



Hidden Treasures of Japan



TOUR DOSSIER

 Unique Japan Tours

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Hidden Treasures of Japan



"Welcome to the start of your Unique Japan Journey!

Our team and I are really looking forward to planning your trip to Japan.

Hidden Treasures of Japan was designed to give travellers a better understanding of Japan's religious and spiritual background, its beautiful most sacred sites, artistic show pieces, all often over looked on regular tourist trails. By joining this tour, you will have a clearer picture of Japan's ancient history – how it transitioned from being an oriental mystery to a master of modern art and architecture. Learn more about how Japanese people think, behave, and appreciate their natural surroundings and ancient treasures that are significant to the traditions and mindset of the people today. Many of the places visited on this tour may not be found on regular routes, and for this reason, make it a really unique adventure.

I am happy to receive any quetsions you might have about this tour so please get in touch!"

Darina Slattery, Unique Japan Tours, Managing Director & Tour Creator Email: <u>darina@uniquejapantours.com</u>



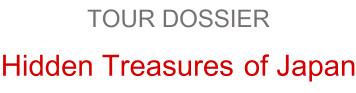


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Why Choose Unique Japan Tours? 1.

1. FULLY BONDED - FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Unique Japan Tours is a member of Total Payment Protection who fully guarantee and protect financial transactions between you and Unique Japan Tours. Your tour is fully protected no matter what country you are paying from. Full details of this will be clearly explained in our terms and conditions.



AQL Number - 47571

2. Small Groups with NO MINIMUM NUMBER POLICY

Our groups have always been intimate in size. We prefer quality over quantity. For that reason, our average group size averages at 8-12 people (maximum 16 guaranteed). Since our tours started in 2007, and unlike many other operators out there, we have never cancelled a tour because of insufficient numbers. If we get less than the minimum number to run a tour (currently set at 6 people), don't worry. We have years of experience designing a semi-escorted version of the same tour. The only difference to you will be instead of having a fulltime tour leader throughout, you will be met on arrival at each destination by local guides and assistants - almost like your own private tour!! [See Inclusions on Page 14]

3. Local Team with 24/7 Emergency Helpline

Our local company UJT Services G.K. [also owned by Unique Japan Tours], will oversee all operations of your trip from start to finish. Our team in Tokyo are busy working behind the scenes ensuring each tour runs smoothly, in real time! So, rest assured, no matter what your problem may be, we will be with you all the way. While on our small group tours, your tour leader &/or local guides will be your key contacts for any emergencies.

4. 22 Years Experience in Japan

Our founder, Darina Slattery, first visited Japan in 1998, where she studied at Tokyo's Meiji Gakuiin University. Today, she leads a team of Japan travel experts, working with hundreds of local suppliers in Japan directly, and selling tours to Japan globally. This invaluable knowledge and vast network of connections has resulted us being able to create the most amazing itineraries for people. All our tours are tried and tested ensuring our clients gain time, memories, & savings while on your trip.

OUR CREW – JAPAN TRAVEL EXPERTS

Our work ethic is family & customer focused. We are a team of Japan travel experts located in Tokyo, London & Dublin. Our clients come from all over the world so you can expect diversity in the group which always adds a bit of colour!

Let's Zoom/Skype/Chat our way to finding you the best tour that suits you and your travel partners. We find speaking to you in person will save everyone time while ensuring you get the best tour suitable for you.





UNIQUE





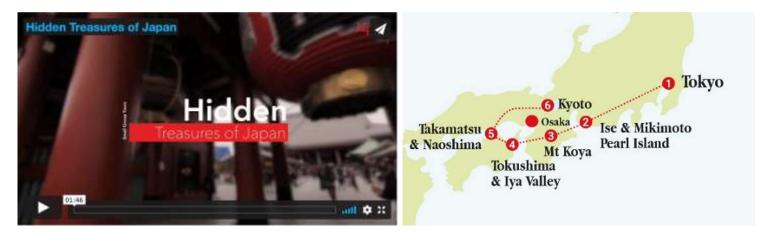
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2. Tour Route & Departure Dates

Duration: 12 Nights / 13 Days

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"A tour created to capture the essence of Japan's soul, beauty and heritage"



On **Hidden Treasure of Japan**, immerse yourself in Japan's ancient past and contrasting present. Visit some of its oldest and most magnificent temples and shrines. Enjoy the contrasting Naoshima Island, home to some of Japan's most innovative and artistic architecture and design. Experience its religious roots first hand as you become acquainted with the monks of Koyasan and grandours of the great Ise Shrine. Glide through the stunning Iya Valley and Ritsurin Garden. The perfect tour for those in search of a far greater and richer travel experience. If you are visiting Japan for the first time, be prepared for complete immersion into Japanese culture and traditions with plenty of off-the-beaten track locations in between the excitement in Tokyo & Kyoto. If you have been to Japan before, you will appreciate these places even more.

