



DON'T TAKE ME TO TOKYO

CITIES OF REINVENTION

Cities, Craft, & Innovation

Tokyo → Matsumoto → Kanazawa → Naoshima → Teshima → Matsue → Kobe

13 nights

Designed by
Cate Fächer

Japan travel for people who've already been



(page for japan images)





Most journeys through Japan follow the same route. Tokyo. Hakone. Kyoto. A few temples. A few trains. A few photos everyone else already took.

This journey takes a different path.

It explores the Japan that emerges once you step off the automatic itinerary: creative cities, quiet traditions, places where craft, design, and landscape still shape daily life.

These sample itineraries are not fixed packages.

They are starting points designed to show what is possible when a journey is shaped by curiosity rather than checklists.

**Every journey I design is fully tailored.
Consider this a sketch, not a script.**

- *Cate Fächter, Founder*



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13 Nights | Craft, Cities, & Innovation

Tokyo is often presented as modern Japan.

But the country's most influential design thinking is distributed. It lives in regional museum cities, in post-war architectural experiments, and in coastal communities that chose art as economic reinvention.

Modern Japan is not spectacle for its own sake. It is material discipline, spatial intelligence, and the quiet tension between preservation and progress.

This route connects places that helped define that conversation.





THE ROUTE

Tokyo → Matsumoto → Kanazawa → Naoshima → Teshima → Matsue → Kobe

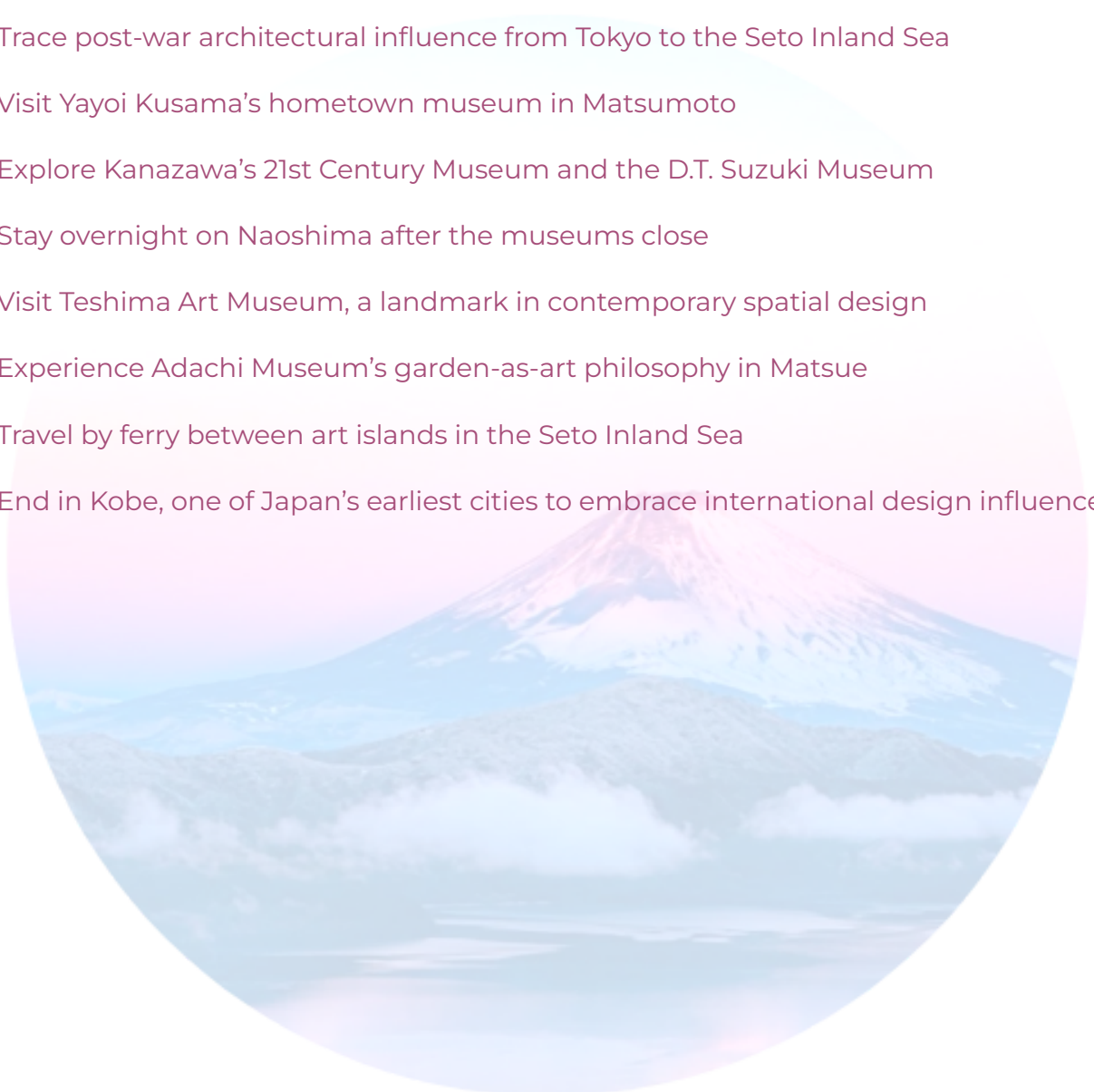
14 Nights

- Rail and ferry connected
- Island overnights
- Architecturally considered accommodation



HIGHLIGHTS

- Trace post-war architectural influence from Tokyo to the Seto Inland Sea
- Visit Yayoi Kusama's hometown museum in Matsumoto
- Explore Kanazawa's 21st Century Museum and the D.T. Suzuki Museum
- Stay overnight on Naoshima after the museums close
- Visit Teshima Art Museum, a landmark in contemporary spatial design
- Experience Adachi Museum's garden-as-art philosophy in Matsue
- Travel by ferry between art islands in the Seto Inland Sea
- End in Kobe, one of Japan's earliest cities to embrace international design influence





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(images of highlights page)





