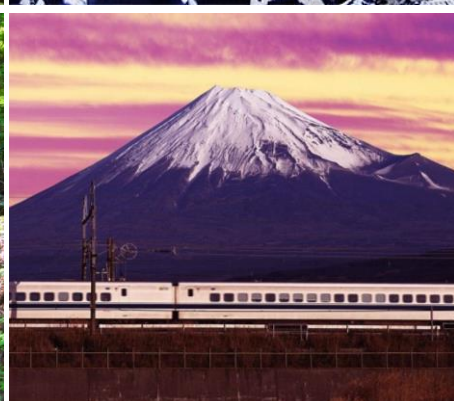
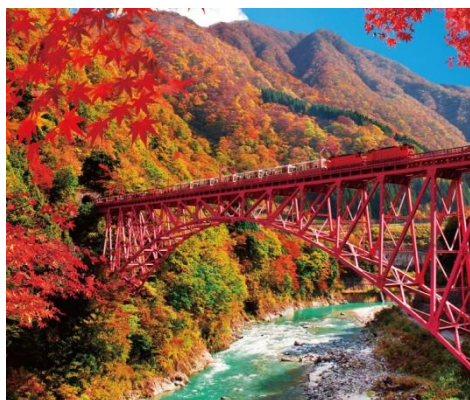


AUTUMN COLOURS & FESTIVALS

- a rail tour around Japan in the season of autumn colours and festivals -
- nature, culture, history, art and food -

Sunday 6 October – Tuesday 29 October 2024

(optional 6 night / 7 day Kyoto, Tokyo, Meiji Shrine Festival extension to 4 November 2024)



Join us for one of our new Autumn Colours tour to Japan – a twenty-three day to experience **autumn colours and seasonal festivals** on the Japanese islands of Honshu, Hokkaido and Shikoku. The tour begins with the **famous autumn festival in Takayama**. As well as autumn colours in nature - the tour has a **special focus on experiencing the culture, art and regional foods of Japan**.

Enjoy five nights in **lovely hot spring resorts**; travel **first class on the high speed 'Shinkansen' trains** – making your journey relaxed, exhilarating and very comfortable; experience **special scenic rail journeys** through colourful forests; and explore the rich **culture and history** of the country, with **gardens**, famed **textiles**, **art** and **food**, and **options for walking in nature**. Experience a range of accommodations from modern city hotels, convenient simpler business hotels, **traditional onsen resort s(ryokan)** and enjoy included meals when it is prudent, and for special locations, but also freedom to dine when, with whom and where you wish. Enjoy **local cuisine at 'Izakaya' restaurants** and **great meals featuring local produce**.

Even if you've been to Japan before, you'll visit different locations and have a **deeper cultural experience**. The tour is led by Japanese speaking expert **Takako Ishige** and **Owen Johnstone-Donnet**, who have designed and organised the tour. We are proud and passionate about our tours - we make it possible to experience the real Japan, visiting **not only iconic cities and sights, but also 'off the beaten track' small villages and islands**, meeting local people.

An optional six day extension adds Kyoto and sights in and around Tokyo to the itinerary, as well as the **'Tokyo Meiji Shrine Festival'** featuring *Yabusame* – traditional Japanese archery on horseback.

Sunday 6 October 2024 - to Japan

Begin your experience of Japanese culture aboard a daylight flight from Sydney to Tokyo with Japan Airlines, or from Melbourne or Brisbane with Qantas. Alternatively fly overnight on Saturday 5th October 2024 with Qantas or All Nippon Airlines and arrive Tokyo the following morning. Check in to the hotel and enjoy the vibrant city of Tokyo at leisure. (Please note early check in to hotels requires a prior night being booked at additional cost.) Overnight Tokyo.

Monday 7 October 2024 (B/D) – Tokyo sightseeing

After a relaxing breakfast in the morning, we introduce you to some of the highlights of Tokyo. We also organise the important process of the Japan Rail Pass exchange, and collect our rail reservations for the tour. This evening enjoy our first group dinner. Overnight Tokyo.

Tuesday 8 October 2024 (B/D) –Shinkansen to Nagoya and scenic journey to Takayama

We commence our rail experience with the impressive journey from Tokyo to Nagoya, aboard the **excellent Japanese high speed 'Shinkansen' service**. Running at speeds of up to 285 km/h, the Shinkansen is known for punctuality (most trains depart on time to the second), comfort, safety and efficiency - it is an exhilarating and comfortable experience. In Nagoya, we join the Limited Express 'Hida' to cross to the central Japan Alps city of Takayama. Enjoy the rugged mountain and dramatic river views from the train as the line weaves through the valleys towards the highland city of Takayama. Enjoy a 'bento' (lunch box) en route. On arrival in Takayama we transfer to our accommodation, and there is time to enjoy a stroll around the city before dinner together. A walk through the historic streets with their colourful lights and heritage facades is an enjoyable way to begin your visit to this mountain city as it prepares for its festival. Overnight Takayama.



