Japan Luxury Rail Tour

https://www.irtsociety.com/journey/deluxe-japan-rail-journey-kyushu-seven-stars/

Overview

The Highlights

- Private Tokyo city tour and visit Imperial Palace’s stunning East Gardens

- Private meeting with a sumo wrestler

- Visit to Tokyo’s famed Nakamise Shopping Street (one of world's busiest)

- Stroll through Kenrokuen garden, one of Japan’s finest

- Bullet train rides on just-opened Kanazawa line in west Japan and to Kyoto

- Private city tour of Kanazawa

- Ride on ultra-scenic Sagano Romantic Train

- English-speaking guide & air-conditioned private coach bus for sightseeing

- Private tea ceremony and a conversation with a geisha

- Overnight in Kurashiki, the “Bruges of Japan”

- Kyoto city tour

- Overnight stays in fine ryokans, traditional Japanese hot springs inn

- All hotel nights, luggage handling, airport transfers, train tickets and all sightseeing activities as described in the itinerary

The Tour

Our Japan Luxury Rail Tour is an exquisite jewel of a journey. Imagine enjoying pre-trip canapés and drinks in the *Seven Stars*' beautiful private waiting room in Fukuoka's Hakata Station. Suddenly, the President of JR Kyushu drops by to welcome you. (This happened to our 2016 group!)

Imagine boarding this spectacular new train, the first luxury sleeper train in Japan. As you leave the station, you see dozens of locals waving the flags of the U.S. and other nations (depending on who's on board) to send you off.

Itinerary

Day 1: Tokyo

Private airport transfer from either international airport. The famed Peninsula is our hotel for the next two nights.

Day 2: Tokyo

This morning, meet your guide and visit the Imperial Palace’s beautiful East Gardens and Fukagawa Fudo temple, followed by a peek at the “Akihabara scene,” a fascinating window into the parallel universe of Japan’s geek-youth culture. Then meet and speak with retired sumo wrestlers, and visit Meiji Shrine, historic Asakusa district and Nakamise Shopping Street.

Day 3: Kanazawa

This morning, catch the new Shinkansen (bullet train) to Kanazawa, traveling to the west coast of

Japan. Enjoy a walking tour of Kenrokuen Garden, one of the finest in Japan, a Kanazawa Castle tour and gold leaf workshop—to make your own pair of golden chopsticks. Other gems: a restored samurai house and tiny garden. Next two overnights at the Nikko Hotel.

Day 4: Kanazawa

Enjoy a full day touring in Kanazawa, with visits to its contemporary art museum, the Higashi district's quaint streets and narrow alleyways, and an exquisite 19th-century chaya, or teahouse. Kanazawa is remarkable for its architecture and gardens, and also for its samurai and geisha cultures.

Day 5: Bullet Train to Kyoto

Now the focus shifts to Kyoto, hub of traditional Japanese culture. Begin with morning ride on bullet train to Kyoto. Today's activities include visits to the railway museum, the grand Kiyomizu-dera temple and a private tea ceremony. Next two overnights at Westin Miyako.

Day 6: Kyoto

Today enjoy spectacular Silver and Golden Pavilions, the beautiful, tree-lined Philosopher's Walk, the famed Daimaru Food Floor (one of Japan's best food stores), traditional Japanese tea ceremony and — a real treat— special meeting with one of Kyoto's famous geishas.

Day 7: Eastern Kyoto Mountains

Today, finish your Kyoto stay with visit to beautiful Arashiyama district with its Bamboo Forest, one of the most famous in all of Japan. See Tenryū-ji Temple and Sanjusangendo, a towering pavilion from olden times. Finish with a scenic ride on Sagano Romantic Train.

Day 8: Kyoto – Kurashiki

Morning train to Kurashiki. It's called the "Bruges of Japan" because of its charm, canals, stone bridges, weeping willows, and winding streets. We will see the world-class Ohara Museum of Art, which houses many Western masterpieces as well as modern Japanese works. Overnight Kurashiki Ryokan.

Day 9: Fukuoka

This morning, three-hour train to Fukuoka, on Japan's southernmost island, Kyushu. This is a lively and surprising city. Enjoy the extensive shopping and dining opportunities. Or relax with a stroll along the seaside boardwalk. Overnight at Hotel Nikko Fukuoka.

Day 10: Seven Stars Train

Enjoy your morning before you transfer to Hakata Station. There, the staff of the luxurious Cruise Train Seven Stars in Kyushu will welcome you to the beautiful Seven Stars' Kensei (Venus) private

lounge in the station. Relax and nibble delectable sweets, enjoy music by the pianist and other musicians, plus a champagne toast to your tour. With the clang of a traditional railroad bell, each Seven Stars passenger is welcomed and accompanied to the platform. After the gorgeous Seven Stars arrives, you'll be shown to your cabin, where your luggage is already stowed.

Today, visit Mojiko and tour Usa Jingu Shrine or enjoy teatime and cultural craft workshop on the train. Tonight, enjoy a drink in "Blue Moon" bar car. Then savor a dinner in the diner, as live musicians entertain. The Seven Stars stops at night to assure restful slumber. Overnight on train tonight, stabled at Aso.

Day 11: Aso and Yufuin

Enjoy stunning Aso in the early morning. Lunch on board, using ingredients from Oita. Arrive Yufuin in the afternoon. You will stay in an exquisite boutique ryokan (Japanese inn,) which is famous for its luxurious natural hot springs. (You will stay at one of several ryokans since they are all small.) You will leave your large suitcases on board and take just an overnight bag to the ryokan. Overnight Yufuin area ryokan.

Day 12: Miyazaki

After a late breakfast, join the locals in a traditional ceremony of planting a small tree. Then return to the train for a unique lunch. This afternoon, travel to Miyazaki's eastern coast on the scenic Nippo line. Miyazaki enjoys scenic views of both the ocean and nearby mountains. Overnight on the train in Kagoshima-Chuo station.

Day 13: Kagoshima-Chuo-Fukuoka

On your final day aboard the Seven Stars train, you will travel on the Hisatsu line with its famous swtich-back, one of the top three most scenic railway views in Japan. Enjoy a goodbye lunch and festivities on board. Then visit the Aoi-Aso Shrine before re-boarding the Seven Stars for our return trip to Hakata Station. Your guide will escort you back to the hotel for your final night in Japan. Dinner on your own tonight in one of Fukuoka's great restaurants.

Day 14: Fukuoka

After your included breakfast, depart for home any time today. A private transfer to the airport is included. Or, begin an extension, perhaps with the Seven Stars' "little sister," JR Kyushu's Sweet Train.

Dates & Prices

Our Process / How to Book Your Trip:

This is a suggested itinerary for a wonderful private journey. It will be fully customized for you. Please contact us at (800) 478-4881, or +1 502 897 1725, or email us at tourdesk@irtsociety.com , to schedule a brief conversation with one of our specialists to discuss our process.

Please note we do not book standalone journeys on the *Seven Stars.* Journeys are customizable and must be at least 11 days in length.

More

This is a private journey. Medical/evacuation insurance is required for this journey. We highly recommend full tour cancellation/interruption insurance to protect your travel investment. We will send a quote upon booking. The precise itinerary and off-train experiences for the Seven Stars program change with the seasons to take full advantage of the wonders of Kyushu.

Request an extension if you wish - perhaps with the Sweet Train.

Latest News: View owner Owen Hardy's blog about his Japanese adventure on the Kyushu Seven Stars. Spoiler alert: He loved it!