Tokyo

Days 1-2

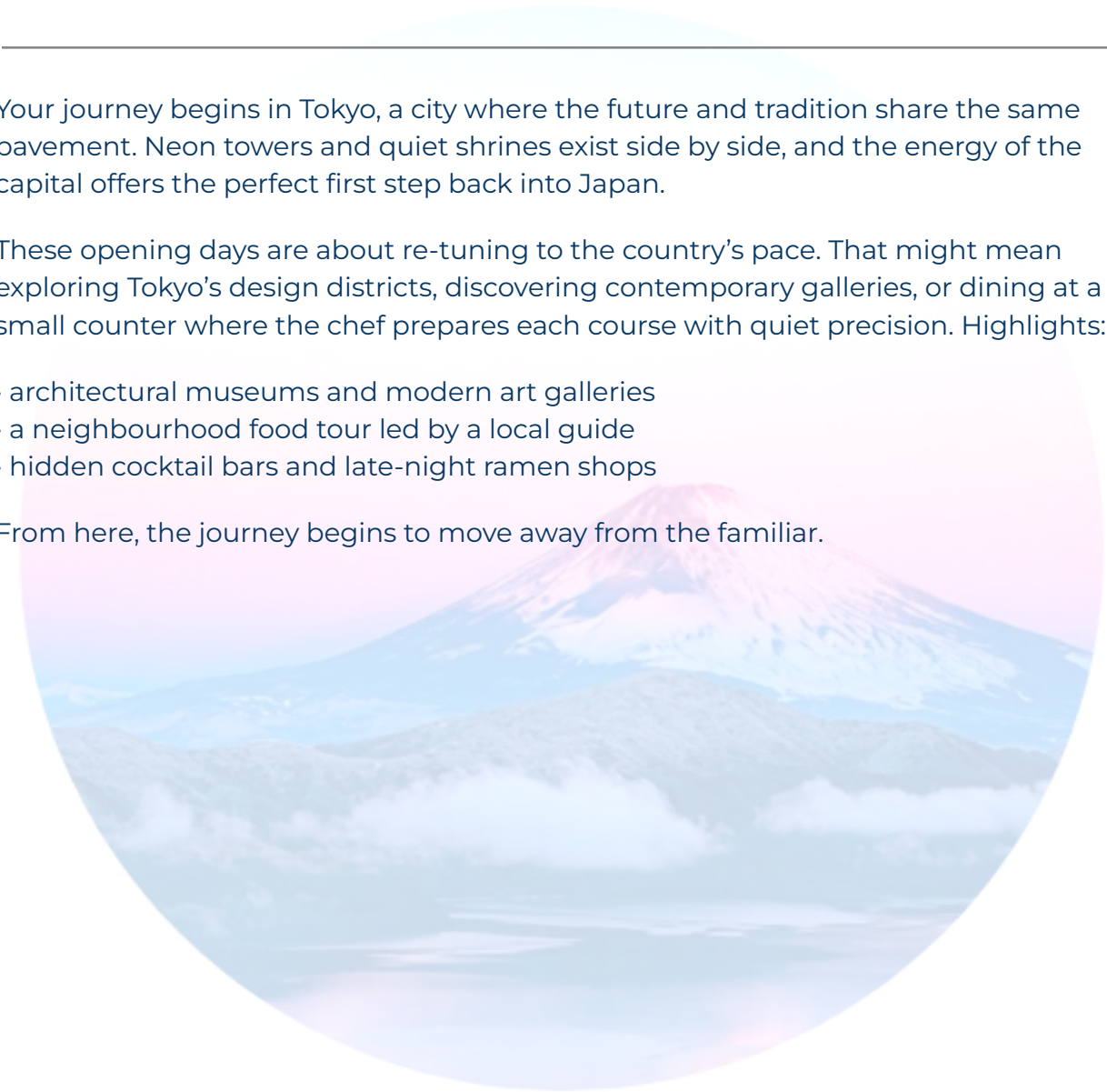
Arrival and the rhythm of modern Japan

Your journey begins in Tokyo, a city where the future and tradition share the same pavement. Neon towers and quiet shrines exist side by side, and the energy of the capital offers the perfect first step back into Japan.

These opening days are about re-tuning to the country's pace. That might mean exploring Tokyo's design districts, discovering contemporary galleries, or dining at a small counter where the chef prepares each course with quiet precision. Highlights:

- architectural museums and modern art galleries
- a neighbourhood food tour led by a local guide
- hidden cocktail bars and late-night ramen shops

From here, the journey begins to move away from the familiar.





Matsumoto

Days 3–4

Castle town at the edge of the Japan Alps

A morning train carries you into the mountains to Matsumoto, where one of Japan's most striking original castles, the famous 'Black Crow' castle, rises above the city.

But Matsumoto's charm lies beyond the fortress walls. The city is known for its artisan culture, independent cafés, and clear alpine light. It's a place where travellers slow down, wandering between soba restaurants, craft studios, and quiet residential streets. Possible highlights include:

- exploring Matsumoto Castle after dark
- visiting Yayoi Kusama's hometown museums
- walking historic sections of the Nakasendo trail
- sampling handmade soba in a traditional restaurant

The mountains begin to frame the journey now.





(photo page, matsumoto / kanazawa)





Kanazawa

Days 5–7

