



Travel with the World Affairs Council of Charlotte
*Discover the Land of the Rising Sun:
From the Sakura to the Samurai*



October 12 – October 23, 2018 (12 days)

***Optional 3-day extension to Osaka and Hiroshima available**

Please contact Jessie Hermann at the World Affairs Council of Charlotte via [email](#) or call 704-687-7762 if you have questions or need more information about the trip.

Prices for the trip and optional extension can be found on Page 15. A deposit of \$500 is due immediately to secure your seat for the trip, with full payment due by August 15th.

Day 1: Friday, October 12th, 2018

Charlotte/Newark/Tokyo

Depart from Charlotte-Douglas International Airport at 7:30 a.m. via United Airlines to Newark. Travelers will arrive in Newark at 9:24 a.m., where they will connect to an 11:00 a.m. United Airlines flight nonstop to Tokyo Narita Airport. Travelers will arrive at Tokyo Narita Airport at 1:55 p.m. Time-appropriate meals and in-flight services will be provided.

Day 2: Saturday, October 13th, 2018

Tokyo

Arrive in Tokyo at 1:55 p.m.

Welcome to Japan!

After clearing customs, proceed with your tour manager by private motor coach to your beautiful hotel (three nights). Travelers will check into the historically renowned Imperial Hotel.

The five-star [Imperial Hotel](#) in Tokyo was founded in 1890 at the direction of the Imperial Palace. Since its creation, The Imperial Hotel has hosted dignitaries, prominent business leaders, and celebrities in glamorous fashion. Redesigned by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1923, the hotel offers an unforgettable heritage of extraordinary style.

Take the afternoon to re-charge after the trans-Pacific flight, and enjoy the evening at leisure.

Overnight at Imperial Hotel (five-star).



[Ginza, Tokyo](#)



[Imperial Hotel, Tokyo](#)

Day 3: Sunday, October 14th, 2018

Tokyo

Complimentary breakfast included.

This morning after breakfast in the hotel, the group will proceed to a full day of guided sightseeing in [Tokyo](#).

Tokyo, which translates to “Eastern Capital” is the capital city of Japan and the most populous greater metropolitan area in the world. It harbors both the seat of the Japanese Government and the home of the Emperor. Previously known as Edo, it was renamed Tokyo after Emperor Meiji moved his seat from Kyoto, in 1868.



[Imperial Palace, Tokyo](#)

First the group will visit [the Imperial Palace](#) and East Garden. The Imperial Palace is the primary residence of the Emperor of Japan and his family. A large area, the complex contains the private residences of the Imperial Family, as well as museums, archives, and administrative offices. Some form of castle has been present on the grounds since 1457, and the current buildings reflect an incredible blend of history and architecture. Guests should note that because this is the residence of the Imperial Family, no buildings may be entered.



[East Garden of the Imperial Palace](#)

The accompanying gardens are works of art in themselves. Crafted from part of the original castle compound, the gardens allow you to get up-close views of the massive stones used to build the castle walls. The number of visitors at any given time is limited, so an enveloping sense of calm will always be present.



[Imperial Palace, Tokyo](#)

After a tour of the Imperial Palace and East Garden, the group will continue to the Asakusa District and the Senso-ji.

The Asakusa District is the center of Tokyo's *shitamachi*, or "low city". Historically, Asakusa was Tokyo's leading entertainment district. During the air raids of WWII, large parts of Asakusa were destroyed, including the entertainment venues. Regardless, Asakusa thrives and is home to the Nakamise, a shopping district that provides traditional wares and local cuisine and focuses on preserving the atmospheres of past decades



[Asakusa District, Tokyo](#)

The [Senso-ji](#), located in Asakusa, is Tokyo's oldest temple. A Buddhist temple, the Senso-ji is dedicated to Kannon Bosatsu, the Bodhisattva of compassion. It is the most widely visited spiritual site in the world with over 30 million visitors annually.

Independent lunch.

