

# Cherry Blossom Tour, An Unforgettable Journey to Kyoto.

**30th March - 9th April CONFIRMED**

Join Jill on her Cherry Blossom Tour of Kyoto. Experience ancient temples, Hanami- cherry blossom viewing picnic, river trip and more. Our itinerary takes you to Kyoto and its surrounding areas. We will visit Nara, Arashiyama and Uji as well as spending an unforgettable evening with the enigmatic geisha of Kyoto. Dates are now confirmed. We always wait until we have data regarding blossom. This is however not an exact science!

Below is the itinerary, this may change slightly.

Tour Itinerary

## Day 1 UK/Kansai Airport

Join Jill on her flight from Newcastle/Manchester with Emirates, a wonderful airline. We book through Dial a flight. We set up a reference number for you to call and book your flights. Because we are tour guides not tour operators we are prohibited from booking your flights. I will happily help you throughout the booking however. If you join us on the flight I will pay the charges from Kansai airport to the hotel and on the return journey.

Alternatively you can make your own way to Kyoto. Other airlines include Emirates, Qatar and KLM. I would recommend Emirates. You will be collected from Kyoto station by one of our guides. The journey from Kansai to the hotel and return journey will be covered by you. On arrival at Kansai, you will be met by a member of staff and transferred to a private taxi for your transfer to your Ryokan. A quick lesson on ordering food will be your first sojourn into the Japanese lifestyle. We round off the evening with a trip up to the top of Kyoto tower. From there you will see the city spread out before you in all its glory.

\*\*A full list of local places to eat, from fast food to gourmet and all in between will be given to you prior to arrival. It includes full details of what foods are offered and maps in both English and Japanese. Many restaurants are within 10 minutes of your accommodation.

## Day 2 Gion and Kiyomizu-dera.

After a leisurely light breakfast, enjoy a full day visiting Kennin-ji temple. Spend the afternoon strolling through Gion and the geisha districts, take in the fabulous shops along the route up to Kiyomizu-dera, a hillside temple offering stunning views over the city.

## Day 3 Nara

Today we take a train to one of Japan's old capitals, Nara. Nara was Japan's first permanent capital and is home to eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Your highlight of the day is a visit to Todai-ji temple, the largest wooden building in the world and home to the Great Buddha. Are you brave enough squeeze through Buddha's nostril! Nara Park is a lovely place to stroll, relax and feed the deer. Spend a relaxing afternoon visiting one of Nara's most beautiful gardens.

## Day 4 Geisha Experience

Nijo Castle and its glorious history and gardens is our first stop today. Now we're ready to go back to the geisha district and take in a tea ceremony followed by one of Kyoto's greatest spectacles. The Miyako Odori, Spring dances are the highlight of today's itinerary. The Miyako and Kyo Odori are a chance to see the geisha performing at their best. Please note this is NOT Gion Corner which is famous for its 'tourist orientated show'. Let's walk back into Gion and have a coffee at my favourite café.

\* OZASHIKI. Price depends on numbers. A special package can be arranged for this evening. For a highly discounted price we can spend a hour in a private bar with geisha. We have a drink, play a few games and see some geisha entertainment. Ask all those questions you have been wondering about and get the picture of a lifetime. The vast majority of native Japanese would never be in the position to meet a geisha. This is truly a great experience.

### Day 5 Toji and Muruyama Park

Toji temple in itself is exquisite, but once a month it becomes one of my favourite places. Each month the grounds of the temple turn into a huge temple market. Hundreds of stalls fill the area. It's a haven for anyone with a love of things Japanese. PLEASE don't be tempted to buy that HUGE samurai helmet. (As one lady did last year!) You buy it, you carry it!

### Day 6 Arashiyama

Taking a train ride into the mountains, we return back into Arashiyama by river cruise. The two hour journey takes you through glorious scenery. See monkeys, cranes, turtles and if we're lucky kingfishers. On arrival in town we stroll over the famous bridge and have a prepared picnic (hanami) under the cherry trees. Finish the day with a relaxing foot spa before returning to Kyoto.

