

# JAPAN 2026

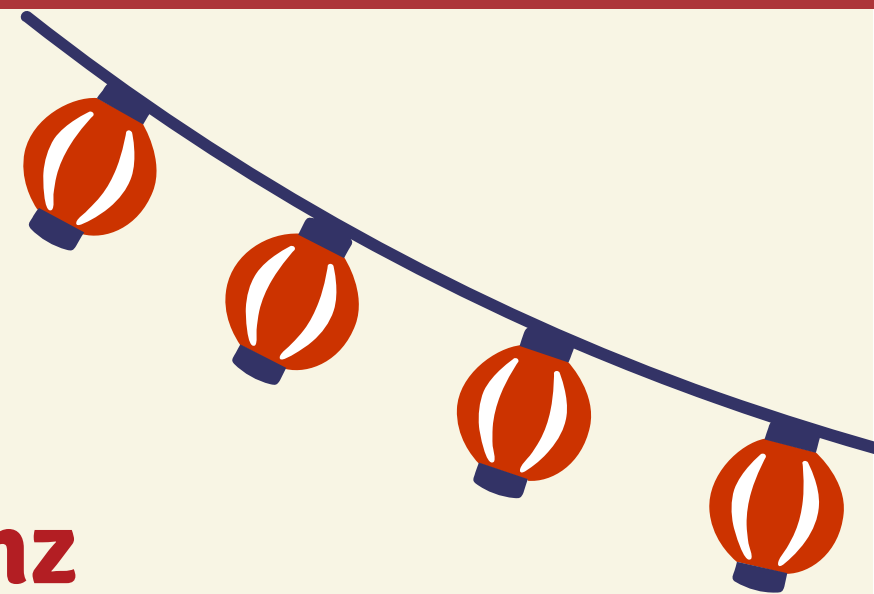
A Helen Jackson Tour  
10<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2026



Join me on an unforgettable culinary adventure through Japan - a feast for both the palate and the soul. While this tour is designed with food lovers in mind, we'll also immerse ourselves in the rich culture, history, and breathtaking landscapes that make Japan so captivating. From the spiritual serenity of Miyajima to the timeless charm of Kyoto, the elegance of Kanazawa, and the vibrant energy of Tokyo, we'll explore some of the country's most stunning and iconic destinations.



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## Key Information

- Price \$8855p/p (twin share) \*Single supplement price available on request
- \$600 deposit required on receipt of booking.
- Full payment required 40 days prior to departure.
- Tour needs a minimum number before confirmation.
- Payment by bank deposit (sorry at this stage I cannot process credit cards).

## What's Included

- 12 nights accommodation in hotels, all with Tripadvisor 4\*+ rating
- Airport transfers on day 2 in Fukuoka (subway) and day 13 from Tokyo to Narita (chartered bus)
- Excursion to Iizuka by chartered bus
- Japanese rail pass from day 4- day 10
- 12 breakfasts, 8 lunches, 8 dinners
- Bilingual guide
- Cooking class as listed in itinerary

## What's not included

- International flights and departure taxes
- 1 domestic flight to start the tour on October 27th depart Haneda on JL 307 (HND) 8:00 - (FUK) 10:00 (This may work out that I can book us as a group if bookings quickly fill)
- Travel insurance (compulsory)
- Optional activities, sightseeing and entry fees not listed in the itinerary
- Meals not listed in the itinerary
- Laundry, telephone or any other room charges
- Some tips and gratuities, to advise (tipping is not typically part of Japanese culture)
- Personal expenses
- Drinks, including those with meals

### **Day 1 Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May: Departure Auckland - Arrival Narita**

For those (most I am assuming), the Air NZ flight departs Auckland 10.05am and arrives at Narita 5pm. Meeting point to be advised.

Understanding that we have already travelled a full day we will then make our way to our hotel to get some sleep before heading to the start of the tour the next day.

Overnight: Comfort Hotel Narita (TBC)

### **Day 2 Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May: Departure Narita - Arrival Fukuoka (B/L/D)**

#### **Departure Haneda (HND) 8:00 - (FUK) 10:00 (JL307)**

This morning, we depart Haneda for Fukuoka to begin our tour. Upon arrival, we will leave luggage at our hotel and head out for two wonderful traditional experiences.

Firstly it is a tea ceremony. In Japan, the tea ceremony, or chanoyu, holds deep cultural significance as a ritual of mindfulness, harmony, and respect, reflecting the country's

appreciation for simplicity, tradition, and the beauty of the present moment.