After lunch, the group will enjoy a traditional Japanese Tea Ceremony and visit the Tokyo Tower for a beautiful panoramic view of the sprawling metropolitan area.



[Senso-ji, Asakusa District](#)

In Japan, the Japanese tea ceremony, or the "Way of Tea" is a cultural activity that includes the ceremonial preparation and presentation of matcha tea. The tea itself is called *chanoyu*, or *chado*, while the performance is called *otemae*. Influenced by Zen Buddhism, the tea ceremony has developed over the course of centuries and is considered one of the three classical Japanese arts

of refinement. In some cases, leaf tea will be used. In these instances, the tea is called *sencha* and the performance *senchado*.

The first documented evidence of tea dates to 815, when Buddhist monk Eichu brought it when he returned from China. Now, many schools of Japanese tea ceremony are still active. The scholar Okakura Kakuzo published in 1906:

“It (Teaism) insulates purity and harmony, the mystery of mutual charity, the romanticism of the social order. It is essentially a worship of the Imperfect, as it is a tender attempt to accomplish something possible in this impossible thing we know as life.”

The [Tokyo Tower](#) is the second-tallest structure in Japan and was inspired by the Eiffel Tower. It is a communications and observation tower that also has two observation decks. The tallest observation deck, at 819 feet, allows for spectacular views of the city of Tokyo.

After a visit to the Tower, guests will return to the hotel and join the group for a welcome dinner in a local restaurant.

Dinner included.

Overnight at the Imperial Hotel (five-star).



[The Tokyo Tower](#)



[Akasaka Palace](#)



[National Museum of Western Art](#)

Early this morning, guests can choose to partake in an optional tour of the [Tsukiji Fish Market](#), the oldest (and largest) fish market in the world. After the visit, the group will return to the hotel for breakfast.

Complimentary breakfast included.

After breakfast, the group will depart on a half-day guided sightseeing tour that will include the [Meiji Jingu Shrine](#).

The Meiji Jingu Shrine is dedicated to the deified spirits of Emperor Meiji and his consort, Empress Shoken. Emperor Meiji was the first Emperor of modern Japan, leading Japan during a time of modernization and westernization. Under Emperor Meiji, Japan joined the world's major powers.

The accompanying Yoyogi Park and the Shrine encapsulate a large forested area in the middle of the dense, bustling city, offering a relaxing refuge from the hyperstimulating environment of Tokyo. Completed in 1920, eight years after the death of Emperor Meiji and six years after the death of Empress Shoken, the shrine was destroyed during WWII, but rebuilt shortly after.

After the tour of the Meiji Jingu Shrine, the group will visit the Omotesando and Harajyuku areas. Omotesando and Harajyuku are full of tree-lined avenues with high-end shopping, which includes a variety of flagship fashion stores. The area is also home to a variety of Japanese cuisine and independent cafes. Here, the group will enjoy an independent lunch.

Independent lunch.

After lunch, the group will return to the hotel for an afternoon and evening to explore Tokyo freely.

Independent dinner.

Overnight at the Imperial Hotel (five-star).



[Meiji Jingu Shrine](#)



[Yoyogi Park](#)



[Omotesando](#)



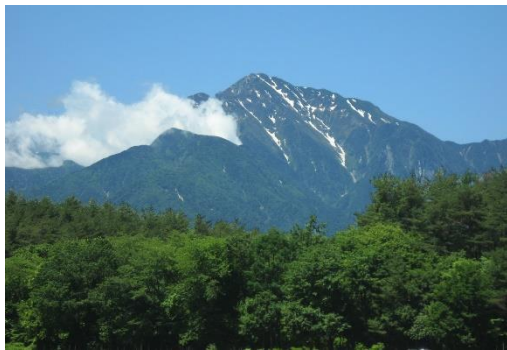
[Harajyuku](#)



[Hakone](#)

Complimentary breakfast included.

After breakfast, travelers will depart by private motor coach for a visit to Hakone. Located at the base of Mount Fuji, [Hakone](#) is part of the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park. Home to the breathtaking Lake Ashinoko and with hot springs and natural beauty abounding, a visit to Japan would be incomplete without a stay in Hakone.



