

The logo for Craig travel, featuring the word "Craig" in a white serif font with a small crown over the 'i', and the word "travel" in a white sans-serif font below it, all enclosed within a red circle.

Craig
travel

SAKURA IN JAPAN

BOOK EARLY
SAVE \$500 PP

SMALL GROUP

MARCH 25 - APRIL 8, 2027 | 15 DAYS | 28 MEALS

JOURNEY LEADER: DEBORAH HART

Sakura season in Tokyo—where cherry blossoms frame the iconic Tokyo Skytree

In Japan, thousand-year-old traditions exist in perfect harmony with the pulse of the future. From the neon-lit corridors of Tokyo to the tranquil gardens of Kyoto, each landscape offers a shifting perspective. Witness the architectural grace of feudal-era castles and the spiritual power of Shinto shrines, then board a high-speed bullet train and be whisked across the countryside.

Beyond the urban skylines, the true heart of the country reveals itself in quieter corners—in the mist-covered peaks of Hakone, the historic farmhouses of Shirakawago, and the meticulous artistry of a traditional tea ceremony. Here, a deep respect for nature and history is woven into everyday life, reflected in exceptional craftsmanship and the warmth of its people.

Whether tasting Osaka's vibrant street food or pausing for reflection in Hiroshima, Japan invites you to discover beauty in the smallest details and embrace the elegance of simplicity.

SMALL GROUP EXPERIENCE LIMITED TO ONLY 25 MEMBERS

Tour Highlights

- UNESCO World Heritage Sites: The gassho-zukuri farmhouses of Shirakawago, Himeji Castle, and the historic Ninomaru Wing of Nijo Castle
- Tokyo city tour including Senso-ji Temple, the Tokyo Skytree, and the Imperial Palace Eastern Gardens
- Full day exploring Kamakura
- The volcanic landscapes of Owakudani in the Hakone region, and the coastal beauty of Miyajima Island
- Japan's legendary high-speed bullet trains
- Traditional craftsmanship at the Miyagawa Morning Market and the Hakuichi Gold Leaf Museum
- Hands-on washi paper-making, a traditional tea ceremony, and the torii gates at Fushimi Inari Shrine
- Kenroku-en, one of Japan's "Three Great Gardens," and the stone lanterns of Kasuga Taisha Shrine
- Kaiseki dinner, social shabu-shabu hot pot, and the vibrant food stalls of Osaka's Dotonbori district
- Osaka Castle and the Cup Noodle Museum

Journey Leader

Deborah Hart is a recently retired United Church minister with a lifelong love of travel, photography, and sports. She has explored more than 30 countries and believes travel enriches life by broadening horizons, breaking down barriers, and fostering understanding. As a Craig Journey Leader, Deborah has guided tours to Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Namibia, Costa Rica, Iceland, Norway, Germany & Oberammergau, Tuscany, and Ireland. Her interfaith and study tours have taken her across the Middle East, Turkey, Greece, India, Nepal, South America, Africa, and Europe. Every journey deepens her awe of the planet and its people. She looks forward to sharing these experiences with fellow travellers.



Inclusive Features

- Return economy group airfare from Canada to Japan
- First-class accommodation as indicated or similar, including one night in a traditional ryokan
- 28 meals included as noted in the itinerary (B - 13 Breakfasts, L - 7 Lunches, D - 8 Dinners)
- Intercity transportation by private coach and rail service as indicated
- Services of your journey leader along with a professional Japanese national guide and local guides
- All surcharges, taxes, fees and gratuities for inclusions
- Airport transfers in Canada or equivalent value with purchase of group airfare
- Individual headsets for all guided tours

MAR 25, Thursday

DEPART CANADA

Tour members from across Canada depart for Tokyo.

MAR 26, Friday

TOKYO, JAPAN

Upon arrival in Tokyo, we'll transfer to our centrally located hotel. **New Otani Garden Tower** (3 nights)

MAR 27, Saturday

TOKYO

We enjoy a full-day Tokyo highlights tour, beginning in Asakusa where we explore Nakamise-dori and the ancient Senso-ji Buddhist temple. After learning about Japan's unique blend of religious practices, we stop for photos at Asakusa Shrine before heading to Tokyo Skytree for stunning panoramic city views. Following a delicious lunch of kushiage (crispy skewered meat and vegetables), we continue to the Ginza district, renowned for its upscale shopping and among the most expensive real estate in the world, with time to explore at leisure. Next, we visit the Imperial Palace Eastern Gardens, a 210,000 square metres public oasis. Our tour concludes at the legendary Shibuya Crossing, often considered the world's busiest pedestrian intersection, where hundreds cross from all directions. Tonight, we gather for a welcome dinner. BLD