### Day 7 Uji

A short train ride takes us to Uji. Uji is perhaps one of the best areas in Japan for tea growing. In Spring Uji bridge is a wonder to see. . We'll be taught tea making by a tea master and visit Byodo-in. Weather permitting we will take a lunch cruise.

### Day 8 Full day walk

After arriving at Kyoto station today we will start our 5 hour walking tour. Don't panic! It's a slow paced walk, with no uphill or downhill. Throughout the day we visit temples, graveyards, artisans and old geisha districts.

### Day 9 Ryo-anji, Kinkaku-ji and Yamazaki

Today we visit the world famous gardens of Ryoan-ji, where the Queen was said to be mesmerised by its beauty. Following on to Kinkaku-ji, the golden pavilion and its sprawling gardens. As this is our last night we will have our farewell dinner at a Ryokan (inn) that is very dear to me.

### Day 10 Nishiki Market and Terramachi, Daimaru, Return to UK

A later start today for everyone. Japan is not only famous for Mount Fuji and geisha, but equally famous for its amazing variety of food. We visit Kyoto's world famous Nishiki market. As we leave tonight to fly back to the UK, we use this last chance to pick up last minutes gifts and supplies at these truly immense covered markets.

## **THE TOUR INCLUDES;**

- 9 nights accommodation at centrally located hotels in Kyoto .
- Services of a knowledgeable guide throughout.
- Airport to accommodation taxi service. Suitcases must weigh no more than 24kg. Hand-luggage must be of a size that will fit on your lap in the taxi.
- Entrance fees for all attractions mentioned above.
- Meet & Greet service upon arrival at Kansai International Airport.
- Optional 4 day extension available.
- Fully guided tour available every day.

## **THE TOUR DOES NOT INCLUDE:**

- ANY flights or travel to and returning from Japan or in the UK other than those stated in the itinerary.
- Any journeys made and not mentioned in the itinerary.
- Any meals not mentioned above.
- Entrance to any attractions not named above.
- Escorted return journey to UK unless otherwise stated. Our guide will take you to the airport and ensure your safety through to departure.
- On returning to the airport you will be charged 1,000¥ per extra bag, other than your suitcase/hand luggage.

**DATES CONFIRMED: 30th March to 9th April (13th April additional available) 2012**

**Group of 4 or more can book any dates required between September and May.**

**TOTAL PRICE: £1,300 per person JAPANESE SINGLE ROOM SUPPLEMENT: £145**

**EXTEND YOUR TRIP by four days for an additional £105 per person, per night.**

**To make a booking, a non-refundable deposit of 10% per person is required. Refundable only should Festival of Japan cancel the tour. The balance must be made 12 weeks prior to departure. Please note there are no exceptions. All price estimates are based on current rates of exchange and are subject to availability**

**Deposits can be made in various ways:**

- 1. Cheque made payable to J.Clay**
- 2. Direct payment by BACS**

Citi Bank

· 084411523

· The Citibank sort code - **30 00 45**

· The Citibank address -  
Citibank International plc,  
19th Floor, Citigroup Centre  
Canada Square  
Canary Wharf  
London, E14 5LB

· Andrew G Clay

### **Frequently asked questions**

#### **Q. How many people are in the tour group.**

A. The Max. numbers will be 15, though usually 6 to 10 people is average.

#### **Q. Why are flights not included?**

A. Flights are not included simply because of the changing exchange rates. Early booking will give you a much better chance of cheap flights. Also note that we try to book our own flights 4 months prior to travel, should you book after this you may not be able to travel to Japan in the main group and might have to make your own way to the hotel.

You may want to do this anyway if leaving from other than Newcastle. You can book flights through our travel agent or one of your choice.

We do not get any benefit from using our travel agent, no commission etc.

