



Private Tour Cultural Diversity Tour - Kansai

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Japan is a land of vast cultural diversity with ultra-modern cities, sparsely populated fishing islands, Buddhist mountain sanctuaries, feudal castles and cultural arts. Our Japan Roads Cultural Diversity Tour of the Kansai area will show you and help you experience Japan unlike any other tour. We will also show it to you on your schedule with only your friends and family.

Destinations:

- Osaka** - Modern Japan with a long history in commerce
- Himeji** - Feudal Japan and UNESCO World Heritage Site of Himeji Castle
- Eijima Island** - Rural Japan on an island fishing village
- Mt Koya** - Spiritual Japan on a holy Buddhist mountain also a World Heritage Site
- Kameoka** - Rural Japan at a home-stay in a small town
- Kyoto** - Imperial Japan in a city founded in 794 AD with 17 World Heritage Sites

Cultural Diversity Tour - Kansai is a 10 day, slow-paced, in-depth tour, designed to give you the opportunity to interact with the Japanese people and to discover the many cultural facets of the area: spiritual, traditional, feudal, historical and social.

Tour Includes: all transportation between destinations, accommodations, tour leader, cultural liaisons in Himeji and Kameoka, 9 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 4 evening meals.

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 your local travel agent.



Dates

Open - Private Tour
Limited to 3 tours per month

Prices 2009

US\$ 4,900 per guest Tour prices include all accommodations, meals as listed below, transportation to and from destinations and while with your international liaison, travel leader, and cultural liaisons in Himeji and Kameoka.

Meals Included

Breakfasts: 9
Lunches: 2
Dinners: 4

Duration

10 days

Guidance

Tour Leader through out the tour
Cultural Liaison in Himeji and Kameoka

Highlights

Overnight stay at a mountain temple, Himeji Castle, home-stay with a Japanese family, Kyoto, close contact with the Japanese throughout the entire tour.

Modes of Travel

Train ('Shinkansen' bullet train and local trains), bus, boat and on foot.

Group Size

Minimum of 2 guests

Age Restrictions

Participants must be at least 12 years old. Anyone under 20 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Guest Comments

"It was great for me as a person who had never been to Japan to have so much packed into a few days. I really felt that I got a feel for the country and its culture and people. It was great also to feel that one was in the hands of such well informed and generous guides.

The way in which Fukiko and Takeo looked after us was better than we could ever have expected. they went out of their way to make sure that we enjoyed every element of the tour whilst in their company. They were well informed and sensitive and made the holiday what it was. One particular personal kindness shown to me by Takeo will always stay in my mind. We could not have asked for better."

-- Sakai and Davies, Cardiff, UK

Itinerary Details:

Day 1 – Osaka - **Western Hotel** - Western Style Room

- Arrive at Kansai International Airport where someone will pick you up
- No Meals are included on this day (Western Style Room)

Osaka is the largest city in the Kansai area. A large and fast-paced metropolis, it is best known as a commercial center. Osaka has a rich mercantile history, which still translates today in the Osaka dialect, where people greet each other with "Mokarimaka?" (Are you making any money?)

Day 2 – Mt. Koya - **"Shukubo - Temple Lodging "** - Japanese Style Room

- Dinner at the Temple
- Breakfast at the temple on the following morning

After the fast city life, Mt. Koya is the perfect place to unwind. Mt. Koya is a holy temple complex situated on a mountain surrounded by beautiful nature. It is the center for Shingon Buddhism and one of the most important spiritual centers in Japan, with over one hundred temples located on top of the mountain. Your tour leader will take you to the mountain, after which you are free to explore the area yourself.

Accommodation is provided in a shukubo, one of the temple lodgings on Mt. Koya. There, you will be able to experience the life of a monk in Japan. You will receive shojin-ryori, a delicious vegetarian meal for dinner and the next day at dawn you are invited to join in the morning prayers. Breakfast is also shojin-ryori and is included.

Day 3 and 4 – Himeji - **Western Hotel** - Western Style Room

- Fully guided by one of our English speaking Cultural Liaisons
- Breakfasts both mornings at your hotel
- You will take a boat ride to Ieshima Island where you will have a fresh fish lunch (weather permitting)

The city of Himeji and its surroundings will show you yet another side of the rich Japanese culture and history: an insight into the Japanese feudal age. Himeji is mostly famous for its castle. A UNESCO world heritage site since 1993, the 'White Heron castle', as it is called, is truly one of the best preserved feudal castles in Japan and certainly one of the main sights in the Kansai area. However famous the castle may be, Himeji offers a lot of other treasures, less explored by the masses. The temple complex Mt. Shosha, one of the locations for the film 'The Last Samurai' is one of them.

