JAPAN
Sakura Cherry Blossoms
March 22 - April 5, 2018
15 Days • 27 Meals
Escorted by Gerry Peddle
Japan, long the economic powerhouse of Asia, is for many outsiders a complete mystery. Seen as the dominant force in electronics, automobiles and heavy industry, we know relatively little of its history, culture, architecture and arts. Images of ancient temples and the Buddha are often overshadowed. Of course, Japan is much more; it is alpine villages tucked away in mountain regions that appear untouched by the modern world; it is magnificent alpine and pastoral scenery and it is relics of an imperial and feudal past, retained for all to see.

Join us next spring as we explore this land during Sakura, the most popular season of the cherry blossoms when the fruit trees burst forth in glorious colour. Spring comes early in Japan and typically the millions of trees are bursting with new life during this two week period (of course this all depends on nature).

We shall also discover the many worlds of Japan from bustling cities like Tokyo and Kyoto to mountain retreats like Hakone, Takayama and Suwa. Discover the historic and religious relics of Kyoto, Japan’s Imperial capital for almost 1,000 years, as well as the temples of Nara. Enjoy the timeless traditions of a ryokan (country inn) and experience the delights of several Japanese gardens.

Our journey will be by private coach and also by rail, a truly wonderful way in which to explore this land.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Komagatake Ropeway with scenic views of Hakone and surrounding area
- Step into the past at the mountain village of Shirakawago, a World Heritage Site
- Experience Japan during the lovely Sakura season when the cherry blossoms are in full bloom
- Travel through the mountainous interior of Japan where life seems unchanged from centuries past
- Enjoy a relaxing Japanese night in a traditional Ryokan
- Visit one of Japan’s largest and most famous gardens: Kenroku-en Garden (The Garden of Six Qualities)
- Enjoy a tea ceremony at Matsuri-no-Mori Museum
- Visit Hiroshima and nearby Miyajima Island
- Visit Himeji Castle, Kyoto’s Nijo Castle and Nara plus other UNESCO World Cultural Heritage sites
- Enjoy Japan’s extensive and very efficient rail system, including rides on bullet trains
- Visit the Golden Pavilion (Kinkaku-ji Temple) in Kyoto

INCLUSIVE FEATURES

- Return economy class airfare with Air Canada
- First class hotels as indicated or similar, including 3 nights in central Tokyo, 1 night in Suwa in a traditional ryokan (Japanese Country Inn), 2 nights in historic Takayama, 1 night by the Sea of Japan in Kanazawa, 2 nights in Hiroshima and 4 nights in historic Kyoto with a day trip to Nara
- 27 meals included as noted in the itinerary (B - 13 Breakfasts, L - 6 Lunches, D - 8 Dinners) featuring a number of traditional Japanese dishes
- Transfers and intercity transportation by private coach and rail service, as indicated
- Services of your tour escort plus our professional Japanese tour guide and local guides
- All surcharges, taxes and fees for included services
- Airport transfers in Canada or equivalent value with purchase of group airfare

TOUR ESCORT

We are most pleased to have the Archdeacon Gerry Peddle escorting this journey to Japan. While Gerry is now retired, he was most recently the National Director of the Pastoral Outreach Program, providing care to Veterans. He previously served in Canada’s military for 28 years until he retired as the Chaplain General in 1999. During that time he travelled extensively in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and throughout North America. Since retiring, he has been escorting groups for us to a variety of destinations, including several journeys to northern France. We are sure his background and extensive travel experience will reward all who join him on this fascinating journey.
March 22, Thursday  
**Depart Canada / Tokyo**
Tour members from across Canada gather in Toronto (for the non stop Air Canada flight to Haneda) or Vancouver for the overnight direct Air Canada flight to Narita.

March 23, Friday  
**Arrive Tokyo**
Arriving in Tokyo this afternoon, we will transfer to our hotel, located in the centre of Tokyo. After settling in we gather for an opportunity to meet our fellow travellers and a relaxed dinner. **Hotel New Otani** (3 nights) D

March 24, Saturday  
**Tokyo**
Our full day city exploration will begin with a visit to Tsukiji, the world’s largest fish market, which handles twenty percent of the global catch. Enjoy a walk through the Ginza district, the most expensive real estate in the world, where we will have some free time to explore a few boutiques and stores. After a lunch of Kushiage (fried meat and vegetables on bamboo skewers) we ride the metro to the Tokyo Skytree and visit the top observation level for an awe-inspiring view of the city (and maybe even Mt Fuji on a very clear day). Continue to nearby Asakusa where we will visit Nakamise-dori, a Senso-ji Buddhist Temple and the Asakusa Shinto Shrine where we will learn about the unique religious practices of Japan. BL

March 25, Sunday  
**Kamakura / Tokyo**
Travel by fast train to Kamakura, 13th century capital and home to countless poets and artists. Our walking tour will bring us through busy streets to Kotoku-in Temple (40 ft bronze Buddha), Hase-Kannon Temple and Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine. Stroll along the colourful Komachi-dori Street. BL

March 26, Monday  
**Mt. Fuji / Hakone / Suwa**
Departing Tokyo we drive south skirting the Japanese alps before driving up the slopes of Mt Fuji (weather providing to the Fifth Station). Enjoy a delightful cruise on Lake Ashi and take the Komagatake Ropeway for scenic views of Hakone and surrounding area. On to Suwa where for this one night we step into another world, relaxing in a cotton matted room and sleeping on a colourful futon. **Saginoyu Ryokan** (1 night) BD

March 27, Tuesday  
**Matsumoto / Takayama**
Our journey continues via Matsumoto, noted for its majestic six storey castle, to the mountain village of Takayama. Visit the Hida Folk Village, a living museum of rural homes and barns, where we will experience the traditional lifestyles of a bygone era. Later we will visit the Matsuri-no-Mori Museum, to learn about the art of tea and to experience a traditional Japanese Tea Ceremony. The museum has a collection of massive yatai or parade floats, created for the annual harvest festival. **BW Takayama Hotel** (2 nights) BD

March 28, Wednesday  
**Takayama**
This morning will be spent on a comprehensive walking tour exploring this delightful small city. Visits include the Miyagawa Morning Market, Kusakabe Folkcraft Museum, formerly the residence of the Kusakabe family, which has been designated an important cultural property; Takayama Jinya, the regional headquarters of the Tokugawa Shogunate. BD

March 29, Thursday  
**Shirakawago / Kanazawa**
Our first stop today will be at the mountain village of Shirakawago, a UNESCO World Heritage Site noted for its traditional gassho-zukuri farm houses (some are over 250 years old). Visit the residence of the Iwase family; with its magnificent thatched roof home. Later visit Gokayama to observe the intricate and involved process of creating traditional Japanese paper (Washi). **ANA Crowne Plaza** (1 night) BD

March 30, Friday  
**Kanazawa / Hiroshima**
Today we tour one of Japan’s most famous gardens; Kenroku-en (The Garden of Six Qualities). It features magnificent landscaping, trees, and lakes (with some good fortune, enjoy the enchanting colours of the cherry blossoms). Visit the well preserved tea house district of Higashi Chaya before travelling by bullet train to Hiroshima, an important southern city. Box lunch will be provided for the train ride. **Hotel Granvia Hiroshima** (2 nights) BL

March 31, Saturday  
**Hiroshima / Miyajima**
Hiroshima is best remembered for the event of August 6, 1945 when the A Bomb decimated the city and area. The Peace Memorial Museum and Peace Memorial Park are both sobering testaments to the event and afterward. Time permitting we shall visit Shukkeien Garden, for cherry blossoms or a quiet walk with time to reflect. This afternoon cross the Inland Sea by ferry to Miyajima Island, felt by many to be one of the three top scenic experiences in Japan. On the island we will ride the cable car to enjoy the magnificent views from the peak and visit the Itsukushima-jinja Shrine dating from 1168 AD. BL

April 1, Sunday  
**Hiroshima / Himeji / Kyoto**
This morning we travel by bullet train to Himeji where we will visit Himeji Castle, the 400 year old UNESCO World Heritage Site and national treasure. Continue by coach to historic Kyoto, capital of Japan for almost 1,000 years (until 1868). This delightful city conjures up classic images: streets of little wooden houses, the sound of geta (wooden sandals) clicking on the cobbledstones, geisha in brightly coloured silk, tea ceremonies, traditional gardens and more. **Rihga Royal Hotel Kyoto** (4 nights) BLD

