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## PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT ESCAPE

DR. PETER BLOCH & Doctors-on-Tour present a

# CME & CULTURAL TOUR OF JAPAN

**“THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN”**

MAY 22 – JUNE 5, 2022



### The Organizers...

#### Doctors-on-Tour

**Doctors-on-Tour** was created in 2000 and specializes in offering ecological, cultural, gastronomical and adventure travel to exotic destinations for physicians who want to combine learning and travelling. Our programs offer targeted educational programs offering updates on current topics of interest together with meetings and discussions with local health care representatives to specifically discuss common medical developments in, and challenges facing, the local health care systems in both Canada and the country where the meetings and discussions are being located. This also includes in-depth tours of hospital facilities (both public and private) in order to meet with local medical practitioners and review, and compare, facilities, techniques and practices on a first hand basis. We offer programs in several worldwide locations including to such diverse and intriguing areas as **South America (Brazil, Chile/Argentina, Ecuador/Peru), Africa (Kenya/Tanzania, Morocco, South Africa, Zanzibar, Kilimanjaro climb), India, Bhutan, China, Japan, South East Asia (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos & Bali), Malaysia/Singapore, New Zealand and Europe (Eastern Europe, Iceland, Spain).**

Additional information, including detailed program brochures downloadable in pdf format and recent testimonials, can be found at [www.doctorsontour.ca](http://www.doctorsontour.ca). The company is a licensed retail travel organization under The Travel Industry Act of Ontario thereby affording complete protection of all monies paid prior to departure. (TICO registration no. 50009110).

Contact us at - tel: 416-231-8466; toll free: 1-855-DOC-TOUR (362-8687); fax: 1-888-612-1459

e: [info@doctorsontour.ca](mailto:info@doctorsontour.ca)

**Dr. Peter Bloch, M.D. - Oakville, On.**

**Dr. Peter Bloch** lived in Chile for 20 years, having started medical school there, but completed his training at Western. He has been a Family Physician in Oakville since 1976 and is an avid world traveller, including his spirited hosting of several extremely successful CME cultural and ecological tours with Doctors-on-Tour since 2005 including Chile, Argentina, Vietnam & Cambodia, Ecuador & the Galapagos, Northern and Southern India, Kenya & Tanzania, Brazil, Spain & Portugal, South Africa, New Zealand, China, Bhutan & Myanmar, Malaysia & Singapore and Iceland.

Dr. Bloch may be contacted at -

tel: 905-842-2660, e: [78pbloch@gmail.com](mailto:78pbloch@gmail.com)



## The Destination... JAPAN

Hardly a day goes by that you don't hear something about Japan, whether the subject is trade, travel, cuisine, the arts, or Japanese imports ranging from Sony and Toyota to karaoke and anime. Yet Japan remains something of an enigma to people in the Western world. What best describes this Asian nation? Is it the giant producer of cars and an entire array of sleek electronic goods that compete favorably with the best in the West? Or is it still the land of *geisha* and *bonsai*, the punctilious tea ceremony, and the delicate art of flower arrangement? Has it become, in its outlook and popular culture, a country more Western than Asian? Or has it retained its unique ancient traditions while forging a central place in the contemporary post-industrialized world?

In fact, Japan is an intricate blend of East and West, a land of contrasts, and our unique itinerary embraces these, combining exciting and innovative contemporary Japan with its traditional legacies. From imperial castles to snow-capped mountains and Shinto shrines to modern boulevards, futuristic bullet trains speeding by kimono-clad ladies and soccer players honing their skills while sumo wrestlers train nearby, this is Japan.

Start in **Tokyo**, the capital since the late 1800's and an endlessly rewarding city to explore. Visit the Meiji Shrine dedicated to a Japanese Emperor who died in 1912. Close by is Harajuku, the uniquely colourful youth fashion quarter with many bargains to be had. Pay your respects at the Imperial Palace and take a river cruise to the old quarter of Asakusa, home of the city's oldest Geisha district and colourful street markets.

From Tokyo, drive to **Hakone National Park**, a region of lakes and spectacular scenery including a Japanese icon, Mount Fuji best viewed from the Komagatake cable car. Stay in a traditional *ryokan* for a uniquely Japanese night's sleep.

Next is the alpine town of Takayama nestled in the Hida Mountains of the Japan Alps National Park the journey to which will provide your first experience on a *shinkansen* (bullet train). There's something magical about the streets of **Takayama**, with its elegant historic district dating back to the Edo period including sake breweries, colorful street markets and places to sample the region's famous Hida beef.

Stop at the UNESCO town of **Shirakawago**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site famous for its traditional gassho-zukuri farmhouses en route to **Kanazawa**, an Edo period city that showcases Japanese arts, crafts, and culture at its finest. Here, you'll visit the famous castle, and the Nagamachi Samurai District, along with Kenrokuen Garden, one of the Three Great Gardens of Japan as well as participating in gold leaf painting which the area is famous for.

Continue West on the shinkansen to re-born **Hiroshima** in western Honshu and visit the sobering Peace Memorial Park as well as to neighboring **Miyajima**, a picturesque jewel of an island in the Seto Inland Sea considered to be one of Japan's most scenic spots with its famous "floating" Itsukushima Shrine dating back to the 6th century.

Your final destination is **Kyoto**, Japan's most beautiful city with 17 UNESCO World Heritage Sites befitting of its status as the reigning cultural capital of Japan. Explore a sample of Japan's most famous and beautiful temples and castles and preserved historical districts with their narrow streets and specialty shops where local crafts have been passed down over the generations. Experience traditional Japanese healing practices first hand with a *Zazen meditation* and *shiatsu* session as your tour comes to an end with a special dinner enhanced with a private *Geisha* and *Maiko* performance. If Tokyo is the door to Japan's future, Kyoto is a window on its mysterious past and is the highlight for many visitors to Japan.

Japan slowly draws you into its eclectic culture and charm, revealing incredible moments every step of the way...

Additional info can be found at –

- [www.japan.travel/en](http://www.japan.travel/en) - Official JNTO (Japan National Tourist Office) site

### The Academic Program (approximately 15 CME hours) ...

The **detailed program itinerary below** provides information on the various medical facilities that we will be visiting to learn about the healthcare system in Japan and fittingly, recognizing that Japan is such a land of contrasts, this will include a focus on both **leading-edge medical technology** and **traditional medical practices**. There will also be a series of lectures throughout the tour from both local physicians and Canadian presenters together with interactive discussions. Complete information on the individual medical topics being presented will be included with your pre-departure documentation.

- **Academic Conference** in Tokyo with presentations by Canadian & Japanese medical experts & interactive discussions on current medical issues
- Visit to **CYBERDYNE**, a robotic medical device manufacturer, to learn about their products and treatments (Tokyo)
- Presentation on **acupuncture** (Kanawaza)
- Visit to a **local hospital** in Takayama to learn about the Japanese healthcare system and meet with local doctors.
- Introduction to **Zazen meditation**, with the session being led by a Buddhist monk (Kyoto)
- **Shiatsu initiation** with a Shiatsu Master (Kyoto)

In addition, any physician who would like to make a short presentation at the Academic Conference should register their interest by completing the relevant section of the program registration form and the **Group Medical Director, Dr. Peter Bloch** (tel: 905-842-2660, e: [78pbloch@gmail.com](mailto:78pbloch@gmail.com)) will contact you directly.

A certificate of attendance will be provided to all attendees of the Academic Program.

## Tour highlights...

- Immerse yourself in the ancient and modern cultures of Japan
- Learn the art of *bonzai* with a private bonzai master
- Participate in a traditional *green tea ceremony* with a Buddhist priest in a private temple
- Wander the *Geisha* district of Asakusa and visit Tokyo's oldest Buddhist temple, Senso-ji
- Ride the Komagatake ropeway (cable car) for a breathtaking view of Mount Fuji in the Hakone National Park
- Stay in a *ryokan* (traditional Japanese inn) to experience traditional Japanese lifestyle including a therapeutic bath in your private *onsen* (hot tub with mineral content)
- Taste legendary Hida beef and sip *sake* at a local brewery in Takayama surrounded by the Japan Alps
- Stroll through one of the country's top 3 gardens at Kenroku-en Garden in Kanawaza and learn about *Samurai* culture
- Be humbled by the lessons of history in Hiroshima at the Peace Memorial Park and the ruined Atomic Dome (UNESCO)
- Delve into Kyoto, the marvelous cultural capital of Japan and home to 17 UNESCO World Heritage Sites
- Thrill to the speed of the *Shinkansen* (bullet train) as you travel between the various regions of Japan. Quickly.
- Experience a special *Geisha* and *Maiko* (apprentice Geisha) performance while dressed in a *kimono* at your Farewell Dinner





## The Itinerary...

### DAY 1 – May 22, 2022 (Sunday) – Depart Toronto

Depart Toronto for your flight to Tokyo, Japan.

Specific flight times / routing will be forwarded upon registration.

### DAY 2 – May 23: Arrive Tokyo (D)



*A business and cultural megacenter that is home to tens of millions of people, **Tokyo**, the capital of Japan, is also the crossroads where the Japanese interact with citizens from all over the world. And, due to the major earthquake in 1923 and the destruction from the 2nd World War, many of the city's buildings are modern and contemporary architecturally. The media love to focus on Tokyo's vibrant fashion, robot restaurants, maid cafes and the passionate uberfans known as otaku. But, as fast-paced as Tokyo's innovation is, the metropolis is just as devoted to preserving tradition through its historical gardens, shrines and temples. Discover graceful tea ceremonies and gardens awash with springtime cherry blossoms, a world apart from skyscraper-dotted Shinjuku or trend-obsessed Harajuku.*

*Tokyo stuns with its contrasts — one minute you're lost in Shiodome's skyscraper jungle, the next in quiet contemplation beside a carp pond in the Zen-like Hamarikyu Gardens. Too vast to grasp, this city is all about delighting in the details — whether you're watching locals retrieve their fortunes from wooden drawers at Buddhist Senso-ji Temple or enjoying springtime cherry trees in bloom in Ueno Park, home to the treasure-trove Tokyo National Museum. Across the color-changing Rainbow Bridge lies artificial island Odaiba's futuristic cityscape and Edo-style hot springs.*

*Known for its extreme attention to detail, Japan's capital is home to some of the best Japanese food in the country, with 234 Michelin-starred restaurants—more than any other city. Whatever your cultural interests are, Tokyo is likely to have you covered. Home to many world-class art galleries and museums, staggeringly diverse nightlife options and cutting-edge technology, you'll never be stuck for things to do or places to go in Tokyo.*

<https://www.japan.travel/en/destinations/kanto/tokyo/>

Afternoon arrival in Tokyo, where you will be met by your local Japanese Tour Escort who will be with you for the duration of your tour. During the transfer to your hotel, your Tour Escort will give you some brief information about your hotel, its surrounding and about Tokyo as well as explaining your program in the city for the following days. You will have some free time to recuperate from your transpacific flight before your welcome dinner at a typical Japanese restaurant.

Dinner and overnight at hotel in Tokyo.

## DAY 3 – May 24: Tokyo (B, L)

Breakfast at the hotel.

### Physicians - Morning medical conference featuring local and Canadian speakers.

**Partners** will visit the Bonsai workshop of **Kunio Kobayashi**, a world famous Bonsai master where you will have a private lesson of Bonsai.

***Bonsai** is the art of growing miniature potted trees. In Japanese culture these graceful creations are often displayed in living rooms as symbols of the beauty of nature. It is a true art form that requires special techniques such as pruning, wiring, fertilizing, and watering. People not only enjoy its visual appearance but also appreciate the effort put into their creation. In the Edo period, bonsai arose as a popular hobby among the people, and it is still a popular pastime for enthusiasts all over the world. Because people of high birth, such as the imperial family, loved bonsai, it has come to be considered more art than simply a hobby.*

**Kunio Kobayashi**, world-famous' Bonsai master runs his school and museum in Tokyo's Edo-gawa ward. At the age of 28 he dedicated his life to Bonsai and gained the required skills due to self-study. Growing up in a nursery he already was familiar with the beauty of plants and nature, but one encounter set him off his determined path in life. During an exhibition he spotted a Japanese white pine formed as a Bonsai tree. Fascinated by its elegant shape showing life's dignity, the young Kobayashi decided immediately to start creating such graceful trees himself. "*Bonsai is art*" and can be described with the three words of individuality (個性 *kosei*), harmony (調和 *chowa*) and elegance (品位 *hini*).

[http://kunio-kobayashi.com/en/kunio\\_kobayashi.html](http://kunio-kobayashi.com/en/kunio_kobayashi.html)



After the morning activities, all participants will meet to have a lunch - a first taste of **Kaiseki cuisine** in Tokyo with Tofu specialty.

*Kaiseki or kaiseki-ryōri is a traditional multi-course Japanese meal and is seen as a type of art form that balances the taste, texture, appearance, and colors of food. Finished dishes are beautifully presented on plates that are chosen to enhance both the appearance and the seasonal theme of the meal. Originally presented to the royal noble classes, kaiseki is the embodiment of "omotenashi," which means wholehearted hospitality.*

After lunch, you will be taken to **Meiji Shrine**, built in 1920 and dedicated to the first modern Emperor and Empress of Japan at that time. Surrounding the shrine is a spacious park and gladed forest with some 120,000 trees of 365 different species, and attractive paths along which to stroll, an oasis in the middle of this vast city. You may be fortunate to see a traditional wedding ceremony take place on the grounds of the shrine with the whole wedding party often dressed in traditional costumes.

Outside of Meiji Shrine you will find **Harajuku**, the shopping haven for all fashionistas and the popular meeting place for teenagers who are usually in eccentric clothing. The landmark of Harajuku is Takeshita Street, a 400-meter long alley filled with boutiques, shops, and cafes.

Neighboring Harajuku is **Omotesando**, commonly referred to as Tokyo's Champs-Elysee. This broad, tree-lined avenue features a number of fashion flagship stores designed by internationally renowned architects like TOD's Omotesando, designed by Toyo Ito.





This evening you will enjoy a spectacular experience as you disconnect from reality at the world famous **Robot Restaurant** in Shinjuku's Kabukicho district. Built in 2012 and initially meant to appeal to Japanese businessmen, as an escape from the rigors of the economic world, the venue has become one of Tokyo's top tourist attractions. Dinosaurs, monsters, ninjas, Disney-style princesses, superheroes - every night mock battles are staged using enormous robots. This is modern-day Gundam (a Japanese military science fiction media franchise/media mix created by Yoshiyuki Tomino) on steroids. Fitted out at a cost of ¥10 billion, Robot Restaurant looks like something straight out of Gaspar Noé's Enter the Void – non-stop action, you are in for a sensory overload!



Overnight at hotel in Tokyo.

