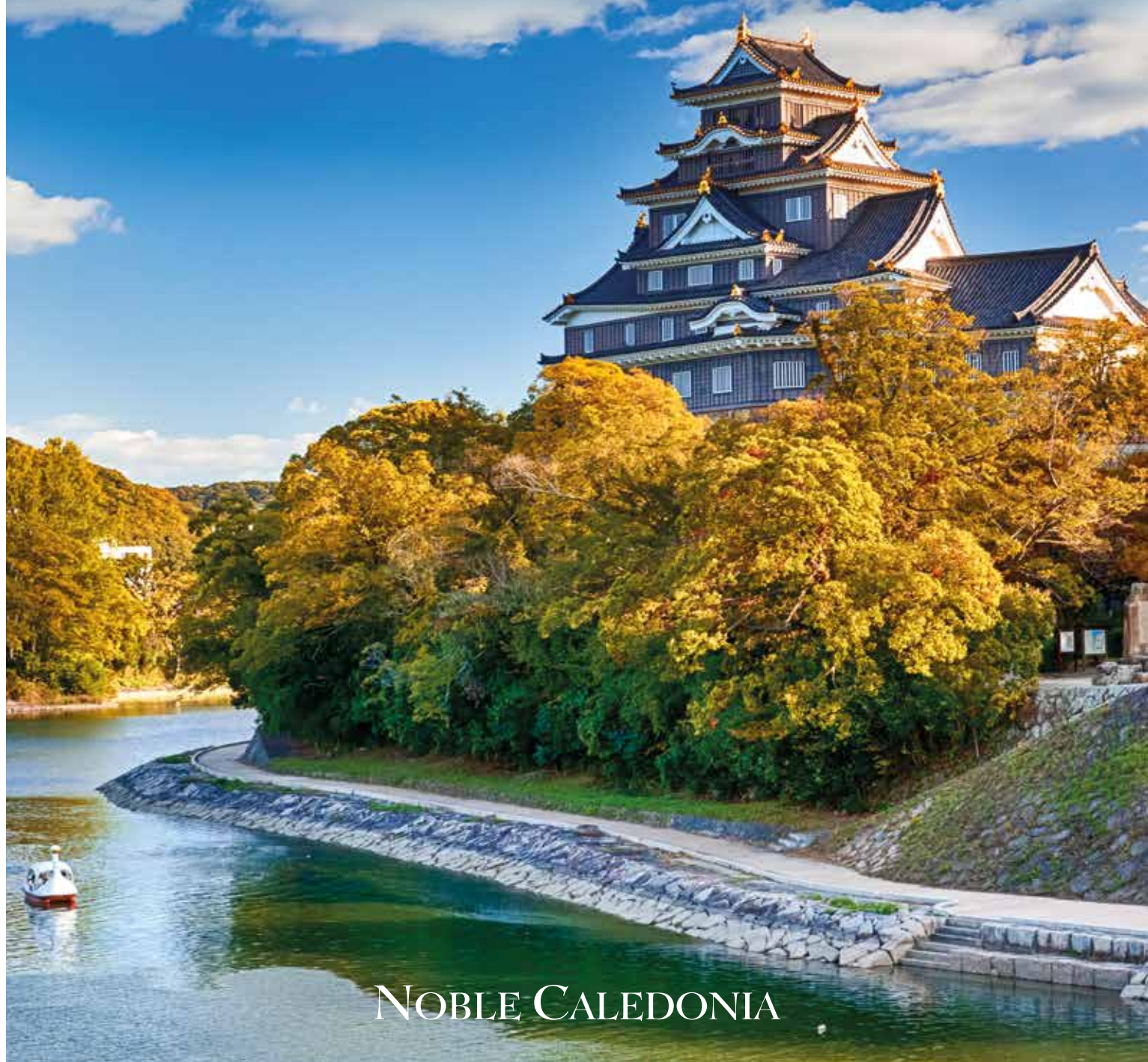


# AUTUMN COLOURS IN JAPAN

AN ESCORTED TOUR DISCOVERING THE GARDENS,  
TEMPLES & CITIES OF JAPAN

3<sup>RD</sup> TO 16<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2024



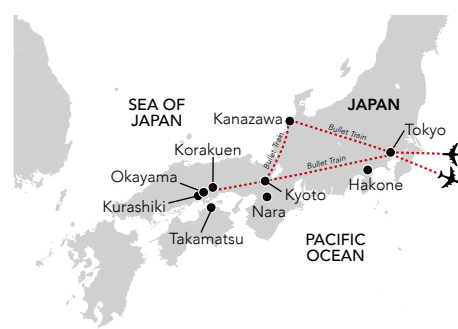
NOBLE CALEDONIA



Golden Pavilion, Kyoto



Japan is a fascinating country with a unique heritage, ancient traditions and culture juxtaposed with the ultra-modern sprawling metropolises of the world's most advanced technological civilisation. Our new escorted overland tour has been designed to give an in-depth view of the country, combining both modern and traditional Japan with the added benefit of being timed for November, a magical time of year when the landscapes burst into colour with the arrival of the autumn foliage, when the leaves of the maple trees and ginkgo trees turn red and yellow presenting beautiful scenery at every turn.



