

Join Panda Travel in...



# 2023 TOKYO FLOWERS AND OMIYAGE WEEKENDER TOUR

(GP12896)



April 18 - 24, 2023  
5 Nights/ 7 Days

Tokyo - Mt. Fuji

**\$100 OFF PER PERSON**  
when you pay with a personal check

**\$2899\***

per person-triple occupancy

**\$2899\***

per person-double occupancy

**\$3199\***

per single occupancy

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(808) 734-1961

1017 Kapahulu Ave, Honolulu, HI 96816

Cancel for any reason up to 60 days prior to departure date for a **FULL REFUND!**

**A minimum of 16 participants is required for the tour to operate**

# Itinerary

## Day 1: (Tue) Apr 18 – Honolulu Depart Honolulu 11:45am via Hawaiian Airlines #821

Please meet the Panda Travel representative **3 hours prior to departure** at the Hawaiian Airlines check-in counters located at Terminal 2, Lobby 4.

## Day 2: (Wed) Apr 19 – Narita-Tokyo

Sunshine City Prince Hotel (Free WiFi)

Arrive Narita at 4pm. After clearing customs, our English-speaking local guide will greet us at the arrival lobby. We'll then transfer to our hotel for the next 5 nights and the entirety of our trip.

With our anticipated early afternoon arrival, be sure to explore Ikebukuro, one of Tokyo's main subcenters.

There's a 24-hour Family Mart convenience store near the hotel lobby. Within a 5 min walk is Seiyu, a 24-hour supermarket with snacks, bentos, and beverages.

## Day 3: (Thu) Apr 20 - Tokyo (B)

Sunshine City Prince Hotel (Free WiFi)

After breakfast, please meet in the lobby by 8:30am.

The morning begins with a 1.5 hr visit to the annual **Peony Festival** at **Ueno Toshogu Shrine**, which commences in mid April and runs until the end of Golden Week. To the Japanese, peonies symbolize bravery and honor and are commonly seen in wedding decor for good fortune.

From here, we're off to Ueno, **Ameyoko Shopping Street**, the absolutely perfect place to get your omiyage. "Ameyoko" is short for "Ameya Yokocho" or "candy shop back alley" since candies were traditionally sold here. Alternatively, it is short for "America," a callback to the post WWII era when American products were sold there illegally. Now, the street is lined with over 400 shops selling cooked street food, snacks like dried squid, fresh seafood, clothes, bags, accessories, cosmetics, and much more!

Next, a stop at **Arcakit Kinshicho** – a shopping complex housing the largest Daiso (7/F) in Tokyo. This train station area offers many more shops (3Coins on 3/F), fashion, eating venues and supermarkets, just to name a few. Spend 1.5 hrs here to shop and enjoy lunch on your own.

Our last stop on today's tour is **Kameido Tenjin-jia Shrine**. This shrine is perhaps most recognizable for the picturesque Drum Bridge arched above a pond in its charming garden.

The shrine is also known for Fuji Matsuri, or the **Wisteria Festival**, which is celebrated from the end of April to the beginning of May. The shrine's many ponds reflect the 100s of wisteria plants in their full amethyst bloom, multiplying its beauty.

Often depicted in art, poetry, family crests, and formal kimonos, wisteria is held closely to the heart of the Japanese as it represents love and longevity. In fact, one of the most famous kabuki dances features the heroine, "Fuji Musume" (the Wisteria Maiden), gripping onto wisteria as a motif for love.

We'll return to our hotel by 4pm. The remainder of the day

is yours at leisure. Your local guide is available to assist you with any questions you might have.

## Day 4: (Fri) Apr 21 – Tokyo-Mt. Fuji-Tokyo (B/L)

Sunshine City Prince Hotel (Free WiFi)

After breakfast, please meet in the lobby by 8:00am as we are off to Mt. Fuji area.

We'll first experience the **Fuji Shibazakura Festival**.



