

Memorial Day Holoholo Weekend to Kansai and Nagoya *The best of Japan's omiyage shopping!*

Kyoto, Nagoya, Nara, Osaka and Kobe



Shop, Sightsee, Eat, Fun- A perfect way to spend the holiday weekend!
5nts/7days from: \$2450 triple \$2495 double and \$2895 single
Cancel for any reason up to 60 days prior-FULL REFUND!
Maximum Tour size is 24 tour members!

Come along and join us on this unique Memorial Day Holoholo Weekender tour to Kansai and Nagoya.

Kansai, Japan's spiritual and cultural capital offers so much to see and do, fantastic nightlife, peaceful temples and shrines, unlimited shopping, and delicious foods. And then, a day trip to Nagoya, the birthplace of Toyota and pachinko. Known as the "middle child", in the shadows of its older siblings, Osaka and Tokyo, Nagoya has much to offer, a cosmopolitan vibe, excellent shopping, and friendly Nagoyans.

We begin with 3 nights in Kyoto, unlike any other city in Japan. There is a day trip to Ohara, an ancient farming village north of Kyoto. Nestled in the mountains, it is famous for its rural beauty and historical significance.

Our touring continues to Nagoya, the largest city in the Chubu region. Sit back, enjoy the bullet train ride as we are off for the day to explore some of this city's highlights.

We then continue to Nara and the well-preserved Edo period town of Imaicho, founded in the 1500's. What is special about this town is that residents are still living here, making it a living historical town. Enjoy time exploring its narrow lanes and traditional buildings.

And now, off to Osaka, Japan's 3rd most populous city. Famous for its food, eating until you drop is common in Osaka. If shopping is on your list, Shinsaibashi Suji, a favorite with local folk will not disappoint. This covered shopping arcade is one of Osaka's oldest and busiest.

Our touring ends in Kobe, perched on a hillside sloping down to the sea, one of Japan's most attractive and cosmopolitan cities.

Come, join us on this fun-filled weekend. Yes, it's filled with quality omiyage shopping time, traditional shopping streets, the Kyoto JR Station and Aeon Mall, and a free day in Osaka, steps from Shinsaibashi. We have also included a sake brewery, cable car ride, bullet train, and a visit to Glicopia Kobe, where you can learn and sample Glico's popular snacks like Pretz and Pocky.

Accommodations for our stay in Kyoto is at Miyako Hotel Kyoto Hachijo, across from the Kyoto JR Station and around the block from the Aeon Mall. In Osaka, we are at Hotel Monterey Grasmere Osaka, ideally located, a short walk from Shinsaibashi and Dotonbori.

Itinerary/Details

Day 1 – May 24th, 2022, Tuesday – Depart from Honolulu

Hawaiian Airlines #449 Departs Honolulu 2:10 pm – Arrive Kansai 6:45 pm +1

Please meet your Panda Travel representative at the Hawaiian Airlines international check-in counters, located in Terminal 2, Lobby 4, a minimum of 3 hours prior to the flight departure time.

Day 2 – May 25th, 2022, Wednesday – Kansai - Kyoto

On arrival in Osaka, please make your way to the baggage claim area and then proceed to customs clearing. On exiting customs, we will be met by our local English-speaking guide. A short walk to our charter bus and then off to Kyoto, the drive time approximately 1.5 hours.

Welcome to Kyoto! Kyoto is old Japan, made up of quiet temples, grand gardens, and colorful shrines. While the rest of Japan has adopted modernity with abandon, the old ways remain in Kyoto.

Accommodation for our first 3 nights on tour are at the New Miyako Hotel Kyoto, ideally situated across the street from the Kyoto JR Station and around the corner from the Aeon Mall. No matter in which direction you turn, a wide variety of food, shopping opportunities are available. If you would like to shop for a snack or drinks, there is 24 hours, 7/11 convenience store just across the street.



Accommodations: Miyako Hotel Kyoto Hachijo  **free**

Day 3 – May 26th, 2022, Thursday – Kyoto-Ohara-Shiga-Kyoto (B)

After breakfast, please meet in the lobby by 8:30am as we are off on a full day of touring.

The morning begins with a visit to Sanzen-in Temple, located north of Kyoto in the quaint village of Ohara. The drive time is approximately 40-minutes. This Buddhist temple, one of the finest in all of Kyoto, is famous for its large garden where an old wooden sub-temple sits in what looks like a still sea of green moss, penetrated by a few tall cedars and carefully placed rocks and shrubs.

