

JAPAN TEXTILES & HANDCRAFTS TOUR

27 May – 10 June 2026

retreat|recreate is delighted to present this 14 night/15-day women's-only textile & handcrafts tour of Japan.

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

Visit specialist textile and handcraft museums, artisan studios and galleries, a flea market, temples & shrines and the cultural sites of Tokyo, Arimatsu and Kyoto. Participate in NINE hands-on workshops and handcraft experiences in silk weaving, kumihimo (braiding), bamboo tea whisk making, shibori, kintsugi, sashiko, ikat weaving and botanical dyeing.

Enjoy a traditional tea ceremony, engage with local artists, be inspired by incredible design and craftsmanship, shop for amazing textiles and handcrafts, and experience traditional Japanese culture and hospitality, all in the company of a small group (max. 12 women) of likeminded textile enthusiasts.

W: www.retreatrecreate.com
E: retreatrecreate@gmail.com

ITINERARY

as at May 2026



Day 1	Wednesday 27 May	Day 2	Thursday 28 May
TOKYO	Hotel Resol Ueno	TOKYO	Hotel Resol Ueno
<p>Konnichiwa! Welcome to Japan! Make your way to our hotel in the heart of the Ueno district and rest and relax after your flight.</p> <p>There will be a tour briefing this evening in the lobby of the hotel at 6:00pm. You'll receive your Welcome Pack and meet your two guides (!) and fellow travellers.</p> <p>Following the briefing meeting you'll enjoy a welcome dinner at a delightful local restaurant.</p> <p><i>Please arrange a flight arrival time (allowing for possible flight and traffic delays) that allows you to participate in the briefing meeting and welcome dinner. You may wish to arrive a day or two earlier.</i></p>		<p>Today, dive straight into your handcrafts itinerary with your first hands-on workshop, an indigo dyeing class. Learn the art of creating 'Japan Blue' from the team of dye specialists at Maito and dye a scarf of your very own, using a variety of shibori techniques including pleating, clamping, folding or twisting.</p> <p>There'll be a group lunch today as it's the first day together.</p> <p>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. Get hands on in your second workshop, learning all about kintsugi.</p> <p>Discover the stunning Sensoji Temple and the beautiful, bustling surrounding area before you head home after a big day.</p>	
Meals: Dinner		Meals: Breakfast, Lunch	



Day 3 Friday 29 May

TOKYO Hotel Resol Ueno

This morning, visit the excellent **National Art Centre** to view their current exhibition ‘*Hanae Mori Vital Type: The 100th Anniversary of Birth*’. This is the first retrospective of haute couture designer Hanae Mori since her death. Mori san was a leading figure in Japanese fashion and the first Asian designer admitted to the *Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture* in Paris. The exhibition features 400 works, many on display for the first time, reflecting Mori’s creativity and achievements.

Late in the morning we have arranged a private visit and presentation at the high end textile company NUNO, known for its innovative incorporation of technology to create fabric masterpieces. One of the designers will host us and deliver a **talk on the NUNO design process**. It’s always an incredibly inspiring visit. There will also be the opportunity to purchase some of these amazing fabrics, and garments and homewares.

The afternoon is free for your own exploration.

Meals: Breakfast



Day 4 Saturday 30 May

TOKYO Hotel Resol Ueno

Kumihimo is the Japanese art of silk braiding. This morning, tour Domyo, one of Tokyo’s premier kumihimo studios, learn all about this ancient craft, and then learn how to use the traditional tools to create your own braided item in a private workshop just for our group. This experience is new for 2026! You’ll choose between a bracelet or strap.

After lunch explore the wonder that is **Nippori Textile Town**. This entire street is filled with fabric shops, and every other textile delight you can imagine – haberdashery, leather, buttons, patterns, upholstery, quilting fabrics, silks, cottons, linens, second hand kimonos, and yet more fabric. Even if shopping isn’t your thing, you’re sure to find inspiration here.

Meals: Breakfast



Day 5 Sunday 31 May

TOKYO Hotel Resol Ueno

This morning kick off the day with a visit to the private home of a **renowned kimono scholar and enthusiast**. Your colourful and very knowledgeable host Sheila Cliffe will deliver a fascinating presentation on the history and types of kimono, display her own collection of kimono and obi, explain how they’re made and generally answer all your kimono-related questions. It promises to be a morning to remember.

After lunch head to the fascinating **Edo Open Air Architecture Museum**. Stroll leafy streets filled with preserved Japanese houses and shops from various periods. Experience Japanese daily life in 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 handcraft traditions sit.

Meals: Breakfast



Day 6 Monday 1 June

ARIMATSU Kasadera Hotel

Today you’ll keep an overnight bag with you and your main luggage will be sent ahead to Kyoto.

Leaving the bright lights of Tokyo, head by shinkansen (bullet train) to the pretty town of **Arimatsu**, famous for its old district featuring beautiful *machiya* (traditional wooden buildings), and because it is Japan’s famous shibori town.

Exploration of Japan’s shibori traditions begins at the **Shibori Museum** where you’ll view some amazing examples of shibori textiles. There are usually a few artisans on site demonstrating their craft. It’s completely mind blowing to watch these master craftswomen tie the world’s tiniest knots completely by hand at breakneck speed, readying the intricately patterned cloth for dyeing.

After the museum visit a studio belonging to the **shibori artist Kaei Hawakawa san**, famous for his ‘arashi’ shibori cloth. Arashi means storm, and this particular pattern resembles the slanted rain in a heavy thunderstorm.

You’ll spend tonight in **Nagoya**, the city most convenient to little Arimatsu. Our Japanese style hotel has its own onsen so tonight’s the night for a lovely soak!

Meals: Breakfast



Day 7 Tuesday 2 June

KYOTO Hotel Resol Sanjo

This morning we are very excited to announce another very special experience, with a **shibori workshop** with the team of experts at **Suzusan**, whose stunning clothes and textiles are renowned worldwide. This high end textile production house is probably the world’s most famous company specialising in shibori, and we are incredibly proud to be able to offer our groups the chance to learn from them. This workshop is always a tour highlight! There’ll also be the chance to visit their shop where you can admire, browse and purchase (if you wish) their stunning wares.

There’ll be some free time to browse Arimatsu’s main street, then it’s time to board the shinkansen to beautiful Kyoto!

Your luggage will be waiting for you at our lovely Kyoto hotel, which is centrally located and surrounded by the city’s best restaurants and shops. We can recommend some excellent places to dine this evening.

Meals: Breakfast



Day 8 **Wednesday 3 June** **Day 9** **Thursday 4 June** **Day 10** **Friday 5 June** **Day 11** **Saturday 6 June** **Day 12** **Sunday 7 June**

KYOTO Hotel Resol Sanjo

Today it's time to learn all about The Way of Tea, in a private **Tea Ceremony**. This exquisite, meditative ceremony offers an insight into Japanese traditional culture and philosophy.

Next, tune into the city's spiritual side with a visit to its most famous Zen temple, the UNESCO World Heritage listed and extraordinary **Kinkakuji Temple, otherwise known as the Golden Pavilion** as its two uppermost storeys are covered in gold leaf.

Nearby is **Ryoanji**, a beautiful temple and garden, 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.

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 some of Kyoto's multitude of traditional handcrafts.

Meals: Breakfast

KYOTO Hotel Resol Sanjo

Day trip to **Nara** today! Home of the famous Todai-ji temple, the temple's giant Buddha, the Kasuga Taisha Shinto shrine and the famous deer park, Nara is a lovely day out from Kyoto.

In addition to exploring beautiful Nara, we have lined up a **tea whisk making class** and demonstration. *Chasen* are the traditional bamboo whisks used when making matcha, or green tea. Carved from a single piece of bamboo, a chasen is instrumental in traditional Japanese tea ceremonies. The studio belongs to the artisan Tango Tanimura, one of Japan's best chasen makers (he provides bespoke chasen to senior tea masters and elite families). The studio is in a beautiful garden setting in an out of the way village where there are now only a few families making chasen the traditional way. Originally, the artisans in this village used to carve their chasen at night, to prevent intruders peeking in to observe their secret traditions!

Meals: Breakfast

KYOTO Hotel Resol Sanjo

This morning, visit a traditional silk weaving studio established in 1894. THE third generation weaver will explain the history of the Koho Tasumura Studio and show examples of both traditional multi layered silk woven designs for kimono, obi and other high end textiles, and their own contemporary interpretations, all executed on enormous traditional floor looms for such customers as the Imperial family, the Japanese government and prestigious religious organisations. A tour of the weaving rooms follows, and the group can enjoy a **silk weaving workshop** and weave a small piece of silk each.

