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## GEEO ITINERARY

Japan 6/21/2025

### **Day 1: Tokyo Arrive in Tokyo at any time. Meet your group for a welcome meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m.**

Arrive in Tokyo at any time. The nearest airport is **Tokyo International Airport (Haneda) (HND)**. We recommend arriving a day or two early to fully explore this huge city (e.g., to see Sensō-ji Temple or Tokyo Tower). This will also give you time to adjust to the time difference, overcome any jet lag, and avoid any disruption to your trip due to flight delays or cancellations. We can book extra hotel nights for you in Tokyo before the trip. **Hotel Check-in and Welcome Meeting** Please note that check-in at the hotel is usually around 2:00-3:00 p.m. There are no planned activities until an intro meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m., usually in the hotel lobby. Check for a sign or ask at the reception desk about the exact time and location of the group meeting. Please make every effort to arrive in time for this meeting. If you are delayed and will arrive late, please inform us. Your tour leader will then leave you a message at the front desk informing you of where and when to meet up tomorrow. After the meeting, you might choose to get dinner at a nearby restaurant with your traveling companions and your tour leader to further get to know one another. **Joining Instructions** The nearest train station is Shinjuku Station, south exit. Shinjuku Washington Hotel is directly connected by an underground passageway (served by JR, Tokyo Metro, Odakyu, Keio, and other railway lines) between 06:00 and 22:45 for comfortable access even in bad weather. It is an 8-min walk from Shinjuku Station, but the passageway can be hard to locate. Tocho-mae Station (Oedo subway line) is approximately 5 mins from the hotel on foot. **From Narita International Airport:** - By train: The JR Narita Express is a direct train between Narita Airport and Shinjuku Station. There is also the Keisei Skyliner, which takes approximately 40 minutes to travel from the airport to Keisei-Nippori Station, where you can transfer to the JR Yamanote Line and get off at JR Shinjuku Station (south exit) after about 8 minutes. See instructions above about walking from the station to the hotel. The train ticket fee is 2,770 JPY per person. - By airport limousine bus: Take the bus from Terminal 1, bus stop #10. It is about 120-150 minutes to the entrance of the hotel. The fare is 3,200 JPY per person. **From Haneda International Airport:** - By train: Take a train from Haneda Airport, Keikyu Airport Line, for approximately 23 minutes to Hamamatsucho Station. There, transfer to the JR Yamanote Line and get off at JR Shinjuku Station (south exit) after about 5 minutes. See instructions above about walking from the station to the hotel. The train ticket fee is 700 JPY per person. - By airport limousine bus: Take the bus from Terminal 3, bus stop #4. It is about 60-80 minutes to the entrance of the hotel. The fare is 1,300 JPY per person. Bus tickets can be purchased at each terminal of Haneda Airport from vending machines near the bus stop. **Pre-booked airport transfer:** If you have booked an arrival transfer shuttle bus with us, a local representative will be waiting for you with a sign with your name on it outside of the luggage hall. Emergency phone number: +81(0)479-85-7522. Transfer time from Narita Airport to the hotel is approximately 2 hours, and from Haneda Airport it is approximately 1.5 hours, depending on the number of stops and traffic conditions. Luggage restrictions on the shuttle bus: Maximum 2 suitcases per person excluding the following items: ski equipment, golf bag, snowboard. **Accommodation:** Shinjuku Washington Hotel (or similar) \* *For the actual hotel your specific departure will be using, please check your voucher.*

### **Day 2: Tokyo Take a walking tour of eclectic modern Tokyo from the hub of Shinjuku to Shibuya through to Harajuku. The rest of the day is free for exploring more of the city.**

Your tour leader will lead the group on a walking tour of eclectic modern Tokyo from the hub of Shinjuku to Shibuya through to Harajuku. Start with a birds-eye view of the city from Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building (opt to return this evening for a nighttime view!). Visit the beautiful Meiji Shrine, a Shinto shrine dedicated to the deified spirits of Emperor Meiji and his wife, Empress Shōken. Then see the famous scramble crossing in Shibuya—automobile traffic is stopped from all sides, and pedestrians scramble across the intersection in every direction, with as many as 3,000 people crossing at one time! The rest of the day is free to explore more of the city. **Accommodation:** Shinjuku Washington Hotel (or similar)