2021 Departures

- June 09 21 (Aoba Matsuri, Mt Koya)
- July 14 26* (Pre-Olympic Season)
- August 08 20* (Olympics, Rousoku (Candle) Festival at Koyasan, & Awa Odori Dance Festival Tokushima)
- September 18 30 (Sumo Special)
- October 23 November 04 (Autumn Foliage)
- December 28 January 09, 2022 (New Years Day at Sacred Ise Grand Shrine)

2022 Departures

- February 10 22 (Magical Winter)
- March 30 April 11 (Cherry Blossom Favourite)
- June 09 21 (Aoba Matsuri at Koyasan)
- July 14 26 (Summer Season)
- August 08 20* (Rousoku (Candle) Festival at Koyasan &
 Awa Odori Dance Festival Tokushima)
- September 18 30 (Sumo Special)
- November 08 20 (Autumn Foliage)
- December 28 January 09 (New Years day at Sacred Ise Grand Shrine)

(*) Supplement applies – see website for exact prices





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3. Tour Itinerary

	Itinerary in Brief	Accommodation & Meals
DAY 1 Tokyo	 Arrive in Tokyo Narita or Haneda Airport Met on arrival by our airport transfer staff and taken to your hotel W usually meet our fellow explorers 6pm in the hotel lobby. So try to arrive by at least 2pm on this day to make it on time for orientation. Enjoy a welcome dinner with your tour leader who will go through the tour in detail and answer any questions you will have. 	
DAY 2	Breakfast at your hotel TOKYO CITY SIGHTSEEING WITH LOCAL GUIDE 09.00 – 17:00 Enjoy a full-day private guided tour of Tokyo City HIGHLIGHTS:	3 Nights Tokyo Shibuya Excel Tokyu
Tokyo	 Hamarikyu Garden Tsukiji Outer market Lunch (Pay locally) Asakusa Sensoji Temple & Nakamise Shopping Arcade Edo Museum or Skytree (Museum is closed Mondays) You will have the evening to spend at your leisure. Your guide will be happy to advise you of the best places to go after dark! 	(or similar city centre 4*) Breakfast Daily + Welcome Dinner on Day 1
DAY 3 Tokyo	 Breakfast at your hotel Free day in Tokyo Optional Activities and Tours: Kamakura & Yokohama Day Trip Tokyo Disney Resort / Studio Ghibli / Sumo Tournament (May & Sep) (Tickets available upon request). 	





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DAY 4 Tokyo $\downarrow \downarrow$ Toyota $\downarrow \downarrow$ Ise	After breakfast, we will take our first ride on the bullet train as far as Nagoya. From here, we continue on toyota to spend a few hours at the very famous Toyota Car Museum & Plant . *Plant tours are not guaranteed – depending on the season and Daily opening hours. Closed on weekends and other days. Check into your hotel in Ise where you can relax and enjoy dinner	
	Breakfast at your hotel	2 Nights
	Ise Shrine & Mikimoto Pearl Island WITH LOCAL GUIDE	Toba Hotel International (or similar 4*)
DAY 5	Enjoy Private guided tour of Japan's most sacred shrine at Ise & Mikimoto Pearl Island.	Breakfast included
lse	 HIGHLIGHTS: Ise Jingu Shrine Oharamachi Mikimoto Pearl Island Mikimoto Pearl farming museum 	
	Dinner at your hotel and evening at leisure	
	Breakfast at your hotel Transfer to Koyasan KOYASAN WALKING TOUR C <i>WITH LOCAL GUIDE</i>	
DAY 6 Ise ↓↓ Koyasan	 HIGHLIGHTS: Walk along the Okunoin Garan Temple Complex Lunch Kongobuji Check into Koyasan Temple Lodge Join evening calligraphy session if available Enjoy vegan friendly Shojin Ryori (highly stylised traditional Buddhist cuisine) for dinner at your temple lodge 	1 night Koyasan Temple Lodge (Japanese Style) Vegetarian Dinner and Breakfast included





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JUNE HIGHLIGHTS:

June 15th marks the celebration of the birth of Kukai (Kobo Daishi), the founder of Shingon Buddhism in Japan, whose masaleum can be found at Okunoin in Koyasan. IN the afternoon a portable shrine, Hanamido, is paraded through the village towards Okuno-in.