Wednesday 9 October 2024 (B) – Takayama Autumn Festival

The Takayama Autumn Festival is believed to have been celebrated for over 400 years, giving thanks for the plentiful harvest, and marking the beginning of preparations for the approaching winter. Its focus takes place in and around Sakurayama Hachimangu Shrine, with a total of 11 floats which are then paraded through the town as part of the festival. The handcrafted floats are so intricately designed that they are likened to the Yomeimon Gate at Nikko Toshogu Shrine. The festival features colourful, ornately decorated floats, some of which are topped with marionettes, and at set times puppeteers make them perform traditional dances. After dark, evening festivities include 100 lantern-lit yatai floats toured around town. The streets are a maze of colour, and the local artisans and craft shops provide myriad opportunities to explore and purchase locally made crafts. As the festival is incredibly popular, and a range of activities take place over the two days, we have allowed you to enjoy lunch and dinner at leisure on two nights to enable you to participate and view various events that interest you, for as little or as long as you wish. Overnight Takayama. *(Note: the Takayama Autumn Festival is one of the most popular festivals in Japan, attracting many local and international visitors. At the time of preparing this brochure, the exact nature of activities each day is not available to allow an exact programme to be finalised. Large crowds may make being together as a group to witness parades and processions impractical. Whilst SJR will do all possible to ensure an ideal organised experience, your understanding in regard to what is possible in regard to witnessing and viewing the festival is required in relation to our visit to Takayama.)*



Thursday 10 October 2024 (B) – Takayama Autumn Festival

Takayama gained importance as a source of high-quality timber and highly skilled carpenters during the feudal ages. For these important resources, the city was put under direct control of the shogun and enjoyed significant prosperity considering its remote mountain location. Takayama's old town has been beautifully preserved with many buildings and whole streets of houses dating from the Edo Period (1603-1868), when the city thrived as a wealthy merchant town. The southern half of the old town, especially the Sannomachi Street, survives in a particularly pretty state with many old homes, shops, cafes and sake breweries, some of which have been in business for centuries. Several homes in the old town open their doors to the public. They provide a glimpse behind the facade into the former living quarters of the local merchants and exhibit traditional household goods and local arts and crafts. Add to this the festival activities, and there will be plenty to keep us engaged today. Dinner at leisure and overnight Takayama.

Friday 11 October 2024 (B/D) – to Unazuki Onsen, a lovely onsen resort in the Japan Alps

After breakfast we depart from Takayama and head further west across the Japanese Alps to the coastal city of Toyama. We return to Toyama in a few days to stay, however on this occasion. We transfer to the private line of the Toyama Chihō Railway for the scenic journey into the Tateyama Kurobe Alps, to the small village of Unazuki Onsen – our base for the next two nights. Unazuki Onsen is one of the best hot spring resorts in Toyama Prefecture, located at the gateway to the Kurobe Gorge. It boasts an abundance of hot spring water, fed by the Kuronagi-onsen hot spring, located seven kilometres upstream along the Kurobe-gawa River, and producing 3,000 tonnes of water per day. It boasts beautiful autumnal scenery, local seafood, and mountain produce, and a respite from the crowds of Takayama. This afternoon you can explore the quiet streets of this small village, and enjoy a lovely onsen before dinner. Dinner is included at our ryokan and overnight Unazuki Onsen.



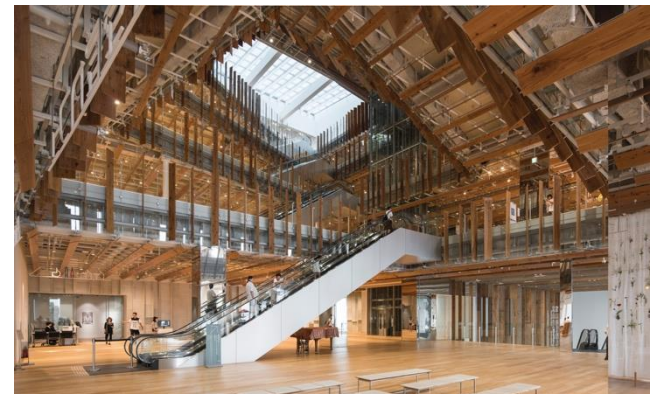
Saturday 12 October 2024 (B/D) – Kurobe Gorge Railway and autumn colours

Today we explore one of the gorges of the **Tateyama Mountain Range** - the deepest V-shaped valley in the entire country - on our **train ride along the Kurobe Kyokoku Line**. View the beauty of the valley between Unazuki Onsen and Keyakidaira on our train that takes 1 hour and 20 minutes to cover 20.1 kilometres, and includes 41 tunnels and 22 bridges. One of the bridges, called Atobiki-bashi, lies over the deepest part of the gorge, and is 64 metres long and 60 metres high. There are many hot springs along the route, and at our destination in the mountains you can walk one kilometre from Keyakidaira Station, the last stop of the train route, and you will see the Kurobegawa River from the precipitous cliff called the Sarutobi Valley. We enjoy a simple lunch at the top of the gorge, and there is the opportunity for those who wish to experience an outdoor foot hot spring experience – or even an onsen in nature ! Return to Unazuki Onsen, and enjoy a warming onsen and another lovely dinner in our ryokan. Overnight Unazuki Onsen.



Sunday 13 October 2024 (B) – to Toyama, explore the city by tram and visit the impressive glass museum

After a lovely ryokan breakfast and relaxing morning, we join the private railway and return to Toyama. “Toyama” means “rich with mountains”, and the name doesn't disappoint! The city offers stunning views of a series of 3,000 metre peaks belonging to the Northern Japan Alps. Located on the picturesque Japan Sea, Toyama was a powerful castle town and today this thriving high tech city still offers visitors splendid ancient festivals and neighbourhoods with traditional 19th century wooden buildings. Together with ultra-modern trams that crisscross beautiful downtown rivers and canals, and the largest community of glass artists in Japan, great sashimi and sushi, award winning pure water, and spectacular mountains, Toyama is a lovely city.



