

Topdeck

DELVE DEEP: JAPAN



TRIP CODE:

TJJTR2

TOPDECKER, meet Asia (TD)

(Previously called: Japan Highlights) TRIP VIBE = iconic sights and in-depth adventures with a local Trip Leader. Don't just want to see Japan, but EXPERIENCE it? In all its ancient, futuristic, kooky, incredible glory? You're in luck. In under two weeks, this Delve Deep trip gives you the highlights and the hidden gems. The culture and the crazy. The ultra-modern and the historic. The scenery and the cities. And all the ramen, okonomiyaki, udon, katsu, yakitori and sake your fat pants can handle (you packed those, right?). This is your insider guide. Japan is waiting.

WORTH NOTING...

A Sector trip is part of a larger journey, meaning your new friends might continue on or after you leave, or you might be joining a trip already in progress.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Delve Deep



Nights



Android/iPhone
app download
info



This is a sector
trip.

Hi, and thanks for choosing to holiday with Topdeck

You can rest assured that we'll pull out all the stops to make your trip unforgettable.

Now it's time to get excited about your holiday...

ABOUT YOUR TRIP NOTES

These Trip Notes contain everything you need to know before your trip departs – including where to meet and what to bring. We recommend that you read these notes thoroughly so you know what to expect on your trip of a lifetime. Also, you can easily download and print this document off so you can bring it with you when you travel.

Please bear in mind that some points should be taken as a guide only – after all, everyone's different! For example, daily spending money and clothing lists can vary from one person to the next, so don't be alarmed if you don't expect to spend (or even wear) so much!

PLEASE NOTE: We strongly urge you to refresh this document as close to the time of your departure as possible to ensure you have the most up-to-date accommodation list and information available.

ON THE BUCKET LIST (INCLUDED)

- + Visit the Meiji Shrine in Tokyo
- + Walking tour of Tokyo's Harajuku and Shibuya districts with Trip Leader
- + Group karaoke experience in Tokyo
- + Visit the Hida folk village
- + Visit the morning riverside markets in Takayama
- + Half-day tour of Takayama
- + Visit a sake brewery in Takayama
- + Visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and Museum
- + Visit the Itsukushima Shrine on the island of Miyajima
- + Experience Buddhist morning rituals in Osaka
- + Visit the Fushimi Inari Shrine in Kyoto
- + Visit Kinkaku-ji Temple in Kyoto
- + Visit the Arashiyama bamboo forest
- + Visit the Nishiki food market in Kyoto
- + Walking tour of Kyoto's Gion district with Trip Leader

MORE INCLUSIONS

- + Visit Meiji Shrine
- + Walking tour of Harajuku and Shibuya with Trip Leader
- + Group karaoke experience
- + Train ticket to Takayama
- + Visit the Hida folk village
- + Visit the morning riverside markets
- + Visit Takayama Jin'ya
- + Sake tasting at a local brewery
- + Train ticket to Hiroshima
- + Visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and Museum
- + Visit the Itsukushima Shrine
- + Ferry to Miyajima
- + Train ticket to Osaka
- + Experience Buddhist morning rituals
- + Train ticket to Kyoto
- + Visit the Fushimi Inari Shrine
- + Visit Kinkaku-ji Temple

- + Visit the Arashiyama bamboo forest
- + Visit the Nishiki food market
- + Walking tour of the Gion district with Trip Leader

YOUR TRIP WILL START

PICK UP:

Tokyo
Japan

YOUR TRIP WILL FINISH

DROP OFF:

Kyoto
Japan

TRIP CURRENCIES

+ Japan -

YOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1 | TOKYO, JAPAN

You ready for 12 UNbelievable days of delving deep into Japanese culture? Discovering the ultra-modern, the ancient traditions and alllll the local eats – plus the weird, whacky and totally wonderful in between? We thought so. First: say konnichiwa to your fellow explorers. Then: we'll kick things off with a group dinner in the traditional Asakusa district, where craft shops and steaming food stalls line the buzzing streets. Nihon e yokoso – welcome to Japan!



MEALS:

+ Dinner

DAY 2 | TOKYO

Down your cup of matcha – we're off to check out the Meiji Shrine this morning. Tokyo's grandest Shinto shrine – take in all the spiritual vibes, make an offering and wander the blooming (or not) gardens. Next, we're heading to the quirky Harajuku district (aka cosplay heaven) with our in-the-know Trip Leader. Expect kawaii culture galore: neon tutus, rainbow-coloured wigs, bubble tea and fairy floss. We'll also swing by the legendary Shibuya Crossing to watch the Mario Karts zoom past. It's all the crazy. Then: the afternoon's yours to wander the futuristic streets of Shibuya, or join an optional sushi-making experience (heads up – spaces are limited so let us know if you're keen before you jet off). And tonight? It starts with a 'K' and ends with an 'E'. Nope, not kale. K-A-R-A-O-K-E time!



