



Nakasendo and the Kiso Valley

SPRING 2017 TOUR | ITINERARY

- DAY 1** **Wednesday 19 April.** Arrive in Nagoya (own arrangements) and check into our hotel. Meet in hotel foyer early evening to discuss the next day's arrangements. Optional dinner together at a local restaurant (own cost).
- DAY 2** **Thursday 20 April.** Today we each pack into our daypack a change of clothes for overnight as our suitcases will be transferred from Nagoya to our inn at Ena on Day 3. After breakfast, we travel by train first to Inuyama, where we make a brief stop to visit one of only twelve original remaining castles in Japan. We then travel on to Mitake where we have lunch. From Mitake we start our 12 kilometre walk on the Nakasendo trail to Hosokute. We walk through woodland and rolling countryside, often on narrow pathways. Some sections of the path retain the original "ishidatami" or stone paving. The path climbs steadily uphill towards Hosokute and along the way, we stop at a French café tucked into the mountains for afternoon tea. In Hosokute we stay overnight at a historical inn which has been operating continuously since the 17th century. The inn was rebuilt after a fire in the 1850s and still retains its mud walls, wooden pillars, paper screens and earth floor in the entrance foyer. Breakfast and dinner included.
- DAY 3** **Friday 21 April.** Today's walk from Hosokute to Ena (formerly the old post town of Oii) is one of our longer walks at 22 kilometres. We follow a path that is over 1000 years old in places and again we walk along sections of ishida-tami, including a section that has only recently been rediscovered. About 2½ hours from Hosokute the trail passes through the quaint well preserved post town of Okute where a sacred cedar tree, thought to be 1200 years old, can be seen. In the afternoon we walk a very old section of the route known as the Jusan-toge (the thirteen passes) and we are rewarded with lovely views. The undulating path follows along the ridge tops before we descend into the town of Ena.
- After arriving in Ena we visit the Hiroshige Print Museum which exhibits ukiyo-e prints. Here we have the opportunity to create our own prints based on traditional prints of the Nakasendo. After the museum, we walk to our nearby traditional inn accommodation for this evening. Breakfast and dinner included.
- DAY 4** **Saturday 22 April.** Before breakfast we leave our suitcases in reception ready for sending ahead to our accommodation tonight. We leave Ena passing the remaining buildings of Oii-juku and walk to Nakatsugawa, another old post town, where we have lunch at a local restaurant. Whereas the morning walk is quite gentle and undulating, from Nakatsugawa the path climbs uphill out of town to the next post town of Ochiai. Beyond Ochiai care needs to be taken on a very attractive but slippery stretch of ishida-tami not far from our inn for the evening. Today we will walk approximately 18 kilometres. Breakfast and dinner included.



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DAY 5 Sunday 23 April. Today we each pack into our daypack a change of clothes for overnight as our suitcases will be transferred from here to our inn at Kiso Fukushima on Day 6. Our 10 kilometre walk today takes in two very well preserved examples of the post towns along the Nakasendo; Magome and Tsumago. We begin the morning with a 40 minute picturesque walk into the quaint post town of Magome. Here the old trail narrows and winds up the Magome Pass through the postcard like town.

After spending some time exploring Magome and buying a picnic lunch, we continue uphill along the Magome Pass out of town. Along the way we stop at the Ichikoku-tochi teahouse, built in the Edo period. Here we enjoy Japanese tea, served by local volunteers who share their knowledge of the area in English. The trail then turns gently downhill and we reach first the small village of O-tsumago and then a little further on, the delightful post town of Tsumago. Great effort has been made by the local community to ensure the veneer of this post town remains authentically as it did before the onset of twentieth century developments such as electricity and vending machines. Our accommodation this evening is at a traditional inn in the centre of Tsumago. Breakfast and dinner included.

DAY 6 Monday 24 April. At 22 kilometres, today's walk is a longer day of walking and we leave early. We first walk about an hour to the town of Nagiso where we buy a picnic lunch to eat along today's walk. Leaving Nagiso, we turn back away from the river and walk uphill over the morning through farms and pretty countryside along the original Nakasendo route to the Ne-no-ue Pass. We eat our lunch along the way and then descend rather steeply along a minor road to Nojiri, further along the Kiso River.

