

JAPAN ART, ARCHITECTURE & CRAFTS PRIVATE TOUR

10 – 26 APRIL 2027

retreat|recreate is delighted to present this 16 night/17-day private Art, Architecture & Crafts tour of Japan for Kate Jordan-Moore and friends.

Come and explore this fascinating country through the lens of its art and handcraft traditions.

Visit the country's best museums, art galleries (and the art islands), installations and artisan studios; enjoy a flea market and Japan's best tea; tour some of the most important temples & shrines in Tokyo, Kanazawa and Kyoto and have a once in a lifetime experience with an overnight stay at a remote Buddhist temple. Immerse yourself in hands-on workshops in traditional crafts including *kintsugi* (mending of ceramics with gold), yarn dyeing, *chasen* (bamboo tea whisk) making, *kasuri* (ikat) weaving, and botanical dyeing.

This exploration of Japan through the lens of its art, architecture and handcrafts, promises to be the trip of a lifetime.

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ITINERARY

as at February 2026



Day 1

Saturday 10 April

Day 2

Sunday 11 April

TOKYO

Konnichiwa! Welcome to Japan. If you have not booked an optional arrival transfer through us, please make your own way to our hotel in the heart of the Ueno district and relax after your flight.

There will be a tour briefing this evening in the lobby of the hotel at 6:00pm (TBC). You'll receive your Welcome Pack and meet your guide and run through the itinerary. Following the briefing meeting you'll enjoy a **welcome dinner** at a delightful local restaurant.

This itinerary is very full so we strongly recommend you arrive a couple of days earlier to pursue your own interests, check out some of Tokyo's best gardens, shop at Nippori Textile Town, etc. We can assist with pre tour accommodation at our tour hotel, or you are free to book elsewhere and get to know a different district of Tokyo.

Meals: Dinner



TOKYO

Today, dive straight into Tokyo's cultural scene with visits to:

- the beautiful **Nezu Museum**. This private collection of Japanese and Asian art is housed in a stunning serene building, set in a magnificent garden.

- **Meiji Shrine and Meiji Jingu Museum** are next on the list. One of Tokyo's most important Shinto shrines, it's dedicated to the Emperor Meiji and Empress Shoken. The forest setting will make you forget you're in one of the world's biggest cities. The museum within the shrine precinct is well worth a look.

- **Ota Memorial Museum of Art** featuring around 12,000 pieces including masterpieces of nikuhitsu-ga painting and ukiyo-e woodblock prints

- **National Art Centre of Tokyo**. This large modern venue holds temporary exhibitions. The 2027 program is still TBC.

Meals: Breakfast (cash provided to purchase)



Day 3 Monday 12 April



Day 4 Tuesday 13 April



Day 5 Wednesday 14 April



Day 6 Thursday 15 April



Day 7 Friday 16 April

TOKYO

Begin your exploration of Japanese handcrafts with your first hands-on workshop, an **indigo dyeing class**. Meet our team of botanical dye experts and learn all about *aizome* , the art of indigo dyeing, and how indigo from the *Persicaria tinctoria* plant is extracted, fermented and processed to create 'Japan Blue'. Then, dye a scarf of your very own, using a variety of simple shibori techniques including pleating, clamping, folding or twisting before dipping your masterpiece in the studio's indigo vats.

A group lunch is included at a delightful restaurant overlooking the Sumida River in downtown Asakusa.

In the afternoon explore Tokyo's oldest temple, the stunning **Sensoji Temple** and the beautiful, bustling surrounding area before strolling home via **Kappabashi (Kitchen) Street**.

TOKYO

Today, head to the fascinating **Edo Open Air Architecture Museum**. Stroll leafy streets filled with preserved Japanese houses and shops from various periods. Experience daily life in Edo (the old name for Tokyo) over different eras, from the humble 200 year old farmhouse to the magnificent 20th century home of a local noble. The museum is always a favourite destination for our groups who enjoy the architecture but also the opportunity to appreciate the broader context within which the local art and handcraft traditions sit.

If the weather is fine, enjoy a picnic lunch soaking up the sun and atmosphere of the park. If the weather isn't conducive to outdoor dining there are two onsite café options.

There'll be a little free time this afternoon for your own exploration. You may wish to visit the Japan Folkcraft Museum (home of the *mingei* movement), head to the bright lights of Shinjuku, or wander the hip district of Shimokitazawa. The choice is yours.