#### DAY 4 – May 25: Tokyo (B, L)



Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning meet up with the guide at the hotel and head to **Hamarikyu**, a Japanese garden that once served as a private villa of a powerful feudal lord during the Edo period. Its wide collection of seasonal flowers makes it one of the most visited gardens in Tokyo, but what makes it more attractive is its teahouse called Nakajima-no-Ochaya.

From the park, take the **scenic river cruise to Asakusa**, a part of Tokyo's shitamachi or old town.

**Asakusa** is the city's oldest Geisha district - *Geisha are performers; classically trained in a range of skills including the art of conversation, playing instruments like the shamisen, drinking games, poetry recital and dance. These skills are practiced and honed for years in training and are employed for entertainment at high-end events and dinners.*

Asakusa is also home to **Senso-ji**, Tokyo's oldest Buddhist temple which offers plenty to see including the bright red Kaminarimon Gate, a statue of the god of thunder, and a five-story pagoda.



The streets around **Senso-ji** feature many traditional shops and are a delight to wander through. As you head towards the main hall and **Asakusa Shrine**, you will pass through **Nakamise-dori** Street, a commercial alley filled with small shops that sell local sweets, handmade figurines, and colorful souvenirs.



Lunch will be at a traditional Japanese house managed by a former Shamisen player who will present you a Shamisen show during lunch. The shamisen is a three-stringed traditional Japanese musical instrument derived from the Chinese instrument sanxian. It is played with a plectrum called a bachi.

After lunch, you will proceed to the **Imperial Palace East Gardens**, an area of the Palace Compound that originally housed the Edo Castle, which was also the home castle of the Tokugawa shoguns (a *shogun* was a military commander or general in ancient Japan, between the 8th and 19th centuries, often leading vast armies – the Tokugawa shoguns ruled Japan for roughly 260 years until the second half of the 19th century). The gardens are open to the public and here you can enjoy the green vegetation in contrast with the tall Tokyo Buildings, besides the foundations of the Castle and other historical structures.

Finish the day in **Akihabara**, an area in **Tokyo** made famous by its hundreds of electronics shops, and more recently as the center for Tokyo's anime, manga, video game, and figurine culture. This district also has the uniquely Japanese Maid Café, where the waitresses will address you as “go-shujin-sama” (“Master”) or “hime-sama” (“Princess”). Here you can rest your feet, enjoy a specially made drink and take a photo with your favorite maid.



Evening at leisure.

Overnight at hotel in Tokyo.



For **physicians**, during your time in Tokyo, there will be a visit to **CYBERDYNE, a robotic medical device manufacturer**, to learn about **Cybernetics**, a new domain of interdisciplinary research centered on cybernetics, mechatronics, and informatics, which integrates neuroscience, robotics and "kansei" engineering.

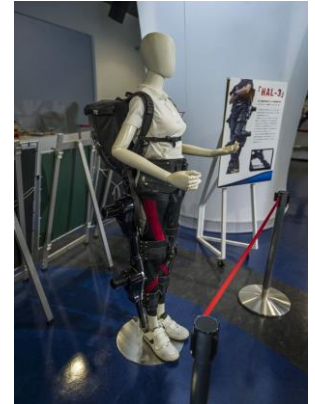
CYBERDYNE was established in June 2004 as a university venture to solve various social problems facing the super-aged society led by Dr. Yoshiyuki Sankai, University of Tsukuba, Japan. It utilizes the Robot Suit HAL®, which was developed as an application of "Cybernetics", in the fields of medicine, caregiving, welfare and labor.

There are now almost 20 Robocare Centres throughout Japan utilizing this technology which is now also available in Europe and North America.

**HAL [Hybrid Assistive Limb]** is the world's first\*1 cyborg-type robot, by which a wearer's bodily functions can be improved, supported and enhanced.

Wearing of HAL leads to a fusion of "man", "machine" and "information". HAL assists a physically challenged person suffering from MADS (Musculoskeletal Ambulation Disability Symptom Complex), to move and enables the ability to exert bigger motor energy than usual. It allows for functional improvement of patients with cerebral, nervous and muscle disorders including spinal cord injury and cerebral embolism. HAL is also considered as the system that accelerates a motor learning of cerebral nerves.

HAL® Therapy is the medical service with Robot Suit HAL® to provide medical treatments for functional improvement of patients with cerebral, nervous and muscle disorders including spinal cord injury and cerebral embolism.



Neuro HALFIT is a new program that induces improvement of brain-nerve-musculoskeletal system by utilizing the world's first Wearable Cyborg HAL.

There are now almost 20 Robocare Centres throughout Japan utilizing this technology which is now also available in Europe and North America.

<https://www.cyberdyne.jp/english/>

## DAY 5 – May 26: Tokyo - Hakone (B, L, D)

Japan's **Hakone** is a region of spectacular natural beauty, home to hot springs, nature and art museums. The town of Hakone is situated in the southwest of Kanagawa Prefecture in the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park. It is famous both inside and outside of Japan as a resort area brimming with natural hot springs of the highest quality, mountains, lakes, interesting historical sites and breathtaking views of Mount Fuji.

<https://www.japan.travel/en/destinations/kanto/kanagawa/hakone-and-around/>

Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning, journey by bus to the Mount Fuji Five Lake area and the discovery of Hakone, part of the **Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park**, less than one hundred kilometers from Tokyo.

The first stop will be on the north of Hakone near **Kawaguchiko** Lake at **Oshino Hakkai** a set of eight ponds in **Oshino**, a small village in the Fuji Five Lake region, located between Lake **Kawaguchiko** and Lake **Yamanakako** on the site of a former sixth lake that dried out several hundred years ago. The eight ponds are fed by snow melt from the slopes of nearby Mount Fuji that filters down the mountain through porous layers of lava for over 80 years, resulting in very clear spring water that is revered by the locals.



A small open air museum, the **Hannoki Bayashi Shiryokan**, surrounds **Oshino Hakkai's** largest pond and contains a traditional thatched roof farmhouse that can be viewed inside and displays various farming tools, household items, samurai armor and weapons.

Lunch at a local restaurant in Oshino Hakkai.

After lunch, continue your route to the south and reach **Lake Ashinoko** to ride the **ropeway Komagatake** and have a breathtaking view of Fuji. When visibility is good, panoramic views of Lake Ashinoko and Mount Fuji can be enjoyed from the ropeway's upper station. A short walk away, on the actual peak of Komagatake, stands the **Hakone Shrine Mototsumiya**, the original Hakone Shrine, whose main site is now located at the more easily accessible shores of Lake Ashinoko in Moto Hakone.



Continue to your ryokan (Hakone Kowakien Ten-yu) to enjoy the hot spring and have some rest until dinner.

A **ryokan** (旅館) is a type of traditional Japanese inn that typically feature tatami-matted rooms, communal baths, and other public areas where visitors may wear yukata and talk with the owner. Ryokan have existed since the eighth century A.D. during the Keiun period, which is when the oldest hotel in the world, Nishiyama Onsen Keiunkan, was created in 705 A.D. Today, they are popular with both Japanese and foreign tourists alike as, more than just a place to sleep, ryokan are an opportunity to experience the traditional Japanese lifestyle and hospitality, incorporating elements such as tatami floors, futon beds, Japanese style onsen baths and local cuisine.



*Because of their emphasis on traditional style and atmosphere, ryokan may appear rigid and intimidating for the first-timer unfamiliar with the procedures and etiquette. In reality they are a special and relaxing experience that everyone should take the opportunity to try.*

Hakone Kowakien Ten-yu >



Dinner and overnight at the ryokan in Hakone where you will be served beautifully presented Japanese cuisine.

#### DAY 6 – May 27: Hakone - Takayama (B, L)



Located in the Hida Mountains (part of the Japan Alps National Park in the Gifu Prefecture), and with a population of 95,000, the alpine town of **Takayama** (often known as “Little Kyoto”) is surrounded by 3,000m peaks and is situated along a river on a wide plateau. It was founded in the 16th century by Lord Kanamori, who selected the site because of the impregnable position afforded by the surrounding mountains. Modeled after Kyoto but also with strong ties to Edo (Tokyo), Takayama borrowed from both cultural centers in developing its own architecture, food, and crafts, all well preserved today thanks to centuries of isolation. With a rich supply of timber provided by surrounding forests, its carpenters were legendary, creating not only beautifully crafted traditional merchants' homes in Takayama but also the Imperial Palace and temples in Kyoto.

Today, Takayama boasts a delightful and elegant historic district, called San-machi Suji, with homes of classical design typical of 18th-century Hida which will make you feel as though you've stepped back in time. The streets are narrow and clean and are flanked on both sides by tiny canals of running water, which in centuries past were useful for fire prevention, washing clothes, and dumping winter snow, but which now give the town its distinct character. Rising from the canals are one and two-story homes and shops of gleaming dark wood with overhanging roofs, latticed windows and slats of wood play games of light and shadow in the white of the sunshine.

With its quaint old character, great shopping (including a lively city market), delightful local cuisine and many museums, Takayama offers a low-key, rustic experience of old Japan developed from its feudal history and its important agricultural roots. As you walk down the streets, you'll also notice huge cedar balls hanging from the eaves in front of several shops, indicating one of Takayama's sake breweries. Altogether, there are six of them in Takayama, most small affairs. Go inside, sample the sake, and watch the men stirring rice in large vats. There are also a surprising number of museums, most housed in traditional homes and filled with historical relics and antiques of Takayama's past. From a culinary perspective, it is also one of the few places where you can enjoy Hida beef, a brand of domestic wagyu that rivals even Kobe beef.



Just a short distance from Takayama is the historic village of Shirakawa-go, designated a UNESCO World Heritage site for its unique thatched-roof farmhouses.

<https://www.japan.travel/en/destinations/tokai/gifu/takayama-and-around/>

Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning, depart Hakone for your next destination, Takayama, a small town nestled high in the **Hida Alpine region**.

En route you will stop at **Shiraito Falls**. Ranked among the most beautiful waterfalls in Japan, the 150 meter wide cascade is fed by the volcano's spring water and flows off the edge of a 20 meter high cliff in thin white streams that resemble hanging threads of silk - hence its name, literally "White Thread Waterfall". The base of the waterfall is easily accessible from the road via a walking trail in just a few minutes. From the end of the Warring States period to the early Edo period, it was considered to be the place where Hasegawa Kakuye, who is said to be the founder of Fujiko, trained, and it became a place of pilgrimage and training for people centered on Fujiko.



After **Shiraito**, head to Shin Fuji Station to catch the *Shinkansen* (bullet train) to Nagoya.

Change at Nagoya for the next leg which is on the Limited Express train Wide View, which offers one of the most scenic train journeys in Japan.

How do the Japanese travel on Shinkansen? They generally buy in advance a "Bento box" for their meal which is the experience that you will also have today for lunch as you will ride the Shinkansen just after Middy.

Japan's high speed trains (bullet trains) are called **Shinkansen** (新幹線) and are operated by Japan Railways (JR).

They connect Japan's main islands of Honshu, Kyushu and Hokkaido which are served by a network of high speed train lines that connect Tokyo with most of the country's major cities. Running at speeds of up to 320 km/h, the shinkansen is known for punctuality (most trains depart on time to the second), comfort (relatively silent cars with spacious, always forward facing seats), safety (no fatal accidents in its history) and efficiency.

The Shinkansen network consists of multiple lines, among which the Tokaido Shinkansen (Tokyo - Nagoya - Kyoto - Osaka) is the oldest and most popular. All shinkansen lines (except the Akita and Yamagata Shinkansen) run on tracks that are exclusively built for and used by shinkansen trains. Most lines are served by multiple train categories, ranging from the fastest category that stops only at major stations to the slowest category that stops at every station along the way.

You will arrive in **Takayama** late afternoon and be transferred to your accommodation and have free time until the next day.

Evening at leisure. Overnight at hotel in Takayama.



## DAY 7 – May 28: Takayama (B)



Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning, discover the two morning markets that are held in **Takayama** every day - the **Miyagawa** Market along the Miyagawa River in the old town, and the **Jinya-mae** Market in front of the Takayama Jinya. The stands sell local crafts, snacks and farm products such as vegetables, pickles and flowers. There is typically a pleasant atmosphere around the markets, as tourists and locals' alike saunter from stall to stall purchasing goods and food and talking.

Then discover the southern half of the old town, especially the **Sannomachi Street**, which is extremely well preserved with many old homes, shops, coffee houses together with several old **sake breweries**, some of which have been in business for centuries and which can be recognized by *sugidama* (balls made of cedar branches) hung over their entrances.

Lunch will be free at leisure in Takayama.



After lunch, visit the **Takayama Matsuri Yatai Kaikan**, a hall next to **Sakurayama Hachiman Shrine**. The elaborately decorated floats are several hundred years' old and beautiful examples of Takayama's legendary craftsmanship.

Adjacent to the Matsuri Yatai Kaikan lies the **Nikkokan**, a spacious hall containing impressive models of the different precincts of Toshogu Shrine in Nikko, one of the most ornate and celebrated shrines in the country. The miniature models are beautifully intricate and are accompanied by short explanations in Japanese and English.





To finish the day, **non-physicians** will visit the nearby **Kusakabe Heritage House** (Kusakabe Mingeikan), one of Takayama's oldest merchant homes open to the public. Its former residents, the Kusakabe family, used to be successful money lenders.

**Physicians** - visit to a local hospital in Takayama to learn about the Japanese healthcare system and meet with local doctors.



Evening at leisure. Overnight at hotel in Takayama.

#### DAY 8 – May 29: Takayama - Kanawaza (B, L)



Located between the Sea of Japan and the mountains on Japan's main island Honshu, **Kanazawa** (population 460,000) is the gateway to the rugged, sea-swept Noto Peninsula and is the prefectural capital of the Ishikawa province.

