

# Grand Tour of Japan



## TRIP OVERVIEW

Journey from incense-scented temples and elegant feudal castles to ultramodern electronics districts and dramatic volcanic landscapes as you travel the length of Japan on six spectacular train rides. Experience the natural grandeur of Mount Fuji and the man made splendour of Matsumoto Castle, tour the shrines of futuristic Tokyo, visit the reminders of Hiroshima's tragic nuclear past, encounter snow monkeys in Yudanaka's hot springs, and walk with geishas amongst the wooden houses of Kyoto on this comprehensive 14-day tour of the region.

## ITINERARY AND DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to Japan. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important information such as visa requirements.

### Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

### DAY 1: UK to Sapporo

Depart London on your scheduled, overnight flight.

### DAY 2: Sapporo D

On arrival in Sapporo, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Settle in before tonight's welcome dinner in a local restaurant introduces you to Japan's famed cuisine.

### DAY 3: Sapporo B/D

Travel to the port city of Otaru and stroll along the Otaru Canal, the city's central waterway. Once the lifeblood of the city, it fell into disuse when modern dock facilities were opened but now boasts a gleaming restoration, with old gas lamps lining its path. Take in the delicately blown glassware of the Kitaichi Glass Shop then marvel at the 25,000 music boxes lining the shelves of the Music Box Museum, accompanied by the tinkle of their music. Continue on to the Nikka Whisky Distillery for a tour through the whisky barrels and casks and a tasting of this peaty whisky before returning to Sapporo.

### DAY 4: Sapporo to Hakodate B

Pack an overnight bag for your trip to Hakodate then, after breakfast, board an express train, travelling through the countryside to Hakodate. On arrival, cross the moats that surround the star-shaped former fort of Goryokaku and explore the tranquil green grounds. Next, travel to Mount Hakodate for a cable car ride to its summit, with each season offering a different bird's eye view of the city, from delicate cherry blossoms to ice-capped rooftops. Continue on to your hotel in Hakodate.

### DAY 5: Hakodate to Tokyo B

Catch a local train and join Hakodate's locals this morning as you browse the lively Morning Market, exploring over 280 stores hawking everything from salted squid and hairy crab - culinary specialties of the area, to souvenirs and locally crafted sake. Browse through the wares on offer then board your high-speed train to Tokyo. On arrival, you will be met and take a short subway ride to your hotel in Japan's dazzling capital.

### DAY 6: Tokyo B/D

Tokyo's enchanting fusion of futuristic districts, centuries-old palaces, family-run ramen booths and spotlessly clean streets, dotted with cutesy anime depictions, provides endless chances for exploration. Today's full-day city tour begins with a visit to the Meiji Shrine. Enter the sprawling complex through a towering wooden gate or 'torii' and explore the museum and inner garden. Continue on to Asakusa Kannon Buddhist Temple, Tokyo's oldest temple, and wander down the age-old Nakamise Shopping Street to reach the main hall and pagoda, where fragrant incense and Buddhist prayer chants fill the air. Browse the stalls that line Ameya Yokocho Street then visit the magnificent Imperial Palace, taking in its moats, gardens and the picturesque Nijo Bridge.

### DAY 7: Tokyo to Hakone B

Following breakfast, travel by coach to Hakone. On arrival, make your way to the Hakone Open Air Museum which houses art collections, including a Picasso exhibit, and an expansive sculptural park. Take a Hakone Ropeway ride to a mountaintop station with spectacular vistas of the sparkling waters of Lake Ashi and towering Mount Fuji. A short walking trail leads to Owakudani Valley, an active volcanic crater, where hot springs, bubbling pools and steam vents serve as reminders of the area's volcanic might. Continue on to the shores of Lake Ashi and enjoy a short cruise on this idyllic lake, surrounded by mountains and greenery. Join the locals at Hakodate's morning market.

### DAY 8: Hakone to Matsumoto B/D

Witness the grandeur of Mount Fuji as a coach ride takes you to the Fifth Station at the mountain's base. Enjoy unobstructed views from the observation deck before learning more about the mountain's cultural significance at the Mount Fuji World Heritage Centre. Your coach ride continues on to the ancient hillside city of Matsumoto. Discover Matsumoto Castle, one of Japan's most beautiful and oldest castles. Ringed by a moat and soaring up over five stories, a climb up the steps to the top will reward you with mesmerizing views. Check into your hotel in Matsumoto for your overnight stay.

### DAY 9: Matsumoto to Kyoto B

Journey into the Japanese highlands of Yudanaka for an unforgettable encounter with the fluffy snow monkeys of the region, which can survive temperatures of below -15 °C. Witness these fascinating creatures lounging and paddling in the steaming onsen, or hot springs, as they beat the icy conditions. Accustomed to their daily encounters with humans, these fearless primates allow an up-close, memorable experience. Drive onward to Nagano's impressive Zenkoji Temple, which houses what is

believed to be the first Buddhist statue brought to Japan. Later, board your train and travel through picturesque rural landscapes, arriving in Kyoto. Catch the subway to your hotel for tonight's stay.

**Please note that in the hot summer months the snow monkeys dislike bathing in the hot springs, in which case your guide will arrange an alternative visit.**

### DAY 10: Kyoto B/D

Experience traditional Japan at its finest as you explore Kyoto, a city of shrines, temples and geisha teahouses. Discover the ancient hallways and sacred waterfall of Kiyomizudera Temple then walk along the streets of Ninenzaka and Sannenzaka, past charming traditional wooden houses and shops. Enjoy double visions of gold as you witness the gold-leafed pavilion of Kinkaku-ji and its shimmering reflection mirrored in the surrounding moat. Visit Fushimi Inari and stroll through an amazing arcade of vivid red 'torii', or shrine gates, inscribed with dedications to Inari, the god of rice. Wander the Zen gardens of Kodaiji Temple before sampling the region's fragrant teas at a traditional tea ceremony in the temple hall. Explore the UNESCO-recognised fortifications and chambers of Nijo Castle then look out for geishas draped in lavish kimonos as you walk through the geisha district of Gion at the end of a thrilling day of exploration.

### DAY 11: Kyoto to Hiroshima B

Depart from Hiroshima, first travelling to Japan's former capital city, Nara, where you'll visit the Todaiji Temple and the world's largest bronze Buddha statue nestled in its interior. Watch over 1,200 deer roaming nearby Nara Park, where deer crackers can be purchased and fed to these friendly park inhabitants. Drive onward to Osaka and catch your bullet train to Hiroshima for your overnight stay.

### DAY 12: Hiroshima B

Start your day with a visit to Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park & Museum where photos and belonging of victims of the Hiroshima bombing are on display, serving as a reminder of the horror of the devastating event. Visit the A-Bomb Dome, one of the buildings which survived the blasts and remains as a symbol of peace in the city, before continuing onward to Miyajima. Take a boat ride to Miyajima Island, known as the 'Island of the Gods' and visit the awe-inspiring Itsukushima Shrine and its towering, free-standing wooden gate which stands in the middle of the sea. Return to your hotel in Hiroshima.

### DAY 13: Hiroshima to Fukuoka B/D

Depart Hiroshima on a bullet train ride to Fukuoka. On arrival, visit the tranquil Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine and learn more about Japan's long and rich history at the Kyushu National Museum. Wander the verdant pebbled gardens of Komyozenji Temple before continuing onward to your hotel for check-in. This evening, visit the Nakasu Area and follow your nose around the fragrant street food stalls. Leave space for tonight's farewell dinner, which marks the end of your Japanese adventure.

### DAY 14: Fukuoka to the UK or extension B

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your return flight to the UK, or continue on to your chosen extension.

**Please note: An overnight backpack/bag is required for your train journey on days: 4, 11 and 12. (See page 3 for details).**

**PORTERAGE IS NOT INCLUDED BETWEEN TRAINS AND HOTELS.**

## ACCOMMODATION DETAILS AND MAP

### Accommodation guide

Your accommodation is selected for convenience, location, comfort or character, and can range from business hotels to overnight trains. Hotel accommodation is generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note there is no international classification system for hotels, and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and Japan. All group tours hotels have private bathroom facilities and air-conditioning, where needed. Rest assured that all accommodation used by Mercury Holidays is regularly inspected by our staff and partners to ensure that standards meet your needs. If you have booked a triple share please note that your room will be a twin room with a rollaway bed or sofa bed added. This may limit the floor space in the room.

**Please note: final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.**

### Meals

Breakfast is always western style and served in the hotel each morning. Dinner (when included) will be taken in local restaurants or at the hotel. A variety of restaurants are visited giving you the chance to experience a range of dishes and flavours.



## ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On your arrival in Sapporo you will be met by a representative from our local agent in Japan, **B Japan Tours**, holding a sign displaying 'Mercury Holidays'. The Mercury Holidays/Beauty of Japan representative will transfer you to your hotel on arrival where you will spend your first night. you may have. If you need to contact Beauty of Japan during your stay the details are:

### B Japan Tours

2-4-4 Shibadai-mon, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0012, Japan, Nakane Building 6F  
email: [pankaj@beautyofjapantours.com](mailto:pankaj@beautyofjapantours.com) / [info@bojt.jp](mailto:info@bojt.jp) / [inquiry@beautyofjapantours.com](mailto:inquiry@beautyofjapantours.com)  
Telephone: +813 6823 2336  
Mobile: +818 0642 22336

### Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details for B Japan Tours  
24 hour emergency number: 0081 3 66599074

## WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

### Visas

UK passport holders are not currently required to obtain a visa prior to departure. A tourist visa will be issued on arrival for a duration of 90 days when you show your passport (must be valid for at least six months from the date you are due to leave Japan). Visa, arrival and departure requirements are subject to change and obtaining a visa is the responsibility of the traveller and not Mercury Holidays. We recommend you check with your destinations' Tourist Board or Embassy prior to departure for the most up-to-date guidelines regarding visas and passport validity.

### Health and Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to check any health & vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in sufficient time before your departure. Sources of information include: [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk), [www.travelhealthpro.org.uk](http://www.travelhealthpro.org.uk), [www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk), your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

### Insurance

We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance with Holiday Extras, please call **0800 781 4237** and quote **'WK830'** for preferential rates. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

### Tour Guides

This is a fully escorted tour, meaning that you will be met on arrival by your Tour Guide who will remain with you for the duration of your trip. Your guide will be on hand for the duration of your tour and will be able to provide you with some general information on each of the destinations/attractions that you visit.

### Private Tour

If you have booked a private tour then you will be accompanied by a Driver Guide or a Driver and Local Guides. These will be available to you during all scheduled sightseeing. Private Tours can depart on any day of the week depending on flight and train schedules and the opening days of the attractions. They will follow the itinerary as described in the brochure unless you have been advised otherwise and you will still have all of the same meals, sightseeing and local excursions included.

### Tipping

It is customary to tip both your driver and guide. We would recommend to tip approximately £2 per person per day. This is a total of £26 per person to budget for tips on your trip. Tips will be collected at the end of your tour. Tips are accepted in the local currency.

### Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with a good level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves climbing of steep stairs and getting on and off coaches. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties. All our tours feature a "Tour Pace" to help find the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights, climb stairs and get on and off coaches and boats. The tour pace of Grand Tour of Japan is rated as Advanced. A higher level of fitness as required as you may be on your feet for most of the day though this will be interspersed with regular breaks and vary from day to day. You will be walking around the sights, getting on and off coaches, trains, boats and climbing steps which may be irregular. There may be some time spend at high altitude. You will stay in variety of hotels, possibly including overnight trains, and accommodation standards may not match those you are used to at home. Our guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

## FLIGHT INFORMATION

**IMPORTANT: Please note that final flight details, including terminal, airline and baggage allowance, will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure. A printed E-ticket is no longer required at check-in, all you need to do is present your passport to the staff at the desk and your boarding pass will be given to you.**

### Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking, lounges or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras Tel. 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

**IMPORTANT:** An overnight bag/day pack will be required during your train journeys due to luggage limitations on the trains. Your luggage will be transferred using a 24hr or 48hr luggage delivery service which will arrive at your accommodation the following day.

### Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 9, and the maximum will be 25. If in the unlikely event there are less than 9 people booked on your tour date, we will endeavour to reduce any disruption to your holiday and try to operate your tour with lower passenger numbers. If we are not able to operate your departure date, then you may be asked to change to a different date and a full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

### Currency Exchange

The currency in Japan is the Japanese Yen (JPY or ¥). You can purchase the currency before you travel but you will probably get a better exchange rate if money is exchanged when in Japan. You can buy Yen at foreign exchange banks and at the airport. Credit, debit and prepaid cards from international brands are accepted at a wide variety of places in the major cities within Japan. Outside of these, cards may not be widely accepted, although you will be able to withdraw cash in the local currency across the country at ATMs. We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. It is important that you budget carefully and ensure you have the right form of currency before you arrive in the country. Cash machines will also be available throughout the tour in order to withdraw money in your local currency.

### Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, any meals not included in the itinerary as well as drinks and any additional snacks. Approximately £700 per person will be sufficient for the duration of the tour. It is a good idea to try and maintain a supply of small notes and change in the local currency for tipping or small purchases.

### Credit Card Information

As normal practice you will be asked for your credit card details on check-in at the hotel in order to cover any extras incurred during your stay. If you do not have a credit card, you may be asked for a cash deposit. American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.

