

BASIC TOUR OUTLINE

2025 AUTUMN LEAVES TOUR OF JAPAN (COMFORT)

Start: Thursday, 13 November 2025 from Tokyo
Finish: Wednesday, 26 November 2025 at Tokyo
Duration: 14 days
Group size: 8 people
Cost estimate: AUD \$12,620 per person
Single supplement: AUD \$3,450 per person
Ref: GAL-25a

TOUR OVERVIEW

Stroll through Japan's iconic sites under the gorgeous coloured autumn leaves. Japan in autumn is like a dream, and this tour is paced to give you the time to savour the dream.

The 2025 Autumn Leaves Tour of Japan takes you to iconic destinations including Tokyo, Hakone, Kanazawa, Shirakawa-go, Kyoto, Hiroshima and Miyajima.

In particular, the tour visits many Japanese gardens renowned for their display of autumn leaves such as Rikugi-en Garden and Kiyosumi Garden, in Tokyo, Hakone Museum, and one of Japan's best gardens - Kenroku-en in Kanazawa. Selected gardens in Kyoto and Arashiyama will also be at the peak of their autumn colours at the time of your visit.

This 14-day tour provides the comfort of 4+ star western style accommodation and a mix of public (bullet train) and private transport. It is fully escorted and most meals and activities are included.

*Accommodation will be as planned below or similar.

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
1	Thu 13/11/2025	Airport meet and greet on arrival	Welcome to Japan! On arrival at Narita or Haneda International Airport, you will be met by a Journey to the East guide and escorted to your hotel by private transport. Today is an arrival day and no group program is scheduled. Your hotel is located right in the middle of Tokyo near glitzy Ginza. Why not take a stroll, relax and be ready to start the first full day of your 2025 Autumn Leaves Tour of Japan.	No meals	Tokyo Station Hotel [Twin/King]

DAY	DATE	PLAN	DETAILS	MEALS	ACCOMODATION
2	Fri 14/11/2025	Guided tour of Tokyo	<p>Start with an orientation from your guide before you begin your exploration of Tokyo.</p> <p>Tokyo has many faces and today you begin our exploration of Tokyo in the Marunouchi area between the expansive Imperial Palace Plaza and the beautifully restored 100-year old Tokyo Station. Marunouchi means inside wall or moat, and it was originally the inner sanctum of Edo Castle, now the Emperor's Palace. It is the oldest and elitist office area in Japan, where all the top Japanese companies have headquarters, and is a great spot to see the blend of history and modernity. In Marunouchi you will see;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hibiya Park, which is one of the top autumn colour sites in Tokyo, - The Imperial Palace Plaza with 2,000 impressive black pine trees, a whole world away from the business district of Marunouchi, - Tree-lined Marunouchi streets and old buildings which marked the modernization of Japan in the 19th century, - The red-brick façade of Tokyo Station, one of the city's most striking pieces of architecture, against the glass and steel of neighbouring skyscrapers. <p>After wandering through Marunouchi with your guide, you will have lunch at a local restaurant rubbing shoulders with the Japanese office workers.</p> <p>In the afternoon, you will visit Rikugi-en Japanese Garden, renowned for its autumn leaves display.</p> <p>Your "Welcome Japan" dinner tonight is at a restaurant in Ginza.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Tokyo Station Hotel [Twin/King]

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3	Sat 15/11/2025	Guided tour of Tokyo	<p>A dazzling metropolis characterised by soaring towers and neon, Japan's capital is also an intriguing collection of small neighbourhoods each with their own distinct flavour. As you explore the city, you'll also get beyond its surface to discover some of the local places where ordinary Tokyoites live and socialise.</p> <p>Today you will visit one of those neighbourhoods, Fukagawa. Despite being close to the business districts of central Tokyo, Fukagawa has a laid-back and serene atmosphere, characteristic of Tokyo's traditional "shitamachi," the old heart of the city. This bayside district was historically a merchant neighbourhood, and it still retains an unpretentious, down-to-earth feel.</p> <p>While you are in the area, you will visit Kiyosumi Garden. Originally built by a local lord in the Edo period, the garden was later owned by the Iwasaki family, the founder of the Mitsubishi conglomerate as a place to entertain guests and employees. It is an exemplary stroll-style garden with a large pond in the middle punctuated by magnificent stones transported from all over Japan.</p> <p>This evening you will try a more casual dining experience near your hotel.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Tokyo Station Hotel [Twin/King]
4	Sun 16/11/2025	Guided tour of Hakone	<p>Today you will head to Hakone, a scenic hot-spring holiday destination in the mountains near Mt Fuji. Hakone is renowned for its natural beauty and world-class art museums.</p> <p>The garden at Hakone Museum is spectacular with its Japanese maple trees in red autumn leaves at this time of the year. Narukawa Art Museum allows you to see modern-day Japanese paintings and experience the exquisite view of Mt Fuji across Lake Ashi.</p> <p>Tonight you will have your first chance to experience an authentic kaiseki-style banquet and a soak in a hot-spring onsen bath. Your guide will talk you through the ritual and etiquette of the Japanese bath and explain why visiting an onsen remains one of the nation's most popular pastimes.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Hakone Kowakien Tenyu [Twin room]