AUGUST HIGHLIGHT:

Rousoku Candle Festival is held on August 13th each year as a memorial service for the spirits of departed loved ones and all other deceased spirits residing at Okuno-in Temple.



Morning chanting by the monks can be observed (optional) Shojin Ryori Breakfast at your temple

Transfer to Wakayama port where will take the ferry to Tokushima.

DAY 7	TOKUSHIMA SIGHTSEEING S WITH LOCAL GUIDE	1 Night
		Hotel Kazurabashi
Koyasan $\downarrow \downarrow$ Tokushima $\downarrow \downarrow$	 Experience: Indigo Dying workshop Naruto Whirl Pool - Watch where two seas meet in rage 	(Superior Japanese Ryokan)
Iya Valley	Continue on to Iya Valley for a stunning scenic stay in the valley.	Breakfast & Dinner daily included
	All Seasons HIGHLIGHT: Enjoy onsen (hot spring) & kaiseki dinner at your ryokan (Japanese style hotel)	

AUGUST HIGHLIGHT

Awa Odori Festival takes place between August 12 – 15 every year as part of the Obon Festival in Tokushima, Shikoku. The festival welcomes over 1.3 million visitors every year, the largest dance festival in Japan. As a result of high demand during this time, our itinerary and accommodation on this day will be subject to change. You will be notified of the changes on your final itinerary.





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	Breakfast at your hotel	
DAY 8	★ IYA VALLEY & KOTOHIRA ★ WITH LOCAL GUIDE	
Iya Valley ↓↓ Kotohira ↓↓ Takamatsu	 Kazurabashi (vine bridge) Iya Gorge & River Cruise Continue on to Kotohira Village where you can visit the famous Kompirasan (shrine with) Kanamazura Theatre (1st Kabuki Theatre in Japan) 	2 Nights ANA Clement Hotel Takamatsu (or similar 4*)
DAY 9 Takamatsu	Arrive to Takamatsu in the evening. Free time. Breakfast at your hotel Morning Visit to Ritsurin Garden with your tour leader/group Afternoon Free Time to explore Takamatsu on your own	Breakfast Included
DAY 10 Takamatsu	Breakfast at your hotel Board Ferry to Naoshima	
↓↓ Naoshima ↓↓ Kyoto	 Naoshima Sight seeing HIGHLIGHTS include: Benesse House Museum Chichu Art Museum Art House Project 	3 Nights
	Ferry & local trains to Okayama / Bullet train to Kyoto Breakfast at your hotel • KYOTO CITY SIGHTSEEING • • WITH LOCAL GUIDE	Kyoto Okura Hotel (or similar 5*) Breakfast daily
DAY 11	HIGHLIGHTS include:	
Kyoto	 Nijo Castle Kinkakuji Golden Pavillion Heian shrine Gion area Tea Ceremony Experience 	



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	Breakfast at your hotel	
	Free day in Kyoto	
	OR, take a self-guided adventure usign your Japan Rail Pass to:	
	- Hiroshima & Miyajima Island	
DAY 12		
	- Himeji Castle	
Kyoto		
	Whichever you decide to do, your tour leader will be ready to help you make your plan and give you the best local advice available.	
	Farewell dinner with your group (optional) organised by your tour leader locally. You can opt in/out of this therefore 'pay locally' will be required .	
DAY 13	Breakfast at your hotel	
Kyoto	Transfer to Kansai International Airport or continue on post- tour back to Tokyo or beyond. Ask our team and we will make necessary arrangements.	
Options:		
Kyoto ↓↓	~~ Tour Ends ~~	
Tokyo/Nagoya/Osaka Airports	SAYONARA	







4. Destination Highlights

Tokyo

One quarter of all Japanese live in Tokyo or the near vicinity and with a population of over 14 million inhabitants, Tokyo is one of the largest cities in the world. With its huge skyscrapers, underpasses, overpasses and crowds of pedestrians, Tokyo may not seem the most attractive city on the surface, but the city has a vibrant charm all of its own. The street level detail is what makes Tokyo such an incredibly interesting place to explore and at every turn you will be met with an array of sights, sounds and smells to enliven the senses. The city has many major sights to visit such as Senso-ji Temple in the old downtown area of Asakusa or the fashion hub of Shibuya from where all new trends are said to emanate. All in all a stay in Tokyo is to experience one of the world's most vibrant and interesting cities; a capital hurtling headlong into the future whilst maintaining its links with the traditions of ancient Japan.





