

Join Panda Travel in...



2024 Cherry Blossoms in Tokyo and Beyond

(GP13032)



March 25 - April 2, 2024
7 Nights/ 9 Days

*Utsunomiya - Nikko - Hitachinaka -
Tokyo - Kawagoe - Kamakura*

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

\$3,782*

per person-triple occupancy

\$3,782*

per person-double occupancy

\$4,482*

single occupancy

pandaonline.com

(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: (Mon) Mar 25 – Honolulu Depart Honolulu via Hawaiian Airlines

→ Meet the Panda Travel representative 3 hours prior to departure at the Hawaiian Airlines check-in counters.

Day 2: (Tue) Mar 26 – Haneda-Tokyo Asakusa View Hotel (Free WiFi)

→ Arrive at Haneda Airport. Meet your guide at the arrival lobby. We'll transfer to Asakusa View Hotel, our accommodations for the night.

Day 3: (Wed) Mar 27 – Tokyo-Utsunomiya-Nikko (B/L/D) Nikko Kanaya Hotel (Free WiFi)

→ Breakfast at hotel.

→ 8:15am – Meet your guide at the hotel lobby for a full day tour to Nikko.

→ 10:30am – Built on an old mining site that once served as a major source of wealth in the area, the **Oya History Museum** showcases the history and mining operations of Oya stone. Visitors can explore vast underground caverns resembling the ruins of ancient Rome, with colorful lights and art installations enhancing the experience. These caverns have frequently been used as locations for movies, music videos, and theater performances.

→ 11:30am – Nearby is **Ooyaji Temple**, a 1,200 years old

site dedicated to Kannon, the Buddhist goddess of mercy. The temple holds Japan's oldest Buddhist carvings, a small garden, and a treasure hall with ancient relics. Across the street stands a colossal **statue of Kannon**, serving as a statement of peace after WWII.

→ 12:30pm – Enjoy Japanese style lunch at a local restaurant. Welcome to **Nikko**: an ancient city adorned with moss-covered stone walls and bright red lanterns. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is famous for its rich nature, sacred sites, and historical ties to the Tokugawa Shogunate, boasting 103 religious buildings set amidst picturesque surroundings.

→ 2:15pm – Our afternoon begins with a fun **strawberry picking experience** at Nikko Strawberry Park. The farm also features a shop selling a diverse selection of products from Tochigi prefecture.

→ 3:30pm – Here on the grounds of **Toshogu Shrine**, a grand memorial to legendary samurai leader and founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate, Tokugawa Ieyasu. Set against a forest of green, the shrine's complex includes over a dozen opulently decorated buildings embellished with gold leaf and etched with countless wood carvings. Particularly notable carvings are the "see no evil, speak no evil, and hear no evil" trio of monkeys, the alluring Sozonozo elephants ("imagined elephants"), and the Nemuri-neko ("Sleeping Cat") wood carving nestled at the top of the Sakashita-mon Gate. Another well known site is the two story Yomeimon Gate ("Sunlight Gate") with over 500 wood carvings. The park's **cherry trees** add extra beauty and tranquility to this historic space.

→ 5:15pm – Arrive at **Nikko Kanaya Hotel**, and a western style dinner will be served at 6:30pm. Perched on a hill above the Sacred Bridge, our hotel has an incredibly rich history and is without a doubt, Nikko's most famous hotel. In addition to providing lodging for VIPs like US President Ulysses Grant in 1879, architect Frank Lloyd Wright in 1905, Albert Einstein in 1922, and Helen Keller in 1937, this hotel is centrally located to many spectacular shrines and temples.

Day 4: (Thu) Mar 28 – Nikko-Hitachinaka-Tokyo (B) Sunshine City Prince Hotel (Free WiFi)

→ Breakfast at hotel.

→ 8:30am – Meet your guide at the hotel lobby.

→ 10:00am – This morning, a visit to **Hitachi Seaside Park**! The park is home to a breathtaking array of flowers all year round. In spring, the park is decorated with floral carpets of narcissuses and nemophila. During the **cherry blossom season**, visitors can find an especially enchanting backdrop to what many photography enthusiasts regard as a must-visit spot.

→ **12:00pm** – Enjoy lunch on your own at the bustling **Nakaminato Fish Market**, famous for its fresh catches of the day, offering a wide variety of delicious seafood, from succulent fish and shellfish to delectable crab and shrimp.

→ **2:00pm** – This afternoon, we'll explore the **Museum of Umeshu and Sake Bessyun-kan**, where you can dive into the world of umeshu (plum wine) and sake. Uncover the rich history, traditional brewing techniques, and diverse flavors of these beloved Japanese alcoholic beverages in this museum.

→ **3:30pm** – Now to enjoy **Kairakuen Garden**, one of the three great gardens of Japan, renowned for its stunning plum blossom display during the early spring season. Additionally, the plum trees in the garden are also known for producing high-quality plums, which are often used to make umeshu.

