



Kumano Kodo

OCTOBER 2019 TOUR | 6 NIGHT ITINERARY

NOTE This tour can be taken as a 6 night or 7 night tour. The 7 night tour starts a day earlier and includes a night at world heritage listed Koyasan. Both groups come together on Sunday 13 October for lunch before commencing the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage trail. The itinerary for the 6 night tour is on pages 1 and 2 below. The itinerary for the 7 night tour is on page 3.

DAY 1 **Saturday 12 October.** We meet at our hotel in Wakayama, a coastal city on the Kii Peninsula. For those who arrive early in the day there are a variety of sightseeing options in Wakayama; walk to the castle and take a stroll through the gardens, climb up to Kimiidera temple or perhaps go to the Kuroshio markets for a tuna filleting demonstration. At 5.30pm we meet in the hotel foyer to enjoy a welcome drink and discuss arrangements for the following day. Afterwards we go to a nearby restaurant for dinner (at own cost and optional).

DAY 2 **Sunday 13 October.** Today both groups travel to Takijiri-oji where we begin our pilgrimage walk along the Kumano Kodo trail. Before starting our walk we stop at a farmhouse café for a lunch of organic home grown produce and visit the information centre at Takijiri-oji. Our walk from Takijiri-oji to Takahara is just under 4 kilometres but it begins with a steep and perhaps challenging climb. The destination is worth the effort. Tonight we stay at a wonderful lodge, well known for its hospitality, organic food and stunning views. Breakfast, lunch and dinner included. Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.

DAY 3 **Monday 14 October.** Today our 14 kilometre walk takes us from Takahara to Tsugizakura-oji. Again our walk begins with a steep climb and before descending for lunch at a roadside café (own cost), we climb 400 metres from Takahara. In the afternoon we pass through the small hamlet of Chikatsuyu, site of one of the oldest oji shrines along the trail. A small footbath here fed by a local hot spring is a pleasant place to soak our pilgrim feet. After admiring the 800 year old giant cedar trees at Tsugizakura-oji, our charter bus takes us to the riverside village of Kawayu Onsen where we spend the next two nights. If time and weather permit, we experience the hot thermal springs of the river before dinner. Breakfast and dinner included.

DAY 4 **Tuesday 15 October.** After breakfast we take a public bus to return to the Kumano Kodo trail at Hosshinmon-oji and walk from there to Kumano Hongu Taisha (approximately 7 kilometres). We pass through orange groves and tea plantations as we gently descend into Kumano Hongu Taisha, one of the three Grand Shrines that make up the Kumano Sanzan. After lunch in the township of Hongu (own cost) we take a bus to the charming hot spring village of Yunomine, home to the historic Tsuyobu; the only hot spring bath with a World Heritage listing. From Yunomine we walk back to our inn at Kawayu (3.3 kilometres) where once again we can experience the hot thermal springs of the river before dinner. Breakfast and dinner included.



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- DAY 5** **Wednesday 16 October.** After breakfast we make our way to nearby Ukegawa to begin our walk along the Kogumotori route to Koguchi (about 13 kilometres in total). Along the way, we pass one of the most spectacular views of the entire Kumano Kodo at Hyakkengura. After enjoying our picnic obento lunches, we begin our descent down into the pretty valley where the small hamlet of Koguchi is located. Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.
- DAY 6** **Thursday 17 October.** After an early breakfast, we set off on the Ogumotori-goe route to Nachi Taisha, another of the three Kumano Grand Shrines. This is our last and most arduous day of walking¹ (approximately 15 kilometres) and the seemingly never ending 800 metre climb on the aptly named Dogiri-zaka (“body breaking slope”) is both physically and mentally challenging. A further climb after a picnic lunch takes us to the Funami-toge pass, with its panoramic views to the Pacific Ocean. From here the final descent to Nachi Taisha begins. This spectacular site is set against the backdrop of Japan’s largest waterfall. Leaving Nachi Taisha, we travel by public bus a short distance to the coastal town of Kii- Katsuura. Our accommodation this evening is an onsen resort where we relax in the indoor and outdoor onsen baths, before our final dinner together. Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.
- DAY 7** **Friday 18 October.** Our tour ends this morning after breakfast² but not before an early morning visit to the tuna markets (optional). From Kii-Katsuura there are train connections to Kansai International Airport, Kyoto, Osaka or on to Tokyo. We are happy to assist with the purchase of train tickets for onward journeys. Breakfast included.

See next page for an alternative 7 night itinerary starting in Osaka on 11 October 2019.

See last two pages for tour price, inclusions and other general information.

¹There is an option to take public transport to Nachi Taisha and we discuss this further on tour.

²For those who do not need to rush away to their next destination, we offer the option of taking a charter bus after breakfast to visit the third of the three Kumano Grand Shrines, Kumano Hayatama Taisha to complete our Kumano Kodo pilgrimage. Later we travel back through the Kii Mountains to Kii-Tanabe with lunch along the way at the delightful organic lodge we stayed on the first night of our Kumano Kodo pilgrimage. Estimated arrival time in Kii-Tanabe is 3pm. From Kii-Tanabe there are train connections to Kansai International Airport, Kyoto, Osaka or on to Tokyo. We are happy to assist with the purchase of train tickets for onward journeys. The cost of this option is dependent on the number of people taking up this option. Please contact us if you are interested in taking up this option and we will advise further.



