

China & Japan's Rail Odyssey



TRIP OVERVIEW

Uncover the ancient city sights of China and the neon-lit districts of Japan, two countries bound by their Buddhist ties and imperial histories yet offering wildly different cultural, culinary and natural attractions. Journey from the geisha districts of Kyoto and towering high rises of Tokyo to explore the iconic sights of Xi'an, Beijing and Shanghai on this 15-day East Asian exploration.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to China & 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 Kyoto

Depart London on your scheduled, overnight flight to Osaka, via Beijing.

DAY 2: Kyoto

On arrival in Osaka, you will be met and transferred to your hotel in the nearby city of Kyoto.

DAY 3: Kyoto B

Experience traditional Japan at its finest as you tour Kyoto, a city of shrines, temples and geisha teahouses that boasts 17 UNESCO World Heritage Sites. 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 a colourful arcade of vivid red 'torii', or shrine gates, inscribed with dedications to Inari, the god of rice. Browse the maze of food stalls in the 400 year old Nishiki Market, bearing fresh produce, intriguing pickles and steaming bowls of udon noodles, then continue on to the geisha district of Gion. Spot geishas draped in lavish kimonos and explore the charming wooden buildings, teahouses and restaurants of the area before returning to your hotel.

DAY 4: Kyoto B/D

A day trip to the nearby city Nara allows you to delve into the cultural legacy of Japan's ancient former capital. Visit the Buddhist complex at Todaiji Temple, home to the world's largest wooden structure and the colossal bronze Buddha statue nestled in its interior. Continue on to nearby Nara Park and watch over 1,200 deer roaming its greenery, perhaps purchasing some deer crackers to feed to these friendly park inhabitants. Travel back to Kyoto for your evening meal, followed by an evening's entertainment allowing you to experience an age-old tradition with a geisha performance.

DAY 5: Kyoto to Tokyo B

After breakfast catch a public train to the station to board your train bound for Tokyo and experience Japan's high-tech rail network, renowned for its speed, cleanliness and punctuality. Journey past rolling rural landscapes and through small, traditional towns as you follow the coastline, arriving in Tokyo later, where this afternoon a public train ride will take you to your hotel, allowing you to enjoy the rest of the day at leisure. **Please note: 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 luggage delivery service which will arrive at your accommodation the following day.**

DAY 6: Tokyo B/L

Tokyo's fusion of futuristic districts, centuries-old palaces, family-run ramen booths and streets dotted with cutesy anime depictions provides endless chances for exploration. A full day of sightseeing begins at Sensoji, Tokyo's oldest temple.

Wander down Nakamise Shopping Street to reach the main hall and pagoda, where incense and Buddhist prayer chants fill the air. Follow in the footsteps of Japan's masterful sushi chefs as you learn more about this iconic dish at a sushi making class then continue on to the area of Ginza, the country's biggest luxury shopping and entertainment district. Wander past luxe department stores, flashing neon signage and colourful buildings before ending your tour in Akihabara Electric Town where a maze of high rises houses gadgets and gizmos galore.

DAY 7: Tokyo B

Following breakfast, visit Hakone National Park, home to one of Japan's most instantly recognisable sights — the iconic Mount Fuji, fringed by thick forests and a crescent-shaped ring of shimmering lakes. Take a Hakone Ropeway cable car ride to a mountaintop station with spectacular vistas of the sparkling, blue waters of Lake Ashi and Fuji's snow-capped peak. From here, 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.

DAY 8: Tokyo to Shanghai, China B/D

Bid farewell to Japan as you transfer to the airport for your flight to Shanghai, China. On arrival, experience your first taste of this fast-paced metropolis with a visit to the Bund, Shanghai's waterside walkway, followed by a stroll along Nanjing Road to observe the world's busiest shopping street. Check into your hotel in time for dinner.

DAY 9: Shanghai B/L/D

Shanghai, China's biggest city, is also its most international. Enjoy the colonial-era and traditional Chinese elements of the city on today's tour. Explore the tranquil pavilions, rockeries and ponds of Yu Garden, the tree-lined avenues and chic eateries of the French Concession and the charming alleyways of the Old Town before taking in the ancient artefacts of the Shanghai Museum. Later, an optional evening river cruise down the Huangpu River that runs through Shanghai gives an excellent vantage point of the city's skyline.

DAY 10: Shanghai to Xi'an B/L/D

After breakfast, board your bullet train to Xi'an, on your arrival, you will be met and transferred to your hotel in time for dinner.

DAY 11: Xi'an B/L/D

Taking nearly four decades to complete and over 700,000 workers, Xi'an's Terracotta Warriors were built to protect China's first emperor in his afterlife. Explore this impressive underground mausoleum, and the 8,000

extraordinarily sculpted warriors, bronze chariots and preserved weapons on display. Continue on to the Small Wild Goose Pagoda and the Muslim Quarter, home to historic mosques and a labyrinth of market stalls selling everything from souvenirs to edible delicacies. Later this evening, travel back in time as you watch a colourful Tang Dynasty dancing show.

DAY 12: Xi'an to Beijing B/L/D

Today take a visit to Xi'an's City Wall, a long stretch of fortifications which is the oldest in China and provides dramatic views over the city. In the evening, board an overnight sleeper train as you travel to Beijing, taking in the night-time scenery that passes you by.

DAY 13: Beijing B/L/D

On arrival in Beijing, you will be met and transferred to your hotel, before today's excursion starting at the iconic Great Wall, constructed over 2,000 years ago to guard the Chinese Empire against Mongol invaders. Stroll along a section of this amazing structure which stretches over 5,500 miles, crossing deserts, grasslands and mountains. Travel back into the city and browse the old, traditional calligraphy and book shops of Liulichang Antique Culture Street and the historic stores of Qianmen Dashilan, where some of China's most notable silk stores are located.

