

CHERRY BLOSSOM IN IMPERIAL JAPAN

A 14 day overland escorted tour

21st March to 4th April 2018



NOBLE CALEDONIA



Buddha statue, Hasedera Temple



Uji Bridge at Ise Jingu Shrine



Tokyo Tower and the city



Torii Gate at Itsukushima Shrine, Miyajima

The cherry blossom (sakura) is Japan's unofficial national flower. It has been celebrated for many centuries and takes a very prominent position in Japanese culture. This, along with the many gardens, shrines and temples, makes spring the perfect season to glimpse some of the facets of modern Japanese life and cultural achievements.

Japan is a fascinating balance of unique heritage and culture contrasting with the sprawling metropolises of the world's most advanced technological civilisation. Our escorted overland tour concentrates on a small area of Japan, in and around Kyoto, giving an in-depth view and allowing you to discover some hidden gems. Kyoto, with its hundreds of temples and gardens, was the former imperial capital and remains the cultural centre of Japan. With an astonishing 1600 Buddhist temples, 400 Shinto shrines, a trio of palaces and dozens of gardens and museums, Kyoto is Japan's cultural treasure house with seventeen of Kyoto's ancient structures and gardens having been declared UNESCO World Heritage sites. Following on from our exploration of the region surrounding Kyoto we will travel by bullet train to Tokyo for two nights of exploration of this vibrant metropolis before returning to London.



The Itinerary

Day 1 London to Osaka, Japan. Fly by scheduled indirect flight.

Day 2 Osaka to Kyoto. Arrive and transfer from Osaka to the Kyoto Tokyu Hotel in Kyoto for a five night stay. Remainder of day at leisure. Dinner will be at the hotel this evening.

Day 3 Kyoto. Enjoy a relaxing morning at leisure. Later we will embark on a guided sightseeing tour visiting Kyomizudera and the beautiful Kodaiji Temple with its famous garden. We also experience a traditional Japanese Tea Ceremony. This evening we will enjoy dinner at a local restaurant or alternatively, for an additional cost, you have the opportunity to stay in a traditional inn known in Japanese as a ryokan. The inn will be a traditional wooden building decorated with classic Japanese simplicity and you will sleep on thick futons. Dinner will be a feast of Kyoto 'Kaiseki'. A stay in a ryokan is an opportunity to experience the true essence of Japanese culture, refinement and service. Those taking this option will be escorted to the ryokan in the afternoon and picked up the following morning after breakfast.



Kenrokuen Gardens, Kanazawa



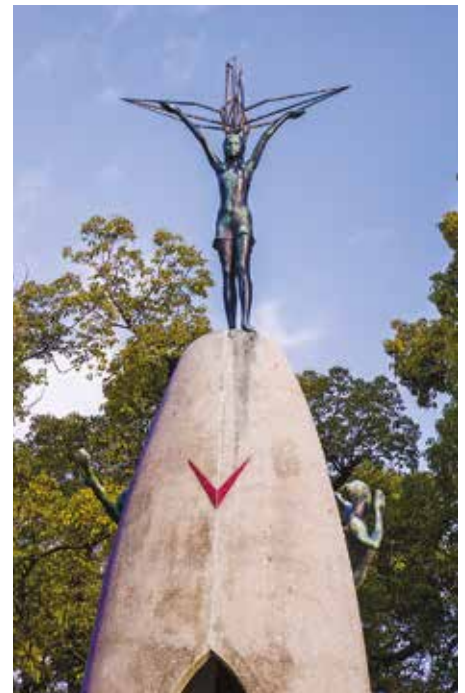
Tea ceremony, Kyoto



Kiyomizu-dera Temple, Kyoto



Cherry blossom



Peace Memorial Park, Hiroshima

Day 4 Kyoto. This morning enjoy some free time to explore independently. In the afternoon we embark on a guided excursion of Kyoto including visits to the Kinkakuji Temple and Nijo Castle. Tonight dinner will be at a local restaurant.

Day 5 Kanazawa. Today we will embark on a full day excursion by train to the famous garden city of Kanazawa, a thriving centre of the arts, long known for its lacquer ware, outstanding collectible pottery of the Kutani style, gold-leaf workmanship, and delicate hand painting of silk for kimonos. The narrow and winding cobblestone streets have a quaint photogenic charm. Around each bend is a traditional house, museum, art gallery, crafts shop, historic samurai residence and even a geisha house to explore. We will tour the city including the famous Kenrokuen gardens which is ranked among the country's top gardens, Bukeyashiki samurai houses and try our hand at Gold Leaf making. Dinner this evening will be a Japanese 'bento' box meal eaten on the train.

