

May 1, 2023

Dear Cathy & Family

Thank you for choosing Explorient! We are delighted to have the opportunity to serve you on your family trip to Japan. Please find your final trip itinerary below. We're excited to have you on board with us!

**TOUR SUMMARY**

**15 Day / 14 Night Custom Japan Family Tour – Deluxe Hotels**

- Tokyo / Nagoya / Kiso Valley / Nagoya / Kyoto Train Tickets (First Class/Green Seat) per itinerary
- 4 nights at Cerulean Tower Tokyu Hotel in Tokyo (Superior Room)
- 2 nights at Ryokan Fuki No Mori in Kiso Valley (Japanese Room with private bath)
- 4 nights at Hotel Celestine Gion in Kyoto (Superior Room)
- 2 nights at Swissotel Nankai Hotel in Osaka (Advantage Room)
- Hotel Breakfasts Daily
- Kaiseki Dinners (2) nightly during Roykan stays in Kiso Valley
- Ghibli Park Tickets to Grand Warehouse Section
- Sightseeing by private guide with use of public transportation and private vehicle per itinerary
- Separate Baggage Transfer (6 pcs) between Tokyo / Kyoto / Osaka

**TOUR ITINERARY**

Day	Activity Summary
May 26	<p><b>Arrive Tokyo:</b> Upon afternoon arrival at Narita Airport (NRT), be met and transferred to CERULEAN TOWER TOKYU HOTEL by private van for your next 4 nights' accommodations.</p> <p><b>Meals:</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Accommodations:</b> Cerulean Tower Hotel (Superior Room)</p>
May 27	<p><b>Tokyo:</b> Today, enjoy a private morning tour of several of Tokyo's must-sees. Visit Meiji Jingu Shrine, Tokyo's most famous Shinto Shrine dedicated to the late 19th-century emperor who opened Japan to the West, home to a 40-foot-high torii gate and a 200-acre park made of 1,500-year-old cypress. Next, proceed to Tsukiji Fish Market, the former site of the world's largest fish market, now a vibrant marketplace filled with produce and seafood stands and sushi joints. Continue to Tokyo's oldest Buddhist Temple at Senso-ji in Asakusa followed by a stroll thru its colorful Nakamise Shopping Street before returning to your hotel. Enjoy the balance of the afternoon at leisure to shop, eat and explore Tokyo on your own. (B)</p> <p>Later this afternoon, we'll head to Yurakucho and mix with the "salarymen" (office workers) who relax with a beer and a grilled chicken skewer ("yakitori") in the so-called yakitori alley. You will enjoy two yakitori of your liking and a drink in a typical yakitori establishment. At the end of the dinner, your guide can drop you off at an izakaya (Japanese pub) in central Tokyo (you will then be on your own and all orders will be on you – the guide will explain how to go back to your hotel) or take you back to your hotel. (B,D)</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Today's program utilizes public transportation</p> <p><b>Meals:</b> Breakfast, Dinner (snacks)</p> <p><b>Accommodations:</b> Cerulean Tower Hotel (Superior Room)</p>

<p>May 28</p>	<p><b>Tokyo:</b> This morning, further explore Tokyo visiting various places of interest (TeamLab Planets Digital Art Museum, local markets, Gardens, etc.) with your guide at disposal. This afternoon, enjoy a private Sushi-making lesson before returning to your hotel on your own. (B,L)</p> <p><b>Note:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Today's program utilizes public transportation.</li> <li>2. Admissions to TeamLab Planets Digital Art Museum is included</li> </ol> <p><b>Meals:</b> Breakfast, Lunch (cooking lesson) <b>Accommodations:</b> Cerulean Tower Hotel (Superior Room)</p>
<p>May 29</p>	<p><b>Tokyo:</b> Full day free at leisure to explore Tokyo on your own. (B)</p> <p><b>Suggested visits while on your own include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Imperial Palace East Garden (park / gardens)</li> <li>➤ Shinjuku Gyoen National Garden (park / gardens)</li> <li>➤ Ueno: National Museum, Ueno Park and Local Markets</li> <li>➤ Ginza, Shinjuku: Shopping and Eating</li> </ul> <p><b>Meals:</b> Breakfast <b>Accommodations:</b> Cerulean Tower Hotel (Superior Room)</p>
<p>May 30</p>	<p><b>Tokyo / Kiso Valley:</b> This morning, proceed to Shinagawa Station by taxi or JR Train (approx. 15-20 minute ride) on you own and board a Shinkansen (Bullet Train) for Nagoya. At Nagoya Station, be met by your guide and continue onto Kiso Valley by express train. Transfer to RYOKAN FUKI NO MORI by hotel shuttle.</p> <p>After checking in to your ryokan, we'll visit the charming post town of Magome, a historic town on the Nakasendo Trail which was a major route that connected Edo (now Tokyo) and Kyoto during the Edo period (1603-1868). Magome is known for its preserved Edo-era buildings, traditional houses, and cobblestone streets. Here, we'll stroll along the picturesque main street of the town lined with shops, cafes, and inns. Return to your ryokan where a Kaiseki Dinner will be served this evening. (B,D)</p> <p><b>Pick-up time:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passengers are to make their way to Shinagawa Station for Shinkansen.</li> <li>• Your Guide will meet your party at Nagoya Station during transit and escort you to hotel followed by tour</li> </ul> <p><b>How to Get There:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shinagawa Station → Nagoya: Nozomi 23: depart 10:17am; arrive 11:45am</li> <li>• Nagoya → Nakatsugawa Station: Express Shinano 11: depart 12:00pm ;arrive 12:48pm</li> <li>• Nakatsugawa → Nagiso: Local Train: Depart 1:00pm; arrive 1:10pm</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All train tickets will be delivered to your hotel in Tokyo upon arrival</li> <li>2. Baggage transfer (6 pcs) between Tokyo and Kyoto will be arranged by your hotel (please leave bags with bell stand at checkout). Bags will be transferred to your hotel in Kyoto the <u>next</u> day. Please bring a small carry-on size bag for your 2 night's stay in Kiso Valley.</li> <li>3. Today's program utilizes public transportation</li> </ol> <p><b>Meals:</b> Breakfast, Dinner <b>Accommodations:</b> Ryokan Fuki No Mori (Japanese Room)</p>