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5	Mon 17/11/2025	Guided tour of Hakone and transfer to Hiroshima	<p>This morning you try a traditional Japanese breakfast – a nutritious, protein-rich mix of grilled fish, miso soup, tofu, rice and pickles.</p> <p>Walking through the Hakone Open-Air Museum you will come upon amazing sculptures from the likes of Henry Moore and Rodin.</p> <p>After a leisurely morning relaxing in Hakone's ambience and nature, you travel by Japan's famous shinkansen (bullet train) to Hiroshima.</p> <p>Upon arrival at Hiroshima, dinner tonight is Hiroshima's most popular soul food Okonomiyaki.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	Sheraton Grand Hiroshima Hotel [Deluxe Twin/King]
6	Tue 18/11/2025	Guided tour of Miyajima	<p>A minivan and short ferry ride take you to the picturesque island of Miyajima, best known for the vermillion-red floating torii gate of Itsukushima Shrine (a UNESCO World Heritage Site). After admiring the gate, you begin a tour of this unusual shrine.</p> <p>Originally constructed in 593 when the island was designated a sacred island only to be inhabited by the gods, the Itsukushima Shrine is also famous for its unique pier-like structure which sits above the tides.</p> <p>You will visit pretty Momijidani Park to see its trademark maple trees ablaze with autumn leaves. Miyajima is home to several important Buddhist temples and pavilions, as well as a popular shopping street near the waterfront with its restaurants and souvenir shops.</p> <p>Back on the mainland, you will have dinner at the hotel tonight.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	Sheraton Grand Hiroshima Hotel [Deluxe Twin/King]

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7	Wed 19/11/2025	Guided tour of Hiroshima and transfer to Kyoto	<p>This morning before leaving Hiroshima, you visit the Peace Memorial Park and its informative and sobering Atomic Bomb Museum, contemplating the devastating impact of the world's first atomic bomb attack in August 1945. Despite this history, present-day Hiroshima remains a very welcoming and vibrant city, characterized by wide boulevards and attractive leafy parks.</p> <p>In the afternoon, you will get on board the shinkansen again to Kyoto, the most iconic of cities.</p> <p>With 17 World Heritage-listed sites, Kyoto is the cultural heart of Japan and the guardian of many of its ancient traditions. Originally made capital in 794, present-day Kyoto offers an endless range of traditional craft shops, refined restaurants, ancient temples and Shinto shrines. It will be a mass of autumn leaves at this time of the year.</p> <p>Upon arrival, you will visit some temples and gardens at the peak of autumn colours in Kyoto.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	The Celestine Kyoto Gion [Superior Twin/Double]
8	Thu 20/11/2025	Guided tour of Arashiyama	<p>In Arashiyama at the foot of the mountains to Kyoto's west, once again you will immerse yourself in magnificent autumn scenery against the backdrop of exemplary temples and gardens. Today, you will;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visit Tenryuji Temple, one of the best examples of formal and informal Japanese gardens, - Take a Rickshaw ride to go through Arashiyama's famous Bamboo Grove, - Explore deeper into rural Sagano and fully experience the rustic simplicity and serenity of mountain temples away from the tourist crowds, and - Sample Kyoto's traditional tofu cuisine, a local specialty that has its roots in Kyoto's Buddhist vegetarian past for lunch. 	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	The Celestine Kyoto Gion [Superior Twin/Double]

