

JAPAN TEXTILES & HANDCRAFTS TOUR

14 – 28 OCTOBER 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), silk reeling,
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.

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ITINERARY

as at JULY 2026



Day 1

Wednesday 14 Oct

Day 2

Thursday 15 Oct

TOKYO

Hotel Resol Ueno

TOKYO

Hotel Resol Ueno

Konnichiwa! Welcome to Japan! Make
your way to our hotel in the heart of the
Ueno district and rest and relax after your
flight.

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 guide and fellow travellers.

Following the briefing meeting you'll
enjoy a **welcome dinner** at a delightful
local restaurant.

*A reminder that as per the update to the
tour page (July 2026), breakfasts at the
Tokyo hotel will not be included. Instead
you will receive cash of ¥1000 to purchase
your own.*

Meals: Dinner

Today, dive straight into your handcrafts
itinerary with two hands-on workshops,
the first being **an indigo dyeing and shibori
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.

A group lunch has been arranged (at own
cost) at a delightful restaurant overlooking
the Sumida River in downtown Asakusa.

In the afternoon explore the stunning
Sensoji Temple before your next
workshop, learning all about kintsugi, the
art of repairing broken ceramics with gold
powder and lacquer.

Meals: Breakfast (cash)



Day 3 Friday 16 Oct



Day 4 Saturday 17 Oct



Day 5 Sunday 18 Oct



Day 6 Monday 19 Oct



Day 7 Tuesday 20 Oct

TOKYO

Hotel Resol Ueno

This morning, visit the excellent **Japan Folkcraft (mingei) Museum**, filled with a stunning range of *mingei* (literally, craft of the common folk) items including ceramics, woodwork, basketry, textiles and cloth. A visit to this gallery is a marvellous introduction to the traditional handicrafts of Japan, providing an opportunity for a deeper understanding of the philosophy of aesthetics and the importance of the handmade in Japanese daily life.

In the late morning you'll enjoy a presentation at the exciting, high end **textile company NUNO Textiles**, known for its innovative incorporation of technology to create fabric masterpieces. One of the designers will host us and deliver a talk on her design process. It's always an incredibly inspiring visit.

Special addition: when we called last month to reconfirm the NUNO visit, the NUNO director suggested the group also visits the gallery next door, which is currently holding an **exhibition on contemporary bamboo craftsmanship!**

There'll be some free time this afternoon.

Meals: Breakfast (cash)

TOKYO

Hotel Resol Ueno

Kumihimo is the Japanese art of silk braidmaking. This morning, tour 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 kumihimo workshop** just for our group. This experience is new for 2026!

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 (cash)

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. It's a great opportunity to appreciate the broader context within which the local handcraft traditions sit.

Pack a [small, soft sided] overnight bag, and bring your suitcase to Reception tonight, to be couriered ahead to Kyoto. *You'll leave your overnight bags in the station lockers tomorrow while you explore Arimatsu so it's imperative your bag is small. Hard carry on cases will not fit in the lockers.*

Meals: Breakfast (cash)

ARIMATSU

Kasadera Hotel

Your luggage will be sent ahead to Kyoto early this morning.

Leaving the bright lights of Tokyo, head by bullet train to the pretty town of **Arimatsu**, famous for its old district featuring beautiful *machiya* (traditional wooden buildings), and a favourite 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 we'll visit a studio belonging to **shibori artist Kaei Hayakawa**, 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 nearby **Nagoya**. At the hotel some rooms have Japanese style beds, others are Western. It also has its own onsen so tonight's the night for a lovely soak!

Meals: Breakfast (cash), Lunch

KYOTO

Resol Sanjo Kawaramachi

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. 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 21 Oct**



Day 9 **Thursday 22 Oct**



Day 10 **Friday 23 Oct**



Day 11 **Saturday 24 Oct**



Day 12 **Sunday 25 Oct**

KYOTO **Resol Sanjo Kawaramachi**
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 the country's centre of traditional and modern craftsmanship. At the **Kyoto Traditional Craft & Design Museum** this afternoon you'll learn about some of Kyoto's multitude of traditional handcrafts. There are often demonstrations held at the museum, and the gift shop is a great place to buy beautiful handcrafted specialist items as souvenirs and gifts.

KYOTO **Resol Sanjo Kawaramachi**
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 at the traditional studio of master bamboo artist Tango Tanimura. *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. Tango san's studio is one of the best in the country, providing bespoke chasen to the imperial family, other noble families, tea masters and celebrities. This 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!

KYOTO **Resol Sanjo Kawaramachi**
Today we're excited to offer a brand new experience. You'll learn all about The Way of Tea in a private **Tea Ceremony** at Korin-in Temple, a sub temple of Kodai-ji which is not usually open to the public. It promises to be very special.

Next, head to Kyoto's textiles district to **Aizenkobo**, the famous **indigo dye studio** of a family of extraordinary and inspiring dye masters. Your hosts will deliver a talk on traditional indigo dyeing and its associated techniques (shibori, katazome, sashiko etc) and present their extensive collection of antique textiles.

After lunch, visit **Koho Tatsumura Studio**, a traditional silk weaving studio. Tour the workshop and see examples of traditional multi layered silk woven designs for kimono, obi and other high end textiles, and contemporary interpretations, all executed on enormous traditional floor looms. The group will have the opportunity to enjoy a **silk weaving workshop** on one of the traditional looms and weave a small piece of silk each.

KYOTO **Resol Sanjo Kawaramachi**
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 weaving.

The group will be split into two groups of six. 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 dyeing yarn** with multiple colours with a braid-resist dyeing technique. After lunch, the two groups will swap activities.

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

KYOTO
This morning you'll experience a quintessential Japanese experience – browsing one of its most famous (and best) **flea markets** in the grounds of the beautiful Kitano Tenmangu Shrine. 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). There'll be plenty of time to explore, browse, and find some lunch before the group reconvenes for the afternoon.

This will be followed by a visit to **Soshi Tsuzure-en**, a studio specialising in **tsuzure ori**, or **silk tapestry weaving**. The master weaver Kikuo Hirano san spent over forty years working as a master weaver 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 explain (and demonstrate) the techniques and history of the extraordinary tsuzure ori weaving, in which the weaver uses his or her specially serrated fingernail as the beater. Yes, it's truly as astonishing as it sounds.

Meals: Breakfast

Meals: Breakfast

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Meals: Breakfast



Day 13 **Monday 26 Oct**



Day 14 **Tuesday 27 Oct**



Day 15 **Wednesday 28 Oct**

KYOTO Resol Sanjo Kawaramachi

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

Kazue's atelier is in the Fushimi district so we'll take the opportunity to visit the 1000 vermillion torii gates of **Fushimi Inari shrine**. A quintessential Kyoto experience!

Fujita Sen-en is a kyo-yuzen dyeing studio where they dye cloth for tenugui and kimono. You'll tour the impressive studio with its massive printing tables and thousands upon 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

KYOTO Resol Sanjo Kawaramachi

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

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 (cash in Tokyo), 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 cities
- 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 guide at conclusion of tour (see Trip Notes for suggested amount)

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
- 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 very full to ensure value for money, although there are a couple of short periods of free time. We recommend you add a few days before and/or after the tour for independent exploration and/or relaxation
- This tour is fully escorted by our excellent Japanese English-speaking guide only. There will not be a retreat|recreate host accompanying this trip