MAR 28, Sunday

KAMAKURA / TOKYO

We spend the day in Kamakura, the 13th-century capital that remains a sanctuary for poets and artists. We'll visit

Kotokuin Temple to witness the Great Buddha, a 13.35-metre-high bronze masterpiece. We continue to Hasedera Temple, renowned for its 9.18-metre-high gilded wooden statue of Kannon, the goddess of mercy. At Tsurugaoka Hachimangu, we'll see the 12th-century shrine dedicated to Hachiman, the Shinto god of war. Before returning to Tokyo, we enjoy time on Komachi Street to browse for local delicacies and handcrafted souvenirs. BL

MAR 29, Monday

TOKYO / HAKONE

Departing Tokyo, we drive south to Hakone. First, we'll visit Owakudani. Walk the trails around the volcano crater to see steam vents and bubbling pools. Try the eggs boiled in natural hot springs, believed to prolong life! Continue via ropeway to Togendai. After a lunch break, we'll visit Hakone Shrine, a popular 12th-century Shinto shrine among samurai, hidden in a dense forest with magnificent torii gates. Then, board a boat to Hakone-En. Tonight, we'll stay in a traditional Japanese ryokan, enjoying tatami mats, futons, onsen baths (filled with mineral water from the naturally heated springs), and a delicious dinner. **Susukinohara Ichinoyu** (1 night) BLD

MAR 30, Tuesday

HAKONE / TAKAYAMA

Today we board a bullet train to Nagoya, then switch to a limited express train to Takayama. Upon arrival, our private coach will take us sightseeing to explore the traditional wooden houses and shops on Kami Sannomachi Street and visit the Kusakabe Folk Museum, once the Kusakabe family's residence (merchants who worked for the shogunate in Takayama) and now an important cultural property. We continue to our hotel for dinner.

Wat Hotel & Spa Hida Takayama (2 nights)

BD

MAR 31, Wednesday

TAKAYAMA

We spend the morning at the Miyagawa Morning Market, one of Japan's largest, browsing unique crafts and fresh produce from independent farmers and local artisans. At Takayama Jinya, we visit a rare historic landmark serving as the only surviving provincial government office from the Edo period. We then visit the Festival Floats Museum to admire the towering, intricately ornamental floats used in the Takayama festival. After some time at leisure to enjoy the city's quiet charm, we gather for dinner. BD

APR 1, 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 (thatched roof) farmhouses, some of which are over 250 years old. Later we visit Gokayama to observe the intricate art of making traditional washi (Japanese paper) at a historic family-run factory. After a guided tour through the facility to learn about this ancient craft, we enjoy a hands-on experience by creating our own customized, postcard-sized paper to take home.

Daiwa Roynet Hotel Kanazawa Miyabi (1 night)

BD

APR 2, Friday

KANAZAWA / HIROSHIMA

We stroll through Kenroku-en, one of Japan's premier gardens, to admire its masterful landscaping, flowering trees, and serene lakes. At the Hakuichi Gold Leaf Museum, we witness a demonstration of the delicate art of gold leaf application before boarding a high-speed bullet train to Hiroshima. **Hotel Granvia Hiroshima** (2 nights) BL

APR 3, Saturday

MIYAJIMA / HIROSHIMA

We cross the Inland Sea to Miyajima Island, celebrated as one of the three most scenic places in Japan. While on the island, we ascend by cable car to witness magnificent



Witness the Great Buddha in Kamakura



Visit Shirakawago, a UNESCO World Heritage Site



Children in traditional Japanese Kimono



Kinkaku-ji Temple, the famous Golden Pavilion

panoramas and visit the iconic Itsukushima-jinja Shrine, a coastal masterpiece dating from 1168 AD. Returning to the mainland, we explore Hiroshima, a city forever defined by the devastation of the atomic bomb. The Peace Memorial Museum and Peace Memorial Park serve as powerful testaments to the event and its aftermath. Time permitting, we stroll through the historic Shukkei-en Garden, providing a quiet sanctuary for reflection. **BL**