TOKYO

Today is a full day of exploring three Ueno Park museums in your own time, ie. your guide will not accompany you today. The museums are across the road from the hotel and easily accessible. Each person can spend as much time as they wish in each museum without the need to stay with the guide or group. The three museums are:

- **Tokyo National Museum;**
- **National Museum of Western Art;**
- **Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum.**

Tickets to the Tokyo National Museum, and the National Museum of Western Art are included in your tour price. Tickets to the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum vary according to the exhibition at the time, so once the exhibition schedule is confirmed closer to departure, these tickets will be purchased for the group and the guide will collect the fees from the group that day.

KANAZAWA

Pack a small overnight bag as your main luggage will be forwarded to Kanazawa so you don't have to wrangle suitcases on the bullet train.

This morning, travel by shinkansen to the very pretty city of Kanazawa (sometimes known as Little Kyoto). The highlight of Kanazawa is the world famous **Kenrokuen Garden**, known as one of Japan's 'Three Great Gardens'. Stroll the stunning Edo period garden, enjoying views of the lake, the famous stone lantern (pictured above) and numerous tea houses. The garden features all six of the attributes of 'a perfect landscape': spaciousness, seclusion, artifice, antiquity, waterways, and panoramas. Within the garden is the excellent **Ishikawa Museum of Traditional Crafts**, highlighting the region's traditional handcrafts.

Kanazawa Castle Park is next door to the garden – you'll pass through its expansive parklands on your way to Kenrokuen and get a good view of the impressive castle.

KANAZAWA

Head to the **National Crafts Museum** this morning – the only *national* museum in Japan that specialises in Japanese crafts, with a collection of over 4000 works in fields including ceramics, lacquerwork, woodwork, glass, metalwork, bamboo-ware etc.

Next up is the **21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art**, a must see while in Kanazawa. Housed in a stunning circular glass-walled building designed by architects Kazuyo Sejima + Ryue Nishizawa from SANAA (one of their landmark projects), the gallery's mission is to create a participation-oriented museum that revitalises the local community and moves in step with the international experimental contemporary art world.

In the afternoon there'll be free time to wander the lanes of the historic **Higashi Chaya district** with its beautiful old wooden buildings, tea houses and shops selling items decorated with the gold leaf for which Kanazawa is so famous.

Your luggage will be waiting for you at the hotel this afternoon.

Meals: Breakfast (cash provided), Lunch

Meals: Breakfast (cash provided)

Meals: Breakfast (cash provided)

Meals: Breakfast

Meals: Breakfast



Day 8 Saturday 17 April



Day 9 Sunday 18 April



Day 10 Monday 19 April



Day 11 Tuesday 20 April



Day 12 Wednesday 21 April

MT SHIGARAKI

Head into the mountains today on your private coach to the very special **Miho Museum**. This world famous gallery is a must-see for anyone interested in art, architecture and landscape. Designed by renowned architect I. M. Pei, most of the building is situated underground, carved out of a rocky mountainside. The entrance to the gallery is by tunnel and tree lined walkway, inspired by the notion of ethereal utopia as described in an ancient Chinese poem. In April you should see the [avenue of sakura blossom!](#)

Later in the afternoon travel to a **Buddhist temple atop Mt Shigisan for a magical overnight stay**. Soak up the serenity strolling the temple grounds at night, enjoy a traditional *Shojin ryori* evening meal, sleep on tatami mats in traditional Japanese rooms, and soak in the temple's onsen (hot spring bath). Spending the night at the temple is a once in a lifetime experience that we promise you'll remember forever. *(Important note: this accommodation is traditional and monastic in nature. Beds are thin futons on tatami mats, and the bathrooms are communal).*

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

KYOTO

Rise early (if you wish) to attend the temple's 5:30am **Goma Fire Ritual followed by the Morning Prayer Ritual with chanting and drumming** – more once in a lifetime experiences! After a *Shojin* breakfast enjoy some free time to explore the temple grounds again or participate in an **optional Buddhist meditation session** (a small fee applies).

Leaving the temple behind, head to a **tea whisk making village for a demonstration**. *Chasen* are the traditional bamboo whisks (pictured above) used when making matcha. Carved from a single piece of bamboo, a *chasen* is instrumental in traditional Japanese tea ceremonies. This studio is one of Japan's best, providing bespoke *chasen* to the best tea masters, celebrities, elite families and international clientele.

