



**ICAN presents:  
Journey to Japan!**

**June 3–13, 2025**

Join ICAN and your fellow ceramic artists to explore Japan's ancient roots and modern wonders on a thrilling journey through the country's history and culture. Stroll through shrines, delicately manicured gardens, Buddhist temples, and bamboo groves. Get swept up in the dazzling neighborhoods and side streets of Kyoto and nearby villages. Take a deep dive into the centuries-old and still practiced traditions of Japanese ceramics with site visits to working studios, kiln tours, and mesmerizing museums devoted to pottery. Get ready for a complete sensory overload!

## Trip Highlights:

- Kyoto ceramics district, the Kiyomizu Rokubei, Kondo Yuzo, and Raku museums, and Yakimono Gallery.
- Full Buddhist service performed by 40 chanting monks, including a fire ceremony.
- Daitokuji Zen monastery for a Way of Tea ceremony with an extensive teabowl collection.
- Bizen pottery village, practicing artists, and the tunnel kilns.
- Kyoto's Gion geisha area; Kennin-ji monastery and gardens.
- Nishijin textile district; demo by a 5th generation master of gold leaf.
- Tamba village to visit local ceramics studio and kilns.
- Celadon master's studio.
- Calligraphy master and performance.
- Shigaraki, Sagawa Museum of Art, plus local ceramic studios.
- Rengei-ji's stunning gardens and architecture in northern Kyoto.
- Ikebana demonstration with ceramic vases in the Sogetsu Ikebana school.
- Kyoto's oldest inn and garden and demo on how various dishes are used to present a Japanese Kaiseki meal.
- Shisendo Hall of the Poet Hermits, former home of a samurai now a Soto Zen temple and a sukiya-style home and scroll garden.
- Contemporary ceramic artist studios and Kawai Kanjiro house
- Optional Kyoto treasures: Tenryu-ji, one of the oldest gardens in Kyoto; Kyoto's bamboo forests; the 10,000 bright vermilion torii gates of Fushimi Inari; delicacies at Kyoto's Nishiki Market; the Philosopher's path; Ginkaku-ji (Silver Pavillion).

## Lodging:

The Royal Park Hotel Kyoto Sanjo

[www.royalparkhotels.co.jp/en/the/kyotosanjo/](http://www.royalparkhotels.co.jp/en/the/kyotosanjo/)

Singles: Single rooms are available in each hotel for an extra charge.

## Included in the Registration:

- 9-nights double occupancy at the Royal Park Hotel Kyoto Sanjo—Western-style room.
- Local transport: Subways, taxis, coach travel for Tamba and Shigaraki, and ordinary car train to/from Bizen
- 9 breakfasts
- 7 lunches, including water, coffee or tea (soft drinks or alcoholic beverages paid individually)
- 2 dinners, including water, coffee or tea (soft drinks or alcoholic beverages paid individually)
- All admissions
- Tour Leader(s) fully fluent in Japanese and Japanese art and culture expert, tour manager
- Japanese ceramics expert for four days of touring with introductions to ceramic artists in Tamba, Shigarki, Bizen, and Kyoto
- All tours conducted in English

## Not Included in the Registration:

- International airfare for tour guests
- Transfers to/from arrival and departure airport and tour hotel
- Personal expenses incurred within hotel properties including laundry, phone calls, meals, beverages, and room service
- Personal purchases and shipping
- Transportation that is not included as part of the tour itinerary
- Admissions and fees not included as part of the tour itinerary
- 7 dinners; drinks with meals other than Japanese tea or water
- Guide tipping

# Daily Itinerary

## Day 1 Tuesday, June 3

International flights depart for Japan

## Day 2 Wednesday, June 4

Arrival in Japan

Arrive Osaka Kansai or Osaka Itami airport. Transfer on your own to the Royal Park Kyoto Sanjo hotel, our well-located tour hotel convenient to public transport.

*Hotel: Royal Park The Kyoto*

*Meals: None*

## Day 3 Thursday, June 5

Kyoto

Spend the morning at Daitokuji Zen monastery, for a private experience of the Way of Tea with the abbot of Zuiho-in sub-temple, an introduction to their extensive tea bowl collection, and a discussion of how the ceramic history of Japan is so closely tied to the tea ceremony. Next, explore more of Daitoku-ji, including a visit to Koto-in and Zuiho-in. After a Zen-style vegetarian lunch travel to eastern Kyoto to visit Yakimono gallery for a deeper introduction to Japanese ceramics with our Japanese ceramics expert, Robert Yellin. Afterward, you can have an optional walk along the Philosopher's path or a visit to Ginkaku-ji (Silver Pavillion). Dinner will be on your own this evening after returning to your hotel.

*Hotel: Royal Park The Kyoto*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

## Day 4 Friday, June 6

Kyoto, Tamba

Travel via bus to the town of Tamba to start the exploration of ceramics with a visit to the studio and kilns of some local ceramic artists. Tamba ware originated in the medieval period and is typically a style used for storage jars and vases and it is also famous for its sake bottles. Rob Yellin will put the artists you are visiting in context so that you will have a deeper appreciation of this type of Yakishime, high-fired unglazed stoneware. After our return to Kyoto we will have a group dinner at a local restaurant.

