

Discovering Zen and Your Self in Japan
Osaka – Koyasan – Hiroshima – Kanazawa – Fukui – Kyoto
(13 nights 14 days)

Designed for Your Clients

Buddhism was introduced to Japan by monks from China and evolved over the centuries into the unique Zen philosophy, which influenced the Japanese society for many years.

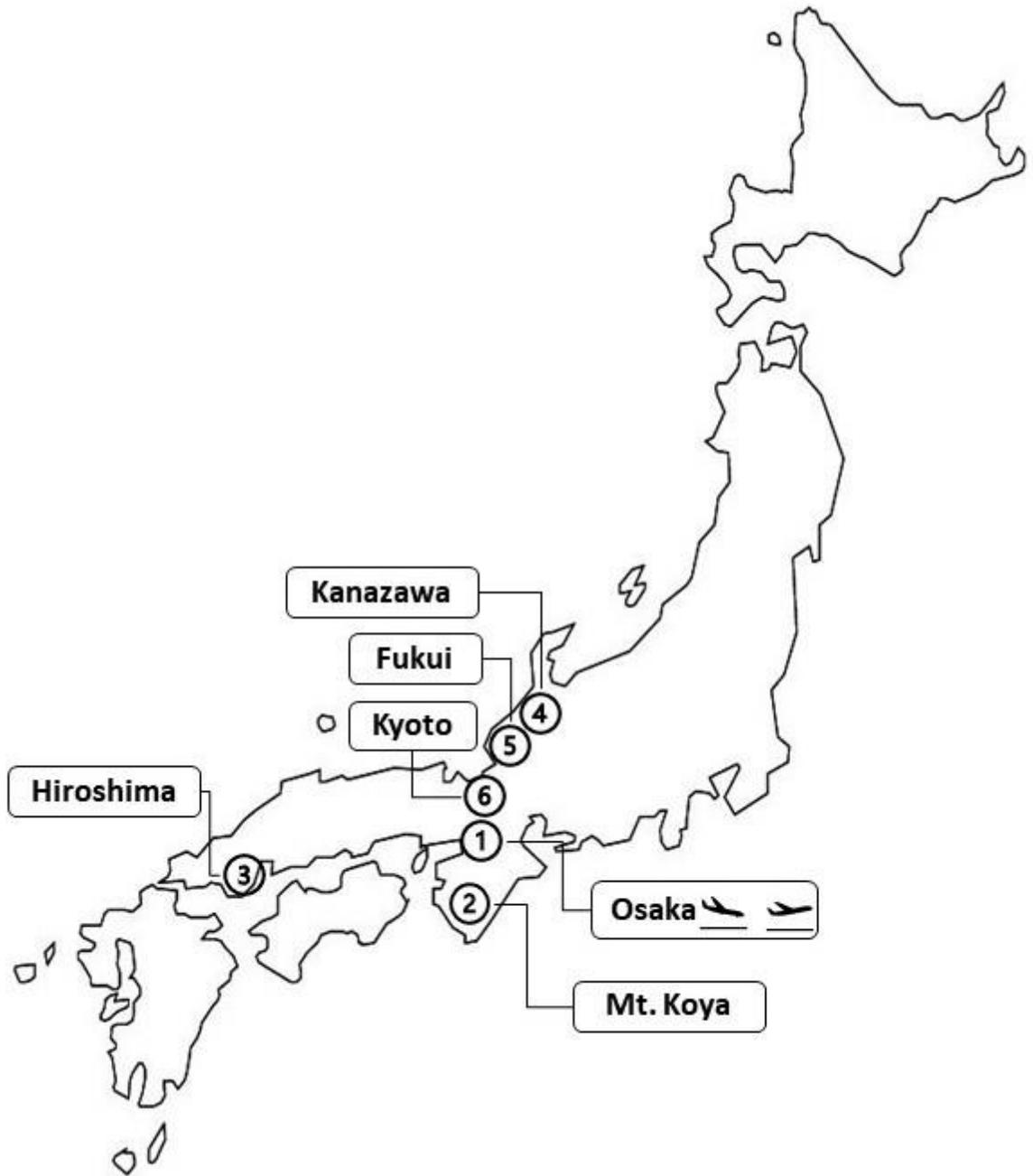
With a fine balance between authentic yet comfortable monasteries and fine accommodation, this immersing journey blends relaxed sightseeing to discover Zen in fine arts, gardens and architecture from the past and present, with private encounters with monks and tea masters as well as meditation practice.