→ **6:15pm** – **Arrive at Sunshine City Prince Hotel**. Our hotel is directly connected to Sunshine City shopping center with many shopping and dining options available to you. Nearby, you'll also find a 24-hr Family Mart convenience store and a Seiyu supermarket for snack, bento, and beverage pickups.

Day 5: (Fri) Mar 29 – Tokyo-Kawagoe-Tokyo (B/L)

Sunshine City Prince Hotel (Free WiFi)

→ **Breakfast at hotel.**

→ **8:30am** – **Meet your guide at the hotel lobby for a full-day tour to Kawagoe**, where you'll step back in time and experience the charm of old Japan in this former castle town. Discover Edo-style buildings, traditional architecture, vibrant festivals, and the birthplace of the iconic Kitsune mask (fox mask).

→ **9:15am** – Opened in 2010, **Bonsai Art Museum** is the world's first publicly run museum dedicated to bonsai art. It boasts a splendid collection of over 100 bonsai masterpieces and works inspired by bonsai culture. Most of the museum's bonsai can be found in the large courtyard, with grander displays than its indoor counterparts.

→ **11:00am** – On our next visit, **Hikawa Shrine**, which boasts a history of approximately 1500 years, enshrines five deities. Among these deities, two are considered married couples, traditionally revered for bestowing 'matrimonial happiness,' 'happiness in the family,' and acting as a 'deity of matchmaking.' The cherry blossoms at the rear of Hikawa Shrine are renowned as one of Kawagoe's most celebrated **cherry blossom spots**.

→ **12:00pm** – Enjoy a **hands-on Daruma painting** workshop, creating a personalized memento to take home. With roots in Buddhism, Fuku-Daruma ("Daruma") is a well-known Japanese good-luck charm, inspiring perseverance and warding off evil. Traditionally, one paints the left eye to make a wish or set a goal, and the right eye is painted

when the wish or goal is fulfilled. The one-eyed doll serves as emotional support and a motivating reminder to keep moving forward.

→ **1:15pm** – **Enjoy Japanese style lunch at a local restaurant.**

→ **2:15pm** – Here we're at **Koedo Kurari**, a nationally registered Tangible Cultural Property with rich historic roots, which will introduce us to a celebrated brewing facility. The site now houses a souvenir shop, a cafe, and a sake tasting room where visitors can sample sake from 30+ breweries strewn across the Saitama prefecture.

→ **3:00pm** – Now, take a **stroll in Kawagoe** or "Little Edo." Enjoy free time to browse, shop, and explore this former castle town, with its preserved Kurazukuri (clay-walled warehouses) and other historic buildings surrounding. A tip: visit the iconic Starbucks on Kanetsuki Dori Street. Located in an old warehouse, this iconic spot has become world famous and the best example of traditional meets modern.

→ **5:00pm** – **Return to hotel**. The remainder of the evening is yours at leisure.

Day 6: (Sat) Mar 30 – Tokyo (B)

Sunshine City Prince Hotel (Free WiFi)

→ **Breakfast at hotel.**

→ **8:30am** – **Meet your guide at the hotel lobby.**

→ **9:00am** – Our day begins with a visit to **Tsukiji Outer Market**. A renowned bucketlist spot, Tsukiji is the largest fish market in the world. While the inner auction market relocated to Toyosu in 2018, the charm remains in its outer market. Be sure to enjoy all that the outer market has to offer, from seasonal produce and candy tasting to knife-making artisan shops.

→ **11:00am** – We'll now visit the brand new **Toyosu Senkyaku Banrai**. Scheduled to open its doors in Feb 2024 and inspired by the historic streets of Tokyo, this Edo themed multi-story shopping and entertainment center treats visitors to a diverse selection of retail outlets, as well as eateries featuring specialty foods like Toyosu's signature fresh seafood and produce.

→ **1:00pm** – Next stop, **Ueno & Ameyoko Shopping Street**, the ideal place to find omiyage. "Ameyoko" is short for "Ameya Yokocho" or "candy shop back alley" since candies were traditionally sold there. 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 from cooked street food, snacks like dried squid, and fresh seafood to clothes, bags, accessories, cosmetics, and much more!

→ **2:45pm** – This afternoon, we will visit **Ueno Park**, famous for its breathtaking **cherry blossoms**. With approximately 1,200 cherry trees adorning this 133-acre park, it attracts an estimated 2 million visitors who come to enjoy the **beauty**

of cherry blossom viewing while picnicking under the trees and appreciating the natural splendor along the pathways.

→ **4:30pm – Return to hotel.** Enjoy the evening of shopping and dining on your own.

