# Itinerary

## 18 Day South Korea & Japan Small Group Tour

***IMPORTANT NOTE: Any extra nights, optional tours or other amendments, will not be visible on this itinerary.**

### Day 1: Arrive Seoul

Welcome to South Korea! Your journey begins in the vibrant South Korean capital of Seoul, a fascinating city where centuries of royal heritage blend seamlessly with modern architecture, bustling neighbourhoods and contemporary culture. Upon arrival, you will be warmly welcomed and transferred privately to your hotel, with porterage assistance provided for a smooth and comfortable arrival. The remainder of the day is yours to relax and settle in. Take time to unwind after your journey, enjoy the hotel facilities or simply soak up the atmosphere of this remarkable city as you prepare for the exciting experiences ahead.
**MEALS:** Nil

**OVERNIGHT:**Ibis Styles Ambassador Seoul Yongsan

### Day 2: Seoul Day Tour

Today, discover the fascinating history and traditions of Seoul, a city where royal dynasties, scholars and artisans have shaped Korea's rich cultural identity. Begin at the National Museum of Korea, home to an impressive collection of artefacts and treasures that tell the story of the Korean peninsula through the centuries. Enjoy a traditional Korean welcome lunch, sampling authentic flavours inspired by the country's culinary heritage. Afterwards, visit the magnificent Gyeongbokgung Palace, the largest of Seoul's Five Grand Palaces. Step back in time as you get the chance to dress in traditional hanbok and wander through the beautiful courtyards and royal grounds. Continue to Seokpajeong Pavilion, a peaceful retreat nestled among forested hills, once enjoyed as a place of rest and reflection. Later, explore the charming streets of Insadong, known for its traditional teahouses, art galleries, antique shops and hidden laneways. Enjoy a traditional Korean tea and sweets experience while soaking up the atmosphere of this historic neighbourhood.
**MEALS:**Breakfast, Lunch

**OVERNIGHT:**Ibis Styles Ambassador Seoul Yongsan

### Day 3: Seoul Free Day

Enjoy a relaxing day at leisure in Seoul, with time to explore the city at your own pace. Browse the local shops, discover neighbourhood cafés, or simply make the most of the hotel's facilities. For those looking to experience more of Korean culture, an optional cultural activity offers a hands-on introduction to Korea's much-loved food traditions. Enjoy an opportunity to learn about local ingredients, traditional techniques and the flavours that have shaped Korean cuisine.

**OPTIONAL TOUR:** Cultural Experience: Traditional liquor tasting and crafting session • Korean BBQ lunch with classic side dishes • Traditional rice-cake making workshop

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** Ibis Styles Ambassador Seoul Yongsan

## Day 4: Seoul ~ Busan

Leave Seoul behind today as you travel south through Korea's changing landscapes of river valleys, countryside and traditional villages. Arrive in Andong, known for its rich cultural heritage and Confucian traditions, and visit Hahoe Folk Village, a UNESCO World Heritage Site where traditional houses, tiled rooftops and village lanes offer a glimpse into Korea's past. Enjoy a walk through the village and experience its distinctive history and way of life, followed by a special lunch. Continue to Daegu, where a scenic cable car ride offers sweeping views across the surrounding mountains and city. Afterwards, explore Seomun Market, one of Korea's largest traditional markets, known for its bustling atmosphere, local produce, street food and everyday shopping. Later, continue to Busan, South Korea's lively coastal city, where you will check in to your hotel and enjoy the evening at leisure.
**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**OVERNIGHT:** Ramada Encore by Wyndham Busan Haeundae