*Kanazawa first gained notoriety about 500 years ago, when a militant Buddhist sect joined with peasant fanatics to overthrow the feudal lord and establish its own autonomous government, an event unprecedented in Japanese history. The independent republic survived almost 100 years before it was attacked by an army of Oda Nobunaga, who was trying to unite Japan at a time when civil wars wracked the nation. Kanazawa was subsequently granted to one of Nobunaga's retainers, Maeda Toshiie, who constructed a castle and transformed the small community into a thriving castle town. The Kaga clan (Maeda family) continued to rule over Kanazawa for the next 300 years, amassing wealth in the form of land and rice and encouraging development of the arts. Throughout the Tokugawa shogunate, the Maedas remained the second-most powerful family in Japan and controlled the largest domain in the country. During the prosperous and relatively peaceful Edo period (1603-1867), a vibrant culture of fine arts and craftsmanship evolved, including Kutani ware, Yuzen silk dyeing, lacquerware, and noh theater, and Kanazawa became the cultural capital of the West Coast of Japan, rivaling Kyoto and Edo (Tokyo). Artists and craftsman from all over Japan came to settle in Kanazawa, perfecting a culture unique to Kanazawa over the centuries.*



*It was the second-largest city (after Kyoto) to escape bombing during World War II, and much of the old city has been left intact, including a district of former samurai mansions, old geisha quarters, Edo-Era canals, and tiny narrow streets that run crookedly without rhyme or reason (apparently to confuse any enemies foolish enough to attack). In Kanazawa today, you will find traditional and modern art and architecture and a vast range of Japanese crafts such as Kaga-yuzen (a silk dyeing technique used on kimono), Ohi ware (austere tea ceremony bowls), maki-e lacquerware and Kutani-yaki ceramics. There are also sword-smithing, geisha and samurai districts, and one of the most beautiful and acclaimed traditional landscape gardens in Japan, the Kenroku-en Garden. The city contains museums and workshops on everything from gold leaf to samurai. In fact, the name Kanazawa literally means marsh of gold, and today the city supplies 99 percent of Japan's gold leaf.*

<https://www.japan.travel/en/destinations/hokuriku-shinetsu/ishikawa/kanazawa-and-around/>

Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning, travel by coach to **Shirakawago**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site famous for its *gassho-zukuri* farmhouses. Gassho-zukuri means "constructed like hands in prayer," which is represented through the farmhouses' steep thatched roofs. This architectural style developed over many generations – the roofs were constructed without any nails and are intricately designed to withstand large amounts of snow. These houses are private homes of the locals, but some are open to the public, such as **Wada House**, a legacy left behind by the Wada Family who used to be the richest family and village leader in Ogimachi. Look around and be fascinated by the culture and history of the village.

Lunch at a Thatched Roof House Shirakawago where you can taste the delicious regional cuisine.



After lunch, continue by coach from Shirakawago to Kanazawa and enjoy seeing rural Japanese scenery such as the manmade **Miboro Dam** and the **Hakusan Mountains**.

Upon arrival in Kanazawa, visit the **21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art**. Opened in 2004 in downtown Kanazawa, it exhibits works of acclaimed contemporary artists from Japan and all over the world, and is among Japan's most popular art museums. The architecture of the museum is unique and distinguishes it from other museums and buildings around Kanazawa. The museum is comprised of a circular building, 112 meters in diameter, with no facade or main entrance. It was designed without a front or back to discourage its patrons from approaching the museum, and consequently its art, from only one direction.



Afterwards, you will have free time in Kanazawa to experience the city independently.

Evening at leisure.

Overnight at hotel in Kanawaza.

### DAY 9 – May 30: Kanawaza (B, L)

Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning, start with the pristine **Kenroku-en Garden**, Japan's most celebrated landscape garden. Open to the public since 1874, the name Kenrokuen literally means "Garden of the Six Sublimities", referring to spaciousness, seclusion, artificiality, antiquity, abundant water and broad views, which according to **Chinese** landscape theory are the six essential attributes that make up a perfect garden. A stroll around Kenrokuen will help with understanding this landscape theory as the grounds are teeming with water features, bridges, trees, flowers, stones, viewpoints and hidden nooks to discover.

The garden offers amazing seasonal views all year round and includes the oldest water fountain in the country as well as a large villa that used to be the retirement home of one of the richest clans in Kanazawa. The garden is also home to historic teahouses, a legacy of the importance of tea ceremony in Kanazawa during the Edo period (1603–1867). These include Yugao-tei, Kenrokuen's oldest surviving structure, built in 1774. Shigure-tei, a more recent addition, was built in 2000 in the style of the garden's original pavilion.

Adjacent to the garden is **Kanazawa Castle**, easily accessed through the Ishikawa-mon Gate, a designated Important National Cultural Asset. From 1583 to the end of the Edo Period, the castle was the seat of the powerful Maeda Clan, lords of Kaga, a feudal domain ranking second only to the Tokugawa possessions in terms of size and wealth.





Lunch will be in **Omicho Market**, known throughout Japan for its fresh seafood and fine sushi.

This afternoon, head across town to the **old Samurai district** of Kanazawa, Nagamachi. The cobblestone streets and tiled earthen walls are characteristic of wealthier samurai districts in Kanazawa during the Edo period (1603–1867). Explore the area's picturesque canals and beautifully restored homes for a sense of what life was like for samurai of that time including a visit to **Nomura House**, a restored samurai residence displaying the lifestyle and artifacts of a high ranked samurai family. Freshly made green tea can be enjoyed on the second floor while viewing the small Japanese garden below and, afterwards, you will have a **gold leaf painting activity**, a traditional art in Kanazawa that you will bring back home with you.

**Samurai** were the hereditary military nobility and officer caste of medieval and early modern Japan from the 12th century to their abolition in the 1870s. They were the well-paid retainers of the daimyo (powerful Japanese feudal lords) and had high prestige and special privileges such as wearing two swords. They cultivated the bushido codes of martial virtues, indifference to pain, and unflinching loyalty, engaging in many local battles. During the peaceful Edo era they became the stewards and chamberlains of the daimyo estates, gaining managerial experience and education. In the 1870s samurai families comprised 5% of the population. The Meiji Revolution ended their feudal roles, and they moved into professional and entrepreneurial roles. Their memory and weaponry remain prominent in Japanese popular culture.



**Gold leaf** is a decorative material that has been used for thousands of years and is commonly seen on picture frames and used in architecture (such as the Statue of Liberty and several state capitol domes), on furniture. Illuminated manuscripts, and religious iconography also make use of gold leaf. It gives a warm golden glow in low light and is brilliant in sunlight. Gold leaf, or kinpaku, is gold that has been rolled flat by a machine and then beaten into a very thin square sheet that averages about 0.12 microns in thickness. For comparison, copier paper is around 130 microns, and human hair around 60 micron. Kanazawa's association with gold leaf began around 400 years ago and today it is the sole remaining production hub of the coveted craft with the city laying proud claim to supplying 99% of the country's domestic gold leaf market.

Evening at leisure.

Overnight at hotel in Kanawaza.



**DAY 10 – May 31: Kanawaza - Hiroshima (B, L)**



**Hiroshima** (population 1.2m) is the capital of Hiroshima Prefecture, and the largest city in the Chugoku region of western Honshu.

When the first atomic bomb was dropped over Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, the city became known worldwide for this unenviable distinction. The destructive power of the bomb was tremendous and obliterated nearly everything within a two kilometer radius. After the war, great efforts were taken to rebuild the city. Predictions that the city would be uninhabitable proved false. Destroyed monuments of Hiroshima's historical heritage, like Hiroshima Castle and Shukkeien Garden, were reconstructed and it is now a modern, cosmopolitan city, featuring excellent cuisine and a bustling nightlife.

In the center of the city a large park was built and given a name that would reflect the aspirations of the re-born city: Peace Memorial Park which acts as tribute to the bomb's victims.

Hiroshima is laced with rivers and wide, tree-lined boulevards and features various art galleries, parks, and museums. Hiking, cycling, ocean sports, and skiing are all popular outdoor activities. The city is also famous for savory okonomiyaki pancakes, anago or saltwater eel, and other culinary delights as well as being the original home of the Mazda car production and now hosts a Mazda Museum. It was declared the City of Peace in 1969 by the Japanese parliament and now receives much international attention as a desirable location for holding international conferences on peace as well as social issues.

Hiroshima is also the most popular gateway for trips to nearby Miyajima, a jewel of an island considered to be one of Japan's most scenic spots.

<https://www.japan.travel/en/destinations/chugoku/hiroshima/>

Breakfast at the hotel.

**Physicians** will have an early morning visit to a **local acupuncture clinic** to learn about this age-old practice.

Acupuncture is the insertion of fine needles into the body at specific points shown as effective in the treatment of specific health problems. These points have been mapped by the Chinese over a period of two thousand years. Recently, electromagnetic research has confirmed their locations.

Modern Western Medicine cannot explain how acupuncture works. Traditional acupuncture is based on ancient Chinese theories of the flow of Qi (Energy) and Xue (Blood) through distinct meridians or pathways that cover the body somewhat like the nerves and blood vessels do. According to ancient theory, acupuncture allows Qi to flow to areas where it is Deficient and away from where it is Excess. In this way, acupuncture regulates and restores the harmonious energetic balance of the body. In Chinese there is a saying, "There is no pain if there is free flow; if there is pain, there is no free flow."

Although it has been used in Japan since the 6<sup>th</sup> century, **Japanese acupuncture** today is quite different from Chinese as, generally speaking, it involves thinner needles and a shallower needle insertion (through a guiding tube), making a treatment more relaxing and less uncomfortable. It places a lot of emphasis on the use of palpation (touch) before needle treatment and practitioners rely on abdominal palpation to judge the insertion point of the needle. This practice roots from the many blind acupuncturists of Ancient Japan, and it goes hand in hand with the gentle needling.

It relies on moxibustion (heat therapy) as much as it does on acupuncture needles in treating people. This combination is very effective at giving the patient a well-rounded gentle, yet, powerful treatment.

The WHO has stated that acupuncture is suitable for treating disorders relating to ear, nose, and throat; respiratory gastrointestinal; eye and nervous system and muscular issues and it is also believed to have benefits for many other problems including knee pain, sprains and most gynecological complaints.



**Non-physicians** will have free time before all group members meet up for the journey to Hiroshima.

Take the Thunderbird Express directly from Kanazawa Station in front of your hotel and then change train at Kyoto Station to take the Shinkansen. During the train journey, your guide will initiate you to **Origami**.



**Origami**, from ori meaning "folding", and kami meaning "paper" is the art of paper folding, and, although it actually has its roots in China from as early as 105AD, it is most often associated with Japanese culture and has been practiced in Japan since the Edo period (1603–1867). It has evolved over many hundreds of years from very basic, ritual objects to the myriad of contemporary designs we see today.

The origami bases that are the beginnings of so many models are Japanese in origin. In modern usage, the word "origami" is used as an inclusive term for all folding practices, regardless of their culture of origin. The goal is to transform a flat square sheet of paper into a finished sculpture through folding and sculpting techniques.

Today, many people are attracted to the idea of learning how to fold origami figures because paper is a cheap craft supply. When origami was first practiced, however, it was a craft only for the elite. Japanese monks folded origami figures for religious purposes. Origami was also used in various formal ceremonies, such as the practice of folding paper butterflies to adorn sake bottles at a Japanese couple's wedding reception. Tsutsumi, folded paper gift wrappers, were used in some ceremonies to symbolize sincerity and purity. Tsuki, folded pieces of paper accompanying a valuable gift, are another example of ceremonial paper folding since these models would act as a certificate of authenticity.

<https://thedesigntest.net/history-of-origami-paper-folding/>

Arrival at Hiroshima Station. Lunch will be near the station and you will discover the Okonomiyaki, a Hiroshima specialty that looks like a pancake.

**Okonomiyaki** is a Japanese-style savoury crepe or pancake. Okonomi means "whatever you like" or "whatever you want," while yaki means grilled. As you can easily imagine, the great thing about this tasty dish is that you can complement it with all your favorite ingredients, egg, cabbage, soba noodles, and meat or seafood.



This afternoon, visit the **Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park** featuring several memorials, monuments, museums, and lecture halls as testament to the fateful day in August 1945 when Hiroshima was chosen as target for the first ever wartime use of the atomic bomb which killed 220,000 people, either from the initial blast or exposure to radiation. It stands as an advocate for world peace, while remembering this devastating incident in Japanese history. The park is also the site of the annual August 6th Peace Memorial Ceremony, a ceremony held every year on the anniversary of the bomb attack - thousands write messages of peace on paper lanterns that are lit at sunset to float down the river past the iconic remains of the Atomic Bomb Dome

Visit the **Genbaku (A-Bomb) Dome** - with only the partially-standing structure and skeletal ruins left after the bomb attack, this domed building is now listed on the UNESCO World Heritage Site. The dome was just metres from where the bomb detonated so it was able to retain its shape and looks almost exactly as it did after the bombing. The **Cenotaph for the A-Bomb Victims** is an arched tomb for those who died and below the arch is a stone chest holding a register of these names, of which there are over 220,000. Inside the Peace Park you will also find a **museum** and **Children Peace statue** where you can bring your Crane Origami in memory of Sadako, a victim of the Atomic bomb.



Evening at leisure. Overnight at hotel in Hiroshima

#### DAY 11 – Jun 1: Hiroshima – Miyajima - Hiroshima (B, D)

Breakfast at the hotel.

Today, you will head for the serene island of Miyajima but, en route, you will first visit a Gin & Whisky distillery in Hiroshima at **Sakurao Distillery**.

Sakurao is a craft distillery which challenges new possibilities in the production of Western liquors. It is the home of the first and only gin domestically produced using ingredients from Hiroshima and has recently begun production of Hiroshima's first single-malt whisky which, after being fully aged for at least three years, is due to make its world debut in 2021.



From mainland Hiroshima, a short (30kms) ferry ride leads to **Miyajima**, a small sacred island located in the Seto Inland Sea.

While officially named Itsukushima, the island is more commonly referred to as Miyajima, Japanese for "shrine island". This is because the island is so closely related to its key shrine, Itsukushima Shrine, in the public's mind. The Island has a long history as a holy site of Shinto with its highest peak, Mount Misen, being worshiped by local people as early as the 6th century. In 1168, Taira no Kiyomori, the most powerful man in Japan during the end of the Heian Period, selected the island as the site of his clan's family shrine and built Itsukushima Shrine.





Start with a visit to this venerable Shinto shrine of **Itsukushima**. The shrine is designed in a pier-like structure and dates back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century.

Like the torii gate, the shrine's main buildings are built over water. At high tide, the shrine's huge vermillion *o-torii* gate seems to be floating in the water which is considered to be one of the most beautiful sights in Japan. The shrine complex consists of multiple buildings, including a prayer hall, a main hall and a *noh* theater stage, which are connected by boardwalks and supported by pillars above the sea.

Walk towards the mountain to visit **Daisho-in**, the most visited Buddhist temple on the island and one of the most important temples of Shingon Buddhism. It is located at the base of Mount Misen, on which the sect's founder, Kobo Daishi, first began the practice of Buddhism on the island of Miyajima. An interesting Buddhist ritual can be performed when walking up the temple's steps. Along the stairs is a row of spinning metal wheels that are inscribed with *sutra* (Buddhist scriptures). Turning the inscriptions as one walks up is believed to have the same effect as reading them. So, without any knowledge of Japanese, you can benefit from the blessings that the reading of *sutra* is believed to entail.



As you explore the island, also famous for its wild deer, maybe sample some local delicacies like oysters, saltwater eel, and maple leaf-shaped cakes. The size and physical landscape of Miyajima makes it an ideal place for walking.

Return to Hiroshima where you will have some free time before dinner which will be at a local restaurant in Hiroshima. Overnight at hotel in Hiroshima

## DAY 12 – Jun 2: Hiroshima - Kyoto (B, L)



**Kyoto** (population 15m), originally founded as Heian-kyo in 794 (literally, "tranquility and peace capital") was the capital of Japan, and the emperor's residence, for over 1000 years before Tokyo became its capital in 1868. It is Japan's most beautiful city with a rich cultural heritage possessing 17 UNESCO World Heritage Sites and it retains its status as the reigning cultural capital of Japan. Over the centuries, Kyoto was destroyed by many wars and fires, but due to its exceptional historic value, the city was dropped from the list of target cities for the atomic bomb and escaped destruction during World War II. Countless temples, shrines and other historically priceless structures survive in the city today.

