



# Japan

## Shinto Shrines and Shingon

9 Days

Join us on a spiritual journey through the Land of the Rising Sun as we travel from Tokyo to Nikkon and onto Kyoto. Learn about the ancient rituals of Shinto and how the teachings of Buddha have been interwoven into traditional beliefs. We travel through vibrant cities, iconic temples and stay overnight in a Monastery where we join in a Shojin meal with our hosts. Along the way we spend time in Nikko with its dramatic backdrop of towering mountains. This is a great opportunity to commune with nature before heading to Kyoto, our final stop, known for its temples, shrines, Geisha costumes and beautiful gardens.



[Learn more about our Carbon Labels](#)

# Your Recommended Educational Journey

## Days 1 - 2

### Depart London & Arrive Tokyo

BLD

Upon arrival in Tokyo, we will be met by our experienced Japanese tour guide before transferring to our hotel. After we have settled into our rooms and had the chance to freshen up, we have a briefing and then head out for our first taste of Japanese cuisine. Known for fresh, high-quality produce, mealtimes are a real highlight of the Japanese experience, as we try new foods to tantalise our taste buds, from sizzling yakitori to traditional ryokan.

## Day 3

### Tokyo City

BLD

Today, we will venture into Tokyo for an action-packed day! Over one-quarter of the Japanese population live within a 50 km radius of the centre of Tokyo, making it the most populous metropolitan area in the world. We begin the day with a stroll to the city's oldest temple at Asakusa to visit the ancient Buddhist temple at Sensō-ji. Founded in 645, this imposing Buddhist structure hosts a magnificent five story pagoda and holds significant importance to the city's Buddhist community.

Our next stop is the 170-acre imperial Meiji Shrine, which was constructed after the death of the Emperor Meiji and his wife in 1912. In stark contrast to the vibrant city all around, the shrine is located in the tranquil Yoyogi Park. Whilst we are here, our guide will introduce us to the history of Shinto traditions and will explain the role shrines play in Japanese culture. Then, we will be invited to write wishes on pieces of paper and tie them onto the prayer wall.

After a delicious lunch, we'll walk to the Harajuku district. In contrast to the spirituality of this morning's sights, we will see a different aspect of Tokyo as we witness the bright lights and fashion outlets of central Tokyo. We finish the day at Shibuya Crossing, the famous pedestrian crossing where wave upon wave of commuters make their daily journey home - a sea of humanity, in one of the world's premier commercial hubs.

## Day 4

### Kamakura

BLD

On day 4, we will take a day trip to the historic city of Kamakura. Located 50 km southwest of Tokyo, Kamakura is known for its unique temples and shrines, many of which are over 1,200 years old. We visit the famous Hase-kannon Temple where we will see one of the largest wooden statues in Japan. With a height of just over 9m and made from camphor wood and gilded in gold, the temple sits halfway up Mount Kamakura and has spectacular views over the Pacific. Then, we will move onto Zeniarai Benzaiten, where legend says you can wash your money in the shrine famous for its natural spring - in the hope that your monetary wealth will multiply!

After lunch we'll move onto Tsurugaoka Hachimangu, the most iconic and important Shinto Shrine in Kamakura, and a Tendai Buddhist temple built in 1063. The shrine and surrounding city were built with Feng Shui in mind and our guide will shed light on the intricacies of this ancient Japanese tradition.



<b>Day 5</b>	<p><b>Nikko</b></p> <p>Today we will move to Nikko, 150km to the north of Tokyo. Nikko has been a centre of Shinto and Buddhist worship for many centuries. The town is set against a striking backdrop, featuring towering peaks, lakes and waterfalls, all located within the neighbouring Nikko National Park. We will then visit Nikko Toshogu, which has a strong connection with old Japanese General Tokugawa Ieyasu. Initially a relatively simple mausoleum, Toshogu was enlarged into the spectacular complex seen today during the first half of the 1600s. There is time in the afternoon for a walk to take in the beautiful surroundings of the botanical gardens. Alternatively, we can head to Yumoto meaning “origin of hot water” where we can visit a traditional onsen.</p>	BLD
<b>Days 6 - 7</b>	<p><b>Kyoto</b></p> <p>Today we’ll head to Kyoto by the Shinkansen Bullet train travelling at speeds up to 320 km/h! We will be met at the train station (in itself a major attraction; its futuristic design has won countless awards) and transfer directly to our hotel. There is time to check in and freshen up before we head out for an orientation tour of the Gion district where we will meet with Geisha women, in traditional costume. They will teach us about the role of Geiko and Maiko culture on their way to or from an engagement at an Ochaya.</p> <p>Kyoto may no longer be the capital of Japan; however, it is now widely regarded as being its capital of culture. Having escaped widespread destruction in the Second World War, the city boasts a wealth of temples, shrines, and other priceless cultural buildings to visit. Today we cover the most iconic places of Kyoto, including the Kinkakuji Golden Pavilion, the top two floors of which are completely covered in gold leaf; Ryoanji; and the world-famous Zen style garden dating from 1450, as well as the Kiyomizu temple regarded as one of the most celebrated temples in the whole of Japan. Approached along the steep and busy lanes of the atmospheric Higashiyama District, these are just some of the places we visit in this action-packed day. There is also the opportunity for a calligraphy lesson in the afternoon (optional extra).</p> <p>On our second full day in Kyoto, we will experience the magical atmosphere of the Torii Red Gates, which straddles a network of trails as well as the important Fushimi Inari Shinto shrine. This is followed by a traditional tea ceremony with an English-speaking Sensei. One of the highlights of the trip takes place this evening as we travel to the Shukubo Temple where we stay the night in basic monastic accommodation and experience a traditional Shojin dinner, the practice of which dates back many centuries.</p>	BLD
<b>Day 8</b>	<p><b>Nara</b></p> <p>Today we take a short trip to Nara, another famous historic city close to Kyoto and home to some of Japan’s oldest and most magnificent temples. We visit the Todaiji temple which hosts the largest Buddha statue in Japan. Our next stop is the Nara Deer Park and the beautiful Isuien Japanese traditional garden where we take a walk through the manicured beds interspersed with tea houses. We will return to Kyoto for our farewell dinner.</p>	BLD
<b>Day 9</b>	<p><b>Osaka &amp; flight to UK</b></p> <p>Free morning followed by transfer to Osaka for our overnight flight back to London.</p>	BL