*Hotel: Royal Park The Kyoto*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

## Day 5 Saturday, June 7

Kyoto

Explore the Gion geisha area, including the Kennin-ji monastery and gardens, followed by a walking tour of the nearby Kyoto traditional ceramics district, including the Kiyomizu Rokubei family generational museum, the Kondo Yuzo museum, and a visit to the home of a renowned celadon master. Learn about the 300-year old Ninsei and Kenzan styles. Return to the center of Kyoto to visit a current ceramics show. The rest of today is a free day in Kyoto, where you can adventure out on your own with our suggestions. We suggest traveling to western Kyoto, to the Arashiyama area, via the local trolley. You can explore Tenryu-ji, one of the oldest gardens in Kyoto, dating from the early 14th century and afterward, walk through one of Kyoto's famous bamboo forests before heading to lunch at a local noodle shop. Or, you may decide to climb through the famous 10,000 bright vermilion torii gates of Fushimi Inari then explore the delicacies on offer at Kyoto's Nishiki Market. Our self-guided instructions provide over a dozen possible days of exploration. Tonight's dinner will be a on your own.

*Hotel: Royal Park The Kyoto*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

## **Day 6 Sunday, June 8**

Kyoto

Early risers may go to an optional temple visit for a full Buddhist service performed by 40 chanting monks, including a fire ceremony. After breakfast, we'll travel to the Nishijin textile district to meet a 5th generation master of gold leaf. In his beautifully preserved, traditional Kyoto-style merchant house, he will introduce you to his intricate process. Next, travel to the Raku Museum followed by lunch. After lunch, we'll visit a working artist. The rest of the afternoon will be free for exploring Kyoto on your own using a complimentary shopping and dining map.

*Hotel: Royal Park The Kyoto*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

## **Day 7 Monday, June 9**

Kyoto

Start the day with a visit to a local ceramics master. Next, we'll visit Rengei-ji, an intimate hideaway in northern Kyoto, where the garden harmonizes perfectly with the adjacent mountains. The temple's abbot and his wife will welcome us with whisked green tea served in their tearoom overlooking a babbling brook. Often overlooked, this stunning garden and temple inspired architectural genius I.M. Pei. Lunch will be at one of Kyoto's oldest inns where we'll enjoy an ikebana demonstration by a master teacher in the Sogetsu Ikebana school and a showing of specialized ceramic vases. The proprietor of Kyoto's oldest inn and garden, located facing the Takano River, will do a presentation on how the various styles of dishes are used in the presentation of a Japanese Kaiseki meal. We end our day at Shisendo, the Hall of the Poet Hermits, the former home of a samurai, which was later converted to a Soto Zen temple. After exploring the highly complex, yet deceptively simple transitional entry area, we enter to find a rustic, sukiya-style home and scroll garden.

*Hotel: Royal Park The Kyoto*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

## **Day 8 Tuesday, June 10**

Kyoto, Bizen

Today we head to Okayama prefecture for a visit to the Bizen Pottery Village in Imbe. Travel via Shinkansen (bullet) and local train. Rob will lead us on an exploration of the various tunnel kilns and artists still practicing the centuries old art of creating these unique reddish or brown-colored, unglazed works. We will learn about the six major variations of Bizenware and how they are created through the careful placement of the objects in the kiln.

*Hotel: Royal Park The Kyoto*

*Meals: Breakfast*

## **Day 9 Wednesday, June 11**

Kyoto, Shigaraki

On today's out-of-town excursion by private bus to Shiga prefecture, we will visit the Sagawa Museum of Art, a beautiful contemporary architectural site, which has devoted a special underground wing to the spectacular work of 15th generation Raku potter, Raku Kichizaemon IV. We'll enjoy a Japanese bento lunch en route and will visit the studios of a selection of ceramic artists and enjoy kiln tours with commentary provided by Robert Yellin. Return to Kyoto by early evening for dinner on your own.

*Hotel: Royal Park The Kyoto*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

## **Day 10 Thursday, June 12**

Kyoto

Today is devoted to a series of visits carefully selected by Robert Yellin to highlight contemporary ceramic artists in the Kyoto area or a showcase of artists (depends on availability) and include a visit to the Kawai Kanjiro

house. Lunch will be in a Zen-style vegetarian restaurant set in a lovely old house near Kiyomizu temple. End the day with a farewell dinner.

*Hotel: Royal Park The Kyoto.*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### **Day 11 Friday, June 13**

Departure from Japan to International destinations. You'll have the morning free to take in the sights, shop, or simply stroll Kyoto's varied neighborhoods one last time. Transfer on own to Osaka Kansai International Airport or Osaka Itami Airport.

*Meals: Breakfast*

## **Additional Travel Information**

- Walking and stairs: **IMPORTANT** This trip will include a significant amount of walking including stairs and steep inclines, and is not recommended for those who have difficulty walking for long distances or at a swift pace. Pack comfortable shoes. Plan to be attentive and stay with the group at all times during walking tours. Each tour is timely and will need to keep moving. We will not be able to wait for individual stragglers.
- Additional accommodations at the group hotel required prior to or following the tour dates can be arranged and paid through ICAN and its tour partner own.
- All additional transportation needed beyond what is listed in the tour itinerary must be arranged and paid for on your own.
- Passports must be valid for 6 months after you have completed your travel.
- Daily/group participation: If for any reason you are unable to participate in an activity, please speak to the ICAN manager or the primary tour guide in advance while on the tour so the necessary arrangements can be made. Note that all tickets, tours, and transportation are arranged and paid for in advance
- Additional information pertaining to travel in Japan will be sent to registered guests once the trip has sold out (or the minimum number of spots have sold) and the trip is confirmed.
- We recommend that you do not book non-refundable flights or other services until the minimum number of spots have sold and the trip is confirmed. The trip will be confirmed to each guest as soon as possible.
- We regret that we are not able to accommodate gluten free (celiac), vegan, or fish allergy diets on group trips to Japan.
- All tour inquiries should be directed to the ICAN manager, Holly Goring, at [hgoring@ceramics.org](mailto:hgoring@ceramics.org) or 614-895-4213. Please do not make direct inquiries to the hotels or the venues listed in the itinerary.
- Itinerary subject to change.