Continuing the theme, you'll then visit the very beautiful **Byodin Buddhist Temple** in Uji, the home of Japan's best tea, and enjoy authentic Uji tea and a **traditional Tea Ceremony**.

Arrive in Kyoto and settle into your centrally located hotel.

Meals: Breakfast

KYOTO

Tune into Kyoto's spiritual side with a visit to its two most famous Zen Buddhist temples, both of which are UNESCO World Heritage listed. First is the extraordinary **Kinkakuji Temple, otherwise known as the Golden Pavilion** as its two uppermost storeys are covered in gold leaf. Nearby is **Ryoanji**, a serene Zen temple featuring Japan's most famous rock garden. The raked gravel garden includes 15 carefully placed rocks, designed so you can never see all 15 no matter your viewing position.

After a big morning of spiritual contemplation, enjoy a group lunch at our favourite family-run restaurant nearby.

Kyoto has flourished during its 1000 year long history. It's in this city that many aspects of Japanese culture were born, and the city enjoys a global reputation as a centre for traditional and modern craftsmanship. At the **Kyoto Traditional Craft & Design Museum** you'll learn about Kyoto's multitude of traditional handicrafts.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

KYOTO

Today features a very exciting day trip and a **full day of textile workshops**. Travel by private coach to a tiny village to visit the home and studio of the inspiring weavers Jun Tomita and Mayo Horinouchi. Jun san is an accomplished ikat weaver, famous for putting a very modern spin on traditional Japanese ikat. His work is truly beautiful, as is his partner Mayo san's modern, sculptural, architecturally complex weaving.

The group will be split into two. One group will learn the art of **weft kasuri weaving** (*kasuri* is Japanese ikat, in which the weft is resist dyed prior to being woven through a plain warp, to create a pattern), while the other group will learn the art of **dyeing variegated yarn** with multiple colours. After a magnificent lunch in Jun and Mayo's own home, the two groups will swap activities.

It's an inspiring day of workshops among the stunning rural scenery. It's always a highlight of our Japan tours; we feel very privileged to be able to take our groups here. For a truly one of a kind souvenir, the couple's works are available for purchase in their gallery.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

KYOTO

This morning you'll experience a quintessential Japanese experience – browsing one of its most famous (and best) **flea markets** in the grounds of a beautiful temple. There'll be antiques, bric a brac, objets d'art, textiles, basketry and all manner of treasures to explore and perhaps take home a bargain (or just a memory if you prefer).

Kintsugi, meaning 'golden seams', is the ancient Japanese craft of repairing broken ceramics with gold powder and lacquer. Kintsugi can be seen as a metaphor for embracing life's flaws and imperfections, much like the Western trend of visible mending of cloth. This afternoon, get hands on in a fabulous **kintsugi workshop**, learning all about the process of applying resin, lacquer and gold to broken or chipped vessels. You'll each take home a beautifully mended ceramic vessel as a momento of your trip, and an ongoing reminder of the importance of seeking beauty in the cracks of life.

Meals: Breakfast



Day 13 Thursday 22 April



Day 14 Friday 23 April



Day 15 Saturday 24 April



Day 16 Sunday 25 April



Day 17 Monday 26 April

KYOTO

This morning, you're off to another of Kyoto's famous handcrafts district – the **ceramics district**. We've scheduled a visit to the **Kawai Kanjiro House, an exquisite family-run museum** that was once the home and studio of the late renowned and revered potter and co founder of the *mingei* movement, Kawai Kanjiro. The serene interior of the beautiful traditional wooden house is sure to inspire you, as is the enormous six chambered community 'climbing kiln' at the rear of the garden.

As it's your last day in Kyoto, we've scheduled a **free afternoon** for you to catch up on a current art exhibition, visit a[nother] UNESCO World Heritage temple, stroll the Philosophers Path, or indulge in some of Kyoto's excellent shopping opportunities. There's a plethora of fabulous things to do in Kyoto. We'll give you a few suggestions of places to go and things to do in your free time, closer to departure.

Meals: Breakfast

UNO

Board your private coach this morning and head to bustling Okayama.

Explore the beautifully preserved historic **Kurashiki Bikan Historical Quarter**, taking the time to admire the Edo period architecture, white-walled warehouses and geometric Namako walls.