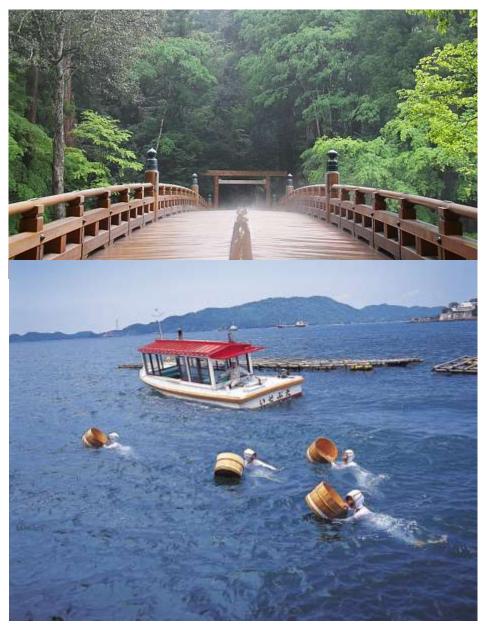
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Toba & Ise

Toba, located at the northeastern end of Shima-hanto Peninsula in Mie, flourished as the castle town of the Kuki family who ruled this region from the 17th century. It was also a landing spot for visitors on the sea route to Ise-jingu Shrine and belongs to Ise-Shima National Park. Ise Shrine is Japan's most sacred shrine dating back to the 3rd century. It is considered to be the spiritual home of the Japanese and its national religion Shinto. There is the Outer Shrine Geku and the Inner Shrine Naiku. The inner shrine is dedicated to the worship of the sun goddess with the outer shrine dedicated to the goddess of agriculture and industry. The Naiku and Geku are rebuilt every 20 years as a part of the Shinto belief of the death and renewal of nature and as a passing of building wav techniques from one generation to the next. The best time to see the rocks is at dawn during the summer, when the sun appears to rise between them.

Mikimoto Shinju-to Island, Irukato Island and many other islands are in Ise Bay. Pearl Bridge connects the town and Mikimoto Shinju-to Island, the place where Kokichi Mikimoto succeeded in



culturing pearls for the first time in the world in 1893. There is a model factory and a Pearl Museum on the island and visitors can watch the processing of pearls and an ama, or a woman diver, diving.





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Koyasan



Mount Koya (known as Koya-san in Japanese) is one of the holiest mountains in all of Japan and the plateau at the top is home to more than 100 temples and monasteries. Koya-san is the headquarters of the Shingon sect, an esoteric school of Buddhism which has over ten million members and 4,000 temples in Japan. There has been a religious community here since 816 when it was founded by a monk named Kukai (Kobo Daishi [774-835]) after he returned from studying for two years in China. Koya is a very peaceful and beautiful wooded area and some great walking is also available. The atmosphere is truly magical and we are sure you will find this a wonderful place to discover the true meaning of Japanese spirituality and beliefs. Kukai also established the 88 Temples of Shikoku Pilgrimmage Route (1,200km). which thousands of pilgrims embark upon each year. Many pilgrims begin and cmplete the journey by visiting Koyasan as a mark of respect to its founder.

Iya Valley

The Iya Valley is considered one of Japan's three 'hidden regions' and when you see the terrain you will appreciate why! Set deep in the heart of Shikoku the area is made up of narrow river gorges and steep mountain peaks, covered in thick vegetation. The isolated location of the Iya Valley and its inhospitable terrain made it a favourite hideaway for defeated clans and exiled political dissidents in days gone by. Today modern engineering has opened up the area to cars and trains, but even so you will still get a very good idea of the true nature of the valley as the narrow roads wind their way around the edge of hillsides and tunnels bore straight through previously impassable mountains. Although now more accessible the Iya Valley remains very rural and very traditional making it a fantastic place to appreciate a side of Japan very different to the bright lights in the big cities. Activities in Iva include boat trips along the river, crossing the vine bridges (for the daring!) that once served as quick escape routes for fleeing armies, as well as simply taking in the wonderful scenery all around you.