On arrival we leave luggage at our hotel, and then visit the Toyama Glass Art Museum. Showcasing a large collection of glass art from around the world, the beautifully modern Kirari building that houses the museum was designed by world-renowned architect Kuma Kengo and also contains the city's impressive public library. The museum offers both temporary and permanent exhibitions - the fourth floor showcases contemporary glass art by international artists procured by the museum over past decades, while the sixth floor hosts the "Glass Art Garden" exhibition, which boasts a collection of installations by Dale Chihuly. You will be impressed ! Dinner is at leisure and overnight Toyama.

Monday 14 October 2024 (B/L) – Kanazawa

From the time the Maeda family lords of the Kaga domain gathered skilled craftsmen from all over Japan in the 17th century, Kanazawa became the epicentre of dozens of traditional crafts and arts. From the elegance of the Japanese tea ceremony to the extravagance of kinpaku gold leaf decoration to the awe-inspiring performances of real geisha, Japanese culture has flourished in a city that is known for its love of arts and crafts. Kanazawa boasts many fantastic museums dedicated to arts and crafts, including the National Crafts Museum, relocated from Tokyo in 2020. Kanazawa is an authentic castle town, with an impressive castle park, located opposite Kenrokuen, justifiably classified as one of Japan's "three most beautiful landscape gardens" - one of the three most famed gardens in Japan. The 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art is very popular, and we enjoy luncheon here today, whilst the Nagamachi samurai district or the Higashi Chaya district with its teahouses offers much for those looking to experience the historical lifestyles of Japan. Dinner is at leisure and overnight Toyama.



Tuesday 15 October 2024 (B) – Tateyama Kurobe Alpine Route

Today we experience the exhilarating Tateyama Kurobe Alpine Route - a unique and spectacular journey through the Northern Japan Alps, traversed by various means of transportation including cablecars, trolley buses, a ropeway, and a walk across the impressive Kurobe Dam wall. Completed in 1971, the route connects Toyama City in Toyama Prefecture with Omachi Town in Nagano Prefecture. The main attraction of the Tateyama Kurobe Alpine Route (as well as the impressive transport infrastructure !) is the magnificent scenery of the Tateyama Mountain Range, part of the Chubu Sangaku National Park. The autumn colours typically reach their best around Murodo and Daikanbo from late September through mid October, and they gradually descend the mountain slopes, arriving at lower elevations from late October to early November. Return to Toyama after a full day of sightseeing, enjoy an evening meal at leisure and overnight Toyama.

Wednesday 16 October 2024 (B/D) – to Oirase Gorge, a peaceful and beautiful onsen resort in the forest



We leave Toyama on the **Hokuriku Shinkansen** and traverse through the alps to Nagano and on to Omiya. We change to the **Tohoku Shinkansen** and head north through Sendai and Morioka to Hachinohe, where we change to our connecting coach to the hotel. Our accommodation is the only resort hotel built on the edge of Oirase Gorge, part of the Towada-Hachimantai National Park. With clear streams, mossy rocks, surrounded by a forest of deciduous broad-leaved trees, the fresh greenery and autumnal coloration of the forest are impressive - the landscape and its beauty have been designated a location of special scenic beauty, and as natural monument. Our hotel and three night stay provides the perfect location for some rest and recreation half way through the tour – from previous experience, an important point to ensure you are rested to enjoy the rest of the tour. Enjoy a wonderful onsen, lovely dinner, and overnight Oirase Gorge.

Thursday 17 October 2024 (B/D) – cruise on Towadako Lake and autumn colours

Towada is the largest caldera lake on Honshu, characterised by two large peninsulas extending nearly a third of the way across the lake. As you will see it is a popular autumn colour destination, especially along the Oirase Stream at the lake's eastern shore, which is rapidly becoming one of Japan's most famous spots to see autumn foliage. Lake Towada is surrounded by a steep, forested caldera rim that rises several hundred metres above the lake's surface, but its shores are relatively undisturbed, except for the small village of Yasumiya. We cruise on the lake, visit the tourist information centre to learn of the flora and fauna of the area, and then return to Oirase Gorge. There is also the option to walk along part of the gorge today for those who wish to enjoy some walking today as well as tomorrow. Perhaps enjoy a massage tonight, refreshing onsen, and then a lovely dinner, before retiring. Overnight Oirase Gorge.



Friday 18 October 2024 (B/D) – a relaxing walk along the stream and at our ryokan

Today you have the opportunity to relax in and around the ryokan and recharge your batteries, or enjoy a short walk with Takako and Owen along Oirase Gorge. It is 10 kilometres from the ryokan to Lake Towada, and you can experience as little or as much walking as you wish. Or perhaps a quieter today at one of the hotels 'classes' or experiences, such as how to make moss balls ! Enjoy a refreshing onsen, and then a lovely dinner, before retiring. Overnight Oirase Gorge.



Saturday 19 October 2024 (B) – to Hakodate, Hokkaido through the undersea tunnel, the brilliant night view

After breakfast we transfer to the shinkansen for our journey north to Hokkaido and the port city of Hakodate. Our journey to Shin-Hakodate-Hokuto aboard the JR Hokkaido / East Japan shinkansen includes the undersea crossing from Honshu - through the 53.85km Seikan Tunnel – one of the world's longest undersea tunnels. This afternoon explore the Motomachi District of **Hakodate** – as one of the first Japanese harbour cities to be opened to international trade after the country's era of isolation, Hakodate experienced notable influence from overseas, and the foreign population's former residential district and its Western style fort are among its attractions. Either today or tomorrow (depending on visibility) we will ascend **Mt Hakodate to enjoy one of Japan's great night views**. Enjoy a meal in the historic warehouse district of the port, or at one of the many restaurants near the hotel. Overnight Hakodate.



