



SOUTH KOREA & JAPAN: CULTURAL LEGACIES – A LUXURY SMALL GROUP JOURNEY (2025)

Explore two vastly different and evolving national legacies — each steeped in rich heritage and tradition — and each poised on the cutting edge of tomorrow’s cultural and technological horizons.

Small Group Journeys, Luxury Small Group Journeys



South Korea, Japan, Asia



11 days from AU\$29,640 pp



18 Guests

Journey Overview

Explore two vastly different and evolving national legacies — each steeped in rich heritage and tradition — and each poised on the cutting edge of tomorrow’s cultural and technological horizons.

Journey Highlights

- Visit the edge of the demilitarised zone (DMZ) separating North and South Korea, including the Third Tunnel
- Discover South Korea’s imperial legacy in the temples and monuments of historic Gyeongju
- Take in a dazzling array of exotic seafood in Busan’s bustling Jagalchi, the largest fish market in South Korea
- Savour the time-honoured tradition of a Japanese tea ceremony in a Kyoto temple
- Learn the finer points of appreciating Japanese sake during a local brewery visit and tasting
- Ride on a high-speed train as you travel along an iconic route passing majestic Mount Fuji
- Experience the art of sushi making with help from a local expert in Tokyo



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Seoul, South Korea

Upon arrival in Seoul, you are met and transferred to your hotel in the heart of the bustling capital.

Four Seasons Hotel Seoul

Day 2: Seoul | Echoes of Empires Past

Begin your exploration of this vibrant city with a visit to Gyeongbokgung Palace. Commissioned in the 14th century, the palace has risen from the ashes of conquest several times throughout its storied past. Today, the palace endures as the largest of Seoul’s five historic palaces, its compound housing a wealth of museums, gardens and architectural wonders. Next, browse the revealing cultural exhibits of the National Folk Museum, and then visit the Bukchon Hanok Village, a collection of hundreds of hanoks (traditional houses) dating back to the 14th century. After a lunch of traditional Korean barbecue, stop at bustling Gwangjang Market, one of the oldest and largest traditional street markets in South Korea, and home to over 5,000 shops. This evening, join your fellow guests for a welcome dinner at the hotel.

Four Seasons Hotel Seoul | Meals: BLD

Day 3: Seoul | A Peninsula Divided

Today, head north to join a shared tour at the edge of the demilitarised zone (DMZ), a hotly contested border region that has divided the Korean Peninsula since 1953. Delve deeper with a tour of the Third Tunnel, a highly secured, mile-long corridor linking the two countries. At Dora Observatory, look out across the DMZ line toward North Korea. After lunch, return to Seoul for an afternoon at leisure, exploring the city on your own or just relaxing. This evening, embark on a street food tour in Seoul’s exciting Myeongdong neighbourhood, sampling everything from Korean egg toast to hotteok (sweet Korean pancakes).

Four Seasons Hotel Seoul | Meals: BL

Day 4: Gyeongju | Temples of the Silla Dynasty

Board a high-speed train to Gyeongju, former capital of the Silla Dynasty, a kingdom that ruled Korea from 668 to 935. Begin your exploration with a visit to Tumuli-gongwon, a large park with 23 tombs of Silla monarchs and family members. After lunch, visit photogenic Anapji Pond before continuing to the nearby Gyeongju National Museum and its exhibits showcasing treasures discovered within the tombs themselves. Continue to Bulguksa Temple, one of Korea’s most iconic structures. Perched atop a series of stone terraces, the temple’s 33 steps represent Buddhism’s 33 stages to enlightenment. The temple was all but destroyed in a 16th-century conflict with Japan. Lovingly rebuilt, it endures today as the crowning glory of Silla architecture. Continue to Busan, South Korea’s second-largest city and one of the world’s busiest ports, where you check in to your hotel.

Signiel Busan | Meals: BL

Day 5: Busan | Coastal Connections

Begin your day at the United Nations Cemetery, a solemn memorial that is the final resting place of more than 2,000 Korean War veterans. Afterward, browse the Jagalchi Fish Market, taking in a vast array of exotic seafood. Later, walk the narrow lanes of colourful Gamcheon Culture Village, and then enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. Enjoy a refreshing Scenic Sundowner as you look out over the bay.