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**Day 3: Tokyo/Nagano Journey to Nagano, located in the Japanese Alps and host city of the 1998 Winter Olympics. Visit the world-famous Jigokudani Monkey Park and watch Japanese snow monkeys bathing in the natural hot springs.**

Today we board a bullet train and journey to Nagano, located in the Japanese Alps and host city of the 1998 Winter Olympics. After arriving in Nagano, we will take a public bus to visit the Jigokudani Monkey Park, where wild snow monkeys can be seen bathing in the natural hot springs. The pool where most of the monkeys soak is man-made, fed by the hot springs. Along the walking paths up to the pools, other monkeys tend to stop and watch visitors curiously. The beautiful walk through the forest from the bus stop to the hot springs takes about 30–45 minutes. **Approximate travel time:** 3 hrs by bullet train  
**Accommodation:** Nagano Tokyu REI Hotel (or similar)

**Day 4: Nagano Enjoy a day-trip to quaint Matsumoto and visit one of Japan's most treasured castles. Return to Nagano and explore historic Zenkoji Temple.**

Today, we travel by local train for a day trip to quaint Matsumoto, where we will visit one of Japan's most treasured castles. Amazingly, Matsumoto Castle still retains its original wooden interior and stone exterior. Explore this castle where 16th-century Samurai once roamed before venturing out with the group to wander Matsumoto's ancient streets or dine in a traditional storehouse. We then return to Nagano and visit the Buddhist temple of Zenkō-ji, one of the last remaining pilgrimage sites in Japan. Built in the 7th century, the city of Nagano grew around the temple. The first Buddha image in Japan, brought from Korea in 522 AD, is known as a hibutsu, or 'secret Buddha,' because it is kept completely hidden from the public eye. The temple laws prohibit the statue from being shown to anyone, including the chief priest of the temple. **Approximate travel time:** 3-4 hrs round trip by local train  
**Accommodation:** Nagano Tokyu REI Hotel (or similar)

**Day 5: Nagano/Otsu Travel to Otsu in Shiga prefecture. Settle in and relax with a stroll around the picturesque Lake Biwa before heading out to enjoy a delicious bowl of ramen for dinner.**

Today we travel to Otsu in Shiga prefecture, located on the banks of Lake Biwa, Japan's largest freshwater lake. Settle in and relax with a stroll (or bike ride) around this picturesque lake before heading out to enjoy a delicious bowl of ramen for dinner. Your time in lovely Otsu will be brief. **Approximate travel time:** 4.5 hrs by train **Accommodation:** Lake Biwa Otsu Prince Hotel (or similar)  
**Meals included:** Dinner

**Day 6: Otsu/Hagi Grab a quick breakfast before a long travel day. Arrive in Hagi, a former castle town that boasts feudal architecture. Meet your host family at a community homestay and get to know each other as you enjoy dinner together.**

Grab a quick breakfast before a long travel day. [Please note that before leaving Ōtsu, you'll need to prepare your day pack/overnight bag for a two-night stay in Hagi, as your main luggage will be sent ahead to Tottori. Remember to include comfortable clothing for a cycling excursion and two nights at the homestay. Also, grab a bento box from Lawson's or FamilyMart to eat during the train journey.](#) In the late afternoon, arrive in the quaint city of Hagi, a former castle town that boasts feudal architecture. Take part in a welcome ceremony with the local residents—your host families! Get to know a local family during your community homestay in Hagi. In recent years, due to the rapidly aging population and limited income opportunities in many of the rural areas of Japan, young people and other community members have had to leave Hagi to make a living in larger cities, like Osaka and Tokyo. Learn about local history and customs from your host family, and enjoy a home-cooked meal with them. **Approximate travel time:** 6.5 hrs by train **Accommodation:** Homestay in Hagi (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Dinner

**Day 7: Hagi Explore rural Hagi on a guided morning cycle. Enjoy free time to wander the narrow streets or opt to visit some of the beautiful old residences.**

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## Later return to your homestay and enjoy dinner with your host family.