April 2, Monday  
**Kyoto**
The highlight this morning is the Kinkaku-ji Temple (Golden Pavilion). This three-storey pagoda is covered in gold foil and is set beside a reflecting pond and surrounded by gardens. Nearby are the gardens and palace Nijo Castle (UNESCO Site), noted for the great Ninomaru Wing and Audience Hall with its Nightingale Floors. The Heian Shrine, built in 1895 to mark the 1,100th anniversary of Kyoto as a capital is known for the 79 foot vermilion-hued Torii gate at this shrine is the biggest in Japan. In nearby Fushimi we visit the Inari Shinto Shrine with its series of vermilion Torii gates leading through gardens with cherry trees to the forested Mt Inari. Ginkakuji (Silver Pavilion) is also noted for its flowering trees as is the Philosopher’s Walk which leads us to Nanzenji. If the timing is right, this should be a most enchanting walk with lots of colours to enjoy. BD
April 3, Tuesday
Nara
Nara is one of the most sacred centres in all of Japan. Here we will see Kasuga Taisha Shrine, founded in the 8th century to protect the capital, which by tradition, is rebuilt every 20 years. In the temple grounds you will find some 3,000 stone lanterns which are lit twice a year, during festivals. At Todaiji Temple we will visit Daibutsuden Hall, once the largest wooden building in the world, enshrining a great bronze sitting image of Buddha. Before returning to Kyoto, we shall see the 5 storied Pagoda of Kofuku-ji and enjoy a stroll through the Deer Park.

April 4, Wednesday
Kyoto
Enjoy a morning at leisure to explore this wondrous former capital. Take the opportunity to shop in the huge complex by Central Station or at the Kyoto Handicraft Centre. This afternoon we will walk through the Higashiyama with its narrow cobblestone streets and tiny shops and into the Gion where Geisha still live and work. Finally we gather for our Farewell Shabu-Shabu Dinner.

April 5, Thursday
Kyoto / Tokyo / Toronto
Later this morning we travel by bullet train to Tokyo and transfer to the airport to catch our flights bound for Canada. West coast passengers will fly from Narita directly to Vancouver while east coast passengers will catch the non-stop flight from Haneda to Toronto.

SPECIAL NOTE: On some journeys and for some overnights our luggage will be unavailable to us. A small overnight bag in which you will carry some clothes and other necessities should be brought for these occasions.

Tour Cost in Canadian Dollars per person

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<th>Location</th>
<th>Cost per Person</th>
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Land only is based on joining at the hotel in Tokyo and leaving at the airport in Tokyo. Rates are per person based on sharing a twin/double room at hotels. Airfares from other gateways are available on request. Airfares and air carrier are subject to change and will be confirmed prior to final payment. Refer to Inclusive Features.

Prices DO NOT INCLUDE the cost of insurance which is available and is highly recommended. Premiums vary with the cost, length of the trip, and the traveller's age. For passengers up to and including 74 years on departure date, premiums will range from $383 to $520 pp plus applicable taxes. Cost supplements for travellers aged 75-85 will range from $201 to $414 pp plus applicable taxes. This insurance is effective from the date of purchase and carries limitations on pre-existing medical conditions. Please discuss your insurance coverage prior to booking. Check our website for the most current information. Refer to the enrollment form for general information and conditions.

Final payment will be due January 10, 2018
Deposit will be $800 per person

To reserve your place(s) on this tour, simply complete the enrollment form, indicating the tour you wish to join and your home city, and forward it with your deposit to:

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tours@craigtravel.com | www.craigtravel.com

CT RATING 3.5 - Challenging: This journey is designed to provide an in depth exploration of all that is Japanese. It will feature an overnight in a Japanese ryokan (country inn), sleeping and eating in tatami-matted rooms, as well as many different meals of traditional Japanese cuisine. By its nature, this journey involves a lot of walking with many long walks and numerous visits involving many steps. To fully enjoy this journey members should be fully mobile with no walking limitations and be in good physical health.