Sunday 20 October 2024 (B/L) – morning market and autumn colours of Onuma Koen

Hakodate developed as a port town for trading with foreign countries at the end of the 19th century – at the bay area near the railway station and our hotel, a **Morning Market** is held where more than 360 stalls packed tightly together attract shoppers with freshly caught squid, scallops, salmon eggs, Atka mackerel, crabs, sea urchin, and many other fishes and shellfishes, as well as fresh produce such as melons. **O-numa National Park**, with nearby Ko-numa Marsh and Junsai-numa Marsh, is 24 kms in circumference, formed by the eruption of Mt. Koma-ga-take. With 126 islands, large and small, it is famous for the spectacular views of small islands connected by 18 bridges. Explore this beautiful location, crossing small bridges between islands dotted in the lake, at the base of Mt Koma-ga-take, and enjoy luncheon. Return to Hakodate in the afternoon and there is free time to explore – dinner at leisure and overnight in Hakodate.

Monday 21 October 2024 (B/D) – Kosetsuen Garden, Goryakaku Fort and the Ainu people

Not far from Hakodate, Miharashi Park features a Japanese-style garden, “**Kosetsu-en**”. With about 150 varieties of trees, the flowers and the quaint buildings provide the perfect foil for each other – the autumnal foliage is often too beautiful for words. Ginkgo, palmate maple, red maple, oliver maple and baby’s breath, lend red and yellow to Kosetsuen. Red Foliage Garden is elaborately adorned and the garden is simply a riot of colours and full of poetic charm. Goryakaku Fort is a western-style fort completed almost 150 years ago. A magnificent panoramic view of the entire star-shaped estate and surrounding moat unveils itself to visitors from the observation platform of the 107-metre Goryokaku Tower, which stands adjacent to the fort. The moat is surrounded by some 1,600 cherry trees, making the Goryokaku one of Hokkaido’s top cherry blossom viewing spots in springtime which turns into a blazing scene of crimson foliage in the fall. The Ainu are Hokkaido’s indigenous peoples of Northern Japan – learn of the history, culture and present day life of the indigenous peoples at the Hakodate City Museum of Northern Peoples. Or visit the former ship, now a museum, that crossed between Honshu and Hokkaido before the opening of the undersea tunnel. Dinner is included tonight in a casual ‘izakaya’ style restaurant in the historic warehouse district near the harbour. Overnight Hakodate.

Tuesday 22 October 2024 (B/D) – to Nagoya

After breakfast, we transfer to Shin-Hakodate-Hokuto to join an East Japan Railway’s shinkansen to Tokyo – where we change to the Central Japan Tokaido shinkansen through to Nagoya. We return through the undersea tunnel and experience the efficiency of the daily operation of the shinkansen which carries thousands of people effortlessly across the length of the country at speeds of up to 325km/h. A relaxing day aboard two of the outstanding shinkansen that provide such excellent travel opportunities in Japan. Dinner tonight is included and overnight Nagoya.



Wednesday 23 October 2024 (B) – Nagoya Palace, Japanese art of Shibori or JR Central Rail Maglev Museum

This morning we visit the splendid Nagoya Castle Palace, restored to its former glory, it is a stunning architectural site and the impressive paintings and internal rooms are amazing. Then learn of the Japanese art of **shibori** - a method of dyeing cloth by binding, stitching, folding, twisting, and compressing. In Japan, the earliest known example of cloth dyed with the shibori technique dates from the 8th century where indigo was the main dye used. Today in Arimatsu, shibori-tie-dyed silk fabric is still made. Arimatsu is one of the 53 stage towns of the Tokaido (one of the five major highways) which flourished during Edo period. It still retains the atmosphere with the traditional street lined with typical Japanese merchant houses. Many shops deal in the traditional specialty products of Arimatsu shibori. Alternatively you can join a group for a visit to the **Central Japan Railway’s Maglev Museum** - opened in 2011 the museum seeks to educate



visitors on the advances in high speed rail in Japan and displays several trains including historic steam locomotives, world record setting experimental shinkansen (bullet train) and the latest magnetic levitating trains (maglev). A collection of 39 retired train cars are displayed in the museum. Many of these can be entered or viewed from underneath, and are accompanied by a host of exhibits explaining the different parts of the trains and all aspects of their operation and maintenance. Another section of the museum is dedicated to maglev trains and JR Central’s plans to construct a maglev high speed link between Tokyo and Osaka. In the afternoon. Dinner at leisure and overnight Nagoya.

Thursday 24 October 2024 (B) – the Nakasendo Walk - forest, waterfalls and traditional villages

The **Nakasendō** (Central Mountain Route), also called the Kisokaidō, was one of the five routes of the Edo period, and one of the two that connected Edo (modern-day Tokyo) to Kyoto. There were 69 stations (staging-posts) between Edo and Kyoto. Although there has been much modern development along the Nakasendō, a few stretches remain in their original form. The most well-known section lies in the Kiso Valley, between Tsumago-juku in Nagano Prefecture and Magome-juku in Gifu Prefecture. The area was first made famous by the early 20th-century writer Shimazaki Tōson, who chronicled the effects of the Meiji Restoration on the valley in his landmark novel *Before the Dawn*. We traverse this eight-kilometre section of the Nakasendō which can be walked comfortably, and both Tsumago-juku and Magome-juku have preserved and restored traditional architecture. The 8.6k walk between these historical post towns requires around three hours, with forests, restored paving and fine views of waterfalls along the way – it is also possible to walk about 5km (mostly the downhill section) for those who wish. Dinner is at leisure, and overnight Nagoya.

