




Art, Architecture and History of Japan 2026

27 OCT – 11 NOV 2026

Code: 22640

Tour Leaders **Dr Mark Erdmann**

Fitness Level 

Level 1 - Active

For people with active lives and good mobility

Explore the artistic traditions of Japan, from the art and architecture of ancient temples and castles, to the current cutting edge creative scene, including the 'Art Islands' Naoshima and Teshima.

Overview

- Travel with [Dr Mark Erdmann](#), an expert on Japanese art and architecture, as he explores the country through the lens of its artistic traditions, from the art and architecture of ancient temples, to the current cutting edge creative scene.
- Visit the well-preserved historic districts of Kanazawa, Kyoto and Nara. Walk through streets lined with old wooden buildings that were once the homes of samurai, artisans and merchants.
- Discover some of the region's finest museums, including the Yamatane Museum and the Ota Memorial Museum of Art in Tokyo, I.M. Pei's Miho Museum in the Shigaraki Mountains, the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa, and the magnificent Adachi Museum in Mitsue, where the museum is set within an extraordinary garden.
- Visit the annual Nara National Museum Shosoin Exhibition, when artefacts from the treasure house of Todai-ji Temple are selected for special display for a few weeks in autumn.
- Trace the development of Japanese sacred and secular architecture, with visits to UNESCO World Heritage Sites, such as Todai-ji, Horyu-ji, Yakushi-ji and Toshodai-ji in Nara, and Kinkaku-ji (Temple of the Golden Pavilion) and Nishihongan-ji in Kyoto.
- Meet artisans who continue the long traditions of Japanese crafts like paper-making and ceramic work, adapting and evolving their work to the lifestyles of the 21st century.
- Spend two days visiting Naoshima and Teshima, two of the famed 'Art Islands', where extraordinary architecture by luminaries like Tadao Ando was built to house modern and contemporary art from around the world.
- Visit splendid and formidable castles from the feudal era, from where the *daimyo* guarded his territory with his army of *samurai*. Explore the vast UNESCO World Heritage Listed Himeji Castle, with its bewildering maze of rooms and corridors.
- Enjoy the peace of remote temples and shrines, a refuge for contemplation and prayer. Take the rope-way up Mt Shosha to Engyo-ji and walk the path through the tranquil forest, past the many Buddha statues and stone lanterns scattered along the route.
- Travel by boat to peaceful Chikubushima, 'Island of the Gods' on Lake Biwa, to visit the Buddhist temple Hogon-ji and the Shinto shrine Tsukubusuma-jinja, both tucked away in the forest.
- Visit Meiji-Mura, an open-air museum where we see the entrance and foyer building of Frank Lloyd Wright's Imperial Hotel Tokyo, saved from demolition and transported here in the 1960s.
- The tour is limited to **18 participants**.

Overnight Tokyo (1 night) • Kanazawa (2 nights) • Nara (2 nights) • Kyoto (4 nights) • Inuyama (2 nights) • Himeji (1 night) • Kurashiki (3 nights)

Palaces, Temples and Castles in Premodern Japan - lecture by Dr Mark Erdmann

<https://youtu.be/dLhyXiTaGP8>

Testimonials

Recently I participated in ASA's Art, Architecture and History tour in Japan. This was my fourth ASA tour. Like the others in Italy and India, it was superbly well organized, headed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable leader, and took me to places that I could never have discovered by myself. I thought I knew Japan, having lived there for a year in the 1970s, but this tour threw a new light on the country – both in the places we visited and in the expert commentary of the leader, Mark Erdmann. I can thoroughly recommend ASA for their ability to show Australians how other people live in other countries and cultures. James, VIC.

Leaders



Dr Mark Erdmann

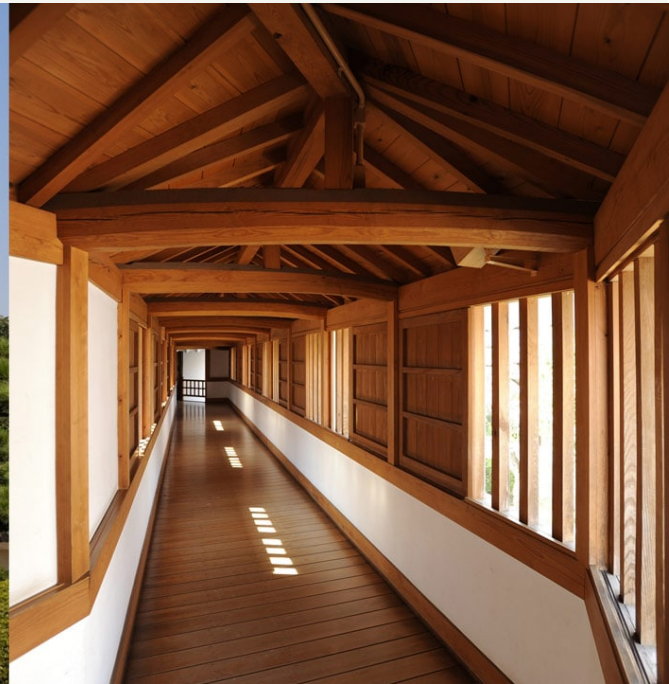
Lecturer in Art History at the University of Melbourne, with a PhD in Japanese art and architectural history from Harvard University. Mark lived in Japan for 15 years and is fluent in Japanese. His research focuses on castles, warrior elite residences, palaces, as well as the Jesuit mission in Japan and their impact on visual culture.