Stop in at Japan's first museum of Western art, the **Ohara Museum of Art**, a private museum boasting European, Chinese, Japanese and Egyptian art, both traditional and contemporary. When it first opened in 1930 its collection was almost entirely French paintings and sculptures from the 19th and 20th centuries. The collection has now expanded to include Italian Renaissance, Dutch and Flemish 17th century art, plus works by American and Italian 20th century artists.

Travel to Uno, your base for the next two nights. Your hotel has access to the outdoor onsen next door and is a two minute walk from Uno Port, the **gateway to the Art Islands**.

Meals: Breakfast

UNO

This morning, catch an early morning ferry to **Naoshima Art Island** for a full day of art exploration. Sites include:

- Chichu Art Museum designed by Tadao Ando
- The brand new Naoshima New Museum of Art, once again designed by Tadao Ando
- Benesse House Museum located high on a hill overlooking the Seto Inland Sea and based on the concept of 'coexistence of nature, art and architecture'
- The Art House Project in Naoshima's Honmura district (time permitting).

Return to Uno on the evening ferry.

Meals: Breakfast

OKAYAMA

Once again take the ferry from Uno, this time to the smaller and quieter **Teshima Island**. Today's sites include:

- The Heartbeat Archives - record your own heartbeat, and listen to others' recordings
- The Teshima Art Museum, home to a contemporary art installation created among terraced rice fields restored together with local residents
- Karato Spring and Mt Dan Viewpoint (nature-based highlights of Teshima)
- Teshima Yokoo House

Catch the 2:00pm ferry to Uno and travel to Okayama.

Tonight is a chance to reflect on the highlights of your trip at a very special farewell dinner.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

OKAYAMA

The tour concludes today after breakfast. It's time to pack up your souvenirs and memories and say a fond farewell to each other and beautiful Japan.

You may wish to request another night or two of additional accommodation to further explore Okayama. Sightseeing options include Okayama Castle and Korakuen Garden, another of Japan's 'Three Great Gardens'.

Meals: Breakfast

Prices in AUD*:

- Twin share: \$10,900 per person based on a group of 12
- Twin share: \$12,200 per person based on a group of 10
- Twin share: \$13,750 per person based on a group of 8
- Single supplement: \$2000

** Important note: at the time of writing in late 2025, our accommodations have not confirmed their prices for 2027. As such, we reserve the right to adjust the prices if required (please be assured this would be a last resort and we will do our best to not amend these prices)*

Inclusions:

- 16 nights/17 days accommodation as per itinerary
- 16 breakfasts*, 3 lunches, 3 dinners (**update as at Feb 2026. Cash will be provided to purchase your own breakfasts in Tokyo, due to our hotel ceasing to offer breakfast in '27*)
- Transport: trains, shinkansen (bullet train), private coach, buses, ferries, taxis
- Hands-on handcraft workshops and experiences, artisan talks and demonstrations, studio visits
- Entrance to all museums, galleries, temples and excursion venues (except 1 x Ueno museum on Day 5 to be paid on the day)
- Luggage transfer between cities
- Services of a local English-speaking accredited guide

Exclusions:

- International airfares
- Arrival & departure transfers (arrival transfers can be booked at additional cost)
- Travel insurance
- Early check in or late check out
- Personal spending (souvenirs, laundry, phone, shopping etc)
- Meals and drinks not included in the itinerary
- Tip for guide at conclusion of tour

Notes:

- The itinerary must be read in conjunction with the Booking Conditions, and the Trip Notes, to ensure the trip is right for you. Before completing an application form, please ensure you read the health and safety notes, and mobility expectations.
- Maximum group size is 12. Minimum group size is 8.
- The itinerary commences in Tokyo and concludes in Okayama. Okayama is a shinkansen hub with frequent bullet trains to Osaka, Kyoto and Tokyo, making it convenient for further independent travel or return travel to your preferred airport. Okayama also has an airport.
- The itinerary is full to ensure value for money, although there are two brief periods of free time. We recommend you add a few days before and/or after the tour for independent exploration and leisure time.
- The temple accommodation on Day 8 is traditional Japanese monastic style with thin futons on tatami mats, shared toilets, and a communal onsen (hot spring bath where public nudity is the norm. Bathing suits are not permitted). The other accommodations feature western style beds and private ensuite bathrooms. The Uno hotel is situated next door to a public onsen which hotel guests can access free of charge.
- This tour is fully escorted by a Japanese English-speaking guide only. There will not be a retreat|recreate host accompanying this trip.