

Join whisky expert **Bill Lark** for the 2026

WHISKY EXPLORATION TOUR OF JAPAN

Two and a half wonderful weeks, exploring the
best of Japanese whisky regions including visits to
Kyoto, Tokyo, Hakone, Nagano and Hokkaido

27 April to 13 May 2026



TRAVELRITE
INTERNATIONAL

WHISKY EXPLORATION TOUR OF JAPAN

VISITING:

- Yamazaki Distillery near Kyoto
- Fuji Gotemba Distillery near Hakone
- Hakushi Distillery at the foot of the Japanese Alps
- Mars Kamagatke Distillery, Japan's highest
- Yoichi Distillery in Hokkaido
- Niseko Distillery



Bill Lark

Bill Lark – the Godfather of Australian whisky. Bill Lark's career as Australia's most recognised whisky distiller began with a single question: "I wonder why there isn't anyone making malt whisky in Tasmania?". This question saw the revival of an industry in Tasmania, the development a globally-recognised and celebrated whisky distillery with LARK, and Bill Lark becoming one of the most prominent figures in whisky – renowned the world over. Together with his wife Lyn, they built an enduring passion and dedication to craft and generosity of spirit in supporting others hone their skills.



YOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1 Monday April 27, 2026 **Kyoto**

Today we depart Australia on our flight to Osaka Japan. On arrival we are transferred to the city of Kyoto and our hotel where we stay for three nights.

DAY 2 Tuesday April 28, 2026 **Kyoto**

Today we have a tour of Kyoto where we see some of the highlights of the city. We visit the Kinkakuji, better known as the Golden Pavilion, a Zen temple in northern Kyoto whose top two floors are completely covered in gold leaf. Formally known as Rokuonji, the temple was the retirement villa of the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, and according to his will, it became a Zen temple of the Rinzaï sect after his death in 1408. We then visit the Ryoanji Temple, the site of Japan's most famous rock garden. Originally an aristocrat's villa during the Heian Period, the site was converted into a Zen temple in 1450 and belongs to the Myoshinji School of the Rinzaï sect of Zen Buddhism. We then visit the spectacular Arahiiyama Bamboo Forest. Walk through the ethereal bamboo grove and enjoy the ambience. Later we visit Gion, Kyoto's most famous geisha district made famous from the novel and film *Memoirs of a Geisha*. It is filled with shops, restaurants and ochaya (teahouses), where geisha and maiko (geisha apprentices) entertain.



DAY 3 Wednesday April 29, 2026 **Kyoto**

Today in one of the highlights of the tour we visit Yamazaki Distillery. Japan's first malt whisky distillery, is an unforgettable experience for whisky enthusiasts. Nestled at the foot of the stunning Osakasayama mountains, surrounded by lush greenery. The building itself blends modern architecture with traditional Japanese aesthetics. After a warm welcome at the visitor center, you're handed a visitor guide and a tasting glass.

The tour begins with a brief history of whisky in Japan, highlighting the pioneering efforts of Shinjiro Torii, the founder of Suntory. As you walk through the distillery, you're captivated by the intricate copper pot stills and the wooden fermentation tanks, each contributing to the unique flavor profiles of their whiskies. The guide shares fascinating insights into the distillation process and the importance of local water sourced from the nearby mountains. We then move to the tasting room, where a selection of Yamazaki whiskies awaits. You sample a few different expressions, from the smooth Yamazaki 12-Year-Old to the rich and complex Yamazaki 18-Year-Old. Each sip reveals layers of flavor—fruity, floral, and a hint of smoke, complemented by the craftsmanship that goes into every bottle.

Later you have time to explore the distillery grounds. You stroll through the beautiful gardens, where you can take in the natural

beauty of the area and reflect on the craftsmanship that goes into each bottle of Yamazaki whisky. The picturesque scenery offers perfect photo opportunities, capturing the essence of Japanese tranquility. There will be time to stop by the gift shop, where you find a range of exclusive Yamazaki whiskies, along with unique merchandise. You can't resist picking up a bottle to take home as a memento of this remarkable experience.



DAY 4 Thursday April 30, 2026 **Mt Fuji Region**

This morning we depart Kyoto and travel by Bullet train to near Hakone the spa town near Mt Fuji where we stay for the next two nights. We then visit the Gaiaflow Shizuoka Distillery. Located in the protected mountainous area of Shizuoka, known as Oku-Shizu, in close harmony with nature. The underground water from the Southern Alps, which nourishes the earth of this area, flows into the Abe River before streaming beneath Oku-Shizu Enveloped as it is with the seasonal microclimate of the region, Gaiaflow Shizuoka Distillery is also the first ever distillery to use Japanese cedar as equipment. Experience a whole new whisky experience on our tour of the distillery. We then continue on to our hotel.

