

Japan Pre-Departure Journey Information

We are delighted you have decided to join our journey and want you to know we will do everything possible to make it a pleasant and rewarding experience for you.

This is a custom program hosted by **Dold World Journeys**, created by **Bobby Chinen Tours (BCT)** and operated by **Nippon Travel Agency**. Bobby, formerly with Sus Tomita Travel, has been leading tours to Japan for over 30 years.

Alex Dold will be your host, and he will be accompanied by Michi Goto, Japanese National Guide.

At this stage we would like to give you some information that will help you prepare for your trip—after all, the excitement of getting ready for any journey is a good part of the fun that comes with travel. We know there are many, many questions in your mind. We will try to answer the basic ones in this flyer. If there is anything else you want to know, please contact Alex. Communicating can easily clarify many things and avoid misunderstandings later.

What kinds of documents do I need?

You need a **PASSPORT** that is valid past **August 2018**, with at least 2 **blank** visa pages (amendment *pages do not count as visa pages*). While traveling you should carry your passport with you. If city sightseeing leave it in the hotel safe; never leave it in your suitcase.

U.S. citizens do not need a **tourist visa** for Japan. If your passport is from another country, please contact (email or call 808 732-9430) us right away, since different regulations may apply.

If you **do not** have a passport, apply for it as soon as possible. You can apply at most major post offices, public libraries, and the University of Hawaii. To find a location nearest you and download passport application forms online visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports.html>.

You can **only apply** for a passport at the Honolulu Passport Agency in the Prince Kuhio Federal Building if you have less than **two weeks** to departure or need a tourist visa. Phone 1-877-487-2778 for an appointment.

Kapiolani Community College’s Passport Acceptance Office accepts ONLY first-time applicants and minors under age of 16. The people there are friendly, helpful, and knowledgeable, and they can also

provide passport photos on-site. Please contact them at (808) 734-9258 or <http://www.kapiolani.hawaii.edu/project-u-s-passport-office/>.

When applying the following are required: The proper application; Evidence of U.S. citizenship—a valid passport, certified birth certificate or naturalization papers; Photo identification—a driver’s license or State/Military/Student I.D. card; Photocopy of the ID document you are presenting; Applicable fee of \$135 is payable by credit card, personal checks (two), cash, or money orders; and One passport photo. Allow about six weeks for processing.

For renewals the following are required: The proper renewal application, your old passport (issued within 15 years and when you were at least 16 years old at the time of issue); Applicable fee of \$110; and One passport photo. Allow about six weeks for processing.

All passport photos must be taken within six months of application. Some places to take passport photos are Costco, SAM’s Club, or Longs.

For more information on Passport applications, check on the Internet or contact us.

At all times it is important we have the correct spelling of your full name and address and your telephone number. We need these for documentation and correspondence. Should you note any errors or deviations on our part in this respect, please notify us immediately.

Do I have to get any shots?

Currently there are **no vaccinations** required for Japan. We **strongly suggest** that you talk with your own physician about any trip. If your doctor is unfamiliar with foreign destinations, then consider visiting a travel clinic like Straub, Queen’s Medical, or Kaiser or Weinstein Pharmacy. Travel Clinics are a wealth of great medical information and very reasonable in cost. It might even be covered by your health insurance.

What if I need special assistance on tour?

If you have any type of special circumstance regarding your health and/or mobility, please advise us as soon as possible so we can inform Nippon Travel Agency. Dold World Journeys and BCT will make reasonable



attempts to accommodate the needs of disabled travelers but are not responsible in the event we are unable to do so.

Enjoying your visit to Japan requires a good amount of physical fitness. Walks through parks, museums, temples, and other historic sites can be lengthy and uneven. As an equal member of this group, you should be in reasonably good health and able to manage walking, dining, getting on and off motorcoaches and other vehicles, and taking care of any other personal needs independently. A qualified and physically able companion must accompany travelers who require such assistance and must assume full responsibility of their well being. Of course, Alex and our local guide are there to assist you, but under normal circumstances their primary job is taking care of everyone in the group.

Also, the Americans with Disabilities Act is only applicable within the United States, and facilities (including wheelchair ramps and special bathroom features) for disabled individuals are often limited or non-existent abroad.

What if I get sick on tour?

There are excellent doctors and hospitals to be found throughout Japan. Our local guide, hotel front desk, and/or local representative will see to it that you are well taken care of.

If you are taking drugs under a physician's orders, have the **container clearly labeled** and carry a copy of the prescription with you at all times. Carry medicines in your hand luggage. You should also get a clean bill of health from your doctor before you go. If you wear eyeglasses, take an extra pair.

Medical insurance policies vary widely, and you may or may not be covered by your policies when abroad. Many policies do cover travel overseas but with specific limits. Medicare and Medicaid do not cover expenses outside of the United States. It is wise to review your policies or check with your insurance agent to be sure.

What about baggage and clothing?