[Mt. Komagatake](#)

Today, the group will visit the Mt. Komagatake Ropeway, where you can enjoy magnificent scenery from pagodas over Mount Hakone, with unforgettable views of the National Park and its various volcanic plumes. Mt. Komagatake is a 1257-meter high lava dome, created by a volcanic eruption that shook the Hakone region over 40,000 years ago. You will be able to observe all of these peaks and take in the sacred dignity of their age and beauty.

Lunch included.

After lunch, the group will enjoy a cruise on the crystal waters of [Lake Ashi](#), accompanied by panoramic views of the spectacular Mount Fuji and the Hakone mountain range.



[Mt. Fuji](#)

In the late afternoon after the cruise, the group will proceed to a Japanese Ryokan for an overnight stay. These traditional Japanese inns, some dating as far back as the 8th century, reflect traditional Japanese culture. Most have tatami flooring, sliding doors, porches or balconies, and hot spring baths. Due to the volcanic activity in the area, there are an abundance of *onsen* in Hakone.

Dinner included tonight in the Ryokan.

Overnight at the [Hakone Yunoshana](#).



[Japanese Ryokan](#)

Complimentary breakfast included.

After breakfast at the Ryokan, the group will leave Hakone to explore [Mt. Fuji](#), a dormant volcano and the highest mountain in Japan. The motor coach will climb to the 5th station of the mountain, a location that provides exquisite views of the surrounding landscape.

Lunch included.

The group will have lunch together at a local restaurant before continuing to the charming town of Takayama, nestled in the Japanese Alps. Travelers will also stop at the [Kubota Itchiku Museum](#), dedicated to the artist who revived the lost art of Tsujigahna silk dyeing, used traditionally to decorate elaborate kimono.

The group will travel to check into their hotel for the night, Hotel Associa Takayama.

[Hida Takayama](#), located about 4 hours from Tokyo by train, is a popular sightseeing spot among locals and foreigners alike; this is a place where one can enjoy the atmosphere of a traditional Japanese townscape. At Shirakawa-go, about 1 hour from Takayama by car, one can also explore Japanese history in beholding the charming, old-style houses which are registered as World Cultural and Natural Heritage sites.

Dinner included.

Overnight at the Hotel Associa Takayama.



[Mt. Fuji](#)



[Takayama](#)



[Kubota Itchiku Museum](#)

Complimentary breakfast included.

This morning, luggage will need to be brought to the front desk to be sent to the Kyoto Hotel.

First, the group will stop at Takayama Jin'ya, a government building from the Edo Period which functioned as a government office until 1969. The building, which was constructed in 1692, is the last of sixty original Jinya that remain throughout the country. Every morning a market is held in front of the entrance to Takayama Jinya, allowing visitors to indulge in local art wares before getting a glimpse into Japan's pre-Western history.

After visiting the Takayama Jin'ya, you will see one of Japan's UNESCO World Heritage Sites, [Shirakawa-go and Gokayama's](#) historic villages.

Located in a mountainous region that was isolated for centuries, these villages subsisted on the cultivation of mulberry trees and the rearing of silkworms. Despite economic upheavals, the villages of Ogimachi, Ainokura and Suganuma represent the outstanding ability of a traditional way of life to adapt seamlessly to the environment and people's social/economic circumstances.

Lunch included.

After lunch, travelers will return to Takayama and take the bullet train to Kyoto. Guests will take in the gorgeous Japanese countryside aboard the singular Japanese *Shinkansen*. Running at speeds of up to 200 miles per hour, the train is known for punctuality, comfort, and safety.

The group will then check in to the [Four Seasons Hotel Kyoto](#), a brand-new hotel with an 800-year-old *ikeniwa* (pond garden) at its heart. Intimate and contemporary, Four Seasons Hotel Kyoto is set in the scenic district of temples.

Independent dinner.

Overnight at the Four Seasons Hotel Kyoto (five-star).



