

# Topdeck

## DELVE DEEP: JAPAN



TRIP CODE:

TJJTR4

## TOPDECKER, meet Asia (TD)

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.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Delve Deep



Nights



Download app



Meals

# Thanks for choosing to holiday with Topdeck

Ready for the time of your LIFE?

The countdown's on...

## ABOUT YOUR TRIP NOTES

These Trip Notes contain everything you need to know before your trip departs – from where to meet your Topdeck fam to what we suggest you bring.

Read them on the train, in the supermarket queue or on the loo – we don't mind, just look through them carefully so you know what to expect on your trip. We recommend you download this document so it's with you when you travel (and give a copy to your MVPs so they know what you're up to).

**IMPORTANT:** please refresh this doc as close to your departure as possible. This means you'll have the most up-to-date info available.

### INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

- Experience the Goma Ritual of consecrated fire at Fukagawa Fudo-do Temple
- Visit Meiji Shrine
- Walking tour of Tokyo's Harajuku and Shibuya districts with Trip Leader
- Train ticket to Takayama
- Visit a sake brewery
- Visit the morning riverside markets in Takayama
- Visit Takayama Jinya
- Visit the Hida folk village
- Visit the Hiroshima Memorial Peace Park and Museum
- Visit the Itsukushima Shrine on the island of Miyajima
- Visit the Fushimi Inari Shrine
- Visit the Nishiki food market
- Walking tour of the Gion district with Trip Leader
- Visit Kinkaku-ji Temple
- Visit the Arashiyama bamboo forest
- Orientation walk of Dotonbori Market with Trip Leader
- Group karaoke experience in Osaka

### YOUR TRIP WILL START

#### PICK UP:

Tokyo  
Japan

### YOUR TRIP WILL FINISH

#### DROP OFF:

Osaka  
Japan

## TRIP CURRENCIES

- Japan - JPY

# 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 at a local restaurant. Nihon e yokoso – welcome to Japan!

### MEALS:

- Dinner

## DAY 2 | TOKYO

Down your cup of matcha – we're off to check out the Goma Ritual of consecrated fire at Fukagawa Fudo-do Temple this morning. Your wishes could be part of this next-level experience. Ace! Then: it's time for the Meiji Shrine to SHINE. Tokyo's grandest Shinto shrine – take in all the spiritual vibes, make an offering and wander the blooming (or not) gardens. Important: you gotta cover that skin up when visiting this place – and any other religious site in Japan. 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 – it's all the crazy. Then: the afternoon's yours to wander the futuristic streets of Shibuya. And tonight? Get ready to party, Japanese-style on an optional tour of Izakaya nightlife. This is real culture in real time.

### MEALS:

- Breakfast

### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Experience the Goma Ritual of consecrated fire at Fukagawa Fudo-do Temple
- Visit Meiji Shrine
- Walking tour of Tokyo's Harajuku and Shibuya districts with Trip Leader

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Guided tour of Izakaya nightlife: prices available locally

## 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 over Cinderella? An optional trip to Tokyo Disneyland is calling. Book your tix in advance to high five alllll your fave characters. Prefer to spend your day breathing in the fresh mountain air? Join a day tour of Mount Fuji and Hakone. Outta-this-world scenery. Gobsmaacking beauty. A side of Japan you only see IRL. It's giving alllll the feels. 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: prices available locally (booking in advance recommended)
- Full day tour of Mount Fuji and Hakone: prices available locally

## DAY 4 | TOKYO – 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 arvo, sample some of the good stuff at a local sake brewery. And tonight, 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 a sake brewery



### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Hida beef dinner: prices available locally

## DAY 5 | TAKAYAMA

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. Tighten those Nike laces to explore Takayama Jinya – the last remaining government outpost from the time of the Samurai and Shoguns. Next up: a taste of traditional life with a visit to Hida Folk Village. And then? A free arvo to do whatever you want. Explore. It. All. The nooks and crannies. The narrow streets. The tranquil waters. Take your trip mates along for the ride. Tonight: dinner's on you. It's all about that beef – if you missed out last night, now's your chance. And it's better than any maccas. Trust us.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Visit the morning riverside markets in Takayama
- Visit Takayama Jinya
- Visit the Hida folk village

## DAY 6 | TAKAYAMA – HIROSHIMA

Hiroshima: we're coming for you. Make sure you grab a window seat for the real af views. That IRL feelin'? Ain't nothing like it. This afternoon, we'll make our way to the Memorial Peace Park and its museum. Here, we'll discover the tragic events of 6 August 1945 when the world's first nuclear bomb was dropped on the city. Later, 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 Hiroshima Memorial Peace Park and Museum

## DAY 7 | HIROSHIMA – MIYAJIMA – HIROSHIMA

All aboard the ferry to the island of Miyajima! First up, check out the incred Itsukushima Shrine. Then, we've got the whole afternoon to explore before settling in for sunset. The floating torii gate is pretty spectacular. Back in Hiroshima: use your free time wisely. Put those super-stretchy pants to the test and do as the locals do: inhale a steaming bowl of Onomichi ramen – chased with a glass of the local sake. When in Japan, right?