ACCOMMODATION DETAILS & MAP



DAY 14: Beijing B/L/D

China's dynamic capital is built on an impressive scale, with its imposing monuments serving as reminders of its imperial past. Today's full-day tour takes you around the highlights of the city, starting with Tiananmen Square, where you'll explore the world's largest public square under the watchful eye of Chairman Mao's large, central portrait. From here, enter the vast Forbidden Palace and wander its 9,999 rooms and chambers before travelling onward to the tranquil Temple of Heaven. Later tonight, experience one of China's top delicacies as you savour a crisp, fragrant Peking duck dinner.

DAY 15: Beijing to the UK B

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your return flight to the UK.

Please note: An overnight daypack/bag is required for your train journey on days: 8,11. (See page 3 for details).

PORTERAGE IS NOT INCLUDED BETWEEN TRAINS AND HOTELS.



Accommodation

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 and China. 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. Unlike the western world, Chinese people do not

ON YOUR ARRIVAL

Japan

On your arrival in Kansai International Airport (Osaka) 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/**B Japan Tours** representative will transfer you to your hotel on arrival where you will spend your first night. If you need to contact **B Japan Tours** during your stay the details are:

B Japan Tours

2-4-4 Shibadairon, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0012, Japan, Nakane Building 6F
email: pankaj@beautyofjapantours.com / info@bojt.jp / 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

China

On your arrival in Shanghai you will be met by a representative from our local agent, **China Travel Service**, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/China Travel Service will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your national guide will be on hand 24 hours a day should you have any queries. However, if you need to contact your representative during your stay the details are:

China Travel Service

Head office address: Room 919, 1 Dongdan North Ave, Dongcheng District, Beijing, China
Telephone: 0086-10-85228725

Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details for **China Travel Service**:
During Office Hours: 00861085228340/00861085228725 or 00861085908341
After Office Hours: Linda Liu: 008613911043036/ 00861085228712
Judith Zhu: 008618611991963/ 00861085228340
Carmen Chen: 008613120095762

WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

Visas

Japan: 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. China: A visa is required for entry into

China: All applicants who wish to apply for a China Tourist Visa must do so in person at the Chinese Visa Application Centre in London, Manchester, Belfast or Edinburgh where fingerprint information will be collected. Fingerprints are not required for children under the age of 14 and adults over the age of 70. If there are two or more of you then you may be eligible to apply for a group visa which does not require you to submit your fingerprints or need to travel to a Chinese Visa Application Centre. The group visa is exclusively arranged for Mercury clients by the Travel Visa Company and they can be contacted on 01270 250 590 for further information. Clients who do not qualify for the group visa can still contact the Travel Visa Company to apply for the standard visa. We recommend that you apply for your visa 8 weeks before travel, however please be aware that your passport will be required for the application so make sure that you will not need it during this time.

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.

Health and Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to check any health and 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 good time before your departure. Sources of information include; www.fco.gov.uk, www.travelhealthpro.org.uk, www.hpa.org.uk, your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

Tour Guides

Japan: This is an escorted tour meaning that you will be met by a local guide in each of the cities that you visit, ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times. During your transfers an English-speaking assistant will be provided. Please note that during train journeys a guide/assistant will not be available.

China: This is a fully escorted tour meaning that you will be met by a local guide in each of the cities that you visit, ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times.

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

Japan: It is at your customary to tip both your driver and guide. We would recommend to tip approximately £2 per person per day. This is a total of £10 per person to budget for tips on your trip. Tips will be collected at the beginning/end of your tour. Tips are accepted in the local currency.

China: It is at your customary to tip both your driver and guide. We would recommend to tip approximately £5 (CNY40.00) per person per day. This is a total of £35 (CNY320.00) per person to budget for tips on your trip. Tips will be collected at the beginning 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 for China and Japans Rail Odyssey is 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.

Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 12, and the maximum will be 40. If in the unlikely event there are less than 12 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

Japan: 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 at 7 Eleven shops.

China: The currency in China is the Renminbi, known as RMB or CNY. It is often referred to as the yuan. We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. US Dollars are widely accepted in China should you wish to keep an alternative currency on you.

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 £600 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. The schedules of the domestic airlines in country are subject to frequent changes. 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 &/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 -

China - If you are travelling within the below Chinese Public Holidays, please note that celebrations last for several 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. Chinese New Year is on 22nd January 2023 & 10th February 2024. Golden Week public holidays fall annually between 1st - 4th of May and 1st - 7th of October.

Japan - If you are travelling within the below Japanese Public Holidays, please note that celebrations last for several days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Golden Week public holidays typical fall around the last few days of April and the first week of May.

WHAT TO PACK

- Sunscreen and hat in summer
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Camera and charger
- A travel plug adaptor - The voltage in China is 220 Volts. It is advisable to bring a multi-adaptor, In Japan, the electricity supply is 110/120 volts and two or three flat pin plugs
- Loo paper for public WCs
- Binoculars

- Personal first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc
- Small day pack for excursions
- Waterproof, lightweight jacket
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Lightweight clothing
- Sweater

Please note; Lighters are not allowed on planes ,trains or sights of special interest, such as Tiananmen square, Forbidden city, The Temple of Heaven , Terracotta Warriors , Three Gorges Dam , Wild Goose Pagoda. Spray cans of any form are not allowed on trains or planes. The following items cannot be transported in Checked Baggage; Mobile phone battery charging packs, Lithium batteries of lower than 100 Wh for laptops, mobile phones and cameras among other personal portable electronic devices. These items must be put in your hand luggage.

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 or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras on 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

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

