



HARNEY & SONS

MASTER TEA BLENDEERS

EST. 1983

Harney & Sons Japan Tea Tour

A Special Adventure for Tea Lovers

April 27 — May 7, 2019

ONWARD TRAVEL ✈️

EST 2014



Join the Harney family for a one of a kind tea-centered tour of Japan. For well over a thousand years not only have the Japanese been drinking tea, but it has been an integral part of local culture. For anyone who loves to drink green tea, Japan is a must-visit. Harney & Sons Fine Tea has been importing tea directly from Japan for over 35 years, and the family has decades-long personal relationships with the best tea growers in the industry.

Over ten nights, our small group hosted by Emeric Harney and Rob Russotti (pictured above with local tea suppliers) will travel from Tokyo to the imperial capital of Kyoto and back again. Much of the tea production in Japan occurs in the hills and valleys between these cities, and we'll visit those famous tea producing destinations— Uji, Wazuka, Shizuoka, and Kakegawa. In each place we'll meet with friends of the Harneys to visit their tea farms and processing facilities, get to know them and learn about the people, tea and culture of this fascinating island nation.

We'll visit at the beginning of the first tea harvest, known as *shincha*, it's the perfect time for tea lovers to go to Japan to try the perfectly delicate newly picked tea. Together we will dive in to explore Japan from the tea fields to the skyscrapers, the Imperial Gardens of Tokyo to the matcha factories of Uji. We hope you will join us!



Imagine yourself...

Sipping freshly picked tea from the first harvest of the year

Soaking in a traditional *onsen* hot spring in the woods beside a river

Standing in a matcha factory as the tea is ground all around you

Welcome to Japan!

DAY 1: SATURDAY APRIL 27

- Get to know your traveling companions at a special welcome dinner

Welcome to Japan! The group's flights will land throughout the day today (or perhaps you'd like to come early to explore Tokyo on your own), so we'll meet at the hotel in the early evening for a get to know you happy hour meet and greet before heading out for our welcome dinner together in private dining room at one of the great local restaurants near our hotel. Directions to The Agnes Hotel, our dignified home away from home in Tokyo, tucked into a quiet corner of bustling Shinjuku, will be provided along with check in instructions.

Meals Dinner

Intro to Tokyo

DAY 2: SUNDAY APRIL 28

- Take in the can't miss sights of Tokyo, including the fish market
- Learn Japanese tea ceremony basics from a Harney family friend

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel, it's included this morning as it is every morning of the tour, and then let's get to know the world's most populous city! Our friendly local guide will meet us at the hotel and we'll set out to see the can't miss sights and get an insider's appreciation for this incredibly dynamic city. Of course we have to visit the world famous Tsukiji Fish Market and we'll enjoy an unforgettable lunch there, too.

In the afternoon we'll visit the family owned tea shop of one of the Harney family's longest associates in Japan. Later in the trip we'll see Mr Takeshi Kaburagi on his family's tea farms in Shizuoka, but today, in the city, he'll introduce us to the sacred tradition of Japanese Tea Ceremony. Tonight we'll enjoy a fun dinner together of *shabu shabu*, Japanese style hot pot.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Focus on History

DAY 3: MONDAY APRIL 29

- Take a trip back in time with our fun and knowledgeable local guide

Our local guide will meet us again for another day of Tokyo sightseeing. We'll focus today on "Old Tokyo," visiting some neighborhoods where despite the hustle and bustle time has stood still. We'll also seek out some of the city's most famous *wagashi*, the traditional Japanese confections that accompany ceremonial tea. Then you'll have some free time for lunch before we go to the Imperial Palace to explore its magnificent gardens. Spend the rest of the afternoon and evening in Tokyo as you like - tonight is a great night to make a reservation at one of the city's amazing restaurants!

Meals Breakfast

Exploring Kyoto

DAY 4: TUESDAY APRIL 30

- Ride the bullet train across the country, catching a view of Mt Fuji
- Attend a special private class at an iconic Japanese tea shop

This morning we bid farewell to Tokyo (for now). Let's hop on the famous bullet train and head to Kyoto, the Imperial capital of Japan for over a thousand years and today its most important center of traditional art and culture. On the Shinkansen bullet train we'll cover the distance of nearly 300 miles in two hours.

