



PRESS RELEASE



KONNICHIWA! AMPERSAND TRAVEL EMBARKS ON A JOURNEY INTO JAPAN WITH LAUNCH OF NEW PORTFOLIO

New itineraries will offer brilliantly tailored experiences across the country from mixing with Geishas in Kyoto to sushi feasting in thrilling Tokyo and discovering beaches to rival Thailand's

February 2015 marks the debut of Ampersand Travel's venture into the captivating country of Japan offering a range of tailored yet dynamic itineraries throughout the Japanese archipelago from the powder filled ski resorts of the northern island of Hokkaido to the subtropical southern islands of Okinawa and everything in between. Whilst renowned for its many outstanding heritage and beauty spots, Japan – with an eye set firmly on the 2020 Tokyo Olympics – continues to step up its contemporary game. The most exciting new addition for 2015 is the recent launch of Aman Tokyo, providing the ultimate urban retreat combining spectacular city views with razor sharp design.

Ampersand's experts have toured the country extensively, selecting their favourite places to stay, ranging between high-end luxe city properties to much more remote and authentic 'ryokans'. These traditional style inns are devoted to fine 'kaiseki' cuisine, hot spring baths and the Japanese 'omotenashi' way of hospitality in which every guest's need is anticipated.

With sample itineraries ranging from Cherry Blossom journeys in April to an all encompassing Sake, Snow, Shrines, Sand and Sushi experience, Ampersand creates diverse trips to ensure a comprehensive adventure for both first time and returning travellers to the country.

How?

With direct flights available from London Heathrow to Tokyo with British Airways, JAL and ANA, guests can reach Japan in just under 12 hours. Having touched down, guests can travel

All eyes on the capital this year following the December 2014 launch of Aman Tokyo



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through the country at lightening quick speeds of up to 300kph, travelling via bullet train across scenic Japan.

For the ultimate adventure, Ampersand recommends catching an express train from Tokyo into the Japanese Alps to admire the Black Crow castle in Matsumoto – one of the few original castles that can still be entered for a sense of life in samurai times. The journey can continue by hopping on the bullet train to reach Kyoto, the beating cultural heart of Japan, before looping back to Tokyo where guests can then enjoy some of the finest views of Mount Fuji from the window of the bullet train. Guests can also choose to stop en route at the Hakone National Park.

Why now?

In December 2014, Japan welcomed Aman Tokyo – the only city hotel by Aman Resorts – which boasts the largest rooms and suites in the city across six floors at the top of the new Otemachi tower. Embracing an urban sanctuary vibe, the property boasts an incredible spa, combining Aman's renowned chemical-free essences with the Japanese health system of Kanpo, across eight generous treatment rooms alongside traditional-style hot baths overlooking the city. Aman Tokyo is also set to be the place to wine and dine in 2015 from its 1,200 bottle cellar to select from, to The Restaurant by Aman which will showcase supreme culinary innovation.

Tokyo is further having its moment of fame among the family audience from late January with the recent release of new Disney animation movie – Big Hero 6, which uses Tokyo as inspiration for the film's setting in "San Fransokyo". Released in the UK on 30 January 2015, the movie's backdrop is a mix of San Francisco's rolling hills with Tokyo's architecture, charm and technical wonders! The royal spotlight will also be shone on the capital at the end of February with Prince William scheduled to pay a visit to Tokyo as part of a wider Asia trip.

As an overall destination, accessibility within the country is now higher than ever too thanks to compatible credit card machines and a notable rise in spoken English. The influx of foreign visitors to Japan this year alone (+20% in 2014) has only heightened Japan's already excellent hospitality across recently opened hotels such as the Shangri-La Tokyo.

Sample Itineraries:

JAPAN: A PERFECT INTRODUCTION WITH AMPERSAND TRAVEL
Tokyo – Takayama – Kyoto – Hakone

For first time travellers, Ampersand has created the perfect introductory itinerary combining modern and traditional Japan across an 11-day trip. Highlights of the trip include shopping in Tokyo's retail district of Omotesdando, walking through the hidden trails to see a more traditional Toyko, to travelling via Bullet train to Takayama to experience traditional Japanese cuisine and hospitality. The itinerary also offers excursions to the finest of Japan's temples, gardens and heritage sites in

Kyoto and Hakone making for an unforgettable experience. The 11-day Perfect Introduction to Japan itinerary is available from £2,990 including 9 nights accommodation, flights, transfers, bullet trains, all activities and privately guided sightseeing.

SAKE, SNOW, SHRINES, SAND & SUSHI

Tokyo - Niseko - Kyoto - Yaeyama Islands

With world class ski resorts as well as beaches to rival the best in Thailand, Ampersand has created the ideal itinerary from which to combine the best of both. This 17-day itinerary will take guests on an epic adventure from the snowy northern island of Hokkaido to the southern tip of the tropical Okinawan islands, but also allow them time to experience the ultimate urban playground of Tokyo and a mid-trip stop in the cultural mecca of Kyoto.

The 17-day Sake, Snow, Shrines & Sushi itinerary is available from £6,250 per person, including 15 nights accommodation, flights, transfers, bullet trains, all activities and privately guided sightseeing.

CHERRY BLOSSOM JOURNEY THROUGH JAPAN

Kumamoto - Nagasaki - Hiroshima & Miyajima - Kyoto - Hakone - Tokyo

For those looking to travel in late March/early April, Ampersand can create a real adventure holiday following the famous cherry blossom trees bloom on Kyushu, the southernmost of the four main islands of Japan. The itinerary makes for an unforgettable treat and an amazing opportunity to follow the blossom along the bullet train line up to Tokyo - even the most grizzled Japanese salaryman feels the infectious festive spirit of 'o-hanami' picnic gatherings beneath the boughs.

The 15-day Cherry Blossom itinerary is available from £4,490 including accommodation, flights, transfers, bullet trains, all activities and privately guided sightseeing.

THE ULTIMATE JAPANESE FAMILY ADVENTURE

Tokyo - Osaka - Kyoto - Yakayama - Matsumoto

With Japan offering endless fun for all the family, this 14-day itinerary starts with encapsulating all that is weird and wonderful about Japanese entertainment, from themed rollercoasters and adventure parks to futuristic hi-tech karaoke booths. The second half of the trip provides a striking contrast with the itinerary taking families to discover the ancient wonders of Kyoto and the Japanese Alps.

The 14-day Family Adventure itinerary is available from £3,990 per person based on 4 people travelling (2 adults & 2 children under 12 years) and including 12 nights accommodation, flights, transfers, bullet trains, all activities and privately guided sightseeing.

FROM COASTS TO COUNTRYSIDES Tokyo - Izu Peninsula - Kyoto - Hiroshima and Miyajima - Kanazawa - Noto - Hakone
Ampersand's Coasts and Countrysides experience is ideal for

travellers wishing to experience the diversity of Japan. Highlights of this 16-day adventure include escaping Tokyo's hustle and bustle to the coastal town of Kamakura to get a taste of fresh seafood, walking around the jagged coastline of Jogosaki and relaxing in a hot spring bath, then travelling on the Bullet train to Hiroshima before strolling through Tsuwano where Koi streams run alongside Samuri dwellings. The experience concludes in Kanazawa sampling traditional Japanese tea and a sake brewery. The 16-day Coasts and Countryside itinerary is available from £5,450 including 14 nights accommodation, flights, transfers, bullet trains, all activities and privately guided sightseeing.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

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