Mark is a Lecturer in Art History at the University of Melbourne. He received his doctorate in Japanese art and architectural history from Harvard University and has studied at University of London SOAS as well as the University of Tokyo, Gakushuin, Kindai University, and Osaka University. He lived for 15 years in Japan and is a specialist in Japanese pre-modern architecture. His research has focused on castles, master carpenters, as well as artistic exchange with Jesuit missionaries.

Mark first joined ASA in 2023 as lecturer for our tour entitled "Art, Architecture and History of Japan".

Palaces, Temples and Castles in Premodern Japan - lecture by Dr Mark Erdmann

<https://youtu.be/dLhyXiTaGP8>



Itinerary

The following itinerary describes a range of gardens, museums and other sites which we plan to visit. Many are accessible to the public, but others require special permission which may only be confirmed closer to the tour's departure. The daily activities described in this itinerary may change or be rotated and/or modified in order to accommodate alterations in opening hours, flight and train schedules and confirmation of private visits. Participants will receive a final itinerary together with their tour documents prior to departure. The tour includes meals indicated in the detailed itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch and D=dinner.

Tokyo - 1 night

Day 1: Tuesday 27 October, Tokyo

- Tour commences at 10.00am in the foyer of the Hotel
- Welcome Meeting
- Yamatane Museum
- Ota Memorial Museum of Art
- Welcome Dinner

Meeting Point: The tour commences at 10.00am in the foyer of the Hotel. Check-in time is not until 3.00pm, however your luggage may be securely stored until we return from our day's program at 4.30pm.

We commence with a short welcome meeting which will be followed by a visit to two of the most interesting museums in Tokyo that will provide an excellent introduction to the traditional art of Japan. The Yamatane Museum specialises in the Japanese style of watercolour painting known as *nihonga*, and its high-quality collection includes over 1800 works primarily from the Meiji period (1868-1912) onward, several of which have been given the status of 'object of national cultural significance'.

The nearby Ota Memorial Museum of Art is a delightful museum specialising in Japanese Ukiyo-e, the

country's famous woodblock prints. The museum has a collection of over 14,000 works from all eras of this art, including masterpieces by Kitagawa Utamaro, Katsushika Hokusai (including a print of *The Great Wave*) and Utagawa Hiroshige.

Tonight we enjoy a Welcome Dinner at our hotel. (Overnight Tokyo) D

Kanazawa - 2 nights

Day 2: Wednesday 28 October, Tokyo – Kanazawa

- Shinkansen (Bullet Train) Tokyo – Kanazawa
- Higashi-Chayagai District
- Nomura-ke (restored samurai residence & house garden)
- 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art
- Evening lecture at the hotel

This morning we travel by Shinkansen train to Kanazawa, considered one Japan's best-preserved Edo-period cities. Kanazawa is a popular place for the Japanese to visit, but perhaps because of its remote location and very cold winters few foreigners make the journey to experience its rich cultural legacies.

The feudal atmosphere of Kanazawa still lingers in the Nagamachi district, where old houses of the Nagamachi Samurai line the streets that once belonged to Kaga Clan. The T-shaped and L-shaped alleys are distinct characteristics of the feudal town, and the mud doors and gates of the houses remain the same as they were 400 years ago. The houses with their samurai windows (*bushimado*) and mud walls under the yellow Kobaita wooden roofs, which were protected from snow by straw mats (*komo*), evoke a bygone era. We will visit the Ishikawa-ken History Museum that is dedicated to the history of this prefecture.

During the Edo Period (1603-1867), the scale and dispensation of land to samurai families who lived in this district, and others in the city, was a fairly accurate indicator of rank. One of the larger Nagamachi estates was assigned to Nomura Denbei Nobusada, a senior official in the service of the first feudal lord of the Kaga domain. The reforms that accompanied the Meiji Restoration in 1868 decimated the lifestyles of the socially privileged. The samurai, whose social class was nullified, not only had their stipends terminated, but their estates were also appropriated by the state. Consequently, the Nomura family, whose considerable land holdings dated back 12 generations, lost their home and were reduced to turning a section of the remaining part of their property over to the cultivation of fruit and vegetables. Though they were discouraged from public displays of ostentation, merchant families and those of former samurai were not prohibited from commissioning the construction of exquisite gardens.

We visit the restored residence of Nomura, displaying the lifestyle and artefacts of the era, and explore its garden which features trees that are over 400 years old. Broad, irregularly shaped stepping stones provide access to the inner garden whose attractive entrance is flanked by a Chinese maple tree with leaves that turn a brilliant red in autumn.

Contrasting 'Old Kanazawa' is the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art that opened in 2004 with a design by SANAA architects. The building is circular, opening equally in all directions and transparent. Sustainability is one of the guiding principles when commissioning works, while another is the 'democratizing' of contemporary art to make it accessible to all.

We finish our day with a lecture at the hotel, when Mark will provide an overview of Japanese history and some of its most significant moments and people. (Overnight Kanazawa) B

Note: Our luggage will be transported separately to our hotel in Kanazawa.

Day 3: Thursday 29 October, Kanazawa

- Ceramics studio
- Kanazawa Castle (exterior)
- Kenroku-en Garden
- National Crafts Museum

This morning we visit a renown local ceramics studio. From the master craftsmen who follow traditional methods, we will learn of the techniques, discipline and philosophies that are essential for the creation of each piece.