The best advice is "if in doubt, leave it out." Due to the limited capacity on the motorcoach, you may only bring one bag per person. It is highly recommended you bring a suitcase **you can handle**. The dimensions *should be* a maximum 62 linear inches, and your bag cannot weigh more than **50 pounds**. Portage for this bag is included in the journey's price. If the suitcase exceeds the established weight and/or dimensions, an additional charge will be collected by the local guide and/or airline carrier.

Carry-on bags should not exceed the dimensions of 9" x 14" x 22". Carry-on bags with wheels will not be allowed in motorcoaches, but stored with suitcases. A few other things which you will probably find

convenient are: toothbrush, toothpaste, hand sanitizer, bacterial wipes, small sewing kit, band aids, your favorite cold and headache remedy, **washcloth** (many hotels **do not** provide washcloths, only towels), spray spot remover, laundry suds which are pre-packaged for travel, and a travel alarm clock. Put toiletries in plastic cases and then in plastic Ziploc bags for double protection against leaks. Plastic bags come in handy for many things, including damp laundry and washcloths.

Remember to pack your birthday suit for the **onsen**!

What will the weather be like?

It will be cold! Make sure you protect your body from the top of your head to the tips of your toes. It's important to protect your ears. **BUT remember if you add a lot of layer and drink warm beverages you will end up in long lines at the toilet, especially the women.** For most of our program we will be **indoors**.

The daily temperatures on this journey will average 38°. The warmest city will likely be Tokyo, around 57°, and the nights are normally around 25°. Remembering it will be cold, people will only see you in your jacket.

When you are planning your wardrobe, remember there is no guarantee of average temperatures; it may be warmer or colder than normal. The **layered look** is the easiest way to prepare for seasonal weather and still travel light. Wash-and-wear clothes are the most practical.

One or two pairs of comfortable walking shoes are a must. Preferably water proof with good grip. NTA will provide us with **Shoe Snow Grips**. Allow enough underwear and socks so that daily laundry is not necessary. A warm jacket will be useful.

Traveling light is recommended. You might want to bring something a little nicer for the evenings, but it is not required. Pullover sweaters are comfortable and always smart looking.

What about valuables, cameras, and film?

Leave anything with you that will create an emotional or financial hardship if lost or stolen at home (extra credit cards and keys, as well as favorite or expensive jewelry). It's that simple. Your cash and any valuables you cannot live without should be carried on you (inside pocket, or money belt). Do not put them in your suitcase or travel bag. **A money belt is highly recommended.**

Bring plenty memory cards and batteries, since these are usually more expensive overseas. Remember to keep an eye on your valuables at all times and keep items (like your passport) in the room safe.

What additional expenses will I have?

Hotel accommodations and taxes, airfare, entrance fees to the attractions featured in the itinerary, most meals, and portage are included in the program's price. Additional expenses include (but are not limited to) op-

tional excursions, additional meals, tips to the local guides and bus drivers, and souvenirs you are planning to buy. Japan is considered a non-tipping country, but tips to the bus driver who takes us through our journey and the national guide who takes care of us would be appreciated. Please see our General Conditions found on the back of the itinerary for more details.

Our supplemental information sheet lists the additional expenses for your tour. These costs, of course, will vary from person to person. You can do your journey for less or the sky can be the limit. These figures should be used as a guideline only.

It is best to pay for your additional expenses with Japanese Yen. You can purchase yen at places like First Hawaiian Bank, Bank of Hawaii, or Paradise Foreign Exchange. Call around and check who has the best rate. It is important to reserve your yen over the phone. On tour you can acquire yen with U.S. cash. Your credit card will give you the best exchange rate, but it will not be accepted everywhere. Be sure to call your credit card company and let them know you will be using your card overseas. The expiration date on your credit card must be good for at least 1 month after the date of your return from the tour.

May I use electrical appliances?

Japan's electrical system runs at 100 Volts. You need to check if the electrical appliance you want to use can adjust to 100. Japanese outlets are similar to our American standard, except some Japanese outlets are not polarized (one blade slightly longer than the other). If you need to use your appliance every day, you should get a multi region adapter plug. Both converters and adapters can be found at shops where they sell luggage. The majority of hotels on this journey do provide *hair dryers* and *hot pots*.

What about Customs?

Group participants are usually passed through customs in foreign countries without formality, but you must be prepared to open your baggage for inspection at any time. Be prepared to itemize your currency, alcohol, tobacco products, and film, and answer all questions truthfully. Generally, there is no objection to reasonable amounts of any item for personal use.

Technically, if you have any foreign-made article that you purchased on a previous trip or in the U.S., such as cameras, watches, or jewelry, register them with the U.S. Customs Office in downtown Honolulu. Otherwise, they could be subject to duty on your return. In other words, you must prove prior possession.

As a resident of the United States, you are entitled to an exemption of \$800 for the articles you bring back. The \$800 exemption may not be claimed if you have used the exemption, or any part of it, within the preceding 30 day period, but a \$200 exemption may apply. The only limitations are liquor and tobacco. No more than 200 cigarettes (one carton) and 100 cigars may be included in your exemption. One liter (33.8 fl. oz.) of alcoholic beverages may be brought to the U.S. duty free, if you are 21 years of age or older and if it is not in violation of the laws of the state in which you arrive. Anything in excess of these limits is subject to duty and tax.