Day 4 - Shibazakura

Unlike the classic sakura cherry blossoms that sway overhead, **Shibazakura** sprouts from the earth and blooms beneath your feet. We'll spend 2 hrs here to enjoy the luscious fields of color with endless rows of vibrant shades of pink, white, and light purple. There's also a variety of shops that offer specialty goods and local snacks.

After our **Japanese style lunch**, we'll visit the **Shingenmochi Factory**. The factory tour reveals the 6 sec approach to wrapping mochi, a rate at which they are able to produce 120,000 shingen mochi on a typical day.

Roll up your sleeves and get ready for a **hands-on experience**. With the motto "**Tsume houdai**," in mind, which translates into "**pack as much as you can**," use the plastic bag given to fill up as much mochi as you can muster.

Enjoy some time browsing through the souvenir shop with omiyage items, mochi flavored candies, biscuits, dorayaki, and roll cakes abound. Or perhaps snack on some shingen mochi ice cream.

We now begin our drive back to Tokyo, arriving at our hotel by 5:30pm. Enjoy the evening of shopping and dining on your own.

## Day 5: (Sat) Apr 22 – Tokyo (B)

Sunshine City Prince Hotel (Free WiFi)

After breakfast, please meet in the lobby by 9:30am.

Our morning begins at the iconic **Tsukiji Outer Market**, the largest fish market in the world and renowned bucketlist spot. While the inner auction market relocated in 2018, the charm remains in its outer market. With the 1.5 hours we spend here, be sure to enjoy all that the outer market has to offer, from seasonal produce and candy tasting to knife-making artisan shops.

We're now off to **Shibuya Scramble Square**. There, you'll find **Shibuya Sky**, an observatory offering a 360-degree view of



Day 5 - Tsukiji Outer Market

Tokyo (there's a special spot to see Mt. Fuji on a clear day!), and over 200 commercial outlets with restaurants, cafes, and shopping. The tower also overlooks the famous and ever busy intersection, **Shibuya Scramble Crossing**. With giant video screens and neon signs as a backdrop to several hundreds of people walking in all directions at every light change, this "scramble" of people is surely a site to witness.

Pay a visit to the famous **Hachiko Dog statue**. This obedient Akita patiently waited at Shibuya Station daily for his owner to return home from work. When his owner tragically died while at work in 1925, Hachikō continued to wait at the station every day for the next 10 years, never giving up hope. Hachikō is a Japanese icon and his statue memorializes his unwavering loyalty and love.

We'll return to the hotel by 5pm. Take the remainder of the day at leisure.

### Day 6: (Sun) Apr 23 – Tokyo-Full day at leisure (B)

Sunshine City Prince Hotel (Free WiFi)

After breakfast, enjoy your free day!

Our hotel lobby directly connects you to **Sunshine City**, a huge shopping and entertainment complex with 4 towers that include an aquarium, planetarium, solarium, a virtual reality play experience, and a nearly 788 foot high skyscraper with an observation deck—no wonder it's been called a "city within a city!"

You can also find the **Pokemon Center Mega Tokyo** on the 2nd floor of the Sunshine City Alpha complex, a mega shop with arcade games and limited-edition items including Pokemon-themed ramen and curry, stationary, and cookware.

Recharge from all the fun with a visit to **Namja Town**, where you can snack on famous gyozas from around Japan at the Namja Gyoza Stadium food theme park or experiment with 50 flavors of ice cream including avocado, crab, beef tongue at Dessert Alley. Namja town also has various carnival attractions like a haunted house, merry-go-round, and arcade games.

In addition to Sunshine City, there's **Tobu Department Store** and **Seibu Ikebukuro Flagship Store**. While Tobu offers UNIQLO and other apparel stores, along with over 40 restaurants, Seibu houses high-end brands like Hermes and Louis Vuitton and specialty goods stores like Loft and MUJI.

Seibu also has the **Kit-Kat Chocolatory** – the world's first Kit-Kat boutique. Don't miss your chance to try special and seasonal Kit-Kat flavors like purple potato, cinnamon cookie, european cheese, bean cake and wasabi-these

make for great gifts too!

