



# 2025 SUMMER KYOTO GION FESTIVAL WITH IWASO INN

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*Experience one of the oldest and greatest festivals in Japan!*

9 Nights / 11 Days • 19 Meals (9 Breakfasts, 6 Lunches, 4 Dinners)  
Escorted from Honolulu • Includes English-Speaking Local Guide  
**July 09 – 19, 2025 • Tour Manager: Eric Yosemite**

**OVERVIEW:** The Kyoto Gion Festival (Matsuri) is one of the oldest festivals in Japan and one of the greatest. Traditional rituals and events related to this amazing festival are held throughout the month of July in Kyoto. Experience the Gion Festival and taste the wonders of Kyoto's history, craft and music traditions. The Gion Festival is considered one of Japan's top three festivals to feature floats. The others being Takayama Festival and the Chichibu Night Festival.

**VISIT:** Himeji • Kurashiki • Okayama • Hiroshima  
Miyajima • Kyoto • Kameoka • Arashiyama • Nara

**TOUR HIGHLIGHTS:** Himeji Castle • Kurashiki Bikan Area  
AEON MALL Okayama • Korakuen Garden • Peace Memorial Park  
A-Bomb Museum • A-Bomb Dome • Children's Memorial • Ferry Ride to Miyajima  
Itsukushima Shrine • Miyajima Ropeway • Shinkansen Bullet Train Ride  
Fushimi Inari Shrine • Kiyomizu Temple • Nijo Castle • Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion)  
Sagano Torokko Ressa (Sagano Romantic Train) Ride • Arashiyama Bamboo Forest  
Nishiki Market • Kyoto Gion Festival • Todaiji Temple • Nara Deer Park

**HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES:** Momiji Manju Making • Surikomi Yuzen (Brush Dyed Yuzen) Dyeing  
Wagashi (Traditional Japanese Sweets) Making • Traditional Japanese Tea Ceremony

**UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES:** Himeji Castle • A-Bomb Dome • Itsukushima Shrine  
Kiyomizu Temple • Nijo Castle • Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion) • Todaiji Temple

## COMPLETE PACKAGE!

Includes Roundtrip Airfare from Honolulu, 9 Nights Hotel, 19 Meals, Tips for Local Tour Guides and Bus Drivers, All Taxes & Fees

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**Day 1: Wed, July 09** – HONOLULU. Depart Honolulu via Japan Airlines flt #791 at 12:05 pm.

**Day 2: Thur, July 10** – KANSAI. Arrive at Kansai International Airport at 3:50 pm. After entry formalities, walk to your hotel which is a short covered walk from the airport. HOTEL NIKKO KANSAI AIRPORT (1 Night)

**Day 3: Fri, July 11** – KANSAI – HIMEJI – KURASHIKI – OKAYAMA. After a sumptuous buffet breakfast, depart for Okayama. En route, stop in Himeji to visit **Himeji Castle**. It is known as “White Egret Castle” and “White Heron Castle” because of its brilliant white exterior, resembling a bird taking flight. It is the largest and most visited castle in Japan. It is a splendid example of traditional architecture. Next, travel to **Kurashiki** and explore its beautiful **Bikan Area**. In merchant days, this scenic town thrived as a port for rice shipments. Several old rice granaries and examples of historic architecture still remain, in addition to the stone lined canal. Transfer to Okayama where you will enjoy shopping and dining at one of the largest AEON Shopping Malls, **AEON MALL Okayama**. HOTEL GRANVIA OKAYAMA (1 Night) (B, L)

\*Baggage will be sent from Okayama to Kyoto, skipping Miyajima. Prepare overnight bag for two nights.

