



Koyasan and Kumano Kodo

SPRING 2027 TOUR | ITINERARY

DAY 1 **Wednesday 7 April.** Arrive in Osaka (own arrangements) and check in to our hotel. Take the opportunity to explore Osaka before we meet as a group later in the day. The bustling Dotonbori area is an easy 10 minute walk from our hotel or maybe take the nearby subway to Osaka castle. At 5.00 pm we meet at the hotel (exact location will be advised closer to the time) to discuss arrangements for the following day and then walk through the nearby Dotonbori area to a casual restaurant for dinner.

DAY 2 **Thursday 8 April.** Today we each pack into our backpack a change of clothes for overnight as our suitcases will be transferred to our inn on Day 3.

This morning 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 take lunch at a local restaurant and then learn more about historic Koyasan with a visit to Kongobu-ji temple and the Garan. 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.

DAY 3 **Friday 9 April.** This morning we join in morning ceremonies at the temple (optional) before breakfast. After breakfast we have a little free time before departing by private bus for Takijiri-oji, around 2.5 hours away. At Takijiri-oji we eat a bento lunch and then begin our pilgrimage along the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage trail.

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.

DAY 4 **Saturday 10 April.** Today we walk some 17 kilometres along the Kumano Kodo and we start with a hearty breakfast (including coffee for those who need it). 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. Soon after lunch we arrive at the small hamlet of Chikatsuyu, site of one of the oldest oji shrines along the trail and where we later return to stay the night. From Chikatsuyu we take a bus to a point further along the trail and walk from there approximately 8 kilometres back to Chikatsuyu. About half way back along the trail we take a break at Tsugizakura-oji and admire the 800 year old giant cedar trees there.



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- DAY 5 Sunday 11 April.** After an early breakfast we return by public bus to where we left the trail yesterday and walk from there to Hosshinmon-oji (approximately 12 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 enjoy a bento lunch. From Hosshinmon-oji we take a bus to the charming riverside village of Yunomine, home to the historic Tsuyobu, the only hot spring bath with a World Heritage listing. (Keen walkers may wish to get off at Hongu and hike the steep Dainichi-goe trail approximately 2.5 kilometres to Yunomine). Our inn sits on the edge of the river and overlooks Tsuyobu.
- DAY 6 Monday 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. Anyone who has walked the Camino de Santiago in Spain may register as a dual pilgrim on arrival in Hongu. Lunch (own cost) can be taken at some of the small cafes in Hongu. In the afternoon we have free time to explore Hongu before travelling by shuttle bus to the nearby riverside village of Kawayu Onsen where we experience the hot thermal springs of the river before dinner.
- DAY 7 Tuesday 13 April.** 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 bento lunches, we begin our descent down into the pretty valley where the small hamlet of Koguchi is located.
- DAY 8 Wednesday 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 (approximately 15 kilometres).* The seemingly never ending 800 metre climb on the aptly named Dogiri-zaka ("body breaking slope") is both physically and mentally challenging. Just before the seven kilometre mark we stop for a break to eat some of our bento lunch before another climb 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 private transport a short distance to the coastal town of Kii-Katsuura. Our accommodation for our last two nights is an onsen resort where we relax in the indoor and outdoor onsen baths.



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DAY 9 **Thursday 15 April.** We begin the day with an optional early morning visit to the local tuna markets before breakfast (subject to the tuna market operating on the day of our visit) or to another nearby onsen resort to bathe in the famous Bokido, a rotenburo (open air onsen) in a cave facing the Pacific Ocean. We then travel by charter bus to nearby Shingu to see the last of the three Grand Shines, Hayatama Taisha. Our charter bus then takes us back to Hongu where we arrive in time to enjoy the annual 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 at the festival food stalls. At the conclusion of the festival our charter bus takes us back to our onsen hotel in Kii-Katsuura for our farewell dinner together.

DAY 10 **Friday 16 April.** Other than breakfast, there are no scheduled activities today. Express trains do not run frequently from Kii-Katsuura but there are services in the direction of Osaka or alternatively to Nagoya (and on to Tokyo) just before 9 am (both directions). There are a few other services later in the day. From our hotel it is about ten minutes on foot to Kii-Katsuura station. Anyone not in a hurry may wish to spend the morning in Kii-Katsuura and take the opportunity to again visit the tuna markets (if open) or to bathe in Bokido or one of the other onsen baths at the neighbouring onsen hotel. Alternatively there are boat cruises to explore the pretty coastline and its unusual islands with names such as Camel Rock and Lion Islands.

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

§The festival is weather dependent. Alternative activities will be arranged if the festival is cancelled or postponed.

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



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SPRING 2027 TOUR | GENERAL INFORMATION

TOUR PRICE

\$5,700 AUD per person twin/triple share^{@#}.

DURATION

10 days/9 nights.

Tour Start Date: Wednesday 7 April 2027. Tour End Date: Friday 16 April 2027.

Tour Start Point: Osaka. End Point: Kii-Katsuura, Wakayama. We will provide directions to our Osaka hotel.

GROUP SIZE

Minimum of 8 and a maximum of 13 participants on a twin/triple share[@] basis (plus tour leader/s).

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. It is particularly difficult to cater to people with coeliac disease or who follow a strictly vegetarian diet.

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/triple share[@] accommodation for 9 nights (including breakfast each day).
- 9 Dinners.
- 5 lunches (Days 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8).
- 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 the morning of Day 2 our luggage is transferred to our accommodation for Day 3 and we each pack into our back pack items required for overnight (Day 2) and the next day (Day 3).
- Entrance fee to Kongobu-ji temple and Konpon Daito Pagoda 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 4 June 2026.