Travels with Helene presents...

Journey Through the Heart of Japan

with Optional 3-Night Hiroshima Post Tour Extension

April 19 – 30, 2028



Upgrade to Elite Airfare! See inside for details.

SPECIAL TRAVEL PRESENTATION

Date: Thursday, February 18, 2027 Time: 6:00 PM

Zoom Presentation: https://collette.zoom.us/j/88161879234

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collette



Small Group Travel rewards travelers with new perspectives. With just 12-24 passengers, these are the personal adventures that today's cultural explorers dream of.

12 Days ● 15 Meals: 10 Breakfasts, 5 Dinners

HIGHLIGHTS... Private Sumo Experience, Mt. Fuji 5th Station, Overnight in Traditional *Ryokan* (Japanese Inn), Old Tokaido Highway, *Shabu-Shabu* & *Geisha* Experience, *Shinkansen* Bullet Train, Sushi-Making Class, Nara Park, Fushimi Inari Shrine, Arashiyama Bamboo Grove, Taiko Drum Lesson

ITINERARY AT A GLANCE

Day 1	Overnight Flight
Days 2 – 4	HILTON TOKYO ODAIBA, Tokyo
Days 5, 6	Hakone Yunohana Prince Hotel, Hakone
Days 7 – 9	Hotel Okura Kyoto, Kyoto
Days 10, 11	Centara Grand Hotel Osaka, Osaka

On some dates *alternate hotels may be used.*

Day 1: Wednesday, April 19, 2028 Overnight Flight. You're bound for Japan! Soon you'll wander Tokyo's museums, witness sumo, ascend to Mt. Fuji's 5th Station, stroll through a bamboo grove, and roll sushi. Tonight is your first step on this journey.

Day 2: Thursday, April 20, 2028 Tokyo, Japan. Today, you arrive in Tokyo, a city where neon towers and tranquil shrines stand side by side. With no scheduled activities, tailor your first impressions of the "Land of the Rising Sun" at your own pace. Navigate Shibuya's Scramble Crossing, pause at a neighborhood shrine, savor sushi at a tiny eatery, or wander into an anime shop. From gardens to crowded alleyways, Tokyo's mix of ancient ritual and modern energy is yours to discover before you meet your travel companions tomorrow.

Day 3: Friday, April 21, 2028 Tokyo. Your day begins with an exploration of Tokyo, a city steeped in art and history. Visit the Tokyo National Museum, where Buddhist statues, samurai armor, and *ukiyo-e* prints tell centuries of stories. At the Imperial Palace, see the moats and walls that encircle its serene East Gardens. In the evening, stroll through Ginza's polished streets, where history meets modern commerce. End the day at a local restaurant where you'll sample regional dishes. *(B, D)*

Day 4: Saturday, April 22, 2028 Tokyo Begin your day by stepping inside a sumo stable for a private demonstration and learn about the discipline, diet, and rituals of Japan's wrestlers. Witness the flickering flames and rhythmic chants of a *Goma* fire ritual at Fukagawa Fudo-do Temple. Tokyo's treasures are yours to explore at leisure this afternoon. Venture out into the city's neighborhoods, shop for crafts, sip matcha in a teahouse, or seek out a hidden shrine. *(B)*

Day 5: Sunday, April 23, 2028 Tokyo - Mt. Fuji 5th Station - Hakone. Depart Tokyo this morning and travel through a haven of natural beauty toward Mount Fuji. Stop at the 5th Station on the volcano's slopes to gaze up at its snow-capped cone and take in the splendor of the iconic peak.* Your journey continues in Hakone, a hot-spring resort town, where tonight you'll stay in a *ryokan*** (a traditional Japanese inn) with *tatami* floors and sliding paper doors. After settling into your room, sit down to a multi-course *kaiseki* feast and a display of culinary artistry featuring seasonal ingredients. *(B, D)*

Day 6: Monday, April 24, 2028 Hakone Up, up, and away! Today's adventures begin with a ride up the Komagatake Ropeway and a short walk*** to the summit for panoramic views over Hakone. Descend and cruise across Lake Ashi to the historic Sekisho-ato Pier, an Edo-period checkpoint. Back on land, follow the Old Tokaido Highway and stroll beneath towering cedar trees on Ancient Cedar Avenue,**** a route once traveled by samurai. Wander among sculptures at the Hakone Open-Air Museum, then end your day with traditional shabu-shabu hot pot and a meeting with a *geisha*. *(B, D)*