*Arriving initially in Kyoto, one's first impression is that of a modern metropolis but, beyond the nondescript high-rises around Kyoto Station hides the Japan of your imagination: a place where you'll see geisha glide past 17th-century teahouses in Gion's narrow alleys; where you can imagine the lives of court nobility at the Imperial Palace; where you can seek contemplation in Ryoanji's Zen rock gardens and under billowing cherry trees on the Philosopher's Path. If Tokyo is the door to Japan's future, Kyoto is a window on its mysterious past.*

*Kyoto is Japan's craft capital, where skills are still passed down through generations. Tiny specialty shops in Shijo Dori, Kawaramachi Dori and the Kyoto Handicraft Center deal in Yuzen-dyed fabrics to wooden combs, fans and everything you need to host a tea ceremony. Shinmonzen Dori and Furumonzen Dori are peppered with antique shops and galleries selling woodblock prints and the department stores around Shijo-Kawaramachi intersection and Kyoto Station are good bets for lacquerware and kimono.*

*It is also home to a range of unique dining experiences -- from eating lip-numbing fugu (pufferfish) in traditional restaurants to shojin ryori (vegetarian cooking) in the tranquil gardens of a Buddhist temple. Follow Higashiyama-ku's red lanterns to lively yakitori-ya, specializing in grilled chicken skewers or, for tofu dishes and perfect noodles, head to Kita-ku's bars, some housed in converted sake warehouses. Or indulge yourself in kaiseki ryori, seasonally inspired Japanese cuisine artistically presented in lacquered bowls.*

<https://www.japan.travel/en/destinations/kansai/kyoto/>

Breakfast at the hotel.

Today's destination is **Kyoto**, the cultural capital of Japan and a fitting city to end your tour in, that you will reach by Shinkansen directly from Hiroshima.

Arriving at **Kyoto Station**, you are immediately immersed in the fascinating contrasts of this unique city as the Kyoto Station building (opened in 1997) conveys a futuristic design and atmosphere that was conceived to convey historical Kyoto through a modern design. It is a massive, ultra-modern complex of glass and steel designed by award-winning architect Hiroshi Hara with the exposed steel beamed roof in the station's large main hall meant to reflect the grid like layout of Kyoto's street network.



Your first visit will be to **Fushimi Inari**, one of the most unusual Shinto shrines in Japan. It is famous for its thousands of vermilion Torii gates, which straddle a network of trails behind its main buildings which lead into the wooded forest of the sacred Mount Inari. It is the most important of several thousands of shrines dedicated to Inari, the Shinto god of rice.

The shrine, which featured in "*Memoirs of a Geisha*", is very famous for the impressive contrast and mystical atmosphere created by the colors of the Torii and those of the surrounding nature.



After the visit of Fushimi Inari, you will have **Yakitori lunch** in a traditional Japanese Machiya in the middle of Kyoto city.

**Yakitori** is a Japanese type of skewered chicken. Its preparation involves skewering the meat with *kushi*, a type of skewer typically made of steel, bamboo, or similar materials. Afterwards, they are grilled over a charcoal fire. During or after cooking, the meat is typically seasoned with *tare* (teriyaki like) sauce or salt.

In the afternoon, discover the temple **Kiyomizudera**. Literally meaning "Pure Water Temple", it is one of the most celebrated temples in Japan. It was founded in 780 on the site of the Otowa Waterfall in the wooded hills east of Kyoto and is best known for the wooden stage that juts out from its main hall. The stage affords visitors an excellent view of the numerous cherry and maple trees below that erupt in a sea of colour in spring and fall as well as panoramic views of the city. The temple was originally associated with the Hosso sect, one of the oldest schools within Japanese Buddhism, but formed its own Kita Hosso sect in 1965. In 1994, the temple was added to the list of UNESCO world heritage sites.

Around the base of Kiyomizudera is the **Higashiyama area**, one of the city's best preserved historic districts. The narrow lanes, wooden buildings and traditional merchant shops invoke a feeling of the old capital city and the streets are lined by small shops, cafes and restaurants which have been catering to tourists and pilgrims for centuries. These businesses retain their traditional design, although many have been renovated through the years, and they continue to serve customers today, selling local specialties such as Kiyomizu-yaki pottery, sweets, pickles, crafts and other souvenirs.



Finish off the afternoon with a visit to a private temple to enjoy a **Tea Ceremony** with a tea master.

The **Japanese tea ceremony** is called *Chanoyu*, *Sado* or simply *Ocha* in Japanese. It is a choreographic ritual of preparing and serving Japanese green tea, called *Matcha*, together with traditional Japanese sweets to balance with the bitter taste of the tea. Preparing tea in this ceremony means pouring all one's attention into the predefined movements. The whole process is not about drinking tea, but is about aesthetics, preparing a bowl of tea from one's heart. The host of the ceremony always considers the guests with every movement and gesture. Even the placement of the tea utensils is considered from the guests view point (angle), especially the main guests called the *Shokyaku*. <http://japanese-tea-ceremony.net/>



Evening at leisure. Overnight at hotel in Kyoto.



## DAY 13 – Jun 3: Kyoto (B, L)

Breakfast at the hotel.

Today, continue your sightseeing of Kyoto with a visit to **Nijo Castle**.

**Nijo Castle** was built in 1603 as the Kyoto residence of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first *shogun* of the Edo Period. The main building was completed in early 1600s and has since then been known for its Momoyama-style architecture, decorated sliding doors, and “squeaky nightingale” floors which alerted residents to unwanted intruders. After the Tokugawa Shogunate fell in 1867, Nijo Castle was used as an imperial palace and its palace buildings are arguably the best surviving examples of castle palace architecture of Japan's feudal era. The entire castle grounds are surrounded by stone walls and moats and the castle was designated a UNESCO world heritage site in 1994.

This is followed by the stunning **Golden Pavilion** collectively known as **Kinkaku-ji Temple**, an elegant, gilded 14th century Zen temple which is one of Japan's most cherished sites. Formally known as Rokuonji, the temple was the retirement villa of the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu and, according to his will, it became a Zen temple of the Rinzaï sect after his death in 1408. Kinkaku-ji was built to echo the extravagant Kitayama culture that developed in the wealthy aristocratic circles of Kyoto during Yoshimitsu's times and each floor represents a different style of architecture. The temple grounds hold exquisite Japanese gardens and koi ponds and what is undoubtedly impressive is the top two floors of the pavilion that are completely covered in handmade gold-leaf.



Then, proceed to the **Arashiyama** area and marvel at the towering stalks of bamboo as you walk up to the **Tenryu-ji Temple**, which is ranked first amongst the Zen temples in Kyoto, also being recognized as World Heritage Site. The traditional Japanese landscape gardens survived for centuries without much change and are a popular attraction on their own. Next to the temple, you will find the area's most famous spot, the bamboo grove.

At Tenryu-ji Temple, you will have a traditional Buddhist lunch course.





After lunch you will have a chance to try **Zazen meditation**, with the session being led by a Buddhist monk who will explain how to sit, breath and focus before initiating a zazen (seated) meditation.

**Zazen** literally means seated meditation, and this meditation practice originated from China and then spread over Japan, Korea, and the Asian countries. The Japanese word "Zen" is derived from the Chinese word "Chan" which is again taken from the Indian term "Dhyana". Of the many schools of Buddhism that took root in Japan, Zen is the most well-known overseas and perhaps the most synonymous with Japanese culture. Tea ceremony, ikebana flower arranging, garden design and marital arts are all seen as direct expressions of Zen spirit. Bushido, the strict samurai code, was also heavily influenced by Zen Buddhism.

One of the most important teachings of Zen Buddhism is that one can achieve self-enlightenment through meditation and the main purpose of the Zazen technique is spiritual.



It provides deep insight into the way mind functions and helps heal people suffering from depression, anxiety, stressfulness, and similar kind of emotional turbulence. It discloses the innate strength and clarity of mind and is useful for both the beginners and the experts.

The practice requires the participants to sit in perfect posture, helping clear their mind as the aim is to get rid of all views and feelings. Thus, one can build up an insight into the mind and body. Apart from relieving stress or tension, it goes much deeper. It handles some general life questions that the participant may not be able to answer and primarily depends on intuition and practice rather than logic.

The great Buddhist master Bodhidharma described it as "A unique communication outside the teachings; not established upon words as well as letters; pointing simply to the human mind; observing nature and becoming a Buddha."

Instead of resolving life problems temporarily, it focuses on the root cause. It teaches us that true happiness does not depend on wealth, fame, success, or any other materialistic parameters, it lies within us. That the more you will give, the more you will be richer. It encourages us to find happiness in the tiny things that life has gifted us. Our joyfulness increases with the expansion of compassion for others.

According to the Zen masters, if you are looking out for inner peace, 'don't think much about it. Instead, concentrate on 'others' happiness. It will give you unlimited peace and joy.



Then, take a stroll through **Nishiki Market**, a narrow, five block long shopping street lined by more than one hundred shops and restaurants. The market started as a fish wholesale district, with the first shop opening around 1310 and many stores have been operated by the same families for generations.

Also 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, and souvenirs in general.

Evening at leisure. Overnight at hotel in Kyoto.

## DAY 14 – Jun 4: Kyoto (B, D)

Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning you will have a last experience before flying back home which is a **Shiatsu initiation** with a Shiatsu Master. During this class, you will discover how, by acupressure, Shiatsu is used to heal a variety of ailments (see below).

**Shiatsu, or Acupressure**, is an alternative-medicine manual therapy in which pressure is applied to points on the body aligned along 12 main meridians (pathways), usually for a short time, to improve the flow of qi (life force). Based on concepts in traditional Chinese medicine such as the use of chi meridians from thousands of years ago, it has been further developed in Japan through a synthesis of Eastern and Western medical concepts, using mankind's most ancient medical tools – the human hand and the human heart - to treat the patient using a holistic approach that stimulates the body's own natural self-healing powers to correct imbalances and effect a cure from within.



Shiatsu literally means "finger pressure" and shiatsu techniques include massages with fingers, thumbs, feet and palms; acupressure, assisted stretching; and joint manipulation and mobilization. To examine a patient, a shiatsu practitioner uses palpation and, sometimes, pulse diagnosis. The practitioner can detect variations subtle responses in the person's condition and then apply pressure on the Shiatsu points. A single point may be pressed to relieve a specific symptom or condition, or a series of points can be worked on to promote overall well-being. Those pressures have a deep effect on the inner body so it can improve physical and mental well-being. Studies suggest that shiatsu can be effective for certain health problems, including headaches, pain, stroke-related weakness, eyestrain, sleeplessness, appetite control for diet and body metabolism.

Learn more about Shiatsu at <https://www.shiatsupractor.com/about-shiatsu/>

Free time this afternoon to continue to explore this fascinating old Imperial capital independently.

This evening a Kimono master will come to the hotel for your **Kimono wearing experience** as tonight is your special **kaiseki farewell dinner** in a private Fortune Garden **with Geisha & Maiko** (apprentice Geisha) - an excellent opportunity to learn about what is involved in becoming a Geisha and the art of Japanese hospitality.



**Kaiseki ryori** has its origin in the traditional tea ceremony, but later evolved into an elaborate dining style popular among aristocratic circles. Kyoto style kaiseki ryori (kyo kaiseki) is particularly refined, placing an emphasis on subtle flavors and local and seasonal ingredients. A kaiseki meal has a prescribed order to their dishes, most of which are prepared by using one of the common techniques of Japanese cooking. However, kaiseki chefs have considerable freedom to add, omit or substitute courses in order to highlight regional and seasonal delicacies and personal style.



**Geisha** is a member of a professional class of women in Japan whose traditional occupation is to entertain men, in modern times, particularly at businessmen's parties in restaurants or teahouses. The Japanese word geisha literally means "art person," and singing, dancing, and playing the samisen (a flutelike instrument) are indispensable talents for a geisha, along with the ability to make conversation. Many geisha are also adept at flower arranging, performing the tea ceremony, or calligraphy. The main function of the geisha is to provide an atmosphere of chic and gaiety for her wealthy clientele. Geisha are usually exquisitely dressed in traditional kimonos and delicately mannered and have a knowledge not only of the past but also of contemporary gossip.



The geisha system is thought to have emerged in the 17th century to provide a class of entertainers set apart from courtesans ("oiran") and prostitutes, who plied their trades respectively among the nobility and samurai. The geisha system was traditionally a form of indentured labour, although some girls, attracted by the glamour of the life, volunteered. Usually, a girl at an early age was given by her parents for a sum of money to a geisha house ("okiya"), which taught, trained, fed, and clothed her for a period of years. Then she emerged into the society known as karyūkai (the "flower and willow world") and began earning money to repay her parents' debt and her past keep. The most sought-after geisha could command large sums from their customers.

In the 1920s there were as many as 80,000 geisha in Japan, but by the late 20th century their number had dwindled to only a few thousand. They can still be found in the cities of Tokyo and Kanazawa but Kyoto remains the best and most prestigious place to experience geisha, who are known there as geiko, and there are four separate geiko districts in the Gion district in central Kyoto. The typical location for a geiko dinner are "ochaya" (tea houses), another important element of geiko districts. The ochaya provides just the tatami room where the dinner takes place, while the food and the geiko themselves are ordered from the outside. Ochaya are highly exclusive places due to their traditional way of doing business and will grant entry to trusted customers only.

Learn more about Geishas at <https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2102.html>

Overnight at hotel in Kyoto.

#### DAY 15 – Jun 5: Kyoto – Tokyo - Onward return flight to Toronto (B)

Breakfast at hotel.

This morning, travel to Tokyo airport for your return flight to Canada.

Specific flight times / routing will be forwarded upon registration.

Arrival back in Toronto on the evening of June 5, 2022.

## The hotel bases...

LOCATION	ACCOMMODATION
Tokyo (3 nights)	The Pullman Tamachi (5*) <a href="https://all.accor.com/hotel/B137/index.en.shtml">https://all.accor.com/hotel/B137/index.en.shtml</a>
Hakone (1 night)	Tenyu Kowakien (4*) <a href="https://www.hakone-tenyu.com/en-gb/">https://www.hakone-tenyu.com/en-gb/</a>
Takayama (2 nights)	Wat Hotel & Spa Hida (3*) <a href="http://www.wathotel.com/english/index.html">http://www.wathotel.com/english/index.html</a>
Kanazawa (2 nights)	Hotel Nikko Kanazawa (4*) <a href="https://www.hnkanazawa.jp/english/">https://www.hnkanazawa.jp/english/</a>
Hiroshima (2 nights)	Hotel Sheraton Hiroshima (4*) <a href="https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/hjsi-sheraton-grand-hiroshima-hotel">https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/hjsi-sheraton-grand-hiroshima-hotel</a>
Kyoto (3 nights)	Kyoto Yura Hotel - M Gallery by Accor Kyoto (4+*) <a href="https://kyotoyurahotel-mgallery.com/">https://kyotoyurahotel-mgallery.com/</a>

As denoted above, the majority of the accommodation is in 4\* properties.