We'll arrive in Kyoto just before lunch and drop off our things at our lovely hotel, at once modern but with stylish traditional decor, located in the heart of the historic Gion district. Lunch today is a special treat, the traditional Japanese lunch box called a *bento box*, taken to go from a famous specialty cafe that has been creating these wooden lacquer boxes full of tasty delicate creations since 1829, during their height of popularity in the Edo era. We'll enjoy a picnic in the park, where our local guide will meet us to embark upon a sightseeing walking tour introduction to fascinating Kyoto.

Our guide will leave us at Ippodo Tea Shop, the oldest in Kyoto and quite well known, and we'll spend the rest of the afternoon there, immersed in a custom designed private workshop to further deepen our knowledge and love of Japanese tea. Spend this evening exploring Kyoto as you like.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

Matcha Town

DAY 5: WEDNESDAY MAY 1

- [Have green tea noodles for lunch & green tea ice cream for dessert](#)
- [Enjoy a sunset stroll through Wazuka Valley tea fields](#)

Kyoto is the gateway to Uji, the mecca for all things matcha. We'll head out of the city this morning and drive 35 minutes to this picturesque settlement on the Uji river where we'll meet a special friend of the Harneys. If you've ever tried Harney & Sons Matcha then you're already connected to Tsuyoshi-san and his tea fields. Today he will take us to the local Uji tea auction so we can see how the tea traders inspect different tea and get a better understanding of the journey tea, as a commodity, must take before we can enjoy it at home.

For lunch, we'll take some free time in the old town of Uji where the river is lined with little shops selling all kinds of delicious things to eat - and tea is definitely the theme of the day, every day, here! Think green tea soba noodles, green tea crepes, green tea ice cream, green tea mochi and so much more...

As if today hasn't already been memorable enough, we have one more legendary Japanese tea destination to visit: the Wazuka Valley. Here we'll visit a family who has been growing organic tea on this land for generations and we'll enjoy a delightful dinner together in their farmhouse, prepared just for us with tea as a main culinary ingredient. Then we'll enjoy an after dinner stroll through the tea fields to observe the evening picking and processing.

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

Green Tea & Geishas

DAY 6: THURSDAY MAY 2

- [Get a behind the scenes look at the tea trade in action](#)
- [Relax over dinner with authentic Geisha entertainment](#)

We are in the Kyoto - Uji - Wazuka region during the most exciting time of year for tea lovers and today we'll spend a few hours at the Hachiju Hachiya Tea Festival where "new tea" or shicha is celebrated. Drinking these freshly picked leaves on May 2nd will ensure good health to the drinker throughout the coming year. We'll have a casual lunch and then Tsuyoshi-san, the Matcha producer we met yesterday, will take us to tour his Matcha tea production operation. This afternoon we'll trace the path of that iconic beverage from the field, to the factory where the grinding machines will surely mesmerize you, and then of course to the tasting room.

Back in Kyoto, tonight is one of the most special nights of our trip. We've arranged a private dining experience complete with entertainment from real Geishas, though here in Kyoto where this tradition continues to flourish authentically, they are called Meiko during their training period and Geiko once they've fully mastered the specifically Japanese art of graceful entertainment. This evening spent in the company of these legendary entertainers is one you'll always remember.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



To Kakegawa

DAY 7: FRIDAY MAY 3

- [Visit the site of the first Japanese tea garden](#)
- [Pose for a photo with flamingos, toucans and other amazing birds](#)

Join an early morning visit to Kazenji Temple, the site of the first Japanese tea garden, or sleep in a little bit today. Then we'll catch the train from Kyoto to Kakegawa with a stop en route at Nagoya Station for lunch and a visit to the only Harney & Sons dedicated retail store in Japan, which is located in an upscale shopping center and food court attached to the station. When we arrive in Kakegawa, the agricultural center of Shizuoka province and the heart of the famous sencha growing region, we have a unique and memorable destination on our agenda: the Kakegawa Bird Park. This theme park of sorts, full of lush gardens and greenhouse environments, is home to thousands of birds from all over the world and it's a magical sort of place to spend a couple hours.

