dissolves, the boundaries between self, others and the world become something continuous," say the creators of the museum. For this reason, visitors are encouraged to explore the exhibition without shoes. Barefoot on the water you can see digital carp — when you touch the fish they turn into cherry blossoms or sunflowers. And in the 'floating flower garden', visitors feel at one with nature: more than 13,000 live blooming orchids are suspended in the air, moving, fragrant and seemingly floating, surrounding viewers.



Golden Pavilion

The Zen Buddhist Kinkaku-ji Temple in northwest Kyoto is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and surprises not only with its beauty but also with its history, which began back in 1397. The temple has burned down several times, and each time it has been rebuilt, restoring it to its original form — a three-storey building finished with genuine gold leaf, with a phoenix-like figure on top. Legend has it that Kinkaku-ji was burned to the ground in the 20th century by a deranged monk, the tragic story behind Yukio Mishima's novel *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*.

The temple complex was originally the residence of the Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, who chose a secluded villa overlooking a large pond for his final years of life. Then, in accordance with his father's will, the shogun's descendants converted it into a Zen temple. Here, every detail, from the interior decoration to the landscape, is not only fantastically beautiful, but also carries a special meaning: the temple symbolizes a Zen paradise, the largest island in the pond is the Japanese Islands, and the compositions of bridges, and plants are reminiscent of famous places described in Japanese literature.



Todaiji Temple

The ancient Buddhist temple in Nara is included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. It is remarkable not only for its rich history, which began in 745, but also for the fact that it is the largest wooden building in the world. The “Great Oriental Temple” is still working and is considered by Buddhists to be one of the most important shrines.

The temple was repeatedly burned down and rebuilt, but the main relics have been preserved. This is Japan's largest bronze Buddha statue weighing more than 500 tons, ancient, richly decorated samurai swords, listed as national treasures of Japan, luxurious wall and ceiling paintings. And in the park of the temple complex, trees are blooming and deer are walking, which are not at all afraid of people.





Tadao Ando architecture

Minimalism, natural materials and Tadao Ando are the first associations with Japanese architecture. The 81-year-old self-taught architect, winner of the prestigious Pritzker Prize, imparts the secrets of his craftsmanship at universities in Japan, the USA and Europe, and his masterpieces are admired by renowned architects.

"Architecture should not talk too much. It should remain silent and allow nature to tell its own story," Ando says. In doing so, he does not use natural materials, but concrete, glass and iron, which seem to start a dialogue with the environment. Such is the case of one of his first masterpieces, the Adzuma private house in Osaka, with an open courtyard in the center of the building, but lacking windows and looking like a monolithic box on the outside. Tadao Ando also designed the famous Church of Light, on the outskirts of Osaka, where a cross is formed by sunlight penetrating through gaps in the concrete wall.







Journey cost

13100 USD per person in a group of 8 people

The price includes:

- accommodation according to the program (in Tokyo: Mandarin 5*, in Kyoto: The Mitsui Kyoto 5*);
- transportation according to the program;
- internal transfer by Shinkansen train;
- meals (breakfasts, lunches and dinners);
- sightseeing program and activities;
- professional certified guide.

15200 USD per person in a group of 6 people

Additional expenses:

- international flight;
- any change of program involving expenses;
- tips for the guide team.



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