<p>May 31</p>	<p><b>Kiso Valley:</b> Today, enjoy a full day tour around Kiso Valley by private car. Your day starts with a visit to Tsumago, another one of 69 post towns on the Nakasendo Trail. Enjoy a scenic 5-mile hike (level: moderate) to Magome. Afterwards, journey north by private vehicle to Narai Juku, the most affluent post town of the Kiso Valley, sometimes referred to as "Narai of a Thousand Houses". Enjoy time in this beautiful heritage town before returning to your hotel. Dinner is served at the ryokan this evening. (B,D)</p> <p><b>Pick-up time:</b> 9am at hotel lobby</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Today's program is based on private vehicle</p> <p><b>Meals:</b> Breakfast, Dinner <b>Accommodations:</b> Ryokan Fuki No Mori (Japanese Room)</p>
<p>June 01</p>	<p><b>Kiso Valley / Ghibli Park / Kyoto:</b> After breakfast, proceed to Ghibli Park by private vehicle (drop off only). Enjoy a visit of Ghibli Park. After the visit, proceed to Nagoya Station on your own by taxi or bus service for your 45-minute Shikansen ride to Kyoto. Upon arrival, transfer to HOTEL CELESTINE GION on your own by taxi located less than 10 minutes from Kyoto Station. (B)</p> <p><b>Pick-up time:</b> To be advised by your guide</p> <p><b>How to get there:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kiso Valley → Ghibli Park: private vehicle</li> <li>• Nagoya → Kyoto: Hikari 519: depart Nagoya Sta. 6:03pm; arrive Kyoto 6:37pm</li> <li>• Kyoto Station → Hotel Celestine Gion Kyoto: on your own by taxi (10 minute ride)</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tickets are included for Ghibli's Grand Warehouse for 1pm.</li> <li>2. Half day (4-hours) guide service will be provided to escort party into Ghibli Park</li> </ol> <p><b>Meals:</b> Breakfast <b>Accommodations:</b> Hotel Celestine Gion (Superior Room)</p>
<p>June 02</p>	<p><b>Kyoto:</b> Today, enjoy a full day sightseeing of Kyoto by private car. Begin the day with a trip to the Nishiki Market, a.k.a. Kyoto's Kitchen, a bustling marketplace filled with local produce, seafood, sushi-stalls and snack stands. Continue to the Western part of the city visiting the beautiful Kinkaku-Ji (Golden Pavilion). Originally built as a retirement villa for the Shogun that later became a Buddhist Temple after his death at his request.</p> <p>Next, take a stroll through the beautiful Arashiyama Bamboo Forest followed by a visit to Ryoan Temple famed for its Rock Garden. Enjoy a tea ceremony at a local tea house before ending the day with a visit to Kiyomizu Temple, one of the most celebrated temples of Japan founded in 780 on the site of the Otowa Waterfall in the wooded hills east of Kyoto. This UNESCO world heritage site is best known for its wooden stage that juts out from its main hall, 13 meters above the hillside below boasting panoramic views of Kyoto City. (B)</p> <p><b>Pick-up time:</b> 9am at hotel lobby</p> <p><b>Note:</b> A private car will be provided for today's tour (guide and car are allocated for 8 hours)</p> <p><b>Meals:</b> Breakfast <b>Accommodations:</b> Hotel Celestine Gion (Superior Room)</p>
<p>June 03</p>	<p><b>Kyoto (Cooking Lesson / Nara):</b> This morning, enjoy a private Izakaya Lesson at <a href="#">Cooking Sun</a> to prepare</p>

