

Cities and Cultures of Korea & Japan

Explore the historic monuments, cultural heritage, social intricacies, and natural wonders in Seoul, Kyoto, Nara, Hakone and Mt. Fuji, and Tokyo

12 Days / 10 Nights

Departures: [May 07-18, 2016](#) [September 03-14, 2017](#) [October 15-26, 2017](#)



ACCESS CHINA TOURS



Group and Private Fine Touring in China and Asia

Tour Program Summary

The **Korean** peninsula is a tantalizingly unexplored slice of East Asia – a pine-clad land of mountains, misty archipelagos and rice paddies of emerald green, studded with urban pockets of incomparable *joie de vivre*. While its troubled history has made Korea's very existence nothing short of miracles, amazingly its traditions and customs have largely survived intact – and for visitors, this highly distinctive culture is an absolute joy to dive into.

While retaining its time-honored culture, **Japan** rapidly absorbed Western technology during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Among the vibrant green of the mountains, amidst the fluttering cherry blossom petals, within the transition of the four seasons, people see colors. Within Japanese-style homes, in the fragrance of wood and the outlines of tableware, Japan's colors and shapes are messages that convey spirit and culture.

Your tour in the Far East starts from **Seoul**, South Korea. One of the largest and most technically advanced cities in the fast developing Asia, the Korean capital regularly confounds expectations by proving itself steeped in history. Here, fourteenth-century palaces, imperial gardens, teeming markets and secluded tearooms continue to exude charm among a maze of skyscrapers and shopping malls.

Wing on to Osaka, Japan and transfer to **Kyoto**, where 1000 years of history and Buddhist culture live on today. Kyoto flourished as the capital of Japan for as long as 1,000 years after 794. Thirteen temples, three shrines and Nijo Castle are all registered as World Heritage Sites. Take a day trip to **Nara**, the first permanent capital of this island nation. This small city is full of historic treasures, including some of Japan's oldest and largest temples.

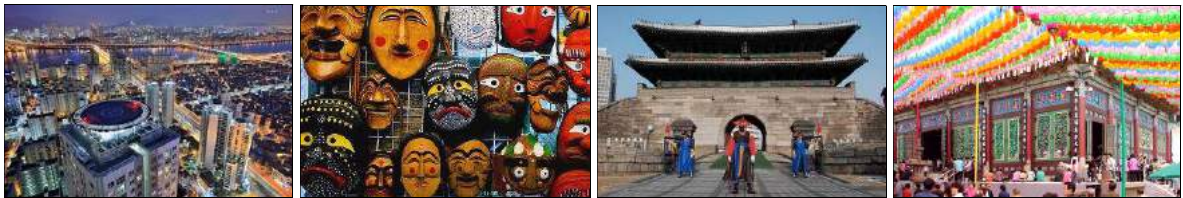
A bullet train ride will take you to **Hakone**, a part of the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park, less than 100 kilometers from Tokyo. Famous for hot springs, natural beauty and the view of nearby **Mt. Fuji**, Hakone is one of the most popular destinations among Japanese and international tourists looking for a break from big cities such as Tokyo.

Then, another train ride will take you to your final stop **Tokyo**, the Capital of Japan. The city's history can be appreciated in districts such as Asakusa, and in many excellent museums, historic temples and gardens. Tokyo also offers a seemingly unlimited choice of shopping, entertainment, culture and fine dining to its visitors.

Fly home from Narita or Haneda International Airport of Tokyo.

Tour Daily Itinerary

- Day 01 → Depart Fly from North America to Seoul, South Korea on your own flight.
- Day 02 **Seoul** Arrive at Incheon Airport of Seoul; met by your English-speaking local guide & driver upon arrival and transfer to the centrally located [Grand Ambassador Seoul \(superior double/ twin room\)](#) for check-in; enjoy an **ACT Welcome Reception** and **the rest of the evening is free; dinner is on your own.**
- Day 03 **Seoul** Breakfast in the hotel; met by your local guide & driver in the lobby and begin a full-day Seoul City sightseeing. Here are the sites you will visit:
Kyongbok Palace, first built in 1394 during the Choson Dynasty; you will see various halls used by the royal family for different functions in the old days. Most of the buildings, however, are reconstructed.
Cheonggyecheon Stream is where water from three nearby hills meet and pass through downtown Seoul. The Gwangtonggyo Bridge was constructed during the Choson Dynasty and remains in good conditions.



