



## Itinerary

### 15 Day Japan & South Korea Discovery

**\*IMPORTANT NOTE: Any extra nights, optional tours or other amendments, will not be visible on this itinerary.**

#### DAY 1: Welcome to Seoul, South Korea

Welcome to Seoul, South Korea! Upon arrival at Incheon International Airport, make your own way to your hotel.

Seoul, the nation's vibrant capital, is the largest city in South Korea and one of East Asia's leading financial and cultural hubs. Here, centuries-old traditions blend seamlessly with cutting-edge technology, creating a cityscape where ancient palaces stand alongside gleaming skyscrapers. This unique fusion of old and new attracts visitors from all over the world.

Spend the remainder of the day at your leisure. You may choose to explore the bustling streets, sample Korea's renowned cuisine, or simply relax and prepare for the journey ahead.

**MEALS:** Nil

**OVERNIGHT:** Stanford Hotel Seoul

#### DAY 2: Seoul ~ Mt. Seoraksan

This morning, depart Seoul and journey towards the scenic Seoraksan National Park. On the way, visit the Sokcho Fishing Village, a community founded by refugees from North Korea's Hamgyeong Province during the Korean War. Today, the village is renowned for its fresh seafood and unique local cuisine.

Continuing onward, arrive at the Mt. Seorak region—Korea's most celebrated national park, designated a UNESCO Biosphere Preservation District in 1982 for its rare plant and animal species. Explore the tranquil Shinheungsa Temple and enjoy a cable car ride to Gyeongju Fortress, offering breathtaking views of dramatic peaks and lush landscapes.

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT:** Sokcho Sea Cruise Hotel

#### DAY 3: Mt. Seoraksan ~ Andong ~ Daegu

After breakfast, depart Mt. Seorak and journey to the traditional village of Andong. Discover the UNESCO-listed village, celebrated for its beautifully preserved hanok houses and unique mask dancing performances. The village is home to descendants of the Ryu clan of Pungsan and has been the birthplace of renowned Joseon scholars such as Gyeomam Ryu Un-ryong and Seoae Ryu Seong-ryong.

Andong gained international recognition when Queen Elizabeth II visited on April 21, 1999, further highlighting its cultural importance. After exploring Andong, continue on to the city of Daegu. Here, visit the popular Dongseongno Shopping District, known for its lively atmosphere, fashion boutiques, and local eateries.

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel Inter-Burgo Exco

#### DAY 4: Daegu ~ Gyeongju

After breakfast, begin your exploration in Daegu with a visit to Cheomseongdae, the oldest surviving astronomical observatory in Asia.

Continue to the Gyeongju National Museum, which houses a remarkable collection of historical and cultural artefacts from the Silla Dynasty (57 BC – AD 935).

Next, visit the renowned Bulguksa Temple and the stunning Seokguram Grotto, both designated as UNESCO World Heritage sites for their cultural and architectural significance.

Travel on to the southeast city of Gyeongju, the former capital of the Silla dynasty for over 1,000 years and famed for its extensive historical remains. Here, explore Donggung Palace and the scenic Wolji Pond, set among beautiful landscaped grounds.

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**OVERNIGHT:** Commodore Hotel Gyeongju

#### DAY 5: Gyeongju ~ Seoul

After breakfast, travel to Seoul for an insightful day at the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ), located approximately 44km northwest of the city. Here, visit North Korea's 3rd Infiltration Tunnel, engineered so an entire infantry division could pass through within an hour.

Explore Imjingak Resort Unification Park and the North Korea Centre to gain a deeper understanding of the history and legacy of the Korean War. From the Dora Observation Platform, view North Korean territory including the eerie Propaganda Village, People School, and Kaeseong City, once the capital of the ancient Goryeo Kingdom.

If DMZ access is restricted, the tour will visit Imjingak Resort instead for further reflection on Korea's divided history and hopes for reunification.

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**OVERNIGHT:** Stanford Hotel Seoul

#### DAY 6: Seoul City Tour

Begin your day with a visit to the iconic Blue House, also known as Cheong Wa Dae—the official residence of the South Korean President. Set against the scenic backdrop of Bugaksan Mountain, this

historic site is a symbol of Korea's political heritage.

Next, explore Gyeongbokgung Palace, originally constructed in 1395 as the principal royal palace during the Joseon dynasty. Marvel at its grand architecture and learn about its fascinating history as the heart of the Korean monarchy.

Continue to the renowned Amethyst Store, where you can browse and learn about Korea's famous gemstones. Later, enjoy a stroll through Isa-dong, a vibrant historic entertainment district known for its bustling streets and rich culture. Step back in time as you visit Bukchon Village, filled with traditional hanok houses and a glimpse into Korea's past.

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**OVERNIGHT:** Stanford Hotel Seoul

## DAY 7: Seoul ~ Tokyo, Japan

At the appropriate time, transfer to the airport for your flight from Seoul to Tokyo, Japan. Upon arrival in Tokyo, you will be met and transferred to your hotel.

The remainder of the day is at your leisure to relax after your journey or begin exploring Tokyo at your own pace.

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel Mystays Premier Narita

## DAY 8: Tokyo City Tour

Today, explore some of the highlights of vibrant Tokyo. Begin the day in Odaiba, an innovative island in Tokyo Harbour, where you'll take in views of the impressive Rainbow Bridge and encounter Tokyo's very own Statue of Liberty replica.

