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Kyoto, Hiroshima, Osaka

March 18 – 27, 2017

Land Package Price:

To be announced

(based on double occupancy)

Tour Price Includes:

- **Daily Breakfast, one lunch, and three dinners**
- **Ground transportation to and from the hotel**
- **Hotel Accommodations**
- **Admission to sites as indicated by itinerary**
- **Escort from Hawaii**

March 18, 2017 **Day One** **Saturday** **Honolulu to Osaka**

An afternoon flight takes us to Osaka.

March 19, 2017 **Day Two** **Sunday** **Osaka to Kyoto**

Upon arrival in **Osaka**, we will go through immigration formalities before collecting our luggage to clear customs. From there we will head to **Kyoto**. For over one thousand years, Kyoto was the capital of the country and home to the emperor of Japan. Today it is the cultural capital of the country, as it preserves many sites from the hundreds of years of serving as the most important city in Japan.

March 20, 2017 **Day Three** **Monday** **Kyoto (B)**

On our first day in Kyoto, we will head to **Kinkakuji** also known as the Golden Pavilion. This temple was created for Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu. Its most famous feature is a three story pagoda that is covered in gold leaf. This is one of the most iconic sites in the city.

From there we will go to **Nijo Castle**. This was the home of the Tokugawa Shogun during his visits to Kyoto to visit the emperor. Unlike other Japanese castles, Nijo Castle is only one story, but is unusually long. The ability to use so much land displayed the Tokugawa Shogun's power. The castle has a beautiful garden, gorgeously decorated screen doors, and the famous nightingale floor.

We will then head to **Kiyomizudera**. This iconic temple is the source of the phrase "to jump off the stage at Kiyomizu." Its meaning is similar to the English phrase, "To take the plunge." Kiyomizudera is located up on a hill above a spring that gives the temple its name. The phrase comes from a stage that is built over the cliff from the main part of the temple. From here one can enjoy a beautiful view of the city. The path up to the temple is lined with many small shops selling souvenirs and snacks. Portions of the temple are currently undergoing renovation.

March 21, 2017 **Day Four** **Tuesday** **Kyoto (B/D)**

On the 21st of each month, **Toji Temple** hosts Kyoto's largest flea market. We will go there in the morning to see this vast flea market which has everything from food vendors to antiques. It is held in honor of Kobo Daishi, the famous Buddhist monk who died on the 21st. Toji Temple's pagoda is considered the tallest in Japan.

We will also visit **Fushimi Inari**. This famous Shinto shrine is noted for the hundreds of torii or gates that line the hills behind the main shrine. Inari is the goddess of rice and patron of merchants. The many torii were donated by businesses hoping for success. Inari is often accompanied by Japanese foxes. As the goddess of rice and because Japanese foxes are said to love fried tofu, you can often find inari zushi near her shrines. Inari zushi is usually formed in the shape of triangles that look like fox ears.

Our last stop of the day will be to **Nishiki Ichiba**. This marketplace is often called Kyoto's Kitchen and is famous for its wide variety of products that are produced in Kyoto.

March 22, 2017

Day Five

Wednesday

Kyoto to Hiroshima (B/D)

We leave Kyoto and hop aboard the **bullet train**. Frequently travelling at over 100 miles an hour, the bullet train will take us to Himeji first. Here we will visit one of Japan's top three castles. Also known as the White Heron Castle, **Himeji Castle** is the largest original castle still standing and is what is often pictured when one imagines a Japanese castle. Its main keep is six stories tall and offers stunning views of the surrounding area.

From there we will continue on to Hiroshima, where we will visit the **Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park**. There we will spend time at the **Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum** dedicated to that fateful day when the atomic bomb was dropped on the city. We will also see the **children's monument** modeled after Sadako and her thousand cranes. Another sight we will see is the **A Bomb Dome**, the skeletal remains of the building over which the bomb was dropped and remains standing.