	<p>your very own lunch. Afterwards, your guide will pick you up at the cooking studio where we'll travel by Express Train to Nara, on the outskirts of Kyoto. Nara is Japan's first Capital from 710-784 A.D. and an UNESCO World Heritage Site. Visit Todaiji Temple, famed for being the world's largest wooden building and houses one of the country's largest Buddha statues. It is adjacent to Nara Park, where over 1,000 free-roaming deer abound. Time permitting, the last stop is Kasuga Taisha, one of the most celebrated shrines in all of Japan. Return to Kyoto in the afternoon. (B,L)</p> <p><b>Note:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooking session Time: 9:30am – 12 noon.</li> <li>• Guide will meet at Cooking Sun Studio for the afternoon Nara tour which utilizes public transportation</li> </ul> <p><b>Meals:</b> Breakfast, Lunch (cooking lesson) <b>Accommodations:</b> Hotel Celestine Gion (Superior Room)</p>
June 04	<p><b>Kyoto (Lake Biwa):</b> This morning, enjoy an immersive experience of Lake Biwa where you'll enjoy a rare opportunity to observe a roof-master in action as well as first-hand experience of life in the countryside. Your morning starts with a visit to Sakamoto town that gives you an opportunity to discover and learn about the beautiful Japanese roof architecture of temples and shrines.</p> <p>On this tour, you'll have the rare opportunity to visit some of the last craftsmen who dedicate their lifework to the preservation of renowned temples and shrines in Japan. Since ancient times, Japanese people have believed that the beauty of Japanese architecture starts from the roof. The tour consists of a behind-the-scenes visit to a 100-year-old Onigawara artisan workshop where craftsmen have continued the ancient tradition of hand-carved Onigawara roof tile creation. Onigawara is a combination of the Japanese words for demon (oni) and tile (kawara), featuring gargoyle and dragon designs. These elaborate tiles serve a dual role in warding off evil spirits and protecting the roof edges from the wear and tear of the elements. We'll visit a workshop where Hiwadabuki—roofs made of cypress bark—have been created for 200 years. This method is considered one of the most authentic and high-class styles of making plant-based roofs such as those made with rice straw and wooden planks. Guests can observe the actual making of the material at this workshop, which is certainly a rare opportunity. The lightning-fast placement of wooden nails is a particularly highlight—see if you can beat the speed of your host! Finally, we will move to Hiyoshi-taisha shrine. This shrine has 2,100 years of history and has its own unique architectural design. The shrine pavilion is a registered National Treasure whose roof was made by the artisans on today's tour.</p> <p>Afterward, take a short train ride to Shiga town. Here, we'll enjoy a stroll through the beautiful farm village that overlooks Lake Biwa, a visit a local family's home where a simple Japanese lunch is prepared (with your help) followed by a fun-filled mochi-making experience to prepare your very own Japanese dessert. Return to your hotel in Kyoto on your own. (B,L)</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Passengers are to make their own way to/from Kyoto Station (by taxi). Meeting time is 9:00am in front of the 7-Eleven located at the WEST GATE of JR Kyoto Station (see provided map)</p> <p><b>Meals:</b> Breakfast, Lunch <b>Accommodations:</b> Hotel Celestine Gion (Superior Room)</p>
June 05	<p><b>Kyoto / Osaka:</b> This morning, enjoy a visit to Fushimi Inari Shrine, famous for its thousands of vermilion torii gates straddling a network of trails behind its main buildings leading into the wooded forest of the sacred Mount Inari. Next, proceed to Osaka and enjoy an afternoon city tour. Visit the Floating Gardens, Osaka Castle and Dotonburi's bustling food and entertainment district just steps from your hotel. Check-in at SWISSOTEL NANKAI for your next 2 nights' accommodations. (B)</p> <p><b>Note:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Osaka transfer and city tour utilizes public transportation</li> </ol>

	<p>2. Baggage transfer (6 pcs) between Kyoto and Osaka will be arranged. Bags will be transferred to your hotel in Osaka the <u>next</u> day. Please bring a small carry-on size bag for your 1st night's stay in Osaka</p> <p><b>Meals:</b> Breakfast <b>Accommodations:</b> Swissotel Nankai Osaka (Advantage Room)</p>
June 06	<p><b>Osaka:</b> Full day free at leisure to eat, shop and explore Osaka on your own. Places of interests include (Osaka Aquarium, Kobe and Himeji Castle). (B)</p> <p><b>Meals:</b> Breakfast <b>Accommodations:</b> Swissotel Nankai Osaka (Advantage Room)</p>
June 07	<p><b>Return Home:</b> Transfer to the airport by private vehicle for your departure flight home. (B)</p> <p><b>Meals:</b> Breakfast <b>Accommodations:</b> N/A</p> <p>****END OF PROGRAM****</p>

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