



Nakasendo and the Kiso Valley

OCTOBER 2020 TOUR | ITINERARY

DAY 1 **Thursday 15 October.** Arrive in Nagoya (own arrangements) and check into our hotel. Meet in the hotel bar at 5:00pm to enjoy a welcome drink with the group and discuss the next day's arrangements. Optional dinner together at a local restaurant (own cost).

DAY 2 **Friday 16 October.** 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 (entrance fee included). We then travel on to Mitake where we have lunch (included). 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. Along the way, and if open, 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, lunch and dinner included.

DAY 3 **Saturday 17 October.** Today's walk from Hosokute to Ena (formerly the old post town of Oii) is one of our longer walks at 21 kilometres*. We follow a path that is over 1000 years old in places and again we walk along sections of ishidadami, 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 1300 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 Museum of Art which exhibits ukiyo-e prints (entrance fee included). Here we have the opportunity to create our own prints based on traditional prints of the Nakasendo. A shuttle bus then takes us for the short transfer to our inn on the outskirts of Ena. Breakfast, dinner and a light lunch included.

DAY 4 **Sunday 18 October.** After breakfast we leave our suitcases in reception ready for sending ahead to our accommodation tonight and take the hotel shuttle bus into Ena. As we leave Ena we pass some buildings from its time as a post town on the Nakasendo trail. One, the former house of the village headman of Oii-juku, is now a small museum and provides some insight into the life of a wealthy merchant family in the Edo period.

Over the morning we walk from Ena to Nakatsugawa, another old post town, where we have lunch at a local restaurant (included). 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 the path continues steeply until we come to a very attractive but slippery stretch of ishidadami where care needs to be taken. A charming inn at the end of this old piece of ishidadami marks the beginning of the Kiso Road section of the Nakasendo trail. From this point it is a 40 minute picturesque walk into the quaint post town of Magome. Tonight our group splits and sleeps in two different locations: one group at an inn on the trail into Magome and the other at a guesthouse in Magome. We eat together as a group at the first inn. Today we walk approximately 19 kilometres*. Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.



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DAY 5 Monday 19 October. Today we each pack into our daypack a change of clothes for overnight as our suitcases will be transferred to our inn at Kiso Fukushima on Day 6. Our walk today takes in two very well preserved examples of the post towns along the Nakasendo: Magome and Tsumago. We begin in the postcard-like town of Magome where the old trail narrows and winds up to the Magome Pass.

After spending some time exploring Magome and buying a picnic lunch (own cost), we continue uphill 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. If time permits, we visit the waki-honjin – an Edo period inn for travelling dignitaries – and museum (entrance fee included). Our accommodation this evening is at a traditional inn in Tsumago. Breakfast and dinner included.

DAY 6 Tuesday 20 October. At 20 kilometres*, today 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 (own cost) to eat along the route. 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 subjected to checking before being allowed to continue on their way. On arrival at Kiso Fukushima in the late afternoon we have time to 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 Wednesday 21 October. After breakfast we leave our suitcases in reception ready for sending ahead to our accommodation tonight.

Today we take a break from walking the Nakasendo trail and explore Kiso Fukushima. Kiso Fukushima was an important town in the Edo period, being the site of one of two barrier stations on the Nakasendo. In the morning we visit the reconstructed barrier station, Kozenji temple and the Yamamura Daikan Yashiki (entrance fees included). After lunch in the historic Ue-no-dan area everyone is free to spend the afternoon as they wish. Possible options include a hike to a nearby waterfall, a visit to a local sake distillery, browsing the shops (perhaps picking up some locally made lacquerware), and enjoying a footbath fed by hot springs. Tonight we stay at another of Kiso Fukushima's hot spring inns. Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.



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- DAY 8** **Thursday 22 October.** After breakfast we leave our suitcases in reception ready for sending ahead to our accommodation tonight. This morning we travel by train to Yabuhara, a town further up the Kiso Valley from Kiso Fukushima, and rejoin the Nakasendo trail. From Yabuhara we walk approximately 8 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 have time to explore the town and buy an early lunch (own cost). 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 our last dinner together at a local restaurant. Breakfast and dinner included.
- DAY 9** **Friday 23 October.** Our tour ends this morning but not before we visit Matsumoto Castle, built over 400 years ago (entrance fee included). 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 Kanazawa and you may choose to continue travelling in the area. Breakfast included.

*The walking distance on Days 3, 4 and 6 can be shortened by taking a taxi or train part way. The cost of taking a taxi or train is additional to the tour price. Please contact us for further information about the options to shorten walking distances on these days.

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



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OCTOBER 2020 TOUR | GENERAL INFORMATION

TOUR PRICE

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

DURATION

8 nights.

Tour Start Date: Thursday 15 October 2020. Tour End Date: Friday 23 October 2020.

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

- Twin share* accommodation for 8 nights (including breakfast each day).
- Welcome drink Day 1.
- 7 Dinners (Days 2-8).
- 4 Lunches (Days 2, 3, 4 and 7. On Day 3 we provide a light lunch of locally made rice balls).
- Transport whilst on the tour.
- Luggage shuttles (1 piece per person, maximum 70 litres/15 kilograms) as per the itinerary. Apart from Days 4, 7 and 8 when our luggage is shuttled to that night's accommodation, our luggage is shuttled to our accommodation for the following night. For the two nights you are without your luggage, you will need to carry your essentials for overnight in your daypack.
- Entrance fees as per the itinerary.

* 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.