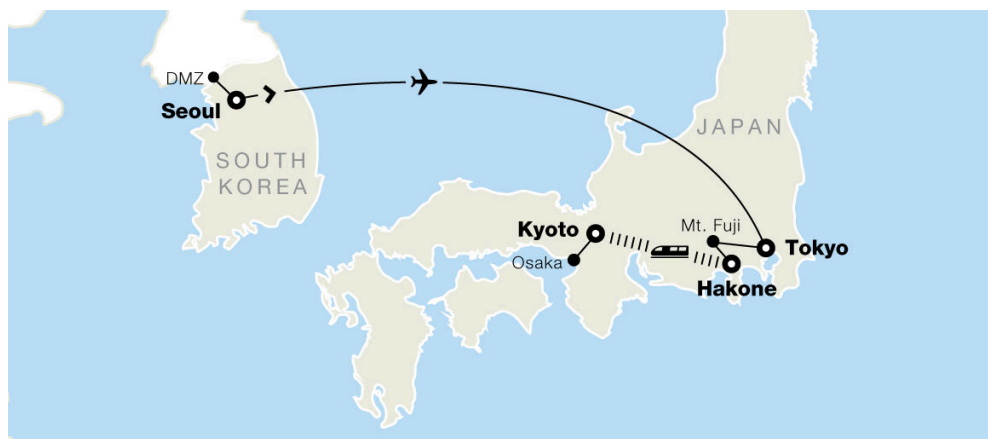




# East Asia Convention Tour: South Korea & Japan

12 days | Mar 20 2025—Mar 31 2025

On the global pop culture scene, South Korea's star has steadily risen in recent years. That's thanks in part to sensationally popular Korean TV shows and films, foods, beauty trends, and pop bands that have taken the world by storm—and piqued travelers' curiosity about the country in the process. Korea's easterly neighbor, Japan, offers up rich history, cultural immersion, and impeccable hospitality that's always in high demand. Spend two weeks getting to know these neighboring Asian nations—from their neon-lit cities to their rural villages to their serene, natural landscapes—alongside fellow Group Coordinators and Go Ahead staff. Tour point value: 3,200 for one; 5,600 for two.



## Your tour package includes

- 9 nights in handpicked hotels
- 9 breakfasts
- 3 lunches
- 6 dinners with beer or wine
- 1 liquor tasting
- 4 tastings
- 2 cooking classes
- 10 sightseeing tours
- Expert Tour Directors & local guides
- Private deluxe motor coach
- 1 on-tour flight
- 1 train ride

## Included highlights

- Convention Tour meeting
- Gyeongbokgung Palace in Seoul
- Kimchi-making class
- Imjin River & DMZ visit
- Sushi tasting at Tokyo's Tsukiji Outer Market
- Tokyo's dynamic Shibuya and Harajuku areas
- Japanese cooking class & dinner
- Hakone Open-Air Museum
- Golden Pavilion in Kyoto

## Tour pace

On this guided tour, you'll walk for about 2.5 hours daily across mostly flat terrain, including paved roads and gravel paths, with few hills. You may need to climb stairs when visiting temples.

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For more information, contact

[grouptoursite.ca/tours/south-korea-and-japan](http://grouptoursite.ca/tours/south-korea-and-japan) | 1-800-742-1731

# East Asia Convention Tour: South Korea & Japan

12 days

## Overnight Flight → 1 night

### Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Seoul today.

## Seoul → 4 nights

### Day 2: Arrival in Seoul

*Included meals: light dinner*

Welcome to South Korea! Settle into your hotel this evening and enjoy a light dinner.

### Day 3: Seoul Tower & Korean BBQ dinner

*Included meals: breakfast, welcome dinner*

Spend a free morning in the bustling city of Seoul before enjoying an optional visit to the beloved local landmark of Seoul Tower, an observation and communication tower located on the peak of Namsan Mountain. Ascend to the top of the symbol of the city and enjoy panoramic views of the surrounding area. Then, peruse the relaxing cafes and shops inside and around the tower.

Tonight, sit down for a quintessential Korean evening out with friends and feast on Korean BBQ. Enjoy grilling your own beef at your table as you get to know your fellow Group Coordinators and Tour Director during tonight's welcome dinner, served with beer or wine.