Your itinerary at a Glance

Kyoto	Program	Accommodation
Day - 1	Arrival in Osaka	The Ritz Carlton, Osaka
Day - 2	Day trip to Awajishima	The Ritz Carlton, Osaka
Day - 3	Move to Koyasan / Koyasan	Sojiin
Day - 4	Koyasan / Move to Hiroshima	Bella Vista SPA & MARINA Onomichi
Day - 5	Hiroshima	Bella Vista SPA & MARINA Onomichi
Day - 6	Move to Kanazawa	Hyatt Centric Kanazawa
Day - 7	Kanazawa	Hyatt Centric Kanazawa
Day - 8	Move to Fukui	Eiheiji Hakujukan
Day - 9	Eiheiji	Eiheiji Hakujukan
Day - 10	Move to Kyoto	The Ritz Carlton, Kyoto
Day - 11	Kyoto	The Ritz Carlton, Kyoto
Day - 12	Kyoto	The Ritz Carlton, Kyoto
Day - 13	Kyoto	The Ritz Carlton, Kyoto
Day - 14	Departure	-

Your Travel Map



Detailed itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Osaka

After arriving at **Kansai International Airport**, you will be greeted by your **English-Speaking Chauffeur** at the Arrival hall and transfer to the **hotel** in the center of Osaka.



Enjoy the rest of the day at leisure, relaxing after your long flight and jet-lag.

The Ritz-Carlton, Osaka



The Ritz-Carlton, Osaka recently received the top rating of 5-pavilion by Michelin Guide Kyoto Osaka Kobe 2011 - and its two restaurants, La Baie and Xiang Tao, both received one-star Michelin ratings for the second consecutive year. In addition, it has won numerous awards including No.1 in Japan and one of the “500 best hotels, resorts, lodges, inns and safari camps” chosen by the acclaimed Travel & Leisure magazine in 2006.

Overnight at The Ritz Carlton, Osaka

Day 2: Day trip to Awajishima

At **9:00**, meet your **private English Speaking Guide**, and transfer to Awajishima by Private Chartered Car. It takes about 1.5 hours to reach in normal traffic condition.

After the short journey to Awaji island, visit **MInamiawaji Takigawa Memorial Museum Seigyoku**. Here, you can see Jikihara Gyokusei's works of Nanga : the Southern school of Chinese painting mainly written by ink which became popular in Japan during Edo period.



After enjoying the pictures, move to Zen temple, **Kokuseiji**. You can also enjoy valuable works of Jikihara Gyokusei's painting here too and also you can have **special experience** drawing pictures by ink. Enjoy making your own Nanga!



Move back to the hotel in Osaka by **17:00**.

Overnight at The Ritz Carlton, Osaka

Day 3, Move to Koyasan

At **9:00**, check out the hotel and meet your **Private English Speaking Guide**, transfer to Koyasan by Private Chartered Car. It takes about 2 hours to reach Mt. Koya.

Upon arrival, visit **Danjogaran** which is one of the first complexes built by Kobodaishi, the founder of Koyasan. The complex has about twenty temples and buildings, including Konpon Daito, the "Great pagoda" rebuilt in the late 1930s and recently repainted in vermilion. A symbolic construction, it would appear at the center of the lotus flower mandala formed by eight mountains around Koyasan. Between legend and cult, Konpon Daito houses the Dainichi Nyorai, cosmic Buddha, surrounded by four other Buddhas who assist him.



Then visit **Okunoin** and enjoy a stroll in the largest cemetery of Japan. Your guide will explain the meaning of statues and funerary stalls along the way to the **Mausoleum of Kobodaishi**, the founder of Shingon Buddhism. Upon arrival at the mausoleum, you may witness the daily ritual ceremony, where monks have been bringing meals twice daily to the cave where Kobodaishi is said to be meditating for 1200 years.



At last, stop by **Reihokan**, which was built to house and preserve the religious and cultural treasures of Koyasan. The museum's entrance hall is styled after Byodoin Temple in Uji and its collection consists of thousands of religious works of art including statues, mandalas (paintings representing metaphysical maps of the cosmos), and various other religious tools and paintings, the most notable of which is the scroll depicting the "Reclining Image of Sakyamuni Buddha on His Last Day". Additionally, a rotating temporary exhibition displays a seasonal selection chosen from the museum's collection.