MEALS:

+ Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Visit Meiji Shrine
- + Walking tour of Harajuku and Shibuya with Trip Leader
- + Group karaoke experience



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- + Sushi-making experience: from 8,824 JPY

DAY 3 | TOKYO

It's your last day in Tokyo – so, you do you. Been waiting for an opportunity to shamelessly wear Mickey Mouse headwear and fan-girl/boy over Cinderella? An optional trip to Tokyo Disneyland is calling. Or if the snow-topped peaks and gleaming lakes of Mt Fuji sound more like you – there's a day trip to the Fuji Five Lakes region on the cards too. Alternatively, stick around the city and check out the ins and outs of East Tokyo with an optional cycling tour (psst: tell us in advance if this sounds like your vibe). This evening: quiz your Trip Leader on where to find the best ramen – and be prepared to order on a ticket machine with pictures of the dishes. It might be a lucky dip, but that's what adventuring is all about.



MEALS:

+ Breakfast



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- + Visit Tokyo Disneyland: from 8,600 JPY
- + Day trip to Mount Fuji: from 16,471 JPY
- + East Tokyo neighbourhood cycling tour: prices available locally

DAY 4 | TOKYO TO TAKAYAMA

Rise and shine – it's an early start to get the iconic Shinkansen (bullet train FYI) to Takayama. Glue your face to the window as we zoom through the incredible Japanese Alps. Once we've pulled in, we'll check into our authentic AF accommodation: a traditional ryokan – complete with tatami-matted floors and sliding doors straight out of The Last Samurai. This afternoon, it's time to visit a traditional Hida folk village for an insight into what mountain life was like back in the day. Hanking for even MORE local culture? We've got a visit to a traditional onsen on offer too. Disclaimer: while the onsen is 100% optional, nudity is not – and tattoos are a no-no here. Finally: an optional Hida beef dinner with the gang is on the menu – vegetarians look away now.



MEALS:

- + Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Train ticket to Takayama
- + Visit the Hida folk village



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- + Traditional onsen experience: prices available locally
- + Hida beef dinner: from 4,500 JPY

DAY 5 | TAKAYAMA TO HIROSHIMA

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day – so we'll kick things off traditional-style in the ryokan before visiting the bustling morning riverside markets. Then, strap on your Nikes to explore Takayama Jin'ya – the last remaining government outpost from the time of the Samurai and Shoguns. Round it all up with a sampling of the good stuff at a local sake brewery before jumping on the train to Hiroshima. And tonight? An included group dinner's on the cards, so get ready to show off your expert chopstick skills (or drop even more stuff down your T-shirt).



MEALS:

- + Breakfast
- + Dinner



INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Visit the morning riverside markets
- + Visit Takayama Jin'ya
- + Sake tasting at a local brewery
- + Train ticket to Hiroshima

DAY 6 | HIROSHIMA

You've seen the photos. Read the book. Now it's time to experience the history for yourself. Take a tour of Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park and Museum – home of the A Bomb Dome. Then, it's all aboard the ferry to the island of Miyajima. With an afternoon free to explore you just gotta visit the Itsukushima Shrine before settling in for sunset. The floating torii gate may be undergoing renovations, but the view is still pretty spectacular. Back in Hiroshima, put those fat pants to the test with a steaming bowl of Onomichi ramen – chased with a glass of the local sake. When in Japan, right?



MEALS:

- + Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and Museum
- + Visit the Itsukushima Shrine
- + Ferry to Miyajima

DAY 7 | HIROSHIMA TO OSAKA

And just when you thought your jeans couldn't get any tighter – today we're headed for Osaka: the foodie capital of Japan. Here, they even have a word for "scoff till you drop" – kuidaore. Dump your bags at tonight's traditional Buddhist lodge and go get it! The afternoon is totally up to you. Regroup tonight for an included dinner, then head to the buzzing Ura-Namba district for micro bars, plenty of sake and a spot more karaoke (the Drunken Clam is the best FYI).



MEALS:

- + Breakfast
- + Dinner



INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Train ticket to Osaka

DAY 8 | OSAKA

Tuck into a traditional Buddhist breakfast before heading out to do your own thing. It's your chance to uncover the real Osaka – so make every second count. Thrill-seeker? Jump aboard an optional day trip to Universal Studios. Foodie? Head to the Dotonbori district (aka Eat Street). History buff? There are plenty of temples and an awesome castle to explore. Tonight, the local experts will show us the ins and outs of Osaka's nightlife on an optional tour.