### Itinerary Changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction and/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

### Public Holidays

If you are travelling within the below Japanese Public Holidays please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open but may be crowded. Golden Week is between 29th April–5th May. Obon Holiday is between 13th–16th August.

### This applies to the following train journeys:

**Day 4: Sapporo to Hakodate - An overnight bag will be required for 2 nights as your main luggage will be transferred to Tokyo on day 4.**

**Day 11 & 12: Kyoto to Hiroshima - An overnight bag will be required for 2 nights as your main luggage will be transferred to Fukuoka on day 11.**

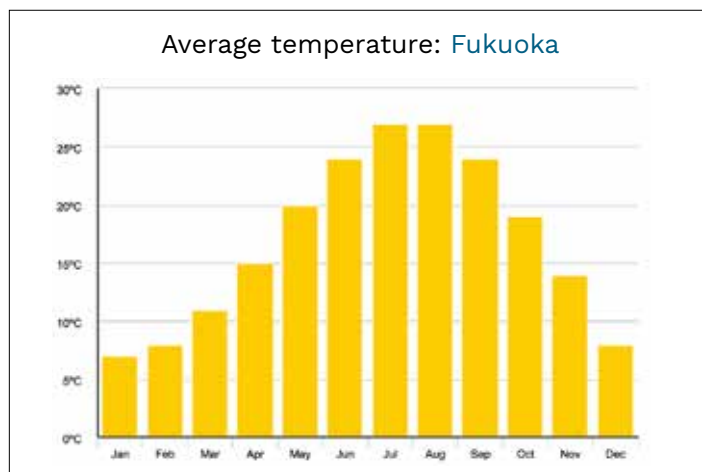
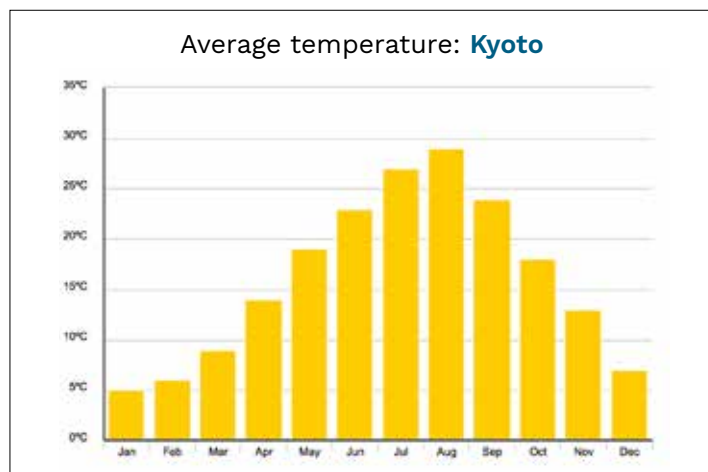
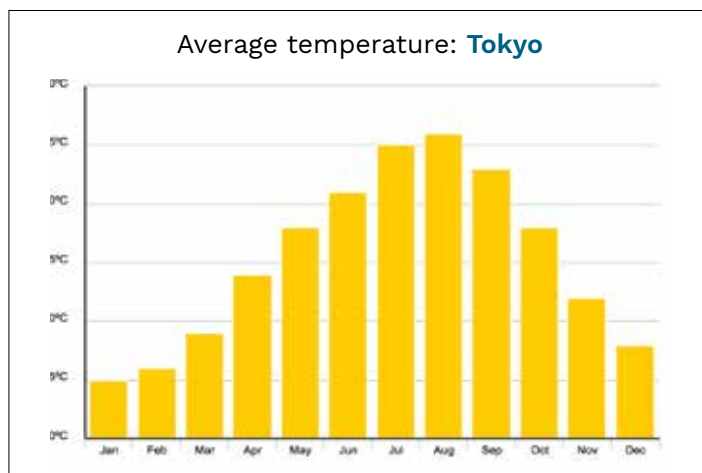
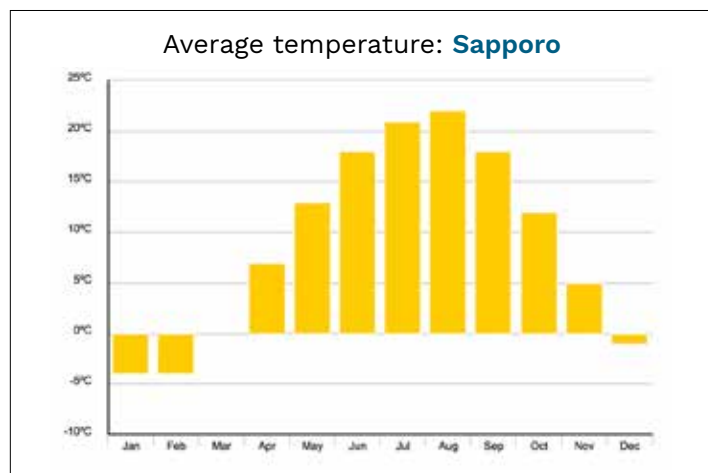