Koyasan and Kumano Kodo

OCTOBER 2019 TOUR | 7 NIGHT ITINERARY

NOTE A minimum of four participants is required for this alternative 7 night itinerary.

DAY 1 **Friday 11 October.** We meet at our hotel in Osaka. For those who arrive in the afternoon, we visit Osaka castle and its surrounding gardens (optional - meet in the foyer at 2.30pm). At 5.30pm we meet in the hotel foyer and go to a nearby bar to enjoy a welcome drink and discuss arrangements for the following day. Later we take the subway to the lively and bustling Dotonbori district for dinner (at own cost and optional).

DAY 2 **Saturday 12 October.** Today we travel by train and cable car to UNESCO listed Koyasan, birthplace of Shingon Buddhism in Japan. On arrival we walk a section of the path taken by female pilgrims, who until early last century were forbidden to enter the Koyasan temple precinct. We continue to explore this historic area after lunch (own cost) including a visit to Kongobu-ji temple. Our accommodation tonight is a Buddhist temple. After a traditional vegetarian temple meal, shojin-ryori, we take an atmospheric night walk through stone lanterns to Okunoin cemetery where Kobo Daishi, the founder of the Shingon sect of Buddhism, rests. Breakfast and dinner included.

DAYS 3 - 8

as per

DAYS 2 - 7 of the 6 night tour outlined on pages 1 & 2 above

See next two pages for tour price, inclusions and other general information.



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OCTOBER 2019 TOUR | GENERAL INFORMATION

TOUR PRICE

\$3,350 per person twin share for the 6 night itinerary starting in Wakayama on 12 October 2019*#. \$3,700 per person (minimum of 4 participants) twin share for the 7 night itinerary starting in Osaka on 11 October 2019 *#.

The cost of the optional bus trip from Kii-Katsuura to Kii-Tanabe with a visit to Kumano Hayatama Taisha and including lunch at Kiri no Sato Organic lodge is dependent on numbers. Please indicate your interest on your booking form or contact us for further information.

DURATION

EITHER

6 nights for the tour starting 12 October in Wakayama.

Tour Start Date: Saturday 12 October 2019. Tour End Date: Friday 18 October 2019.

Tour Start Point: Wakayama. End Point: Either Kii-Katsuura or Kii-Tanabe depending on option chosen.

We will provide directions to our Wakayama hotel.

OR

7 nights for the tour starting 11 October in Osaka.

Tour Start Date: Friday 11 October 2019. Tour End Date: Friday 18 October 2019.

Tour Start Point: Osaka – End Point: Either Kii-Katsuura or Kii-Tanabe depending on option chosen.

We will provide directions to our Osaka hotel.

GROUP SIZE

10 participants (combining the 6 and 7 night tours) on a twin share* basis (plus 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. The traditional Japanese inns where we stay and the restaurants where we eat are generally not able to cater to specific dietary needs. Soy sauce and fish stock are widely used in Japanese cuisine and most meals including breakfast will feature fish or seafood.

You may need to bring your own food or snacks to supplement the meal that is provided if you are a strict vegetarian or have dietary requirements, such as a gluten intolerance or have an allergy or dislike of seafood. If you have dietary restrictions, please contact us to discuss further.

ACCOMMODATION

We stay at traditional Japanese regional inns, mostly simple family run minshuku (guesthouses or lodges). Toilets and bathrooms are usually shared. At some inns the baths are communal (women and men are segregated) in keeping with traditional Japanese culture. By western standards these inns might be considered two or three star. Conversely in our opinion the meals and hospitality are four star or more. Our website has more information in the What to Expect section.

See next page for Inclusions



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OCTOBER 2019 TOUR | GENERAL INFORMATION

INCLUSIONS – 6 night tour

- Twin share * accommodation for 6 nights (including breakfast each day).
- Welcome drink Day 1
- 5 Dinners (Days 2-6).
- 3 lunches (Days 2, 5 and 6).
- Transport whilst on the tour (as per the itinerary). Any transport costs associated with taking an option to shorten the walking distance outlined in the itinerary are not included.
- Luggage shuttles (1 piece per person, maximum 70 litres/15 kilograms).

INCLUSIONS – 7 night tour

- Twin share * accommodation for 7 nights (including breakfast each day).
- Welcome drink Day 1
- 6 Dinners (Days 2-7).
- 3 lunches (Days 3, 6 and 7).
- Transport whilst on the tour (as per the itinerary). Any transport costs associated with taking an option to shorten the walking distance outlined in the itinerary are not included.
- Luggage shuttles (1 piece per person, maximum 70 litres/15 kilograms).

* 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 do not have a travelling companion to share with. On some nights and subject to availability we may be able to provide a room for single occupancy at an additional charge.

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 8 June 2018.