[Takayama Jin'ya](#)



[Shirakawa-go](#)



[Bullet Train \(Shinkansen\)](#)

Complimentary breakfast included.

After breakfast at the hotel, guests will begin touring this awe-inspiring city. [Kyoto](#) served as Japan's capital and the emperor's residence from 794 until 1868. Over the centuries, Kyoto has been destroyed many times over, but due to its exceptional historic value, the city was dropped from the list of target cities for the atomic bomb and escaped destruction during World War II. Countless temples, shrines and other historically priceless structures survive in the city today.

The tour will commence with a visit to one of Kyoto's most sublime temples, [Kiyomizu-dera](#), a Buddhist temple in East Kyoto. Over 1200 years have passed since the foundation was laid for Kiyomizu-dera Temple. Halfway up Mt. Otowa (a peak within Kyoto's Higashiyama mountain range) stands the temple, to which large numbers of visitors come to pay their respects to Kannon, a deity of great mercy and compassion.

Independent lunch.

After getting a taste of Kyoto's culinary delights at an independent lunch, guests will continue with a stroll through the several centuries-old [Nishiki Market](#), known to locals as "Kyoto's pantry."

The rest of the afternoon will be yours to explore Kyoto at leisure.

Dinner included at local restaurant.

Overnight at Four Seasons Hotel Kyoto (five-star).



[Kiyomizu-dera Shrine](#)



[Nishiki Market](#)



[Four Seasons Hotel Kyoto](#)

Complimentary breakfast included.

After breakfast in the hotel, a full day of touring this enchanting city awaits.

The group will savor the unique [Ryoanji Temple](#), the site of Japan's most famous rock garden, attracting hundreds of visitors every day. Originally an aristocrat's villa during the Heian Period, the site was converted into a Zen temple in 1450 and belongs to the Myoshinji school of the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism, whose head temple stands just a kilometer to the south. The temple grounds include a sprawling park area with a pond and walking trails.

Next, the group will be treated to a rickshaw ride through the otherworldly [Sagano Bamboo Grove](#), one of the most photographed sites in Kyoto. Prepare to be transported to a realm of fantasy and breathtaking beauty in the shade of towering stalks of bamboo.

Not far from the Sagano Bamboo Grove is the Tenryuji Temple, the most notable of [Kyoto's five great Zen temples](#). Although the temple itself has been built and rebuilt through the ages due to wars and fires, Tenryuji's garden has survived the centuries in its original form. Created by the famous garden designer Muso Soseki, who also designed the gardens of Kokedera and other important temples, the beautiful landscape garden features a central pond surrounded by rocks, pine trees and the lush Arashiyama mountains. Tenryuji is now officially classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Finally, the group will marvel at Kyoto's most iconic site, the stunning [Golden Pavilion](#), or Kinkakuji in Japanese. Like Tenryuji, Kinkakuji is a Zen temple, and it derives its name from the gold leaf that coats the structure's top two floors. Overlooking a large pond, the Golden Pavilion is truly a heavenly site to behold.

Lunch included.



[Ryoanji Temple](#)



[Sagano Bamboo Grove](#)



[Tenryuji Temple](#)

After a day of exploration, travelers will return to the hotel in the late afternoon and will be free to enjoy Kyoto as they please.

Independent dinner.

Overnight at Four Seasons Hotel Kyoto (five-star).



[Golden Pavilion](#)

Day 10: Sunday, October 21st, 2018

Kyoto/Nara/Osaka

Complimentary breakfast included

After breakfast, the group will travel to the ancient city of [Nara](#). Formerly known as Heijo, Nara was designated as Japan's first permanent capital in 710. Thanks to its long history, the city harbors a rich cultural heritage, including some of the country's most renowned temples, and the sprawling Nara Park, the famous home of over 1,200 wild Sika deer.



[Historic Nara](#)

The group will also visit the [Todaiji Temple](#) which houses the world's largest bronze Buddha and Kasuga Taisha Shrine, a Shinto Shrine first built in 768.

