



Nakasendo and the Kiso Valley

OCTOBER 2019 TOUR | 11 days/10 nights

Day 1 Wednesday 10 October. Arrive in Nagoya (train arrangements) and check into our hotel. Meet in the hotel bar at 5.30pm to discuss the next day's arrangements. Optional dinner together at a local restaurant (paid cost).

Day 2 Thursday 11 October. Today we each pack into our luggage a change of clothes for overnight as our suitcases will be transferred from Nagoya to our lodgings on Day 5. After breakfast, we travel by train first to Nagoya, where we make a brief stop to visit one of only twelve original remaining castles in Japan. We then travel on to Mito where we have lunch. From Mito we start our 12 kilometre walk on the Nakasendo trail to Hosotate. We walk through woodland and rolling countryside, often on narrow pathways. Some sections of the path retain the original "shideban" or stone paving. The path climbs steadily uphill towards Hosotate. Along the way, and if open, we stop at a French cafe tucked into the mountainside for afternoon tea. In Hosotate 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 road walls, wooden pillars, paper screens and earth floor in the entrance foyer. Breakfast and dinner included.

Day 3 Friday 12 October. Today's walk from Hosotate to Iga (formerly the old post town of Iga) is one of our longer walks at 24 kilometres. We follow a path that is over 1000 years old in places and again we walk along sections of shideban, including a section that has only recently been rediscovered. About 25 hours from Hosotate the trail passes through the quiet well-preserved post town of Otsu where a sacred cedar tree, thought to be 1000 years old, can be seen. In the afternoon we walk a very old section of the route known as the post-ridge (the Ikaruga pass) and we are rewarded with lovely views. The undulating path follows along the ridge tops before we descend into the town of Iga.

After arriving in Iga we visit the Ikaruga Post Museum which exhibits shige-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 the evening. Breakfast and dinner included.

Day 4 Saturday 13 October. Before breakfast we leave our suitcases in reception ready for sending ahead to our accommodation tonight. We leave Iga passing the remaining buildings of Ikaruga 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 Otsu. Beyond Otsu cars need to be taken on a very attractive but slippery stretch of shideban not far from our inn for the evening. Today we walk approximately 17 kilometres. Breakfast and dinner included.