



Japan Textiles Arts and Crafts Tour

Destination Guide and FAQs



First time in Japan?

Whether you're marvelling at the geisha's fluid grace, pausing to inhale a perfectly brewed cup of sencha, or thrumming to the pulsating rhythm of Ginza, Japan has the power to captivate the most jaded traveller. On this 14-day tour timed to take in the spring Sakura (cherry blossom) festival, we will explore the best of Japan's culture, textiles, arts, crafts, and cuisine.

"Dream trip of a lifetime, a beautiful combination of high buzz and cultural appreciation, thoughtfully and thoroughly conceived. I'm still processing it all . . ." – Jessica

If you have been lucky enough to visit Japan, you're already in love. But do read on because a few things have changed.

From navigating dietary restrictions and food allergies, to money matters, what to pack, tipping, manners and customs, staying in touch with (envious) folks back home, we're covering everything.



First off, is Japan safe for travellers?

Your perception of safety is important, and we urge you to visit your country's travel advisory consular site. These days, only a few countries do not carry an advisory. Happily, Japan is one of them. It is one of the safest countries in the world for both men and women. Petty theft and violent crime are extremely rare. Stories of people leaving wallets, passports and bags on trains and being reunited with them are the norm. However, you should still be sensible and follow the usual travel precautions.

A bonus of group travel is you can always be with a travel companion. Additionally, our local office in Canada is on hand to address any concerns.

Do I need a visa for Japan?

Visa requirements for Japan have resumed to the normally straightforward process. U.S. and Canadian nationals are visa-free and can stay for 90 days. Due to Covid, as of May 2022 the visa exemption is currently suspended, and all foreign nationals require a visa to enter Japan. You'll need to make an appointment at the nearest Japanese embassy or consulate or apply by mail if you want to visit (the government is limiting daily visitor entries to 20,000 due to the pandemic).

U.S. nationals please visit https://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/travel_and_visa.html

Canadian nationals, please visit https://www.ca.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/visa.html

Other nationals, please search for "Embassy of Japan in xyz (your country)" and click on Visa services.

Please bear in mind that processing can take 3-4 weeks. Please understand that it is your sole responsibility to possess a valid passport and visa prior to embarking on this tour.

What is the Time Zone in Japan?

Japan observes [Japan Standard Time](#) all year. There are no Daylight-Saving changes. Japan Standard Time is 13 hrs ahead of Eastern time zone.

What is the weather like in April?

April is a pleasant month with warm temperatures throughout Japan. The high average temperature can go up to 19°C (66°F), and the lowest averages 10°C (50°F) in the morning and at night. The average monthly rainfall is about 110 mm (4 inches). BONUS** Early April is Sakura or cherry blossom season. While this natural phenomenon cannot be guaranteed, our tour is well-timed to experience the season.

How strenuous is this tour?

You must be able to walk comfortably and without assistance at a moderate pace for one-hour stretches to do this tour. Moderate pace is defined as around 100 steps per minute.

We take public transport almost everywhere except for 2 days when we travel with private coaches. A major effort has been made in major Japanese cities to ensure that every





train, metro, tram, or bus is accessible, but this cannot be guaranteed. Hikes and strenuous activities are always optional.

What types of accommodations will we stay in?

One of the best ways to experience Japan is to stay in atmospheric ryokans (traditional inns) for architecture, cultural relevance, and personalised service. While ryokans are not widely available or conveniently located in urban areas, we include **nine nights in traditional inns** with natural hot springs onsen or public hot bath onsen. The rest is in comfortable western style 3-4* hotels.

All accommodation is clean and well-appointed with private bathrooms and western-style toilets. All serve included breakfast.



What should I pack?

A comprehensive packing list will be supplied. Consider layering clothes. Pack a light windbreaker and fleece hoodie, as well as warm socks, toque, and mitts. Comfortable closed-toed walking shoes are recommended. Bear in mind we will take public transport within cities, and the bullet train in between. Luggage on bullet train days will be transferred by coach. You should be comfortable carrying your daily needs in a backpack or bag.

It's best to leave expensive jewelry and

valuables at home.

What is the voltage in Japan?

Voltage in Japan is 100V. Your adaptor will need to fit into these sockets.



Where to fly in and out of? What are the best international flight options?

Our tour starts in Tokyo and ends in Kyoto. Shared airport shuttle will be provided for all arrivals and departures at no cost. If you are arriving or departing either later or earlier, airport transfer is included as long as you book the extra nights' accommodation through us. Do give yourself ample time to settle in after your long flight. Please see P. 7 below for information on arrival and departure transfers, as well as extra nights.

We're happy to advise on individual options. Please contact shila@eyhotours.com

Can I get a local SIM card?