Friday 25 October 2024 (B/D) – to Okayama, Korakuen Garden and Okayama Castle

This morning we head south west with the Central and then West Japan Railway shinkansen to Okayama. On arrival we visit the beautiful **Korakuen Garden – considered one of the ‘three best gardens in Japan.’** Located just beside Okayama Castle which can be seen from the garden as "borrowed scenery," there is also the opportunity to visit **Okayama Castle**, also known as "crow castle," due to its black exterior. Dinner is included and overnight Okayama.

Saturday 26 October 2024 (B/L) – Naoshima – the art island of the Inland Sea

After breakfast we head to the port of Uno to enjoy the short **scenic ferry crossing on the Inland Sea**, to explore **Naoshima** – famed for its **outdoor art and Benesse House**. Benesse House Museum opened in 1992 as a facility integrating a museum with a hotel, based on the concept of "coexistence of nature, art and architecture." Designed by famed **Tadao Ando**, the facility is built on high ground overlooking the Seto Inland Sea and features large apertures that serve to open the interior to the splendid natural surroundings. In addition to exhibiting painting, sculpture, photography and installations in its collection.



The Museum also contains permanent site-specific installations that artists have created especially for the building, selecting locations on their own and designing the works for those spaces. The Museum's artworks are found not just within its galleries, but in all parts of the building, as well as in scattered locations along the seashore that borders the complex and in the nearby forest. A lovely luncheon is included today in the gallery's restaurant. Enjoy a day of art and scenery, and a lovely ferry crossing on the inland sea - we return to Okayama for dinner at leisure and overnight.

Sunday 27 October 2024 (B/D) – Grand Seto Ohashi Bridge, Shikoku, Tokushima and Awa Odori dancing

After breakfast we board a JR Shikoku Limited Express train for the island of Shikoku. **Cross the Japan Inland Sea** on one of the engineering wonders of the modern world, **the Grand Seto-ohashi bridge**. A collective term for six bridges that connect Kojima in Okayama Prefecture on Honshu and Sakaide of Kagawa Prefecture on Shikoku, spanning five islands, the bridges took 40 years and a tremendous amount of money to build. **The structure is more than 13 kilometres long, and consists of three suspension bridges, two oblique suspension bridges and one truss bridge.** We visit **Tokushima**, the capital of the prefecture of the same name. Famed for its **Awa Odori festival**, tens of thousands flock to the city in August to experience the "Fool's Dance" whose origins date back 400 years. This nickname comes from the lyrics to the common dance song, which translates as follows: **"Fools dance and fools watch, if both are fools, you might as well dance"**. Though not August, we will experience the spectacle at the **Awa Odori Kaikan Museum** - there are explanations on the history and attractiveness of Awa Odori, exhibitions of costumes and musical instruments used, a 3D theatre where you can enjoy the live dance, and the main attraction - an actual Awa Odori performance. We will then ascend by **Bizan Ropeway to the top of Mount Bizan** – you'll have a full view of the Tokushima Plains from the mountain top, and views over the inland sea. We enjoy luncheon and time and weather permitting, a little more exploration in Tokushima, before returning to Okayama for a final group dinner together and overnight Okayama.

Monday 28 October 2024 (B) – to Tokyo and return to Australia, or extend and explore Kyoto and Tokyo

After breakfast, we join a Shinkansen towards Tokyo – for a mid afternoon arrival into Tokyo's Shinagawa Station, where we change to Haneda Airport for overnight flights to Australia.

Alternatively, you can extend the tour and visit **Kyoto** and then **Tokyo**, with the highlight being the **Aki no Taisai – Meiji Jingu's Grand Autumn Festival** – held in Tokyo on the first three days of November.

Those continuing with us alight at Kyoto for three days of sightseeing. This afternoon we enjoy **sightseeing** where autumn colours are best – possibly **Fushimi Inari** with its famed sequence of red torii gates, or **Tofukuji Temple**, or **Kiyomizu-dera**, one of the most famous temples in Kyoto. The latter was built at the end of the 8th century, the main hall was constructed in the 17th century, and is famous for its location overhanging a cliff. The platform of the main hall, which is supported by 139 giant pillars, affords a spectacular view of the town. There is also the opportunity to walk through the picturesque lanes of Ninenzaka to the colourful Gion. We return to the hotel and enjoy a meal at leisure at one of the many nearby and excellent restaurants close to our hotel. Overnight Kyoto.



Tuesday 29 October 2024 (B/D) – Mt Hieizan - Enryakuji, Nishijin Textiles, Kimono Show and Handicraft Centre

We head into the mountains this morning to visit the special site of **Enryakuji** - located in Kyoto's eastern mountain range on **Mount Hieizan**, **Enryakuji** is one of the most important monasteries in Japanese history and the headquarters of the Tendai sect of Japanese Buddhism. Enryakuji was founded in 788 by Saicho, the monk who introduced Tendai Buddhism from China into Japan. At its peak, Enryakuji had as many as 3000 subtemples and a powerful army of warrior monks who often engaged in power struggles with other monasteries and political leaders. On his way to remove all potential rivals and unite the country, Oda Nobunaga attacked and destroyed most of Enryakuji's buildings and killed most of its inhabitants in 1571. Therefore, most of today's temple buildings date back to the early Edo Period, when Enryakuji was rebuilt. Experience cablecars, mountains and views, as well as a lovely mountain walk in this sacred and beautiful location. Return to Kyoto, then there is the option to visit the Nishijin Textile Centre, Kyoto Handicraft Centre, and then enjoy dinner a simple dinner together and overnight Kyoto.



