

UNCLE JACK'S TAG ALONG TRIPS

THESE PRIVATE EXCURSIONS feature truly exceptional places I enjoy revisiting. During and immediately after every trip, I revise the itinerary to make the next tour even more rewarding and pleasantly paced and economical, if possible.

Tag Along Trips can be done in two ways. Either you tag along with me on any of my currently scheduled excursions you choose, or I tag along with you as your guest/escort on a tour I plan just for you.

On a YOU-GO-WITH-ME TRIP, all my major expenses are already paid in advance by myself, and I give you a copy of my confirmed reservations so you're able to duplicate these bookings (or very nearly the same ones) for airlines and hotels, which you purchase directly any way you prefer. Then you're ready to tag along with me during MY TRIP, perhaps together with others forming a group. You'll have out-of pocket expenses for ground transportation in cities, plus admission fees to recommended attractions, also for food and beverage needs.

On an I-GO-WITH-YOU TRIP, you pay all expenses for YOUR JOURNEY that I design based upon my experience and what particularly interests you. The cost includes the air fares for both of us, hotel accommodations, ground transportation, also our Japan Rail Pass for GREEN CAR service when going there. No matter what our destination, you'll only need to buy food for yourself because I'll purchase my own and pay my own entrance fees while acting as your guest/escort.

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JAPAN RAIL PASS RAMBLE

Eight Days From Honolulu, Available Mid-May or Mid-October

This is my favorite Tag Along Trip, a grand experience for those who enjoy traveling aboard superior trains and who are physically fit for long walks. By now I've taken more than forty excursions to The Land Of The Rising Sun since 1973 and spent over a year of my life there, but never extending any visit beyond three weeks. I'm still drawn strongly to Japan, particularly its remarkable transportation system and the traditional practices of this nation's indigenous Shinto Religion, as well as their Jiriki Zen Buddhism. Of course, the highlight of this "ramble" is the Japan Railways Group itself, world renowned for safety, punctuality and comfort. Such high standards make it possible for me to schedule easy connections at convenient travel times.

Our aircraft lands at Kansai International Airport located on a man made islet in Osaka Bay where we stay overnight in the only hotel there. Early the next morning we ride an express train to metropolitan Osaka, then a super-express Bullet Train southwest to historic Hiroshima. We visit this famous city first because it has become an international symbol of healing and longevity, due to its recovery from the atomic bomb explosion in 1945. This required civic feats of repair, decontamination, restoration and beautification. The story is preserved accurately at Peace Memorial Park. Next we stroll around elegant Shukkeien Garden before beginning an invigorating "whirlwind" adventure into other inspiring environments during a marvelous introduction to typical life in Japan, giving participants the self-confidence to stay another week or two on their own -- without knowing the language!

LET'S GO TO TOKYO!

One Week From Honolulu, Available Mid-May Or Mid-October

Highlights within the city include The Imperial Palace Plaza & Moats & East Garden; Yasukuni Shrine's Torii & Outdoor Noh Theater & Flower Arrangements; International Forum & Yurakucho & The Ginza & Nihonbashi; Shinjuku Skyscraper Stroll; Edo-Tokyo Museum; plus some "must see places" outside the metropolis, including the National Museum Of Japanese History at Sakura, the Bonsai Village at Omiya Goen, and Nikko's Toshogu Shrine & Daiyuin Shrine.

A QUICK TRIP TO KYOTO AND BEYOND

Eight Days From Honolulu, Available Mid-May Or Mid-October

Here are some places that just might change your life. The first day starts with a walk to Higashi Honganji Temple followed by a long stroll around Central Kyoto and beside the Kamo River. The second day features a circuit by city bus to Nijo Castle, Ryoanji Zen Rock Garden, Kinkakuji Gold Pavilion and Ginkakuji Silver Pavilion, concluding with the Heian Shrine & Garden. The third day will begin with a walk to Toji Temple & Pagoda, followed by an excursion on Japan Railways to Nara for a leisurely stroll through The Great South Gate and into Daibutsuden, the world's largest wooden building -- an experience itself worth a single trip to Japan -- followed by a walk around the Kofukuji Pagoda and Sarusawa Pond. On the fourth day we ride three trains each way between Kyoto and Ise-shi, to visit Ise Jingu, the most highly venerated Shinto compound in all Japan, also known as The Grand Shrines of Geku & Naiku. On the fifth day we go by train and bus to Miho Museum, an architectural masterpiece designed during the late 1990s by the innovative Chinese-American architect, I.M. Pei, and built within a nature preserve of the Shigaraki Hills. Our remaining time in Kyoto is open for some interesting options, such as the National Museum, Kawai Kanjiro's House, or an outing to the popular Arashiyama District.