Signiel Busan | Meals: BLD

Day 6: Osaka & Kyoto, Japan | Foodie’s Adventure

Fly to Osaka, Japan, and upon arrival visit Dotonbori, the bustling heart of this foodie capital, where diners indulge in everything from octopus dumplings to okonomiyaki, a battered and grilled concoction of chopped cabbage, meat or seafood, and seaweed, and enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. Continue on to historic, temple-filled Kyoto, and check in to your beautiful hotel.

Hotel the Mitsui Kyoto, a Luxury Collection Hotel & Spa | Meals: BLD

Day 7: Kyoto | The Golden Pavilion & Bamboo Grove

This morning, discover the glittering Kinkaku-ji Temple (Golden Pavilion) and contemplate Kyoto's iconic Zen rock garden at Ryoan-ji, the perfect spot for a meditative moment. Covered with gold leaf, the temple casts its delicate reflection in a tranquil pond. After lunch, explore the Arashiyama neighbourhood, including the garden of Tenryu-ji Temple. Dating back to the 14th century, the temple buildings themselves were destroyed and rebuilt over the course of several conflicts, while its stunning garden has survived the centuries in its original glory. Later, bask in the magical atmosphere of Arashiyama Bamboo Grove, strolling along a winding path as sunlight filters down through towering bamboo shoots — considered by many a healing experience. Return to your hotel for an evening at leisure.

Hotel the Mitsui Kyoto, a Luxury Collection Hotel & Spa | Meals: BL

Day 8: Kyoto | Traditional Tea & Sake Tasting

This morning, visit a local temple where you experience the art of the tea ceremony, noting its refined sense of hospitality and etiquette, which date to the time of the samurai. Continue to the 10,000 torii gates of Fushimi Inari Shrine. This Shinto shrine is renowned for its visually striking tunnel comprised of thousands of vermilion torii gates that line a network of trails leading into the wooded forest of Mount Inari. After lunch at a local restaurant, visit a local sake brewery to gain a deeper appreciation of this national spirit and enjoy a tasting. This evening, savour traditional Japanese cuisine while an attending geiko (as a geisha is known in Kyoto) and maiko (apprentice geisha) dance, sing, pour sake and chat about life in Kyoto.

Hotel the Mitsui Kyoto, a Luxury Collection Hotel & Spa | Meals: BLD

Day 9: Tokyo | Heart of the Great Metropolis

This morning, transfer to Kyoto Station and Ride Like a Local as you board a high-speed train bound for Tokyo. Hurling along in excess of 170 miles per hour, your route affords a glimpse of Mount Fuji's iconic profile. Upon arrival, enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. This afternoon, visit colourful Asakusa Kannon Temple before continuing to a family-owned workshop that specialises in Japanese drum making, and try your hand at playing the taiko, on an A&K-exclusive experience. Check in to your hotel and gather with your fellow guests for dinner at a local restaurant.

The Ritz-Carlton, Tokyo | Meals: BLD

Day 10: Tokyo | Sushi Making

Start your day at Tsukiji Fish Market, a bustling hub of Japanese daily life boasting a dizzying array of seafood. Then, embark on a culinary adventure as a local chef leads a hands-on sushi-making class, followed by lunch, for a memorable Chef 's Table experience. Explore the Tokyo National Museum, the oldest national museum in Japan and home to a vast collection of Japanese art and antiquities. Next, visit the sacred Meiji Jingu Shrine and stroll along the city's famed Omotesando Street. Tonight, enjoy cocktails and a farewell dinner at your hotel.

The Ritz-Carlton, Tokyo | Meals: BLD

Day 11: Depart Tokyo

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight home.

Meals: B

Journey Details

Internal Air Included: Busan/Osaka

Minimum age is 10 years.

This journey contains some active elements.

The visit to the DMZ is highly regulated, and entails shared touring with non-A&K guests and on non-A&K vehicles.

First group event: welcome briefing at 8:30 a.m. on Day 2.

Last group event: farewell dinner at 6:30 p.m. on Day 10.

Departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 2 guests.