Insadong Antique Alley, a narrow street lined with antique stores, art galleries and secondhand book stores, where visitors can wander and browses at leisure. Have **lunch** in a local restaurant.

Continue touring in the afternoon. Visit Cheongwadae (Blue House/ Presidential Residence and office), contains the residence and offices of the president of the Republic of Korea.

Changdeok Palace & Bi-won (Secret Garden), Changdok Palace is probably the favorite destination for most visitors. The main gate of the palace, Tonhwamun, is one of the oldest gates in Seoul. Secret Garden (Biwon) is a wooded garden tucked away in a quiet corner of Changdok Palace. It is an idyllic oasis, with its pavilions interspersed with small streams, bridges, and places of exquisite beauty.

Namdaemun Market, crowded streets are lined with tiny shops selling almost every product imaginable and there are buildings which specialize in a category of products such as homewares, clothing, jewelry.

Transfer back to your hotel in late afternoon; **remainder of the day is free and dinner is on your own tonight. <B-L>**

- Day 04 **Seoul** Breakfast in the hotel; met by guide & driver in the lobby and off to a half-day Seoul sightseeing. Attractions to visit:
National Folklore Museum, displays the religious rituals, housing customs, household tools and implements, food and social dynamics of traditional Korean life.

Chogyesa Temple is one of the largest Buddhist temple with the city limits and is the headquarter of the Chogyejong Sect. It is famous for its Lantern Festival held every spring to celebrate Buddha's birthday.

Bukak Skyway: a nickname for Bukaksangil, the road running along the ridges of Mt. Bugaksan. The number of ornamental trees by the road is over one hundred thousand. Along the way one can find an octagonal pavilion called Palgakjeong which provides an ideal place for a bird's eye view of downtown Seoul as well as for refreshment.

Transfer back to your hotel and **rest of the day is free for your own exploration, shopping or relaxation; lunch and dinner are on your own.**

- Day 05 **Seoul** ✈️ Breakfast in the hotel; met by guide & driver in the lobby and transfer to the
Osaka 🚗/🚝 Incheon Airport for a **morning flight** to Osaka, Japan; met by your local
Kyoto English-speaking guide upon arrival and travel to Kyoto by vehicle or train.
Check-in at the centrally located [Hotel Nikko Princess Kyoto \(standard twin room\)](#) for a three-night stay; **rest of the day is free for your own exploration or relaxation; lunch and dinner are on your own.**



- Day 06 **Kyoto** Breakfast in the hotel; met by guide & driver in the hotel lobby and start your Kyoto city exploration. Today's sightseeing includes:
Kiyomizu Temple (UNESCO), best known for its wooden stage that juts out from its main hall, 13 meters above the hillside below. The stage affords visitors a nice view of the numerous cherry and maple trees below that erupt in a sea of color in spring and fall.
Golden Pavilion (UNESCO), an extremely impressive and beautiful structure built overlooking a large pond, and the top two floors are completely covered in gold leaf. Cranes and other birds rest on trees or wander on small islands dotted the huge pond.
Ryoanji Temple (UNESCO), the site of Japan's most famous rock garden. The garden consists of a rectangular plot of pebbles surrounded by low earthen walls, with 15 rocks laid out in small groups on patches of moss. Visitors usually sit down for a while to enjoy the view.
Arashiyama (bamboo forest), enjoy a nice walk along the trail among a thick bamboo forest to appreciate the fluttering sound of the bamboo leaves in whispering wind.
Late afternoon, go to Gion District for a stroll in the traditional neighborhood and enjoy a **Japanese Culture Show** at *Gion Corner*. Transfer back to the hotel afterwards; **lunch and dinner are on your own.**