Craft, culture, and quiet elegance

Kanazawa offers a different expression of Japan's cultural heritage. Unlike Kyoto, its historic districts survived the war largely intact, and the city's traditions of craftsmanship remain deeply woven into daily life.

Here you might wander samurai lanes, visit gold-leaf workshops, or explore contemporary galleries that sit comfortably beside centuries-old tea houses.

Highlights to explore:

- strolling the gardens of Kenrokuen
- exploring Kanazawa's preserved geisha districts
- meeting artisans who continue centuries-old crafts
- dining on exceptional seafood from the Sea of Japan





Naoshima

Days 8–9

Japan's most extraordinary art landscape

The journey then moves south toward the Seto Inland Sea, where the small island of Naoshima has become one of the world's most remarkable art destinations.

Here architecture, landscape, and contemporary art blend together across quiet fishing villages and coastal hills. You might spend your time:

- visiting Tadao Ando's iconic museums
- cycling between outdoor sculptures and seaside installations
- watching the sunset across the Inland Sea

This part of Japan moves at an entirely different pace.





Teshima

Day 10

A quieter island still

Just across the water lies Teshima, smaller and more contemplative than its famous neighbour.

Here art installations merge almost invisibly with the landscape. The island's remarkable Teshima Art Museum is less a building than an experience, a space where architecture dissolves into sky and water.

A single day here can feel like stepping briefly outside the modern world.