APR 4, Sunday

HIMEJI / KYOTO

Travel by bullet train to Himeji to see the exterior of Himeji Castle, a 400-year-old UNESCO World Heritage Site and national treasure. Continue by coach to historic Kyoto, once the capital of Japan for almost 1,000 years until 1868. **Doubletree by Hilton Kyoto Station (3 nights)** **BLD**

APR 5, Monday

KYOTO

Our day begins with a walk through the unique Arashiyama Bamboo Grove, one of Kyoto's most popular attractions, followed by Kinkaku-ji Temple, the famous Golden Pavilion. This three-story masterpiece, covered in brilliant gold leaf, sits beside a tranquil reflecting pool surrounded by lush pine forests. We continue to the gardens and palace of Nijo Castle, a UNESCO site noted for the Ninomaru Palace and its legendary nightingale floors. Next, we stroll through the narrow cobblestone streets and tiny shops of the Higashiyama District, leading us into Gion where geisha still live and work. Tonight, we gather for a special kaiseki dinner at a local restaurant. **BD**

APR 6, Tuesday

NARA / KYOTO

We'll start our day with a tea ceremony experience, learning about the various types of tea and the instruments used to prepare it. You'll discover the significance of each movement and the cultural importance of serving tea in Japan. Next, we'll visit Fushimi Inari Shrine in Kyoto's Fushimi ward, famous for its thousands of vermilion torii gates that form an iconic pathway through the sacred forest of Mount Inari. Then, we'll head to the gracious town of Nara to visit Kasuga Taisha Shrine, founded in the 8th century to protect the capital. The shrine grounds feature around 3,000 stone lanterns, which are lit during special festivals. At Todaiji Temple, we'll explore Daibutsuden Hall, once the largest wooden building in the world, housing a great bronze seated Buddha. Take a stroll through the Deer Park. Tonight, we gather for a shabu-shabu dinner. **BLD**

APR 7, Wednesday

KYOTO / OSAKA

Our exploration of Osaka features the historic Osaka Castle, the largest of its kind when constructed in 1583. This fortress is surrounded by formidable stone walls and moats, sitting within a sprawling park that covers two square kilometres. We also experience the vibrant energy of Dotonbori, a famous shopping and entertainment district celebrated as a premier food destination. Here, we encounter the city's obsession with kuidaore, the philosophy of "eating until you drop," amidst iconic mechanized signs and neon lights. Another highlight includes the Cup Noodle Museum, where we discover the science and history behind this global phenomenon. We walk through the Instant Noodles Tunnel and enjoy a hands-on experience by creating our own customized cup of ramen to take home as a unique souvenir. **Royal Park Osaka Midosuji (1 night)** **B**

APR 8, Thursday

OSAKA / KYOTO / CANADA

Enjoy a leisurely start to the day before we gather for our afternoon departure back to Canada, arriving home the same day. **B**

CT Rating 3.5/5 - 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 (traditional inn), sleeping and eating in tatami-matted rooms, as well as a variety of different meals featuring traditional Japanese cuisine. By its nature, this journey involves a lot of walking, with some 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.

Special Note: To facilitate effortless travel on Japan's rail system, your main luggage will be forwarded between hotels at various stages of the journey. Please bring a small overnight bag for essentials during these intervals, as porter services are limited. Complete instructions and specific details will be included in your final travel documentation.



**Book Early
and Save \$500 Per Person**



Tour Cost in Canadian Dollars Per Person

Land Only (Join Tokyo hotel / Leave Osaka hotel) ...	\$12,655
Vancouver	\$14,955
Calgary / Edmonton	\$15,095
Winnipeg	\$15,195
Regina / Saskatoon	\$15,245
Toronto	\$15,245
Montreal / Ottawa	\$15,355
Halifax / St. John's	\$15,495
Single Supplement	\$2,895

*Land only members join at the Tokyo hotel and leave at the Osaka hotel.

Airfares from other gateways are available on request. Airfares and air carriers are subject to change and will be confirmed prior to final payment. Refer to inclusive features for details. Tour price is based on sharing a twin-bedded room at hotels. Prices are based on a minimum 20 members and on rates, taxes and fees effective April 2026 and are subject to change due to factors beyond our control. Group to be escorted with a minimum of 20 group members.

Insurance is not included but is highly recommended, contact our staff to receive a quote. Check our website for the most current information, and for terms and conditions.

Deposit is \$1,000 per person

Final payment is due on November 26, 2026

To reserve your spot on this tour, book online through our website or submit an enrollment form with your deposit to:

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