- Day 07 **Kyoto** Breakfast in the hotel; met by guide & driver in the hotel lobby for a half-day
⇌ **Nara** excursion to Nara, the oldest capital of Japan. Sightseeing includes:
Fushimi Inari Shrine, famous for its thousands of vermilion torii

gates, which straddle a network of trails behind its main buildings. The trails lead into the wooded forest of the sacred Mount Inari, which stands at 233 meters and belongs to the shrine grounds. Also enjoy Fushimi Sake Tasting Session on site.

Nara Park (Deer Park), the park is home to hundreds of freely roaming deer. Considered in Shinto to be messengers of the gods, Nara's nearly 1200 deer have become a symbol of the city and have even been designated as a natural treasure.

Todaiji Temple (UNESCO), Todaiji's main hall, the Daibutsuden (Big Buddha Hall) is the world's largest wooden building, despite the fact that the present reconstruction of 1692 is only two thirds of the original temple hall's size.

Tour ends at your hotel in Kyoto; **this afternoon is free at your own leisure; lunch and dinner are on your own.**



Day 08 **Kyoto**
 **Hakone**
& **Mt .Fuji**

Breakfast in the hotel; met by guide & driver in the hotel lobby and transfer to the train station for a bullet train ride to Hakone. Met by your local guide upon arrival and begin your exploration. You will visit:

Hakone Sky Gondola or Ropeway on Mt. Komagatake (depends on weather conditions), the ropeway can take visitors to the top of Mt. Komagatake in only 7 minutes. The ropeway's lakeside station is at Hakone-en. The total length of the ropeway is 1800m.

Owakudani Boiling Valley or Hakone Check Point (depends on local conditions), much of the area is an active volcanic zone where sulfurous fumes, hot springs and hot rivers can be experienced.

Boat Cruise on Lake Ashi with Mt. Fuji in the background is a must-do activity in Hakone. The best views of the lake in combination with Mt. Fuji can be enjoyed from the boat cruising on the lake.

Transfer to Yumoto Fujiya Hotel (Japanese western room) for check-in and relaxation; **lunch is on your own.** Tonight, enjoy a **traditional Japanese style dinner** in the hotel. <B-D>



Day 09  **Tokyo**

Breakfast in the hotel; **enjoy leisure time in the morning.** Picked up by guide from hotel in late morning and transfer to the train station for a short bullet train ride to Tokyo.

Upon arrival, met and transfer to the centrally located [Hotel New Otani Main Tower Tokyo \(standard twin room\)](#) for check-in and **your own arrangements. Lunch and dinner are on your own. **

Day 10 **Tokyo**

Breakfast in the hotel; met by English-speaking guide at the hotel lobby at and enjoy a full-day tour in Tokyo. Sightseeing includes:

[Imperial Palace Plaza](#), the current Imperial Palace is located on the former site of Edo Castle, a large park area surrounded by moats and massive stone walls in the center of Tokyo near Tokyo Station.

[Tsukiji Outer Fish Market](#), best known as one of the world's largest fish markets, handling over 2,000 tons of marine products per day. The outer market consists of a few blocks of small retail shops and restaurants crowded along narrow lanes. Have **lunch** in a local restaurant.

[Asakusa Temple & Nakamise Shopping Street](#), one of Tokyo's most colorful and popular Buddhist temples located in Asakusa and the shopping street nearby called Nakamise.

[Sky Tree](#), a new television broadcasting tower and landmark of Tokyo. It is the tallest building in Japan and the second tallest structure in the world at the time of its completion.

Tour ends at your hotel in Tokyo; **lunch and dinner are on your own, and evening is free. <B-L>**



Day 11 **Tokyo**

Breakfast in the hotel; met by English-speaking guide in the hotel lobby and enjoy a half-day guided tour. Sightseeing includes:

[Harajuku & Omotesando](#), the center of Japan's most recent cultural trends, newest gadgets and fashion styles, but also offers shopping for adults and some historic sites as well.

