

Explore Kyoto



DURATION:

5 days

Kyoto – the residence of the emperor and the country’s capital for over 1000 years – is often described as the heart of Japan’s culture. Famed for its striking temples and traditional old buildings, geishas and tea-shops, it’s a great place to explore.

Our adventure starts with the iconic bullet train, speeding from Tokyo through beautiful countryside to Kyoto. Then, after a guided tour to introduce some of the highlights and familiarise you with the city, you’re free to explore as you choose – amble alongside the Kamo River, head up into the wooded hills dotted with shrines, or shop the markets and covered arcades ... there are plenty of delights to discover.

Make the most of this opportunity to experience more of Japan’s unique culture after your trek!

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Tokyo – Kyoto by Bullet Train

(main group departs Tokyo)

This morning, after saying farewell to your fellow trekkers, you head to Shinagawa train station and board the famous Tokaido Shinkansen – the world’s first high-speed train – to Kyoto. More commonly known as the bullet train, the journey itself is an iconic Japanese experience. Travelling almost 300 miles in 2-2.5 hours, you can relax and enjoy the views, and (being now a seasoned traveller in Japan) the *ekiben* lunch-box you no doubt bought in advance. You’ll be met on arrival by your guide and, after stowing luggage at the nearby hotel, enjoy a guided walk to sites including Kiyomizu-dera Temple – one of Japan’s most iconic temples, founded over a thousand years ago; its location on a rise affords wonderful views. You’ll also be able to discover atmospheric Gion District, a photogenic area of historic wooden buildings, known for its tea-shops and geisha culture. This tour is also a great opportunity to get a feel for the lay-out of the city and getting around, before you explore independently. There are plenty of options nearby for dinner. Night hotel.

Breakfast provided; own arrangements for Lunch and Dinner; hotel accommodation

Day 2: Explore Kyoto

There is so much to see in Kyoto, and today is free for you to choose what to experience. As you explore, it will quickly become apparent that you are in Japan's historical and cultural centre – there are graceful, colourful temples and Shinto shrines in every direction. Don't miss Fushimi Inari Taisha Shrine, with thousands of distinctive red torii gates leading up the forested slopes of Mount Inari, or Kinkaju-ji (Golden Pavilion), one of the city's most famous temples, with its top two tiers covered in gold leaf. You might also enjoy a relaxing wander along the Kamo River, soaking up the sights and taking in Nishiki traditional food market (known as Kyoto's Kitchen), where you can see and often sample local specialities of seafood, sushi, wagyu beef and green tea. There are plenty of food-stalls here, or detour the short distance to narrow Pontocho Alley, packed with restaurants. If you like shopping, the colourful covered shopping arcades of Teramachi and Shinkyogoku are close by, and also worth exploring. Or you may want to experience a traditional tea ceremony – there are plenty of options in this central area.

Breakfast provided; own arrangements for Lunch and Dinner; hotel accommodation

Day 3: Explore Kyoto; Bullet Train to Tokyo

This morning is free to discover more of Kyoto's cultural attractions, before retrieving your luggage and heading to Kyoto Station for the Tokaido Shinkansen (bullet-train) back to Tokyo. Ten minutes on the local train takes you back to Shinagawa Station and your nearby hotel. Enjoy your last evening in Japan in this vibrant Tokyo neighbourhood, which you'll be familiar with by now.

Breakfast provided; own arrangements for Lunch and Dinner; hotel accommodation.

Day 4 - 5: Depart Tokyo for London

Head back to the airport by train; a guide will meet you at the hotel to ensure your journey goes smoothly. Here your adventure in Japan ends, as you board your international flight back to London (expect to arrive next day.)

Breakfast provided

NB: Much of this extension tour is unguided, to allow you to decide which of the many sights you wish to focus on, at the pace you wish. Kyoto is safe and easy to get around, and you will quickly become an expert! A guide will meet you on arrival in Kyoto, and facilitate your journey to the airport at the end. You will also be provided with an emergency phone number, should you have any problems when you are exploring independently.

Extension requires a minimum of 3 people to operate.

Contact the office for pricing and availability.

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- 3 nights 3-4* hotel accommodation in convenient locations (2 in Kyoto, 1 in Tokyo; twin-share basis)

- Hotel breakfasts as indicated in the itinerary
- Shinkansen (bullet-train) return travel between Tokyo and Kyoto
- Guided walking tour as detailed; entrance fees included
- English-speaking guide where indicated
- Local assistance on arrival in Kyoto and on departure to the airport

WHAT'S EXCLUDED?

- Meals where indicated in itinerary
- Activities or entry fees to sites during free time
- Public transport during free time
- Personal spending, tips, drinks, etc



Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

Please note: This document was downloaded on 30 Apr 2026, and the challenge is subject to change.