We then visit Kanazawa Castle, the seat of power of the local Maeda clan, hereditary feudal lords (*daimyo*) of the Kaga province from 1583. Burnt down on a number of occasions, only the superb Ishikawa Gate and the Sanjikken Nagaya samurai dwelling survive from the original construction.

Kenroku-en was once the outer garden of Kanazawa Castle and there has been a garden on the site since the late 1600s. The original garden, begun by the fifth Maeda lord, Tsunonori Maeda, was called 'Renchitai' but it was almost entirely burnt out in 1759. It was restored in the 1770s and in 1822 became known as Kenroku-en, a name that means 'the garden of six sublimities' or, 'a garden combining the six aspects of a perfect garden'. These six features were what the Chinese traditionally believed were necessary for the ideal garden – spaciousness and seclusion, artifice and antiquity, water-courses and panoramas: all these characteristics are to be found in the 25 acres of this beautiful garden.

We finish the day with a visit to the newly opened National Crafts Museum. This collection was previously housed in the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo, relocating to Kanazawa in 2020, and comprises craft, graphic and industrial design work from the Meiji era (1863-1912) to today.

This evening we dine at a charming local restaurant. Hidden behind a traditional façade hung with lanterns, the restaurant specializes in delicious charcoal grilling. (Overnight Kanazawa) BLD

Nara - 2 nights

Day 4: Friday 30 October, Kanazawa – Kyoto – Nara

- Shinkansen Kanazawa – Kyoto
- Horyu-ji Temple Complex, Nara (incl. Chugu-ji Golden Hall and Pagoda)

This morning we take the Shinkansen to Kyoto, and then travel by coach to Nara, a beautiful town that retains the atmosphere of ancient Japan, and from 710 to 784 it was the nation's first permanent capital. It is home to many of Japan's oldest temples, particularly Buddhist and Shinto shrines.

On arrival we visit one of Japan's oldest temple complexes, Horyu-ji, founded in 607 by Prince Shotoku. This extensive Buddhist temple complex was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1993 and the Western Precinct is home to the world's oldest surviving wooden structures – the central gate, the main hall and a five-storey pagoda. (Overnight Nara) BLD

Day 5: Saturday 31 October, Nara

- Yakushi-ji
- Toshodai-ji
- Todai-ji
- National Nara Museum, and the annual Shosoin Exhibition

This morning we visit two important temple complexes that are included as part of the UNESCO designated World Heritage Site 'Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara'. Yakushi-ji was constructed by the Emperor Tenmu in the late 7th century in gratitude for the recovery of the Empress from illness. This Buddhist temple complex has a strictly symmetrical layout, with a main hall flanked by two pagodas. Today it is the headquarters of the Hosso school of Japanese Buddhism.

Toshodai-ji is of the Risshu sect of Buddhism, and its Golden Hall, the kondo, is considered the archetype of the 'classic style' of Buddhist temple architecture. The façade of the single story structure is divided into seven bays and topped by a hipped tile roof.

After time at leisure for lunch we visit the impressive Todai-ji, founded in 745 by Emperor Shomu. Although rebuilt following a fire in 1709 to two-thirds of its original size, it nevertheless remains the largest timber building in the world. Two seven-metre tall guardian gods flank the entrance, to the great Buddha Hall, the Daibutsu-den, which houses the 15-metre-tall bronze statue of the great Buddha. The original casting was completed in 752, when an Indian priest stood on a special platform and symbolically opened its eyes by painting on the Buddha's eyes with a huge brush. This ceremony was performed before the then retired Emperor Shomu, his wife Komio and the reigning Empress Kogen, together with ambassadors from China, India and Persia.

We finish the day with a visit to the Nara National Museum, one of the pre-eminent national art museums in Japan. The museum houses a marvellous collection of art belonging to the temples and shrines in the area, and is renowned for the collection of Japanese Buddhist sculpture, scrolls, paintings and altar goods. Our visit is timed to coincide with the annual Shosoin exhibition, when artefacts from the treasure house of Todai-ji Temple are selected for special display for a few weeks in autumn. (Overnight Nara) BD

Kyoto - 4 nights

Day 6: Sunday 1 November, Nara – Shiga – Kyoto

- Joruri-ji
- Miho Museum
- Shigaraki Village

This morning we depart Nara and visit a remarkable site in the hills to the north east of the city, Joruri-ji. This Buddhist Temple of the Ritsu sect dates to the mid-eleventh century and the complex holds four national treasures and nine important cultural properties. Of particular importance are the group of nine sitting Amida Nyorai statues, each one symbolizing one of the nine stages of Nirvana, and the group of the Four Heavenly Kings. The temple's historic garden is one of the few remaining examples of a Paradise garden of the early Heian Period (794-1185); the layout is said to be in the shape of the Sanskrit letter 'A', expressing paradise.

Further north we visit the Miho Museum, located in the beautiful Shigaraki mountains, an extraordinary contemporary space designed by I.M. Pei. Home to an impressive private collection of Asian, African and European art, the museum is built into the mountain itself (80% of the structure is underground), in order to create harmony between the building and the natural landscape. The architecture echoes the temple

design of the past, and clearly reflects Pei's philosophy "that light is the key to architecture".