### Day 4: Sightseeing tour of Seoul & kimchi-making class

*Included meals: breakfast, tasting, dinner*

Meet up with your local guide and get to know South Korea's capital city, Seoul. Situated in the northwestern reaches of South Korea, the thriving metropolis is home to modern skyscrapers, ornate Buddhist temples, grand palaces, and nearly 10 million residents. It's also the perfect place to experience many fun and dynamic Korean cultural trends—from K-pop music to novelty foods like dakbal (spicy chicken feet) and fruit sandwiches—that have flourished around the world throughout the last decade.

- Step inside the 14th-century, 7,700-room Gyeongbokgung Palace, built by King Taejo and widely considered the most beautiful of

Seoul's five grand palaces. This must-see structure burned down during the Imjin War in the late 1500s, but was fully restored by 1919—a project that took 67 years to complete.

- Watch the Palace Royal Guard Changing Ceremony, a reenactment of the guard-changing procedure that took place during the Joseon dynasty. The ceremony features colorful reproduction costumes, as well as instruments and weapons, recreated based on historical records.
- Visit the National Folk Museum of Korea to learn about traditional ways of life, which are rapidly disappearing as a result of modernization and urbanization.
- Enter bustling Gwangjang Market, the city's oldest market, where you'll find everything from street food to silks to hanbok—Confucian-inspired Korean clothing whose origins date back more than 2,000 years. Hanbok signify social class, gender, and marital status through their style and colors.
- Enjoy a tasting of the market's not-to-be-missed street food, like tteokbokki (spicy rice cakes) or bindaetteok (a Korean pancake made of mung beans, meat, and vegetables). Next, you can keep snacking your way through Gwangjang Market or explore and shop nearby with your free time.

No Korean meal would be complete without kimchi, a traditional side dish of spicy, fermented vegetables and (often, but not always) fish sauce. Join your fellow travelers for a hands-on class to learn how to make your very own traditional kimchi using ingredients like cabbage, radishes, gochugaru (Korean chili powder), garlic, and ginger.

- Make your own kimchi and take a small jar of the beloved snack as a souvenir.
- Head to a local restaurant serving Korean specialties—including more kimchi, of course.

### Day 5: Korean War History & DMZ visit

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch*

Get an authentic look at the relationship between South Korea and North Korea on a visit to the DMZ, or Demilitarized Zone.

- Travel out of Seoul and begin your tour in Imjingak Park, where you'll view the Freedom Bridge, named for the nearly 13,000 prisoners of war who were returned home here in 1953.
- Board a military bus and continue on to a theater to learn about the fascinating history of the Korean War and the heavily fortified border.
- While in the DMZ, visit Dorasan Station, the last train stop before reaching North Korean territory.
- Take in panoramic views of North Korea's landscape from the Dorasan Observatory, which offers the best vantage point of North Korea from the south.
- Descend into the Tunnel of Aggression and learn how North Koreans built the extensive underground tunnel system in an effort to launch a surprise attack on the South in the 1970s.
- Enjoy an included lunch en route back to Seoul.

*Please note: Soldiers will be screening tour participants at the entrance gate to the tunnels. You must bring your passport in order to register at this checkpoint. Travelers will need to walk down a steep slope for half a mile. There is no elevator to enter the tunnel, so travelers must be comfortable climbing stairs in order to enter and exit. This excursion is not recommended for travelers who are claustrophobic.*

## Tokyo → 3 nights

### Day 6: Convention Tour meeting & flight to Tokyo

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

Join your group for a Convention Tour meeting, a series of presentations and discussions designed with Group Coordinators' questions, experiences, and interests in mind.

- Begin with a keynote address by senior members of Go Ahead Tours staff, followed by an insider's view of the company and tours.

For more information, contact

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- Discuss trip planning and recruiting best practices with staff and your fellow Group Coordinators.
- Get an overview of the many benefits available to you as a Group Coordinator and learn about new program updates, from app features to perks.
- Enjoy coffee, tea, mineral water, and an included lunch.

This afternoon, fly to Tokyo, where you'll find a mix of ultra-modern sites and ancient relics and experiences. After settling in at your hotel, gather together this evening for an included dinner, served with beer or wine.

### Day 7: Sightseeing tour of Tokyo & cooking class

*Included meals: breakfast, tasting, dinner*

Join a local guide and explore Tokyo's peaceful parks and modern skyscrapers—juxtaposed with ancient shrines and temples—all composing the tapestry of the city, which is home to nearly 14 million people.