In the unlikely event that a property needs to be substituted it will be of a similar standard.



**The price... Cdn \$11,495 / person**  
**(Early Booking Price valid until January 17, 2022 – save \$500/person)**

Pricing (exc. Insurance) / per person - Cdn\$	Including Air (from Toronto)
Per person (double occupancy)	
- registrations up to January 17, 2022	<b>\$11,495</b>
- registrations after January 17, 2022	\$11,995
Single supplement	\$ 2,540
Single share matching fee (A)	\$ 300 **
Transportation / hotel taxes and fees	\$ 685
Academic program registration fee (per MD registrant)	\$ 800

(A) Single share matching fee – can't find a traveling partner but don't want to pay the single supplement? We'll keep our eyes open for similar clients and try and find you a compatible person to share a room with. However, if we are unable to find you a suitable companion the single supplement will be payable.

**Connecting flights** from other Canadian cities available upon request (supplement applies).

### REPEAT CUSTOMER DISCOUNT

If you have travelled with Doctors-on-Tour before, you are eligible for our Repeat Customer Discount. Simply deduct \$100 /person for each separate tour that you have travelled with the company on up to a maximum of \$300 /person (ie travelled on one previous tour, deduct \$100; two tours, \$200; three or more tours, \$300). **Please note, this discount is subject to the payment (s) for the tour being made by cheque.** The discount is to be made from the final balance payment with the deposit amount being paid in full.

### COST EFFICIENT INVOICING !

For **invoicing** purposes re Academic Program registrants and their companions, we can also provide a separate invoice with the registrant's air cost plus 100% of the accommodation costs included in the registrant's invoice.

### CANADIAN \$ PRICING !

Please note, unlike many programs offered by other companies which are quoted in US\$ (and are also usually land only prices excluding air fare), **our prices remain in Canadian\$** - and, with a premium now of around 30% (at October 2021) when paying in US\$, this makes a significant difference.

### ONLINE REGISTRATION FORM

Our **online registration form** may be accessed via the direct link below –

<https://fs22.formsite.com/Doctorsontour/JAP2205/index.html>

Full program information may also be found at –

<http://www.doctorsontour.ca/cme-programs-japan-upcoming-2205.php>

**REGISTER BY JANUARY 17, 2022 AND SAVE \$1,000/COUPLE !!**

## Inclusions and Exclusions...

### Included in the price :

- Round trip International flights from Toronto to Tokyo, Japan
- Modern, air conditioned coach transportation (including bottled water), local trains and bullet trains (*Shinkansen*)
- All meet and greet services and arrival and departure transfers
- 4 star hotel accommodation
- 13 breakfasts, 9 lunches, 4 dinners
- Comprehensive daily itineraries including privately escorted tours of local cultural sites, museums, attractions and shows.
- *Bonzai* workshop
- *Origami* session and personal *origami* crane offering in Hiroshima Peace Park
- Japanese tea ceremony
- Introduction to *Zazen* meditation led by a Buddhist monk
- *Shiatsu* initiation with a *Shiatsu* Master
- Private group dinner hosted by a *Geisha/Maiko*
- All admission fees (except those specifically noted above)
- Fully escorted program including services of local English speaking cultural experts
- Guiding earphone for the duration of the tour
- Portage
- CME program including tours of various local medical facilities spouses (Academic Program Certificate provided) with separate programs for spouses
- Hosting by our Group Leader and Medical Director, Dr. Peter Bloch and his wife, Mary

### Exclusions

- Any meals or activities not mentioned above
- Camera / video entrance fees (where applicable)
- Personal expenses (laundry, telephone / internet usage, drinks)
- Gratuities for local tour escort / guides and drivers
- International airport departure tax
- Travel insurance – please note, **travel insurance (including medical and trip interruption coverage) is highly recommended** for this tour. Coverage is available through Doctors-on-Tour with Manulife Insurance – please check for further details in our brochure (page 32)

Online registration is available at <https://fs22.formsite.com/Doctorsontour/JAP2205/index.html>

For **invoicing** purposes re doctors and their spouse, we can also provide a separate invoice with the doctor's air cost plus 100% of the accommodation costs included in the doctor's invoice.

**OUR PROGRAMS HAVE LIMITED CAPACITY !**

**WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND REGISTERING (WITH A DEPOSIT OF \$500 PER PERSON, PLUS APPLICABLE TRAVEL INSURANCE PREMIUM) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO GUARANTEE YOUR RESERVATION.**

**REGISTER BY JANUARY 17, 2022 AND SAVE \$1,000/COUPLE !!**



## Misc information you need to know...

### Travel documentation and visas

An entry visa is not required for Canadian citizens but your passport must be valid until at least the planned date of your departure from Japan.

Citizens of other countries should check their requirements at <https://cibtvisas.ca/>

**Mandatory vaccinations** – none at the present time, however, we would assume that, by the date of this tour, the Japanese Immigration authorities may require **proof of vaccination against COVID-19** to be allowed entry into Japan.

### Recommended medical precautions

A list of our full medical **recommendations** will be provided closer to departure – this will include up to date MMR, Hepatitis A/B, polio and Japanese encephalitis vaccinations.

In the new COVID world, you should also plan to bring -

- Hand sanitizer
- Anti-bacterial wipes
- Face mask (wearing a mask will likely be the expected norm at this stage, whether in sites or indoors)
- Personal refillable water bottle

## COVID-19

We recognize that, for the foreseeable future at least, COVID-19 has significantly changed the travel experience. We are continuously monitoring the developing situation in all of our worldwide destinations through guidance provided by the PHAC, CDC and WHO and we have been working with our exclusive local destination partners to ensure that travel to any destination that we offer is able to re-commence as safely as possible. Our new **Travel with Confidence** policy features new health and safety procedures from the moment you arrive to the moment you leave, with as little disruption as possible from your overall travel experience and this policy will evolve as time goes on and as we continue to monitor the ongoing situation in each destination

In addition to a Wellness Declaration Form that we will require you to complete and submit before joining your tour, each destination will have their own health screening requirements for entry. Entry screening will likely involve completing a COVID-19 questionnaire upon arrival at Immigration and may include the requirement of evidence of recent negative COVID-19 test results and temperature screening. **You can also expect that proof of vaccination against COVID-19 will be required** and it is possible that proof of medical insurance (including for COVID-19) may also be an entry requirement. A particular destination's requirements may obviously be subject to change as each country's specific situation evolves and we are monitoring each of our planned destinations in order that we may provide you with the most specific up to date information which will be provided to you prior to your tour balance payment being due.

Complete details of our **Travel with Confidence** policy including a list of our **COVID-19 health & safety protocols**, and Q&A regarding travelling during COVID-19 may be found at -

<http://www.doctorsontour.ca/covid-19-travel-with-confidence.php>

## Travel insurance information... Coverage available through Manulife Insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out travel insurance to protect you against the unexpected due to, in particular, limited provincial health care coverage afforded to Canadians while traveling overseas and the cancellation provisions inherent in your booking. We offer the following insurance coverage options through Manulife Insurance, one of Canada's leading insurance providers –

### NON-MEDICAL INCLUSIVE PLAN

There are significant inherent cancellation penalties associated with your booking as detailed in our booking terms and conditions and this insurance package provides coverage for cancellation penalties if you should have to cancel due to medical, or other listed, reasons either relating to yourself or a member of your immediate family. It also covers you for trip interruption costs short notice return flight home etc) for medical reasons again, either relating to yourself or an immediate family member as well as flight and travel accident and baggage insurance.

### ALL INCLUSIVE PLAN

This plan provides coverage for all the components in the Non-medical Inclusive plan, plus unlimited health coverage (\*\* see note re COVID-19 exclusion and availability of separate COVID-19 medical policy below) while in the destination

### "Cancel for any reason (CFAR)" coverage - NEW and at no additional cost !!

So long as you **purchase either of the two insurance policies above at the same time as your tour booking**, you are automatically entitled to this added benefit of CFAR coverage whereby, if you need to cancel your tour booking up to 14 days or more before departure **for any reason**, your policy will refund you up to a maximum of 50% of the cancellation penalties incurred. This is excellent peace of mind coverage to protect you against (50% of the) cancellation penalties incurred in a situation where the reason for cancellation is not one of the regular covered risks in your policy (ie it is essentially "change of mind" insurance).

### PREMIUM PROTECTION PLAN ("PPP")

As a third option, Manulife is now also offering a new enhanced travel insurance policy, their **Premium Protection Plan ("PPP")**. This is Manulife's most comprehensive coverage, providing all the same types of coverage as the All-Inclusive plan (above) but with higher covered amounts in most areas. It is also a simplified policy in so much that, whereas the All-Inclusive plan and Non-medical Inclusive plan (above, and as is the case with most insurance company travel policies) have a list of specific covered events, the **PPP offers cancellation coverage for any unexpected and unforeseen event** (ie., any event, situation or circumstance that is beyond your control that prevents you from travelling) with only a few exclusions that apply.

An overview of the PPP may be found by clicking [here](#)

A comparison of the enhanced benefits provided by the PPP compared to Manulife's regular All Inclusive plan may be found by clicking [here](#)

And, in these uncertain times, a major benefit of the PPP is that coverage for reimbursement of inherent cancellation penalties under the **Cancel For Any Reason (CFAR)" coverage is increased to 80%** of the cancellation penalties incurred for all cancellation **up to 7 days or more before departure**.

Please note, the PPP is only available to clients under the age of 75 (at the date of purchase of the insurance coverage) and **must be purchased at the same time as the travel tour booking is made** (72 hour grace period).



A detailed overview of coverage benefits and limitations of each insurance policy that we offer through Manulife may be found at -

<https://www.igoinsured.com/Direct/ManulifeGlobal.aspx?ag=ONTOTPR&lang=E>

Manulife's insurance premiums (dependent upon your age at the time of purchasing insurance and your total tour costs) are below -

Total insurable costs (\$/person)	NON-MEDICAL INCLUSIVE								ALL-INCLUSIVE							
Age>	0-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85+	0-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85+
4000 - 4500	406	406	454	487	536	743	1,040	1,040	474	474	581	669	878	999	1,472	1,472
4500 - 5000	440	440	494	534	590	817	1,135	1,135	508	508	622	716	932	1,060	1,567	1,567
5000 - 5500	474	474	535	582	644	892	1,229	1,229	542	542	662	763	986	1,121	1,661	1,661
5500 - 6000	507	507	575	629	698	966	1,324	1,324	575	575	703	810	1,040	1,181	1,756	1,756
6000 - 6500	541	541	616	676	752	1,040	1,418	1,418	609	609	743	858	1,094	1,242	1,850	1,850
6500 - 7000	575	575	656	723	806	1,114	1,513	1,513	643	643	784	905	1,148	1,303	1,945	1,945
7000 - 7500	609	609	697	771	860	1,189	1,607	1,607	677	677	824	952	1,202	1,364	2,039	2,039
7500 - 8000	642	642	737	818	914	1,263	1,702	1,702	710	710	865	999	1,256	1,424	2,134	2,134
8000 - 8500	676	676	778	865	968	1,337	1,796	1,796	744	744	905	1,047	1,310	1,485	2,228	2,228
8500 - 9000	710	710	818	912	1,022	1,411	1,891	1,891	778	778	946	1,094	1,364	1,546	2,323	2,323
9000 - 9500	744	744	859	960	1,076	1,486	1,985	1,985	812	812	986	1,141	1,418	1,607	2,417	2,417
9500 - 10000	777	777	899	1,007	1,130	1,560	2,080	2,080	845	845	1,027	1,188	1,472	1,667	2,512	2,512
10000 - 10500	811	811	940	1,054	1,184	1,634	2,174	2,174	879	879	1,067	1,236	1,526	1,728	2,606	2,606
10500 - 11000	845	845	980	1,101	1,238	1,708	2,269	2,269	913	913	1,108	1,283	1,580	1,789	2,701	2,701
11000 - 11500	879	879	1,021	1,149	1,292	1,783	2,363	2,363	947	947	1,148	1,330	1,634	1,850	2,795	2,795
11500 - 12000	912	912	1,061	1,196	1,346	1,857	2,458	2,458	980	980	1,189	1,377	1,688	1,910	2,890	2,890
12000 - 12500	946	946	1,102	1,243	1,400	1,931	2,552	2,552	1,014	1,014	1,229	1,425	1,742	1,971	2,984	2,984
12500 - 13000	980	980	1,142	1,290	1,454	2,005	2,647	2,647	1,048	1,048	1,270	1,472	1,796	2,032	3,079	3,079
13000 - 13500	1,014	1,014	1,183	1,338	1,508	2,080	2,741	2,741	1,082	1,082	1,310	1,519	1,850	2,093	3,173	3,173
13500 - 14000	1,047	1,047	1,223	1,385	1,562	2,154	2,836	2,836	1,115	1,115	1,351	1,566	1,904	2,153	3,268	3,268
14000 - 14500	1,081	1,081	1,264	1,432	1,616	2,228	2,930	2,930	1,149	1,149	1,391	1,614	1,958	2,214	3,362	3,362
14500 - 15000	1,115	1,115	1,304	1,479	1,670	2,302	3,025	3,025	1,183	1,183	1,432	1,661	2,012	2,275	3,457	3,457

Total insurable costs (\$/person)	PREMIUM PROTECTION PLAN (PPP)		
Age>	0-69	70-74	75+
4000 - 4500	675	1,296	
4500 - 5000	750	1,440	
5000 - 5500	825	1,584	
5500 - 6000	900	1,728	
6000 - 6500	975	1,872	
6500 - 7000	1,050	2,016	
7000 - 7500	1,125	2,160	
7500 - 8000	1,200	2,304	
8000 - 8500	1,275	2,448	
8500 - 9000	1,350	2,592	
9000 - 9500	1,425	2,736	
9500 - 10000	1,500	2,880	
10000 - 10500	1,575	3,024	
10500 - 11000	1,650	3,168	
11000 - 11500	1,725	3,312	
11500 - 12000	1,800	3,456	
12000 - 12500	1,875	3,600	
12500 - 13000	1,950	3,744	
13000 - 13500	2,025	3,888	
13500 - 14000	2,100	4,032	
14000 - 14500	2,175	4,176	
14500 - 15000	2,250	4,320	

Coverage not available if age 75 or over at the date of purchasing insurance

**For residents of Ontario**, simply accept your choice of insurance (Non-medical Inclusive, All-Inclusive or Premium Protection coverage) on our *online* registration form and we will apply the premium above on your invoice confirmation (if using our *pdf* registration form, enter the applicable premium from the above table when completing the registration form)

**For residents of Canadian provinces other than Ontario**, insurance regulations state that travel insurance should be taken out directly with Manulife Insurance, albeit through a direct web link hosted on our web site, ie you should purchase your travel insurance policy by simply following the link below to take advantage of our preferred rates with Manulife) via our company's exclusive Manulife link:

<https://www.igoinsured.com/Direct/ManulifeGlobal.aspx?ag=ONTOTPR&lang=E>

### Non-Canadian residents

For residents of countries outside of Canada (including the USA), insurance regulations allow us to sell "**Trip Cancellation**" insurance (this policy includes both trip cancellation and trip interruption coverage but not medical coverage). Hence it is not possible for non-Canadian residents to purchase either the All Inclusive or Premium Protection plans from Manulife. We do find that many of our overseas clients already have medical insurance through other channels and therefore, if this is the case, you may purchase "Trip Cancellation" coverage by following the link below to purchase the "Trip Cancellation" insurance policy (taking advantage of our preferred rates with Manulife) via our company's exclusive Manulife link:

<https://www.igoinsured.com/Direct/ManulifeGlobal.aspx?ag=ONTOTPR&lang=E>

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

### Travel insurance that may be available through your credit card

When considering any of the travel insurance policies above, if you believe you may have coverage through your **credit card** we would strongly advise checking with the credit card company the actual coverage afforded to ensure it covers medical, trip cancellation and trip interruption as not all of these items are covered (or may only offer limited coverage as to trip duration or insured \$amount in the event of a claim - sometimes as low as only \$1,000 per person) by all kinds of cards. Also, most coverage through credit card benefits does not include Cancel For Any Reason (CFAR) coverage.

