



Koyasan and Kumano Kodo

AUTUMN 2020 TOUR | ITINERARY

- DAY 1** **Saturday 7 November.** At 5:00pm we meet in the foyer of our hotel in Osaka. We then take the subway to the lively and bustling Dotonbori district followed by dinner (own cost) at a local restaurant. Over dinner we discuss arrangements for the following day and give an overview of the week ahead.
- DAY 2** **Sunday 8 November.** 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 (entrance fee included). 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.
- DAY 3** **Monday 9 November.** 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 (included). 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 just under 4 kilometres but it begins with a steep and perhaps challenging climb. The destination is worth the effort. Tonight we have dinner at a wonderful lodge, well known for its hospitality, organic food and stunning views. Sleeping arrangements for our group are split tonight with some staying at the lodge and others at a nearby guesthouse. Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.
- DAY 4** **Tuesday 10 November.** 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. We stay tonight in Chikatsuyu but first we continue along the Kumano Kodo trail for about four kilometres to Tsugizakura-oji where we can admire the 800 year old giant cedar trees before walking around 20 minutes off the main trail to a bus stop where we take a public bus back to our accommodation in Chikatsuyu. Breakfast and dinner included.
- DAY 5** **Wednesday 11 November.** Today we walk around 12 kilometres. Our destination is Hosshimon-oji, which marks the outermost entrance to the sacred precincts of Kumano Hongu Taisha. After an early breakfast we take a public bus back to the Kumano Kodo and rejoin the trail near where we left it yesterday. Over the day 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 enjoy an obento lunch. From Hosshimon-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.



Koyasan and Kumano Kodo

AUTUMN 2020 TOUR | ITINERARY

- DAY 6 Thursday 12 November.** 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 Friday 13 November.** 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 8 Saturday 14 November.** 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* (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.
- *There is an option to take public transport to Nachi Taisha and we discuss this further on tour.
- DAY 9 Sunday 15 November.** For our last day, we begin with an optional early morning visit to the local tuna markets before breakfast. Our charter bus first takes us to nearby Shingu to see the last of the three Grand Shines, Hayatama Taisha. We then travel back through the Kii mountain range to our final destination of Tanabe, with a stop for lunch on the way. Our estimated time of arrival at Tanabe is 2:30pm and from here 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 and lunch included.

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



Koyasan and Kumano Kodo

AUTUMN 2020 TOUR | GENERAL INFORMATION

TOUR PRICE

\$4,550 per person twin share*#.

DURATION

8 nights.

Tour Start Date: Saturday 7 November 2020. Tour End Date: Sunday 15 November 2020.

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

GROUP SIZE

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. 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

- Twin share * accommodation for 8 nights (including breakfast each day).
- 7 Dinners (Days 2 - 8).
- 5 lunches (Days 3, 5, 7, 8 and 9).
- 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).
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.

* 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 15 November 2019.