## Look what's included:

- International flights
- All accommodation, transportation and activities
- All food as described above
- Local, bi-lingual, first-aid qualified STC tour leader
- Parent and student trip launch presentation
- Pre-travel training programme
- 1-day offsite safety INSET day for school staff
- ATOL financial protection
- Emergency Medical & Repatriation Insurance
- Group first aid kit and prescription meds pack
- BS8848 safety management and risk assessments
- Detailed pre-departure information and kit lists
- Comprehensive teacher travel packs
- Permanent operations team in your destination
- 24-hour UK operational support whilst overseas
- Donations to two carbon & conservation charities
- Free Fairtrade t-shirt for every participant and teacher
- Free travel guide book to your destination

## What's not included:

- Transport to airport in UK
- Drinks (advice will be given on purification of water)
- Visas or tourist cards if required
- Any required inoculations or Covid tests
- Personal spending money
- Tips for guides, drivers and porters (ask for guidance)
- Airport departure taxes paid locally
- Personal effects and cancellation insurance



## A word about Responsible Tourism

On our expeditions and educational journeys, we strive to connect teachers and students with the people they meet, nurture the cultures they experience and protect the beautiful environments they are lucky enough to explore.

Many companies talk the talk, few truly walk the walk. While we are far from perfect, we are leading the way in sustainability in the school travel sector. In 2018 we were the first UK travel company to become **Travelife Certified** – a verified sustainability certificate formally recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.



This is our passion, and we'd love to tell you more about it in due course. In the meantime, for more information on some of the steps we take as a company to make our operations more sustainable, please visit:

<https://www.thestc.co.uk/travel/what-do-we-do/>

Trees for Life

## Physical Rating for this trip: Grade 4



Fitness is important at this grade, which compares to extended walking in mountainous terrain such as the Lakes or Snowdonia, for up to three to five days in a row. It is likely that significant sections of a trip will involve walking and trekking with some days up to eight hours. Some of the trip could be at altitudes of up to 4,500m, but the itinerary will be designed with appropriate acclimatisation in mind. Be prepared for significant possible variations in temperatures throughout the tour. There is not usually time to 'get fit' on these treks, so a two to four-month fitness improvement programme would ensure you get the most out of the trip.

## Cultural Rating for this trip: Grade 2



Expect to find local life broadly familiar to that in the UK, however aspects of the trip are likely to be in remoter areas where differences are more profound. Whilst English may not be the native language, you can expect it to be widely spoken. There may be some cultural differences and although western pallets should be well catered for there will be the opportunity to try new dishes.



## Travel Safety & Other Pre-Travel Training

Preparing students and teachers for their upcoming adventure is an opportunity to teach important life skills and a vital part of our overall approach to safety management. Please ask for your quote for the training schedule specific to this educational journey. Topics covered will include:

### Responsible Tourism workshop

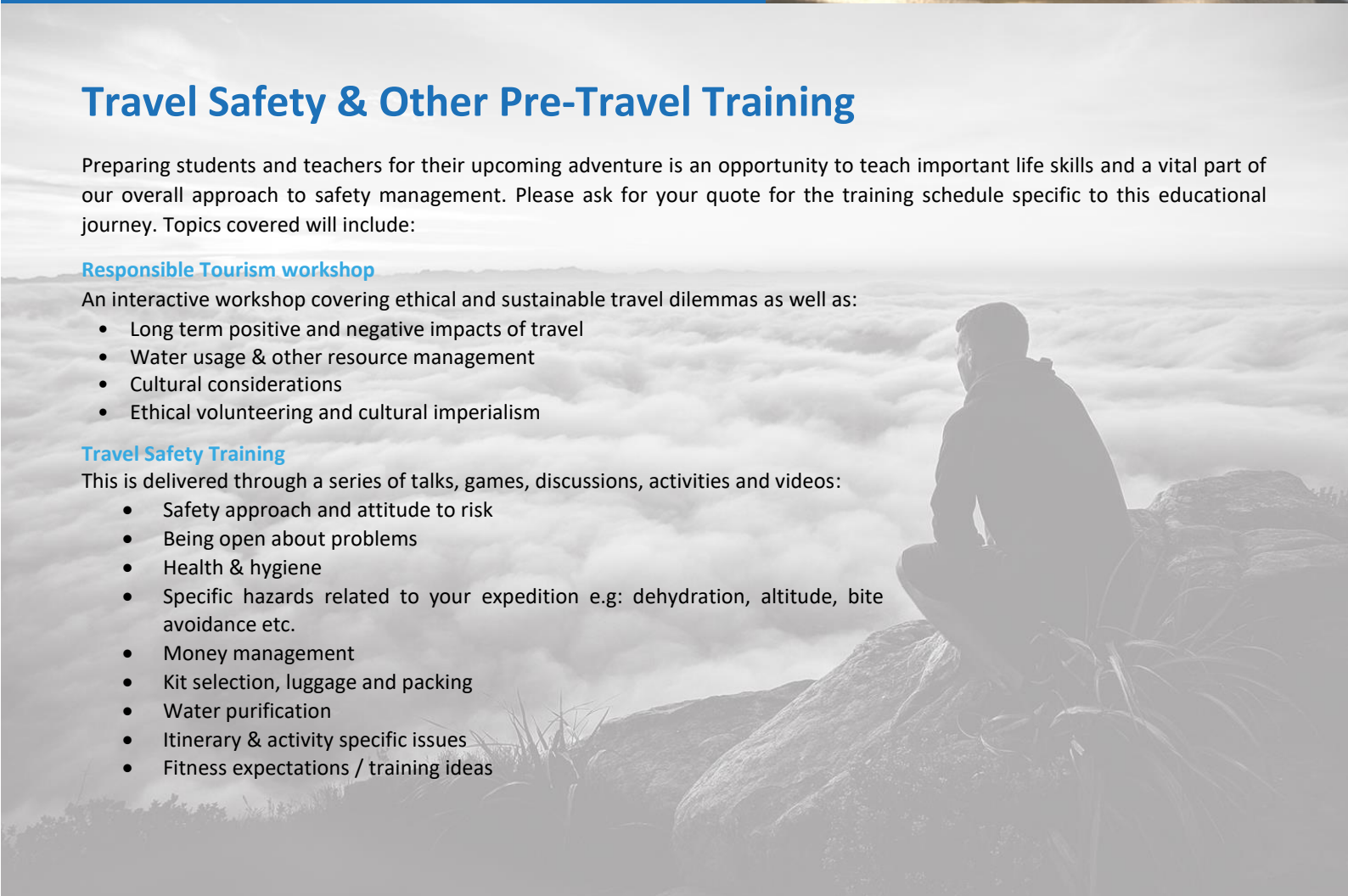
An interactive workshop covering ethical and sustainable travel dilemmas as well as:

- Long term positive and negative impacts of travel
- Water usage & other resource management
- Cultural considerations
- Ethical volunteering and cultural imperialism

### Travel Safety Training

This is delivered through a series of talks, games, discussions, activities and videos:

- Safety approach and attitude to risk
- Being open about problems
- Health & hygiene
- Specific hazards related to your expedition e.g: dehydration, altitude, bite avoidance etc.
- Money management
- Kit selection, luggage and packing
- Water purification
- Itinerary & activity specific issues
- Fitness expectations / training ideas





# A journey of 1,000 miles...

Starts with a single step... Contact us now to start your educational journey

## 1 Ask for your personalised quote & further information

If this itinerary doesn't quite scratch your adventure itch then let us tailor-make one for you. Our wealth of experience and expert in-country contacts means we can design an adventure that's just right for you and your students. Contact us for more information and a detailed quote.

## 2 Ask for risk assessments and marketing materials

We can provide initial risk and threat assessments to help you with your trip approval process. Ask for posters and your Pre-Booking Information Pack too.

## 3 Arrange a trip launch evening

This is a chance for students and parents to hear more about the planned adventure with comprehensive information covering the itinerary, safety management, the build-up to the trip and lots more. There is also plenty of opportunity for questions.



The home of the modern, innovative school expedition, where a sustainable, ethical approach guarantees unique experiences and a life enhancing adventure.



Our school trips and educational tours are all about maximising the learning opportunities of travel. It's all here, the humble school tour has just come of age.



Adventures, holidays and cultural journeys for teachers looking to 'Escape the Classroom' and discover more about our amazing world, its people and places.



*"I am being completely serious when I say that I won't ever run a school trip without you guys. I trust you and your team completely - and the in-country staff that you carefully cultivate and train are a cut above the rest."*

**Teacher feedback, King's High Warwick**

## Contact Us:

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