Continue to the famous Tsukiji Fish Market, renowned for its fresh seafood and bustling atmosphere. Enjoy free time here to browse and find lunch among the many local eateries.

Next, head to the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building. Ascend to the 200-meter high observation deck for stunning panoramic views across the endless cityscape of Japan's capital.

Later, visit Sensoji—also known as Asakusa Kannon Temple—one of Tokyo's most colourful and popular temples. Complete your day with a stroll through Nakamise Shopping Street, where you can browse for local souvenirs and experience the lively market atmosphere.

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** Loisir Hotel Shinagawa Seaside

## DAY 9: Tokyo ~ Mt. Fuji ~ Hamamatsu

This morning, depart Tokyo and journey toward the iconic Mount Fuji region. Visit Gotemba Peace Park, celebrated for its tranquil atmosphere and outstanding views of Mt. Fuji's majestic peak.

Continue to the Mt. Fuji World Heritage Centre, an architectural marvel designed by Shigeru Ban. Marvel at the striking cone-shaped building, with its timber lattice facade echoing the surrounding forest. Inside, discover exhibits detailing the geology, history, and deep cultural significance of Mt. Fuji in Japanese art and literature.

After your exploration, travel onward to Hamamatsu. Enjoy the evening at leisure following your day of scenic and cultural discovery.

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel Associa Toyohashi

## DAY 10: Hamamatsu ~ Osaka

Begin your day traveling from Hamamatsu to Osaka, with stops highlighting Japan's rich cultural heritage. First, visit the Iga-ryu Ninja Museum in Iga City, Mie Prefecture—dedicated to the legendary ninja who were skilled spies and warriors during Japan's feudal period. Explore interactive exhibits and learn about their secretive techniques, weapons, and fascinating history.

Continue to the iconic Osaka Castle, a masterpiece of Japanese architecture constructed in 1583 by Toyotomi Hideyoshi. The castle played a pivotal role in Japan's unification and stands today as a symbol of the country's historic past, surrounded by sprawling parks and impressive stone walls.

Later, experience the buzzing energy of the Dotonbori district. This renowned entertainment and shopping area in central Osaka dazzles with its colourful neon lights, lively atmosphere, and famous landmarks—including the Glico running man and Kani Doraku crab billboards, signature icons of the city.

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel it Osaka Shinmachi

## DAY 11: Osaka ~ Kyoto ~ Osaka

This morning, board the shinkansen bullet train from Osaka to Kyoto, an engineering marvel that glides through the countryside at speeds up to 280km/h. Enjoy striking views from your seat as you journey towards Japan's ancient capital.

Your first stop in Kyoto is the famed Fushimi Inari Taisha, known for its iconic pathway of thousands of red torii shrine gates. Dedicated to Inari, the Shinto god of rice, this atmospheric shrine winds up the forested slopes of Mount Inari. Take time to stroll through the gates and discover the tranquil shrines and temples nestled in the hills.

Continue to the enchanting Arashiyama Bamboo Grove for a walk among towering green stalks—a truly magical natural setting. In the Arashiyama district, you may also visit attractions like the Togetsukyo Bridge, renowned for its views over the Katsura River and surrounding mountains.

Your final stop is Kyoto's Golden Pavilion, also known as Kinkaku-ji. Marvel at the exquisite gold leaf facade reflected in the peaceful pond before the temple. This three-story historical structure was built in the 14th century as a shogun's retirement villa and later converted into a Zen temple, now a UNESCO World Heritage site.

After a full day of discovery in Kyoto, return to Osaka for the evening.

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel it Osaka Shinmachi

## DAY 12: Osaka Free Day

Today is free for you to enjoy at your own pace. Spend the day exploring Osaka's vibrant neighbourhoods, sampling local cuisine, or visiting cultural landmarks.

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel it Osaka Shinmachi

## DAY 13: Osaka ~ Himeji ~ Hiroshima

After breakfast, depart Osaka and travel to Hiroshima with a memorable stop en route. Visit Himeji Castle, renowned as the "White Heron Castle" for its elegant, soaring white walls and graceful design. As one of Japan's last remaining original medieval castles, its impressive size and exceptional artistry make it among the country's most spectacular historical sights.

Take time to explore the castle's stunning grounds and admire its beautiful architecture. Afterwards, continue onward to Hiroshima, arriving in the afternoon to settle into your hotel and unwind after a day of discovery.

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** HOTEL MYSTAYS Hiroshima Peace Park

## DAY 14: Hiroshima ~ Osaka

Begin the day with an excursion to Itsukushima Shrine on Miyajima Island, famous for its striking torii gate uniquely built over water. At high tide, both the gate and shrine appear to float on the tranquil sea, offering one of Japan's most iconic scenic views.

Return to Hiroshima to explore the Peace Memorial Park and the Atomic Bomb Dome. These solemn sites stand as powerful reminders, commemorating the victims of the atomic bomb and reflecting on the city's history and resilience.

In the afternoon, travel back to Osaka for your overnight stay.

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel it Osaka Shinmachi

## DAY 15: Departure ~ End of Tour

At the appropriate time, make your own way to the airport for your homeward flight.

We hope this journey has provided you with unforgettable memories of your travels through South Korea and Japan. Wishing you safe travels, and we look forward to welcoming you on another exciting adventure in the future.

**MEALS:** Breakfast