First off, it is not necessary to get a SIM card during your travels in Japan. WiFi is common, and you'll find it in most hotels or hostels, as well as in several coffee shops and restaurants around the country.

If you do need more connectivity, consider a [Japanese SIM card](#) at around \$50. For plans, see [here](#). You could also [rent a pocket WiFi](#) to bring a hotspot with you wherever you go so you can search for directions, get train



schedules or look up restaurants in the area. Plus, you can connect up to 10 devices, which makes it superior to a SIM card, in our opinion.

Travelling in Japan with dietary restrictions or food allergies

Traveling with dietary restrictions can be challenging, but it's not impossible. Vegetarian and vegan restaurants are becoming increasingly popular in cosmopolitan parts of Japan, but it can still be difficult to navigate menus if you don't read Japanese. Some tips for vegetarians traveling in Japan:

- [Happy Cow](#) is a great website that lists vegetarian/vegan restaurants all around the world!
- Dashi is a fish stock base that is in many dishes, even if they don't contain meat. Be careful when ordering soups or ask waitstaff if the dish contains dashi. Miso soup, however, is typically suitable for vegans.
- Conveyor belt sushi restaurants are a good place to find vegetarian food as they often have veggie rolls, avocado rolls and cucumber rolls, as well as a variety of desserts.
- Okonomiyaki is a good dish to try, as it is made to order and you can customize the ingredients to your liking.

For gluten-free diets, Japanese cuisine don't appear to be heavy on wheat, so it might surprise you to learn that gluten is found in lots of Japanese dishes. Many of the staple sauces (including soy sauce and miso) have wheat in them. Read [this](#) for gluten or celiac diets.

In the interests of pre-booking restaurants during a busy travel time, we will collate your dietary restrictions three months prior.

If you have any dietary restrictions, it might be a good idea to print out these cards and carry them with you during your trip in Japan.

アレルギーの為
乳製品が一切食べられません。
ご了承下さい。

Due to allergies, I cannot
eat any dairy products.
Thank you for your understanding.

アレルギーの為
小麦、小麦粉が一切食べられません。
ご了承下さい。

Due to allergies, I cannot
eat any wheat or wheat flour.
Thank you for your understanding.

申し訳ありませんが、私はベジタリアンです。
肉、鶏肉、魚(出汁を含めて)が食べられません。
卵、乳製品は大丈夫です。

I'm a vegetarian. I can't eat meat, poultry
or fish including dashi. Eggs and dairy are ok.
Thank you for your understanding.

Is it safe to drink tap water in Japan?

The answer is yes, you can drink tap water in Japan! All throughout Japan, tap water is safe to drink and that includes the water found in parks, gardens, and public bathrooms. Bottled water is also available and can be found in convenience stores or vending machines inexpensively. Bring a refillable water bottle to save the planet!

What about the currency?

In Japan, the currency is yen (¥). The current exchange rate (Nov 2022): USD: \$1 = ¥137; CAD: \$1 = ¥107; British Pound: £1 = ¥167; Euro: €1 = ¥160; Australian Dollar: \$1 = ¥97.

Major credit cards are accepted at big hotel chains, larger restaurants, or shops in large cities, but you'll want to have cash on hand to use in small restaurants, markets or in more



rural towns.

There's no need to bring yen from home either. ATMs offer the best exchange rate possible. Easy to find in train stations as well as convenience stores. Before heading to a rural town though, be sure to withdraw cash.



What about tipping?

Tipping is not customary in Japan. In fact, it can be considered rude and insulting in many situations. Most Japanese restaurants require customers to pay for their meals at the front register, rather than leave money with the waiter or waitress. Tipping also isn't required for cab or bus rides and many hotel services.

However, there are three exceptions. When staying at a ryokan with personal attendants, it's customary to prepare an envelope with \$10 in equivalent yen and give it at check in. If you're lucky enough to arrange a private dinner with a geisha, hand her an envelope (around \$25) with both hands and a slight bow in respect. And lastly, guides in Japan greatly appreciate gratuities. It's up to you how much you wish to tip them. They also appreciate a snack from your hometown or being bought coffees or small refreshment.

And shopping . . . ?

Japan is a shopper's paradise. Excellent textiles, a plethora of handicrafts, dolls, glassware and cutting-edge youngsters' fashion items and

accessories. Not to be forgotten are the quirky 100-Yen shops, selling just about everything for the same price.

Given our tour focus on textiles, arts and crafts, some shopping is unavoidable. We will keep the non-shoppers in mind by scheduling shopping stops at day's end wherever possible.