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Visit the Itsukushima Shrine on the island of Miyajima

## DAY 8 | HIROSHIMA – KYOTO

Another day of living your best life, let's get it! Today, 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. Getting hangry? Grab some lunch before we stop by the Nishiki food market. Drool = 100% guaranteed. Then get ready to say g'day to the geishas as we head to the Gion district. Afterwards: the evening's yours for exploring.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Visit the Fushimi Inari Shrine
- Visit the Nishiki food market
- Walking tour of the Gion district with Trip Leader

## DAY 9 | KYOTO

Rise n shine travel besties, it's time to see what Kyoto's got to offer. And we're delving in deep. First up: Kinkaku-ji. Alter ego: Temple of the Golden Pavilion. Zen vibes alllll day. Ready to feel like you're in an enchanted land? Arashiyama's gonna make your eyes sparkle. You've got some free time here, so make the most of it! Get lost in the bamboo forest. Cross Tokugetsukyo Bridge. See Tenryu-ji Temple and its lush garden. After breathing in fresh Japanese air and making those calves work wonders, bellies will be ready to rumbleee. Gather the gang and hit Pontocho. Atmospheric. Traditional. Bombastic-side-eye-exclusivity. This place is where REAL Kyoto foodies thrive.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Visit Kinkaku-ji Temple
- Visit the Arashiyama bamboo forest

## DAY 10 | KYOTO – 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. Let's keep that energy with our foodie optionals for the day. Opt for a ramen cooking class OR a ramen AND gyoza cooking class. Whatever you choose, the end product will have you scribbling down recipes like there's no tomorrow. Later, we've got a date with Dotonbori Market. Authentic street food that slaps? Sorted.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Orientation walk of Dotonbori Market with Trip Leader



### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Ramen and gyoza cooking class: prices available locally
- Ramen cooking class: prices available locally

## DAY 11 | OSAKA

Tuck into a traditional 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 (just make sure you book in advance). Foodie? Eat your way around the city with zero regrets. Culture-fiend? Hit Shitennoji Temple – one of the oldest in all of Japan. Tonight, we'll regroup and head to a local eatery for a send-off to remember. And later? It starts with a 'K' and ends with an 'E'. Nope, not kale. K-A-R-A-O-K-E time! This has been one hell of a trip.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Group karaoke experience in Osaka



### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Full day tour of Universal Studios: prices available locally (booking in advance recommended)

## DAY 12 | OSAKA

After breakfast it's sayonara to the Land of the Rising Sun and our newfound travel fam. Swap Snapchats and start planning that next adventure.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast

# OTHER INFORMATION

## TOPDECK APP

Feeling appy? Download the Topdeck app and get PUMPED for the adventure ahead. Best bit is: from 45 days before departure you'll be able to chat with your soon-to-be tripmates.

Plus, get your itinerary at your fingertips – so you know where you'll be going and what you'll be doing on each day of your trip. Nice!

Links:

Apple <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/topdeck/id994727866>

Android <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.FlexiTechSolutions.TopDeck&hl=en>



## YOUR SAFETY

### NIGHTS OUT

We love a good night out – experiencing the nightlife and entertainment places have to offer is a big part of travelling. But alongside the fun it's important to be aware of your surroundings and personal safety.

When you're out late, 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 so you can find your way back to your fellow Topdeckers if you become separated. Make sure you have your 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.

### DRUG USE

Topdeck has a strict zero-tolerance drug policy. Customers 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 immediately. 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 do you risk getting in trouble with the local police, but our Driver will also be held responsible if they are found on the Topdeck coach. Trust us, you don'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.

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 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 (fact!)

## **TRAVEL SINCE COVID-19**

Travel looks a bit different since COVID-19. That's why we've put some new procedures in place to help keep you safe on the road.

What remains the same? Your Topdeck trip will be run hygienically, responsibly, and with your safety at the forefront of everything we do. End of.

Here's the info: <https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/travel-safely>

# **RESPECT ON THE ROAD**

## **RESPECTING FELLOW TRAVELLERS**

Our trips are for everyone. We're a family – and we want every Topdecker to have an incredible time.

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

## **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 adventure AND 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 room 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!

# **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.



Head to our FAQ for more info: <https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/faqs-0>

Got more Qs? Chat with our Customer Service team: <https://www.topdeck.travel/about-us/contact>

## 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's 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. Check out our handy interactive map showing global visa requirements:

<https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/latest-border-restrictions>

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.

## TIPPING

Basically: it's not necessary.

Your Trip Leader and Driver don't expect tips, and they won't ask for any either. Meaning? More dollar to spend on optional activities (and a souvenir for your nan).

## 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!).

Off to Japan? Your luggage must be no bigger than 160cm in total (height x width x length). So maybe leave the hairdryer at home.

Psst: this is a packing list for Topdeck trips in general. Obv you'd look silly splashing around the Greek islands in a snowsuit.

- 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 warm jacket + 1 rainproof jacket

- Underwear and socks + swimwear
- Towel
- Toiletries
- Hat and sunscreen
- Basic medical kit (including plasters, aspirin etc)
- Adaptor plug
- Reusable water bottle
- Snow gear



**THAT'S IT!**