You will transfer to monastery by **17:00** for check-in.

Soji-in Temple

This inn is located in the center of Mt. Koya and convenient for visiting the nearby temples.



(Images Only)

Overnight at Soji-in Temple

Day 4: Morning service / Move to Hiroshima

This morning, **wake up early** and meet **Private Guide** at **6:00**, take part to the **Morning Service** (Buddhist ceremony, open to residents of the Temple) in the richly decorated prayer Hall. Prayers and chanting are hypnotic and the ambience is spiritual. After the ceremony, you will be able to walk around the prayer hall and see funeral tablets as well as several Buddhist artifacts, usually not accessible to the public. This is a rare opportunity to penetrate in the most sacred precincts of a Buddhist Temple.



Enjoy a **Traditional “Shojin” Breakfast**, with tea, rice, tofu and other vegetarian items. There is also a western bakery in town where your guide can take you, in case of need. After breakfast, take a short rest in your room.

Check out of the Monastery and re-meet your guide at **9:00**, then visit **Kongo Buji**, the holiest Temple of Mt.Koya and **headquarters of the Shingon sect**. The complex comprises administrative buildings, a religious university, and a temple open to visitors. Built in 1593 by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, it has been destroyed by fire and rebuild several times.



Move to **Shinosaka station** to catch train to Hiroshima. (It takes about 2h by normal traffic condition.)

[Suggested Schedule]

Bullet Train Nozomi #27 / Shinosaka 13:38 – 14:39 Fukuyama

Upon arrival at **Fukuyama station**, you will be welcomed by **Japanese Speaking chauffeur** at the station platform and transferred to hotel by private chartered car.



Bella Vista Spa & Marina



Bella Vista is located on a plateau overlooking the Seto Inland Sea. Bella Vista means "a beautiful view" in Italian and provides beautiful landscapes where guests can gaze at the ocean and forget the stress of everyday life.

Overnight at Bella Vista Spa & Marina

Day 5: Fukuyama – Full day tour

You will meet **English Speaking guide at 9:00** at the lobby and leave for excursion by private chartered vehicle. Starting from **Shinshoji temple – Zen & Garden Museum** by private chartered car. (15mins to reach by normal traffic condition.)



Take your time to enjoy Zen world. You can enjoy **Kohtei** – which is a huge ship-shaped structure covered in wooden shingles, designed by SANDWICH and inside is a new installation by artist Kohei Nawa, in which the viewer experiences ever-changing magical reflections of light on the ripples on the water and also you can enjoy the **gallery that exhibits Zen artworks**.

Then move to the **Onomichi** area and visit **Senkoji**. This is not Zen temple but locate in the top of the hill and scenery is very beautiful and also this can be good to compare between Zen temples.



Transfer back to the hotel by private chartered vehicle by **16:00**. (30mins to reach by normal traffic condition.).

Overnight at Bella Vista Spa & Marina

Day 6: Move to Kanazawa

After checking out the hotel, you will meet **Japanese Speaking chauffeur** at 9:15 and transfer to the station by private chartered car.

[Suggested Schedule]

Bullet train Nozomi #14 / Fukuyama 10:06 –11:07 Shinosaka

At Shinosaka station, change to

Limited Express Train Thunderbird #19 / Shinosaka 11:46 – 14:23 Kanazawa



Upon arrival at **Kanazawa station**, you will be welcomed by **English Speaking Assistant** at the station platform and escorted to the hotel.

Hyatt Centric Kanazawa



Situated just seconds from the Kanazawa station, Hyatt Centric Kanazawa is the perfect spot from which to explore the authentic art, shops, restaurants and culture of Kanazawa. Experience this well-preserved historical city; renowned for its geisha and samurai districts as well as wonderful cuisine.

Overnight at Hyatt Centric Kanazawa

Day 7: Kanazawa – Full day tour

You will meet **English Speaking guide** at 9:00 and transfer to the station by private chartered car.

Starting from **Ishikawa NISHIDA KITARO Museum of Philosophy**. Architecture of this museum is designed by Tadao Ando themed on “thinking” which related to philosophy. Here you can appreciate the combination between gallery of worldwide philosopher and architecture.



