



**Self-Guided Tour
Classical Japan Tour**

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The Classical Japan Self Guided tour will take you from feudal castle of Himeji to the quiet old streets of Takayama and the rural village of Shirakawa-go before giving you plenty of time to wander the streets and alleyways of ancient capital of Kyoto.

Destinations:

Himeji - Himeji Castle is one of the

best original castles in Japan,

Takayama - Beautifully preserved classic town,

Shirakawa-go (day trip) - 300 year thatched roof farmhouses, and

Kyoto - Imperial Japan in a city founded in 794 AD with 17 World Heritage Sites,

This 7 day tour begins and ends in Japan.

The price is US\$ 1,995 per person, including all transportation between destinations, accommodations, 6 breakfasts and 1 evening meal at your *ryokan* (Japanese inn) in Takayama. This tour can also be combined with a tour of Kyoto, Nara or other sights in the Kansai Area.

I hope the above has peaked your interest in this tour. If you have any questions or wish to sign up for a tour please [Contact Us](#).

Itinerary Details:

Classical Japan Tour - Suggested Day by Day Itinerary

Day 1 – Himeji- Western Style Hotel - Western Style Room

- Arrive at Kansai International Airport
- Travel to Himeji City and visit Himeji Castle
- Stay in a city center hotel
- No Meals are included this day

After arriving in Japan you will be met by a member of Japan Roads staff and brought to Himeji. In Himeji you will have a chance to visit Himeji Castle which was founded in 1333 by Akamatsu Sadonori. The structure that you can see today was finished in 1581 though it has been restored from time to time over the years. It is one of the few remaining original castles in Japan and considered by many to be the most beautiful.



Dates

Open - Self-Guided Tour

Prices

US\$ 1,995 per guest (2 guest minimum)

Meals Included

Breakfasts: 6
Lunches: 0
Dinners: 1 (at your ryokan in Takayama)

Duration

6 nights, 7 days

Guidance

Detailed materials as well as support from our experts in Japan will be available for this self-guided tour. No tour leader is supplied.

Highlights

Himeji Castle, Takayama's Old Town, Gassho Zukuri farmhouses of Shirakawa-go and Classical Kyoto

Mode of Travel

Train ('Shinkansen' bullet train, limited express and local trains), streetcar, and on foot.

Group Size

Minimum of 2 guests

Age Restrictions

Participants should be at least 12 years old. Everyone younger than 20 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Day 2 – Takayama - Ryokan Lodging - Japanese Style Room

- Breakfast at your hotel in Himeji
- Traditional Dinner at your *Ryokan*
- Visit classical Japanese homes and museums

After breakfast at your hotel in Himeji you will head out to the old Takayama. During the Edo Period (1603-1867) Takayama thrived thanks to timber resources which attracted artisans and craftsmen. Many of the merchants homes survived and are now open to the public as museums and galleries. After a long day to touring you will be treated to a wonderful dinner at your *ryokan* (Japanese inn). Once you are full it is recommended that you go for a walk while the town is quite and peaceful.

Day 3 – Day Trip to Shirakawa-go - Stay in Takayama at the same *ryokan*

- Breakfast at your *ryokan*
- Take a bus to Shirakawa-go (about 90 minutes)
- Visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Shirakawa-go and wander amongst the *gassho-zukuri* (praying hands) thatched roof farmhouses.
- Return to Takayama



Shirakawa-go was cut off from the rest of Japan due to its remote location in the mountains. The steep thatched roofs distinctive of this area were designed to protect the homes from heavy snow. In the center of the home is a sunken hearth called an *irori* which was used to cook food and heat the house. Instead of a chimney the villages would put a large plank over the fire which would catch any rogue sparks and distributed smoke though out the house. The smoke is necessary for the roof as it would act as a bug repellent and waterproofing. Without the smoke from the hearth the roof would leak and be filled with bugs. Besides keeping snow off the home the steep roof also provided a second floor where the owner could raise silkworms as a cash crop for the artisan of Takayama.

Day 4, 5 and 6 – Kyoto - Western Style Hotel - Western Style Room

- Have Breakfast at your *ryokan* in Takayama
- Take a train from Takayama to Kyoto
- Wander the temples and alley ways of this old capital

The remaining days of your tour will be at the ancient imperial capital of Kyoto. Here you will have a chance to visit hundreds of temples, shrines, gardens, shops and neighborhoods. The beauty and history of Kyoto is so vast that it is impossible to see it all in one visit.

Note: If you want to visit Osaka, Nara, or Mt. Koya you will be at a good location to do so. A 7 day JR Rail Pass is included in the tour price but if you wish to extend your travels in Japan we can increase the duration of your pass to 14 days or 21 days. You will need to pay the difference in cost between a 7 day pass and a longer pass. If you are interested in this option, we recommend you take the tour first and do other sightseeing afterwards.



Tour Accommodation:

Throughout the tour, you will have the chance to stay at Japanese style inns, or *ryokans*, as well as modern, Western style hotels. By choosing the best accommodations possible and offering both traditional and modern lodging experiences, Japan Roads aims to give you a deeper insight into life in Japan and make you as comfortable as possible. In particular, the traditional accommodations will allow you to have close personal contact with the Japanese owners and staff of these places, thus deepening your cultural experiences.

Sample Accommodations (may vary but will be of similar quality)

- Himeji: Himeji Castle Hotel (Western Hotel)
- Takayama: Tanabe Ryokan (Japanese Ryokan)
- Kyoto: Monterey Kyoto (Western Hotel)



Cuisine:

Food is an important part of any vacation and helps the traveler get a better understanding of the area they are visiting. This is definitely true of Japan so we have included a dinner at your *ryokan* in Takayama. This will give you a wonderful chance to try something that you might not have a chance to if you only stayed at Western style hotels.

About Self-Guided Tours:

The tour gives offers you the materials necessary to get to your destinations and see the most interesting sights available, while giving you the flexibility and freedom to enjoy things at your own pace. We provide you with the train tickets, lodging reservations made in advance, rail and walking maps, general cultural and etiquette tips, a suggest itinerary, explanations and history of the places you will visit, as well as other information you may need. Furthermore, cell phones provided for the duration of the tour will enable you to contact us if you need assistance.

This 7 day 6 night tour begins and ends in Japan.

Tour schedules are subject to change. If any changes should be made it will be done in the best interest of the travelers.
Japan Roads will at all times aim to offer you the most interesting tour possible.

Japan Roads

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