Included with every Luxury Small Group Journey

- English-Speaking Resident Tour Director® and Local Guides
- Hand-Selected Luxury Accommodations
- Airport Meet and Greet with Private Transfers
- Travelling Bell Boy® Luggage Handling
- Full Breakfast Daily; Select Lunches and Dinners
- Traveller's Valet® Laundry Service
- Internet Access
- Entrance Fees, Taxes and All Gratuities Except Resident Tour Director
- 24/7 A&K On-Call Support
- Guaranteed Departures with Just Two Guests

Customise this Journey

Talk to one of our expert Journey Designers or your travel agent about booking this tour as a private journey for your own small group with family or friends. Or, if you would prefer to travel privately, find out more about creating the perfect bespoke Tailor-Made Journey based on this itinerary.

Map



Accommodation

Four Seasons Hotel Seoul



Centrally located nearby iconic sites including Gwanghwamun Plaza, the Royal Gyeongbokgung Palace and Sejong Art Centre, the Four Seasons Hotel Seoul provides a perfect base for discovering the city. This luxury hotel combines classic Korean motifs with a clean, modern aesthetic that effortlessly blends the old and new, its walls home to some 160 contemporary artworks. The 317 rooms and suites are flooded with natural light from the floor-to-ceiling windows which showcase incredible views out over the city and towards the surrounding mountains.

The hotel offers a wide range of dining options, with seven restaurants and bars to choose from. Local Korean favourites are on the menu at Maru, savour flavourful Italian cuisine at Bocalino, indulge in sushi and Japanese share plates at Kioku, while Yu Yuan delivers Michelin-starred Cantonese delights. Later sip a sundowner at the intimate Charles H. bar, where Seoul's burgeoning craft-cocktail scene is at its finest.

For those looking to relax, you can unwind in the Korean sauna, indulge in a treatment at the serene spa, or take a dip in the indoor swimming pool.

The Ritz-Carlton, Tokyo



A stay at this downtown Tokyo hotel begins on the 45th level of one of the city’s tallest buildings, where floor-to-ceiling windows perfectly frame the skyline, from Tokyo Tower, National Stadium to Mt. Fuji. Attractions like Mori Museum, Billboard Live and the Imperial Palace are just steps away from the hotel along with foreign embassies and high-end shopping. As guests settle into their stay, they discover luxury amenities as impressive as the view.

Offering a respite from the vibrant city life below, the 247 guest rooms and hotel suites feature an East-meets-West design, marble bathrooms and magnificent Tokyo views. The Club lounge on the 53rd floor enhances one’s stay with four ambient spaces, culinary offerings and exclusive events.

Discover the hotel’s seven restaurants and bar that promises to broaden your horizons. Enjoy Japanese culinary experiences at Hinokizaka, seasonal produce paired with local seafood at Towers, the Michelin-starred French cuisine at Azure 45 and more.

Spanning 21,528 square feet on the 46th floor, The Ritz-Carlton Spa, Tokyo encourages wellness with a blend of Eastern and Western traditions. Featuring a 20-meter indoor pool and variety of saunas, showers and baths round out the offering of this luxury day spa.

Guests can immerse themselves in the traditions of Japan without ever leaving the hotel. A dynamic selection of activities ranging from manga to Shorinjiryu Karate offers a first-hand experience of Japanese culture.

Why we like it:

- Five star hotel set within the city’s tallest building that elevates Tokyo hotel luxury to new heights
- Sensational 360-degree panoramic views of Tokyo
- The Ritz-Carlton features six incredible restaurants, which includes a Michelin-starred French cuisine at Azure 45
- A floor dedicated to health and wellness including a 20-meter indoor pool and variety of saunas, showers and baths

Dates & Pricing

Prices are in AUD, per person, based on double occupancy

Apr 4, 2025 - Apr 14, 2025

Price	Single Supplement	Internal Air (From)	Availability
AU\$30,420 pp	AU\$13,005	Included	Call for Availability

May 9, 2025 - May 19, 2025

Price	Single Supplement	Internal Air (From)	Availability
AU\$29,640 pp	AU\$12,240	Included	Call for Availability

Oct 10, 2025 - Oct 20, 2025

Price	Single Supplement	Internal Air (From)	Availability
AU\$29,640 pp	AU\$12,240	Included	Call for Availability

Nov 7, 2025 - Nov 17, 2025

Price	Single Supplement	Internal Air (From)	Availability
AU\$29,640 pp	AU\$12,240	Included	Call for Availability

Abercrombie & Kent

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