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9	Fri 21/11/2025	Guided tour of Kyoto	<p>A minivan takes you to the southern part of Kyoto to visit one of Kyoto's most famous Shinto shrines, Fushimi-Inari Taisha. A vast shrine complex, it's best known for the thousands of vermillion-red torii gates that frame the pilgrim paths winding through the woods of Mt Inari.</p> <p>After another magnificent temple garden, you will visit Nishiki Market, dubbed Kyoto's kitchen. A 400-meter narrow passage is packed with more than 100 vendors selling pickles, vegetables, seafood, cookware, ceramics and paper products.</p> <p>This afternoon and evening, you have some free time to explore Kyoto. Why not explore Kyoto's bustling food and textile markets? Or, you may prefer to wander around Kyoto's great range of craft shops and department stores for something special to take home.</p>	Breakfast	The Celestine Kyoto Gion [Superior Twin/Double]
10	Sat 22/11/2025	Transfer to and guided tour of Kanazawa	<p>Another train ride will take you to your next destination, Kanazawa, located on the Sea of Japan coast.</p> <p>Kanazawa's historical lineage, as a wealthy castle town steeped in samurai culture, offers an impressive range of architectural and cultural attractions and beautifully preserved streetscapes. In Kanazawa, you visit;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kenrokuen Garden, a castle garden dating back to the 17th century and regarded as one of the three best gardens in Japan, and - An authentic tea house to experience a Japanese-style tea ceremony. <p>Dinner tonight is Kanazawa's regional cuisine at a restaurant.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	The Hotel Sanraku Kanazawa [Superior Twin/King]
11	Sun 23/11/2025	Guided tour of Shirakawago and Gokayama	<p>A day trip by private minivan takes you to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Shirakawago. This is a charming rural village surrounded by mountains and blazing autumn-coloured leaves.</p> <p>The village's famous thatched-roof farmhouses known as gassho-zukuri (meaning "hands clasped together in prayer") are the main attraction. Their steeply slanted roofs were built to withstand the region's heavy snowfalls. You will hear about their fascinating history and construction.</p> <p>Your lunch today is a warm bowl of soba noodles, the local specialty. And for dinner tonight, enjoy premium Wagyu beef cooked in front of you at a Teppanyaki restaurant.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner	The Hotel Sanraku Kanazawa [Superior Twin/King]

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12	Mon 24/11/2025	Guided tour of Kanazawa	<p>This morning, you set out to explore the beautifully preserved Nagamachi samurai resident district and visit one of the former samurai houses that is now a museum. The museum house showcases the great architecture and the might and wealth of samurais in this area during the heyday of the feudal era.</p> <p>You then visit Omicho Market, a lively working market. As you walk through the market the guide will point out some unique products of west coast Japan. The market houses many little local restaurants, one of which you have lunch today.</p> <p>There is a great variety of things to see in Kanazawa and this afternoon and evening have been set aside especially for you to explore.</p> <p>Kanazawa is well-known for its superb arts and crafts including pottery, lacquerware, silk and gold leaf. You can also participate in a culinary activity such as a cooking class or sake tasting.</p> <p>Please ask Journey to the East for more information.</p>	Breakfast, Lunch	The Hotel Sanraku Kanazawa [Superior Twin/King]
13	Tue 25/11/2025	Transfer to Tokyo	<p>This morning you will hop onto the Shinkansen one last time and travel back to Tokyo where your adventure started.</p> <p>The rest of the day is free until dinner, an opportunity to finish shopping or visit places you missed in the first round.</p> <p>This evening, you will gather together one last time to enjoy your farewell dinner.</p>	Breakfast, Dinner	Tokyo Station Hotel [Twin/King]
14	Wed 26/11/2025	Departure	<p>This morning after breakfast, your 2025 Autumn Leaves Tour of Japan concludes. You can depart from Haneda International Airport or Narita International Airport. Perhaps you might like to linger in Japan for a little longer. We will be delighted to plan your personal post-tour extension to show you a different part of Japan. Please see our Model Extension Itineraries on Private Tour page for inspiration!</p> <p>Note: The cost of an escorted transfer to your departure airport is not included in our Small Group Tours (as we found many guests choose to stay in Japan a bit longer), but we will be happy to arrange your transfer to the airport or your next destination. Please see our FAQ for more details.</p>	Breakfast	

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		Inclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Accommodation as per itinerary ■ Meals as per the itinerary ■ Airport meet & greet on arrival ■ Hotel transfer by private transport on arrival ■ All local transport (train, bus and private minivans) ■ Expert English-speaking tour guides (locally licensed) ■ Cultural activities and entry fees included in the itinerary ■ Luggage transfers (1 piece per person) 		
		Exclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ International and domestic airfare ■ Travel insurance ■ Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages (except the first drink at each meal) ■ Tips and gratuities (not routinely expected in Japan) ■ Personal expenses (laundry, coin-locker, internet, telephone etc.) ■ Visa (if required) 		