

Day 1

Arrive Seoul

Upon arrival at Incheon International Airport, you will be welcomed by your local driver, please look out for your name on their welcome board. Transfer to your hotel for an overnight stay. Remainder of the day is at your leisure.

Duration 2 Nights

Accommodation

Mercure Ambassador Seoul Hongdae

Day 2

Seoul

This morning, you'll be met by your guide in the lobby of your hotel to begin your full-day exploration of South Korea's vibrant capital city. Begin with a visit to Gyeongbokgung Palace, where you'll witness the Palace Royal Guard changing ceremony and the palace. Built-in 1395, Gyeongbokgung Palace was the first and largest of the royal palaces built during the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910). Next visit to "Bukchon Hanok Village." This Village is home to hundreds of traditional houses, called hanok, that date back to the Joseon dynasty. Bukchon, which was the central residence of nobles and bureaucrats during the Joseon Dynasty, is a place called a city street museum because of its many historic sites, cultural assets, and folklore materials.

After enjoying lunch at a local restaurant, visit "National Museum of Korean Contemporary History" to see the history of South Korea from the late 19th century to the present. Tour will continue on to visit Insadong Arts and Crafts Street. Insadong Street is one of the most popular areas in Seoul and represents the focal point of Korean traditional culture and crafts. Stores in Insadong specialize in a wide variety of goods that can only be purchased or appreciated in Korea: hanbok (traditional clothing), hanji (traditional paper), traditional teas, pottery, and folk crafts. Today's tour will end at "Gwangjang Market". This historic market opened in the early 20th century and is home to a number of clothing and food stalls, offering tourists a taste of traditional Korean cuisine. Starting with 'Mayak gimbap', one of Koreans' all-time favorite snacks, and Nokdu-jeon (Mung Bean Pancake), visitors can sample a range of Korean delicacies. Other traditional treats such as Tteok-bokki (Stir-fried Rice Cake) and eomuk (Fish Cake) are also available.

Following your tour, you'll be transferred back to your hotel for the remainder of the day and evening at your leisure.

Meal Plan Breakfast and Lunch

Day 3

Seoul to Andong to Gyeongju

This morning, you'll be met by your tour guide in the lobby of your hotel and transferred to Cheongryangri Station where you'll have your first experience on South Korea's KTX high-speed trains as you travel 2 hours to Andong. Upon arrival at Andong Station, you'll transfer to a local restaurant for lunch.

After lunch, you will visit a historical "Hahoe village" where Korean beauty and tradition come alive.

Before the Hahoe Village tour, first, go up to "Buyongdae" where you can have a panoramic view of Hahoe Village. "Buyong" is a Chinese character meaning lotus, and it is derived from the fact that the shape of Hahoe Village is like a lotus floating on water. Buyongdae is the best place to see the entire view of Hahoe Village.

Afterwards, you will start the tour of Hahoe Village. Hahoe is a representative single-clan village where the members of Ryu family which originated from Hahoe Village have lived together for 600 years from the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910).

This village, where tiled and thatched-roofed houses have been preserved well for quite some time, has been registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site because it retains many cultural heritages that show traditional Korean living culture and ancient architectural styles. Before starting the Hahoe Village tour, first, go up to "Buyongdae Cliff" where you can have a panoramic view of Hahoe Village. "Buyong" is a Chinese character meaning lotus, and it is derived from the fact that the shape of Hahoe Village is like a lotus floating on water. Buyongdae is the best place to see the entire view of "Hahoe Village".

Next, visit "Byeongsan Seowon" (Neo-Confucian Academy) which is said to be the highlight of Seowon architecture for its beautiful harmony of nature and architecture. Seowon is a private educational institution established by local Neo-Confucian Literati from the mid-16th century to the mid-17th century during the Joseon Dynasty.

Following your tour, you'll be transferred to Gyeongju and check-into your hotel.

Meal Plan Breakfast and Lunch

Duration 2 Nights

Accommodation

Kolon Hotel Gyeongju

Day 4

Gyeongju

This morning, you'll be met by your guide in the lobby of your hotel to begin another full day of exploration in Gyeongju. Start with a visit to Seokguram Grotto located on Tohamsan Mountain. It is the main stone temple of Korea. The official name of Seokguram, National Treasure No. 24, is Seokguram

Seokgul. Designated as a World Cultural Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1995, it is an artificial stone temple made of granite. Continue on to visit the iconic Bulguksa Temple, the representative relic of Buddhist culture from the Silla Kingdom in Gyeongju which used to be the capital of Silla Kingdom (BC57-AD935). Along with Seokguram Grotto nearby, Bulguksa Temple was designated as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site in 1995.

