

# Topdeck

## DELVE DEEP: JAPAN



TRIP CODE:

TJJTR3



## TOPDECKER, meet Asia (TD)

TRIP VIBE = iconic sights and in-depth adventures with a local Trip Leader. Don't just want to see Japan, but EXPERIENCE it? In all its ancient, futuristic, kooky, incredible glory? You're in luck. In under two weeks, this Delve Deep trip gives you the highlights and the hidden gems. The culture and the crazy. The ultra-modern and the historic. The scenery and the cities. And all the ramen, okonomiyaki, udon, katsu, yakitori and sake your fat pants can handle (you packed those, right?). This is your insider guide. Japan is waiting.

### WORTH NOTING...

On this trip you'll be travelling like a local – including riding the Shinkansen (aka bullet train)! Because carriage space is limited on Japanese trains, we'll transport your luggage on a few days. You'll just need to bring a small overnight bag to cover you for these nights. Pssst: optional activities are subject to availability, but there's \*always\* something fun to do in Japan – trust us.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Delve Deep



Nights



Download app



Meals



# Thanks for choosing to holiday with Topdeck

Ready for the time of your LIFE?

The countdown's on...

## ABOUT YOUR TRIP NOTES

These Trip Notes contain everything you need to know before your trip departs – from where to meet your Topdeck fam to what we suggest you bring.

Read them on the train, in the supermarket queue or on the loo – we don't mind, just look through them carefully so you know what to expect on your trip. We recommend you download this document so it's with you when you travel (and give a copy to your MVPs so they know what you're up to).

**IMPORTANT:** please refresh this doc as close to your departure as possible. This means you'll have the most up-to-date info available.

### INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

- Visit Meiji Shrine
- Walking tour of Harajuku and Shibuya with Trip Leader
- Group karaoke experience
- Train ticket to Takayama
- Visit the Hida folk village
- Visit the morning riverside markets
- Visit Takayama Jin'ya
- Sake tasting at a local brewery
- Train ticket to Hiroshima
- Visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and Museum
- Visit the Itsukushima Shrine
- Ferry to Miyajima
- Train ticket to Osaka
- Half-day tour of Osaka with Trip Leader
- Experience Buddhist morning rituals
- Train ticket to Kyoto
- Visit the Fushimi Inari Shrine
- Visit Kinkaku-ji Temple
- Visit the Arashiyama bamboo forest
- Visit the Nishiki food market
- Walking tour of the Gion district with Trip Leader

### YOUR TRIP WILL START

#### PICK UP:

Tokyo  
Japan

### YOUR TRIP WILL FINISH

#### DROP OFF:

Kyoto  
Japan

## TRIP CURRENCIES

- Japan - JPY

# YOUR ITINERARY

## DAY 1 | TOKYO (JAPAN)

You ready for 12 UNbelievable days of delving deep into Japanese culture? Discovering the ultra-modern, the ancient traditions and alllll the local eats – plus the weird, whacky and totally wonderful in between? We thought so. First: say konnichiwa to your fellow explorers. Then: we'll kick things off with a group dinner at a local restaurant. Nihon e yokoso – welcome to Japan!



### MEALS:

- Dinner

## DAY 2 | TOKYO

Down your cup of matcha – we're off to check out the Meiji Shrine this morning. Tokyo's grandest Shinto shrine – take in all the spiritual vibes, make an offering and wander the blooming (or not) gardens. Next, we're heading to the quirky Harajuku district (aka cosplay heaven) with our in-the-know Trip Leader. Expect kawaii culture galore: neon tutus, rainbow-coloured wigs, bubble tea and fairy floss. We'll also swing by the legendary Shibuya Crossing – it's all the crazy. Then: the afternoon's yours to wander the futuristic streets of Shibuya. Add some slappin' skills to your CV with an optional taiyaki making experience. A fish-shaped waffle cake never tasted so good. And tonight? It starts with a 'K' and ends with an 'E'. Nope, not kale. K-A-R-A-O-K-E time!