DAY 5 Friday May 1, 2026

Mt Fuji Region

Today we visit the Fuji Gotemba Distillery which was first opened in 1973. It uses Mt. Fuji snowmelt and rainwater in all whisky-making. This water takes a 50-year journey from the mountain's peak to the depths of the aquifer located 100 meters (330 feet) beneath the distillery.

The Whisky benefits from the natural, misty environment of Mt. Fuji. High humidity, a year-round blanket of fog, cool temperatures, and clean air purified by forests provide a unique terroir perfect for aging whiskies. Nestled amidst the rugged grace of Mt. Fuji, the distillery has crafted its whiskies over 50 years. A whisky with pristine clarity on the palate and vibrant fruity notes on the nose.

This afternoon we visit and taste the whisky from the Sasakawa Distillery. They crate the worlds finest Whisky from the natural mineral water from Mt Fuji. We then return to our hotel.



DAY 6 Saturday May 2, 2026

Tokyo

This morning we depart the Mt Fuji area and first visit a local Sake producer to sample their produce before we travel into the city of Tokyo and our hotel.

DAY 7 Sunday May 3, 2026

Tokyo

Tokyo is the political, economic and cultural capital of Japan. There are more than twelve million people living in Tokyo and millions more living within a radius of fifty kilometres. We will enjoy a city tour of exciting Tokyo this morning. We see the famous Ginza area and visit the Imperial Palace East Garden, which is still part of the Royal Residence. We continue with a visit to Asakusa, the heart of traditional Japan. The main attraction is Sensoji, a popular Buddhist temple built in the seventh century. We will have time to walk along Nakamise-dori, the bustling market area, where souvenirs and wooden sandals are sold. This evening we attend a well known Tokyo Whisky Bar.

DAY 8 Monday May 4, 2026

Tokyo

This morning we visit Gin distiller Tokyo Riverside Distillery which was established in 2020. In the afternoon we visit the Blue Rabbit Distillery that is located in the heart of Tokyo. This evening we visit another of the famous Whisky bars of Tokyo.



DAY 9 Tuesday May 5, 2026

Nagano

Today we depart Tokyo and travel into the Japanese Alps. We first visit the Hakushi Distillery which is a magical experience set in a stunning forest at the foot of the Southern Japanese Alps. The distillery was established in 1973 and is another Suntory distillery offering a great experience for whisky lovers. We have a tour of the distillery and a whisky tasting. We then continue further into the Alps to the our hotel in the town of Nagano.

DAY 10 Wednesday May 6, 2026

Nagano

Today we visit the Komoro Distillery surrounded by forest high above the city of Komoro. The distillery was founded by Koji Shimaoka along with Ian Chang formerly the head distiller at Kavalan Distillery in Taiwan.

DAY 11 Thursday May 7, 2026

Nagano

Today we travel further into the highlands to visit the Mars Kamagatake Distillery which is Japan's highest distillery at an altitude of 798m. The distillery was established in 1949 by Kiichiro Iwai. The distillery sits at the base of its namesake mountain, the tallest peak in the Central Japanese Alps. A river of crystal-clear water, fed by the snowmelt from the mountains above, flows beside the distillery as it descends into the Ina Valley below. The Mars Komagatake Distillery produces a range of blended and single malt whiskies and ages them on the premises. We have a tour of the distillery and taste a number of their whisky's before returning to Nagano.

DAY 12 Friday May 8, 2026

Otaru, Hokkaido Japan

Today we depart Nagano and first travel Chichibu Distillery. After the famous Hanyu Distillery closed in 2000, Ichiro Akuto, grandson of the original owner, bought the remaining casks and continued his family's legacy by establishing the Chichibu Distillery in 2007. Today, Akuto is well-known across Japan's whisky landscape, since the Chichibu Distillery, while still relatively small, has a reputation for experimentation that has earned fans across the world. We then head to the airport for our flights to Hokkaido where we are transferred to Otaru and our hotel.

DAY 13 Saturday May 9 2026

Otaru

Today we visit the famed Yoichi Distillery which sits in a beautiful garden setting. The location was chosen as it was abundant in barley and peat as well as coal which is still used today to fire the stills (this is rarely seen elsewhere in the world today.) Yoichi is also influenced

by its proximity to the sea at Ishikari Bay.

The distillery was established by Masataka Taketsuru, known as the father of Japanese whisky. After returning From Scotland where he worked in various distilleries gaining an invaluable experience he first helped Shinjiro Torii establish Yamazaki, and he then founded the Nikka Distillery in Yoichi in 1934. Masataka and his Scottish wife, Rita have since become the subject of a beautiful love story and there historic home on the distillery site can be visited today. We then return to Otaru and our hotel.

DAY 14 Sunday May 10, 2026

Otaru

This morning we will visit a local sake producer to find out about how this local beverage is made. The afternoon is free to explore the town of Otaru.