Afterwards, visit the National Museum of Gyeongju. This is a fantastic place to uncover the cultural history of Gyeongju with earthenware, art & craft works, and many galleries exhibiting everyday household goods dating back to life in the Royal Court during the Silla kingdom. Next, visit Cheomseongdae, the oldest existing astronomical observatory in Asia. Afterwards, continue on to the Daereungwon Tomb Complex where large ancient tombs of kings and nobles of the Silla Kingdom can be explored.

Conclude your tour with a visit to Anapji Pond, designed as a park for royalty. Following your tour, you'll be transferred back to your hotel for the remainder of the day and evening at your leisure.

Meal Plan Breakfast and Lunch

Day 5

Gyeongju to Busan

This morning, you'll be met by your guide and transferred by road to Busan (approximately 1 hour). On the way, you'll visit Tongdosa Temple which is a head temple of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism. Tongdosa is famous as there are no statues aside from Buddha at the temple because the "real shrines of the Buddha" (relics) are preserved here. Afterwards, visit Haedong Yonggungsa Seaside Temple. This superb attraction offers visitors the rare chance to see a temple along the shoreline as almost all temples in Korea are located in the mountains. Haedong Yonggungsa Temple was first built in 1376 by the great Buddhist teacher known as Naong during the Goryeo dynasty. Continue on to Dongbaekseom Island (Island of Camellias) which is an island located off one end of Busan's famous Haeundae Beach. You'll also have time to visit APEC House Nurimaru and Haeundae Beach before being transferred to your hotel to check-in. Enjoy the remainder of your day and evening at leisure.

Meal Plan Breakfast and Lunch

Duration 2 Nights

Accommodation

Felix by STX Hotel and Suite

Day 6

Busan

This morning, you'll be met by your guide in the lobby of your hotel to begin another full day of exploration in Busan. Your tour includes a visit to the UN Memorial Cemetery where South Korea honors

UN soldiers from 16 countries and UN aids from five countries that were killed in battle during the Korean War from 1950-1953. Next, visit Youngdusan Park (Busan Tower) in downtown Busan which is one of Busan's three famous mountains. Continue to Gukje Market, which has a history of over 70years, is a representative traditional market in Busan. Following the Korean War, refugees who fled to Busan set up stalls in order to make a living by selling smuggled or imported products, which developed into Gukje Market (gukje meaning "international" in Korean) of today.

Then visit one more market called Jagalchi Fish Market located on the shoreside road in Busan's Jung-gu, which is Korea's largest seafood market, selling both live and dried fish. After the Korean War, the market solidified itself as a fish market.

Today's tour ends with a visit to Songdo Yonggung Suspension Bridge. This suspension bridge is 127m long, 2m wide, and made of wire mesh, people can see the blue ocean under their feet and feel the thrill of walking on the sea and at the same time enjoy the refreshing view of the sea.

Following your tour, you'll be transferred back to your hotel for the remainder of the day and evening at your leisure.

Meal Plan Breakfast and Lunch

Day 7

Busan to Kyoto

Enjoy time at leisure until you check out and are met and transferred to the airport for your regional flight to Osaka.

At Osaka's Kansai International Airport you will be met and assisted to your transfer to Kyoto.

Kyoto was the capital of Japan for over 1000 years before Tokyo became its capital in 1868 and is Japan's most beautiful city with a rich cultural heritage possessing 14 UNESCO World Heritage Sites. It is known as the "City of 10,000 shrines" because there are 2000 religious sites (mainly Buddhist). Other major attractions on a Japanese vacation are Kyoto's palaces and gardens plus its old and colourful neighbourhoods.

The balance of the day is at leisure to relax or explore Kyoto at your own pace.

A 7-Day Japan Rail Pass is included in the tour price. You may exchange your voucher and validate the pass at most Japan Rail Stations. Ensure the pass is validated prior to use.

Meal Plan Breakfast

Duration 3 Nights

Accommodation

Miyako Hotel Kyoto Hachijo

Day 8

Full Day Kyoto Highlights Guided Walking Tour

This is the perfect introduction to Kyoto, visiting some of the city's most iconic sites. Meet your guide in the morning in the lobby of your hotel and then begin your walking tour using public transit (subway and bus). Your first stop is the renowned Kinkakuji temple, better known as the Golden Pavilion, one of Kyoto's UNESCO World Heritage sites. Walk through the temple grounds to admire the gold leaf decorated temple and visit the teahouse for a matcha green tea tasting and Japanese sweet.

