

# Japan: Nakasendo Trail and Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage

Trip Code: JNK

Version:



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



MODERATE



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Immerse yourself in serene nature on the Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage
- Be transported to Edo Period Japan with 2 days walking on the Nakasendo Trail
- Discover the bright lights of Tokyo and the zen gardens and temples of Kyoto

- Sleep in traditional ryokan with their own onsen 'hot spring' baths
- Experience the intricacies of Japanese culture

## AT A GLANCE

- 6 day walking and trekking
- 3 days sightseeing
- Max altitude - 1200 metres
- Join at Tokyo, End in Osaka

## ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

# Introduction

The Nakasendo Trail connected Kyoto and Tokyo during the age of the samurai. We'll walk some of the best sections of this mountainous trail, including visits to the 'post towns' of Tsumago and Magome. Their beautifully preserved cobbled streets and dark wood, lattice-front houses evoke Japan's Edo period glory.

During our 3-day Kumano Kodo pilgrimage, we'll take on a challenging trek between two of Kumano's grand shrines. Our path through the heart of these sacred mountains, where nature is worshipped and Shinto gods dwell in thundering waterfalls, winds through tranquil ancient forests, with spectacular mountain and ocean views - a feast for the body and soul.

We will experience the warmth of Japanese hospitality staying in traditional ryokan and minshuku; sleeping on futon beds, dining on traditional multi-course meals, and relaxing in soothing hot thermal springs.

Additionally included are 3 nights in dazzling, future-chasing Tokyo and 2 days to explore the peaceful Zen gardens and temples of Kyoto. We'll utilize Japan's excellent public transport throughout, including a journey on the world-famous high-speed bullet train.

This trip is an excellent way to experience the history and culture of Japan. You'll return home a step closer to understanding the unique Japanese way of life.

## Is this holiday for you?

This holiday is graded as moderate. On the Nakasendo Trail, our hikes will last for around 4 hours with moderate amounts of ascent and descent. Most of the walking is on good, soft paths, and partly on paved roads.

On the Kumano Kodo, we will encounter some more demanding sections with long, steep ascents and descents on paved and cobbled paths. Our most challenging day will be walking the Ogumotori-goe from Koguchi to Nachi, where we must climb 800m in just 5km on the intimidatingly named 'Dogiri-zaka' (torso-splitting slope!). We'll be sure to take this section in our stride.

We will sleep in a combination of hotels and traditional ryokan and minshuku. In the traditional accommodation, we will spend multiple nights sleeping on futon beds, which are essentially bedding and mattresses rolled out on a tatami mat floor.

Sightseeing in Tokyo, Kamakura, and Kyoto will involve a combination of walking and public transport, so we can expect to be actively walking (on our feet) for several hours on each of these days.

We will utilize public transport throughout, using a combination of buses and trains. This is simply the best way to travel in Japan, and it makes the holiday a very immersive experience. This does mean that we will be responsible for loading and unloading our baggage and walking with it to/from our accommodations.

A wonderful part of Japanese culture is the cuisine, so we recommend you brush up on your chopstick skills before visiting Japan; knives and forks may not always be available, and the culinary delights will be irresistible

# Itinerary

---

Version:

## Holiday Information

---

### What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- Shared shuttle airport transfer if arriving on Day 1
- Train from Osaka Hotel to Kansai Airport if departing on Day 14
- JP Rail Pass and pre loaded IC card (to cover included transport and meals)
- All accommodation as described
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- All land transport required by the itinerary
- All activities/excursions/entrance fees mentioned unless specified as 'optional'

### What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Airport transfers other than group transfers
- Some meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Tips
- Miscellaneous personal expenditure - drinks and souvenirs etc

### Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the group hotel in Tokyo on the afternoon of Day 1.

Shared shuttle transfers from Tokyo Haneda and Tokyo Narita Airport are included for anyone arriving on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary. The transfer from Tokyo Haneda will take around 20 mins and from Tokyo Narita around 90 mins.

On the last day of the Land Only itinerary, you will need to take the train from close by our hotel in Osaka to Kansai International Airport. It is around a 10 minute journey. The cost of the train ticket is included in the holiday cost price and can be paid for using the prepaid IC card that will be provided for you by the Tour Leader.