March 23, 2017

Day Six

Thursday

Yamaguchi Excursion (B/L)

Today we will head to **Yamaguchi**, where many Japanese immigrants to Hawaii came from. During the day, we will visit the **Museum of Japanese Emigration to Hawaii**. Here we can learn about that first generation of emigrants to Hawaii and the struggles they endured as they made their way in a new country. There is also a section on the continued relationship between those emigrants and their descendants with their ancestral homeland.

We will also visit one of Yamaguchi's most famous sites, the **Kintai-kyo Bridge**. Originally built in 1673, it was designed to withstand the turbulent waters of the Nishiki River. Through good maintenance and design the bridge withstood nature until 1950, when due to a typhoon and a lack of upkeep due to the war, it finally fell. It was rebuilt three years later and is considered a national treasure. The bridge leads to **Kikkou Park**, which lies at the base of Iwakuni Castle. Time permitting we will visit the park, which was the former residence of the lord of the province. There is even a **white snake museum** dedicated to the creatures associated with Benten, the goddess of wealth. These indigenous snakes are considered a sign of good luck when encountered.

March 24, 2017

Day Seven

Friday

Hiroshima to Osaka (B)

In the morning we will go to a small island off the coast, **Miyajima**. This is a sacred island and is noted for **Itsukushima Shrine and its famous floating Torii** or gate. In the past, no one was able to set foot on the island and the temple was built on stilts. So to enter the temple, one had to take a boat through the Torii. The island is now open to the public and we can enjoy going through the small village and perhaps try some of their **momiji manju**. This maple leaf shaped treat is traditionally filled with azuki bean, but can now be found with chocolate and cream fillings as well.

We will then hop on the bullet train and head for Osaka, Japan's third largest city. It is one of Japan's most international cities as it serves as one of the country's largest ports. We will visit **Dotonburi**, which is the city's famous food district. Here you can find cuisine from around the world as well as some of

Osaka's culinary specialties like Takoyaki, an octopus dish. Dotonburi is found within Osaka's largest shopping district with everything from kitchen equipment to electronics.

March 25, 2017 **Day Eight** **Saturday** **Osaka (B)**

Today will be spent at **Universal Studios Japan**, a popular theme park which in 2014 opened its Harry Potter World. Here you can watch shows and enjoy rides from various Universal Studios movies like Jurassic Park, Back to the Future, and the Terminator Series. There is also an area dedicated to Charlie Brown and Snoopy, Hello Kitty, and Sesame Street.

March 26, 2017 **Day Nine** **Sunday** **Osaka (B/D)**

In the morning, we will go to the **Osaka Aquarium**. This is one of the world's largest aquariums. It houses fish and animals from around the world with its starring attraction being a whale shark that is kept in its main tank.

From there we will go to **Osaka Castle**. This is a reconstructed castle and is made up of mostly concrete. The castle was originally built for Toyotomi Hideyoshi at the end of the 16th century to serve as his headquarters. However it was destroyed not long after his death. The current castle was rebuilt in the 1920's and is one of its most popular tourist destinations. From its top floor you can enjoy a nice view of the city.

Our last stop of the day will be to the **Osaka Museum of History**. Here you can learn about the city's origin from the fifth century straight through to the modern day.

March 27, 2017 **Day Ten** **Monday** **Osaka to Honolulu (B)**

On our last day we will head to **Nara**, the former capital of Japan before Kyoto. During its brief time as capital, Nara was the focus of many Buddhist efforts in temple construction. Even today it holds a high concentration of temples and artifacts. Today we will visit **Todai-ji**, a Buddhist temple that is home to the world's largest wooden building that houses the world's largest Bronze Buddha statue. The temple rises to just over 150 feet in height and is now over 300 years old. The original temple was built in the 8th century and this is the third version of the temple. While still a dominating structure, it is 30 percent smaller than its previous incarnation.

Adjoining Todai-ji is the **Nara Deer Park**. It is home to many deer who are considered messengers of the gods. The deer are usually well behaved and can be approached and fed.

From there we will head to the airport to catch our evening flight back to Hawaii. We will return on the morning that we left due to the International Dateline. Our journey ends as we pass through immigration and customs formalities.