A short distance from the Miho Museum is Shigaraki, one of Japan's Six Ancient Kilns. The development and popularity of Shigaraki ware flourished from the 14th century as the tea ceremony evolved in nearby Kyoto and Nara, and by the Edo period (1603-1867) the kiln produced tea jars, sake bottles, and miso jars, followed by charcoal braziers during the Meiji era (1868-1912). Today, the local craftsmen use traditional techniques to create objects suited to the 21st century, particularly vases, tableware and ceramic planters.

We will enjoy a leisurely visit to Shigaraki village where the proud tradition and history is celebrated, then continue on to Kyoto. (Overnight Kyoto) B

Day 7: Monday 2 November, Kyoto

- Kinkaku-ji (Temple of the Golden Pavilion)
- Daitoku-ji
- Afternoon at Leisure

We start the day with a visit to the Golden Pavilion (Kinkaku-ji). During the 15th century the Chinese Sung Dynasty exercised an enormous influence in Japan as artists, poets and Zen priests were gathered together by Yoshimitsu, the third Ashikaga shogun (1358-1409). Yoshimitsu began construction of the Golden Pavilion just before he retired in 1394, handing power to his nine-year-old son so that he could move to his estate. Little of his work remains but we can sense the character of the garden in its pond, rockwork and extensive plantings.

The pavilion at Kinkaku-ji recalls Sung period architecture but it is a recreation, having been burned down in the 1950s. The present building is an exact replica, except that where Yoshimitsu proposed only to gild the ceiling of the third storey with gold, now the whole building is gilded. Yoshimitsu positioned his palace on the edge of a lake. The ground floor was a reception room for guests and departure point for leisure boating, the first storey was for philosophical discussions and panoramic views of the lake while the upper floor acted as a refuge for Yoshimitsu and was used for tea ceremonies. The size of the gardens is increased visually by the water's convoluted edge, the use of rocks and clipped trees and by visually 'borrowing' a distant view of Mt Kinugasa that creates a sense of gradation between foreground, middleground and deep distance.

We then visit Daitoku-ji, a large complex of Zen temples with prayer halls, religious structures and 23 sub-temples with some of the most exquisite gardens in Kyoto, some quite small, including raked gravel gardens and, in the Daisen-in, one of the most celebrated small rock gardens in Japan. The Japanese consider Daitoku-ji one of the most privileged places to study and it is associated with many of Japan's most famous priests. Unlike many of the larger public Buddhist temples of earlier sects, the Rinzai sect monasteries were intimate, inward looking and remained isolated from the outside world.

The temple received imperial patronage and grew out from its centre in an organic way. A transition occurred as the complex expanded from a formal centre to semiformal and informal precincts. The central north-south walkway is most formal with wide paths to accommodate processions and ceremonies, while to the side are sub-temples with gates. As you walk through one of these gates you immediately come upon a less formal world with narrow paths, turns and walkways. The temple site contains a number of notable gardens including Daisen-in, Zuiho-in and Ryogen-in. It also celebrates Autumn with special openings of areas of the complex usually closed to the public.

The afternoon is at leisure. You may wish to visit some of Kyoto's many temples and gardens, stroll along

the Philosopher's Path or explore the city's many artisan shops selling traditional wares. (Overnight Kyoto)

Day 8: Tuesday 3 November, Kyoto

- Tofuku-ji
- Sekiho-ji

This morning we visit Tofuku-ji, a large temple complex founded in the 13th century and is one of the 'Kyoto Gozan' or 'five great Zen temples of Kyoto'. The Hojo, a garden designed in 1939 by Shigemori Mirei who masterfully combined 20th-century design with elements from Japanese tradition. Mirei implements subtle, restrained design themes such as chequer-boards of stone in moss to allow the natural form and colour of maples on the surrounding hills to make full impact. The main gate (*sanmon*) is a national Treasure and the oldest surviving gate in the country.

This afternoon we escape the crowds that flock to Kyoto to enjoy the glorious autumnal colours, and visit Sekiho-ji, a tranquil shrine with a stroll garden. Founded in 1713, the temple is of the Obaku sect of Zen Buddhism. Stone paths lead visitors through the garden to a bamboo grove where 500 stone statues are arranged, many by famed painter and sculptor Ito Jakuchu. (Overnight Kyoto)

Day 9: Wednesday 4 November, Kyoto

- Nishihongan-ji
- Shimabara Sumiya

Nishihongan-ji is a large temple complex built in 1591. Many of its buildings have been designated as National Treasures, while the complex as a whole is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Nishihongan-ji celebrates the beauty of autumn by opening up buildings that are normally closed to the public. In the central courtyard is an old ginkgo tree that displays beautiful autumnal colour. The tree is given particular care as it is credited with saving the surrounding buildings from fire in 1864 by 'spraying' them with moisture.