Alternatively, **Ikebukuro station** is close by and has rail lines connecting you to other popular areas like **Shinagawa, Shibuya, Shinjuku, Ueno, and Akihabara**.

### Day 7: (Mon) Apr 24 – Tokyo-Narita (B)

After breakfast, please meet in the lobby by 9:45am. It's our last day on tour, but there's still much to see and do before our flight home later this evening.

Our morning begins with a visit to one of Tokyo's most unique shopping streets, **Sugamo Jizo Dori Shopping Street**.

Affectionately called "**Grandma's harajuku**," this half a mile arcade hosts over 200 shops that specialize in a variety of goods that seniors will especially appreciate. You'll find comfy shoes and clothes in droves, many at Takeshita-like bargain prices. There are brand-name goods here too!

As one might suspect, health-related products feature high on the shopping lists of the elderly and on **Jizo Dori**, you'll find at least 8 drugstores, 2 pharmacies, and 3 kampo apothecaries. Some stalls sell the latest and greatest in hearing aids, while others hawk designer walking canes. Try a cone of herbal ice cream while you're here!

But Jizo Dori is not just for our sweet seniors. Snack on popular shio-daifuku—rice balls with sweet red bean paste and a sprinkle of salt—while you peruse through plentiful Japanese confectionaries, rice crackers, green tea, and cooking ingredients.

**Sugamo** is also best-known for aka-pantsu (red underwear). Not only is the red color supposed to improve the wearer's health and vigor, but it's also believed to ward off evil spirits and bring happiness. Other notable stores are **Sugi Yohoen**, which stocks dozens of honeys, jams and juices, nihonshu (sake) infused with ginger, and **Chirimen**, which features modern takes on furoshiki cloths and yukata, wallets, coffee mugs, and other everyday items.

Stroll around this unique area and experience the city of old in Sugamo.

From here, we'll explore all of Japan without having to leave Tokyo at the **antenna shops in Yurakucho**. To promote tourism and share their cultures, local prefectures like Okinawa, Hokkaido, and Osaka have set up these retail stores to showcase their region's food, craft, and other specialties. Enjoy free time to explore and have lunch on your own.

Now, off to Narita Airport and begin the check in process for our flight home.

**Depart Narita 7:55pm via Hawaiian Airlines #822.**

**Arrive in Honolulu at 8:10am.**

**Thank you for traveling with us!** 

Please note the following:

- **\*Fares and fees** (priced in USD) are subject to change in light of fuel supplements, taxes, and fees. Tour members are responsible for any differences in costs. Additionally, we reserve the right to make changes to the itinerary with or without notice.
- **Travel insurance:** We highly recommend the purchase of trip insurance. Please ask our representatives for more information.
- **Special Assistance:** You must inform us of any disability/impairment that requires special attention at the time of your making the reservation. We reserve the right to cancel the reservation(s) if the disability/impairment is unsuitable for the tour. You are also responsible for any costs and/or accommodations related to your disability/impairment, such as providing your own travel companion.
- All U.S. citizens must hold a valid passport at the time of travel, which includes a passport that will not expire at least within 6 months from the return tour date. Non-U.S. passport holders must check with the Japanese Consulate to see if a visa is required.
- You are expected to abide by domestic and international government and accommodation policies related to health, safety, and welfare.
- Land Tour Operator is Nippon Travel Agency.
- Land Tour costs are based on current currency conversion rates, which are subject to change. We will notify tour members of any substantial changes to the costs.
- Not Included in the tour: Gratuities for local English speaking guide; additional baggage fee charges from the airlines; alcohol and soft drinks with meals.
- A **minimum of 16 participants** are required for the tour to operate.

Booking requirements/Payment policy/Cancellation policy:

- **Reserve with \$75 per person deposit. Refundable up to 60 days prior to departure, February 17, 2023.**
- **Final payment due by March 1, 2023. Package is non-refundable after this date.**