Manners and Customs in Japan

- Eating while you walk is considered sloppy. Instead, find a place to sit and enjoy your snack.
- Pointing is considered rude. Instead, use an open hand to make gestures.
- Blowing your nose in public can be considered rude. Japanese people often go into the bathroom to blow a stuffy nose.
- On a crowded subway or train, it is polite to take off your backpack and hold it in your hands.
- Slurping noodles not only cools them down as you eat, but it indicates that the meal is delicious. So, slurp away, it's the polite thing to do!
- Taking off your shoes is common courtesy before entering many places. If the floor is raised at the doorway, it is an indicator that you should remove your shoes.
- Public baths or onsens do not allow tattooed guests.

Do I need any vaccinations? * See below P6. for Covid provisions.

Make sure your routine vaccinations are up to date. Japan does not require any mandatory vaccinations.

Great! How do I sign up?

We'd be delighted to welcome you on board! Please [contact](#) us.



Covid provisions

As of October, 2022, Japan has lifted all restrictions on visitors, with one exception:

- All entrants required to provide either [a valid COVID-19 vaccination certificate \(3 doses\) of vaccines on the Emergency Use List of World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) or [a certificate of negative result of pre-departure COVID-19 test conducted within 72 hours prior to departing from the original country/region](#).

You can now travel freely within the country without a Japanese guide-escort.

More info:

<https://www.japan.travel/en/practical-coronavirus-information/government-measures/>

On E.Y.H.O.'s part, in order to safeguard all our travellers, guides, and drivers, we require:

- full vaccination i.e. 3 doses of WHO-approved vaccines against Covid, OR
- a negative PCR test result 72 hours prior to joining the tour. We may require additional Rapid Antigen tests.
- Travel medical and trip interruption insurance. Medical costs in Japan can be very high. Travel repatriation insurance is optional but recommended.

Should we have a case of Covid within the group, we will act quickly to place distance between the unwell traveller and others. We will follow government guidelines operational at that time. Currently, no quarantine requirements are in place in Japan.

Other considerations

- PCR tests are readily available (depending on whether you would like a

quick result within hours, or the 24-hour service) and are available in all the cities. For additional peace of mind, please carry your own Rapid Antigen tests.

- All guides and drivers are fully vaccinated.

Please note that E.Y.H.O. Tours is not responsible for covering the cost of any curtailment to the tour, missed transport arrangements, accommodation required, all expenses for testing and treatment or any other costs incurred by the traveller/s. Travellers MUST ensure that their travel insurance covers these costs.

Please refer to [Terms and Conditions](#) for travel insurance suggestions.



Arrivals and Departures

Arriving for the start of Tour

Our tour starts on April 7, 2023, with a welcome briefing at 13:00 hrs, followed by Sumida River cruise and Hamarikyu Garden activities. If you are late for the welcome briefing, you may join the group for the welcome dinner at 19:00 hrs (location tba)

If you wish to join our 13:00 hrs welcome briefing and activities on Day 1, your flight's arrival time should be no later than 10 am (Narita airport) or 11 am (Haneda airport)

Accommodations for early arrivals/late departures

We can book additional nights pre-tour at our start hotel in Tokyo:
USD 85pp double occ.
USD 100pp single occ.

Additional nights post-tour at our end hotel in Kyoto:
USD 100pp double occ.
USD 140pp single occ.

Based on availability. Deadline for extra night accommodation requests is February 15, 2023.

Arrival Airports

Haneda or Narita airport (Tokyo)

Departure Airport

Our tour ends on April 20 in Kyoto.
Closest airport: Kansai International /Itami Airport (Osaka)

Train from Kyoto to Tokyo (Narita/Haneda airport): approx JPY17,000 (USD 130)/3-4hours

Domestic flights from Osaka

(Itami/Kansai airport) to Tokyo (Narita/Haneda airport) approx. 4 hours including trains to/from airports. Approx. USD 100 one way. Book through Google Flights.

Kumano Kodo Extension

Depart April 24th: Kansai International airport (Osaka): approx JPY7,000 (USD 55)/4 hours by bus from hotel in Kumano.

Domestic flight from Nanki Shirahama airport to Tokyo Haneda (JAL): approx JPY40,000 (USD 300)/5 hours including trains to/from airports

Train from Kumano to Tokyo (Narita/Haneda airport): approx JPY20,000 (USD 150) 7-9hours

*We recommend staying a night in Tokyo unless departing international from Kansai International airport

Airport Transfers – Main Tour

Shared airport shuttle is included for all arrivals and departures at no cost. Please see below for exceptions *

Shared Shuttle for all arrivals and departures: how it works

We use a shared shuttle service which passengers from other tour operators may also board. The shuttle collects passengers from same airport/hotel at the same time of day for arrival/departure transfers, which often takes longer than a private hire service. For example, it takes 1-2 hours from Narita/Haneda airport to the hotel but the airport-shared shuttle may take 1.5-2.5 hours.