Our afternoon is spent in Shimabara, one of the historic courtesan districts, and later also a geisha district of Kyoto. Our focus is the Sumiya, one of the few secular buildings in Kyoto to survive from the Edo period and the only remaining former *ageya* ('pleasure house'). The first floor had a banquet room for up to 100 people, facing a large garden to the rear of the property. There was also a smaller banquet room facing an inner garden and three tea houses. The upper story had had smaller rooms that could be opened up for larger parties or closed for privacy. Throughout the Sumiya is adorned with paintings from different phases of the building's life, along with fascinating insights into the patronage of the establishment. The archives contain poems by noted haiku poets who had a salon here, while the sword rack and sword chest where clients checked-in their *katana* are testimony to the measures required to prevent outbreaks of violence. (Overnight Kyoto) L

Inuyama - 2 nights

Day 10: Thursday 5 November, Kyoto – Chikubushima – Inuyama

- Hogon-ji Temple, Chikubushima Island
- Tsukubusuma-jinja, Chikubushima Island
- Inuyama Castle (exterior)

Today we drive to Nagahama on the shores of Lake Biwa, and from there we take a short ferry ride to Chikubushima Island. Known locally as the Island of the Gods, Chikubushima is thought to have its own benevolent spiritual energy. It is a beautiful and peaceful place, with temples and shrines tucked away in forested hills. The Buddhist temple Hogon-ji dates to 724, while the nearby Tsukubusuma-jinja is a Shinto shrine and National Treasure that dates to 420.

Returning to the mainland we continue on to Inuyama, where we pay a visit to Inuyama Castle, strikingly situated overlooking the Kiso River. The castle was founded in 1440, although the current buildings date from the 1580s. Once surrounded by barracks, gates and other such buildings, only the keep survives today – the other buildings were demolished at the end of the Edo period in the mid-19th century. (Overnight Inuyama) LD

Day 11, Friday 6 November, Inuyama – Mino – Inuyama

- Urakuen Garden, Inuyama
- Meiji-Mura (including Frank Lloyd Wright's Imperial Hotel)
- Mino Tesuki Washi House

Our first visit today is to the tranquil stroll garden located near our hotel, Urakuen. We continue on to Meiji-Mura, an extraordinary open-air architecture museum where buildings from the Meiji (1868-1912), Taisho (1912-1926) and early Showa (1926-1989) eras are preserved in a large park. This was an era when Japan started to open up to the world and started to adopt aspects of Western culture. A highlight of the museum is Frank Lloyd Wright's Imperial Hotel Lobby and Front Entrance. Built in 1923 in Tokyo, the hotel was demolished in 1976 to make way for a larger hotel, and this front section of the building was dismantled, moved to Meiji-Mura and reassembled. Other notable buildings include schools, a brewery, a military barracks and the 1901 Tomatsu merchant house that survived the bombing of Nagoya during World War Two.

We then visit Mino, a charming town famed for the production of high-quality Mino washi paper – listed as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. The historic Mino Udatsu district retains Edo period wooden houses that were the homes and businesses of the washi paper merchants. (Overnight Inuyama) BD

Himeji - 1 night

Day 12, Saturday 7 November, Inuyama – Nagoya – Himeji

- Shinkansen Nagoya – Himeji
- Himeji Castle

This morning we travel by Shinkansen to Himeji a city in the Kansai region famous for the sprawling white castle that dominates the skyline. Himeji was strategically situated on the San'yodo Highway connecting this region with western Japan, and was therefore an important stronghold of the Tokugawa shogunate. It is one of the few original castles for the feudal period, surviving many battles and natural disasters throughout its 800 year history, even incendiary bombing air raids in the final days of World War Two. The UNESCO World Heritage Site comprises a network of 86 buildings, including a six-storey keep and three smaller subsidiary keeps, towers, kitchens, storehouses and gates. Many of the defence systems are still intact and provide a fascinating insight into the brutality of feudal warfare and the innovative architectural features that were developed. (Overnight Himeji) B

Kurashiki - 3 nights

Day 13, Sunday 8 November, Himeji – Engyoji – Okayama – Kurashiki

- Mount Shosha Ropeway
- Engyo-ji
- Shinkansen Himeji – Okayama

Today we explore the mountains outside Himeji, an opportunity to visit an area of great natural beauty and historic architecture that is not often visited by tourists. We travel up the mountain by the Mount Shosha Ropeway, a kind of funicular that will carry us up the mountain to Engyo-ji, a temple complex spread over a spacious densely forested site. 33 Buddha statues line the path from the ropeway station, and trails through the trees lead from one temple building to the next. We will see the Daikodo (main hall), Jikido (dining hall, now exhibiting the temple treasures) and the Jogyodo.

After returning to Himeji by the ropeway we travel by train to Okayama, then travel by coach to Kurashiki. (Overnight Kurashiki) B

Day 14, Monday 9 November, Kurashiki – Teshima – Kurashiki

- Ferry to Teshima Art Island
- Teshima Art Museum
- Return to mainland by ferry

We have an early start this morning, travelling to Uno from where we take a ferry to Teshima Art Island. There are around 3000 mostly uninhabited islands in the Seto Inland Sea, and hidden amongst them are the 'Art Islands', where cutting edge museums and extraordinary art installations have brought world-wide fame to the region.

The Teshima Art Museum was designed by architect Ryue Nishizawa and artist Rei Naito. It is intended to resemble a water droplet at the moment of landing. The harmony of nature, art and architecture is enhanced by a natural spring that wells up inside the building, and the two large openings that allow the outside world to enter the museum – even snow on occasion!

Other installations on the island include the Teshima Seawall House, a former teahouse filled with the sound of music boxes, drums and Japanese flute, and *Les Archives du Coeur*, a small gallery that houses and randomly plays heartbeats from around the world.