We begin our visit along the approach, lined with a variety of shops and snacks. Once there, explore the tree-lined paths on the way to Ojo-Gokuraku-In Hall, containing the amazing figure of Amida, the Buddha of the Western Paradise and two kneeling attendants.

From here, a short drive to the temple town of Sakamoto to enjoy a truly unique experience, the Sakamoto Cable Car ride to Hieizan Enryakuji Temple. On route to the cable car station, do look out to the street of Sakamoto, lined with stone walls known as Anou-shu Zumi stone walls.

This cable car railroad which began in 1927 is the longest funicular line in Japan at 2,025 meters. Sit back and enjoy a varied view of seven bridges and two tunnels from your window. As the cable car climbs up the mountain, you will have a wonderful view of Lake Biwa.

Welcome to Hieizan Enryaku-ji Temple, one of the most significant sacred Buddhist places in Japan has a 1200-year history and as well a World Heritage site. Hieizan sits on the side of Mt. Hiei which also overlooks Lake Biwa, the oldest and largest lake in Japan. Its waters have been cherished since ancient times for purifying disease and as the mother lake that nurtures all life.

It is the landscape, with majestic trees and open vistas that make this a very special place, less crowded than most of Kyoto's world heritage sites.

From here, a stop at a roadside station, Michinoeki Biwako Ohashi Kome Plaza for omiyage shopping and lunch on your own.

Now, back to Kyoto and our hotel, arrival by 3:15pm. The remainder of the afternoon and evening is free to explore the area and enjoy shopping at its best. The Aeon Mall is just around the corner and across the road, the JR Kyoto Station offering many, many shops, and eateries.



Accommodations: Miyako Hotel Kyoto Hachijo  **free**

Day 4 – May 27th, 2022, Friday – Kyoto-Nagoya-Kyoto (B/L)

After breakfast, please meet your guide in the lobby by 8:30am. We are off to Nagoya for a fun filled day of touring. The morning begins with a bullet train ride on Nozomi 2 departing Kyoto at 9:01am and arriving at the Nagoya Station at 9:34am. We will be walking over the JR Kyoto Station and on arrival in Nagoya, be met by a bus and driver.

Welcome to Nagoya, the largest city in the Chūbu region of Japan. While it is known as the “middle child”, between Tokyo and Osaka, Nagoya is quite the cosmopolitan city offering great shopping, nightlife, dining, and a variety of top museums. With over two million inhabitants, it is Japan’s 4th most populated city. Come, let get out and explore!

Our touring day begins with a sightseeing bus tour of Nagoya’s highlights including the Sakae Area, the city’s main shopping and entertainment area, Nagoya TV Tower, and Hisaya Odori Park. A must viewing is Oasis 21, a shopping complex in the design of a spaceship, with a futuristic glass roof.

From here, a visit to Nagoya Castle, built in the beginning of the Edo Period as the seat of one of the three branches of the ruling Tokugawa family. It was one of the largest castles in the country, and the castle town around it ultimately grew to become Japan's fourth largest city.

Most of the castle buildings were destroyed in the air raids of 1945, including the castle keep and the palace buildings. The current ferro-concrete reconstruction of the castle keep dates from 1959 and - before its closure in May 2018 - contained a modern museum with exhibits about the castle's history. The park surrounding the castle keep features two circles of moats and impressive walls with corner turrets.

Next, a visit to Tokugawaen Garden, a traditional Japanese garden, literally, an oasis of green in the middle of Nagoya City. The garden began as a retirement villa for Mitsutomo, Lord of the Owari Tokugawa, complete with a lake large enough to accommodate a 16-oar boat. This lake, Ryusenko Lake forms the strolling garden’s centerpiece, which is also noted for its dramatic waterfalls, perfectly placed rock formations, delicate wooden bridges, a samurai tea house, restaurant and its peonies and irises. While the best viewing time is April and June, we might just luck out.

From here, a visit to Osu Shopping District, a popular shopping area with over 1,200 shops and restaurants. This covered arcade is filled with energy. We will be here for 2-hours so that you can enjoy leisurely shopping and lunch on your own.

Your guide will set a meeting spot for the short bus ride to Nagoya Station for our bullet train ride back to Kyoto. We are off on Nozomi 95, departing 4:32pm and arrives at the JR Kyoto Station at 5:06pm. We will walk across the street to our hotel and the remainder of the afternoon and evening is free.



Accommodations: Miyako Hotel Kyoto Hachijo  **free**

Day 5 – May 28th, 2022, Saturday – Kyoto-Nara-Kyoto (B)

After breakfast, please meet your guide in the lobby by 8:15am as we bid our good-byes to Kyoto and off on a full day of touring ending in Osaka.