#### **Q. Are my meals included?**

A. Meals are not included. We have regular mealtimes and will visit a variety of restaurants and cafes. You can of course choose your own meal times and venues.

#### **Q. Are all of my travel expenses covered?**

A. Daily travel to classes, attractions and services to and from Kansai Airport are included. Incidental taxi rides, bus rides etc made outside of the itinerary will NOT be included

#### **Q. What are the cancellation charges?**

A. A deposit of 12.5% must be made on application. This is non-refundable. The remainder of the cost must be made no less than 8 weeks prior to travelling (unless otherwise agreed).

#### **Refunds:**

Monies paid (with the exception of the deposit) will be refunded as below. Charges have to be made as classes, theatre tickets etc will have to be booked in advance to ensure places.

**Up to four weeks prior to travel - 100% refund**  
**Up to three weeks prior to departure - 75% refund**  
**Up to two week prior to travel - 50% refund**  
**Less than two weeks – 30% refund**  
**Less than one week – no refund**

Should the trip be cancelled by ourselves for any reason, all monies will be refunded.

\*\*\*Japan Rail pass – may be purchased as part of the beading course only. This is purchased a month before travel and delivered directly to you. In the event of a cancellation you can return the ticket if unused up to 12 months after the date of purchase. The cost of this ticket will therefore obviously NOT be refunded as you have to claim a refund personally.

## **Packing for Japan**

The yen is the Japanese currency unit. It's convenient to bring major credit cards, such as MasterCard or VISA. You can use them at various places such as department stores, hotels, and restaurants in major cities, though not all. If you are travelling the countryside of Japan, many stores might not accept credit cards/traveller's checks. It's good to carry some Japanese yen in cash while you are in Japan. Be careful of pickpockets if you are taking a crowded train or going to an event where you can expect a large crowd. You can exchange currency at post offices; (you **MUST** have your passport with you) and in Kyoto station. You can use some foreign credit cards/ATM cards at Japan Post Office ATM.

We have found that the currency in Kyoto station gives the best rate of exchange, indeed better than the UK.

### **Appliances**

The electricity in Japan is 100 volts, and there are two cycles (50/60). In the southwest Japan, it's 60 cycles. Osaka, Kyoto, and Nagoya are in the southwest side.

If your appliances are three-pronged, you will certainly need a plug since Japanese appliances are two-pronged. It shouldn't take much space in your luggage. These are available from most supermarkets. Matalan also have them, as do certain Pound Shops. Buy BEFORE you get to the airport, as the price is ridiculous. Make sure that it is suitable for Japan.

If you want to email your family or friends from Japan, there are Internet cafes or our Ryokan usually has that facility. However feel free to bring your laptop.

### **Luggage**

Compared with westerners, who often travel with large suitcases, it's not common for Japanese people to travel with a large suitcase around the country. There are no spaces to store large luggage in trains, and the coin lockers aren't large enough to hold them either. Keeping luggage small is recommended when you travel around Japan. We will be able to wash and dry clothing, though you may want to bring a small travel iron.

After we arrive in Japan we will take a bus, then taxi to Ryokan. Please be sensible and try to pack light. Remember the more clothing you bring the fewer goodies you can take home.

The weather during the daytime is similar to UK springtime. Usually short sleeves. After dark the temperature does drop so a lightweight, but warm coat is essential.

### **Shoes**

Since it's a Japanese custom to take off your shoes indoors, you might have to take off your shoes often in Japan. Bringing a pair of shoes that you can slip off and on easily might be convenient. Make sure to bring, and wear, a nice pair of socks or pantyhose to avoid any embarrassment when you take off your shoes. Trainer socks are perfect to pop into your handbag.

## **Handkerchief and Pocket tissue**

It's important to carry a handkerchief in Japan. Many restrooms in Japan don't have paper towels. Be sure to bring a handkerchief in your pocket to dry your hands. I will provide everyone with a tenugui, hand cloth. These can easily be rinsed out at the end of the day.