- Walk through Tsukiji Outer Market, whose historic lanes and alleys are chock-full of sushi shops, ramen stalls, tea vendors, and more.
- Learn about Japan's heritage with seafood commerce and consumption, and visit a vendor's stall to sample fresh sushi (*vegetarian option available*).
- View Tokyo's iconic Shibuya Crossing—the world's largest, with as many as 3,000 pedestrians passing through the busy intersection at a time—as you drive through the center of the city.
- Set off on a short walk from Yoyogi Park—one of Tokyo's most expansive parks, full of lush green lawns, lively ponds, and dramatic forested areas—to Meiji Jingu shrine, the final resting place of Emperor Meiji, under whose turn-of-the-century reign Japan became a major power in the modern world.
- Stroll through the lively Harajuku neighborhood, which is known for its colorful street art, youthful fashion trends, and cosplay culture.

Tonight, join an experienced chef at a local restaurant for a cooking lesson and dinner.

- Tie on your apron and watch as the chef demonstrates how to make traditional Japanese cuisine.
- Try your hand at crafting your own authentic local meal.
- Sit down to enjoy the dish you've made.

### Day 8: Sightseeing tour of Kamakura

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch*

Step aboard a train in Tokyo and make your way to the seaside city of Kamakura, where you'll explore its countryside, temples, and shrines on a guided walking tour.

- Pay a visit to the city's famous Great Buddha—the second-tallest statue of Buddha in the country—and Hase Kannon Temple, which is known for an imposing gold-gilded statue of its namesake goddess (complete with all 11 of her heads).
- Sit down for an included lunch and enjoy free time to peruse the arts and crafts for sale along Komachi Street, which is lined with restaurants, cafes, and shops.

*Please note: Travelers should expect to walk around 10,000 steps along even terrain.*

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## Hakone → 1 night

### Day 9: Hakone via Mount Fuji

*Included meals: breakfast*

Enjoy a free morning in Tokyo before setting off to Hakone, a resort town in the Ōwakudani Valley that's known for its hot springs.

- Make a photo stop at Mount Fuji, which stands an imposing 12,388 feet tall.
- Ascend halfway up the mountain and take in panoramic views of nearby lakes and villages from the observatory.

This evening, sit down for an included dinner, served with beer or wine, followed by free time to relax in the hotel's hot springs.

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## Kyoto → 2 nights

### Day 10: Mount Komagatake, Lake Ashi & train to Kyoto

*Included meals: breakfast*

This morning, take a guided tour of Mount Komagatake—a lava dome created when a volcano last erupted more than 40,000 years ago—and Lake Ashi.

- Enjoy a seven-minute ropeway ride up to the top of Mount Komagatake, which is a sacred place for the Shinto religion, admiring spectacular views from the cable car as you go.
- Embark on a cruise of Lake Ashi, formed after Mount Hakone erupted 3,000 years ago.
- Take in surreal views of Mount Fuji looming in the background.

- Pay a visit to the Hakone Open-Air Museum, a 17-acre park with countless sculptures and over 300 works by Picasso.

This afternoon, board a high-speed bullet train to Kyoto.

### Day 11: Sightseeing tour of Kyoto & Zen meditation class

*Included meals: breakfast, tasting, farewell dinner, liquor tasting*

Join a local guide for a tour of Kyoto. The city served as the capital of Japan for more than 1,000 years—and is still considered its spiritual capital today.

- Tour the 17th-century Nijo Castle, which boasts intricate architecture and a unique alarm system: floors that sound like a nightingale when walked on.
- See the famous 14th-century Kinkaku-ji temple, widely known as the Golden Pavilion, which sits at the edge of a tranquil reflecting pond and is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

This afternoon, visit a local Buddhist temple and immerse yourself in the spiritual traditions of Japan.

- Tour the temple and tap into your unconscious mind during a guided Zen meditation session.
- Sip matcha green tea alongside a traditional Japanese sweet.

Tonight, join your fellow travelers at a farewell dinner in Kyoto, where you'll enjoy a sake tasting and enjoy traditional shabu-shabu (hot pot).

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## Flight Home

### Day 12: Transfer to Osaka, sightseeing tour & departure

*Included meals: breakfast, tasting*

Continue on to Osaka, the birthplace of many of Japan's well-known arts, such as Kabuki theater and the tea ceremony. Today's guided tour, led by your Tour Director, offers a look inside the city's historic sites.

- Make a photo stop at the massive Osaka Castle, which was built by legendary samurai and leader Toyotomi Hideyoshi—the “Great Unifier” who completed the unification of Japan in the 16th century.
- Stroll through Kuromon Ichiba market, famous for its selection of fresh fish, vegetables, fruit, and other Japanese specialties.

This afternoon, transfer to the airport to board your flight home.