We begin our exploration with the bright neon lights of Tokyo where the mesmerising cityscape of skyscrapers is interspersed with ancient temples and scenic gardens. During our time in Tokyo we will make the short journey to Hakone where we will cross Lake Ashinoko, an enormous volcanic crater and enjoy views of nearby Mount Fuji. We continue to the ancient castle town of Kanazawa, home to artisans who produce some of Japan's most celebrated pottery, lacquerware and silks. Here we will visit the colourful Omicho Market to see local life in action and stroll through Kenrokuen Gardens, justifiably classified as one of Japan's most beautiful, landscaped gardens. Our next few days will be spent in atmospheric Kyoto, the former imperial capital which is Japan's cultural treasure house with an astonishing 1600 Buddhist temples, 400 Shinto shrines, a trio of palaces and dozens of gardens and museums. Our final days are based in Okayama where we visit the beautiful landscaped Korakuen Garden which was created over 300 years ago and considered one of the three great gardens of Japan. From Okayama we also explore charming Kurashiki with its historical quarter and pretty canals and Takamatsu to see the beautiful Ritsurin Koen Garden before returning to Tokyo by bullet train for our final night in this truly timeless country.



Sensoji Temple, Tokyo



Hakone Shrine and Mount Fuji



Cable car to Owakudani

## THE ITINERARY

**Day 1 London to Tokyo, Japan.** Fly by scheduled flight.

**Day 2 Tokyo.** Arrive and transfer to the New Otani Hotel for a three night stay. The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure. Meet this evening for dinner at a local restaurant. (D)

**Day 3 Tokyo.** This morning explore Asakusa, Tokyo's 'Old Town'. We will visit Sensoji, Tokyo's oldest temple and spend time in Nakamise, a shopping street that has been providing temple visitors with a variety of traditional snacks and tourist souvenirs for centuries. Continue to Kiyosumi Garden, designated as a National Place of Scenic Beauty in Tokyo, which has been designed in the Kaiyu-rinsen style as a strolling garden. Take time to walk around the central pond and see the stones which have been brought here from all over Japan. After lunch at a local restaurant, we will visit the Hamarikyu Garden, an Edo period Japanese garden, a tranquil spot on the river surrounded by the futuristic skyscrapers of the Shiodome District. It is a wonderful example of how Japan blends the historic and modern worlds. (B, L)

**Day 4 Hakone.** After breakfast we will start our journey to Hakone, where we hope to get a glimpse of Mount Fuji. Our first stop of the day will be the Hakone Shrine, a Shinto shrine that was very popular among Samurai in the 12th century and hidden away in dense forest. In fact it is so well hidden it would be easy to miss were it not for the magnificent Torii gates. After our visit we will board a boat to cross Lake Ashi, an enormous volcanic crater created by an eruption over 3000 years ago. In Togendai, we will take the cable car towards Owakudani, located on an active volcano and where we can join a series of walks to the steam vents and bubbling pools. Return to Tokyo where the remainder of the evening is at leisure. (B, L)

**Day 5 Tokyo to Kanazawa.** This morning we travel to Tokyo station to board the Shinkansen bullet train to Kanazawa, and whilst on board will enjoy a Japanese bento box. On arrival in Kanazawa visit the Nagamachi Samurai District where you can enter the Nomura Samurai House, a traditional house with a tea ceremony room, an interior courtyard garden and artefacts from the Edo period. There will also be a visit to the imposing Kanazawa Castle. Our last stop of the day will be the beautiful Kenrokuen Garden, classified as one of Japan's three most beautiful gardens. Walk the paths of the garden taking in the red and yellow autumn foliage. Continue to the Hotel Nikko Kanazawa and check-in for our two night stay. We will meet this evening for dinner at a local restaurant. (B, L, D)