Wednesday 30 October 2024 (B) – the Miho Museum

This morning we head to what has been described as an Earthly Paradise among the Mountains. First-time visitors to the **Miho Museum** are amazed at how harmoniously it melts into the surroundings. Nestled among mountains, the path to the museum passes through a tunnel and over a hanging bridge before you arrive at the entrance. The buildings were **designed by I.M. Pei, the celebrated architect of the Glass Pyramid at the Louvre and the West Wing of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts**. Based on an image of Shangri-La, eighty percent of the building is buried underground to blend into the natural landscape. The collection contains antique and ancient pieces from a range of regions, including Japan, China, Greece, Rome and the Middle East. Return to Kyoto and the afternoon is free to explore further, before dinner at leisure. Overnight Kyoto.

Thursday 31 October 2024 (B/D) – to Tokyo

After a relaxed breakfast we join a mid morning Shinkansen to Tokyo. We leave our luggage at the hotel then enjoy an afternoon exploration of parts of this great city. Visit the bustling centre of Shinjuku, with its high rise and Metropolitan Government Buildings with viewing observatory on the 50th floor; witness the hustle and bustle at the busiest railway station in the world; travel over the Tokyo Harbour on the *Yurikamome* people mover and view the developments around the harbour precincts; witness the dynamic Akihabara area with its 'electrical city' and eclectic street life, or stroll the elegant streets of Ginza. Dinner at a simple restaurant tonight, and overnight Tokyo.



Friday 1 November 2024 (B) – Meiji Jingu Grand Autumn Festival

Meiji Jingu holds a grand festival - the Aki no Taisai (秋の大祭) in November – the most important of its bi-annual festivals since it celebrates the birthday of Emperor Meiji enshrined at the shrine. Meiji Jingu-mae is one of the most prestigious Shinto shrines in the whole nation, being the largest Shinto shrine in Tokyo, and due to its dedication to Emperor Meiji (1852-1912) and his wife Empress Shoken (1849-1914). The festival encompasses a range of pageantry and includes a number of Japanese performance arts including music, theatre and martial arts. We visit the shrine to witness the impressive festival. (A range of events takes place over the three days, and we will provide details for you to select those that are of interest. We do not intend to spend all day at the festival, but to select the highlights, and then also add other elements of Tokyo sightseeing.) Dinner at leisure and overnight Tokyo.



Saturday 2 November 2024 (B/D) – Meiji Jingu Grand Autumn Festival

The festival includes a wide range of activities including a Chrysanthemum exhibition (the Chrysanthemum is the official symbol of the Japanese Royal Family); Bugaku (ancient ceremonial dance and music); Noh and Kyogen theatre; Sankyoku; Hobu (traditional dances); Kyudo (archery) and Aikido; Kobudo (Japanese old martial arts) and Momoteshiki (Japanese ritual archery.) As noted above, a range of events takes place over the three days, and we will provide details for you to select those that are of interest. We do not intend to spend all day at the festival, but to select the highlights, and then also add other elements of Tokyo sightseeing to meet the interest of the group. The festival site is also easily accessible from our hotel location, allowing you to return. To the hotel and to the festival site during the day at your leisure. Close to Meiji Jingu are the popular Harajuku and Omotesando districts that provide a range of eating places and other sights of interest. Dinner together for our last night and overnight Tokyo.



Sunday 3 November 2024 (B/D in flight) – Meiji Jingu Grand Autumn Festival, Yabusame, and to Australia

The highlight of the final day of the festival is the Yabusame (horseback archery.) After enjoying this spectacle we return to the hotel, collect luggage and transfer to Haneda or Narita Airport for flights to Australia.



Monday 4 November 2024 (B in flight) – Relaxing bush walk along the stream

Arrive Australia.

GENERAL COMMENTS AND BOOKING CONDITIONS

ACCOMMODATION, MEALS AND RAIL TRAVEL

Accommodation is generally in 4 star standard hotels. In some locations the best available may not be 4 star, and in some locations we have selected superior hotels or ryokans as part of the experience of the location. Some nights we have included traditional ryokan accommodation with tatami mat floors and comfortable futon beds prepared on the tatami matting. Shoes need to be removed whilst in the ryokan, in rooms and at meals. Ryokan meals are generally included, and whilst we will aim to accommodate dietary requests, some meal experiences are a traditional Japanese set meal. In some locations we have selected simpler 'business hotels' where rooms are smaller and meals simpler, but their location near railway stations makes them ideal when we spend limited time in the hotel. In some hotels twin rooms are larger than double rooms, and in some cases we may provide a larger room with two large single beds if you have selected double bed accommodation. Meals are included as shown - breakfast is included most mornings, however as a general rule we have not included lunch or dinner when there is a range of options, and you can choose the style and time of dining that you prefer. Meals included are indicated as (B) Breakfast, (L) Luncheon and (D) Dinner. Travel is generally in first class (Green Car) seats, though some services only offer standard accommodation and on some trains Green Car accommodation can be limited – we'll arrange the best seating possible. There is a wide range of options for eating in Japan - from very simple meals to elegant dining experiences, and from traditional Japanese food, through to the very best of international western cuisine. The choice is yours. For lunch we'll identify a number of eating options. Every town in which we stay where dinner is not included has a range of restaurants where it is relatively easy and inexpensive to eat well and enjoyably. Major department stores have food halls with freshly prepared food. Most shops and at all railway stations you can purchase a 'bento' - local take away meal boxes with a fresh range of meats, seafood, vegetables and rice. Bakeries offering tempting fresh items abound, especially at railway stations. Eating and enjoying the foods of Japan is part of the tour experience. You can eat as simply or as lavishly as you wish. Japan is exceptionally clean, fresh food a priority, and preparation and hygiene surpass Australia.