Day 6 Kyoto. Morning free for individual sightseeing. In the early evening we will travel to Gion for a walking tour of the Geisha Districts followed by an 'enkai' party with dinner and Geisha entertainment at a local restaurant.

Day 7 Kyoto to Ise. This morning travel to Ise. On the way we will make a stop at Byoudoin Temple to see the unique 'pure land' stroll garden and the famous 'Phoenix Hall' which is depicted on the 10 yen coin. We arrive mid-afternoon at the Ise Shima Kanko Hotel for a two night stay. Dinner is served both nights at the hotel.

Day 8 Ise. Today, there is a full day of sightseeing. In the morning, set out for Mikimoto Pearl Island for the chance to view the process of pearl cultivation. Later we will visit one of Shinto's most sacred shrines, Ise Jingu. The shrine consists of Geku, the outer shrine, dedicated to Toyouke, the kami of clothing, food and housing, and the inner shrine, Naiku, which enshrines Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess.

Day 9 Ise to Nara. After a relaxing morning we will head for Nara, stopping on the way at Hasedera to visit the beautiful temple on a hillside famous for the eleven face statue of Kannon, the Goddess of mercy. Afterwards, transfer to the Hotel Nikko Nara for a two night stay.

Day 10 Nara. Today visit the major sights of Nara. See the giant Buddha at Todaiji Temple and spend some time at the gorgeous Isuien, a refined Meiji period garden. Our final stop of the day will be Kasuga Shrine.

Day 11 Nara to Hiroshima. After breakfast we travel from Nara station to Kyoto by local train and then join the Nozomi Shinkansen, the world-renowned 'Bullet Train'. The 225 mile journey takes 1 hour and 40 minutes. We will arrive in Hiroshima at noon and our half day tour will include the moving Peace Memorial Park and museum which commemorates the dropping of the atomic bomb over Hiroshima in 1945. There are a variety of monuments and buildings in the park, each dedicated to a different aspect of the bombing. We stay for two nights at the Hotel Sheraton Hiroshima. Dinner will be at the hotel this evening. *N.B. Your luggage will be transferred to Tokyo so just a small bag will be needed for two nights.*

Day 12 Miyajima. This morning we take a full day excursion to Miyajima Island. Travel by tram through Hiroshima and take the ferry across to the island. We will spend all afternoon exploring the island including the World Heritage site of Itsukushima Shrine and the cable cars which go



Sensoji Temple in Tokyo's Asakusa district

to the top of Mount Misen for stunning views of the inland sea. In the late afternoon return to Hiroshima. This evening dinner will be the local speciality of Okonomiyaki, a kind of pancake with cabbage, noodles and a variety of fillings.

Day 13 Hiroshima to Tokyo.

This morning we take the bullet train to Himeji to visit the immaculate White Heron castle and Kokoen Gardens before continuing our journey on to Tokyo. On arrival we check into the New Otani Tokyo Hotel for a two night stay.

Day 14 Tokyo. Today we will experience the highlights of Tokyo on a guided tour. We pass by the Imperial Palace and continue to Asakusa, Tokyo's old town, where you can soak up the atmosphere of the Tokyo of the past. This afternoon we take a boat cruise on the Sumida River passing under twelve bridges before disembarking in Hamariku Garden, an Edo Period Japanese garden surrounded by the Shiodome district's futuristic skyscrapers. Our final stop for today is a visit to Tokyo Tower observatory at 250 metres to get a bird's eye view of Tokyo. This evening we will meet for our Farewell Dinner.

Day 15 Tokyo to London. Transfer to the airport for your return scheduled flight to London.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

ROOM DESCRIPTION	
Twin	£7295
Single	£9295

Price Includes: Economy class scheduled air travel, 13 nights hotel accommodation as described on breakfast only basis, all evening meals except days 9 and 13 (please note that some evening meals will be at local restaurants, whilst others will be taken at your hotel), guided excursions as stated in the itinerary, all entrance fees and transportation, Japanese tour escort, Noble Caledonia Tour Manager, gratuities, airport taxes.

Not Included: Travel insurance, meals other than those stated, visas, Ryokan stay available on day 3 (availability and price on request)

NB: Itinerary and hotels are subject to change.



NOBLE CALEDONIA

2 Chester Close, Belgravia, London, SW1X 7BE
+44 (0)20 7752 0000 | info@noble-caledonia.co.uk | www.noble-caledonia.co.uk



All special offers are subject to availability. Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.
Cover images - FRONT: Cherry blossom at Nara in springtime. BACK: Torii Gate, Miyajima