

## The Path of the Samurai Tour



This tour will take you along the fascinating Ancient Japan samurai history; from Tokyo (old Edo) to Kyoto, visiting wonderful cities (such as Niigata, Matsumoto, Kanazawa, Okayama, Nagoya, Mimasaka,...), where the most brave samurai warriors were born and lived on the solemn Samurai Path, with unalterable honour and courage, to remain in our hearts forever.

You begin in Tokyo, old Edo, the centre of Tokugawa Ieyasu's ruling. You will have ample time to explore this marvellous city and Kagurazaka area, and the nearby 'Little Edo', Kawagoe. Also, a Japan Rail Pass is included to travel to Niigata and visit some samurai residences and streets preserved. From here, travel by train to the Kiso Valley, Nakasendo Road, historical samurai highway that connected old Tokyo and Kyoto; then head to the castle town of Matsumoto.

Journey onwards Kanazawa and travel along the ancient villages of Takayama and Shirakawago, a World Heritage site where you can see traditional 'minka' houses with roofs that resemble hands joined in prayer called 'gassho-zukuri' style.

You will visit the city of 'Momotaro' and Okayama Castle, and then you will explore Mimasaka, the village where the famed hero Miyamoto Musashi devised the Two Swords style. From here, travel by train to the Fukuoka and charming port-city Nagasaki, where trade relations between Europe and the land of the rising sun began, back in the sixteenth century. Your Fukuoka stay is followed by a memorable adventure in Kyoto, full of sacred and marvellous temples and shrines, geishas that look like something out of a Japanese fairy tale, (or are they just 'ukiyo-e' princesses brought to life by the skilful hand of Hokusai Sensei?); and Nagoya, where you can visit its castle and the shrine of one of the most famous samurai of Japan, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, brave warrior and one of the 'great unifiers', who may also brought an end to the mythical Samurai period.



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Day 1 **Tokyo.** Arrive in Tokyo. Free to explore Tokyo, including the Samurai Museum in Kabukicho (Tokyo), and Kagurazaka area in the afternoon, where you may visit many former samurai residences and geisha district. Stay for 3 nights.

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Day 2 **Tokyo.** Feel free to travel by train using your Japan Rail Pass to Kawagoe (Saitama). You may wish to see the traditional 'kura' warehouses, Kita-in Temple, Hikawa Shrine, Sweets Shop Alley Stroll, the Kawagoe Tower Bell and the Old Store Merchant House.

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Day 3 **Tokyo.** Travel by train using your Japan Rail Pass to Niigata. Upon arrival, feel free to visit the city where the famous samurai Kenshin Uesugi was born. Free to explore Kasugayama Castle, Izumi Fumoto Museum, and may visit the nearby samurai city of Joetsu, where you may explore Kasugayama Castle and some preserved samurai houses.

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Day 4 **Kisoji.** Travel by train using your Japan Rail Pass to the Kiso Valley. Upon arrival, free to explore Magome or Tsumago. You may wish to hike some of the Nakasendo Road, the

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original highway from Edo (nowadays Tokyo) to Kyoto or you may take an optional tour. Stay for 2 nights.

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Day 5 **Kisoji.** Travel by train using your Japan Rail Pass to Matsumoto. Free to explore castle town Matsumoto in the morning and stroll along the old streets of the Nawate area.

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Day 6 **Kanazawa.** Travel to Kanazawa using your Japan Rail Pass. Free to explore the castle town of Kanazawa, including Nagamachi Samurai District (Former Samurai Residence), Kenrokuen Garden, Higashi-chaya Tea House District and Hakuza (gold leaf shop) or you may take an optional tour. In the afternoon, you may visit Kanazawa Castle. Stay 2 nights.

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Day 7 **Kanazawa.** Free to explore Takayama, and the World Heritage-listed villages of Shirakawago and Gokayama.

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Day 8 **Okayama.** Travel by train using your Japan Rail Pass to Okayama, the setting of the Japanese story 'Momotaro'. Free to explore Okayama Castle area, and may visit the nearby samurai cities of Matsue or Izumi in the evening. Stay for 2 nights in Okayama.

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Day 9 **Okayama.** Travel by train using your Japan Rail Pass to Mimasaka, the village of the hero Miyamoto Musashi. Free to visit Miyamoto Mushashi Shrine and the local dojo, where the Two Swords style was born and developed.

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Day 10 **Fukuoka.** Travel by train using your Japan Rail Pass to Fukuoka. Free to explore the city of the samurai Nagamasa from the House of Kuroda, and visit the old town of Hakata, including Hakata Sen Nen Mon Gate, Waka Hachimangu Shrine, Ogusu-sama Tree, Jotenji Temple, Tochoji Temple, Ryugu-ji Shrine, Mitsuyasu Seikaen Chaho, Sumiyoshi Shrine, Kushida Shrine and Fukuoka City Museum. Stay for 2 nights.

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Day 11 **Fukuoka.** Travel by train using your Japan Rail Pass to Nagasaki. Explore Dejima Island, Nagasaki's historic churches, Urakami Cathedral, and the Twenty-Six Martyrs Museum and Monument in honour of the 26 Christians executed in 1597 on the order of Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

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Day 12 **Kyoto.** Travel by train using your Japan Rail Pass to Kyoto. Free to explore Great Buddha, Todaiji Temple, Golden Pavillion, Ryoaniji Temple, Kiyomizu and the Geisha District of Gion or you may take an optional tour. Stay for 3 nights.

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Day 13 **Kyoto.** Travel by train using your Japan Rail Pass to Nagoya. Free to visit the shrine of samurai lord Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Nagoya Castle and the famous Tokugawa Museum. You may like to visit Sekigahara, where the decisive battle for the unification of Japan took place.

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Day 14 **Kyoto.** Free to explore Heian Jingu Shrine, Kiyomizudera Temple, and Sanjusangendo Hall, Sagano Bamboo Grove and Arashiyama or you may take an optional tour.

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## Tour Prices for 2019

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Jan – Dec **Please call us for advise**

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