Our morning begins with a short drive to Nara. If you think of Japan as a land of bullet trains and J-pop in Shinjuku storefronts, come to Nara—a city filled with rolling hills, ancient temples, and 1,200 entitled deer roaming its old streets.

Once here, we will be visiting Todaiji Temple and its Great Buddha (Daibutsu), Japan's largest bronze Buddha.

When Emperor Shomu ordered construction of both the temple and Daibutsu in the mid-700s, he intended to make Todaiji the headquarters of all Buddhist temples in the land. As part of his plans for a Buddhist utopia, he commissioned work for this huge bronze statue of Buddha. It took eight castings to complete this remarkable work of art. At a height of more than 15m (50 ft.), the Daibutsu is made of 437 tons of bronze, 286 pounds of pure gold, 165 pounds of mercury, and 7 tons of vegetable wax. However, thanks to Japan's frequent natural calamities, the Buddha of today isn't quite what it used to be. In 855, in what must have been a whopper of an earthquake, the statue lost its head. It was repaired in 861, but alas, the huge wooden building housing the Buddha was burned twice during wars, melting the Buddha's head. The present head dates from 1692.

Be sure to walk in a circle around the Great Buddha to see it from all angles. Behind the statue is a model of how the Daibutsuden used to look, flanked by two massive pagodas. Behind the Great Buddha to the right is a huge wooden column with a small hole in it near the ground. According to popular belief, if you can manage to crawl through this opening, you'll be sure to reach enlightenment. You can also get your English-language fortune for ¥200 by shaking a bamboo canister until a wooden stick with a number comes out; the number corresponds to a piece of paper.

The wooden structure housing the Great Buddha, called Daibutsuden, was also destroyed several times through the centuries; the present structure dates from 1709. It is the largest wooden structure in the world, but only two-thirds its original size.



Todaiji Temple with Great Buddha

From here, a visit to Higashimuki Shopping Street, in short, it is Nara's most important shopping street. This covered shopping arcade offers a wide selection of shops and restaurants. Enjoy free time here to shop, browse, and have lunch on your own.

At the entrance of the shopping street, there is Nara's most famous specialty, persimmon leaf sushi. It is basically bite size rice balls topped with salted mackerel and wrapped in a persimmon leaf. Each piece is then put into a wooden box and pressed with a heavy stone to ferment for a few days. The persimmon leaf adds a distinctive flavor to the sushi, so you can eat it as it is without any soy sauce. Persimmon leaf sushi is a perfect dish to casually eat outdoors.

This afternoon, we are off to visit the well-preserved Edo town of Imaicho. Laid out in a 2-kilometer grid, it is compact and easy to explore. You will find several hundred traditional houses and shops. The town once housed wealthy merchants. It is the only remaining town to have been fortified and surrounded by a moat with gates.

Enjoy free time to explore and take in the authentic period atmosphere. Some of the historic homes are open to the public and there are several original sake and soy sauce makers.

We are now off to Osaka, its real treasures are in the bustling street life in its arcades, markets, and byways. And Osaka really comes into its own at night, when locals come out for delicious eats and good times.

One last stop on our touring day, a visit to Namba Yasaka Shrine. It is one of Osaka's most distinctive places to worship. While the shrine itself isn't all that large, it's the 12-meter tall, 11-meter-wide lion head-shaped building that's the main draw here. Why a lion? Apparently, the huge open mouth will swallow any evil spirits plaguing you, leaving you only good luck for succeeding in business or school-related ventures.

Now, off to our hotel, Hotel Monterey Grasmere Osaka, ideally located in the heart of all the excitement you would expect from Osaka. We are literally steps from the Shinsaibashi Shopping Arcade and Dotonbori.

Our arrival will be by 4:30pm and after checking in, for those not familiar with the area, our guide will be available for a short walking tour.



Accommodations: Hotel Monterey Grasmere Osaka **free**

Day 6 – May 29th, 2022, Sunday – Osaka (B)

After breakfast at our hotel, enjoy a complete free day to shop until you drop, sightsee, and enjoy delicious foods.

Just around the corner from our hotel are probably the two most popular streets in all of Osaka, Shinsaibashi and Dotonbori. This is the city's most famous entertainment district and offers abundant dining and shopping choices.

Shinsaibashi's covered arcade shopping street has been Osaka's most important shopping area for 400 years, with hundreds of shops lining this 600-meter-long street. From huge department stores like Daimaru and flagship Uniqlo clothing stores to small independent boutiques, there is something for every shopper and every wallet on this street. There are also dozens of delicious restaurants and cafes hidden in the streets and the alleys leading just off it.