Explore rural Hagi on a guided morning cycle through town. Enjoy the slow pace of life as you pedal past the city's Tokugawa-era architecture, and cycle along the Japanese Sea. Opt to jump in and go for a quick swim. Your clothes will dry off as you cycle back to the visitor center. Afterward, you will have free time to try some local cuisine and wander the narrow streets or visit some of the beautiful old residences that are open to the public. In the late afternoon, return to your homestay and enjoy dinner with your host family. **Accommodation:** Homestay in Hagi (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Dinner

## Day 8: Hagi/Tottori Bid farewell to your host family after enjoying breakfast together. Travel to Miho-misumi by train. Learn the art of making "washi," a Japanese paper, before continuing to the seaside town of Tottori.

This morning, you'll bid farewell to your host families after enjoying breakfast together. Later, travel to Miho-misumi by train, taking in scenic views along the way. In Miho-misumi, learn the art of making "washi," a UNESCO-recognized traditional Japanese paper, and take home your handmade washi as a memento. Then, board another train to the seaside town of Tottori, where you'll end the day.

**Approximate travel time:** 6 hrs total by train **Accommodation:** New Otani Tottori (or similar) **Meals included:** Breakfast | Lunch

## Day 9: Tottori/Kyoto Spend the morning exploring Tottori's scenic sand dunes. After, visit the local fish market and opt for a fresh seafood lunch. Later travel to Kyoto.

Located along the coast of the Sea of Japan, the Tottori Sand Dunes (or "Tottori Sakyu") were formed thousands of years ago when sand was washed away from a nearby river. This morning, we'll walk along the dunes and climb one to take in scenic views of the coastline. Afterward, take a bus to Tottori's harbor fish market, home to fresh seafood and some of Japan's best crab. Walk among the stalls and watch the locals in action. Opt to try a tasty dish in the market's restaurant section. In the late afternoon, travel to Kyoto, the traditional heart of Japan. **Approximate travel time:** 3 hrs by train **Accommodation:** Oakwood Hotel Oike Kyoto (or similar)

## Day 10: Kyoto Visit the iconic Fushimi Inari Taisha Shrine, famed for an impressive 10,000 red torii gates. This afternoon, enjoy free time in this picturesque city.

We will start off the day with a visit to the Fushimi Inari Shrine, located just outside of Kyoto. Walk under the thousands of iconic torii gates (as seen in the film *Memoirs of a Geisha*) and enjoy the peaceful atmosphere. The shrine itself is at the base of the Inari mountain but includes many trails up to smaller shrines in the area. If you're up for a challenge, hike all the way to the very top! Kyoto is home to over 2,000 temples, including some of the most magnificent in the country, dating back centuries. Use your free time to continue exploring—the city also boasts museums, castles, and traditional gardens—or opt to visit neighboring Nara or Osaka. **Accommodation:** Oakwood Hotel Oike Kyoto (or similar)

## Day 11: Kyoto Depart Kyoto at any time.

There are no planned activities today, so you may depart Kyoto at any time. Kyoto does not have its own airport, but the closest airport to Kyoto is **Osaka International (Itami) Airport (ITM)**. For travellers flying out of Kansai International Airport (KIX), note that taxis can be quite expensive in the late hours. Other options include:

1. By train - departing from Kyoto station, the limited express "Haruka" Train goes directly to the airport. The last train to the airport leaves Kyoto station at 20:30.
2. By bus - departing from Kyoto station, with several stops along the way. The last bus to the airport leaves Kyoto station at 22:10.

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Timetable Reference: <http://www.hyperdia.com> We highly recommend extending your stay in Kyoto by at least one day or more to allow more time to explore this incredible city and/or take day trips to Osaka and Hiroshima (by Shinkansen). You may book post-trip accommodation at your hotel in Kyoto through us. Please note that check-out time from the hotel is usually mid-morning, but luggage storage services are available at the reception desk. Want more adventure? Book two or more GEEO programs in the same school year and receive a discount! GEEO will give you 10% off the lesser-value program(s) (up to 3 programs per year). If you would like to extend your time abroad but don't see another GEEO program that interests you, let us know. We can work with you to find a trip from our tour operator's much larger catalog. Their tours are open to the general public and not designed specifically for educators, but we can still offer you and your travel companions a discounted educator price on any additional tours that you book.

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**\*Itinerary Disclaimer:** *While it is our intention to adhere to the routes described on our website, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable, to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The information on our website is a general guide to the tour and region, and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.*