This is then followed by a hands on Dashi workshop led by Atsuko, offering a deeper appreciation of Japan's culinary traditions. In 1908, while researching the taste of dashi (a broth made from seaweed), Japanese chemist Ikeda Kikunae uncovered the chemical basis of a taste he named umami. Almost 80 years later, in 1985, umami was recognized as the fifth human taste, alongside the four traditional tastes of sweet, sour, salty, and bitter.

Overnight: Via Inn Hakataguchi Ekimae

### **Day 3 Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May: Fukuoka. excursion Iizuka (B/L/D)**

This morning we travel by train to Iizuka. We will walk along the Nagasaki Kaido (the Sugar road) for about 20 minutes. Here you will encounter the confectioneries that have remained as symbols of the sugar culture

We will visit Kaneyoshi (soy sauce brewery) and Ebisu (miso factory), hearing the stories behind the culture, fermentation and brewing of these Japanese staples.

We will return by train to Fukuoka late in the afternoon.

Dinner: Mentaiko, a specialty of Fukuoka

Overnight: Via Inn Hakataguchi Ekimae



#### **Day 4 Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May: Fukuoka - Shimonoseki - Miyajima (B/L)**

This morning we take a 1 hour trip by train and ferry from Fukuoka to Shimonoseki.

Late morning we will visit the lively Karato Ichiba, one of Japan's most renowned fish markets.

Here, you'll experience the vibrant energy of local seafood culture, where the freshest catches are on display in a bustling, coastal setting. A special opportunity awaits—sampling fugu, the legendary pufferfish delicacy, prepared with expert precision and tradition.

After lunch we take the shinkansen for a 2 hour trip to Miyajima and check into our hotel.

We will then take a quick 10 minute ferry ride to Miyajima Island. Here we will explore the serene beauty of Miyajima, home to the iconic floating torii gate of Itsukushima Shrine. Nestled in the tranquil waters of the Seto Inland Sea, this sacred island blends breathtaking natural scenery with rich cultural heritage.

Dinner at Mametanuki

Overnight: Coral Hotel Miyajima (TBC)

#### **Day 5 Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May: Miyajima - Hiroshima - Himeji - Kyoto (B/L/D)**

This morning, we journey to Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, a place of reflection, resilience, and remembrance.

We will explore the serene grounds of the Peace Park and visit the Peace Memorial Museum, where powerful exhibits and personal stories offer a moving tribute to those affected by the events of 1945. It is a deeply meaningful experience that honours the past while inspiring hope for a peaceful future.

Lunch today is a regional specialty of okonomiyaki.

This afternoon we travel by shinkansen from Hiroshima to Kyoto.

Dinner this evening is a popular Japanese style of izakaya, shared plate style dining.

Overnight: Via Inn Kyoto

#### **Day 6 Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May: Kyoto (B/L/D)**

This morning, we step into the tranquil world of Daitoku-ji, one of Kyoto's most revered Zen temple complexes.

Our visit includes the sublime Daisen-in, renowned for its contemplative rock garden that embodies the essence of Zen philosophy. We also explore Hoshun-in, where a delicate collection of bonsai trees reflects centuries of artistry and mindful cultivation. Together, these spaces offer a serene immersion into the spiritual and aesthetic traditions of Japanese Zen culture.

Lunch (shojin ryori, buddhist meal)

This afternoon we will wander the Pilgrim's Trail (approx 5 km). Walking the Pilgrims' Trail in Kyoto is a serene journey through forested paths and sacred sites.

Following in the footsteps of generations past, you'll pass mossy stone lanterns and quiet temples, immersed in the timeless beauty and spiritual heritage of Japan.

This afternoon we head to Fushimi Sake Village for a Sake Tasting and Dinner at Fushimi Sake Village.

After dinner it is a quick 20 minute train ride to Kyoto

Overnight: Via Inn Kyoto

**Day 7 Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May: Kyoto, excursion Wazuka/Nara (B/L)**

This morning, we depart Kyoto for the picturesque countryside of Wazuka, arriving around Renowned for its lush tea fields, Wazuka offers a peaceful escape where we'll visit a local tea plantation, enjoy a tasting of its finest brews, and savour a traditional lunch.

In the afternoon, we continue by bus and train to Nara, where we'll explore the historic Nara Park and visit the awe-inspiring Tōdai-ji Temple, home to the Great Buddha.

Dinner at your leisure in Kyoto, there is so much to explore.