PERSONAL SERVICE AND MEETING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

SJR prides itself on its personal service and attention to detail. The tour is escorted by the two organisers of the itinerary who have both travelled to Japan many times, or lived in Japan for many years. You are assured of the utmost service and our commitment to your satisfaction. We recognise each guest has different interests, and we will provide the opportunity to allow you to rest from the group, explore by yourself, return to particular places, or visit friends or special sites you've read about – if you wish. If your interests are gardens or castles or scenery, you can tailor your activities to focus on these specific interests. Detailed advice and assistance will be given to help you, and most travel requirements can be made for you.

CAPACITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TOUR

Fitness and mobility are necessary for participation in the tour. Tour passengers must be able to manage their own luggage, and to carry/wheel it on and off trains, from stations to hotels, and if necessary, up or down a flight of stairs. Whilst most stations have escalators / elevators, the older and regional stations may not. Visiting temples and shrines involves walking up and down flights of steps, and in some cases removing shoes. The tour involves travel on the public transport networks of the many Japanese cities. By payment of your deposit and tour fare you confirm that you are of a suitable level of mobility and fitness to participate in the tour, and are aware of the nature of the tour. Whilst it is often possible to use taxis to reduce the distances walked, this option is at your own expense. You may choose to not participate in an activity if you consider it too strenuous, and remain at the hotel, or explore locally.

FARES AND BOOKING PROCEDURES

The tour is limited in size to 20 guests, and bookings will be confirmed in order of receipt of a deposit of \$3,000 per person. **The tour fare for the period 6 to 29 October 2024 is \$17,780 per person (twin share) plus airfares from Australia, with a \$2,995 single supplement for hotels.** The tour fare includes first class rail travel in Japan (some rail services may not have first class accommodation available, or in some instances, not sufficient for the whole group, and in these cases, standard rail accommodation is provided); all bus, tram, metro and light rail transfers when part of the group; all accommodation on a twin share basis (single accommodation is available on payment of the single supplement); sightseeing and entrance fees as indicated, and meals as shown in the itinerary for each day. The fare does not include meals not identified, drinks, excess baggage charges, gratuities, telephone calls, laundry, any items of a personal nature, travel outside the organised group, or taxi usage when not part of the planned transport means. Due to the variety of interests of individuals, and the large range of temples, gardens, shrines, museums etc. available for inspection on some days, we have included key features in the tour cost. Inspection and entry fees when not part of the planned group activity are not included in the tour cost. Additional or optional activities such as some cable car journeys, boat cruises or entrance fees are not included in the cost. Bookings should be made on the attached form.

The optional extension from the night of 28 October to the morning of 4 November 2024 (an extra 6 nights and seven days) is 5,670 per person (twin share) plus airfares from Australia, with a \$1,995 single supplement for hotels.

The deposit of \$3,000 per person should be forwarded by cheque, payable to St James Rail, along with the booking form, to SJR, PO Box N400, GROSVENOR PLACE, 1220.

You can also pay by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT):

Account Name:	Scenic Journeys by Rail
BSB:	033 364
Account Number:	612826
Reference:	Your name and 'Japan'

If paying by EFT, please include the Reference above, and email to sjr@digitor.com.au to advise that you have done so – or if you have used a different reference. Please forward the booking form to the postal address above, or scan and email it to us. Credit card payment is possible, with merchant fees of 1% for Visa/MasterCard. Please call us to make payment by credit card.

AIR TRAVEL TO/FROM JAPAN

A range of flight options exist, including overnight services in both directions with Qantas, direct daylight travel to Japan and night travel back from Japan with Japan Air Lines, or daylight and overnight flights with All Nippon Airlines. On receipt of booking we'll contact you to discuss your flight preferences and with our travel agent Jones and Turner Travel Associates, Paddington, we will identify the best airfare to meet your travel needs. Business Class seating is also available.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Call us on 0418 585 838 or email at sjr@digitor.com.au for further details or information.