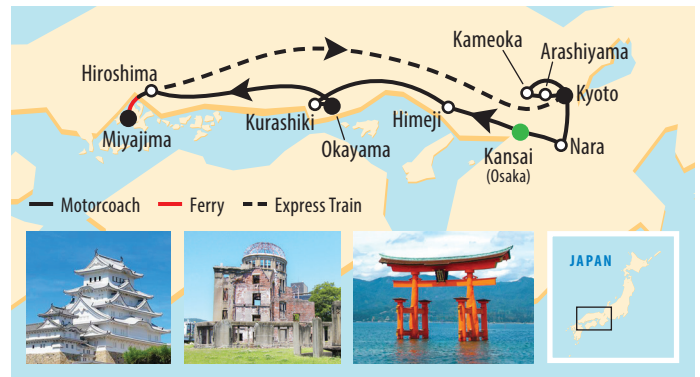
**Day 4: Sat, July 12** – OKAYAMA – HIROSHIMA – MIYAJIMA. Begin the day walking through **Korakuen Garden**, a beautifully landscaped garden in Okayama. Korakuen Garden is viewed as one of Japan’s three best gardens in Japan. Transfer to Hiroshima for lunch. After lunch, visit the **Peace Memorial Park, A-Bomb Museum, A-Bomb Dome**, and **Children’s Memorial**. Take a **short ferry ride** to the island of Miyajima, considered sacred by many. Walk to the hotel. This evening soak in the relaxing atmosphere of the **onsen hot spring baths**. You can enjoy the beauty of the primeval forests and gentle sound of mountain streams while taking a bath. For dinner, enjoy a traditional, multi-course **Kaiseki Dinner** featuring Hiroshima’s local and seasonal ingredients including fresh seafood from the Seto Inland Sea. IWASO INN (2 Nights) Japanese-Style Room with Onsen and Kaiseki Dinner (B, L, D)

**Day 5: Sun, July 13** – MIYAJIMA. After breakfast, begin the morning exploring **Itsukushima Shrine**. At high tide, the vermilion torii gate looks like it’s floating in the middle of the sea. The shrine complex has been selected as one of Japan’s three most scenic places (nihon sankei). Today, you’ll **learn how to make momiji manju**, a specialty of the area. Next, take a ride on the **Miyajima Ropeway**, a cable car and gondola system linking Miyajima township to Mt. Misen. On a clear day the ropeway provides an excellent observation point, plus access to the Wild Monkey Park, temples and shrines. Free time will be given to explore the excellent shopping available down the main street of Miyajima Island. Return to the hotel for another special traditional, multi-course **Kaiseki Dinner**. (B, L, D)

**Day 6: Mon, July 14** – MIYAJIMA – HIROSHIMA – KYOTO. After a special breakfast this morning, we make our way back to the “mainland” via a **short ferry ride**. Transfer to the Hiroshima Station and take a **Shinkansen Bullet Train** to Kyoto Station. Upon arrival in Kyoto, visit the stunning vermilion colored **Fushimi Inari Shrine**, whose four kilometer long tunnel of scarlet torii gates was featured on the film *Memoirs of a Geisha*. The evening is at your leisure to explore more of the city on your own. Numerous choices for dining and shopping. MIYAKO HOTEL KYOTO HACHUJO (5 Nights) (B)

**Day 7: Tue, July 15** – KYOTO. After a delicious Japanese/Western buffet breakfast at the hotel, embark on a full day of sightseeing beginning with a visit to **Kiyomizu Temple** (literally “Pure Water Temple”). Next, visit **Nijo Castle**. After the Tokugawa Shogunate fell in 1867, Nijo Castle was used as an imperial palace for a while before being donated to the city and opened up to the public as a historic site. Its palace buildings are arguably the best surviving examples of castle palace architecture of Japan’s feudal era. After lunch, learn how to **surikomi Yuzen (brush dyed Yuzen)**. Since the patterns are dyed by placing a paper stencil over material, you can make an authentic piece, even if this is your first time. Finally, visit the **Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion)**, a Zen Temple whose top two floors are completely covered in gold leaf, before returning to the hotel for dinner. (B, L, D)

**Day 8: Wed, July 16** – KYOTO – KAMEOKA – ARASHIYAMA – KYOTO. After breakfast, travel to Kameoka, where you will board the **Sagano Torokko Ressha (Sagano Romantic Train)**. Next, you’ll have the choice of several activities: relax in the “gender segregated” **open-air onsen hot spring baths** with 100% natural hot spring water, the only one in Arashiyama with a great view



of Togetsukyo Bridge, the Oi River, and Mt. Atago (fees apply), explore the famous **Arashiyama Bamboo Forests**, or shop for world-famous Arashiyama bamboo products. After lunch, **learn how to make wagashi** – traditional Japanese sweets. Finally, explore **Nishiki Market**, a narrow, five block long shopping street lined by more than one hundred shops and restaurants. Known as “Kyoto’s Kitchen,” this lively retail market specializes in all things food related, like fresh seafood, produce, knives and cookware, and is a great place to find seasonal foods and Kyoto specialties, such as Japanese sweets, pickles, dried seafood, and sushi. Most stores specialize in a particular type of food, and almost everything sold at the market is locally produced and procured. Return to the hotel for an evening of leisure. (B, L, D)