After our visit we return to the mainland then continue on to the historic town of Kurashiki. The evening is at leisure to stroll through the Bikan Historic Quarter (old merchant quarter) where traditional 17th century wooden houses line canals. (Overnight Kurashiki) BL

Day 15, Tuesday 10 November, Kurashiki – Naoshima – Kurashiki

- Ferry to Naoshima Island
- Chichu Art Museum
- Lee Ufan Museum
- Farewell Lunch at Benesse House Museum Issen Restaurant
- Return to mainland by ferry

The island of Naoshima in the Seto Inland Sea is home to a number of contemporary art museums and outdoor sculpture exhibitions. The Benesse Corporation installed much of the art on Naoshima and the

neighbouring islands, and commissioned the design and construction of several museums by Tadao Ando. This commission included the Benesse House Museum, the Chichu Art Museum and the Lee Ufan Museum.

This morning we take a ferry from the mainland to Naoshima Island and spend a day visiting some of the remarkable art exhibitions, sculpture and architecture the island has to offer. We also enjoy our farewell lunch at the Issen Restaurant at Benesse House Museum, where the focus of the cuisine is on the sustainability and exquisite presentation of each dish.

In the late afternoon, we return to the mainland by ferry. (Overnight Kurashiki) BL

Day 16, Wednesday 11 November, Kurashiki – Matsue – Izumo Airport

- Adachi Museum of Art
- Tour ends at Izumo Airport at 1.15pm

This morning we drive north to Matsue, where we shall visit the Adachi Museum of Art, located in the rural landscape of the Sinmane region. This is a contemporary art museum set within a large garden, considered by many to be one of the most beautiful gardens in Japan. The museum was founded by Adachi Zenko who felt a strong resonance between the sublime sensibility of the Japanese-style garden and the paintings of Yokoyama Taikan whose work he collected. This is a contemplation garden which visitors observe from various carefully designed points within the museum. Each season reveals itself through different aspects of the garden, and during our visit we can expect the hills that form the backdrop to the vista before us to be a blaze of autumnal colour while vivid reds enliven the foliage of the garden.

We then transfer to Izumo Airport where our tour officially ends at 1.15pm. B

Accommodation

All hotels are rated 3 to 5-star locally and are comfortable and conveniently situated. All rooms have en suite bathroom.

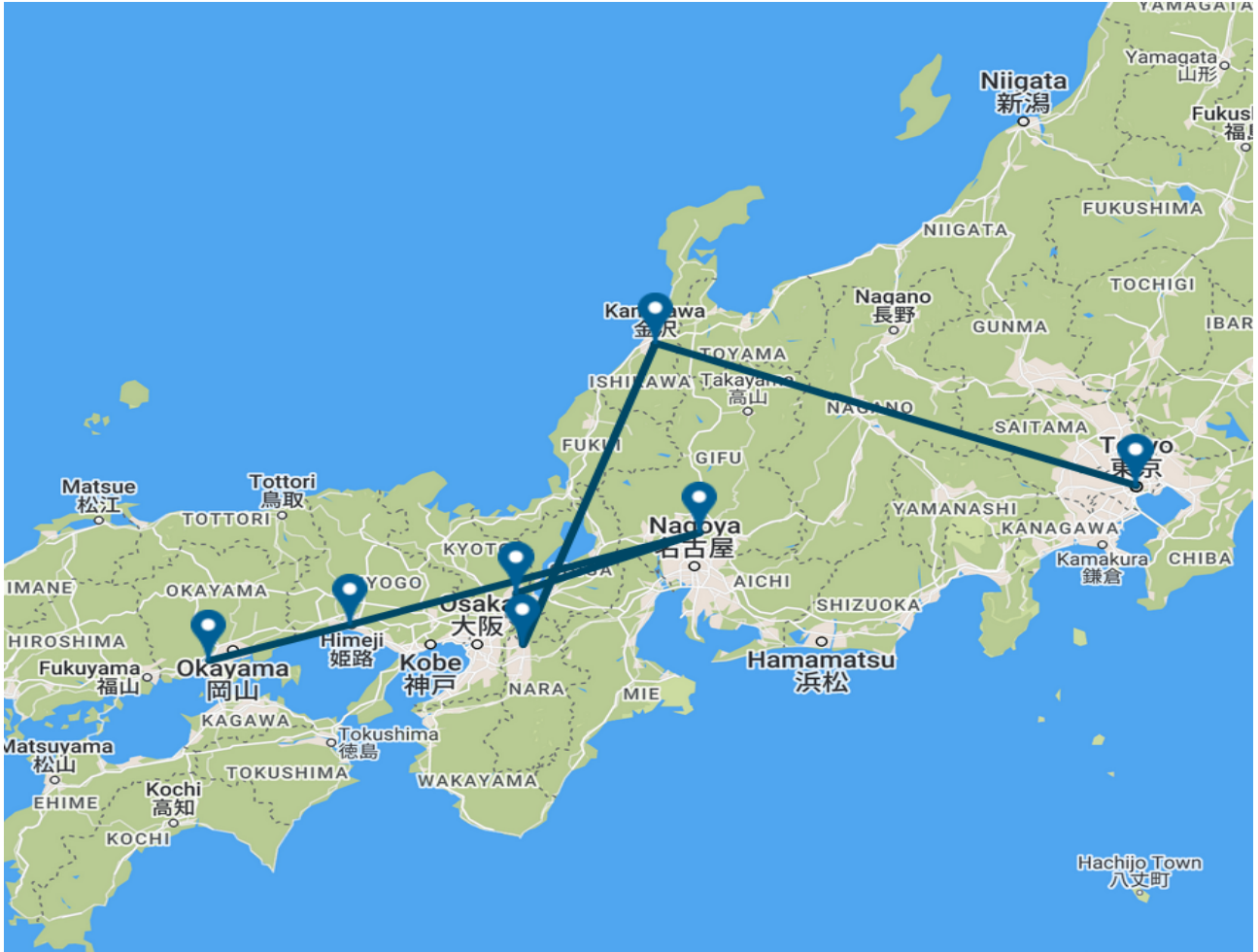
- Tokyo (1 night): 4-star [Tokyo Prince Hotel](#) – a modern hotel in the Minato-ku district.
- Kanazawa (2 nights): 4-star [ANA Crowne Plaza Hotel](#) – a modern hotel conveniently located near the Kanazawa train station.
- Nara (2 nights): 3-star [An-Grande Hotel Nara](#) – a modern hotel, conveniently located near the old town and Nara Park, with restaurants and bars.
- Kyoto (4 nights): 3-star [Mimaru Kyoto Shinmachi Sanjo](#) – a modern apartment hotel located close to supermarkets, convenience stores and restaurants. Each apartment is 35-40 sqm and includes a small well-equipped kitchen and laundry. Breakfast is not served at the apartment-hotel, but can be purchased from the stores located 50m away.
- Inuyama (2 nights): 5-star [Hotel Indigo Urakuen Garden](#) – a 'design' hotel in a tranquil garden setting, with bright, spacious rooms and *onsen* facilities.
- Himeji (1 night): 3-star [Hotel Nikko Himeji](#) – a modern 'business-style' hotel located near the train station.
- Kurashiki (3 night): 4-star [Kurashiki Royal Art Hotel](#) – a short walk from the historic Bikan district.

