

SAAS OUTDOOR & TRAVEL JAPAN

June 16-30, 2025

12-15 Current 10th & 11th Grade Students

Cost: \$5945

TRIP LEADER: Thomas O'Neil

On this trip, students will be traveling to major areas of Japan. Japan is a country rooted deeply in traditional practices and thinking, allowing our students to experience something completely new. We will be visiting Kyoto, Nara, Kobe, and Hiroshima, with each location allowing us to get involved in the world of innovation, society, and ecology of Japan. Students will be tasked with prototyping solutions to the significant challenges that Japan faces today. They will be guided through the design thinking process as we visit start-ups, maker's spaces, and change-making organizations across the country.

Prerequisites:

Priority will be given to students who have taken either Building a Business or Design Thinking classes at SAAS.

5 Pre-trip meetings + 1-2 post-trip meetings

Pre-trip meetings will cover cultural norms, cultural differences, language, and trip-project details.

A current passport is required.

Cultural Engagement, Independence, and Leadership:

Japan is well known as a hub of innovation and technology. It is also a country rooted deeply in traditional practices and thinking. Students will be challenged to examine the contradictions and intersections between history, culture, and society. They will be faced with social norms and behavioral expectations that differ greatly from those in America. Most students will not have strong Japanese language skills. They must learn to navigate a foreign country without this skill and support each other. Students will be asked to find and purchase their own lunches while utilizing Japanese currency and key Japanese phrases.



Itinerary:

June 16

Fly to Osaka, Japan

June 17

Arrive, Travel to Kyoto, Rest

June 18-20

Kyoto: Kiyomizu Dera, Nara
Day Trip, Osaka Expo Day Trip

June 21

Travel to Kobe

June 22-25

Kobe: Garden visit, Awaji Day
Trip, Kobe High School visit

June 26

Travel to Hiroshima

June 27-28

Hiroshima: Peace Memorial
Museum, Miyajima Island Day
Trip

June 29

Travel to Osaka

June 30

Fly home to Seattle



Curriculum:

Before the trip, we will ask students to attend five pre-trip meeting sessions to discuss cultural differences, learn helpful Japanese phrases, and mentally prepare to leave home for 15 days. These meetings will be a crucial experience to prepare students for the cultural immersion in Japan. During the trip, students will be tasked with completing a design thinking project that they will present to family and friends upon returning. These pre-trip meetings will also allow our group to explore and learn about the project goals, outcomes, and preparation expectations.

On this trip, we will visit start-up organizations and innovative businesses in Kyoto, Kobe, and

Hiroshima. We will engage in individual reflections and group discussions to unpack what we learn and expand our thinking. Each student will be asked to research one of the challenges Japan is currently facing. As we visit organizations throughout Japan, students will prototype solutions and collect feedback from innovative thought leaders at these organizations. On the return from the Japan trip, we will host a presentation night where students can share their experiences with their families and celebrate together.

Students will also learn about Japan's ecology during our trip. This will focus on the relationships the people of Japan have with nature (animals, plants, etc.). One specific example of this will

be a day trip to Nara. Nara is widely known for its deer population. The deer population in Nara is world-renowned for its fearlessness around humans and has become a part of everyday life. The ecological relationship between animals and humans have become seamlessly entwined into the culture of Nara Park. The deer were originally protected due to religious beliefs from Japanese stories of a God riding a white deer into the park. The deer are a major tourist attraction in Japan, and this has caused the population of deer to go unchecked, which has impacted the ecosystem of Nara Park. The park is looked at to study biological population dynamics, ecology, and animal behavior.



Contact Information:

For any further questions please email:

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To register for the trip, complete any necessary trip surveys and find more information, please visit our SAAS trips page by following the link here:



www.seattleacademy.org/student-life/outdoortravel



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