Matsue

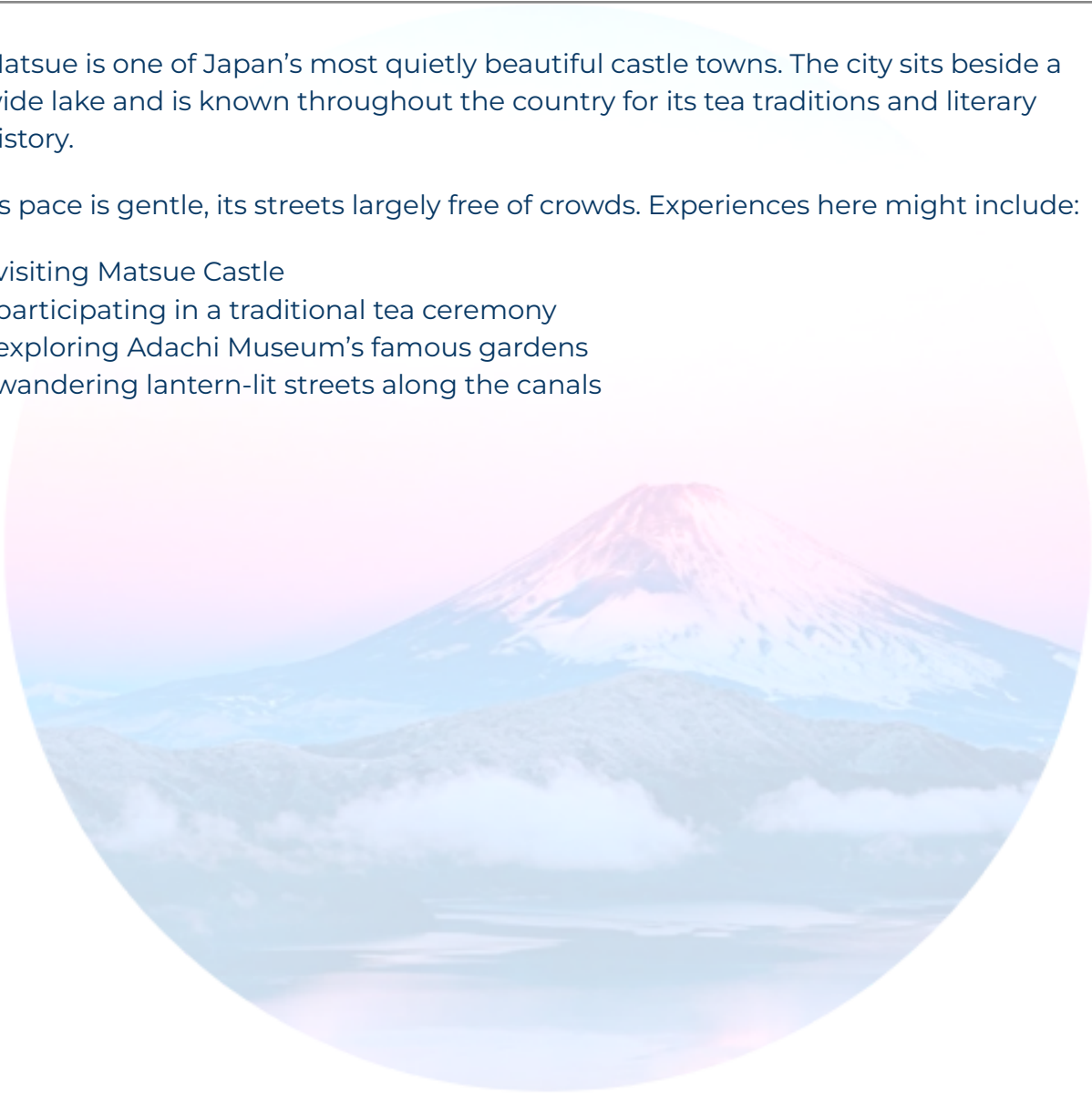
Days 11-12

Samurai heritage and tea culture

Matsue is one of Japan's most quietly beautiful castle towns. The city sits beside a wide lake and is known throughout the country for its tea traditions and literary history.

Its pace is gentle, its streets largely free of crowds. Experiences here might include:

- visiting Matsue Castle
- participating in a traditional tea ceremony
- exploring Adachi Museum's famous gardens
- wandering lantern-lit streets along the canals





Kobe

Days 13–14

A stylish finale

The journey finishes in Kobe, one of Japan's most elegant port cities. International influences have shaped its cuisine, architecture, and easy cosmopolitan atmosphere.