DAY 15 Monday May 11, 2026

Niseko, Hokkaido Japan

Today we visit the Niseko Distillery which was established in 1922 to produce Sake before obtaining a licence to make whisky in 2016. Located in between Mt. Niseko Annupuri and Mt. Yotei, the town of Niseko is blessed with the type of high-quality water that is unique to areas of heavy snowfall. The blessings of these beautiful natural surroundings allow their whisky to mature gently over time along with the changing of the four seasons. We then visit a local Sake distillery

DAY 16 Tuesday May 12, 2026

Sapporo, Hokkaido Japan

This morning we travel to the city of Sapporo in Hokkaido. On arrival we have a tour of the Sapporo Beer Factory and visit the beer museum before checking into our hotel. This evening we have a final night dinner to celebrate our tour of Japan.

DAY 17 Wednesday May 13, 2026

Departure

After breakfast the tour group will be transferred to the Airport for flights back to Australia. The tour concludes.

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TOUR PRICE:

Price for the tour is \$11,750 per person twin-share.
Single supplement is \$2,875 per person.

Included in the tour price:

- Accommodation in three and four-star hotels with private facilities. Hotel taxes and service charges.
- Airfares return from Australia and internally in Japan.
- Breakfast daily.
- Entry and tasting fees and special services at distilleries in each of the regions visited. Sightseeing and general entry fees as detailed in the itinerary.
- Tour leadership by Bill Lark.
- Tour management by Travelrite International

Not included in the price:

- Passport and visa fees.
- Travel insurance.
- Sightseeing and general expenses not specified in the itinerary.
- Items of a personal nature.
- Additional travel arrangements – these will be quoted for separately.

General information and booking conditions

Touring can involve a considerable amount of walking and stair climbing in the places visited and it is important that all tour participants have a level of physical fitness that allows them to take part in this activity without the need of assistance from others.

TOUR OPERATOR: Travelrite International Pty Ltd, (ABN 64 005 817 078) is the tour operator.

TOUR COSTS: The tour costs are based on airfare, general transport, and accommodation costs at 1/2/25. Travelrite reserves the right to alter the costs if any of these factors change, giving any passenger that has booked the right to withdraw with full refund of monies paid or modify arrangements. No alterations to price will be made within 60 days of the start of the tour.

DEPOSITS AND PAYMENTS: A non-refundable deposit of \$900 per passenger is required at the time of booking. Full payment will be required 75 days before departure. A 1.5% administration fee will be charged on payments made by credit card.

CANCELLATION CONDITIONS: Cancellations within 75 days of departure will result in the loss of all monies paid. Cancellation outside 75 days from departure will result in a cancellation fee of the deposit.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: Travel insurance is recommended to cover the costs of cancellation fees due to illness, death in family, etc.

MINIMUM TOUR NUMBERS AND CONDITIONS: The tour has been priced on the basis of a minimum number of passengers having booked 75 days prior to departure. Travelrite reserves the right to cancel the tour, giving a full refund of all monies paid or offer arrangements to proceed with the tour at a modified cost. Travelrite reserves the right to change advertised entrances if necessary for the smooth operation of the tour.

REFUNDS: The tour is based on arrangements that do not allow for any refunds in respect to sightseeing, accommodation, meals, airfare or other services not utilized after the tour has commenced.

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DELAYS AND UNFORESEEN EVENTS: You engage Travelrite International to book this tour on your behalf and you acknowledge that Travelrite International acts as your agent for the purpose of making contracts between you and the various providers of accommodation, transportation and other services that comprise the tour. Travelrite may without reference to you provide or make available to you, or may as your agent engage any third party to provide or make available to you, any good or service which Travelrite reasonably believes is necessary for your benefit to maintain the tour itinerary,

repatriate you or otherwise accommodate, transport or sustain you in circumstances in which the tour itinerary fails wholly or partly for any reason. You appoint Travelrite International your attorney for this purpose. You agree to pay Travelrite any cost thereof and you indemnify Travelrite in respect of any cost it incurs in this regard. Travelrite advises you to obtain travel insurance generally including in respect of the risk that any such good or service may become required.

HOW TO BOOK: Bookings can be made by completing a booking form and sending it with a non-refundable deposit of \$900 per person to:

Travelrite International Pty Ltd
423 Whitehorse Road,
Balwyn, Victoria 3103

Further information can be obtained by telephoning

Toll Free: 1800 630 343

Phone: (03) 9836 2522

Email: sales@travelrite.com.au

www.travelrite.com.au

ABOUT TRAVELRITE INTERNATIONAL: Travelrite International Pty Ltd is a well-established travel company which has been operating in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne for more than 40 years. It is fully ATAS accredited (No. A10538) and fully IATA credited and directly represents the major airlines of the world and all major domestic and international tour and transport operators. Travelrite International has been operating special interest tours for over 38 years, and now runs over 120 tours a year. Travelrite International Pty Ltd is a full member of the Australian Travel Industry Association – ATIA.



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