### **\*\* COVID-19**

Due to its worldwide impact, COVID-19 has been deemed by all travel insurance companies, including Manulife, to be a "Known Event" at the time of the insurance policy purchase and hence the majority of claims relating to COVID-19 are excluded for both trip cancellation and medical insurance coverage in most circumstances, with the two most common situations that will apply to travelers being summarized below –

- Canadian Government Level 3 (Avoid All Non-Essential Travel") or Level 4 (Avoid All Travel) Advisory in place regarding the travel destination at the date of claim  
*Any claims due to COVID-19 relating to either trip cancellation coverage or medical insurance coverage in destination are excluded*  
*Note: Manulife Insurance have recently announced that they will be offering a separate additional policy which will cover travelers for any medical costs in destination related to COVID-19 for clients traveling when a travel advisory is in place. **Details of this policy (COVID-19 Pandemic Medical Plan) may be found below.***
- Canadian Government Level 3 (Avoid All Non-Essential Travel") or Level 4 (Avoid All Travel) Advisory is NOT in place regarding the travel destination at the date of claim  
*Medical claims in destination relating to COVID-19 are covered*  
*Trip cancellation claims relating to the client cancelling due to concerns regarding travelling to the destination because of COVID-19 are excluded*



Note: However, trip cancellation claims *will* be covered if you need to cancel your trip for one of the following events –

- You become ill due to COVID-19 *before* your departure from Canada and need to cancel your trip; or
- You experience an involuntary loss of employment due to COVID-19

Therefore, because trip cancellation claims relating to COVID-19 (with the exception of you contracting COVID or losing your job due to COVID-19) are not covered, it is even more important to purchase one of the insurance policies above at the same time as your travel tour booking is made in order that you have **Cancel For Any Reason (CFAR) coverage to protect yourself against cancellation penalties should you decide to cancel.**

### COVID-19 PANDEMIC MEDICAL PLAN

The COVID-19 Emergency Pandemic Travel Plan for Travelling Canadians is designed to help cover medical expenses, including medical expenses if you have tested positive for COVID-19, in your destination. It also includes Trip Interruption insurance for hotel and meal expenses, and for a return flight if you are required, by a medical professional, to quarantine or self-isolate due to a positive COVID-19 test result or contact tracing. The plan provides for COVID-19 related medical expenses in destination such as emergency treatment, hospital allowance up to \$5.0m per insured if fully vaccinated (up to \$1.0m if not vaccinated) against COVID-19 (including coverage for up to \$5.0m per insured for any non COVID-19 related medical expenses).

This insurance is only available to Canadian residents and you must have a valid government health insurance plan in place for the duration of your trip.

This policy is sold separately from any other Manulife travel insurance policy as a standalone plan and can be purchased at any time before your departure, although for peace of mind we do recommend that you purchase the coverage at the same time as your trip booking. The insurance premium is determined by your age, the duration of your travel and the plan for which you qualify which may only be determined by completing an online insurance questionnaire on Manulife's web portal at the link below -

<https://www.igoinjured.com/Direct/ManulifeGlobal.aspx?ag=ONTOTPR&lang=E>

Once you have accessed this page, click on “Get a free quote”, then “Quote/Purchase”,  
 Step 1: “Enter Trip Details” - enter your general information on this page and click “Get Quote”  
 Step 2: “Select insurance plan” – select Manulife COVID-19 Pandemic  
 This will take you to an online medical questionnaire which will determine your eligibility and the applicable premium.

## Testimonials

"Great hotel facilities, excellent service – an extremely enjoyable, and educational, week  
Dr. Doug Wooster, Toronto – Chile, 2005

"Great company, well organized and interesting tours, educational lectures and great food (and wine....!) – Fantastic trip!"  
Dr. Ray Martin, Toronto – Argentina, 2006

"Thanks for planning such an amazing trip. Our congenial group enjoyed so many rich experiences together and collected memories to last a lifetime. Each day was an adventure!  
Andrea Maurice – Vietnam / Cambodia, 2007

"I want to express our appreciation for a wonderful trip. The tour operator and the guides were excellent and everything went very smoothly.... this was a tremendous trip which we will need to review again over the coming days to catalogue and appreciate all the places we visited and the marvelous things we saw.. Thanks again for all the hard work in putting the trip together with the memorable result that was achieved...  
Dr. Rudy Hyles, Mississauga – Ecuador & The Galapagos, 2008

"Wonderful people! Wonderful places!"  
Dr. Phil McGuire, Ottawa – Peru, 2009

"The organization and accommodation were both excellent. We were always looked after with consideration and provided with a wide variety of interesting activities and experiences. The guides were most helpful and informative. A wonderful tour!"  
Dr. Michael Dales, Toronto - Ecuador & The Galapagos, 2009

"I do not have words to express my appreciation and admiration for the your hospitality and service provided by your company and your partners on the ground in India"  
Dr. Sudhir Pandya – Northern India, 2009

"A wonderful trip. It was amazing to see so many different animals co-existing on the beautiful African plains. The Kenyan and Tanzanian people we met were gracious and welcoming.  
Our host/trip manager was excellent - very bright, knowledgeable, good problem solver, great people skills - a delightful man who really made our trip memorable. Our guide/driver was also excellent - very knowledgeable, an excellent driver and keen to make our safari experience a good one. We had lots of fun and learned a lot from him.  
I loved the parks and reserves - the Serengeti and Ngorongoro are absolutely amazing".  
Andrea Maurice, Toronto – Kenya & Tanzania – March, 2010

"The guides throughout the trip were superb, well informed with excellent local knowledge and willing to discuss any topic! The visits to the local hospitals were excellent. A fantastic tour!"  
Dr. Linda Stirk, Toronto - Ecuador & The Galapagos (and Peru), 2010

"We had a great visit to the Falls. Stefani was a very helpful guide. The hotel and facilities were fabulous. The tour overall was an exciting experience. Thanks to you both and Ian for the hard work and planning.  
Drs. Hirsch and Indra Rastogi, Ancaster – Brazil, 2011

"In addition to exploring the fantastic sights of Northern India, our group visited local hospitals and clinics to learn more about how medicine is practiced in India as well as in the SOS Children's village in Jaipur and the Mother Teresa charity Mission in Agra" - Dr. Serge Puksa, Northern India, 2011

"We found this tour to be a wonderful adventure... even more than we had anticipated. The planning and attention to detail on the ground ensured we had a comprehensive introduction to the many wonders of Ecuador. I will definitely consider participating in another program and will be certain to share details with my colleagues"  
Dr. Alison Kelford, Oakville - Ecuador & the Galapagos, 2011



"Spain greatly surpassed my expectations, offering wonderful gastronomic experiences, lavished with outstanding wines and extremely hospitable people with a culture and history that is as rich as deep. Fernando Garcia, through his many connections, was able to allow us access to exclusive vineyards , where we were submerged in to the local cuisine and regaled with their finest wines".

Dr. Peter Bloch, Oakville – Spain Gourmet tour, 2011

"Our guide was excellent, enthusiastic and knowledgeable. Cooking classes were good and the hotels were excellent"

Dr. Barbara Flanagan, Charlottetown – Vietnam, Laos & Cambodia, 2012

"Excellent! Loved the trip and well worth it. Life changing experience, excellent speakers and very well organized. Met some great people and will keep in touch for future trips. Will definitely book another doctors-on-tour trip in the future"

Dr. Janel Gracey, London – Bali, 2012

"A quick personal note to tell you how much we enjoyed our trip to Spain & Portugal. The whole agenda was well planned and well carried out. The winery visits and dinners were amazing, we learned so much about the history and making of Port."

Dr. Blair Fraser, Guelph – Spain & Portugal, 2012

"We had a magical time in Machu Picchu - such a spiritual time at day break - our guide was great! Many thanks for the fabulous trip - memorable and well organized. Your company does such a great job and such an opportunity for us, and what a great group of people to share such an amazing trip with".

Dr. Paul Bates, London – Ecuador & the Galapagos, Peru 2012

"What an amazing trip this was ! Your company did such a fantastic job – well organized with wonderful support staff – everything left on time, great food, weather & traveling companions – and (our guide) Gonzalo was the best ! Thank you very much for such an unforgettable adventure".

Jack & Lore Brown, London - Ecuador & the Galapagos, 2012

"I have been fortunate to enjoy four trips with doctors-on-tour since 2009 - to Ecuador, Vietnam/Cambodia/Laos, India and Bali. All these tours were wonderful. Well-organized, excellent accommodations, top notch guides, remarkable CME experiences that broaden one's outlook on medicine and really great leaders of the tours. You should seriously consider taking one of these exotic trips. Beats lying on a beach!"

Dr. Linda Rapson, Toronto – 2013

"We enjoyed our extension to the UAE and saw an amazing amount in a short time. Our guide was very helpful, informative and pleasant and we appreciated how he was able to inform us about the country, it's people and customs. Excellent !"

Drs Christopher & Margaret Ibey, Parry Sound, On. – United Arab Emirates, 2013

"The whole trip was wonderful and very well organized. We appreciated the advance preparation information packages. The hotel accommodation was excellent and the guides provided a lot of background information in Indian culture and society which made the trip even more valuable as a learning experience. We enjoyed all of it – including meeting Dr. Peter, & Mary, Bloch (Group Medical Director) and the great people in the group!"

Dr. Ron Eliosoff, Ottawa - South India, 2013

"Excellent trip – hotels, guides, food and company and we saw such wonderful sites.

Dr. Martin and Eileen McIntyre, Brantford - Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos, 2013

"We had a wonderful trip. It was such an interesting mix of people that we laughed all the way through - an amazing experience and a fabulous time. The Pantanal was awesome and we also totally loved the old colonial town of Paraty. We enjoyed ourselves so much we are thinking of signing up for another one soon. Thanks again - you did a wonderful job - it was a dream".

Dyana Driscoll, Toronto – Brazil, 2013

"I was extremely pleased with my second trip through Doctors-on-Tour to Kenya & Tanzania - the tour was one of the most amazing things I have experienced!"

Dr. Kerri McGuire, Ottawa - Kenya & Tanzania, 2013

"Fantastic experience! Every detail to perfection."

Dr. Les Marien, Orangeville, On. - Spain Gourmet, 2013

"Had a great time! Very well organized"

Dr. Yusuf Januwala, Ipswich, Queensland, Australia - Ecuador (Galapagos) & Peru, 2013

"Our guide was amazing - so professional and knowledgeable. Great itinerary - Well done !"

Dr. Susan Smith, Frederickton, N.B - South Africa, 2014

"We had a wonderful trip. Places we stayed during the tour were all very nice and every one had a good time. Your local tour manager was wonderful, extremely helpful and very well organized. Thanks again for all your help"

Dr. Kumar Banerjee, Vancouver, B.C. - South India, 2014

"We felt the tour is one of the best (CME tours) we have been on. We keep missing the great Chilean wines and Argentinian beef. Right sized group and great company. CME tours were interesting and informative. Our guides were good and I enjoyed learning about the country from their comments".

Dr. Eduardo Aenlle, Fallbrook, California - Chile, Argentina and Patagonia Cruise, 2014

"It was an amazing trip thru Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos. It exceeded all our expectations. Our group leaders were gracious hosts. Their thirst for adventure and generosity of spirit added so much to our trip. The group we traveled with were a great bunch and we hope to cross paths in the future. The CMEs were informative and I enjoyed seeing the varied medical sites in each country"

Dr. Tom Stark, Timaru, New Zealand - Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos, 2014

"Macchu Picchu and Galapagos were the highlights. Wonderful guides, very well organized and enjoyable. Tour leader did a great job !"

Dr. Michael Garner, Montreal, QC - Ecuador (Galapagos) & Peru, 2014

"Our guide was absolutely fabulous - she took superb care of us and added so much to the trip through her knowledge of New Zealand history, flora and fauna. Peter and Mary (Bloch) were wonderful medical leaders - calm, helpful, interesting and vivacious - kudos to them."

Drs. Peter & Louise Bobechko, Toronto, On. - New Zealand, 2015

"I really enjoyed this tour - Rajasthan and Agra are beautiful. Our tour escort, Kumar, has great people skills, and has been very attentive to everyone's needs - Himanshu has been an excellent guide and is very knowledgeable. We would love to return to India on your South India program"

Dr. Rajalaxmi Wong, North Bay, On. - North India, 2015

"The trip to South Africa was awesome - I would rank it up there with my favorite so far with Doctors on Tour. The people in our group were wonderful - it was a total joy and I can see now why South Africa is one of your favorite destinations"

Dyana Driscoll, Toronto, On.- South Africa, 2015

"Bob and I enjoyed the time shared with each of you in Bali, My expectations for the tour were met and exceeded .It really was a small window into the Balinese culture. To (our group leaders) Bonnie and Mel, Thanks! Hope this isn't our last tour.