BOOKING, CANCELLATION AND TRAVEL CONDITIONS

Bookings will be accepted on the attached form. **Changes to the itinerary** - as the tour operates to some remote parts of Japan, where accommodation and travel options are limited, the tour organiser reserves the right to change and amend the itinerary at his sole discretion based on necessary changes to travel plans due to air, sea and land schedule changes and hotel availability. **Currency fluctuations** – the tour organiser reserves the right to adjust the tour price based on significant foreign exchange movement between the Australian Dollar and the Japanese Yen. **Cancellation** fees apply as follows: the initial deposit is non-refundable. After payment of further deposits towards the final tour cost, costs for tickets, accommodation, sightseeing etc made on your behalf will incur cancellation charges equal to the cancellation charges incurred to us, imposed by suppliers/operators, plus a fee to cover administrative costs – more than three months prior to departure, \$1000 per person; within three months, \$2000 per person. No refund will be made for cancellations after 1 July 2024. All cancellation or administration charges imposed by the suppliers/operators of components of this tour must be borne by you, the passenger. **Responsibility** - St James' Rail acts only as the organiser of the tour. On acceptance of tickets and travel documents for this tour, which may be evidenced in writing by a ticket, voucher, letter, or other document, you accept that neither St James' Rail nor representatives from any other firm supplying services in conjunction with this tour programme, shall be liable in contract or in tort (actionable wrong) for any injury, loss, damage, accident, sickness, delay or additional expense to you or your possessions arising directly or indirectly by force majeure or other events which are beyond our control, or which are not preventable by reasonable diligence on our part, including, but not limited to, civil disturbance, fire, floods, acts of God, acts of Governments or other authorities, changes in itinerary, weather, strikes, war, transportation disruption, failure of machinery or equipment, industrial action, pandemic, quarantine or any other cause. Where travel is by scheduled carrier, or charter service, that carrier's responsibility is limited in accordance with their conditions of carriage. Similarly all luggage is your responsibility, and we cannot be held liable for any loss or delay however caused. The care of your travel documents are your own responsibility. All expenses incurred by loss must be borne by you. Airline regulations and conditions are written on the airline tickets and are issued to passengers subject to their acceptance of these conditions. Changes in exchange rates, taxes and any land arrangements costs may alter the price of the tour, and St James' Rail reserves the right to change, amend or cancel this tour and/or itinerary if necessary. We reserve the right to amend the itinerary en route to account for unforeseen changes or conditions, or to improve the tour experience for the majority, as determined by the tour leader. **Passports, visas, vaccinations, health requirements** – a valid passport with six months validity from the end of the tour is required. Obtaining all visas, vaccinations or other health requirements to meet the expectation of airlines or foreign governments is your responsibility. St James' Rail cannot accept responsibility for any losses or expenses incurred as a result of a passenger not holding valid and necessary passport, visa, vaccination or health documents. **Conditions relating to COVID-19** – if the tour is unable to proceed due to Government restrictions, SJR may at our election: postpone your travel arrangements to a future date, in which case we will issue you with a credit note equal to amounts paid at the time of postponement; or cancel your travel arrangements, in which case our contract with you will terminate. If we cancel your travel arrangements and our contract terminates, neither of us will have any claim for damages against the other. However, we will refund payments made by you less unrecoverable third-party costs and less fair compensation for work undertaken by us up until the time of termination and in connection with the processing of any refund. SJR will refund payments it is able to recover or not incur from the various suppliers of services to this tour. Refunds will be made when the funds have been received by SJR from third party suppliers. **Full details of terms and conditions:** if you would like a copy of the full terms and conditions applicable to all SJR tours please contact us and we will forward a copy to you.

INSURANCE

A condition of travel on this tour is that you have a comprehensive travel insurance policy to protect yourself against cancellation fees, health and other travel risks. An insurance policy can be sent to you from our travel agent, Jones and Turner Travel Associates, Paddington, for your consideration. Obtaining insurance cover for the tour is your responsibility. It is highly recommended that insurance is secured at the same time or shortly after deposit payments are made.

AUTUMN COLOUR - JAPAN BY RAIL -

Sunday 6 October – Tuesday 29 October 2024

(optional 6 night / 7 day Kyoto, Tokyo, Meiji Shrine Festival extension to 4 November 2024)

Booking Form

YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

Name:

Address: Suburb: Postcode:

Home tel: Work tel: Mobile:

Email:

BOOKING DETAILS (Full passenger names EXACTLY as shown in your passport:)

Passenger 1 Name:

Date of Birth: Passport No: Expiry Date:

Frequent Flyer No: Airline No:

Passenger 2 Name:

Date of Birth: Passport No: Expiry Date:

Frequent Flyer No: Airline No:

PLEASE INCLUDE / SEND A SCANNED PHOTOCOPY OF THE DATA PAGE OF YOUR PASSPORT

PAYMENT

..... I have enclosed \$ as deposit (\$3,000 per person) for the above booking. Please make cheques payable to St James Rail and send to SJR, PO Box N400, GROSVENOR PLACE, 1220.

..... I have paid by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) as described previously. Please email SJR to advise and send this form.

Account Name: Scenic Journeys by Rail
BSB: 033 364
Account Number: 612826
Reference: Your name and 'Japan'

A letter will be sent acknowledging receipt of your deposit and providing further details.

AIR TRAVEL TO/FROM JAPAN

..... We would like you to book flights for me/us to travel to and from Japan. We will call to discuss air travel options.

..... We will make our own flight arrangements to travel to and from Japan.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

Single rooms: Double rooms: Twin (two bedded) rooms:

(Note – as mentioned above, in some hotels twin rooms are reasonably larger than double rooms, and in these cases we may provide the larger room for you unless you specifically request us not to do so.)

A single supplement is payable for sole use of rooms in hotels/ryokans.

RYOKAN – TRADITIONAL JAPANESE ACCOMMODATION

The tour includes some accommodation in quality Japanese ryokans. These involve sleeping on tatami mat floors, with futons (thin mattresses) and require you to remove shoes in the ryokan, the rooms, and sometimes at dinner and breakfast.

Please advise below if you are not able (or do not wish) to sleep on tatami mats with futons in Japanese ryokan hotels, or do not wish to remove your shoes. We will then book you a western style hotel room or at a western style hotel.

..... I prefer western style beds, but am happy to remove shoes in the ryokan

..... I prefer western style beds, and do not wish to remove shoes for meals (we will accommodate you in a nearby hotel.)

DIETARY REQUESTS (we will do our best to accommodate and advise accordingly)

Please indicate any dietary request :

.....

.....

INSURANCE

..... Please send an insurance policy from Travel Associates, Paddington.

YOUR SIGNATURE

I have read the reservation conditions outlined above and accept them on behalf of myself and my party by whom I am authorised to make this agreement.

Signature of person making reservation: Date:

Cancellation charges will apply as advised in this itinerary. An insurance policy can be forwarded from our travel agent at Travel Associates, Paddington, NSW 2021.

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Web www.stjamesrail.org

April 2023