Your final evening might involve:

- dining at one of the city's renowned restaurants
- exploring Kobe's harbour district
- visiting nearby sake breweries in Nada

The perfect closing chapter before returning home.





Why This Journey Works

Japan rewards travellers who move with the country's rhythm.

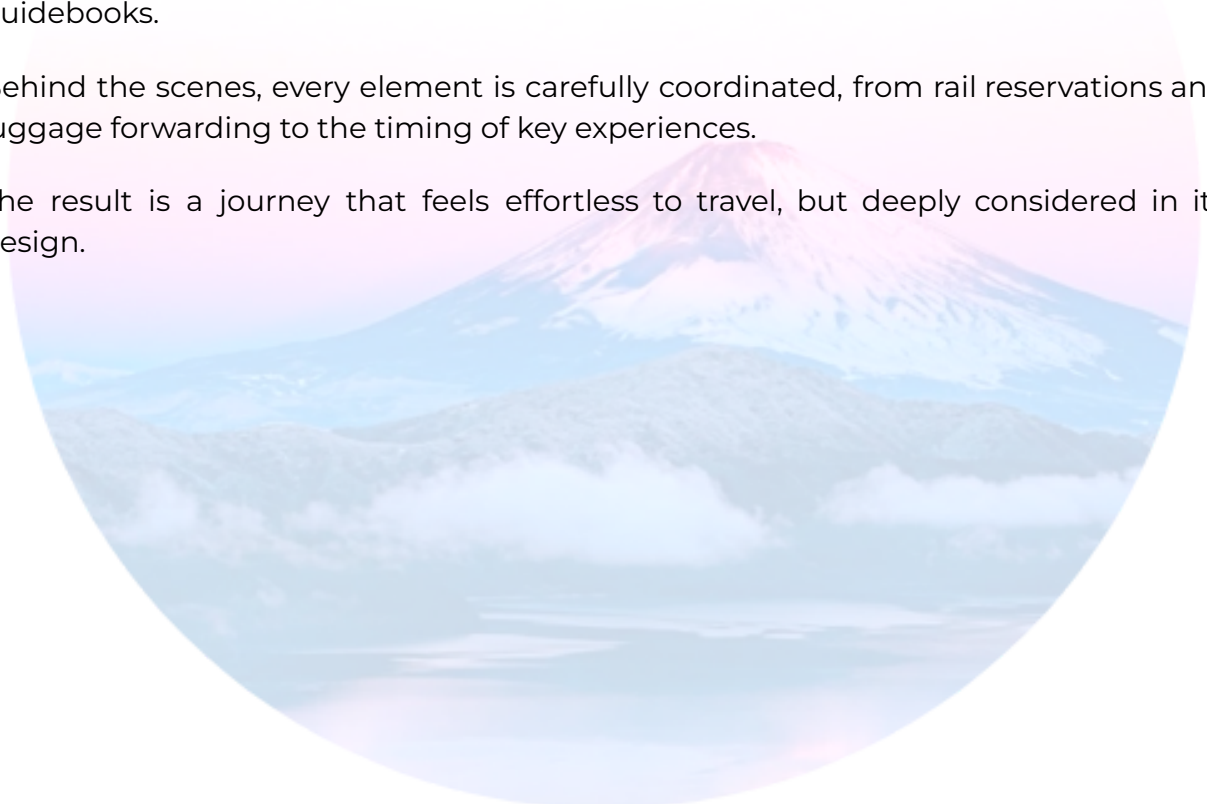
This route has been designed to balance movement with stillness, combining creative cities, historic towns, and landscapes that reveal how tradition and modern life continue to shape each other.

It also avoids many of the pressures now affecting Japan's most famous destinations. Instead of rushing between crowded highlights, the journey focuses on places where culture is still lived rather than performed.

Careful pacing allows time to experience Japan properly: lingering over meals, wandering neighbourhoods, and discovering the details that rarely appear in guidebooks.

Behind the scenes, every element is carefully coordinated, from rail reservations and luggage forwarding to the timing of key experiences.

The result is a journey that feels effortless to travel, but deeply considered in its design.