You all were interesting and gracious, Terima Kasih. Salam Jalan"

Dr. Bob & Evelyn Lawler, Gibsonia, PA - Bali 2015

"I found the trip to Spain to be a great combination of site-seeing, CME and amazing gourmet meals and wines selected by an internationally famous chef. We visited several famous vineyards and were able to sample their wines. The visit to an ophthalmological institute was especially memorable, we watched lens surgery in close up. The visit was very well organized with time to explore cities on our own, as well as tours of architectural wonders. I strongly recommend this tour as a great experience"

Dr. John Cocker, Stouffville, On - Spain Gourmet, 2015



"Thank you for your excellent guidance during our trip to Ecuador. the trip was very good, and the logistics and handling of the group were excellent"

Dr. David Spence, London, On - Ecuador (including the Galapagos and Amazon), 2015

"The trip was exceptional in every way. Our guide was more than just a tour guide - the knowledge she shared was detailed and interesting - what an ambassador for her country! The high level of care that she offered was above and beyond anything that we have ever experienced. We thoroughly enjoyed every minute of this trip! Thank you!"

Dr. Les Marien, Orangeville, On - New Zealand, 2016

"The tour guides in each country were excellent. Fabulous trip!

Dr. Gail Neild, Woodbridge, On. – Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos, 2016

"An enjoyable and enlightening tour"

Dr. Brian Davies, Sarnia, On. - China, 2016

"A great exposure to Balinese culture and the spiritual aspects behind their healing philosophy"

Dr. Karyn Klapcecki, Toronto, On. - Bali, 2016

"I am in withdrawal, eating salad. Good for the body, not as good for the soul as the food last week! What an awesome group of people to get to know! We felt truly blessed to enjoy Spain with all of you.

Dr. Wendy Reimer, Breslau, ON – Spain Gourmet, 2016

"An extremely interesting, informative and invigorating tour. The medical CME components were excellent and I'm glad that we were able to see and experience so much".

Dr. Paula Chalmers, Vancouver, B.C. - South Africa, 2017

"Myanmar was very well organized and our guide was excellent - the best I have ever had! The sites and activities in Bhutan were very enjoyable and the local medical facilities and clinics that we visited as part of the CME were good"

Dr. Brenda Cholin, North Battleford, SK - Myanmar & Bhutan, 2017

"It was an incredible tour - we saw so much !"

Dr. Mo Meghji, Kitchener, On. - Argentina & Chile, including Patagonia cruise, 2017

"This was a very good tour. The progress that the country has made over the years has been very significant. However, China still has multiple levels of Red Tape, both public and private that will not change ever, so it must be accepted.

Overall a 9.5 out of 10 !"

Dr. Ted Erb, Waterloo, On. - China, 2017

"Everything was excellent! We had a wonderful time. Hotels were superb. Thank you again for the well organized, all details worked out, great trip!"

Dr. Andrea Cordas, Burlington, On. – South India, 2017

"It was our first trip with your company. John and I loved it. The itinerary was perfect. Busy days followed by quieter ones. Lorna and Ashley were lovely and so capable! The coordination was superb. Thank you. We had the trip of a lifetime!"

Dr. John Gapski, Mississauga, On. – Ecuador & Galapagos, 2017

"We really enjoyed traveling with an interesting group of professionals which gave us the opportunity to visit places where the public normally does not have easy entry. Excellent pre-departure information and the tour was well-balanced with a mixture of historic and social highlights, while travelling through very different landscapes and areas of the country. The public/private health care system was well described on the Groote Schuur Hospital tour and the children's' song and dance performance at SOS children's village in Cape Town was touching. Our local tour guide was outstanding [5+++] and provided excellent context for the political, economic and social aspects of SA. He was calm, professional, responded quickly to everyone's needs and was very proud of his country".

Helle & Tony Tosine, Toronto, On. – South Africa, 2017

"We really enjoyed New Zealand and the services provided by your company. The Academic Conference presentations were top caliber and contained information useful to both the specialist and generalist. I enjoyed getting to know and learning from the other group participants. We would recommend this trip and plan to travel with Doctors on Tour again".  
Dr. John Britt, Winston-Salem, NC - New Zealand, 2018

We enjoyed our trip very much. The hotels we stayed in were superb, the itinerary was great and the guides, both in Bhutan and in Myanmar, were fabulous. Overall it was a wonderful, memorable trip. Thank you very much!  
Dr. Sabine Ernsting, Adelaide, South Australia - Bhutan & Myanmar, 2018

So many highlights – favorites include Cape of Good Hope, Table Mountain, Kapama Game Reserve – because of excellent game rangers and trackers – saw the big 5 and so much more. Our local escort – excellent!!! Bus drivers also excellent. Coaches comfortable – great bonus to be able to charge cell phones inside buses. Bottom line – Awesome experience!!"  
Dr. Cinda Lee, Toronto, ON - South Africa, 2018

"I found this to be a very well organized trip. It exceeded my expectations. I'd like to repeat it, but I'll join your other trips instead. Too much to see and to learn in this world."  
Dr. Kas Tuters, Toronto, ON – Bali, 2018

"I totally loved Singapore and Malaysia. The local escorts were honestly a ten star. There was nothing they would not do for us".  
Dyana Driscoll, Toronto, On. – Malaysia & Singapore, 2018

"This was an exceptional trip – thanks again! Everything was perfectly well orchestrated. It feels like we have been travelling for more than two weeks. We have learned so much. We will definitely recommend this trip to our friends. We have seen so many things. We have had exceptional guides. The group we travelled with was fantastic! Again, an amazing adventure!"  
Dr. Collette Deslandres-Leduc, Montreal, Qc. – Ecuador and Peru, 2018

"Good guides, amazing sightseeing, loved the Patagonia cruise"  
Dr. Chantal Breton, Kirkland, Qc. - Argentina & Chile, including Patagonia cruise, 2019

"Thanks for sending along (the song that you wrote about Bali) and for everything else. your stories, tips, enthusiasm, quiet presence and good company. This trip was certainly quite special. Please also pass on my thanks to Bonnie. Take good care"  
Dr. Louise Lefort, Ottawa, On. – Bali, 2019

"This was an excellent unique tour combining both the cruise and a varied land component with spectacular sights ! Great group and local tour escort and cruise staff!"  
Dr. Evelyn Brett, Toronto, On. – Iceland circumnavigation cruise and land, 2019

"Peter & Mary Bloch did an excellent job leading the group. The guides and others were very helpful and excellent - Amit 5\*, plus Sheva and team. I thoroughly loved the trip. It exceeded my expectations. The people are so sweet and lots of smiles! This is a great place to visit."  
Dr. Vickie Carducci, Kilworthy, On. - Northern India, 2019

"Malaysia was exhilarating! We had a wonderful, adventurous time, especially in the Borneo Rainforest. The local guides (Malek and Hirzan) were very friendly and helpful, very well versed in the history of Malaysia and we learnt a lot. The canopy walk was breathtakingly hair-raising. The tour was very well organized and the optional stay in Singapore was very relaxing. We look forward to more of your tours in the future".  
Dr. Shiraz Walji, Calgary, AB - Malaysia & Singapore, 2019

"Fantastic trip – well organized, packed with loads of things to do and see – but did not feel 'superficial'. Just loved the opportunity to do and see so much. The group was fantastic – made new friends. Ian was a great tour leader"  
Dr. Lorraine Manzig, Toronto, ON – Ecuador & the Galapagos, 2019

"Your tours are great. Thanks for the experience!"  
Dr. Ikenna Ezeilo, Lethbridge, On. – South East Asia, 2020



## And about your Group Leaders and Medical Director, Dr. Peter, and Mary, Bloch (Oakville, On.)

"Very well organized ! - Peter & Mary were excellent in encouraging productive and enjoyable interactions between group members which resulted in a cohesive and unified group and resulted in the whole tour unfolding smoothly"

Dr. Elizabeth Weber, Toronto - Spain, 2011

"Peter and Mary were excellent hosts (as usual). It was particularly helpful having Peter at the ATMs which seemed to mystify me. It was also wonderful having Peter talk about Chile - growing up there, his summers in Vina - our own personal tour guide!

Andrea Maurice, Toronto – Chile & Argentina, , 2012

"As usual, Dr. Peter & Mary (Bloch) were spectacular hosts. A wonderful trip!"

Andrea Maurice, Toronto – South India, 2013

"I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed our recent trip to India. We all agreed that Peter and Mary were exceptional hosts. They were incredibly warm and welcoming and were on top of situations as they arose"

Dr. Ron Eliosoff, Ottawa - South India, 2013

"I want to give you some feedback on our amazing trip to South Africa. Our guide Craig was exceptional; lunch at La Petite Ferme was a highlight, great food, wine and scenery; in Swaziland, glass factory was very good the candle factory was great; Kapama River (Game) Lodge - amazing ! Soweto - great ! Overall it was a great trip, the group was easy to get along and of course Peter and Mary were great group leaders!"

Dr. Steve and Marg Szarka, Hamilton, On. - South Africa, 2014

"It was an amazing trip thru Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos. It exceeded all our expectations. Peter and Mary (Bloch) were gracious hosts. Their thirst for adventure and generosity of spirit added so much to our trip. The group we traveled with were a great bunch and we hope to cross paths in the future. The CMEs were informative and I enjoyed seeing the varied medical sites in each country"

Dr. Tom Stark, Timaru, New Zealand - Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos, 2014

"Thank you, Peter & Mary - you are wonderful at doing this !"

Dr. Linda Cohen, Montreal, Qc. - Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos, 2014

"Our guide was absolutely fabulous - she took superb care of us and added so much to the trip through her knowledge of New Zealand history, flora and fauna. Peter and Mary (Bloch) were wonderful medical leaders - calm, helpful, interesting and vivacious- kudos to them."

Drs. Peter & Louise Bobechko, Toronto, On. - New Zealand, 2015

"Mary & Peter were definitely an 11 (out of 10). I thought they were absolutely amazing, kind and friendly"

Dianne Fournier, Toronto, On. - China, 2016

"Excellent tour guide - Excellent meals! Peter and Mary did a great job.

Dr. Sy Lam, Calgary, AB - South Africa, 2017

"That was a great trip. (Dr.) Peter & Mary (Bloch) are excellent leaders"

Dr. Yaso Kancherla, Burlington, On. - Iceland circumnavigation cruise and land, 2019

"Peter and Mary Bloch – great hosts, helped bring participants closer and engage as a group"

Dr. Jack Richman. Oakville, On. - Iceland circumnavigation cruise and land, 2019

"Thanks to you and Mary for your all your care and attention. It was a fantastic trip. Sorry we slept through happy hour 😊 "

Dr. Sonia and Joel Kurtz, Toronto, On. - Iceland circumnavigation cruise and land, 2019

"Peter & Mary Bloch did an excellent job leading the group. The guides and others were very helpful and excellent - Amit 5\*, plus Sheva and team. I thoroughly loved the trip. It exceeded my expectations. The people are so sweet and lots of smiles! This is a great place to visit."

Dr. Vickie Carducci, Kilworthy, On. - Northern India, 2019

"Very good tour – very good guides, very good, friendly and helpful group leaders, Peter and Mary – a pleasure! Excellent tour organization and visits."

Dr. Michael Garner & Dr. Jeanne Teitelbaum, Montreal, QC – Northern India, 2019



Doctors-on- Tour – Ecuadorian Amazon



Doctors-on-Tour - India



Doctors-on-Tour – Spain



Doctors-on-Tour - Chile & Argentina



Doctors-on-Tour – South East Asia



Doctors-on-Tour – China



## The fine print...

Please take the time to read and understand the Terms and Conditions of booking set out below prior to booking a tour with us.

The Terms & Conditions contained herein are the terms under which Doctors-on-Tour and on-Tour (being operating brands of Britcan International Consulting (B.I.C.) Inc. and together, for the purposes of these Terms & Conditions, being referred to collectively as DOT/OT/BIC) accepts reservations. Our liabilities are limited. When you make a payment of deposit and/or final payment, it is also an acknowledgement of receipt and acceptance of these Terms and Conditions.

Due to the current COVID situation, we are offering more **flexible terms and conditions** for all **reservations received and deposited between January 1 - March 31, 2022 for all tour departures up to December 31, 2022**. Where different to our standard Terms and Conditions, these flexible terms and conditions are noted in *italics* (and are highlighted in yellow) in the relevant section below.

**1. RESERVATIONS & DEPOSIT:** Early reservations are recommended to guarantee your reservation as several of the accommodation providers with which we make arrangements on your behalf have limited capacity. All services are strictly on a request basis, both for air travel and land requirements and subject to availability of seats and hotel/lodge/camp rooms and cruise cabins. A guaranteed non-refundable deposit of \$500 per person (\$700 per person for programs which include a cruise component, \$1,000 per person for Iceland cruises), together with the applicable travel insurance premium, is required with your reservation request. Tour extensions and, where applicable, seat upgrades in aircraft cabin categories higher than economy, are also subject to additional non-refundable deposits as detailed in each specific program's brochure. Reservations made for travel within 95 days (105 days for programs which include a cruise component) of the travel date will require full payment at the time of reservation. Certain non-standard arrangements may require higher deposit and the same will be advised to you at the time of booking. Please be aware that some airfares (outside of our group air blocks) require full payment at time of booking and will be advised to you accordingly at the time of your booking confirmation.

*Lifetime transferable deposits : If you decide to change your plans and no longer wish to participate in the particular tour that your deposit has secured, your deposit may be transferred to any of our overseas programs (either the same destination at a future date or a different destination) so long as you notify us before the tour balance payment date. Lifetime transferable deposits are s.t. the possible retention of a nominal amount relating to any non-refundable deposit charged by the airline which is out of our control.*

**2. FINAL AND/OR BALANCE DUE PAYMENT:** Guaranteed payment of all balances due is no later than 95 days (105 days for programs which include a cruise component) prior to departure date. If payment of the balance due is not received by the stipulated date, we reserve the right to cancel your reservation without refund of deposit.

*For our land based programs, balance payments are now due 65 days prior to your departure and for our programs that include a cruise component, balance payments are now due 95 days prior to your departure. In certain circumstances, and depending on group air arrangements, payment for air seats may be required earlier.*

**3. CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS:** Visa & MasterCard credit cards are accepted as form of payment. We do accept any other kinds of cards, including either American Express or Diners Club. Your online authorization by way of our Online Registration Form acts as your approval for the credit card provided as part of your registration to be charged for both the initial deposit (and travel insurance premium, where applicable) as well as the future balance payments on the date they become due, together with any other charges due relating to the booking that have been requested by you in writing (including by current or future electronic mail communication). For registrations that are not received via our Online Registration Form, but instead are forwarded to DOT/OT/BIC by mailing, faxing or e-mailing a scanned completed copy of our (non-online) Registration Form, your signature on such (non-online) Registration Form verifies your approval for your credit card to be charged. No services will be provided without receipt of either the authorized Online Registration Form or the duly signed (non-online) Registration Form. Third party payments may have restrictions.