## Day 5: Busan Day Tour

Discover the coastal beauty and cultural charm of Busan today, beginning with a ride on the Haeundae Blueline Coast Train. Enjoy scenic views of the coastline as the train follows the seaside route, passing rocky cliffs, beaches and sweeping ocean views. Continue to Gamcheon Culture Village, a colourful hillside neighbourhood known for its brightly painted houses, creative murals and winding alleyways. Once a modest hillside settlement, the village has been transformed into one of Busan's most recognisable cultural attractions, with art installations, small galleries and local cafés tucked throughout its streets. Later, visit Haedong Yonggungsa Temple, one of Korea's most distinctive Buddhist temples, set dramatically along the rocky coastline. Explore the temple grounds, admire the traditional architecture and stone pagodas, and enjoy the peaceful ocean views. After a day of coastal scenery and cultural discoveries, return to your hotel with the remainder of the evening at leisure.
**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**OVERNIGHT:** Ramada Encore by Wyndham Busan Haeundae

## Day 6: Busan ~ Gyeongju ~ Seoul

Today, travel to Gyeongju, often described as an open-air museum for its remarkable collection of historical sites and cultural treasures. Once the capital of the ancient Silla Kingdom, the city offers a fascinating glimpse into Korea's royal past. Begin with a visit to Bulguksa Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its beautiful Buddhist architecture, stone bridges and peaceful mountain setting. Continue to Seokguram Grotto, home to an impressive stone Buddha statue overlooking the East Sea, considered one of Korea's most significant Buddhist treasures. Next, explore Tumuli Park, where distinctive grass-covered burial mounds mark the resting places of ancient Silla royalty. Continue to Donggung Palace and Wolji Pond, a former royal palace complex where traditional architecture and landscaped gardens create a picturesque setting. After a day discovering Korea's ancient history and

heritage, return to Seoul for the evening.
**MEALS:**Breakfast, Lunch

**OVERNIGHT:**Ibis Styles Ambassador Seoul Yongsan

## Day 7: Seoul ~ Demilitarized Zone Day Tour

Today offers a fascinating insight into Korea's modern history and the events that shaped the Korean Peninsula. Travel to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), the heavily guarded border separating North and South Korea. Visit the 3rd Infiltration Tunnel, discovered in 1978, and learn about its historical significance. Continue to Dora Observatory, where you can look across the border towards North Korea, before visiting the DMZ Theatre for further insight into the history of the Korean War and the division of the peninsula. Return to Seoul and view Cheong Wa Dae, also known as the Blue House, the former presidential residence, from outside. Continue to the War Memorial of Korea, where exhibitions, military artefacts and historical displays provide a deeper understanding of the Korean War and the country's journey since. This evening, come together for a farewell dinner, sharing a final meal and reflecting on the memorable experiences and friendships made throughout your journey in Korea.
**NOTE:**Due to military regulations and daily visitor quotas at the DMZ, access is governed by local security authorities. Should entry be restricted on the day of your tour, an enriched alternative program will be provided, featuring the Imjingak Resort and the DMZ Peace Gondola.

**MEALS:**Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT:**Ibis Styles Ambassador Seoul Yongsan

## Day 8: Seoul ~ Osaka, Japan

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight to Japan's Kansai region. Upon arrival, enjoy a private transfer to your hotel in Osaka, one of Japan's most vibrant cities, known for its lively atmosphere, food culture and fascinating blend of traditional and modern attractions. The remainder of the day is at leisure. Take time to settle into your hotel, relax after the journey or explore the surrounding neighbourhood at your own pace. Enjoy a leisurely evening as you prepare for the next chapter of your Japanese adventure.
**MEALS:**Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:**Odysis Suites Osaka Airport Hotel

## Day 9: Osaka ~ Hiroshima

Travel through Japan's historic heartland today, beginning with a visit to Himeji Castle, one of the country's most impressive and best-preserved original castles. Known for its striking white exterior and elegant architecture, this UNESCO World Heritage Site offers a fascinating glimpse into Japan's feudal history. Explore the castle grounds and admire its distinctive design, which has stood for centuries. Continue to Kurashiki, a charming historic town known for its picturesque canal district, willow-lined waterways and traditional white-walled merchant houses. By evening arrive in Hiroshima, a city with an important place in Japan's history and a welcoming modern atmosphere. Upon arrival, check in to your hotel and enjoy the evening at leisure.

