



## Koyasan and Kumano Kodo

SPRING FESTIVAL 2020 TOUR | ITINERARY

- DAY 1** **Tuesday 7 April.** We meet at 5.00pm in the hotel foyer as a group and go to a nearby bar to discuss the next day's arrangements over a drink. We then take a subway to the lively and bustling Dotonbori district for dinner (at own cost and optional).
- DAY 2** **Wednesday 8 April.** 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, where there will be an opportunity to join in a guided meditation before dinner. 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.
- DAY 3** **Thursday 9 April.** This morning we join in morning ceremonies at the temple (optional) before breakfast. We then travel by charter bus to Takijiri-oji, with a stop at a farmhouse café for a lunch of organic home grown produce. On arrival at Takijiri-oji, we visit the information centre and then begin our pilgrimage along the Kumano Kodo. Our walk from Takijiri-oji to Takahara is only about 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.
- DAY 4** **Friday 10 April.** 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, we walk 20 minutes off the main trail to our accommodation for this evening. Breakfast and dinner included.
- DAY 5** **Saturday 11 April.** After an early breakfast we return to the trail and walk from Tsugizakura-oji to Hosshinmon-oji (approximately 14 kilometres). Over the morning we hike up and over three high passes predominantly through forest but with occasional magnificent views to the Kii mountain ranges. The trail passes through a number of former settlements and along the way we eat our obento lunch. From Hosshinmon-oji we take a bus to the delightful riverside village of Kawayu Onsen where we spend the night. Weather permitting, we experience the hot thermal springs of the river before dinner. Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.



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**DAY 6** **Sunday 12 April.** 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.

**DAY 7** **Monday 13 April.** After breakfast we make our way to nearby Ukegawa to begin our walk along the Kogumotori route to Koguchi (about 15 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 8** **Tuesday 14 April.** 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 walking\* (about 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 Funamitoge 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. Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.

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

**DAY 9** **Wednesday 15 April.** For our last full day, we begin with an optional early morning visit to the local tuna market before breakfast (subject to the market operating). Our charter bus first takes us to nearby Shingu to see the last of the three Grand Shines, Hayatama Taisha. We then travel back along the Kumano river to Hongu to enjoy the Spring Festival at Kumano Hongu Taisha, a highlight of our tour. Lunch (own cost) can be taken at some of the small cafes in Hongu or perhaps graze on the food on offer at the festival food stalls. At the conclusion of the festival our charter bus will take us to the coastal city of Tanabe where we stay for our last night together in a western style hotel. Breakfast and dinner included.

**DAY 10** **Tuesday 16 April.** Tour ends. From Tanabe there are good 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 tour price, inclusions and other general information.**



## Koyasan and Kumano Kodo

SPRING FESTIVAL 2020 TOUR | GENERAL INFORMATION

### TOUR PRICE

\$4,700 per person twin/triple share.\*#

### DURATION

9 nights.

Tour Start Date - End Date: Tuesday 7 April 2020 – Thursday 16 April 2020.

Tour Start Point: Osaka – End Point: Tanabe. We will provide directions to our Osaka hotel.

### GROUP SIZE

Maximum of 12 participants on a twin/triple 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. 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.

### INCLUSIONS

- Accommodation for 9 nights (including breakfast each day).
- Welcome drink Day 1.
- 8 Dinners (Days 2-9).
- 4 lunches (Days 3, 5, 7 and 8).
- Transport whilst on the tour (as per the itinerary).
- Luggage shuttles (1 piece per person, maximum 70 litres/15 kilograms).  
With the exception of Day 2, our luggage is shuttled daily and we walk with just a day pack. On Day 2 our luggage is transferred to our accommodation for Day 3 and we each take a small, soft bag for items required that night. This bag is not carried whilst hiking.
- Entrance fee to Kongobu-ji temple at Koyasan.

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\* 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 22 February 2019.