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Kotohira

Kotohira is a relatively unheard of little pilgrim town in Shikoku, the smallest of Japan's four main islands. It is home to Shikoku's most popular shrine and pilgrim destination, Kompirasan whose main hall stands at the top of almost 800 steps, making for a challenging but rewarding ascent! Kotohira also houses the Kanamaruza which is Japan's oldest surviving, complete kabuki playhouse, built in 1835 which is still infrequently staging kabuki performances. Although a popular destination for Japanese visitors, Kotohira is very much offthe-beaten track for overseas tourists, and the town retains a very sleepy, rural, laid-back feel to it, especially in the evenings when the day-trippers have headed home, and the streets are empty.



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Takamatsu

Takamatsu is the largest city in Kagawa Prefecture in the northeast corner of Shikoku island. Takamatsu faces the Inland Sea and has a long history as a port, acting as something of a link between Shikoku and the main island of Honshu. The city's top attraction is Ritsurin Koen, one of Japan's finest examples of a landscape garden, considered by many to be on a par with the famous 'Big Three' gardens of Mito, Okayama and Kanazawa. Also of interest are Yashima, a flat-topped mountain and nearby Shikoku-Mura, a collection of traditional houses and other buildings brought from all over Shikoku to display local architecture and construction techniques.

Naoshima

Naoshima could easily be another pretty but forgotten island in the Seto Inland Sea scraping a living from fishing. However a unique art project has given Naoshima its deserved global reputation. Naoshima is home to a large collection of contemporary art galleries, exhibits and installations which offer a tour de force of architectural expression integrating art and the natural environment. Two of the main galleries, the Chichu Art Museum and Benesse House, were designed by the world famous architect Tadao Ando and feature works by Claude Monet, Walter de Maria, James Turrell, Andy Warhol, Richard Long and Bruce Nauman among others.





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Kyoto

Brimming with tradition, Kyoto is the ultimate destination for anybody who wants to soak up time-honoured Japanese culture. Home to 17 UNESCO World Heritage sites, over 1,600 Buddhist temples, and 400 Shinto shrines, this ancient city showcases the heart and soul of traditional Japan. Kyoto boasts an array of world-class gardens, majestic festivals and delicate cuisine, all of which make much of the rhythms of nature and the changing of the seasons. While on first glance visitors may find themselves struck more by the ubiquitous grid-like structure of modern metropolitan Japan, a great part of the magic of Kyoto is in picking out its treasures: sacred shrines tucked in among shopping arcades, time-honoured teahouses nestling among modern businesses and the geisha of legend sweeping down backstreets among the tourists and souvenirs. Kyoto's charm lies in these details and whether you're here for three days or three years, the closer you look, the more you'll discover.







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5. Tour Prices & Inclusions

Land Package Prices:

Triple Room Sharing:	€4,200 £3,800 US\$5,100 AU\$6,600
Twin/Double Sharing:	€4,450 £3,990 US\$5,400 AU\$7,000
Single Occupancy*:	€5,750 £5,150 US\$6,950 AU\$9,050

*If you are willing to be paired up with another solo traveler, enquire with your travel consultant. While we cannot guarantee this option, we will do our best to find you a suitable room mate.

All prices are per person and subject to change at the discretion of the company. Check website <u>www.uniquejapantours.com</u> for up-to-date & guaranteed prices. Once deposit is paid, your tour price is fixed. <u>Book Now</u>.

Price Inclusions:

Hotels & Ryokans (12 nights)	9 Nights combination of Boutique, Superior & Deluxe Western Hotels 3 Nights Ryokan (Japanese style) 1 Night Temple Stay (Japanese style)
Fully Escorted (6 – 16 persons):	You will be escorted by our English speaking tour leader.
Semi Escorted (1 – 5 persons):	If your group is less than 6 people, you will be doing the tour on a semi- escorted basis (Met in each area by our local assistants and guides).
Meals:	 ✓ Breakfast daily ✓ 5 evening meals (taste the seasonal local produce from each region where you stay)
Private Tour Guides:	Private Guides in Tokyo, Ise, Koyasan, Tokushima/Iya Valley, Takamatsu & Kyoto
Getting Around:	 Reserved Seats on all long-distance trains 2 Luggage transfers (one bag per person) Chartered vehicles, local taxis/minivans/coaches on private city tours Arrival & Departure Airport transfers to & from hotel
Entrance Fees:	Included into all sights listed on itinerary



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Cultural Experiences:

- ✓ Tokyo Sights
- ✓ The Great Ise Shrine
- ✓ Toyota Kaikan Museum & Car Factory tour (subject to availability)
- ✓ Mikimoto Pearl Island & Ama Diver demonstration
- \checkmark Overnight in traditional Japanese style accommodation with kaiseki dinner
- ✓ Onsen / Hot Spring retreats
- ✓ Temple stay
- ✓ Optional calligraphy and/or meditation
- ✓ Iya Valley boat ride
- ✓ Japanese garden
- ✓ Naoshima art island Architecture and Art lovers treat
- ✓ Kyoto World Heritage temples and shrines
- ✓ Authentic Tea Ceremony Experience
- ✓ Bullet train journeys
- June Koyasan Festival
- > August Awa Odori Dance Festival & Koyasan Candle Festival

Seasonal Festivals/Events:

- September Sumo
- November Autumn Leaf Changing Season
- December New Years Day at Japan's most significant shrine

6. What about our luggage?

When using express trains on our small group tours, we will send your large suitcases on to the next hotel (usually skipping one night). Your itinerary will clearly highlight when this will be required. On these days, you will need a small overnight bag to bring with you (similar to a carry-on bag for flights). Although this service is reliable & efficient, Unique Japan Tours cannot take any responsibility for guests' baggage. Each passenger will be required to carry your own bags at all times. Tour leaders will not be responsible for bags. Some hotels will have porter service but not all.



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7. Complimentary Services

UJT's Additional Services:

- ✓ Unique Japan Tours Travel Consultant
- ✓ Comprehensive tailor-made travel pack
- ✓ Local Emergency Contact
- ✓ All taxes and service charges
- ✓ Financial Protection

Not Included:

- Meals & Beverages (not listed on itinerary)
- International Flights (request quote)
- Tour Guide / Driver Gratuity (optional)

"At UJT, our aim is to be open and honest with all of our travellers. We hate hidden costs so will tell you where and when you will need cash while on the go!" Darina Slattery, UJT Owner/Manger

UJT's Essential Travel Pack

At Unique Japan Tours we aim to make your adventures in Japan run as smoothly as possible. To facilitate this, we will provide a detailed Travel Pack, tailor-made for your specific trip including:

- ✓ Tips, hints and information covering subjects as diverse as transport, food, language and bathing etiquette!
- ✓ Detailed step-by-step itinerary including hotel names (in both English and Japanese – good to have for taxi drivers) and daily suggested itineraries with clear details on how to make this happen!
- Customised access maps with bi-lingual train times and full instructions for every journey you will be making in Japan.
- ✓ Destination guides giving you up to date information on each place you visit.
- ✓ Local Area Maps, Vouchers, and Emergency contact details.

Any other information you have specifically requested from us.

8. Ready to BOOK!

To secure your place on Hidden Treasures Tour we require a booking deposit of:

€400 / USD500 / GBP350 / AUD600 per person

Pay Deposit Online: <u>https://www.uniquejapantours.com/book-a-tour/</u>

Tour Reference: Booking Deposit

Tour Name: Hidden Treasures





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Small Group Tours Checklist

When?	What to do:	Tick when complete:
Before paying deposit:	Read and agree our full <u>Terms & Conditions</u>	0
When ready to book:	Pay Booking Deposit <u>(Payment Link</u>)	0
After paying deposit up to 7 days:	Receive pro-forma invoice outlining schedule of payments. Check it. Complete Booking Form and send (with copy of passport) to your travel consultant	0
After paying deposit :	Take out personal/medical Travel Insurance . Send your policy name and details to your travel consultant	0
After paying deposit (up to 8 weeks prior):	Book your flights as soon as you have your tour secured with us (or before if you find a good deal) Send E-Ticket to your UJT Travel Consultant	0
8 weeks prior	Tour Balance is due 8 weeks prior to the tour starting date. Pay online or by bank transfer. Details will be on your Pro-forma invoice.	0
2-3 weeks prior	Wait for your Travel Pack including full pre-departure details. We will send to the postal address you provide us with. Your travel consultant will be in touch before this time to confirm address.	0
Pre-Departure	Final check you've sent all Essential Documents to your travel consultant: Flight E-Tickets, Dietary Requirements (if any), Insurance Policy Name/Number, Passport Copy, Emergency Contact Name/Number	0

As a result of the prolonged restrictions caused by **Covid-19 Pandemic**, scheduled tour dates may be affected. Website dates will be kept up-to-date. As of January 2021, we are unsure when Japan will open up its borders. However, don't let that stop you plan your dream trip for later on in 2021 and indeed into 2022/2023. All deposits are refundable if we cannot operate a tour due to Covid.