In the afternoon we'll visit local tea growers and friends of the Harneys, the Otsukas, at their family farm. You'll enjoy hearing their story, learning their process and of course tasting the freshly picked sencha. Tonight we'll invite the Otsukas to join us for a casual dinner together in Kakegawa.

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

The World Tea Museum

DAY 8: SATURDAY MAY 4

- Visit a museum created with tea enthusiasts in mind

This morning we will visit with the Otsukas again, and we have a special surprise planned for the group.

Then we'll enjoy lunch together before we visit the famous World Tea Museum, which of course must be in Japan. On our guided tour we'll expand our knowledge of tea - and not only local teas are featured, but exhibitions highlight tea production and tea drinking culture from around the world. We'll finish our time at the museum, appropriately, in the traditional tea house surrounded by beautiful gardens.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

Tea Fields to Hot Springs

DAY 9: SUNDAY MAY 5

- Spend a day in the famous Shizuoka tea fields
- Check in to a luxurious traditional hot spring hotel

We're departing Kakegawa bright and early this morning and heading east to the legendary tea region near Shizuoka city. We'll spend the day there with Takeshi-san, whom we met back at the beginning of our journey in Tokyo. He'll guide us through his family tea farm, where Harney teas you may have enjoyed in the past or will enjoy in the future are grown, and we'll also visit the processing facility to see how the tea makes it from the field to our cups. Mid-day we'll enjoy a casual lunch together and then of course taste plenty of tea.

In the late afternoon we'll arrive at a special place that will surely be a highlight in your Japan memories: tucked away in the trees beside a river and accessed by a suspension bridge is the luxurious Ryokan Yama No Chaya Onsen. This is a traditional Japanese hotel (*ryokan*) with hot springs (*onsen*) where we'll join the local tradition of slipping away for an evening to relax, soak in the thermal waters, and enjoy a multi-course dinner of beautiful traditional *kaiseki* cuisine. Each room has its own open-air bath fed from the springs 300 meters below the hotel, and there are also gorgeous larger community pools where you may relax in the company of your traveling companions.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Back to the Capital

DAY 10: MONDAY MAY 6

- Spend one last afternoon in Tokyo however you like
- Toast your traveling companions at a festive farewell dinner

After we bid farewell to our luxurious ryokan we will travel back to the heart of Tokyo, about an hour by train. Once we arrive at the comfortable, centrally located business hotel where we'll spend our last evening in Japan you are free to spend the rest of the day as you wish - Onward Travel is happy to help if you'd like to schedule a tasting session with the famous tea mixologist Shinya Sakurai or book a spot at afternoon tea, Tokyo style, at one of the city's posh hotels. Maybe shopping or some more sightseeing is the order of the day!

We'll reconvene in the early evening for a very special farewell dinner. Collectively, Tokyo restaurants have more Michelin stars than any other city in the world, so tonight we'll set out to dine at one of the city's lauded restaurants for that ultimate Tokyo fine dining experience. Let's toast to the marvellous adventure we've enjoyed together in tea lover's paradise!

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

Farewell

DAY 11: TUESDAY MAY 7

Our wonderful time exploring the world of tea in Japan together has come to an end. Our hotel has convenient metro and train links to the airports for your journey home or maybe you'd like to stay on and continue to explore Japan on your own. Safe travels!