### Meal Plan

All breakfasts, 5 lunches and 7 dinners are included in the holiday price.

## Food & Water

Water from the taps is perfectly drinkable on this holiday - please use this to fill your personal bottles for your daily activities. We do not encourage the purchase of single-use plastic bottles.

Japanese cuisine is fresh, fragrant and flavoursome. Rice, and noodles such as Udon and Soba, are ubiquitous. Seafood and shellfish is very common, served grilled or raw as sashimi or sushi, as well as soy products, like tofu. Broths and soups, such as Miso, are also very typical. Seasonal vegetables will feature prominently and may come served in a broth, lightly battered (tempura), or pickled. These items are generally served at breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Coffee is not popular in Japan and so you may have to rely on the plentiful Green Tea to provide your daily caffeine fix.

Our included evening meals will generally be kaiseki style, this is a traditional Japanese multi-course meal including multiple small dishes freshly prepared with locally-sourced seasonal ingredients. Meals are generally served at low tables, and you will be required to sit on cushions on the floor. Knives and forks will be rarely seen, be prepared to use chopsticks. Outside of the cities breakfasts will also be exclusively Japanese style and included lunches during the walking sections of our holiday will usually be bento boxes provided by our accommodations.

When food is not included, your tour leader will be able to recommend the best places to eat and to help arrange group meals. In towns and cities there will be a variety of restaurants and street-food stalls offering extensive menus, which often have pictures to make ordering easier.

If you are vegetarian please be advised that, outside of the cities, it is hard to guarantee that dishes are 100% vegetarian. Most Japanese dishes involve miso, dashi or soy sauce, all of which contain fish and vegetarianism is not a concept that is widely understood. It will be a good idea to bring some of your own food with you to help supplement your diet and you will also be able purchase snacks in shops. The same applies to those following a vegan or gluten free diet.

## Accommodation

During the holiday, you will spend 7 nights in comfortable hotels, which are well located for public transport, 3 nights in Tokyo, 3 nights in Kyoto and 1 night in Osaka.

In Kiso Fukushima (2 nights) and in Yunomine Onsen (2 nights) we will stay in traditional ryokan, with their own onsen (communal hot spring bath) for those wishing to experience this unique Japanese ritual. At the ryokan it is usual to find a cotton robe (yukata) and slippers provided for your comfort and it is normal to wear these for dinner as well as whilst relaxing in the evening.

All rooms at the hotels and at the ryokan have private bathrooms.

In Koguchi (1 night) and Nachisan (1 night) we will stay in simple minshuku with shared bathroom facilities.

Ryokan are traditional Japanese Inns, Minshuku are similarly traditional but usually with more basic facilities and are more akin to a family run B&B. Whilst staying at the ryokan and minshuku we will experience traditional Japanese lifestyle and hospitality, sleeping in a simple room on a futon bed, with a tatami mat covered floor, and enjoying local cuisine served by our welcoming hosts.

Accommodation is based on twin share. If you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired with another single client of the same sex. A limited number of single rooms are available for a supplementary cost. If you are planning to extend your holiday, additional nights at the group hotel are available on request.

## Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader.

## Spending Money

Approximately £450 per person (or equivalent in US dollars or Euros) should be allowed for non-included meals, drinks, snacks, and miscellaneous expenses.

Japan is mainly a cash society and it is best to travel with cash. You can obtain yen prior to travel or money changing facilities are available at the airport and in most towns/cities if you would prefer to change your money on arrival. Your Tour Leader will be able to advise.

Please note you may have difficulty using credit and debit cards issued outside Japan. Cirrus, Maestro, Link and Delta cash cards are not widely accepted. Japanese post offices, 7-Eleven stores and JP Post Bank often have international cash machines. Check with your bank before travelling and take sufficient alternative sources of money for the duration of your stay.

## Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is not customary in Japan, in fact, if you try to tip in hotels/restaurants it may be refused. Some higher end restaurants may add a 10% service charge to your bill. You may want to tip your Tour Leader to say thank you, or handing over small gift is also a good way to show your satisfaction. If you tip your Tour Leader money should be placed inside of an envelope and presented quietly. As a guide, £2-3 a day would be appropriate.

## Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one main piece of luggage and one daypack. Your main luggage should be a soft-shell suitcase with wheels or, ideally, a large backpack with wheels.

To avoid additional costs/issues with having to pre-book luggage space on trains (which would also mean you are separated from your luggage for the journeys), it is essential that your luggage can be stored in the luggage rack above the seat. For this reason, your luggage must have a total measurement (length + width + height) of less than 160cm.

If your luggage has a rigid frame, the height should not exceed 82 cm or it will not fit into the luggage lockers at stations.

Another reason to keep your main luggage as small and lightweight as possible is that you will be required to regularly carry your luggage on and off public transportation and to/from accommodation (no more than 15 15-minute walk).

For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

## Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

# General Information

---

## Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

## Visa Japan

UK and USA passport holders do not require a visa for short stays.

## Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

## VACCINATIONS

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella, along with hepatitis A and typhoid. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

## Currency

The unit of currency in Japan is the Japanese Yen.

## Preparing for your Holiday

Getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience.

You should be aerobically fit and comfortable with walking 3 to 6 hours for consecutive days. Hill walking, with a good amount of ascent and descent, is the best training. Running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardiovascular fitness and stamina.



## Climate

Japan's climate is classified as temperate in that it has four distinct seasons. However a variety of influences including the Siberian air stream and various Pacific Ocean currents give the country a fairly complex climatic pattern. In May/Oct/Nov you can expect temperatures from around 10 - 20 degrees centigrade. We will be hiking in mountainous regions and it is possible we will encounter sun, rain, fog and wind at times. It is important to pack for hot, cold and wet weather.

## Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at [travellaware.campaign.gov.uk](http://travellaware.campaign.gov.uk) and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

## Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

## Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

# Equipment Information

## Equipment List

Please try and keep the weight of your baggage to a minimum. See the 'baggage allowance' section for further details.

**YOU SHOULD BRING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:**

- Hiking boots/shoes
- Sandals/trainers
- Socks
- Walking socks
- Trekking trousers
- T-shirts (quick drying)
- Thin long sleeve top/shirt
- Lightweight waterproof overtrousers
- Lightweight waterproof jacket/Poncho
- Underwear
- Shorts
- Sunhat
- Sunglasses
- Daypack
- Water bottles 1 Litre x2
- Selection of dry bags (to keep luggage contents dry)
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Washbag and toiletries

- Small travel towel (these are not always provided)
- Antibacterial handwash

Basic First Aid Kit - You should bring your own personal first aid kit consisting of the following: throat

- lozenges, painkillers (anti-inflammatory), antiseptic cream/spray, plasters and blister treatment, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite). Glucose tablets are a good idea.

## THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE OPTIONAL:

- Travel clothes
- Trekking poles
- Umbrella
- Insect repellent - (DEET)
- Camera
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

## NOTES

Luggage: A soft bag/suitcase with wheels/large rucksack is most suitable. Please keep this as small and lightweight as possible as you will have to do a fair bit of carrying on and off public transportation and to/from accommodation. If your luggage has a rigid frame, the height should not exceed 82 cm or it will not fit into the lockers.

Remember to bring sandals or comfortable shoes for sightseeing, we will be on our feet a lot. These should be easy to take on and off, as shoes are not worn inside most buildings in Japan!

## Cotswold Outdoor

Many of the equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive a 12.5% discount with Cotswold Outdoor, Snow+Rock and Runners Need. The discount code can be downloaded from your MyKE account and you can use this code at the checkout, either in store or online.

## Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for joining in Tokyo. A shared shuttle transfer from Tokyo HANEDA or Tokyo NARITA is included on Day 1. The holiday ends in Osaka. A train transfer from Osaka to Kansai Airport is included.

## Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Tokyo Haneda or Narita. Outbound flights will depart the UK early evening, arriving in the morning. Return flights will depart Osaka KANSAI airport in the morning of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK in the evening.

# Why Choose KE

## Why KE

To make sure you get the most out of your holiday to Japan we've limited our group sizes to 12. Though we've endeavoured to include as many highlights as possible, we've also been careful to factor in multiple nights in most destinations, so that there is still time for relaxing, reflecting, and for some independent exploration along the way.

**Please Note** This document was downloaded on 21/11/2024 and the trip is subject to change