From Nojiri we take a 40 minute train ride to Kiso Fukushima where we stay the night in a charming hot spring inn. Kiso Fukushima was an important town on the Nakasendo trail, being the site of one of two barrier stations on the Nakasendo. The purpose of barrier stations was to prevent the movement of political hostages and arms and every traveller or porter was required to present themselves for checking before being allowed to continue on their way. On arrival at Kiso Fukushima in the late afternoon we can wander through the Ue-no dan historic area lined with traditional buildings and enjoy a footbath fed by local hot springs. Breakfast and dinner included.

DAY 7 Tuesday 25 April. Our suitcases will be transferred from Kiso Fukushima to our hotel at Matsumoto on our final night. Today, after an early visit to the reconstructed barrier station at Kiso Fukushima, we take a detour from the Nakasendo to the Kaida Highlands on the edge of Mount Ontake, the second highest volcano in Japan (after Mount Fuji). Many people who travelled the Nakasendo trail to Kiso Fukushima were pilgrims on their way to nearby Mount Ontake, considered one of the holiest mountains in Japan. We travel by private charter bus to the start of today's walk with a brief stop at the Karasawa no Taki waterfall along the way. We begin by climbing over the Jizo Pass and then down onto the Kaida Highlands, a plateau 1200 metres above sea level with views of Mount Ontake. We stop here for lunch before taking a short bus ride to the start of our second walk for the day. We climb up and over the Nishino pass then descend to our hot spring accommodation for the night. In total, we will walk approximately 10 kilometres today. Breakfast and dinner included.



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- DAY 8** **Wednesday 26 April.** This morning we will travel by private bus to Yabuhara, a town further up the Kiso Valley from Kiso Fukushima, and re-join the Nakasendo trail. From Yabuhara we walk approximately 7 kilometres up and over the Torii-toge pass to the next post town of Narai. Known as Narai of the Thousand Houses, Narai has a long stretch of well-preserved buildings housing many souvenir shops, cafes and restaurants. We can wander through the town before an early lunch of soba noodles – the local speciality. From Narai we take a train to Matsumoto where we enjoy the last night of the tour at a charming historical Western hotel. In the late afternoon, we have time to wander through the Nakamachi district with its interesting antique and curio shops. Tonight we enjoy dinner at a lively local izakaya restaurant. Breakfast and dinner included.
- DAY 9** **Thursday 27 April.** Our tour ends this morning but not before we visit Matsumoto Castle, built over 400 years ago. Matsumoto Castle is nicknamed 'crow castle' due to its striking black appearance. From Matsumoto there are train connections to Tokyo and back to Nagoya. We are happy to assist with the purchase of train tickets for onward journeys. There are a number of other popular tourist destinations close by such as Takayama and Kamikochi and you may choose to continue travelling in the area. Breakfast included.



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SPRING 2017 TOUR | GENERAL INFORMATION

TOUR PRICE

\$3,400 per person (twin share). *#

DURATION

8 nights.

Tour Start Date - End Date: Wednesday 19 April 2017 – Thursday 27 April 2017.

Tour Start Point: Nagoya– End Point: Matsumoto. We will provide directions to our Nagoya hotel.

GROUP SIZE

Maximum of 10 participants on a twin share basis (plus two tour leaders).

TOUR LEADERS

Alison Weber and Carolyn Abbey. In the unlikely event that either Alison and Carolyn, or both, are unable to accompany this tour due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances, we will endeavour to engage a replacement tour leader and will provide details as soon as possible.

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Food allergies and strict dietary requirements are not common or well understood in Japan. Our accommodation providers are generally not able to cater to specific dietary needs. If you have dietary restrictions but are interested in joining our tour, please contact us to discuss further.

INCLUSIONS

- Accommodation for 8 nights (including breakfast each day).
- 7 Dinners (Days 2-8).
- Transport whilst on the tour.
- Luggage shuttles (1 piece per person, maximum 70 litres/15 kilograms) as per the itinerary. Each day we walk with just a day pack. Apart from Day 4 when our luggage is shuttled to that night's accommodation, our luggage is shuttled to our accommodation for the following night. For the three nights you are without your luggage, you will need to carry your essentials for that evening in your daypack whilst hiking.

* As many of the inns we stay in are quite small and have a limited number of rooms, accommodation is provided on a twin share basis (subject to availability, triple share may be an option). Please contact us if you wish to join the tour but do not have a travelling companion to share a room with.

As indicated in our terms and conditions, the tour price is subject to change if there is a fall in the Australian dollar to yen exchange rate. There will be no change in the tour price once we have received full payment from you. The price reference date referred to in the terms and conditions is 11 October 2016.