## **Gifts**

While you are in Japan, you might be visiting a Japanese home. If you are wondering what to bring for gifts, anything like sweets (traditional British), postcards of where you live, t-towels, T-BAGS! Etc. You will find that the Japanese will regularly help us, so these gifts will come in handy.

## **Telephone**

We can hire you a mobile telephone once in Kyoto. This can be delivered direct to your room. The charge for 10 days is 4,900 Y (approx £35). You will be billed for calls after returning the handset.

However using the public telephones in Japan is the same as in the UK. You will be provided with a list of useful numbers should you get separated, including my mobile number. It is much cheaper than in the UK.

## **Travelling on buses, taxis etc**

I will provide you with the hotel address both in English AND in Japanese. Should you ever become separated from the group you will be able to show this to any taxi driver. Taxi travel is very cheap in Japan. Most trips costing less than £5.00

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## **CHECK LIST**

- Passport
- Airline Tickets
- Traveller's cheques if applicable
- Japanese yen in cash if possible. Please remember to fill in the onboard airline forms honestly when declaring cash and food.
- Your passport MUST have at least 7 months remaining before expiry
- Travel Insurance, I will need to see this 14 days before travelling
- Credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express)
- 2 Photocopies of all these documents. One spare for you and one for us
- Small suitcase or extra bags. There are many Pound shops where these can be bought.
- Camera (film is cheap in Japan). We are near to a camera shop where photos can be quickly be put onto CD's
- Umbrella, though these are as cheap as £1 in most stores
- Sewing kit
- Walking shoes, slip-on if possible
- First Aid Kit including plasters
- Prescription medicines, please put some in your hand luggage and half in your case
- Alarm clock, our Ryokan has no wake up service
- Glasses and Contact lenses. Buying gasses in Japan is very cheap. Bring along your last eye prescription you may see some you like.
- Pen and notebook
- Cosmetics, unless you use special shampoo etc these can be bought cheaply in Japan. This will free up case space

**Declaration**  
**CHERRY BLOSSOM 30th March to 9th April 2012**

I, the undersigned, would like to participate in Jill Clays cultural visit to Japan. I understand and accept that, should my application be accepted, I shall pay a non-returnable deposit of 12.5%, followed by the full agreed payment for this activity no later than 8 weeks before departure (Please see FAQ for payment options and cancellation fees)

I further understand and agree that my participation in this cultural visit is dependant on my obtaining (from any professional source) appropriate insurance to cover me for medical expenses, loss of possessions and damage to third party possessions and property, for the period of my visit to Japan.

Jill Clay's cultural visits to Japan are fully guided whilst in Japan. I further understand and agree that, should my application be accepted, I shall endeavour to participate fully in all items on the itinerary, including sleeping, eating and bathing in the traditional Japanese manner, and trying the various Japanese arts. Please tell us of any fears or worries you may have prior to travelling, so they can be addressed in good time.

\*\*\* Please note that to enter Japan your passport must have at LEAST 7 months remaining before expiry. Also, please attach your photograph, thank you. And details of beading level.

<b>Family Name:</b>		<b>Given Names:</b>	
NB Please give your name exactly as it appears on your passport			
<b>Passport No:</b>		<b>Expiry date:</b>	__/__/____
<b>Nationality:</b>		<b>Date of birth:</b>	__/__/____
<b>Occupation:</b>			
<b>Address:</b>			
<b>Telephone:</b>		<b>E-mail:</b>	
<b>Special dietary needs:</b>			
<b>Allergies or other medical conditions:</b>			
<b>Prescribed medication to be taken to Japan:</b>			
<b>Interest in Japan</b> (please mention previous visits there, studying the language or culture, or any Japanese events attended in the UK):			
<b>Cherry Blossom Tour 10 day Tour</b> ( ) <b>Additional 4 day tour</b> ( ) <b>Single person Supplement</b> ( )			
Signed _____		Dated __/__/____	

**Application for participation in Jill's cultural visits to Japan**