**Day 6 Kanazawa.** Our first stop of the day is the Omicho Market which has been the centre of Kanazawa for nearly 300 years. The market is home to more than 200 stalls selling all sorts of local produce, and as Kanazawa is

located on the coast, you may wish to sample some of the fresh local seafood. After visiting the market we will continue to the 21st century Art Museum, a modern art museum that has carefully selected works of art from contemporary artists from Japan. After lunch, we will head to the Higashi Chaya District, the largest and by far the most interesting of Kanazawa's wonderfully preserved Geisha Districts. Many of the buildings along the main street now house cafes and shops, some of which sell the famous gold leaf products of Kanazawa. Return to the hotel in the late afternoon and enjoy the remainder of the day at leisure. (B, L)

**Day 7 Kanazawa to Kyoto.** After breakfast we will board the Shinkansen bullet train to Kyoto. Arriving into Kyoto we will have lunch at a local restaurant before visiting the Kiyomizu Temple which is known as the pure water temple, due to the water that comes from the east mountains and flows to the site. The 13 metre high veranda of the temple's main hall offers amazing views over Kyoto and was built without using a single nail. From the temple we will start a walking tour and head towards Gion district, Kyoto's most famous geisha district filled with shops, restaurants and teahouses where geiko and maiko entertain. From here we will continue to the Hotel Okura Kyoto where we will be based for three nights. There will be time to relax before dinner at a local restaurant. (B, L, D)

**Day 8 Kyoto.** Today we will continue our exploration of Kyoto. Our first call will be Kinakujji, also known as the Golden Pavilion, which was originally built as a retirement villa for the Shogun. After the death of Shogun Yoshimitsu it became a Buddhist Temple at his request, with the top two floors completely covered in gold leaf. We will then visit the Tenryuji Temple, one of Kyoto's five great Zen temples and the largest and most impressive temple in Arashiyama. Founded in 1339 at the start of the Muromachi Period, the temple is now considered important cultural property and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In addition to the temple buildings there are beautiful gardens with walking paths. On the way to Nonomiya Shrine the path will lead us through the famous Arashiyama bamboo groves which are unlike any other in Japan. Nonomiya Shrine is a Shinto shrine where in ancient times, unmarried imperial princesses would stay for a year or more to purify themselves and is referenced in numerous works of literature, most notably in the world's first novel: the Tale of Genji. After lunch we will visit Nijo Castle, which was built by the founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate as the Kyoto residence of the Shogun and is surrounded by stunning gardens. The ornamental building was completed in 1603 and is well known for its Monoyama architecture, decorated sliding doors and 'chirping' nightingale floors. This evening will be at leisure. (B, L)

**Day 9 Nara.** After breakfast we will drive to the nearby town of Nara. During the 8th century Nara was Japan's capital for 74 years and many of the



temples and shrines still stand today. Visit Todaiji Temple, one of the world's largest wooden structures and home to Japan's largest Buddha. The park surrounding the temple is called Nara Park but is referred to by many as 'Deer Park' due to the large population of more than one thousand tame deer who freely roam the streets and will bow their heads in exchange for a treat. Next stop is Nara's most celebrated shrine, Kasuga Taisha. Established in 768 AD the shrine is dedicated to the deity tasked with the protection of the city and is famous for its hundreds of bronze and stone lanterns which have been donated by worshippers over the years. After lunch, we return to Kyoto and visit the Fushimi Inari Shrine, which was featured in the movie 'Memoirs of a Geisha'. The shrine is known for its thousands of red torii gates leading up and through the sacred forest of Mount Inari. (B, L)

**Day 10 Kyoto to Okayama.** This morning we will board the Shinkansen bullet train for the short journey to the city of Okayama. On arrival we will begin a full day tour of this cultural city. The first stop will be the beautiful landscaped Korakuen Garden, considered one of the three great gardens of Japan. It was created over 300 years ago by the Ikeda family who once ruled Okayama. The vast grounds, designed around carp filled ponds, have classical features of a strolling garden, waterfalls, bridges, tea houses and cherry trees. The gardens are a wonderful place to view the autumn leaves. After lunch we will continue to the Yumeji Art Museum, dedicated to Yumeji Takehisa, one of the leading Japanese artists of the 20th century. From here visit Okayama Castle which sits next to Korakuen Gardens and admire the impressive black castle. The last stop of the day will be Hayashibara Museum which has an excellent collection of art, armour and swords. Your guide will explain the significance of swords to the Samurai and in Japan's history. Continue to the ANA Crowne Plaza Hotel for a three night stay and this evening we will enjoy dinner at a local restaurant. (B, L, D)