Transferred to the north and visit **Buzaiin temple**. This temple has long history and has 3 buddha statues recognized as national important Cultural Property.



Continue to **Eikoji temple** to appreciate another Zen temple.

Back to the city and visit **D.T. Suzuki Museum** – The museum consists of three wings connected by corridors: an Entrance Wing, an exhibition Wing and a Contemplative Wing, and three gardens: the Vestibule Garden, the Water Mirror Garden and the Roji Garden.



At last, you can have relaxing moment at **Tentokuin temple**. Maeda Toshitsune, the 3rd Lord of the Maeda family, married to Tamahime, a granddaughter of Tokugawa Ieyasu (the first shogun) in order to keep good a relationship with the central government (Tokugawa Shogunate). Tentokuin Temple was constructed as the family temple of Tamahime in the first half of the 17th century. The solemn gate of the temple that has been maintained since the time of foundation is a highlight



Back to the hotel by **17:00**.

Overnight at Hyatt Centric Kanazawa

Day 8: Move to Fukui

Spend relaxing morning at your own pace and after checking out from the hotel, meet with your **English-Speaking guide** at 12:00pm at lobby in the hotel.



Transfer to **Eihei-ji** in Fukui. (It takes about 1h 15mins to reach by normal traffic condition.) Upon arrival at Eihei-ji temple, you will look around this temple with your guide then check in by 16:00.

Eihei-ji Hakujukan



The Hakujukan hotel of Eihei-ji Temple presents where guests can enjoy pleasant facilities and services like a Japanese inn, while also partake in like authentic Buddhist vegetarian cuisine or sitting Zen as a monastery, for a true Zen experience. Besides Zen experiences Enjoy fine Buddhist vegetarian cuisine and delicious local Sake from Echizen at the Japanese restaurant.

Overnight at Eihei-ji Hakujukan

Day 9: Eiheiji temple

Spend the day at Eiheiji temple and enjoy activities with your guide from the morning.

- Morning service (Buddhist ceremony)
- Zazen Experience
- Hand-copying sutra
- Evening service before dinner (Buddhist ceremony)



Enjoy staying another night at the monastery.

Overnight at Eiheiji Hakujukan

Day 10: Move to Kyoto

Meet your **English-Speaking Guide** at **9:00 am** and leave for Kyoto by private chartered vehicle. (It takes about 2.5h to reach by normal traffic condition.) Upon arrival, visit **Ginkakuji (Silver Pavilion)** inspired from the Golden Pavilion. Ginkaku-ji has an area of around 25,000 square meters and is known for its luxuriant growth of moss. The garden is composed of two terraces. The upper terrace is arranged in the style of a dry garden using stones, sand, and plants with no water, to represent a scenic view. The lower terrace is designed to entertain visitors with changing scenes as they walk around the Kyoko-chi Pond.



From here starts a peaceful, **meditative two-kilometer stroll** along a canal commonly known as **the Philosopher's Walk**: a well-known Japanese philosopher, Kitaro Nishida, used this route for daily meditation. At the end of the Philosopher's walk, stop by at **Nanzenji temple**, sitting on a large tranquil hillside, the highlights of which are impressive gardens, serene ponds and a sublime dry stone garden in the sub-temple.



Transfer to hotel in Kyoto to check in by **17:00**.

Overnight at The Ritz Carlton, Kyoto

Day 11: Kyoto – Full day tour

You will meet your **English Speaking guide** at 9:00 and move to the temple which is NOT open to the public to have special experience on this morning; **Tea ceremony**. (Private activity and by appointment only)



Tea ceremony is one of Japan's traditional cultural practices and is the name given to a synthetic art that encompasses not only the making of tea, but also tea-room architecture, the appreciation of tea utensils and bowls and Zen Buddhism. It is not a religion, but a means to the study of Japanese manners and spirituality. Tea master Sen no Rikyu's aphorism "WA-KEI-SEI-JAKU" (harmony, respect, purity and tranquility) conveys the importance of the spirituality in tea ceremonies. After the ceremony, your tea master will instruct how to make green tea, you can enjoy your own made tea.

Move to **Kenninji temple** which serves as one of the head temples of the Rinzai Sect of Japanese Buddhism, and is ranked third among the five great Zen temples of Kyoto.