Afterwards, choose to visit either Nijo Castle, one of the best examples of castle palace architecture from Japan's feudal era or Kyoto's Imperial Palace, the once residence of Japan's Imperial family. Your guide will then escort you to a restaurant for lunch as you will have surely worked up an appetite from all the morning explorations. The type of cuisine you have for lunch will depend on your preferences, but your guide will be able to make some recommendations. After lunch, travel to the Southern Higashiyama district to visit another one of Kyoto's most famous sites, Kiyomizu-dera temple, located on a hillside overlooking the city and also a UNESCO site. Explore the temple grounds and see Otowa Waterfall. Then you may decide to explore the souvenir shops in Higashiyama (time permitting). Your guide will escort you back to your hotel at the end of the tour or you may choose to end the tour in the Gion district, the historical geisha district of Kyoto.

Meal Plan Breakfast

Duration 8 Hours

Day 9

Kyoto at Leisure

A full day to explore historic Kyoto at your own pace. Please ask your destination specialist about optional excursions available.

Meal Plan Breakfast

Day 10

Kyoto to Hiroshima

Following breakfast depart by train for Hiroshima.

Meet your guide in the lobby of your hotel in Hiroshima or at Hiroshima JR train station in the morning and then begin your walking tour using public transit (streetcar, train and ferry). Your first stop is Peace Memorial Park. Walk through the park to see the Atomic Bomb Dome and the other monuments and

then visit Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. Afterwards, go for lunch at an okonomiyaki cuisine restaurant, one of Hiroshima's specialties. Then transfer to Miyajima island, home to one of Japan's most photographed sites - Itsukushima Shrine with the floating tori gate. During high tide the tori gate appears to be floating in the sea. After visiting the shrine, the rest of the day will be spent exploring the quaint town of Miyajima. Choose to visit the lesser known Daishoin temple, perched on a hillside overlooking the sea or explore the shops and food stalls in town. At the end of the tour, your guide will either escort you back to your hotel or the train station.

Meal Plan Breakfast

Duration 1 Night

Accommodation

Miyajima Grand Hotel Arimoto

Day 11

Hiroshima to Tokyo

Following breakfast, travel to Hiroshima by ferry and train and then take the bullet train to Tokyo, Japan's sprawling capital city. The balance of the day is at leisure.

We suggest you stop en-route in Himeji to visit Himeji castle, one of Japan's most famous castles. The castle is about a 5 minute taxi ride from Himeji station, making it a very convenient stopover.

Meal Plan Breakfast

Duration 3 Nights

Accommodation

Keio Plaza Hotel Tokyo

Day 12

Half Day Tokyo Guided Walking Tour

Travel around Tokyo using the cities sophisticated and efficient subway and train lines together with your private guide visiting some of Tokyo's main sites. Meet your guide in the lobby of your hotel and then walk to the train station to begin your adventure. Start the day with a visit to Sensoji Temple, Tokyo's oldest Buddhist temple. After visiting the temple grounds take time to stroll along Nakamise shopping street to look for souvenirs or maybe purchase a snack. Then travel to the Imperial Palace East Gardens, a part of the inner palace area. The palace itself is not open to the public as it is the residence of the emperor, but you can walk through the garden grounds to see the moats, remains of Edo castle

and gardens. Next, travel to either Ginza or Tsukiji Outer Fish Market. Your guide will either say goodbye so you can continue exploring or escort you back to your hotel.

Meal Plan Breakfast

Day 13

Full Day Mount Fuji and Hakone Tour

Travel from Tokyo to Mt. Fuji by bus this morning and head up to the 5th Station. The 5th Station is situated at 2,300 meters (7,546 ft) above sea level. At this height, you will be amazed at spectacular, breathtaking views from above the clouds. After which you will enjoy lunch. Once your lunch is done a short visit on a Lake Ashi Cruise. This crater lake along the southwest wall of the caldera of Mt. Hakone was formed by a powerful volcanic eruption nearly 3,000 years ago, and provides postcard views of Mt. Fuji towering 30 km northwest. Admire the superb view of Mt. Fuji from aboard a ship. Take a ropeway ride to the peak of Mt. Komagatake. There will be time to include a walk around at the peak. Take a cableway ride up to the spiritual Hakone Shrine Mototsumiya (original shrine) that nestles at the mountaintop. Depart Hakone and proceed to Odawara Station by bus. Board the Kodama Shinkansen to Tokyo in the non-reserved section. You will arrive back in Tokyo between 8-10pm, all dependent on traffic conditions. You will need to make your own way back to your hotel on arrival.

Meal Plan Breakfast and Lunch

Day 14

Depart Tokyo

Following breakfast, transfer to Tokyo's Haneda airport for your onward flight.

Meal Plan Breakfast