

Press Release: 21<sup>st</sup> July 2009

## Japan Journeys launches first Gourmet Tour of Japan in May 2010

Specialist tour operator Japan Journeys has launched its first ever Gourmet Tour after spotting a gap in the UK travel market. The ten-day itinerary will include a cookery class in Tokyo, as well as a tour of a sake brewery, a visit to the biggest fish market in the world and the opportunity to eat at one of Tokyo's Michelin-starred restaurants. The group will visit Tokyo, Kyoto and Nara, and have the chance to travel by Japan's famous Bullet Train and attend a Sumo Tournament.

The tour has two departure dates on 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> May 2010 and costs £2,245 per person based on two sharing including international flights. There is a maximum of 14 guests per tour and the group is accompanied by an experienced, Japanese-speaking guide at all times.

Japan Journeys' Gourmet Tour starts in the beautiful city of Kyoto, which is renowned for its excellent cuisine, as well as its female *geishas*. Here, guests will stay for four nights in a centrally-located three star hotel and visit beautiful shrines, temples and gardens. On arrival, guests will be treated to a fabulous *sukiyaki* meal, which involves slowly simmering meat, tofu and vegetables in a shallow iron pot in a mixture of soy sauce, sugar and mirin.

On the fourth day, the tour will visit the ancient city of Nara, home to Todai-ji Temple, the world's largest wooden building, and the Great Buddha statue. Guests will enjoy a lunch of *soba* noodles before visiting a sake brewery. For dinner, participants will enjoy a *kaiseki* (haute cuisine) meal for which Kyoto is famed.

On the fifth day, the Gourmet Tour itinerary takes the group to the Nishiki-koji food market – a staggering array of locally produced goods from green tea and bean-paste to vegetables and seafood. Participants also visit a local temple, where they can sample a very tasty *shojin ryori* (monk's food) lunch. As meat was not traditionally eaten in Buddhist Japan, this kind of cuisine became another speciality of the Kyoto area.

The group then returns to Tokyo by Bullet Train, on which they'll enjoy a traditional *o-bento*, or lunchbox. In the afternoon, participants of the Gourmet Tour will take part in a cooking class to learn how to make some traditional Japanese dishes.

The next three days are spent exploring Tokyo, including a visit to one of the city's best *ramen* noodle bars and the choice of dinner at a Michelin-starred restaurant. Tokyo has more starred-restaurants than any other city in the world.

On the morning of the eighth day, guests will get up early to visit Tsukiji, the biggest fish market in the world, where tuna is the main attraction. This trip is followed by the freshest sushi breakfast imaginable. In the afternoon, the group will visit the beautiful gardens of Hamarikyū before cruising up the Sumida River to Asakusa, the old heart of

Tokyo. Dinner is at Kappabashi, a playground for restaurateurs with an incredible range of crockery and cooking utensils.

The last day is free for participants to do as they please. Japan Journeys recommends spending the day at a Sumo Tournament, which is taking place on 18 May 2010. Before departing for the UK, the group will enjoy a farewell dinner of *nabe*, a hearty Japanese-style hot pot.

**Tour dates and prices:**

The first tour takes place between 10<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> May 2010 (the Sumo Tournament only takes place during this tour), whilst the second runs between 24<sup>th</sup> May and 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2010. The ten-day tour costs £2,245 per person based on two sharing.

The cost includes direct return flights in economy class with Japan Airways; eight nights' accommodation at centrally-located 3\* hotels in Kyoto and Tokyo on a bed and breakfast basis; some lunches and dinners; a cookery class in Tokyo; transfers by private coach; entrance fees for all named activities; and green tea at Daitoku-ji temple. The price does not include optional activities, such as dinner at the Michelin-starred restaurant; drinks; insurance; and baggage transfer.

Those wishing to extend their trip can take advantage of Japan Journeys' reduced hotel rates of £45 per person based on two sharing.

**About Japan Journeys:**

Japan Journeys was established in 2004. It is a dedicated Japan specialist and the number one provider of manga and bonsai tours to Japan. It also offers gap year programmes for those aged under 29 who are thinking of working abroad, as well as a Quilters' Tour of Japan and a luxury Hidden Islands of Japan cruise.

For more information, please go to: [www.japanjourneys.co.uk](http://www.japanjourneys.co.uk) or telephone 020 7766 5267.

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