Time for an independent lunch in Nara before proceeding to your hotel in Osaka for two nights.

Independent lunch.

Enjoy an evening of leisure to explore Osaka independently.

Independent dinner.

Overnight at Hotel Ritz Carlton Osaka (five-star).



[Todaiji Temple](#)

Complimentary breakfast included

If you are participating in the optional extension, bring your luggage to the front desk to be transported to the hotel in Hiroshima. Keep an overnight bag for tonight in Osaka.

The group will first explore the magnificent [Osaka Castle](#), one of Japan's most beloved landmarks. The Castle was originally intended to stand as the center of a newly unified Japan, under Toyotomi rule in 1583. Having been destroyed and rebuilt numerous times, this resilient structure has survived air and lightning strikes, and embodies the unbreakable spirit of Osaka.

The tour will continue in the Dotonbori District, Osaka's bright and bustling hub of shopping and entertainment. Known as the heart of Osaka's night life, the area is absolutely full of opportunities for a good time. Then, it's time to visit the [Kuromon Market](#) (also called "Osaka's Kitchen"); with street food samples and establishments serving Japanese staples.

Independent lunch.

After lunch, sight-seeing will commence at the astonishing Umeda Sky Building. This one-of-a-kind structure is known for its observatory in the form of two thin bridges that connect the main towers. Above the bridges, the roof is built in a donut shape, providing an unobstructed 360 degree view of the city. Viewers are also able to feel the wind directly, which can be powerful from atop this 170-meter-tall building.

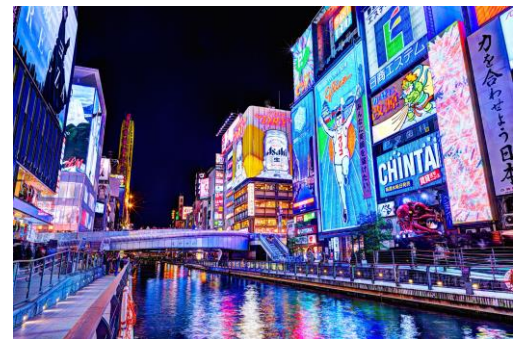
Finally, to close out this once-in-a-lifetime journey, the group will be presented with a festive and heartfelt farewell dinner at a local Osaka restaurant. If this is your final night, take this time to fully absorb all that your unique experience has offered you, and enjoy the company of peers that you will never forget.

Farewell dinner at local hotel.

Overnight at Hotel Ritz Carlton Osaka (five-star).



[Osaka Castle](#)



[Dotonbori District Center](#)



[Kuromon Market](#)



[Umeda Sky Building](#)

Osaka/San Francisco/Washington/Charlotte:

Complimentary breakfast included.

Use your final hours in Japan to freely explore Osaka.

At 1PM, the group will be transported to the beautiful [Kansai Airport](#), which is located on its own manmade island. The United flight from Kansai will depart at 4:50 PM, and will fly nonstop until arrival in San Francisco.



[Kansai Airport](#)

Once in San Francisco, clear U.S. Customs/Immigration and connect to the nonstop United flight to Washington Dulles, departing at 12:50 PM. This flight will land at 8:59 PM. Upon arrival at Washington Dulles, connect to your United flight to Charlotte, departing at 10:00 PM and landing at 11:24 PM.

Okaerinasai! Welcome home!

***Osaka/Hiroshima: Optional Extension**

Complimentary breakfast included.

Those who have chosen the extension will be transported to Shin-Osaka Station for their bullet train 2 hour ride to Hiroshima.

Once in Hiroshima, the group will start by tasting a beloved Japanese savory pancake, Okonomiyaki.



[Okonomiyaki](#)

Lunch included.

During the afternoon, the visit will continue at [Peace Memorial Museum and Park](#), a poignant and touching tribute to Hiroshima itself as the first city in the world to fall victim to the atrocities of nuclear warfare. The Memorial was built adjacent to the iconic [Genbaku Dome](#), which was the only structure left standing in the area following the atomic bomb explosion on August 6, 1945. This resonant and peaceful space was built at a site of absolute chaos, and serves as a reminder of the power we hold over one another.



[Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and Park](#)

Following the visit to the Peace Memorial, it will be time to continue on to the hotel, where your luggage will be waiting for you. Then, the group will go to dinner together.

Dinner included.

Overnight at Grand Prince Hiroshima.



[Genbaku Dome](#)

Day 13: Wednesday, October 24th, 2018

Hiroshima/Miyajima

Complimentary breakfast included

This morning, travel by motor coach to visit iconic [Miyajimaguchi](#), long regarded as an Island of Gods. Here, we will visit the Itsukushima Shrine, a centuries old torii gate built over water and one of Japan's most recognizable landmarks.

There will be time to explore the island and enjoy an independent lunch before a ride on the Miyajima Ropeway, which will transport the group by gondola to the top of [Mount Misen](#). Wild deer and moneys can often be spotted during this trip to the summit.

At 500 meters above sea level, this panoramic view afford spectacular views of the Seto Inland Sea. It is said that Buddhism was first practiced on Mount Misen by Kobo Daishi, the founder of the Shingon sect- you will find many religious structures and Buddhist temples on the mountain.

“Do not seek to follow in the footsteps of the men of old; seek what they sought.” –Kobo Daishi

Later in the afternoon, we will return to Hiroshima and enjoy an independent evening exploring the city.

Overnight at Grand Prince Hiroshima.



[Itsukushima Shrine](#)



[Miyajima Ropeway](#)

Day 14: Thursday, October 25th, 2018

Hiroshima/Osaka/San Francisco/Washington/Charlotte

Complimentary breakfast included

After breakfast, the group will drive to [Kansai Airport](#) to board a nonstop United flight to San Francisco. From there, the group will depart to Washington D.C. before arriving in Charlotte at 11:24 PM.

Okaerinasai! Welcome Home!



[Charlotte, NC skyline](#)

PRICE PER PERSON BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY

*Single occupancy rate available for an additional \$2,505

Min. 15 Travelers

\$7,712

Min. 20 Travelers

\$7,210

Min. 25 Travelers

\$6,705

AIR TRAVEL:

Deadline to secure discounted United Airlines tickets through Knight Travel is July 31st

You may also book air travel independently

\$1,415 (plus tax and surcharge of \$285)

HIROSHIMA EXTENSION - PRICE PER PERSON BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY

*Single occupancy rate available for an additional \$220

15 Travelers

\$1,325

20 Travelers

\$1,185

Good news: the US dollar is strengthening against the Japanese Yen- 0.68% in the past week, 1.09% in the past month and 4.15% in the past 3 months. Economists predict that this trend will continue into the fall: this increases your purchasing power, which discounts your cost in Japan.

Price includes top level hotels, all breakfasts, 5 lunches, 7 dinners, local transportation, and a highly qualified tour manager with dedicated local guides. Itinerary is subject to change as WACC secures meetings with US diplomats in Japan, as well as with local political, cultural, and business leaders.

Travelers must be members of good standing with the World Affairs Council of Charlotte. If you are not a member, please contact jessie.hermann@worldaffairscharlotte.org or call 704-687-7757. Individual membership starts at \$50 and is a tax-deductible donation.

- **A deposit of \$500 is due by July 31st to secure your seat for the trip.**
- **Full payment is due by August 15th, 2018.**
- If you are traveling alone but would like a roommate, please let us know as soon as possible and we will work on matching you with another traveler.
- Business or First Class air travel is available. Please contact Jeff Knight (jknight111@hotmail.com) as soon as possible if you are interested in an upgrade.
- Air/government taxes and fuel surcharges will be billed at prevailing rate at the time of billing.
- Please note that a 3% processing charge will be added to your payment if you choose to pay by credit card due to travel agency requirement. No additional charge if you pay by check.
- Payment installments are available for this trip. If you are interested in this option, please contact lstambuk@worldaffairscharlotte.org.