

Japan Update #4 – January 18, 2017

Accommodations Booked

We now have our accommodations confirmed for all 9 nights of our trip! Here are the details:

- Tokyo: March 9, 10, and 11 – Sakura [Hotel Jimbocho](#)
 - This hotel is right in the heart of central Tokyo's bookseller district. We are very close to a train station, to restaurants, comic and book stores, and really in the heart of authentic Tokyo. The hotel has a good reputation and our group is in a space that is separate from the hostel guests.
- Kyoto: March 12, 13, 14, and 15 – [K's House Kyoto](#)
 - This hotel and hostel is also in a great location. We are steps from Kyoto station and can get to all the temples, shopping, and cultural areas of Kyoto very easily from here. We will not likely ever need to use transit.
- Tokyo: March 16 and 17 – [Hotel Mystays Premier Hamamatsucho](#)
 - This one is the fanciest of the three. This was a tough two days to book, as the tourist season is really starting to ramp up. This one cost a bit more, but we were still able to stay below our anticipated budget altogether. Not too far from our first Tokyo hotel (about 4 km), we are in a distinctly different neighbourhood, and can get anywhere in Tokyo very easily from this spot. Also easy access to the Airport for our departure.

In each case, I have booked rooms where each of the travellers will have their own single bed and we are never mixed with any other groups. In fact, even though two of these hotels are both hotel and hostel style accommodation, we stuck to the hotel style.

In most cases, we will have three to a room, with a few times where there are four.

When all is said and done, it looks like our total cost per person for accommodation will be **\$549.00** including all taxes and fees. This is \$51 per person below our budget.

We don't have to pay anything right now, so I will send you a confirmation of the cost in a few weeks with an invoice. I just put it all on my credit card for now (just to hold the rooms).

ACTION ITEM: One more travel consent form (to take your kids out of the country)

The Canadian government recommends (strongly) that chaperones carry a consent letter, specific to the trip, so we do not encounter any problems taking your children in and out of countries.

[Here is the link to the recommended fillable PDF](#) form that the government provides. If you could please fill it in, save it, and send it to me, and I will fill in my own information (the form displays chaperone information space once “accompanied” is selected on the form.)

If you could do this soon, I would appreciate it. I like to have all my ducks in a row early, as lots of other things need to be done closer to the date we leave.

Train tickets

I am just sorting out the last few details on our 7-day train passes and will have information to you on that in a few days. We will likely need to purchase those passes within the next two weeks.

The cost is \$329.00 plus a \$13 delivery charge to get a physical ticket, which we need. This is about \$40 less than in our anticipated budget.

When it is time to buy, I will send you the link again with clear instructions as they apply to our group, as you will need to do the buying and online form-filling. (fun!) But here is the link now too so you can check it out and get ready. <https://www.japan-rail-pass.com/jr-pass#>

Travel from Airport to Hotel upon Arrival

While we seem to be about \$100 under budget, we will add about \$20 back on to our costs to address transfers from the airport to our hotel upon arrival. It will cost about \$35 altogether, and I will confirm exactly how we do that trip in my next update. In short, it is a limousine bus (about an hour) plus a very short train trip and a 200 metre walk. When we return to the airport at the end of the trip, we can just take the train, and our 7-day passes will be active.

Fundraiser

We are planning at least one more fundraiser before we leave (we might do some afterwards as well). It will be a garage sale that we will hold at the school. We are considering dates and will confirm one at Thursday’s lunchtime meeting. Probably Saturday, February 11 or Sunday February 12.

Thursday lunch meetings

Our lunch meetings will now be 45 minutes long, starting at 12:15. Topics for our next few meetings will be:

Jan. 19 – etiquette in Japan

Feb. 2 – critical phrases and a quick guide to eating in Japan

Feb. 9 – phones and communication technology (plus electrical adaptors, etc.)

Feb. 16 – walking maps, tips on getting around, and a look around on Google street view

Feb. 23 – emergency plans and code of conduct/expectations

Feb. 30 – packing, luggage management, and staying organized

Mar. 2 – last chance – questions, details, go over checklist

Fundraising will be worked into each meeting as needed.