At the arrival gate, a non-English speaking driver welcomes guests with a signboard with guests' names on it. Our guides will welcome each guest at the hotel when they arrive.

Time limit for meeting with airport shuttle is 90 min from flight arrival (see ** below for immigration clearing procedures)

More info on airport shuttle [here](#).

Please note: Currently (Nov 2022) the airport arrival shared shuttle service is running on limited hours due to the lack of meet & greet staff caused by COVID-19.

Narita Airport Shuttle is 6:00 –20:30 based on estimated time of arrival.

Haneda Airport Shuttle 5:00 – 20:30 based on estimated time of arrival.

*Although we anticipate a return to normal services by tour start date, we cannot guarantee a transfer should you arrive outside these hours. Please enquire about booking a private transfer or make your own way to our hotel. <https://sunroute-asakusa.co.jp/en/>

Immigration procedures

Currently (Nov 2022), airports in Japan are experiencing similar staff shortages and higher than normal volumes similar to airports elsewhere.

We strongly recommend completing pre-arrival procedures via this portal:

https://vjw-lp.digital.go.jp/en/#link_01 to save time and ** meet your shared shuttle on time.

Emergency #s and WhatsApp Group Chat

Emergency #s will be supplied 2 weeks prior to tour start.

On this tour, we will stay in daily touch via WhatsApp group chat beginning one week prior. If you use a smartphone, please ensure you have [downloaded the free app](#) and are comfortable using it before the tour.



Suggested Reading List

In addition to [regular titles](#), the following relate specifically to our tour focus.

A Textiles of Japan (engl.)

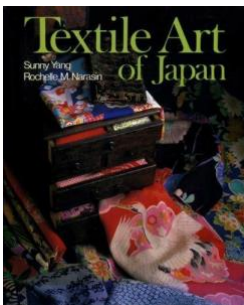


By Thomas Murray and Virginia Soenkensen

From rugged Japanese firemen's ceremonial robes and austere rural workwear to colorful, delicately patterned cotton kimonos, this lavishly illustrated volume

explores Japan's rich tradition of textiles.

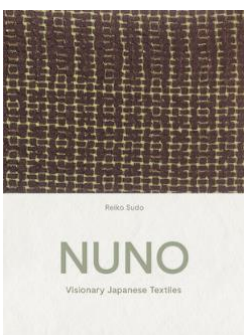
Textile Art of Japan



By Sunny Yang and Rochelle M. Narasin

This richly illustrated volume, with over 200 color illustrations, is the perfect introduction to the subject of Japanese textiles. It includes

examples of modern Japanese fabrics made according to or by adapting traditional methods and shows them used in innovative ways: in quilts, screens, cushions, and hats.



Nuno – Visionary Japanese Textiles

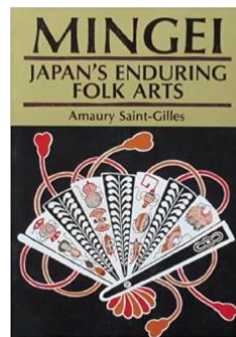
By Reiko Sudo, Naomi Pollock

A career-spanning monograph of the work of NUNO, one of Japan's most

innovative and respected textile design studios. Featuring the most outstanding, influential, and experimental

fabrics, the book is organized into thematic chapters, each based on a family of textiles. Interspersed are illuminating essays from a wide range of contributors, from writer Haruki Murakami and architect Toyo Ito to designer Kenya Hara.

Mingei – Japan's Enduring Folk Arts

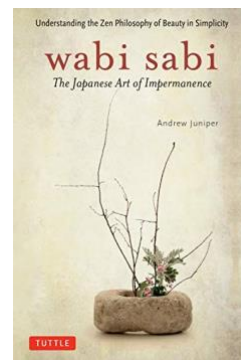


By Amaury Saint-Gilles

Explore Japanese folk art--called *mingei*. Introduces 116 exquisite and interesting Japanese pieces, describing their origins, showing how they are made and used, and relating the

background of myth and folklore associated with each.

Wabi Sabi – The Japanese Art of Impermanence



By Andrew Juniper

Developed out of the aesthetic philosophy of *cha-no-yu* (the tea ceremony) in fifteenth-century Japan, wabi sabi is an aesthetic that finds beauty in things imperfect, impermanent, and

incomplete. In addition to presenting the philosophy of wabi-sabi, this book includes how-to design advice--so that a transformation of body, mind, and home can emerge.

We hope you enjoy these titles! Let us know your opinions or your favourites.