Day 7: (Sun) Mar 31 – Tokyo (B)

Sunshine City Prince Hotel (Free WiFi)

→ **Breakfast at hotel.**

→ **9:00am – Meet your guide at the hotel lobby for a full day tour in Tokyo.**

→ **9:30am** – Our day begins with a stroll through **Meiji Jingu Shrine**, a Shinto shrine built in 1920 to honor Emperor Meiji, the first emperor of modern Japan, and his wife, Empress Shoken. Nestled in a forest with muffled sounds of the bustling city in the near distance, Meiji Jingu Shrine first welcomes visitors with an enormous wooden torii gate. While exploring the vast grounds, you'll find over 200 sake and wine barrels, gifted by famous breweries from across Japan as sacred offerings to Emperor Meiji. The display also features wine barrels from France, a tribute to the emperor's affection for wine and promotion of Western culture during the Meiji period. Enhanced by the presence of cherry blossoms, this location offers a perfect setting for **cherry blossom viewing**.

→ **10:45am** – Now, it's time to indulge in **Harajuku & Takeshita Dori**, the vibrant heart of all things trendy and eccentric. Beyond its colorful street art and youth-driven quirky fashion culture, this area is a delightful haven for sweets, including gigantic cotton candy, crepes, and cream puffs. Enjoy lunch on your own, and don't miss the multi-story Daiso nearby for some shopping fun.

→ **1:00pm** – This afternoon, we'll explore **Asakusa**, a famous district that melds the culture and traditions of ancient Tokyo with the metropolitan styles of modern Japan. It's also home to Japan's first cinema! Widely regarded as the most important temple in Japan, Asakusa's iconic **Sensoji Temple** and **Kaminarimon Gate** (aka "Thunder Gate") with its massive lantern are a "must see" in every guidebook, boasting over 30 million annual visitors. Traditionally, as a sign of respect, visitors clap twice and bow their heads at the top of the temple steps. With the belief that coins trap the dangers of daily life, visitors also customarily make a small offering by tossing coins into a wooden rack, tossing away those dangers as well.

→ You'll also find the **Five Storied Pagoda** there. Regarded as one of the "Four Edo Pagodas," this nearly 174 foot monument stands to represent Tokyo's few remaining pagodas. The temple grounds also include the **Nakamise Shopping Arcade**, a lively and extensive shopping street lined with good luck charms, traditional goodies, and Japanese snacks.

→ **2:45pm** – Located along the picturesque Sumida River, **Sumida Park** is a charming spot for **cherry blossom viewing**, with the iconic Tokyo Skytree as a backdrop. With over 500 cherry trees that bloom in late March, the park stands as one of the city's most renowned hanami spots.

→ **4:30pm – Return to hotel.** Enjoy the evening at leisure!

Day 8: (Mon) Apr 1 – Tokyo-Free day at leisure (B)

Sunshine City Prince Hotel (Free WiFi)

→ **Breakfast at hotel.**

→ **The day is yours to explore Tokyo!**

Day 9: (Tue) Apr 2 – Tokyo-Kamakura-Haneda-Honolulu (B)

→ **Breakfast at hotel.**

→ **9:00am – Meet your guide at the hotel lobby.**

→ **10:30am** – Our morning starts with a visit to the **Great Buddha at Kotokuin Temple**. This mountainous bronze Amida Buddha stands nearly 38 feet tall, making it the 2nd tallest bronze Buddha in Japan. Despite being exposed in the open air since 1495, the statue remains beautifully adorned and well-preserved. For a small donation, visitors can enter the Buddha and experience what many regard as Japan's National Treasure. And while you're there, don't miss the opportunity to enjoy **cherry blossom viewing** in the serene surroundings of the temple.

→ **12:00pm** – Explore and grab lunch on your own on the **Komachi-dori shopping street**. Be sure to stop by Kamakura's famous cookie store for a sample. They're best known for their dove-shaped butter cookies, which make for a great Kamakura souvenir and omiyage gift.

→ **2:45pm** – Now, we're at **Lazona Kawasaki**, a shopping arcade with more than 300 shops, offering a variety of options, including Daiso, fashion boutiques, and eating venues. Enjoy some last-minute shopping!

→ **Depart from Haneda via Hawaiian Airlines for our flight home.**

→ **Arrive in Honolulu (same day).**

Thank you for traveling with us!



Need to Know...



Payment Policy

- » Reserve with **\$75 per person deposit. Refundable up to 60 days prior to departure date, January 25, 2024.**
- » **Final payment due by February 6, 2024. Package is non-refundable after this date.**

* Fares and Fees (Priced in USD)

- » Are subject to change in light of fuel supplements, taxes, and differences in costs.
- » Air ticket fare is guaranteed, but taxes, fees, and fuel surcharges are subject to change until tickets are issued, approximately 45 days out.
- » We reserve the right to make changes to the itinerary with or without notice.



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.



Travel Insurance

- » We highly recommend the purchase of trip insurance. Please ask our representatives for more information.



Travel Documents

- » A valid passport is required for all U.S. citizens and must be valid and not expire at least 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.



Land Tour Operator & Costs

- » Land Tour Operator is Nippon Travel Agency.
- » Land Tour costs are based on current currency conversion rates, which are subject to change.



Other remarks

- » 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.
- » You are expected to abide by domestic and international government and accommodation policies related to health, safety, and welfare.