Close by is Amerikamura, also known as Amemura. With its American-style boutiques and shops, international bars, and low prices, Amemura is a popular hangout spot for trendy youths who like Western fashion and pop culture. Rather than the big-name brands found in Shinsaibashi or Midosuji, Amemura has indie boutiques and thrift stores that give it its quirky and lively reputation. Flea markets are sometimes set up on weekends and there are often street performances. This makes this a fun place to visit and hang out to experience the fusion of Japanese and Western culture.

And then there is the Dotonbori, the lively entertainment area and Osaka's most famous tourist destination and renowned for its gaudy neon lights, extravagant signage, and the enormous variety of restaurants and bars. This is one of the most colorful areas in Osaka and an absolute must-visit location when traveling through Kansai region.

The history of this area goes back to 1612 when a merchant by the name of Yasui Doton invested all his personal capital in an ambitious local development project. Doton's plan was to divert and expand the Umezu River into a new waterway that would link the local canal network with the Kizugawa River. Unfortunately, Doton's project was interrupted by war and he was killed during the Siege of Osaka in 1615. Later that same year, Doton's cousins completed his work, and, in his memory, the new canal was named Dotonbori or "Doton Canal".

Also, close by is Kuromon Market, with more than 190 years of history and tradition, this popular area is known by locals as "Gastronome" and "Osaka's Kitchen". All kinds of fresh food items are available at this market, fully satisfying the hunger of the people of Naniwa (Naniwa is the old name for this area).

Despite its sometime touristy feel, the 150 or so shops here still give you the sense of a local neighborhood market. Local folks in the area come here to do their shopping, buy their produce and fish, new clothes, shoes, and a variety of household items and gadgets. Enjoy free time here to explore.

Just about a block away is Doguyasuji Shopping Street, a 150-meter-long shopping arcade lined with specialty shops selling cookware, kitchen utensils and restaurant supplies. This arcade with its variety of appliances, tableware and cooking accessories provides an interesting counterpoint to Kuromon Market and can also be a good spot for picking up some unique souvenirs.

As you can see, there is quite a lot to see and do on this free day and the best is that it is just a walk from our hotel.

Enjoy your day!



The Famous Runner Neon



One of two Don Quijote stores




Ever popular Daiso



canal cruising



Accommodations: Hotel Monterey Grasmere Osaka  **free**

Day 7 – May 30th, 2022, Monday – Osaka-Kobe-Kansai (B/L)

After breakfast, please meet your guide in the lobby by 8:45am as we journey off to Kobe. The drive is approximately 1-hour. It's our last day on tour, but still much to see and do.

Kobe, perched on a hillside sloping down to the sea, one of Japan's most attractive and cosmopolitan cities. It was a maritime gateway from the earliest days of trade with China and home to one of the first foreign communities after Japan reopened to the world in the mid-19th century.

Our first stop is a visit to Glicopia Kobe, for a factory tour where you can learn, taste, and maybe purchase some of their latest additions of Pretz and Pocky. Their 3rd floor shop offers original items not available for purchase anywhere else.

Its lunch time and no visit to Kobe is complete without enjoying a Kobe beef lunch. Kobe beef is a special grade of beef from (Wagyu) cattle raised in Kobe, Japan. These cattle are massaged with sake and are fed a daily diet that includes large amounts of beer. This produces meat that is extraordinarily tender, finely marbled, and full-flavored. It is also extremely expensive, often costing more than \$100 per pound.

This afternoon, a visit to Kobe's sake district. While there are thousands of sake breweries in Japan, this area is known to make the best. The Nada district has about 40 breweries and produce nearly 30 percent of Japanese sake production.

The history of sake brewing in Nada dates to the 17th century and their methods have been passed down to the present day. The Great Hanshin Earthquake in 1995 destroyed most of the breweries' wooden facilities and new ones rebuilt. As a result, breweries have the appearance of concrete wall, but they maintain their traditional method of brewing in new buildings.

Many of the breweries in the area operate small museums offering a glimpse into its 600-year history, traditions, and methods of this ancient craft. You also will have the opportunity to find out what makes Nada sake so special — and to taste the difference.



Hakutsuru Sake Brewery Museum

We now make our way to the Kansai Airport, but not without a last-minute shopping stop at the Aeon Mall. The supermarket on the ground floor is a great place to pick up a freshly made dinner bento to enjoy at the airport.

Hawaiian Airlines #450 Departs Kansai 8:45 pm – Arrive Honolulu 9:45 am