**Day 9: Thur, July 17** – KYOTO. This morning we will explore the Gion Festival (streets are closed to vehicular traffic). The **Gion Summer Festival** is held at Yasaka-jinja Shrine and the highlight is the Yamaboko Junko Grand Parade – which is the splendid pageantry of some 30 floats called “yamaboko” proceeding along the main streets of Kyoto. Each float, two-storied and about six meters tall, is topped with a long pole shaped like a spear. Adorned with exquisite craftwork such as woven fabric, dyed textiles and sculptures, these floats are so gorgeous that they are often described as “mobile art museums.” During the parade, children wearing make-up and musicians playing the flute, drums, and bells are seated on the second level of the floats. This festival is believed to have started some 1,100 years ago when floats were made and paraded in the town to appease the deity of plague and illness. You will be joining thousands of people in the merriment by watching the performances and dancers, eating matsuri (festival) food, and listening to great taiko drums. (B)

**Day 10: Fri, July 18** – KYOTO. Full day at leisure. Your hotel is surrounded by department stores, specialty stores, and restaurants. A perfect day to fulfill your shopping list. Your Local Guide will be available to assist as needed. (B)

**Day 11: Sat, July 19** – KYOTO – NARA – OSAKA – TOKYO – HONOLULU. After breakfast, check out from hotel. A full day of sightseeing is ahead. On our way to Osaka, experience a **traditional Japanese tea ceremony**. After lunch, visit the **Todaiji Temple** in Nara. Todaiji, the largest wooden building in Japan, houses the largest bronze statue of Buddha at 16.3 meters high. The surrounding **Nara Deer Park** is inhabited by **over 1,000 Shika deer**. Transfer to Itami Airport for our return flight home. Depart Osaka via Japan Airlines flt #128 at 5:00 pm and arrive in the Haneda Domestic Airport at 6:20 pm. Depart Haneda International Airport via Japan Airlines flt #74 at 9:05 pm and arrive in Honolulu at 9:50 am the same day. Aloha and welcome home! (B, L)

**UNESCO World Heritage Sites:** Himeji Castle (1993), A-Bomb Dome (1996), Itsukushima Shrine (1996), Kiyomizu Temple (1994), Nijo Castle (1994), Kinkakuji Temple (1994), Todaiji Temple (1998).

\* Fares are per person, USD based on double occupancy and include all airline taxes and fees. Airline fuel supplements, taxes and fees are subject to change and tour member is responsible for any increases. Some airline-imposed personal charges, including but not limited to baggage, priority boarding and special seating, may apply. For details visit [www.tripadvisor.com/AirlineFees](http://www.tripadvisor.com/AirlineFees). After initial deposit, a \$75 per person Non-Stop Travel (NST) Cancellation Fee will apply. Group departures may be cancelled, if there are less than 24 tour members. Final payment to NST for “non-cruise/line” Air and Land Package must be made by money order or personal check. NST does not guarantee that all tour members will fly together with Tour Manager. Tour Manager assignments, number of meals offered on tour, tour price, discount, and the “final” tour itinerary are subject to change with/without notice. **NST reserves the right to correct errors or omissions including but not limited to, fares, fees, and surcharges at any time.** Deposit: \$500 per person. Final Payment Due: 02/28/25. NST at its discretion, may use group and individual photos on its website, print, television, and various social media. † Early booking discount is per person. Purchase of NST’s complete Air and Land Package is required. †† Earn rewards every time you refer a friend. For each “new-to-NST” customer you refer, both you and your referral can receive a \$25 discount off your next NST escorted group. **Special Assistance:** You must notify NST, at time of reservation, of any disability requiring special attention. NST reserves the right to cancel your booking or terminate your vacation if your special needs or disabilities are not suitable for the vacation or if you are not traveling with a companion who will provide all the assistance you require. **Wheelchair and electric scooter access outside of the USA is severely restricted.** 091024