



Japan Trip 2011

Sponsor: Mrs. Melissa Matsu

Teacher sponsored trip to Japan in June 2011. This trip does not involve any classroom time, tests, or research. It is a fun and educational trip for high school students. We will be doing many varied activities. The trip is open to all **CVHS students and their families**. We will be traveling with a company called EF tours, who has been doing educational tours for decades. I have traveled with them before 6 times before including to Japan in 2008.

Dates: Departure scheduled for early June 2011 (trip is 9 days).

Cost: \$2850 (approximate price as of now) Includes:

- registration fee (\$95)
- airfare to and from Japan
- departure fees (airport tax, fuel surcharges, etc..)
- hotel accommodations (students room in triples and quads)
- breakfast and dinner daily
- full time bilingual local guide (guide is with us 24 hours a day)
- bus & bullet train transportation around Japan
- sightseeing tour of Osaka, Kyoto, and Tokyo
- entrance fees into exhibits, parks, and other planned activities
- Visits to: • Nijo Castle • Heian Shrine and Garden • Silver or Gold Pavilion • Lake Hakone cruise • Meiji Shinto Shrine • Sumida River cruise • Asakusa Kannon Temple

Optional Additional Excursions

- Excursion to Nikko (add \$160) – most people choose to do this one. It’s amazing!
- Half-day excursion Nara (add \$95)

The other costs related to this trip would be spending money for souvenirs and money for lunch. There is also a \$125 all inclusive insurance (baggage, accident, travel/cancellation, property); not “required” but HIGHLY recommended

Schedule of payment: \$95 registration fee is paid to lock in price then you can set up a payment plan with the company. The full balance is due 99 days prior to travel.

How to sign up: www.EFtours.com/student or call 1-800-665-5364 **Tour # 792923**

Adult/Parent Interested? Adults are welcome to join us. EF tours adds \$335 adult supplement to the cost of the trip. This is because adults are roomed in doubles, instead of triples or quads. Adults are only roomed with other adult chaperones, but can pay extra to have a private room.

- ▶ please contact me with questions, concerns, or anything else

mmatsu@houstonisd.org OR cell phone: 832-452-7172

Day 1 Flight

Overnight flight to Japan • Relax as you fly to Japan, the Land of the Rising Sun.

Day 2 Tokyo

Arrive in Tokyo • Touch down at Narita International Airport in Tokyo. The modern day capital of Japan, Tokyo is the national center of government, education and finance, and home to 12 million residents. Museums and restaurants, shrines and kabuki theaters—you can find it all beneath the neon lights of this pulsating modern metropolis.



Day 3 Tokyo

Sightseeing in Tokyo • The sights, sounds and smells of the largest city in Japan come at you from all directions, but your licensed local guide will put it all in perspective. Begin with a visit to the Meiji Shinto Shrine and its elaborate wooded Inner Garden. Pass through Harajuku, the trendy district popular among the younger Tokyoites, and continue through the Shopping District. Then visit the Imperial Palace, residence of the Imperial family, with its gigantic stone walls, a spacious plaza and a large garden open to the public. Afterwards, finish your tour with a cruise on the Sumida River to Asakusa, Tokyo's amusement center. The 7th-century Asakusa Kannon Temple, dedicated to the Goddess of Mercy, is a five story pagoda surrounded by shops, restaurants, theaters and cinemas.

Included Tempura Dinner • Tempura, one of the better-known Japanese culinary delights, consists of fresh seafood and vegetables dipped in batter and cooked in vegetable and sesame oil. Tonight, you will enjoy this regional delicacy at an included tempura dinner. Try many different kinds—tempura can be anything from shrimp or squid to eggplant or sweet potato—and don't be afraid to experiment. Tempura connoisseurs have one more piece of advice: Get it while it's hot!

Day 4 Tokyo

Optional excursion to Nikko • Those with an appreciation for natural beauty will want to take advantage of this optional excursion to Nikko, a national park of rivers, lakes and wooded highlands. Park visitors engage in a wide range of recreational activities, from mountain climbing to skating. You will visit the five-story pagoda of Toshugo Shrine—be sure to "Hear no evil, speak no evil and see no evil" beneath the three monkeys whose poses represent the age-old admonition. Then witness the awesome power of Mother Nature at the 300-foot Kegon Waterfall, and trace your way to the falls' origin—the deep blue waters of Lake Chuzenji. Stop at the Bonsai Garden before returning to Tokyo.