Another known, but less explored spot in the Himeji area is Ieshima Island, off the coast of Himeji. Sparsely populated, this relaxing island offers you a real taste of island life in Japan: friendly locals and great seafood.

Whether you visit the castle area, Mt. Shosha or the Himeji seaside area, the region offers numerous interesting locations that our cultural liaison will be happy to share with you.

Day 5 – Kameoka - **Home Stay Lodging** - Japanese or Western Style Room

- Home Cooked Dinner

Day 6 – Kameoka - **Home Stay Lodging** - Japanese or Western Style Room

- Fully guided by one of our English speaking Cultural Liaisons
- Home Cooked Breakfast
- Lunch at a Local Restaurant
- Home Cooked Dinner
- Home Cooked Breakfast served each morning

In Kameoka, a picturesque town near Kyoto, you can experience a Japanese home-stay in the home of our cultural liaison. With our liaison as your personal guide, the possibilities are endless: you can explore Kameoka by bicycle or on foot and also learn about Japanese cooking, flower arrangement, pottery, and much, much more. An excellent hostess, guide and cook, our liaison will immediately make you feel at home and will make this home-stay a truly unforgettable experience for you.

Day 7 – Kyoto - **Japanese Ryokan** - Japanese Style Room

- Dinner at your Ryokan
- Free time to Explore and Discover on your own

Day 8 and 9 – Kyoto - **Japanese Ryokan** - Japanese Style Room

- Breakfast at your Ryokan
- Free time to Explore and Discover on your own and at your pace



Formerly the imperial capital of Japan, it is in this city that the traditional Japanese 'high arts' flourished. Tea ceremony, calligraphy, poetry, philosophy and religion, Kyoto is the number one place to visit. Numerous temples and shrines are located throughout the city and walking along canals, next to traditional wooden houses and through the small streets really gives you an idea of the ancient Japanese imperial culture. Kyoto is not just about the high arts however. The city is also famous for its crafts: textile, kimono and pottery.

Depending on your interests, your tour leader will provide you with ample information on places to see and visit, allowing you to get the best out of your visit to Kyoto. Please let us know in advance what your interests are to help us best plan.

Day 10 – Kyoto and Home

- Breakfast at your Ryokan.
- Leave for the airport.

Tour Accommodation:

Throughout the tour you will have a chance to stay at a Buddhist temple, a traditional Japanese inn (ryokan), a typical Japanese home and Western style hotels. By carefully choosing such a variety of accommodations, Japan Roads aims to give you a deeper insight into life in Japan. The intimate accommodation will allow you to have close personal contact with the owners and staff of these places.

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

- Osaka: Swiss Hotel Nankai (Western Hotel)
- Himeji: Himeji Castle Hotel (Western Hotel)
- Mt Koya: Shojoshin-in (Japanese Temple Lodging)
- Kameoka: Home-Stay Lodging
- Kyoto: Tamahan (Japanese Ryokan)



Cuisine:

To make sure you get the most of your Japan experience, Japan Road tours offer a wide variety of Japanese cuisine to enjoy. You will have the chance to eat local specialties in small Japanese diners and sample some of the more 'refined' Japanese cuisine. During your stay on Mount Koya, you will receive 'shojin-ryori', a vegetarian Buddhist meal and in Himeji, you will be served a full course seafood meal. In Kyoto, you will have the opportunity to try 'kyoryori', a full-course traditional Kyoto-style dinner consisting of a number of skillfully prepared seasonal dishes. At the Japanese home in Kameoka, your host will prepare you two home-cooked Japanese-style breakfasts and dinners. You will have plenty of opportunity to talk to your hostess about the food and how it is prepared.



Tour Guidance:

The tour combines the comfort of an organized tour while still offering you the freedom to explore by yourself. In Himeji and Kameoka, you will be escorted by our local Japanese liaisons. Fluent English-speakers and experts in their field, they will be glad to give you an insight into the local history and people. On Mount Koya and in Kyoto you will be assisted by a tour leader who will assist you with travel details like hotel check-ins and train schedules and will generally make sure that your trip goes smoothly.



This 10 day 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
Rediscover Travel Inc. (dba Japan Roads) 3160 Gateway Ledge, Commerce Twp, Michigan, USA 48390
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