Note: Hotels are subject to change. In this instance a hotel of similar standard will be provided.

Single Supplement

Payment of this supplement will ensure accommodation in a double room for single occupancy throughout the tour. The number of rooms available for single use is extremely limited. People wishing to take this supplement are therefore advised to book well in advance.

Tour Map



Tour Price & Inclusions

AUD \$TBA Land Content Only – Early-Bird Special: Book before 31 December 2025

AUD \$TBA Land Content Only

AUD \$TBA Single Supplement

Tour Price (Land Content Only) includes:

- Accommodation in twin-share rooms with private facilities in hotels generally of 4-star standard
- Breakfast, lunches & evening meals as indicated in the itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch & D=dinner. Breakfast is NOT served at the Kyoto apartment-hotel.
- Drinks at welcome and farewell meals. Other meals may not have drinks included.
- Transportation by air-conditioned coach and rail as outlined in the itinerary
- Departure airport transfer
- Porterage of one piece of luggage per person at hotels (not at airports or train stations)
- Lecture and site-visit program
- Entrance fees to all sites
- Use of audio headsets during site visits
- Tour notes
- Tips for the coach driver, local guides and restaurants for included meals

Tour Price (Land Content Only) does not include:

- International Airfare: Australia-Tokyo, Matsue-Australia
- Arrival airport transfer in Tokyo
- Personal spending money
- Luggage in excess of 20kg (44lbs)
- Travel Insurance



Fitness Criteria & Practical Information

Fitness Level 

Level 1 - Active

For people with active lives and good mobility

You must be able to:

- manage at least five hours of physical activity per day with ease.
- walk at a regular pace up to 5-7km per day on flat or undulating terrain; some stretches include steeper slopes or several flights of stairs (eg at temple complexes).
- keep up with the group at all times.
- stand for one to two hours during visits to galleries and museums without the need to sit.
- board/alight transport including coaches, trains and ferries unassisted.
- to carry your hand luggage up and down stairs as you change platforms with a limited time to make the train connection.

Fitness Levels

Please also view the fitness criteria required for our tours, graded from Level 1 to Level 3, at www.asatours.com.au/fitness-level/

All ASA tours are active programs suitable for people with a good level of mental and physical fitness and good mobility. They are not suitable for people who lack stamina, have difficulty walking at the group's pace or who have mobility issues. An unavoidable aspect of every tour is the need to manage walking, stair-climbing and standing for long periods of time.

It is a condition of travel that all participants agree to accept ASA's directions in relation to their suitability to participate in activities undertaken on the tour, and that ASA retains the sole discretion to direct a tour participant to refrain from a particular activity on part of the tour. Before enrolling on an ASA tour please

read the fitness requirements carefully.

High Speed Bullet Trains & Luggage Transfers

This tour involves several journeys on Japan's high-speed bullet trains. Larger suitcases are not permitted on these trains; the group's luggage will therefore be transferred by truck to the hotel.

- **Tokyo-Kanazawa:** this journey is by bullet train. The group's luggage will be transferred by truck from Tokyo to Kanazawa and will be ready for the group when they check-in at the end of the day's program.
- **Kanazawa-Kyoto-Nara:** the group will travel from Kanazawa to Kyoto by bullet train, and then by coach to Nara. The group's main luggage will be transferred directly to the hotel in Nara.
- **Nagoya - Himeji and Himeji - Okayama:** these journey are by bullet train. The group's luggage will be transferred by truck from Nagoya to Kurashiki and will be ready for the group when they check-in. An overnight bag will be required for the 1 night stay in Himeji.