After a group lunch, tour Fujita Sen-en, a **kyo-yuzen dyeing studio** where they practise the traditional Kyoto style dyeing of cloth for kimono, while always developing new techniques and methods. You'll see the impressive studio with its massive printing tables and thousands of silk screen templates. Kyo-yuzen dyeing originated from traditional hand drawn yuzen dyeing techniques developed in the 17th century, although its origins are from the 8th century!

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

KYOTO Hotel Resol Sanjo

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 3D weaving style.

The group will be split into two parts. One group will learn the art of **weft kasuri** (*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 **variegated dyeing of yarn using multiple colours**.

After a magnificent lunch in Jun and Mayo's own home, the two groups will swap activities.

It's always an inspiring day of textile and handcraft workshops among the stunning rural mountain scenery and is absolutely a highlight of our Japan textile tours.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

KYOTO Hotel Resol Sanjo

All of the day's activities today take place in the south of the city.

This morning you'll experience a quintessential Japanese experience – browsing the famous **Toji flea market** held in the grounds of the very beautiful 5 storied pagoda Toji Temple. There'll be antiques, bric a brac, textiles, basketry and all manner of treasures to explore and perhaps take home a bargain (or just a memory if you prefer). Toji market is widely accepted as one of the country's best so we hope you enjoy it!

Another of the highlights of our textiles and handcraft itinerary is a private **sashiko workshop** with the lovely Kazue from SashikoLab. You'll spend the morning learning all things sashiko and will each begin your own envelope style pouch, perfectly designed to carry a pair of chopsticks or whatever you desire.

Later, walk through the thousand orange torii gates of the stunning and iconic **Fushimi Inari Shrine**. A fitting end to an iconic day.

Meals: Breakfast



Day 13 **Monday 8 June**

KYOTO Hotel Resol Sanjo

Deep in the heart of Nishijin, Kyoto's textiles district, is well known Aizenkobo, the **indigo dye studio** and bespoke shop of a family of extraordinary and inspiring dye masters. Your highly knowledgeable hosts will deliver a talk on traditional indigo dyeing and its associated techniques (shibori, katazome, sashiko etc) and introduce you to the studio's extensive collection of antique textiles.

This will be followed by a visit to a studio specialising in **tsuzure ori, or silk tapestry weaving**. The master weaver spent over forty years working at Japan's premier textile and weaving school before retiring to open his own studio. He will show the group around his tiny, atmospheric workspace and demonstrate the techniques and history of this extraordinary method in which the weaver uses his specially serrated fingernail as the beater. Yes, it's truly as astonishing as it sounds.

Meals: Breakfast



Day 14 **Tuesday 9 June**

KYOTO Hotel Resol Sanjo

This morning, stroll around Gion, the famous geisha district, full of wooden tea houses and beautiful restaurants overlooking the river.

Then, it's off to another of Kyoto's famous handcrafts district – the **ceramics district**. We've scheduled a visit to the **Kawai Kanjiro House, an exquisite private 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 full day in Japan, the afternoon is free for your own further exploration, shopping or relaxation before your farewell dinner.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 15 **Wednesday 10 June**

KYOTO

Your tour comes to an end today after breakfast. There are no activities planned for today and you are welcome to depart at any time. The hotel check out time is 11:00am unless you have booked a late check out, or are staying on for an extra day or two.

A list of suggested activities, venues, restaurants and handcraft shops and studios will be provided to travellers closer to departure, to help you plan your free time and/or additional days.

Meals: Breakfast

Inclusions:

- 14 nights/15 days accommodation as per itinerary
- 14 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 2 dinners
- Transport: trains, shinkansen, private coach, buses, taxis
- Hands-on handcraft & textiles workshops and experiences, artisan talks and demonstrations, studio visits, tea ceremony
- Entrance to all museums, galleries and excursion venues
- Luggage transfer between Tokyo and Kyoto
- Services of our excellent local English-speaking accredited guide

Exclusions:

- International airfares
- Arrival & departure transfers
- 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 your 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
- We no longer pair up solo travellers on our Japan itineraries due to the small size of Japanese hotel rooms. Twin share rooms are only available to friends/relatives travelling together.
- The itinerary is full to ensure value for money, although there are short periods of free time. We recommend you add a few days before and/or after the tour for further exploration.
- This tour is fully escorted by TWO excellent Japanese English-speaking guides. There will not be a retreat|recreate host accompanying this trip.