[Shibuya Crossing](#), a prominent landmark of Shibuya is the large intersection in front of the station's Hachiko Exit.

[Tokyo Tower](#), standing 333 meters high in the center of Tokyo, is the world's tallest, self-supporting steel tower, 13 meters taller than its model, the Eiffel Tower.

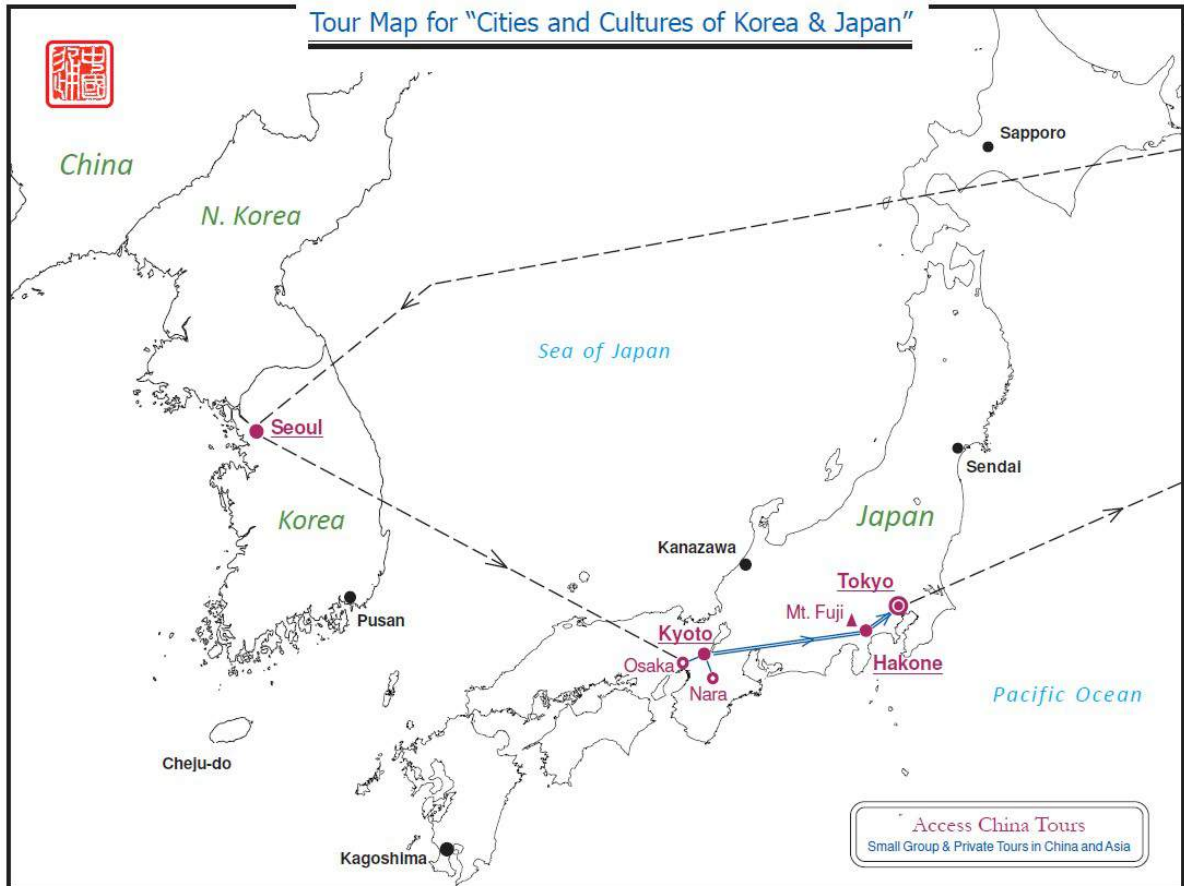
Tour ends at your hotel in Tokyo; **this afternoon is free at your own leisure; lunch and dinner are on your own. **

Day 12 **→ Return**

Breakfast in the hotel; met by driver at hotel and transfer to Narita or Haneda Airport for your homebound flight. ****

Changes to Itinerary: Access China Tours has made all possible attempts to ensure the accuracy of tour itineraries. Circumstances beyond our control may occur. We reserve the right to change itineraries, sightseeing activities, and common carriers, and to substitute hotels when necessary.