MEALS:

- + Breakfast



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- + Full day tour of Universal Studios: prices available locally
- + Osaka nightlife tour: prices available locally

DAY 9 | OSAKA TO KYOTO

Ever wondered what life as a Buddhist monk was really like? Rise early and find out with a morning Buddhist ritual – complete with Goma Kito Fire Ceremony and a walk around the temple with a local monk. Then we're hitting the tracks to Japan's traditional capital, Kyoto. Home to over 2,000 temples and shrines, this place ticks all the spiritual boxes. We'll visit the incredible Fushimi Inari Shrine – with plenty of time to hike to the top and explore the torii gates. Then, dinner is up to you. Our suggestion? Head to Nishiki Warai for seriously good yakisoba and okonomiyaki *wipes drool from chin*.



MEALS:

- + Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Experience Buddhist morning rituals
- + Train ticket to Kyoto
- + Visit the Fushimi Inari Shrine

DAY 10 | KYOTO

Time to explore this place properly with our expert Trip Leader. We'll tick off the Zen Kinkakuji Golden Pavilion and Tenryu-ji Temple before moving on to the sprawling Arashiyama bamboo grove, where there's free time to delve deeper into this fairytale forest. All the walking making you hangry? DW, we're stopping by the Nishiki food market next. Food baby in tow, we'll then head to the Gion district to say g'day to the geishas. Afterwards: the evening's yours for exploring. Discover the traditional restaurants and teahouses along lantern-lit Pontocho Alley. Or slurp up some more noodles and watch life go by in one of the Kawaramachi district's relaxed cafés.



MEALS:

- + Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Visit Kinkaku-ji Temple
- + Visit the Arashiyama bamboo forest
- + Visit the Nishiki food market
- + Walking tour of the Gion district with Trip Leader

DAY 11 | KYOTO

PSA: this is your last day in Kyoto. Get moving! Check out Yokai ('Monster') Street, where homemade creatures from Japanese folklore are waiting to greet you outside the shops. Or for something to impress those Tinder dates with, there's an optional ramen cooking class on offer. You can even dress up as a geisha or samurai (we told you it would get weird). Later, we'll regroup and head to a local eatery for a send-off to remember. This has been one hell of a trip.



MEALS:

- + Breakfast
- + Dinner



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- + Dress as a geisha or samurai: from 9,600 JPY
- + Ramen making class: from 3,500 JPY

DAY 12 | KYOTO

After breakfast it's sayonara to the Land of the Rising Sun and our newfound family. Swap Snapchats and start planning that next adventure. We hear the ski season here is pretty sick.



MEALS:

- + Breakfast

TIPPING

NO TIP NECESSARY

Your Topdeck Trip Leaders and Drivers never expect tips, and they won't ask for any either. We also know how much tipping can cost you. So go ahead – spoil yourself with the money you save traveling with us (just don't forget Mum's souvenir).

TOPDECK TRAVEL APP

Our app is available to download before you travel. With a range of cool features including a currency converter, budget planner, check-in tool and group chat, it'll help you plan your trip like a pro. Think of it as your very own Topdeck Trip Leader in the palm of your hand.

TRIP GROUP CHAT

Connect with your fellow Topdeckers before you depart and begin your magical friendship in the flash of a winking face emoji.

ITINERARY VIEWER

Get the lowdown on where you'll be going and what activities you'll be doing on each day of your trip with this handy little tool.

CHECK-IN

Plug in all your vital deets and we'll keep them safe for when you really need them. Making your life easier, one swipe at a time.

BUDGET TRACKER

Keep an eye on your holiday spending, leaving you with more FUN-ds to play with. Think: elaborate Spanish feasts (not questionable supermarket sandwiches).

MAPS

Navigate your way to meeting points and lesser-known local gems using pins dropped by your Trip Leader, seek out your own bucket list sites and take to the streets like a pro.

Once the trip is over, you'll need the app to give us feedback about your trip experience. We love to hear what you thought about your trip, as it helps to give us an idea of the things we're doing well and the things we could be doing better.

PLEASE NOTE: The Topdeck Travel App should only be downloaded once you have booked your trip. You will not be able to log in unless you have a Topdeck booking reference number.

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PASSENGER SAFETY

NIGHTS OUT

One of the best parts of travelling is experiencing the nightlife and entertainment each city has to offer. However, amidst the fun and excitement, it's important to be aware of your surroundings and personal safety as well. Before you hit the road with us, be sure to familiarise yourself with the following safety information.

When you're on a night out, remember to avoid walking alone, particularly through deserted areas like beaches and back streets. Always stick together, take a registered taxi where possible, and keep a note of your accommodation details so you can find your way back to your fellow Topdeckers if you become separated. It's also a good idea to get your Topdeck trip mates' mobile numbers in case you need to get hold of them while out and about.