Free time in Tokyo • Alternatively, enjoy free time to absorb the one-of-a-kind atmosphere of this ultra-modern urban setting. While you could fill a morning simply meandering the streets and feeling the rush of the city around you, there is no shortage of cultural and historical sights to anchor your explorations. Perhaps visit Sensoji Temple, the city's oldest and most popular temple. According to legend, it was constructed to honor the Buddhist goddess of mercy and happiness. Alternatively, survey the wide-ranging collection of Japanese art at the massive Tokyo National Museum. If you're looking for peace and quiet, you might seek out one of the tranquil Japanese gardens. Hama Rikyu Garden is one of Tokyo's most renowned city oases, having served as duck hunting grounds for the Tokugawa shoguns more than 300 years ago.

Day 5 Tokyo • Hakone

Transfer via Kamakura to Hakone • As you leave Japan's capital, stop in the small town of Kamakura for a photo opportunity at the Great Image of Buddha. Second largest of its kind, behind the Buddha image in Nara, this one tops out at more than 37 feet.

Day 6 Hakone • Kyoto

Tour of Hakone National Park • Enjoy a guided tour through one of Japan's most beloved national parks. A popular getaway for Tokyo residents seeking a relaxed natural setting, Hakone offers hot springs, lakes, historic sites and close-up views of majestic Mount Fuji. It's no wonder the park attracts 20 million visitors from Japan and beyond every year. You'll experience the natural beauty of this remarkable landscape on a boat cruise across the sparkling Lake Ashi and a cable car ride up Mount Komagatake.

Bullet train to Kyoto • In 1964, the first bullet train (*shinkansen*) sped from Tokyo to Osaka. Today, the most up-to-date model will whisk you across the Japanese countryside. You'll reach speeds of 180 miles per hour before coming to a stop at Kyoto, one-time hub of Japanese civilization and national capital for more than a thousand years. Beginning at the onset of the Heian Period in A.D. 794, the Imperial family resided here until the capital was changed to Tokyo in 1868. Kyoto is a city rich in history—pagodas can be seen alongside Shinto shrines, old

imperial villas and Buddhist temples. Time-honored crafts such as silk weaving, ceramics and lacquer ware have been made here for generations.

Day 7 Kyoto

Sightseeing of Kyoto • Kyoto's past becomes your present as you explore the city with a local guide. Begin at Nijo castle, a structure built almost entirely out of Japanese cypress. The castle was built under the orders of the powerful Tokugawa shogun, who would live here during his visits to Kyoto. Then visit the Heian Shrine, constructed in 1895 to commemorate the 1,100th anniversary of Kyoto's founding. In spring, the shrine's beautiful gardens bloom with cherry blossoms and irises. Your tour concludes at the Kinkakuji Temple—also known as the Gold Pavilions.

Optional half-day excursion to Nara • Today, opt for an excursion to Nara, one of Japan's ancient capitals. See *Daibutsu*, the world's largest bronze statue of a Buddha. Then walk through the wooded Nara Park, whose informal nickname, "Deer Park," stems from its sizable deer population. Just outside the park, you will visit Kasuga Shrine, one of the most famous Shinto shrines in the country. Twice a year, some 3,000 lanterns are lit simultaneously at the shrine in celebration of the Lantern Festival.

Day 8 Kyoto • Osaka

Free time in Kyoto • This morning is free for you to discover Kyoto on your own. Perhaps you'll want to visit the Kiyomizu Temple, with its spectacular views of the city and surrounding valley. You might also choose to explore the Kyoto National Museum, which features traditional Japanese art objects and treasures. Or simply wander the canal-lined streets and let the wooden homes, bonsai trees and occasional kimono-clad geisha in traditional makeup take you back to years past. **Transfer to Osaka** • The third-largest city in the country, modernized Osaka is the industrial and commercial center of western Japan, and its air- and seaports make it a major transportation hub for Pacific Asia. Skyscrapers dot the landscape, none more distinctive than the Umeda Sky Building, whose all-glass composition reflects the bustle of the modern city all around. As with all the progressive Japanese cities, Osaka is certainly not without ties to the past. It is the birthplace of *bunraku*, the traditional form of puppet drama, and is still considered the best place in the world to take in a performance.

Visit to Osaka Castle • Enjoy a visit to Osaka Castle, a classic *donjon* with five towers and panoramic views of Osaka City. The castle was originally constructed by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the famous general who completed the unification of Japan in the 16th century. Today's castle is a reproduction of the original *donjon*, and inside you can find art objects and historical documents. The grounds around the old castle form a public park, where modern-day Japanese can relax in the shadow of their past.

Day 9 Home

Return home • Your tour director assists with the transfer to the airport, where you'll check in for your return flight home.

Optional Excursions:

- We will decide on these later. Some travelers may chose to spend their day staying in Kyoto (instead of going to Nara) or Tokyo (instead of Nikko).

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