Meals Breakfast



TRIP INFORMATION

Harney & Sons Tea in Japan

BEGINS	The Agnes Hotel in Shinjuku, Tokyo 6:00 pm on Saturday April 27, 2019
ENDS	Central Tokyo Tuesday May 7, 2019 — No activities scheduled May 7
SUITABILITY & MOBILITY	<p>This tour includes walking for 15-30 minutes at a time, plus stairs, cobblestones, uneven farm terrain and traveling on public transportation. If you have limited mobility, please inquire and we will discuss options. Travelers may always opt out of activities they deem too physically challenging but refunds will not be provided.</p> <p>In addition, this tour requires a level of flexibility as we will stay at five different hotels, and when the group travels between cities by train and public transportation travelers will be responsible for handling their own luggage. Travelers should also be open-minded to new foods and readily accepting of cultural differences.</p>
TRIP LENGTH	11 days, 10 nights
LODGING	<p>The Agnes Hotel Tokyo 3 Nights 5-Star hotel with French flair in a quiet neighborhood in the city center</p> <p>Granbell Hotel Kyoto 3 Nights Newly opened charming boutique hotel in the city's lively historic district</p> <p>Dormy Inn Express Kakegawa 2 Nights A comfortable hotel in the heart of Kakegawa</p> <p>Yama No Chaya 1 Night An unforgettable traditional ryokan experience with hot springs and private baths</p> <p>Central Tokyo Hotel (TBD) 1 Night In the heart of Tokyo, a business hotel with convenient airport links</p>
TOUR DATES & PRICE	<p>April 27—May 7, 2019</p> <p>Double Occupancy \$4850 per traveler</p> <p>Single Supplement \$1175 additional</p> <p>Contact Onward if you are interested in a room upgrade. Please note that air travel is not included and a current passport is required for travel to Japan. No visa is required for travelers from the United States.</p> <p>You are welcome to pay your trip fee by credit card, please note that a 3% processing fee will be applied.</p>

Trip price includes the following:

- Ground transportation to/from all scheduled activities
- 10 nights accommodations at different types of hotels for a dynamic Japan experience
- Most meals: daily breakfasts, 5 lunches, and 7 dinners. We have fantastic gourmet experiences planned with libations included, of course!
- Local guide services throughout the tour to truly understand Japan, the tea expertise and connections of the Harney family to enhance your experience, and an Onward Travel guide at your service
- All activities, admissions, tastings, and tours as detailed in the itinerary
- Taxes and all gratuities

Register now!

Visit onwardtravel.co to complete the registration form and submit payment. \$1500 deposit due upon booking, balance due by January 27, 2019.

AIR TRAVEL:

The tour begins and ends in central Tokyo, and the city is served by two airports: Narita (NRT) and Haneda (HND). Please confirm with Onward Travel that the tour is a "go" before booking non-refundable airfare.

Contact Onward Travel for assistance or to coordinate with other *Harney & Sons Tea in Japan* travelers.

TRIP INFORMATION Harney & Sons Tea in Japan

About Onward Travel

Onward Travel is a group tour operator owned and operated by sisters Molly Crist and Katerina Dhand. Onward Travel is focused on unique, thoughtful small group tours with itineraries that are researched and pieced together carefully to ensure authentic, engaging trips that foster genuine connection to places and people. A deep love of hospitality and adventure has been in Molly and Kat's blood for generations as Onward Travel is inspired by their family's cooking school on a farm in Bucks County, PA that offered culinary-focused travel to customers for over two decades.

Japan in the Late Spring

We'll be visiting Japan in the middle of tea harvest. The weather this time of year is beautiful... expect nice, temperate days with highs around 70° and lows in the mid-50's at night. There is of course a potential for rain here and there, so pack appropriately. The height of tea harvest also coincides with "Golden Week," a string of national holidays during which time many Japanese are off work and traveling domestically. So, you'll also need to bring along an extra dose of patience as many of the sites we'll visit will be crowded.

Miscellaneous Travel Information

- Passports are required for American citizens travelling to Japan. Visas are not required. Note your passport should be valid for at least six months beyond the date of travel.
- The currency of Japan is the Japanese Yen. To determine the current exchange rate, Google "USD to JPY."
- Travel Protection: Onward Travel recommends that you purchase a travel protection plan to help protect you and your travel investment against the unexpected. Travel protection plans include coverage for Trip Cancellation, Trip Interruption, Emergency Medical and Emergency Evacuation/Repatriation, Trip Delay, Baggage Delay and more. For more information on the recommended plans or to enroll, contact Travelex Insurance Services at 800-228-9792 and reference location number 32-0704. *For a summary of plan details on benefits, coverages, limitations and exclusions, please refer to the applicable Description of Coverage. Travel Insurance is underwritten by Transamerica Casualty Insurance Company, Columbus, Ohio; NAIC #10952. 1308294*

Get in Touch!

Contact Onward Travel with questions or special requests.
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Mike Harney is pictured with the Otsukas, his tea suppliers in Kakegawa, Shizuoka Prefecture