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Visit Meiji Shrine
- Walking tour of Harajuku and Shibuya with Trip Leader
- Group karaoke experience



### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Taiyaki (fish-shaped cakes) making experience: from 5,600 JPY

## DAY 3 | TOKYO

It's your last day in Tokyo – so, you do you. Been waiting for an opportunity to shamelessly wear Mickey Mouse headwear and fan-girl/boy over Cinderella? An optional trip to Tokyo Disneyland is calling. Book your tix in advance to high five allll your fave characters. This evening: quiz your Trip Leader on where to find the best ramen – and be prepared to order on a ticket machine with pictures of the dishes. It might be a lucky dip, but that's what adventuring is all about.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Visit Tokyo Disneyland: from 13,200 JPY (booking in advance recommended)

## DAY 4 | TOKYO – TAKAYAMA

Rise and shine – it's an early start to get the iconic Shinkansen (bullet train FYI) to Takayama. Glue your face to the window as we zoom through the incredible Japanese Alps. Once we've pulled in, we'll check into our authentic AF accommodation: a traditional ryokan – complete with tatami-matted floors and sliding doors straight out of The Last Samurai. This afternoon, it's time to visit a traditional Hida folk village for an insight into what mountain life was like back in the day. Tonight, an optional Hida beef dinner with the gang is on the menu – vegetarians look away now.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Train ticket to Takayama
- Visit the Hida folk village



### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Hida beef dinner: from 6,000 JPY

## DAY 5 | TAKAYAMA – HIROSHIMA

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day – so we'll kick things off traditional-style in the ryokan before visiting the bustling morning riverside markets. Then, strap on your Nikes to explore Takayama Jin'ya – the last remaining government outpost from the time of the Samurai and Shoguns. Round it all up with a sampling of the good stuff at a local sake brewery before jumping on the train to Hiroshima. And tonight? An included group dinner's on the cards, so get ready to show off your expert chopstick skills (or drop even more stuff down your T-shirt).



### MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Visit the morning riverside markets
- Visit Takayama Jin'ya
- Sake tasting at a local brewery
- Train ticket to Hiroshima

## DAY 6 | HIROSHIMA

You've seen the photos. Read the book. Now it's time to experience the history for yourself. Take a tour of Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park and Museum – home of the A Bomb Dome. Then, it's all aboard the ferry to the island of Miyajima. With an afternoon free to explore you just gotta visit the Itsukushima Shrine before settling in for sunset. The floating torii gate is pretty spectacular. Hankering for even MORE local culture? Back in Hiroshima, we've got a visit to a traditional onsen (aka hot springs) on offer too. Disclaimer: while the onsen is 100% optional, nudity is not – and all tattoos are strictly a NO-GO here. Soz. Later: use your free time wisely and put those fat pants to the test with a steaming bowl of Onomichi ramen – chased with a glass of the local sake. When in Japan, right?



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and Museum
- Visit the Itsukushima Shrine
- Ferry to Miyajima



### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Traditional onsen experience (tattoos not allowed): prices available locally

## DAY 7 | HIROSHIMA – OSAKA

And just when you thought your jeans couldn't get any tighter – today we're headed for Osaka: the foodie capital of Japan. Here, they even have a word for "scoff till you drop" – kuidaore. Dump your bags at tonight's traditional Buddhist lodge. This arvo, we've got a walking tour with our Trip Leader. The main character? Umeda. Glittering skyscrapers. Endless shopping opportunities. And entertainment that's wayyyy better than scrolling for hours (and hours). We see you TikTok addicts. Tonight we'll tuck into an included dinner, then get out there and explore Osaka-style!



### MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Train ticket to Osaka
- Half-day tour of Osaka with Trip Leader

## DAY 8 | OSAKA

Tuck into a traditional Buddhist breakfast before heading out to do your own thing. It's your chance to uncover the real Osaka – so make every second count. Thrill-seeker? Jump aboard an optional day trip to Universal Studios (just make sure you book in advance). And tonight? The local experts are primed to show us the ins and outs of Osaka's nightlife on an optional tour.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Full day tour of Universal Studios: from 13,200 JPY (booking in advance recommended)
- Osaka nightlife tour: from 10,267 JPY

## DAY 9 | OSAKA – KYOTO

Ever wondered what life as a Buddhist monk was really like? Rise early and find out with a morning Buddhist ritual – complete with Goma Kito Fire Ceremony and a walk around the temple with a local monk. Then we're hitting the tracks to Japan's traditional capital, Kyoto. Home to over 2,000 temples and shrines, this place ticks all the spiritual boxes. We'll visit the incredible Fushimi Inari Shrine – with plenty of time to hike to the top and explore the torii gates. Then, dinner is up to you. Go get it!



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Experience Buddhist morning rituals
- Train ticket to Kyoto
- Visit the Fushimi Inari Shrine

## DAY 10 | KYOTO

Time to explore this place properly with our expert Trip Leader. We'll tick off the Zen Kinkakuji Golden Pavilion and Tenryu-ji Temple before moving on to the sprawling Arashiyama bamboo grove, where there's free time to delve deeper into this fairytale forest. All the walking making you hangry? Grab some lunch before we stop by the Nishiki food market. Then get ready to say g'day to the geishas as we head to the Gion district. Afterwards: the evening's yours for exploring.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Visit Kinkaku-ji Temple
- Visit the Arashiyama bamboo forest
- Visit the Nishiki food market
- Walking tour of the Gion district with Trip Leader

## DAY 11 | KYOTO

PSA: this is your last day in Kyoto. Get moving! There's even the chance to dress up as a geisha or samurai (we told you it would get weird). Later, we'll regroup and head to a local eatery for a send-off to remember. This has been one hell of a trip.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner



### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Dress as a geisha or samurai: from 10,533 JPY

## DAY 12 | KYOTO

After breakfast it's sayonara to the Land of the Rising Sun and our newfound family. Swap Snapchats and start planning that next adventure.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast

# OTHER INFORMATION

## TOPDECK APP

Feeling appy? Download the Topdeck app and get PUMPED for the adventure ahead. Best bit is: from 45 days before departure you'll be able to chat with your soon-to-be tripmates.

Plus, get your itinerary at your fingertips – so you know where you'll be going and what you'll be doing on each day of your trip. Nice!

Links:

Apple <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/topdeck/id994727866>

Android <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.FlexiTechSolutions.TopDeck&hl=en>



## YOUR SAFETY

### NIGHTS OUT

We love a good night out – experiencing the nightlife and entertainment places have to offer is a big part of travelling. But alongside the fun it's important to be aware of your surroundings and personal safety.

When you're out late, remember to avoid walking alone – particularly through deserted areas like beaches and back streets. Always stick together, take a registered taxi where possible, and keep a note of your accommodation so you can find your way back to your fellow Topdeckers if you become separated. Make sure you have your trip mates' mobile numbers in case you need to get hold of them while out and about.

In some countries, alcoholic measures can be considerably larger than what you may be used to. Try to keep track of what you're drinking – and if you see one of your trip mates looking a little worse for wear, take them back to your accommodation. Never leave your drink unattended.

It's also important to be aware that what you might consider harmless flirting may be interpreted differently in some countries. Be yourself and have fun, but stay savvy – you don't want to find yourself in an uncomfortable situation.

### DRUG USE

Topdeck has a strict zero-tolerance drug policy. Customers should not bring any illegal substances onto the Topdeck coach or into any of the accommodation we stay in on our trips. This includes marijuana – even if it is legal in some of the states your trip passes through. If you are found in possession of drugs, you will be removed from the trip immediately. All instances of drug possession will be reported to Topdeck Head Office, who may consider alerting the relevant authorities.

**REMEMBER:** if you are found in possession of drugs, not only do you risk getting in trouble with the local police, but our Driver will also be held responsible if they are found on the Topdeck coach. Trust us, you don't want that to happen to any of our Drivers – they're awesome.

### MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Culture shock, homesickness, random periods of feeling down – these things happen and are totally normal. You can rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Topdeck crew will do their utmost to cheer you up.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call home. Sometimes it's nice to hear a familiar voice and have a good old-fashioned catch up with your loved ones
- Eat well. Never underestimate the power of a good, wholesome meal. Nobody feels at their best when they're hungry!



- Drink responsibly. Not only will you swerve the dreaded hangover, but by keeping an eye on what you drink you could also avoid getting into any potentially uncomfortable situations
- Talk to your Trip Leader. Don't forget, they're probably far from home too – so they're sure to know some tried- and- tested ways to beat the blues
- Integrate with your fellow Topdeckers. This one is key! The more fun you're having on your trip, the less likely you are to feel homesick (fact!)

## **TRAVEL SINCE COVID-19**

Travel looks a bit different since COVID-19. That's why we've put some new procedures in place to help keep you safe on the road.

What remains the same? Your Topdeck trip will be run hygienically, responsibly, and with your safety at the forefront of everything we do. End of.

Here's the info: <https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/travel-safely>

# **RESPECT ON THE ROAD**

## **RESPECTING FELLOW TRAVELLERS**

Our trips are for everyone. We're a family – and we want every Topdecker to have an incredible time.

What we're not about is excluding people or making them feel like they don't belong. That's why we always encourage Topdeckers to be kind and courteous to their fellow tripmates . The golden rules? Respect each other's space, be mindful of causing excessive noise in shared accommodation, and treat others how you'd wish to be treated. Easy!

## **HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE TRAVELLER**

Responsible travel isn't difficult to achieve. With a little conscious thought and preparation, you can have an awesome adventure AND a positive impact on the places you visit. Sweet!

Here are five things you can do to ensure you're travelling responsibly:

- Conserve water. You know the drill – reuse your room towels, take short showers and remember to turn off the tap when you're brushing your teeth
- Reduce your waste. Ditch the plastic bag, refuse unnecessary packaging, dispose of your waste responsibly and recycle as much as possible
- Go local. Hunt down locally owned and operated restaurants and bars, shop in local markets, and book tours and activities run by local guides
- Consider the wildlife. Avoid any attractions that involve closely engaging with wild animals
- Respect local people and culture. Obeying local laws is a given – but also remember to dress and behave in a manner appropriate to the community. Be polite and keep an open mind!

# **INSURANCE**

Before your trip departs, it's compulsory for all passengers to take out comprehensive travel insurance covering cancellation, medical expenses (including repatriation), loss or damage to baggage and personal belongings, money and personal liability.

Head to our FAQ for more info: <https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/faqs-0>

Got more Qs? Chat with our Customer Service team: <https://www.topdeck.travel/about-us/contact>

## PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Please make sure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your trip. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your trip's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling. Check out our handy interactive map showing global visa requirements:

<https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/latest-border-restrictions>

PLEASE NOTE: some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure, as requirements do change periodically.

## TIPPING

Basically: it's not necessary.

Your Trip Leader and Driver don't expect tips, and they won't ask for any either. Meaning? More dollar to spend on optional activities (and a souvenir for your nan).

## WHAT TO BRING

Based on our experience, these items are key. Everyone's different though – so if you want to bring more or less, go for it (as long as you don't exceed your 20kg allowance, that is!).

Off to Japan? Your luggage must be no bigger than 160cm in total (height x width x length). So maybe leave the hairdryer at home.

Psst: this is a packing list for Topdeck trips in general. Obv you'd look silly splashing around the Greek islands in a snowsuit.

- 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes + 1 pair of smart casual shoes
- 1 pair of thongs/jandals/flip-flops
- 2 pairs of jeans/trousers
- 2 pairs of shorts/skirts
- 4 shirts/T-shirts
- 2 sweaters/jumpers
- Smart casual evening wear
- 1 warm jacket + 1 rainproof jacket

- Underwear and socks + swimwear
- Towel
- Toiletries
- Hat and sunscreen
- Basic medical kit (including plasters, aspirin etc)
- Adaptor plug
- Reusable water bottle
- Snow gear



**THAT'S IT!**