Overnight: Via Inn Kyoto

**Day 8 Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May: Kyoto - Ōmi-Takashima - Kanazawa (B/L/D)**

This morning, we travel by train from Kyoto to the lakeside town of Ōmi-Takashima, Here, we'll explore a local shop and enjoy a unique culinary experience featuring funa-zushi, a regional delicacy, followed by lunch. In the afternoon, we continue by train to Kanazawa, arriving in the early evening. Our day concludes with a delightful tempura dinner, highlighting the delicate flavours of seasonal ingredients.

Overnight: Onyado Nono Kanazwa

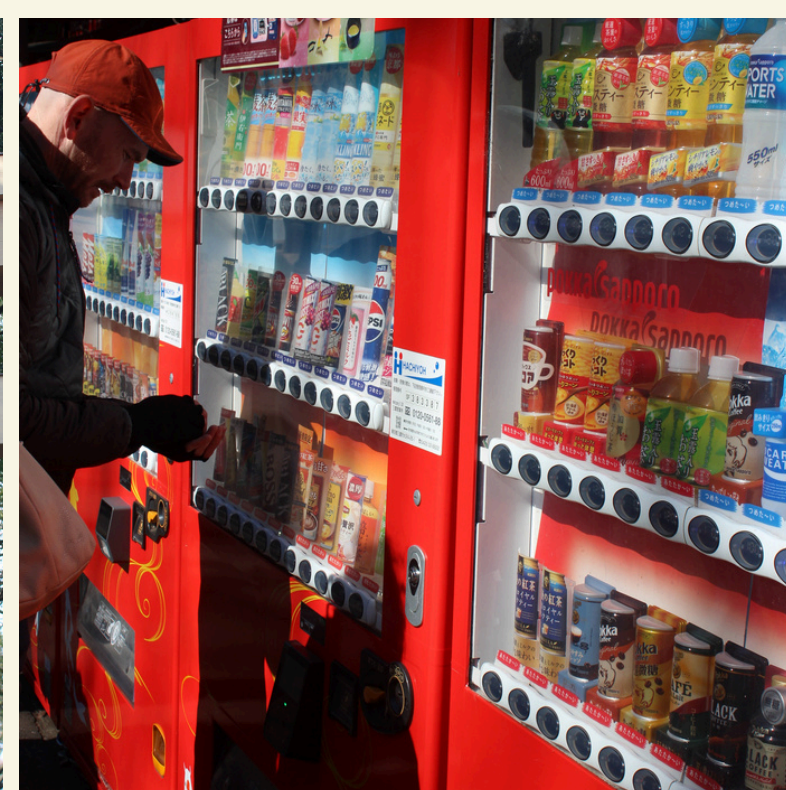
**Day 9 Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May: Kanazawa (B/D)**

Today offers free time to discover the charm of Kanazawa at your own pace. You may wish to stroll through the exquisite Kenroku-en Garden, visit the contemplative D.T. Suzuki Museum, or explore the city's many cultural treasures.

In the evening, we gather to enjoy a sushi dinner, savouring the flavours of the Sea of Japan.

Overnight: Onyado Nono Kanazwa





### Day 10 Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May: Kanazawa - Matsumoto - Tokyo (B/L/D)

This morning, we depart Kanazawa by train for Matsumoto, arriving at 10:50. Our first stop is the iconic Matsumoto Castle, one of Japan's most beautiful original fortresses, where we'll explore its historic grounds from 11:00 to 12:30. Afterwards, we enjoy a lunch of traditional soba noodles. In the early afternoon, we continue by train to Hotaka to visit the picturesque Daio Wasabi Farm, famed for its clear spring waters and serene walking paths. Following our visit, we board the train to Tokyo. A beautifully prepared ekiben lunchbox will be taken on board the shinkansen, offering a taste of regional specialities as we journey into the evening.

Overnight: Villa Fontaine Shiodome (tbc)

### Day 11 Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May: Tokyo (B)

Today, we explore Tokyo's vibrant eastern districts, including the cultural richness of Ueno, the historic charm of Asakusa, the sumo heritage of Ryogoku, and the electric energy of Akihabara.

Overnight: Villa Fontaine Shiodome (tbc)

### Day 12 Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May: Tokyo (B/D)

Today, we discover the dynamic western side of Tokyo, from the bustling streets of Shinjuku and the trendsetting avenues of Harajuku to the iconic crossing and vibrant energy of Shibuya. In the evening, we come together for a memorable farewell dinner, savouring an exquisite kaiseki meal that celebrates the artistry of Japanese cuisine.

Overnight: Villa Fontaine Shiodome (tbc)

### Day 13 Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May: Departure Tokyo (B)

Today is yours to do as you please.

Shop til you drop or take some time to wander and stretch your legs before flying home.

Travel to Narita by chartered bus, time to be advised.