Day 7: Tuesday, April 25, 2028 Hakone - Kyoto. This morning, the Shinkansen bullet train glides you along on your journey toward Kyoto. After you settle into your hotel, it's time to stroll along Pontocho, a notable dining alley that runs beside the Kamo River. Here, lantern-lit wooden houses hide long-standing eateries and modern bars serving *yakitori*, *tempura*, and *sake*. Feel Kyoto's timeless atmosphere as you wander through alleys under glowing paper lanterns. *(B)*

Day 8: Wednesday, April 26, 2028 Kyoto Rise early to greet the day and beat the crowds with a visit to the peaceful Fushimi Inari Shrine. Walk beneath thousands of vermilion *torii* gates climbing the forested hillside and pause at shrines along the way. This afternoon, head to Kyoto's historic Gion district, where *geisha* still glide along flagstone lanes lined with teahouses and *machiya* townhouses. Sample *wagashi* sweets or *matcha* cakes as you explore the surrounding neighborhood. *(B)*







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Book Now & Save $100 Per Person:

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For bookings made after Jul 20, 2027, call for rates.

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Not included in price: Cancellation Waiver and Insurance of $599 per person

* All Rates are Per Person and are subject to change, based on air inclusive package from TPA

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- * Elite Air pricing (Premium Economy, Business Class or First Class) is valid until 8 months prior to departure, after which rates are subject to change and will be quoted based upon availability.

† Refer to the reservation form to choose your upgrade option

IMPORTANT CONDITIONS: Your price is guaranteed once deposit is received and booking confirmed by Collette. Your price is not subject to increase after the deposit is received and booking confirmed, except for charges resulting from increases in government-imposed taxes or fees. ***(See registration form for consent.)***

Day 9: Thursday, April 27, 2028 Kyoto. The morning is yours to uncover more of Kyoto. Perhaps visit a quiet temple, shop for crafts, or relax in a teahouse. At midday, walk through the Arashiyama Bamboo Grove, where swaying stalks create a green tunnel. Tour Nijo Castle (UNESCO), whose creaking nightingale floors recall the shoguns. Roll up your sleeves for tonight's dinner. You'll be learning the art of making sushi as you join a local chef to prepare your meal before dining on your creations. *(B, D)*

Day 10: Friday, April 28, 2028 Kyoto - Osaka. Leave Kyoto for Nara this morning. In Nara Park, stroll among bowing deer and visit Todaiji Temple to see its giant bronze Buddha. In Osaka, join a guided walk along the neon-bright streets of Dotonbori and Shinsaibashi, lined with street food stalls and boutiques. The evening is yours to sample *takoyaki*, *okonomiyaki*, and other specialties in Japan's culinary capital at your leisure. *(B)*

Day 11: Saturday, April 29, 2028 Osaka. Today, you'll get insight into a traditional form of Japanese culture with a private *taiko* drumming lesson before heading to Osaka Castle Park****** to learn about the city's samurai heritage. The rest of the afternoon is yours to explore Osaka. You might visit a museum, cruise the canal, shop in Umeda, or snack on street food. As evening approaches, gather with your fellow travelers for a farewell dinner celebrating your journey through Japan. *(B, D)*

Day 12: Sunday, April 30, 2028 Osaka - Tour Ends. After breakfast, your tour comes to an end, but the spirit of Japan remains in your heart. *(B)*

Book Now rates valid until Jul 20, 2027, valid on air-inclusive packages only.

The overall activity level of this tour is a level 4. This means you're ready to seize the day, whatever it may bring. You lead an active life at home (walking, biking, and half- or full-day hikes are things you may enjoy), and 10,000 steps a day is normal for you. You can handle longer walking tours (more than 3 hours covering 3+ miles at a steady clip) and activities that involve traversing uneven terrain, steep slopes, standing for periods of time, and varying altitudes and temperatures. You don't mind being on the go with some early starts, late nights, and full days. You can handle altitudes of 9,000 feet or higher with little to no issue. This level is not appropriate for travelers who use wheelchairs, walkers, and other mobility assistance devices.

Travel with an average of 19 people (maximum of 24).

***There is approximately 20 minutes of walking to reach the summit of Komagatake.

****The walk along Ancient Cedar Avenue covers a distance of 1.25 miles / 2 kilometers and takes approximately 30 minutes.

If you require any special assistance while on tour, please make us aware at the time of reservation so the necessary request form can be sent to your attention.

Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate wheelchairs on this tour. In addition, travelers who require assistance walking or who travel with oxygen tanks will not fully enjoy this trip, and we strongly recommend a different tour.

Important Tour Information: