

**Day 1 – May 9 – Depart USA**

**Day 2 – May 10 – Arrive Tokyo**

**Transfer by private car** to our four-star downtown hotel, conveniently located in the Marunouchi district, adjacent to Tokyo Station. Brief meet and greet orientation in the evening.

Accommodations: Marunouchi Hotel

Meals included: None



**Day 3 – May 11 – Tokyo**

After breakfast in the hotel, depart for a special-access tour of the wholesale floor of the new **Toyosu Fish Market**, followed by an introduction to the building blocks of Japanese cuisine on a guided walk through the historic **Tsukiji Market**, complete with snacking and shopping opportunities. At a **sushi-making class**, we'll observe techniques for preparing fish and make our own sushi for lunch. This afternoon we will visit the one of the city's fine **art museums**. Tonight, get to know your fellow travelers at an informal welcome dinner of **izakaya** (Japanese pub-style) cuisine.

Accommodations: Marunouchi Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



**Day 4 – May 12 – Tokyo**

We begin the day with an **architectural walk** through the **Marunouchi and Ginza districts** (including the Kitte Building and Tokyo International Forum), Japan's priciest real estate of buildings by some of the **world's top architects**. We end in time for a **department store opening ceremony**, in which the entire staff bows in welcome. After free time to experience one of Tokyo's famed **depachika** (department store basement food halls), we will have lunch at a longstanding **soba noodle** restaurant. Then we journey to the **Asakusa neighborhood**, center of Tokyo's historic **shitamachi** (downtown). We will join the crowds at **Sensoji Temple** and **Nakamise-dori** shopping street, where many **street foods** are made before our eyes, including freshly roasted **sembei** (rice crackers) and **ningyo-yaki** (bean-paste dumplings). From here, a walk through atmospheric side streets leads to the **Kappabashi** restaurant supply district, known for lifelike plastic models of foods. Dinner tonight is **tempura** served by a master chef in the classic counter style at one of Tokyo's top tempura specialists.

Accommodations: Marunouchi Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



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ESPRIT TRAVEL & TOURS

**Day 5 – May 13 – Tokyo**

This morning we will journey across town to **Meiji Shrine**, one of the largest in Japan's native Shinto religion, for a blessing of our tour involving **kagura** (traditional court dance and music) and sake. From here we proceed to the **Axis Building**, a design complex in the fashionable **Roppongi district**, for a presentation at the highly innovative **Nuno textile studio** and free time to visit other shops selling contemporary tableware, knives, interior goods and more. Today's lunch is **chef-driven kaiseki** cooking. The remainder of the day is at leisure to explore nearby museums or shops including the Mori Art Museum, National Art Center Tokyo and 21\_21 Design Sight. For tonight's dinner, you may wish to have the concierge make a reservation at one of Tokyo's nearly 200 Michelin-star restaurants or venture out on your own to explore.



Accommodations: Marunouchi Hotel  
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

**Day 6 – May 14 – Tokyo to Kanazawa**

This morning we will depart to nearby Tokyo Station to experience Japanese **ekiben** (train station **bento**) culture and purchase a **bento** lunch to eat on board the **Shinkansen** (bullet train) to the beautifully preserved city of **Kanazawa**, near the coast of the Sea of Japan. Our first stop will be the **Nagamachi**



**Samurai District** to view a **traditional samurai home** and browse shops selling **wagashi** (Japanese sweets), followed by a visit to a **geisha house** in the **Higashi-Chaya-gai former geisha district**. Dinner this evening is at one of one of Japan's most acclaimed **ryotei** (formal dining restaurants). Our hotel is centrally located steps from sights, shops and restaurants.

Accommodations: Kanazawa Tokyu Hotel  
Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

**Day 7 – May 15 – Kanazawa**

This morning we depart early for **Kenrokuen**, the former pleasure garden of Kanazawa Castle and considered one of Japan's top three strolling gardens. After a visit to the **Ishikawa Prefectural Museum of Traditional Crafts**, enjoy lunch of your choosing among the stalls and restaurants of the landmark



**Omicho Market**, nicknamed Kanazawa's kitchen. Our afternoon visits begin with the **D.T. Suzuki Museum**, dedicated to the inspirational Kanazawa native who helped spread Buddhist teachings around the world, followed by the cutting-edge contemporary exhibits and architecture of the **21st Century Museum of Art**, by the Pritzker Prize-winning SANAA team. The remainder of the day is free for craft shopping, sightseeing and dinner on your own at one of Kanazawa's many fine restaurants.