Luggage Forwarding

Japan's rail system makes travelling easy, but moving large suitcases can be tiring. Where helpful, I'll suggest using Japan's reliable luggage forwarding service, which allows you to send bags ahead between hotels. This keeps travel days lighter and more comfortable. Guidance will be included in your Info Pack.

Accommodation Tax

Some cities charge a small local accommodation tax, payable at check-in. Where possible, this is included in advance. If not, it is usually only a few hundred yen per person. In Kyoto, higher city taxes are already included unless stated otherwise.

Visas for Japan

Visitors with passports from the majority of destinations (including Europe, Australia, New Zealand and North America) do not need a visa to visit Japan for tourism for a trip of less than 90 days.





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Start Planning Your Japan Journey

Japan reveals itself differently every time you return.

If you're ready to explore beyond Japan's familiar routes, I'd be delighted to help design the next chapter of your journey.

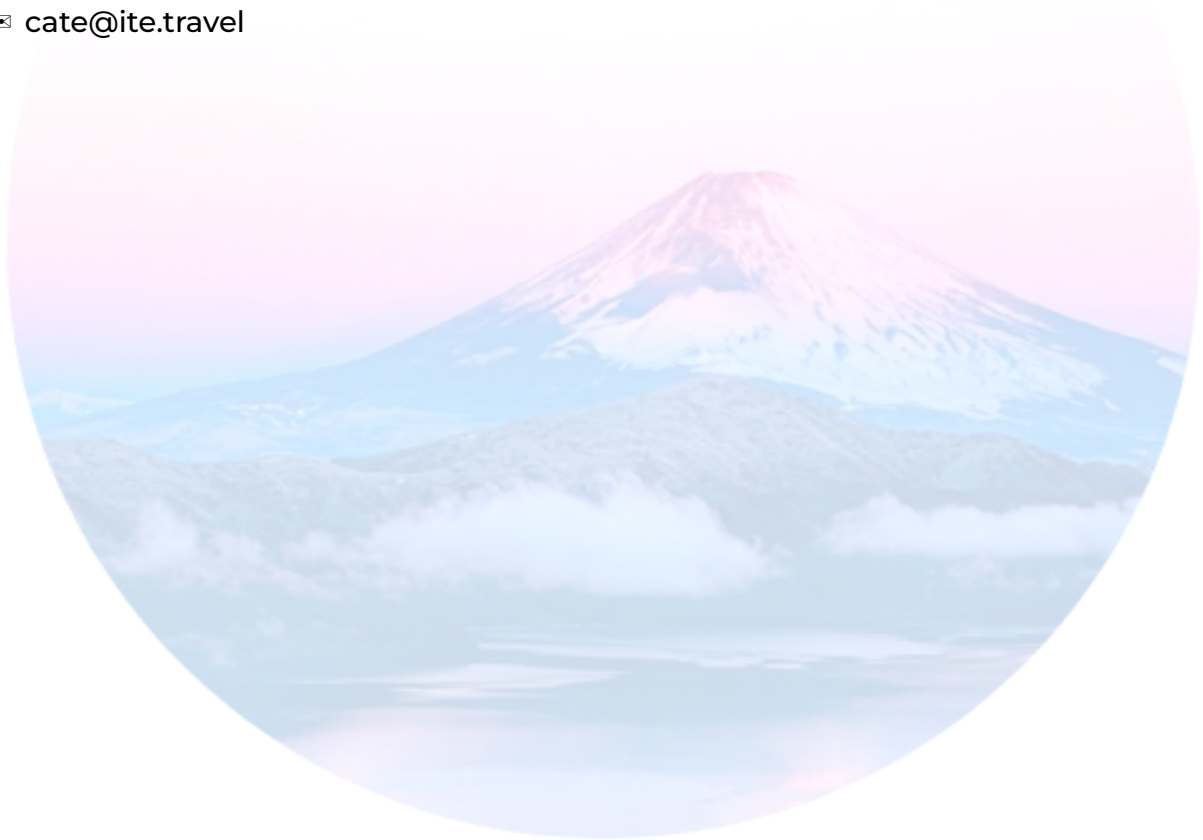
Book a complimentary 30-minute consultation and we'll begin shaping your ideas into a tailored itinerary.

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*If you don't want to go back,
you didn't do it right*

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