**MEALS:**Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:**Oriental Hotel Hiroshima

## Day 10: Hiroshima Day Tour

Discover Hiroshima today, a city known for its remarkable history and resilience. Begin with a visit to Peace Memorial Park, a moving tribute to the victims of the 1945 atomic bombing. Walk through the park and learn about the events that shaped the city, with time to reflect at its important memorials and monuments. Next, enjoy a hands-on okonomiyaki experience, where you will learn about one of Hiroshima's most famous local dishes. Discover the ingredients and cooking techniques behind this popular savoury pancake while enjoying a taste of local food culture. Later, take a ferry across to Miyajima Island, one of Japan's most scenic destinations. Known for its beautiful coastal setting and the iconic Great Torii Gate of Itsukushima Shrine, the island offers wonderful views of the traditional shrine and its famous gate, which appears to float on the water at high tide. Enjoy time exploring the island's charming streets and waterfront scenery before returning to your hotel.
**MEALS:**Breakfast, Lunch

**OVERNIGHT:**Oriental Hotel Hiroshima

## Day 11: Hiroshima ~ Setouchi ~ Okayama

This morning, if the weather permits, enjoy a scenic journey through Japan's Setouchi Inland Sea, known for its calm waters, picturesque islands and beautiful coastal landscapes A bento lunch will be served on board, offering a taste of Japanese cuisine as you enjoy the journey. Should weather conditions prevent the cruise from operating, the day will take an alternative route with visits to local sake breweries. Discover the traditional brewing process and learn more about the craftsmanship and regional traditions behind Japan's famous rice wine. Later, continue your journey to Okayama, where you will check in to your hotel and enjoy the evening at leisure.
**MEALS:**Breakfast, Lunch

**OVERNIGHT:**Hotel Granvia Okayama

## Day 12: Okayama ~ Osaka

Begin the day with a visit to Ritsurin Garden in Takamatsu, one of Japan's most celebrated traditional landscape gardens. Set against the backdrop of Mount Shiun, the garden features beautifully landscaped grounds, sculpted pine trees, tranquil ponds and traditional bridges. Enjoy a leisurely stroll through its carefully designed pathways and take in the peaceful scenery. Continue with a hands-on udon-making experience, where you will discover the art of preparing one of Japan's best-loved noodle dishes. Learn about the ingredients and traditional techniques involved in making fresh udon noodles, with an opportunity to try the process yourself. Enjoy a fun and interactive way to enjoy the Japanese food culture before travelling back to Osaka.
**MEALS:**Breakfast, Lunch

**OVERNIGHT:**Hotel it Osaka Shinmachi

## Day 13: Osaka ~ Nara ~ Uji

Today, discover two of Japan's most charming cultural destinations, beginning in Nara, the country's first permanent capital. Visit Nara Park, where hundreds of freely roaming deer are considered sacred messengers and have become one of the city's most recognisable attractions. Enjoy time walking through the park and observing these gentle animals in their natural surroundings. Continue to Todaiji Temple, one of Japan's most significant Buddhist temples and home to the impressive Great Buddha statue. Admire the temple's grand wooden architecture and discover the history behind this remarkable religious landmark. Later, travel to Uji, a historic town renowned for its high-quality green tea and long-standing tea culture. Enjoy a relaxing riverside lunch before taking part in a traditional Japanese tea ceremony. Learn about the customs, preparation and presentation of Japanese tea while experiencing an important part of the country's cultural heritage. After a day of sightseeing and cultural experiences, return to your hotel.

**MEALS:**Breakfast, Lunch

**OVERNIGHT:**Hotel it Osaka Shinmachi

## Day 14: Osaka ~ Kyoto

After breakfast you will head off to discover the cultural highlights of Kyoto, a city renowned for its historic temples, traditional architecture and rich heritage. Begin with a visit to Kinkakuji, also known as the Golden Pavilion, one of Japan's most famous landmarks. Admire its distinctive gold-leaf exterior reflected across the surrounding pond and explore the beautiful temple grounds. Enjoy a traditional multi-course kaiseki lunch, showcasing seasonal Japanese ingredients and beautifully presented dishes. This special dining experience is accompanied by a live geisha performance, offering an insight into Japan's traditional arts and cultural heritage. Later, visit Fushimi Inari Shrine, famous for its thousands of vermilion torii gates that wind through the forested hillside. Walk beneath the iconic gates and explore the shrine grounds, one of Japan's most recognisable cultural landmarks. After a day discovering Kyoto's history and traditions, return to your hotel in Osaka.
**MEALS:**Breakfast, Lunch

**OVERNIGHT:**Hotel it Osaka Shinmachi

## Day 15: Osaka ~ Mt. Fuji

Today, experience one of Japan's most iconic landmarks as you travel towards the Mt. Fuji region. Begin with a journey aboard the Shinkansen bullet train, offering a comfortable and memorable way to experience Japan's famous high-speed rail network while enjoying views of the passing countryside. Upon arrival, continue towards Mt. Fuji, Japan's highest and most recognisable mountain, known for its cultural and spiritual significance. Depending on weather conditions, visit Mt. Fuji's 5th Station, situated partway up the mountain, where you can enjoy views of the surrounding landscape. Alternatively, visit the Mt. Fuji World Heritage Centre to learn more about the mountain's history, cultural importance and UNESCO World Heritage recognition. Later, continue to your hotel near the Fuji Five Lakes region. Enjoy the peaceful surroundings and some time to relax after a day of travel and sightseeing.
**MEALS:**Breakfast, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT:**Motosu Phoenix Hotel

## Day 16: Mt Fuji ~ Tokyo

Today, visit Oshino Hakkai, a traditional village known for its eight crystal-clear spring-fed ponds, formed by snowmelt from Mt. Fuji filtering through layers of volcanic rock. Enjoy time exploring the village, admiring the clear waters and traditional surroundings, with beautiful views of Mt. Fuji on a clear day. Continue your journey to Tokyo, Japan's bustling capital, known for its blend of modern attractions, traditional neighbourhoods and vibrant food culture. Upon arrival, visit the Ramen Museum, where you can discover the history and regional varieties of one of Japan's most popular dishes. Learn more about the different styles of ramen and the role this much-loved comfort food plays in Japanese cuisine. Afterwards, continue to your hotel in Tokyo and enjoy the remainder of the day at leisure.

**MEALS:**Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:**Hotel Metropolitan Tokyo Ikebukuro

## Day 17: Tokyo Day Tour

Today, discover the highlights of Tokyo, a city where traditional culture and modern life come together. Today you will visit to Asakusa and Sensoji Temples, wander through the nearby streets and browse the traditional shops and stalls of Nakamise Shopping Street. Continue to Tsukiji Outer Market, a lively food market known for its fresh seafood, local produce and traditional Japanese food stalls. Enjoy time exploring the market and experiencing one of Tokyo's well-known food destinations. You will also visit Tokyo Tower, an iconic city landmark offering views across the surrounding skyline and Shibuya Crossing, one of the world's busiest pedestrian crossings, where you can experience the energy and atmosphere of this famous Tokyo neighbourhood. This evening, come together for a special farewell dinner, sharing a final meal and reflecting on the memorable experiences and friendships made throughout your journey in South Korea and Japan.
**MEALS:**Breakfast, Farewell Dinner

**OVERNIGHT:**Hotel Metropolitan Tokyo Ikebukuro

## Day 18: Tokyo ~ Departure

After breakfast, private transfer to the airport for your onward flight home. As your journey through South Korea and Japan comes to an end, take with you wonderful memories of the destinations visited, cultural experiences enjoyed and friendships made along the way.
**MEALS:**Breakfast