On our return flight to the United States you will clear customs at our port of entry. The flight attendant will distribute Customs declaration forms for you to complete. For this purpose it is a good idea to keep a record of your purchases.

May I deviate from the tour?

Yes, you can change your flights as you desire, the question will be how much will it cost? We are only able to offer you the group's air schedule. If you wish to deviate from these flights, then you'll be purchasing a Land Only package from us. We'd be happy to refer you to Sara at ES International. She is the agent that will be issuing our group's airlines tickets. You can reach her at 808-596-0490.

When you deviate from the group, keep in mind there may be charges for any changes made after the cancellation deadline (normally

180 to 120 days prior to departure; please refer to the General Conditions page of your brochure). Once we issue your airline tickets, they are **non-refundable**, and the airlines will charge **fees** for any changes.

We suggest you discuss this with us soon as possible because there is a *limit on the number* of deviations and land only seats we can sell per tour.

What about seat assignments?

Once everyone in the group has made **full payment**, we send all the names to the airlines for seat allocation. *The airlines have full control of all seats.*

We do everything we can to place spouses together with one of them sitting in an aisle. For roommates we request as many aisle seats as we can and strive to put roommates close to each other. If you would like to request a window seat or be seated next to your roommate with only one of you in the aisle, please let us know before the **final payment deadline**. These re-



quests can never be guaranteed, but we will do our best. Window seats and aisle seats are very limited. [Please DO NOT change your own seat assignment. You will jeopardize the groups seats. Call Alex.](#)

It is not possible for you to use mileage to upgrade your seats on our group tickets. Please feel free to call us for more information.

If you are a United Airlines MileagePlus Premier member (Silver, Gold, Platinum, or 1K), please let us know **before** you make your final payment so we can try to accommodate you in Economy Plus seating.

When will we make final payment?*

Your invoice is included in this mailing, and final payment is due no later than 65 days prior. Please read the refund and cancellation clause under Terms and Conditions carefully so there will be no misunderstanding.

Since this is a custom program, we can only accept **checks** for the land payment. (We based our Japan price on 110 yen to the dollar.)

Should I take out insurance?

Insurance for Trip Cancellation and Medical Emergency is strongly recommended and costs little. With the strict cancellation charges the airlines impose upon us, it is important to insure against these cancellation charges, plus loss of money and personal accident.

You will find an insurance policy online or we can send you one. Look it over and discuss it with us. It is best to purchase this insurance with your deposit to be covered for any pre-existing conditions. **Your last chance to purchase it is with final payment.** It is better to be safe than sorry.

When do I get my documents?*

At least three weeks prior to departure we will have a get-together where we will brief you once more, answer your questions, and give you some tour documents. You will receive a sufficient supply of hotel lists and flight schedules to leave with relatives and friends and a final itinerary. We will send you an invitation to this meeting. If you are unable to attend, we will mail your documents to you. Once we arrive in Tokyo we will receive a detailed itinerary (with all the times).

Before departure...

You should tell the local police and neighbors that your house or apartment will be vacant. Stop mail and newspaper deliveries or they will be piling up outside your door. Arrange for the care of Scooby your dog, Garfield your cat, and all your plants. Turn off the gas and water, and disconnect all electrical appliances, especially the television set. Buy a timer in a local hardware store and arrange a lamp in a strategic place to be

turned on at sunset and off at midnight. Make sure everything is locked. Leave a set of house and car keys, plus an itinerary, with a relative or trusted friend. It is also a good idea to make sure your insurance policies are up to date.

And a final word...

Travel at all times is an intensely rewarding experience. It is also a very personal experience. We all see the same things, but we react differently to them, depending upon our background, nature, and personality; therefore, what is absorbed, remembered, or treasured varies from individual to individual.

Much work has gone into the planning and operating of your itinerary. The program has a great spiritual value, will be lots of fun, and will provide you with memories to last a lifetime.

If you love travel, enjoy being with people, and love to explore the mysteries of faraway places, you will have an absolutely wonderful time. Yet group tour travel is not for everybody; it requires understanding. There are literally hundreds of components that make up a complete tour package, and some people find it difficult to adjust to the occasional discomfiting situation, which arises when you travel through vastly different regions having different lifestyles. Travel abroad also requires a pleasant tolerance of different customs, habits, and living standards. It necessitates agreeable acceptance of foreign conditions, accommodations, service, and most of all, people for what they are and not for what we would like them to be. All generalizations and preconceptions are excess baggage. They are like blinders and should be shed. If you travel with an open mind, you will gain much better insight into the various aspects of life abroad, and you will have a far richer experience.

Let us assure you we will make every conceivable effort to make sure you have an exciting tour.



“There is a great moment when you see, however distant—the goal of your wandering. The thing which has been living in your imagination suddenly becomes a part of the tangible world.” ~ Freya Stark