SOME AMAZING PLACES IN PERU

Two Weeks From Honolulu, Available During May Or October

DEVELOPING MY ITINERARY for this adventure required ten trips to The Republic Of Peru, archaeological center of South America. We start with a few excellent museums in the capitol city of Lima on the Pacific Coast before flying to the high altitude municipality of Cuzco situated at an elevation of 10,000 feet, which is probably the Western Hemisphere's oldest continuously inhabited city with an antiquity estimated at 4,000 years. From here, side-trips are taken to The Sacred Valley Of The Incas and other ceremonial sites where we enjoy walking amidst the spectacular grandeur of the Peruvian Andes, ending with a full day excursion to the colossal ruins at Machu Picchu, then returning to Lima for our final day before heading back to Honolulu.

LIMA: Plaza de Armas, Lima Cathedral, San Francisco Cathedral, National Museum Of Anthropology & Archaeology, Gold Museum, Rafael Larco Herrera Museum, and the vibrant Miraflores District.

CUZCO: Plaza de Armas, Cuzco Cathedral, La Compania Church, Central Market, Loreto Street, Coricancha Temple Of The Sun, Santa Teresa Church, Museum Of Religious Art, Museo Historico Regional, The Fortress Of Sacsayhuaman, Kenko Sacrificial Site, Tambomachay Water Temple, Corau Pass, the ruins at Pisac and Chinchero, and the scenic trail downhill to Urquillos Village.

FOLLOWING MAHATMA GANDHI AROUND INDIA

Three Weeks From Honolulu, Available Only In January Or February

WE ENTER the country at Bombay/Mumbai where we visit The Gateway Of India, The Prince Of Whales Museum, the caves at Elephanta Island, then Mani Bhavan which is the city's major memorial to Mahatma Gandhi, formerly the residence of a wealthy jewel merchant where Gandhi stayed frequently as a guest. Next we proceed upland to Lonavla to see the religious Baja Caves and Karla Caves. At Pune we enter the former Palace Of Aga Khan III which he made available to the British Colonial Government as a comfortable private prison for Gandhi whose wife died there. Next we stop at the artistically carved caves of Ellora & Ajanta, on our way to Gandhi's Sevagram Ashram established near the city of Wardha in Central India where he sometimes resided -- and here stands the only tree known to have been planted by him, now a huge Banyan. Then we proceed to Sabarmati, another ashram of Gandhi's beside the river at Ahmedabad located in Western India. From there we venture among the multiple religious shrines built privately on the hillsides of Palitana, en route to Gandhi Kirti Mandir, the great man's birthplace in the port city of Porbandar. Our final stop is atop Mt. Abu with its Jain Temples of intricately carved marble.

AN EASY TRIP TO INDIA'S STATE OF TAMIL NADU

Two Weeks From Honolulu, Available Only In January Or February

Landing at Madras/Chennai, we stay a few days in the Mylapore District to see its Kapaleshvara Hindu Temple, San Thome Catholic Basilica, the Krishnamurti Retreat, and the historic Ice House where for many years imported blocks of ice were stored, now a memorial to a holy man, Vivekananda. We also view the collection of South Indian bronzes in the Government Museum. The Kalakshetra "Temple Of Art" is a school for Bharata Natyam classical dancing. Then we're off to the Dakshina Chitra Cultural Center, en route to the Mamallapuram Shore Temple, followed by three temples at Kanchipuram. Next comes the Vandantangal Bird Sanctuary, then the Arunachaleshvara Temple situated dramatically beside a 2,640-foot mountain at Thiruvannamalai. We also stop at Kumbakonam Town to see the Airavateswarer "Temple Of Entertainment" in the Darasuram Complex, on our way to Thanjavur with its Brihadeshvara Temple regarded as India's greatest stone temple. We take a little detour through the seaside resort of Pondichery before arriving at Madurai with its colorful Minakshi Temple, Government Museum, Gandhi Museum, Palace Of Tirumala Nayak and the Tappakulam Water Tank -- from whence we return 286 miles back to Madras/Chennai for our departure.

VULGAR LAS VEGAS AND ITS MORE GLORIOUS NEIGHBORS

One Week To Ten Days From Honolulu, Available November Through April

Here we devote every evening to "casino crawling" for observing Sin City's gambling action, its preposterously artificial atmosphere of sparkling lights and architectural pretensions on a grand scale, everything designed primarily to produce glitzed-out theatrical and ersatz-monumental effects to bedazzle people who are delighted by materialistic displays of big money. In striking contrast to all this gaudy superficiality, our daylight hours are reserved for touring by automobile some truly inspirational places: Nevada's Red Rock Canyon and The Valley Of Fire and Hoover Dam, also Death Valley in California and some magnificent viewpoints along the south rim of Arizona's Grand Canyon.