**Day 11 Kurashiki.** After breakfast we will head to the nearby town of Kurashiki. During the Edo period it was an important point along the rice distribution route through Japan. Canals were built to allow boats and barges to navigate between the city's storehouses and we will explore a section of this canal city that has been preserved. Wander down the side streets taking in the historic architecture and houses which are now filled with cafes, art galleries and shops. After lunch there will be a visit to the Ohara Museum, the oldest private collection of Western Art in Japan. Assembled by Ohara Mogsaburo at the end of the 19th and start of the 20th century the collection features works by Picasso, Cezanne, El Greco and Matisse. The last stop of the day will be Ohashi House. Built in 1793 it is a beautifully restored wooden house that belonged to one of Kurashiki's richest families. Return to Okayama in the late afternoon. (B, L)

**Day 12 Takamatsu.** Today we head to Takamatsu to see the beautiful Ritsurin Koen Garden which was built in the early Edo period and features six ponds and 13 landscaped hills with both a Japanese and Western style gardens. The garden is designed with seasonal flowers and in autumn it is full of rich and vibrant hues of autumnal foliage. After lunch visit the Kinashi Bonsai District, an area which has a history of growing Bonsai for over 250 years. Visit one of the Bonsai houses to learn about how these quintessential Japanese icons are grown and cared for. (B, L)

**Day 13 Okayama to Tokyo.** After breakfast we will return to Tokyo by bullet train. On arrival in Tokyo we will visit the famous Meiji Shrine. Located within a forest it feels as if you are miles away from one of the biggest cities in the world rather than in the middle of it. From here transfer to the New Otani Hotel where the rest of the afternoon is at leisure before a farewell dinner. (B, L, D)

**Day 14 Tokyo to London.** This morning transfer to the airport for the scheduled flight to London. (B)

## EXPLORING & TRANSPORTATION

To best enjoy this escorted tour, travellers should have a good level of mobility as the majority of the sightseeing is undertaken on foot over a range of terrains including cobblestones, woodland paths and there are a number of steps at temples and shrines. Travel between cities is aboard the Japanese Bullet Train.

### PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Twin	£8395
Twin for sole use:	£9995

**PRICE INCLUDES:** Economy class scheduled air travel • 12 nights hotel accommodation as described • Meals as indicated inclusive of drinks with lunch & dinner (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner) • Excursions • English speaking local guides • Noble Caledonia Tour Manager • Gratuities • Transfers.

**Not Included:** Travel insurance.

**Please note:** The autumn colours are a natural phenomena and sightings are not guaranteed. We have timed our journey to meet the traditional times for the changing colours in Kanazawa, Kyoto and Okayama however it may be too early to see the colours in Tokyo.



# YOUR ACCOMMODATION

For our escorted tour of Japan we have selected the following four and five-star hotels;



## New Otani Hotel, Tokyo – Four Nights

The New Otani Hotel in Tokyo offers an excellent location to explore the city from but set within a 400-year-old 10 acre garden the hotel offers pure escapism from the bustle of Tokyo. The peaceful garden is a wonder to explore with its flowers, paths, waterfalls and lagoons. The hotel has a range of facilities including an indoor and outdoor pool, a number of restaurants and a spa. The bedrooms in the Garden Tower at 27.3 square metres are spacious and classically decorated. The rooms feature a range of amenities including television, in-room safe, minibar, tea/coffee making facilities and bathrobes.

## Hotel Nikko Kanazawa – Two Nights

Featuring panoramic views, eight dining options and shops, Nikko Kanazawa is conveniently located right in front of JR Kanazawa Train Station in the city centre. All rooms are located above the 17th floor, offering beautiful views of the city. The spacious air-conditioned rooms include Wi-Fi, a flat-screen TV, toiletries, hairdryer, tea and coffee making facilities and a safe. Each morning there is a choice of Japanese or Western buffet breakfast. La Plage restaurant offers French cuisine and Benkei serves sushi beside a Japanese garden. There is also a Chinese restaurant and a bar on-site.



## Hotel Okura Kyoto – Three Nights

The Okura Hotel in Kyoto offers a classic atmosphere of tranquility and comfort. The hotel is well located for exploring Kyoto. The hotel has a range of dining options from traditional Japanese to French cuisine. The hotel also has a large indoor swimming pool, a gym and spa. The bedrooms are spacious and elegant with neutral tones and a range of amenities including Wi-Fi, television, bathrobes and minibar.

## ANA Crowne Plaza Okayama – Three Nights

The ANA Crowne Plaza in Okayama is centrally located and perfect for exploring the city. The hotel has two restaurants and a Sky bar, which offers lovely views over the city. Bedrooms are contemporary and bright. They feature all the standard amenities including television and minibar, as well as Wi-Fi and tea/coffee making facilities.



Red Torii gates, Fushimi Inari shrine



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Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request. Itinerary and accommodation subject to change.  
Cover image: Okayama Castle.