



# Gardens of Japan

9 days

## Tour Description

*Gardeners, historians and architecture buffs will all enjoy this trip to Japan. The great gardens of Japan delight nature lovers with their tranquil atmosphere, fruit and maple trees, flowers and more. There are also parks and gardens on the grounds of several of the temples and shrines visited on this tour. Everyone will be fascinated learning about the lives of the mighty emperors and shoguns who ruled the country for centuries and the more sobering facts of Hiroshima.*

## Highlights

- ❖ Wander two of the three great gardens of Japan
- ❖ Visit Imperial palaces, Shinto shrines, and Buddhist temples
- ❖ Experience the Shinkansen bullet trains
- ❖ Admire Himeji and Nikko, UNESCO World Heritage Sites
- ❖ Contemplate the solemn Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

## Sample Tour Itinerary

### **Tokyo – 2 nights**

#### **Day 1: Arrive Tokyo**

Upon arrival at Tokyo's Narita airport, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Your group reconvenes this evening for a welcome dinner.

#### **Day 2:**

After breakfast, enjoy a full day private tour of Tokyo. Highlights include the Imperial Palace Plaza, Meiji Shrine, Asakusa Kannon Temple, the famous Ginza shopping district, and a visit to Tokyo Tower. Lunch will be included at a local restaurant.

### **Nikko – 1 night**

#### **Day 3:**

Depart north this morning to Mito to view Kairaku-en, one of the three great gardens of Japan. After viewing the garden and lunch in Mito you head inland to Nikko. Upon arrival in Nikko you'll visit UNESCO World Heritage listed Nikko Toshogu Shrine.

### **Tokyo – 1 night**

#### **Day 4:**

Today begins with a journey up into the mountains to view the thunderous Kegon Falls at the base of Mt Nantai. Later we return to Nikko to visit the fascinating Tamozawa Imperial Villa and its beautiful garden. Return to Tokyo this afternoon with the remainder of the day at leisure.



### ***Kyoto – 2 nights***

#### **Day 5:**

Your day starts off with a bullet train ride to Kyoto. After arriving in Kyoto enjoy a buffet lunch before boarding your private coach for an afternoon of touring. Highlights will include Kiyomizu Temple, Sanjusangendo Temple, and Heian Jingu Shrine. Heian Jingu's torii gate is one of the largest in Japan.

#### **Day 6:**

After breakfast visit Nijo Castle. You will also visit the Golden Pavilion (Kinkakuji) and Kyoto Imperial Palace. After lunch head to Nara where you will visit Todaiji Temple, and the Kasuga Grand Shrine. At the end of the tour you will be returned to your Kyoto hotel.

### ***Hiroshima – 1 night***

#### **Day 7:**

Another bullet train awaits you as you travel to Hiroshima. Upon arrival in Hiroshima visit the sobering Peace Memorial Park and Museum and view the Atomic Bomb Dome. Later you will head to Miyajima Island to view the red torii gates at Itsukushima Jinja Shrine.

### ***Osaka – 1 night***

#### **Day 8:**

Your last bullet train of the trip takes you to Okayama where you will be greeted and taken the short distance to Koraku-en Garden, another of the three great gardens of Japan. Following your visit to the garden you'll be driven east to Himeji for a tour of UNESCO listed Himeji Castle with its network of 83 buildings and advanced feudal period defensive systems.

The day ends in Osaka with a farewell dinner.

#### **Day 9:**

Transfer to the Kansai International airport to catch your flight home.

### **INCLUSIONS**

- Accommodations: Tokyo 3 nights, Nikko 1 night, Kyoto 2 nights, Hiroshima 1 night, Osaka 1 night
- Meals: Continental breakfast daily, lunch and dinner as noted in itinerary
- Ground transportation via air conditioned luxury coach or high speed train
- English speaking assistants and guides
- Admission tickets as outlined in the itinerary