Booking Conditions

Making a Tentative Reservation before the tour price has been published

ASA INTENTION TO TRAVEL APPLICATION FORM

Some ASA tours fill almost immediately. Don't miss out! You can register your 'Intention to Travel' by completing this application and returning this to ASA with a AUD \$200.00 per person deposit. Once the tour price has been published, the itinerary and ASA Reservation Application Form will be sent to you. From the time you receive the itinerary you will have two weeks to either:

- Send us a completed ASA Reservation Application Form together with an additional deposit of AUD \$800.00 per person. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation. At this time your deposit of AUD \$1000.00 is subject to the tour's Booking Conditions.

Or

- CANCEL your Intention to Travel in writing. ASA will refund your AUD \$200.00 per person deposit, less a \$66.00 service fee (including GST).



Intention to Travel Application

TOUR NAME _____

TOUR DATES _____

Booking before the tour price is available

Some ASA tours fill almost immediately. Don't miss out! You can register your 'Intention to Travel' by completing this application and returning this to ASA with a AUD\$200.00 per person deposit. Once the tour price has been published, the itinerary and ASA Reservation Application Form will be sent to you. From the time you receive the itinerary you will have two weeks to either:

- Send us a completed ASA Reservation Application Form together with an additional deposit of AUD\$800.00 per person applicable for International tours OR AUD\$300.00 per person applicable for Australian tours. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation. At this time your full deposit is subject to the tour's Booking Conditions.

OR

- Cancel your Intention to Travel in writing. ASA will refund your AUD\$200.00 per person deposit, less a \$66.00 service fee (including GST).

Applicant Details (as in passport)

TITLE Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐ Miss ☐ Dr ☐ Other _____

FIRST NAME _____ Preferred FIRST NAME _____

MIDDLE NAME _____ SURNAME _____

POSTAL ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ COUNTRY _____ POSTCODE _____

TEL. (AH) () _____ TEL. (BH) () _____ Mobile Tel: _____

EMAIL address _____

Date of birth ____ / ____ / ____ GENDER Male ☐ Female ☐

Tour Accommodation (rooming preferences)

I/we would like: ☐ a twin-bedded room ☐ a double-bedded room ☐ a room for sole occupancy

I am travelling: ☐ on my own ☐ with a friend/family member Travel Companion _____

Meals

☐ I do not have any specific dietary requests

Please **X** the box if you **CAN NOT** eat any of the following:

☐ fish ☐ poultry ☐ red meat ☐ dairy products

☐ eggs ☐ pork ☐ nuts

☐ Other _____

Correspondence

Your preferred method of correspondence ☐ Postal Mail ☐ Email Address _____

Participation Criteria

To participate in an ASA tour, you must be reasonably fit, in good health and able to participate in all activities without assistance from Tour Leaders or other tour members. If you require assistance, a fit and able travel companion must undertake to accompany and assist you with all tasks for the duration of the whole tour.

ASA's ability to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your specific needs, your health and safety and the health and safety of other tour members, is of paramount importance to us. For this reason the ASA Reservation Application includes a Medical Information section. As a general guideline, you must be able to accomplish each of these activities *without assistance or support*:-

- walk & stand unassisted for at least 2-3 hours a day in hot, humid conditions
- walk confidently on and over uneven surfaces
- climb at least 3 flights of stairs
- embark and disembark from ferries, buses and trains
- walk up and down steep slopes
- walk at a steady pace and no less than 1 km every 15 - 20 minutes
- organise, manage and carry your own luggage
- follow and remember tour instructions
- meet punctually at designated times and places
- administer your own medication.

Applicant's Signature _____

Dated _____

Tour / Course Name

Name of Traveller 1 _____

Name of Traveller 2 _____

I have enclosed a payment to the value of \$ _____ (including CC or bank fee if applicable) for this tour

Payment by (please indicate): ☐ Cheque ☐ Direct Debit (see below) ☐ Credit Card (see below)

International Payments

Welcome to our international travellers! If you are making a payment and do not have an Australian bank account/credit card, we can only accept payment as follows:

- via credit card with the applicable fee - the credit card company/bank will set the exchange rate
- via bank transfer; please give your surname and tour code (eg. Smith 21705) as a reference and ask your bank to allow for all charges.

Bank cheques or personal cheques will not be accepted.

By Cheque (accept Australian cheques only)

Please make cheques payable to *Australians Studying Abroad*

Direct Deposit or Internet Banking

You will need to:

1. Provide your bank with ASA's bank details (see below) and the amount you wish to transfer OR make a direct deposit through any ANZ branch
2. Include any fees levied by the banks
3. Provide a reference number (Mobile or last name recommended).
4. Complete section below, including confirmation no. (given when transaction completed).

Australians Studying Abroad bank details

Bank ANZ
Branch 420 St Kilda Road, Melbourne Vic
Swift Code ANZBAU3M
BSB 013-423
Account No 3472-32759

Bank confirmation No. _____

Reference used: Mobile or last name recommended

Date Money Transferred _____

Credit Card Payment

Credit card fees apply: Mastercard, Visa & American Express 2%

Please debit my: ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ American Express

I authorise ASA to debit my credit card for the amount due plus the applicable fee as above

Credit Card Number _____

Expiry Date _____

Security Code (CVC) _____

Bank the Card is linked to (eg. NAB or ANZ) _____

Cardholders Name _____

Cardholders Billing Address _____

Postcode _____

State _____

Country _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Cardholders Signature _____

AUSTRALIANS STUDYING ABROAD

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