## WHAT TO PACK

- Sunscreen, insect repellent and wide-brimmed hat
- Waterproof, lightweight jacket
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Lightweight clothing
- Sweater
- Camera and charger
- Small day pack for excursions
- Personal toiletries and first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc
- A plug adaptor – the electricity supply is 110/120 volts and two or three flat pin plugs

## WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



# Hong Kong City Stay Extension

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0333 003 0522



## TRIP OVERVIEW

Following your incredible tour of Japan, why not explore the bustling metropolis of Hong Kong, where towering skyscrapers form the backdrop to the city's busy harbour? Experience the city's unique blend of British and Chinese culture, a legacy of its colonial past.

## ITINERARY AND DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your extension in Hong Kong.

### Guide to meals included:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

### DAY 14: Fukuoka to Hong Kong B

Depart Fukuoka in the morning and fly to Hong Kong. You will find your shared coach transfer at B18 at the arrival hall (see map), operated by Airport Shuttle and will be transferred to the 4★ The Cityview Hotel.

### DAY 15: Hong Kong B

After breakfast, you will embark on a half-day tour of the city with an English-speaking guide, where you can visit some of the city's most famous sights. The afternoon is left to you to spend at your leisure, exploring fascinating Hong Kong.

### DAY 16: Hong Kong B

Enjoy a day at leisure to experience Hong Kong at your own pace. Why not visit the outlying island of Lantau, home to the 34m-tall bronze Tian Tan Buddha statue, or take a ferry to the gambling mecca of Macau?

### DAY 17: Hong Kong to the UK B

This morning transfer to the airport for your return flight to the UK.

### Hotel information:

Your stay in Hong Kong will take place at the 4★ **The Cityview**. The modern Cityview hotel occupies a great position in downtown Kowloon, within walking distance of many of the city's iconic sites including the Temple street night market and Jade market. The rest of Hong Kong and Kowloon can be explored via the nearby MTR station which is only a minutes walk away.

Hotel address: 23 Waterloo Rd, Yau Ma Tei, Hong Kong

Phone: 00852 2783 3888

If the hotel listed is unavailable an alternative will be used of a similar standard.

### Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details for **HK Target Travel**:

Mon-Fri: 09.00 - 17.30, Sat: 09.00 - 13.00

Closed Sunday and Hong Kong public holidays

Office: 00852 2312 1812

Emergency: 00852 9432 5300

### Personal Expenses

You will need to take some extra money with you to cover any meals not included, drinks and personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, and any extra snacks.

### Currency

The currency in Hong Kong is the Hong Kong Dollar (HKD). We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK; however, ATMs are available throughout Hong Kong.

### Tour Guides

This add-on to Hong Kong is not escorted. Whilst you will be accompanied by an English speaking guide on your half-day city tour on day two, the rest of your time in Hong Kong will be at your leisure.

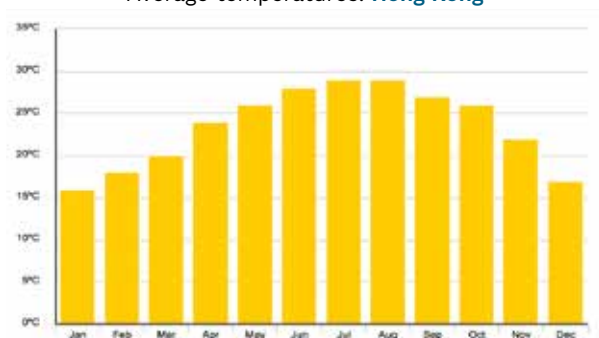
### Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 2, and the maximum will be 10.

## WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.

Average temperatures: **Hong Kong**



## FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0333 003 0522**

## Hong Kong City Stay Extension

For your arrival transfer, after clearing customs and collecting your bags, you will meet the driver in Arrival Hall B. The transfer driver will holding a sign marked with guest name & Sunspot/Mercury Holidays logo.

For your departure transfer from the hotel to the Airport you need to be waiting in the hotel lobby at your designated pick up time as informed by our guide after the city tour.

Driver contact details (Mr Eric) - (852) 65331890