Kenninji was founded by Eisai (also known as Yosai), the Buddhist monk who introduced both Zen Buddhism and tea cultivation to Japan upon returning from study trips to China. The temple was constructed in 1202 and is considered to be the **oldest Zen temple in Kyoto**.

After lunch, visit **Shokakuji temple**, officially Mannenzan Shokoku Joten Zenji, it is the second of the Kyoto Gozan, the five leading Rinzai Zen temples in Kyoto during the medieval period. Tucked away into a quiet area in northern Kyoto, the silent remains of its original Entrance Gate (Sanmon) and Buddha Hall (Butsuden), now shaded with the intermingling branches of pine and cypress trees, remind the visitor of its former glory.



You can also visit **Jotenkaku Museum** which include 5 National Treasures and 145 Important Cultural Properties.

Then return to the city center and visit the **Geisha district of Gion**, famed for the preservation of its traditional architecture and traditional entertainment presented by graceful “Geiko,” which literally means “women of art.” During its golden age in the first half of 19th century, more than 3000 Geikos worked in some 700 teahouses in Gion.



Stroll around Gion area before going back to the hotel by 17:00.

Overnight at The Ritz Carlton, Kyoto

Day 12: Kyoto – Full day tour

Meet your **English Speaking guide** at **9:00** and leave for excursion by private chartered car.

Today you will move to **Daitokuji temple** – a large walled temple complex in northern Kyoto and the head temple of the Rinzai sect's Daitokuji school of Japanese Zen Buddhism. The complex consists of nearly two dozen sub-temples and is one of the best places in Japan to see a wide variety of Zen gardens and to experience Zen culture and architecture.



Then move to **Genko-an** which was founded by Tetsu'o Giko, the second abbot of Daitoku-ji Monastery, of the Rinzai School of Zen, in 1346, and used as his retirement hermitage. In 1694, Manzan Dohaku Zenji, a priest in the Soto School lineage, came from Daijo-ji temple, located in present day Ishikawa Prefecture, in order to take over as abbot of Genko-an.



Continue to **Myoshinji Temple**, is a large temple complex in northwestern Kyoto which includes about 50 subtemples in addition to its main buildings. The Sanmon Gate and Butsuden Hall are both considered important cultural properties but can only be observed from the outside.



Then followed to **Ryoan-ji** temple, prominent for its rock garden comprised of nothing but clay walls, raked sand and fifteen rocks. It is intriguing to interpret the garden's mysterious arrangement based on intuition. Compare the stark differences between magnificence of Kinkakuji and the simplicity of Ryoanji temples.



At Last you will visit the Golden Pavilion **Kinkakuji** temple, originally built in 1397 to serve as a retirement villa for Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, whose grandson used the temple as the inspiration for the Silver Pavilion Ginkakuji temple.

Overnight at The Ritz Carlton, Kyoto

Day 13: Kyoto – Full day tour

You will meet **English Speaking guide** at 9:00 and leave for excursion by private chartered car.

You will be introduced to the basics of **Zen meditation** which is held at one of the temples with private setting at one of the temples NOT open to the public. Experience insight into the nature of existence and thereby gain enlightenment.



Then visit **Tofukuji temple**. This temple is the head temple of the Tofukuji School of the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism. It was built in 1236 on the instructions of Kujo Michiie, the great Statesman of the Kamakura period, who desired to build in Kyoto a temple complexes in Nara. Even its name, Tofukuji, is a combination of one character from the names of each of these Nara temples.



If you can get the appointment (subject to availability) visit **Moss temple**.



Moving to **Arashiyama** district and visited **Tenryū-ji** Temple. This famous Zen Buddhist temple is the head temple of the Tenryū-ji branch of Rinzai Zen sect and part of World Cultural Heritage monuments. It has an excellent garden with a pond stroll that was laid out by a garden designer of genius.



From here, take a relaxing stroll around the **Bamboo Forests**, designated as one of the three most beautiful bamboo forests in Japan. Here, the sound of the leaves rustling in the wind is nice to listen to and gives a peaceful atmosphere.

Back to the hotel by **17:00**.

Overnight at The Ritz Carlton, Kyoto

Day 14: Departure

After checking out from the hotel, you will meet with **English Speaking chauffeur** (Depending on your flight schedule) and leave for **Kansai International Airport** by a private chartered car.



***** END OF YOUR JAPAN JOURNEY *****