**4. CANCELLATIONS & CHANGES:** The deposit amounts (for both the main tour and any optional extensions reserved) are 100% non-refundable and non-transferable. Cancellation penalties for bookings cancelled by the client after the final balance due date (95 days before departure; 105 days before departure for programs which include a cruise component) are as follows: 95 – 61 (105 - 61 days for programs which include a cruise component) days before departure – 25% of total price paid; 60 – 31 days – 50% of total price paid; 30 days or less – 100%. (Notwithstanding the foregoing, any domestic Canada flight purchased as an additional service to the advertised package is 100% non-refundable irrespective of the date of cancellation). If payments are not received by their due dates, we reserve the right to cancel the booking without further notice. Bookings are non-transferable. There will be no refund for unused land arrangements after departure from North America. In the event of the cancellation by DOT/OT/BIC of any or all components of the travel services offered herein, DOT/OT/BIC will offer either a refund, or future travel credit, depending on the situation with our supplier partners subject to any specific penalties relating to airline seats that would be out of our control and would obviously be dependent upon the air ticket conditions. Irrespective of whether a tour booking is cancelled by the client or if any or all components of the travel services are cancelled by DOT/OT/BIC, airfares may be subject to different rules and cancellation fees including some airfares may be fully non-refundable once the booking is confirmed regardless of when it was made including upgraded air cabin classes (ie premium economy, business and first class cabins) which are subject to different rules and cancellation fees based on the individual fare class in which the seats are purchased.



*Lifetime transferable deposits : If you decide to change your plans and no longer wish to participate in the particular tour that your deposit has secured, your deposit may be transferred to any of our overseas programs (either the same destination at a future date or a different destination) so long as you notify us before the tour balance payment date. Lifetime transferable deposits are s.t. the possible retention of a nominal amount relating to any non-refundable deposit charged by the airline which is out of our control.*

*Cancellation penalties for bookings cancelled by the client after the final balance due date (65 days before departure; 95 days before departure for programs which include a cruise component) are as follows: 65 – 46 (95 - 46 days for programs which include a cruise component) days before departure – 25% of total price paid; 45 – 31 days – 50% of total price paid; 30 days or less – 100%.*

**5. TRAVEL INSURANCE:** To protect against cancellation charges, we strongly recommend purchasing Cancellation Protection and Travel Interruption Insurance. In the event of illness, medical and hospital expenses are the traveler's responsibility, and no refunds will be made, partial or total, for the purchased tour. We strongly urge that you purchase either the Non-Medical Inclusive insurance (ie Cancellation Protection and Travel Interruption Insurance), All Inclusive insurance (Non-Medical coverage plus health coverage), or the Premium Protection Plan insurance package (All Inclusive coverage with higher coverage limits) offered by DOT/OT/BIC through Manulife Insurance. COVID-19 is currently viewed as a pre-existing situation by all insurance companies, including Manulife Insurance, and therefore is an exclusion under those policies that include health insurance, ie All Inclusive and Premium Protection Plan insurance packages. For coverage relating to COVID-19 health claims while on your tour, Manulife offers separate coverage, ie COVID-19 Pandemic Travel Insurance. Some countries may require proof of medical insurance, including specifically for COVID-19.

**6. TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION, VISA & OTHER IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS:** A Canadian citizen must be in possession of a passport that must remain valid for a minimum of 6 months from the date of conclusion of their journey for all destinations offered with the exception of New Zealand, Spain/Portugal and countries on our Eastern Europe program where the passport must remain valid for a minimum of 3 months from the date of conclusion of their journey. Tour participants must also ensure that they comply with all visa and health requirements of countries they intend to visit.

For Canadian citizens, a tourist entry visa (or, in some cases, a reciprocity fee) is required for entry into the following destinations offered by DOT/OT/BIC -

- Bhutan, Brasil, China, India, Kenya, Myanmar, Tanzania, Vietnam (tourist entry visa, or a visa pre-approval letter in some cases, must be obtained prior to departure from Canada), Cambodia, Laos, Zambia (tourist entry visa may be obtained upon arrival in the destination)
- A tourist entry visa is not required for entry into Argentina, Bali (Indonesia), Chile, Ecuador, Iceland, Japan, Malaysia, Morocco, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, South Africa, Spain and any country on our Eastern Europe program.

Non Canadian citizens may have different requirements. It is the passenger's responsibility to ensure that all his or her passport, visa and mandatory health vaccination requirements for entry into the country are met and the cancellation penalties referred to above will apply if a passenger is not allowed into the destination country (or determines in advance of departure that he will not be allowed into the destination country) due to lack of proper documentation including, but not limited to, passport, visa, customs, health or currency provisions required by the destination country thus preventing him from participate in the tour.

While COVID-19 remains an ongoing issue, some countries may introduce specific medical requirements for entry which may completing medical wellness declarations upon arrival and/or proof of a negative COVID-19 test and/or proof of having received an approved COVID-19 vaccination. Proof of medical insurance, including specifically for COVID-19, may also be required. As regulations and requirements continue to change by country, we will notify you of any specific necessary requirements for your destination closer to departure.

**Proof of a full series of vaccination doses against COVID-19 is required for all participants on programs offered by DOT/OT/BIC.**

Final tour documents consisting of detailed tour itinerary, vouchers, and airline tickets will be forwarded approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure subject to receipt of final payment.

**7. PRICING POLICY:** Accommodations and services at the destination are contracted in local currencies and/or US Dollars. Due to frequent fluctuations in currency exchange (as well as other factors beyond our control including, but not limited to, fuel costs, transportation taxes and airport and local surcharges), prices are subject to change with or without notice and surcharges may apply for which we would endeavor to inform you as soon as possible. However, once we have received your final payment we would either waive any price increase or allow you to cancel your booking without penalty.

**8. UNUSED PORTION OF THE TOUR:** No refund will be made for any unused accommodations, missed meals, transportation segments, cruise portions, sightseeing tours or any other service. Such unused items are neither refundable nor exchangeable.

**9. ACCOMMODATIONS:** We use a variety of accommodations on our programs with many of our properties specifically chosen to reflect the local style and culture of the region. Our rating system reflects the majority of the accommodations throughout each program but some variety can occur. Ratings are based not only on room quality but also on facilities and location. Accommodation ratings in overseas destinations outside of Canada are an arbitrary measure and their definition from country to country can differ slightly as well as not always being consistent between individual properties in that particular destination nor are they necessarily comparable to an equivalent rating in North America. Rooms are assigned by the respective supplier(s) on a run-of-the-house basis, in category (ies) as specified in the itinerary and the right is reserved to substitute properties/hotels/lodges/camps/cruise/ships as conditions warrant such change for reasons beyond our control. Accommodations on twin occupancy basis, is provided at the properties/hotels/lodges/camps/cruise ships as specified or similar. Single room supplements apply to persons occupying sole use of a room/cabin but travelling with other passengers on the same tour and sharing transport cost on transfers, game drives, coach tours, sightseeing and excursions. Quoted single room rate does not necessarily mean single occupancy of a double room, as several of the establishments offered have especially designed single occupancy units.

**10. SINGLE PASSENGERS TRAVELLING TOGETHER:** If you are travelling with a companion and each paying separately the regular each of two double sharing accommodation rate and your companion decides to cancel, the remaining travelling passenger will be responsible for either finding a replacement travelling companion to take the cancelled passenger's place or must pay the single supplement and travel on a single basis.

#### **11. AGE & HEALTH REQUIREMENTS:**

**Minimum Age:** The minimum age for the majority of our tours is 12 at the time of travel.

**Maximum Age:** We have no upper age limit for our tours though we inform you that our tours may include some components for which group members need to be in good physical condition in order to be able to participate. We will provide details on mandatory and recommended health requirements, but it is your responsibility to ensure that you obtain proper and detailed medical advice at least 6 weeks prior to travel for the latest health requirements and recommendations for your destination and how they impact your own personal health situation.

**12. MEALS & BEVERAGES:** Meals as included on our itineraries are either buffet meals and/or table d'hôte. Meals ordered through room service are not included and must be paid directly to the establishment. Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, and bottled water are included only where indicated on the itinerary. Unless specifically mentioned in your itinerary, all drinks (both alcoholic and non-alcoholic) are to purchase and paid directly to the establishments.

**13. OPTIONAL TOURS & EXCURSIONS AND TOUR EXTENSIONS:** It is our intent to operate any optional tours & excursions and tour extensions on a private group basis. However, should the number of participants be of an insufficient level, we reserve the right to either -

- (1) add a surcharge to the previously stated selling price to be able to still offer the extension on a private basis or
- (2) operate any individual tour on a shared basis with other non-group participants or
- (3) cancel the tour and provide a full refund of all monies paid.

No refunds can be provided for cancellation of any tour by the client while in the destination.

**14. SPECIAL REQUESTS:** While we will make every effort to accommodate special requests, eg., room/cabin locations, adjoining rooms, non-smoking rooms, bed preferences, special dietary meal requests, these cannot be guaranteed, and DOT/OT/BIC cannot be held responsible if such requests cannot be fulfilled. Requests for upgrading rooms/cabins are subject to additional charges. Any deviations to the standard program arrival and departure flight dates should be notified to us by separate e-mail at the time of booking and are subject to availability and also any applicable flight class supplement.

**15. SEATING ASSIGNMENT ON FLIGHTS:** Our air arrangements are made via group contracts with the airlines and are therefore subject to more restrictive airline Terms & Conditions and policies than seats purchased individually from airline web sites. If you have a particular seat request, we will do our best to fulfill it subject to the policies of the airlines. Certain airlines assign group seating automatically for which the specific location within the group block is out of our control and to which the airlines do not provide access for us to change specific seat locations; and several airlines do not allow for specific advance seat assignment at all in which case specific seats will be assigned at airport check-in.

**16. DOCUMENT DELIVERY:** Your travel documents will be sent to you approximately 3 weeks prior to departure. For bookings received within 3 weeks of departure, express delivery of documents will require a courier delivery fee of \$30 to cover extra handling and processing. Additional courier charges will apply for all residents outside of Canada, irrespective of when the booking is made.

**17. CONSUMER PROTECTION:** DOT/OT/BIC are licensed under the Ontario Government Ministry of Consumer & Corporate Relations, Travel Industry Act 1974, Registration No. 50009110. The Act is administered by the Travel Industry Council of Ontario (TICO), the government regulated body which is responsible for enforcing and monitoring the Travel Industry Act, including the protection of advance monies paid to its registrants by consumers. More information about TICO is available at <http://www.tico.on.ca/>

**18. NOTICE TO TRAVELLERS:** Canadians enjoy a living standard which is among the highest in the world. In other countries, the uninterrupted supply of water and electricity, local health conditions, levels of security and standards of food and beverages may sometimes

differ from those enjoyed at home. Illness or inconvenience resulting from the services provided or omitted at the destination are outside the reasonable control of DOT/OT/BIC who bear no responsibility for such illness or inconvenience. DOT/OT/BIC cannot accept responsibility for the behavior of other guests/groups nor the unlikely event of the withdrawal of services or facilities due to local cultural and political events, or strikes.

#### **19. ACCEPTANCE OF RISK:**

You acknowledge that participation in overseas travel involves a degree of personal risk and that you may be visiting places where the political, cultural and geographical attributes present dangers and physical challenges greater than those present in our daily lives. You acknowledge that you are choosing to travel at a time where you may be exposed to epidemics and/or pandemics including, but not limited to, the COVID-19 virus. We will take all reasonable steps to ensure your safety and may require you to follow additional safety protocols on your trip.

We use information from government foreign departments and reports from our own contacts in each destination, including our local destination supplier partners, assessing whether the itinerary should operate. However, it is also your own responsibility to acquaint yourself with all relevant travel information, including applicable health and safety risks and the nature of your itinerary. You acknowledge that your decision to travel is made in light of consideration of this information and you accept that you are aware of the personal risks attendant upon such travel. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we accept no liability in relation to these additional risks.

**20. FORCE MAJEURE:** DOT/OT/BIC shall not be liable for any claims, losses, damages, costs, expenses, delays or loss of enjoyment, of any nature or kind whatsoever, resulting from events beyond our or a supplier's reasonable control, including but not limited to acts of God; war; civil commotion or insurrection; riot; blockade or embargo; fire; explosion; breakdown; union dispute, strike, lockout or other labor disputes or disruptions; earthquake; epidemic, pandemic or other health emergency; flood; windstorm or other extreme weather event; lack or failure of courses of supply; passage of any law, order, proclamation, regulation, restraint, ordinance, demand, requisition or requirement or any other act of any government authority, whether or not foreseeable, which would make it dangerous or not viable for a trip to commence or continue.

**21. OUR RESPONSIBILITIES:** DOT/OT/BIC makes arrangements with a network of third party suppliers, ie., airlines, tour operators, ground handlers, accommodation providers, cruise companies, activity providers, coach and transfer companies, car rental companies, tour and local guides, government agencies, and other independent contractors and individuals to provide you with the travel services and other services you purchase. Although we take care in selecting these third party suppliers, we have no control over them and, therefore, cannot be responsible for their acts or omissions. In the unlikely event that a particular hotel / lodge / cruise ship described in this brochure is not available we reserve the right to provide an alternate hotel / lodge / cruise ship of the equivalent standard. We also reserve the right to substitute another airline if the particular airline described in this brochure is not available.

The travel services provided by DOT/OT/BIC are subject to the applicable provincial Travel Industry Acts and Regulations and are subject to the conditions imposed by our third party suppliers and their liability is limited by their tariffs, conditions of carriage, tickets and vouchers and international conventions and agreements.

DOT/OT/BIC shall not be responsible for any loss, damage or injury, whether physical or mental, or to property, resulting from any delay, substitution or deficiency of quality of equipment or service, or any act, omission, negligence or commission of any party supplying any of the services or accommodation herein, its agents, servants, employees, subcontractors or for any claims for such loss, damage, or injury, whether physical or mental, arising therefrom, or from any cause that arises by reason of actions of parties other than DOT/OT/BIC. In the event that it becomes necessary or advisable for the comfort or well-being of the passengers, or for any reason whatsoever, to alter the itinerary or arrangements, such alterations may be made without penalty to DOT/OT/BIC. The right is reserved to withdraw any or all tours should conditions warrant, also to decline to accept or retain any passengers as members of the tours. DOT/OT/BIC can assume no responsibility for lost tickets or coupons. The liability of DOT/OT/BIC for any loss, damage or injury, whether physical or mental, arising from its own acts, omissions or negligence, is limited to the price of the services purchased.

**22. SEVERABILITY:** In the event that any term or condition contained in these Terms & Conditions is unenforceable or void by operation of law or as being against public policy or for any other reason then such term or condition shall be deemed to be severed from this contract or amended accordingly only to such extent necessary to allow all remaining terms and conditions to survive and continue as binding.

**23. PRIVACY POLICY:** Any personal information that we collect about you will be handled in accordance with our Privacy Policy and may be used for any purpose associated with the operation of a trip. In making this booking you consent to this information being passed on to the relevant persons such as our agents, service providers or other suppliers to enable us to operate the trip or, if permitted by any relevant e-marketing spam laws, to send you marketing material in relation to our events and special offers.