Service of a similar category and standard will be maintained if such changes are made. The Service Voucher in your last pre-departure packet will provide the operational itinerary summary, final transport and hotel information.



Deluxe or First Class Hotels Selected for This Tour



Grand Ambassador Seoul



Hotel Nikko Princess Kyoto



Yomoto Fujiya Hotel Hakone



Hotel New Otani Main Tower Tokyo

Tour Land Price Inclusions & Exclusions

Tour Land Prices: **\$5,370 USD** per person double occupancy (for a group of 2-5 travelers)
 \$5,180 USD per person double occupancy (for a group of 6-9 travelers)
 \$4,990 USD per person double occupancy (for a group of 10-16 travelers)

Single Supplement Cost: **\$1,360 USD** for single occupancy in hotels throughout the tour

What's Included in 'Tour Land Prices'

- Deluxe & first class category hotel double occupancy accommodations with breakfast
- In-country ground transportation by bullet train, local train, motor coach/minivan or bus
- Arrival and departure transfers on tour dates
- Transfers and luggage (1 piece of 45 pounds per person for domestic flights) handling
- Pre-departure information packets
- All sightseeing, visits, cultural events, and activities listed in the itinerary
- All meals (*all breakfasts, 2 lunches, and 1 dinner*) as specified in the itinerary
- Service of a private English-speaking Tour Manager/Escort (*for a group of 10+ travelers*)
- Service of a private English-speaking local guide in each city/region
- Private motor vehicle with AC and a professional driver on tours (*for a group of 6+ travelers*)
- Gratuities to local guides and drivers in Korea (*for a group of 6+ travelers*)

What's Not Included in 'Tour Land Prices'

- Cross-Pacific int'l air ticket and Seoul-Osaka 1-way air ticket (*will quote separately if requested*)
- Trip cancellation, baggage, accident, and medical insurance (*will quote separately if requested*)
- Most lunches and dinners
- Gratuities to your Tour Manager/Escort (optional)
- Tipping for Korean guide and driver (*for 2-5 travelers*), and tipping not a custom in Japan
- Items not listed and/or specified as included in the itinerary

Cancellation Policy: **\$600 USD pp deposit is required at sign up.** All cancellation notices must be received in writing and will become effective as of the date of receipt by *Access China Tours*. We assess cancellation fees of all tours according to the following schedule:

90 days or more prior to departure	\$300 per person *
89 to 60 days prior to departure	\$600 per person *
59 to 30 days prior to departure	\$900 per person *
29 to 15 days prior to departure	\$1200 per person *

* Plus any charges assessed by government agencies, land suppliers, cruise companies and airlines.

Within 14 days of departure100% forfeiture of the tour price per person

Access China Tours will not grant partial refunds for any unused trip arrangements after the trip has commenced or any refunds to participants who do not complete any portion of the itinerary. Any airline tickets issued are subject to the carrier's refund and cancellation policy. **We strongly recommend you purchase trip cancellation/interruption insurance to protect your travel investment.** If a tour is forced to be cancelled due to government's travel warnings, declared or undeclared wars, hostilities, civil disturbances, strike, riot, epidemic, and quarantines, *Access China Tours* will refund all participants' payment less any irretrievable expenses and loss (visa fees, airline penalties, communication cost, and non-refundable booking cost, etc.). However, *Access China Tours* will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by tour participants (e.g., non-refundable "advance purchase" air tickets, insurance & medical expenses, passport and visa expenses, etc.).