In some countries, alcoholic measures can be considerably larger than what you may be used to. Try to keep track of what you're drinking, and if you see one of your trip mates looking a little worse for wear, take them back to your

accommodation. Never leave your drink unattended.

It's also important to be aware that what you might consider harmless flirting may be interpreted differently in some countries. Be yourself and have fun, but stay savvy – you don't want to find yourself in an uncomfortable situation.

RESPECTING FELLOW PASSENGERS

Here at Topdeck, we're all about inclusivity. We want to make sure that everyone has a great time on our trips, and that everyone feels like they're part of one happy Topdeck family.

What we're not about is excluding people or making them feel like they don't belong – that's just not what families do. That's why we always encourage Topdeckers to be kind and courteous to their fellow passengers. The golden rules? Always remember to respect each other's space, be mindful of causing excessive noise in shared accommodation and treat others how you'd wish to be treated yourself. Easy!

DRUG USE

Topdeck has a strict zero-tolerance drug policy. Passengers should not bring any illegal substances onto the Topdeck coach or into any of the accommodation we stay in on our trips. This includes marijuana, even if it is legal in some of the states your trip passes through. If you are found in possession of drugs, you will be removed from the trip. All instances of drug possession will be reported to Topdeck Head Office, who may consider alerting the relevant authorities.

REMEMBER – if you are found in possession of drugs, not only could you risk getting in trouble with the local police, but our Driver will also be held responsible if drugs are found on the Topdeck coach. Trust us, you wouldn't want that to happen to any of our Drivers – they're awesome.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Culture shock, homesickness, random periods of feeling down – these things happen and are totally normal. You can rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Topdeck crew will do their utmost to cheer you up again.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- + Call home. Sometimes it's nice to hear a familiar voice and have a good old-fashioned catch up with your loved ones
- + Eat well. Never underestimate the power of a good, wholesome meal. Nobody feels at their best when they're hungry!
- + Drink responsibly. Not only will you swerve the dreaded hangover, but by keeping an eye on what you drink, you could also avoid getting into any potentially uncomfortable situations
- + Talk to your Trip Leader. Don't forget, they're probably far from home, too – so they're sure to know of some tried-and-tested ways to beat the blues
- + Integrate with your fellow Topdeckers. This one is key! The more fun you're having on your trip, the less likely you are to feel homesick (trust us).

HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE TRAVELLER

Responsible travel isn't difficult to achieve. With a little conscious thought and preparation, you can have an awesome holiday AND have a positive impact on the places you visit. Sweet!

Here are five things you can do to ensure you're travelling responsibly:

- + Conserve water. You know the drill – reuse your hotel towels, take short showers and remember to turn off the tap when you're brushing your teeth
- + Reduce your waste. Ditch the plastic bag, refuse unnecessary packaging, dispose of your waste responsibly and recycle as much as possible
- + Go local. Hunt down locally owned and operated restaurants and bars, shop in local markets and book tours and activities run by local guides
- + Consider the wildlife. Avoid any attractions that involve closely engaging with wild animals
- + Respect local people and culture. Obeying local laws is a given – but also remember to dress and behave in a manner appropriate to the community. Be polite and keep an open mind!

OTHER INFORMATION

INSURANCE

Before your trip departs, it's compulsory for all passengers to take out comprehensive travel insurance covering cancellation, medical expenses (including repatriation), loss or damage to baggage and personal belongings, money and personal liability.

World Nomads provides comprehensive travel insurance for people from over 140 countries. For more information, visit www.topdeck.travel/travel-insurance.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Please make sure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your trip. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your trip departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling.

PLEASE NOTE: Some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure, as requirements do change periodically.

WHAT TO BRING

Based on our experience, these items are key. Everyone's different though – so if you want to bring more or less, go for it (as long as you don't exceed your 20kg allowance, that is!)

Heading on our Namaste India trip? Your luggage is capped at 15kg, so maybe leave the hairdryer at home.

- + 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes
- + 1 pair of smart casual shoes
- + 1 pair of thongs/jandals/flip-flops
- + 2 pairs of jeans/trousers
- + 2 pairs of shorts/skirts
- + 4 shirts/T-shirts
- + 2 sweaters/jumpers
- + Smart casual evening wear
- + 1 rainproof jacket
- + 1 warm jacket
- + Underwear and socks
- + Swimwear

- + Towel
- + Toiletries
- + Hat and sunscreen
- + Basic medical kit (including plasters, aspirin etc)
- + Insect repellent
- + Conversion plug
- + Reusable water bottle
- + Snow gear



THAT'S IT!