Accommodations: Kanazawa Tokyu Hotel  
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

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**Day 8 – May 16 – Kanazawa to Kyoto**

After breakfast, we will head by express train to Kyoto and proceed to the mountainous **Arashiyama District** west of the city center. Following **lunch of yudofu**, a regional, Buddhist specialty of stewed tofu with condiments, we will visit the UNESCO World Heritage site **Tenryu-ji Temple**. A stroll through the **Sagano Bamboo Forest** takes us to **Okochi-Sanso**, villa of a silent film star, where **matcha and sweets** are served and hillside garden paths offer views across the city and mountains. We will then journey across town to our centrally located hotel for check-in and an orientation walk of the neighborhood and downtown shopping district. Dinner this evening is **contemporary kaiseki** of Kyoto specialties. Accommodations: Royal Park Hotel Kyoto Sanjo Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



**Day 9 – May 17 – Kyoto**

Today begins at the **Daitokuji Monastery** for a lesson in the **Way of Tea** and a visit to an exquisite **temple garden**, followed by **Buddhist vegan lunch**. Then we head across town to the gallery of a renowned **Japanese ceramics expert**, to learn how ceramics inform Japanese food ways. The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure. Sightseeing suggestions nearby include Ginkaku-ji (Silver Pavilion) temple and stroll along the creek-side Philosopher’s Walk, or you may join your tour leader on an optional guided walk through the historic Nishiki Food Market. This evening’s dinner is a **cooking class of everyday recipes** you can also easily make at home. Accommodations: Royal Park Hotel Kyoto Sanjo Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



**Day 10 – May 18 – Kyoto**

Today is **free for individual exploration** in Kyoto using extensive sightseeing suggestions from Esprit, including Nijo Castle, **Kinkaku-ji (Golden Pavilion) Temple**, Kiyomizu Temple, hiking the 10,000 **torii** gates of the **Fushimi Inari Shrine** or browsing for crafts, clothing and antiques at a **flea market** or in the city center using Esprit’s exclusive Kyoto Downtown map. We will reconvene for an upscale dinner of **Japanese-Italian fusion fare**. Accommodations: Royal Park Hotel Kyoto Sanjo Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



**Day 11 – May 19 – Kyoto/Ohara Day Trip**

We journey northeast of Kyoto to the **farming village of Ohara**. After visiting the morning **farmers’ market**, we will head to a **working farm** and **dye workshop** that uses natural extracts of herbs and plants to make its dyes – you may choose to try your own hand at **shibori tie-dyeing**. A walk along terraced rice fields leads to a rustic, multi-course **lunch in a restored farmhouse**. En route back to central Kyoto we visit the Intimate **Renge-ji Temple** to learn about Buddhist garden and temple design, before free time for the rest of the day. Accommodations: Royal Park Hotel Kyoto Sanjo Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



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**Day 12 – May 20 – Kyoto to Uji & Osaka**

This morning we will travel by charter coach Kyoto's **Uji district**, known for centuries as one of Japan's most important tea growing centers. Here will visit a **tea plantation** and get a rare visit to a **tea processing plant**. From there we will continue to **Osaka**, Japan's third-largest city, hub of the Kansai region and one of the nation's food capitals – the unofficial city motto is 'kuidaore' (eat 'til you drop). After a casual lunch of **kushikatsu (fried foods on skewers)** in the gaudily decorated lanes of the **retro Shin-Sekai neighborhood**, we will visit one of Japan's top **knife shops** for an informative presentation about the craftsmanship and use of Japanese knives, and browse the **Doguya-suji Arcade**, famous for restaurant and kitchen supplies. We will have a break to check in to our hotel, conveniently located near the shopping and restaurant halls of the Umeda and Osaka Station areas. This evening we will enjoy a **progressive dinner** around the neon-lit **Dotonbori Canal**, featuring two Osaka specialties for everyday folk: **conveyor-belt sushi** and **okonomiyaki, savory pancakes**.



Accommodations: Hilton Osaka  
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Day 13 – May 21 – Osaka/Kobe Day Trip**

The morning begins with an **udon noodle-making class and lunch**, followed by free time in Osaka (sightseeing suggestions including Osaka Castle and its museum, the food stalls of Kuromon Market and more). This afternoon we will travel by regional train to the vibrant port city of **Kobe** to learn the history and production process of sake at a **sake museum and brewery** in the Nada neighborhood, known for centuries as one of Japan's leading sake centers – we'll also have a **tasting**. From here it's a short ride to central Kobe, where we will walk from the neighborhood of **Ijinkan, western-style houses** built by some of Japan's earliest foreign residents, to the landmark **Ikuta Shrine** before our **farewell dinner featuring Kobe beef**. After dinner, return to Osaka by regional train.



Accommodations: Hilton Osaka  
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Day 14 – May 22 – Departure**

Travel by **airport shuttle** to Osaka Kansai or Itami airports for your departure flights, or onward travel in Japan on your own.

Meal included: Breakfast

Note: Actual visits and events will be finalized approximately 30 days prior to departure to allow for the inclusion of special exhibitions, visits and events, and are dependent on the schedules of our Japanese colleagues. A final itinerary will be sent to you about two weeks prior to tour departure. The itinerary is subject to change at any time.

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