

# EXPLORE!

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## Walk Japan - Kumano Kodo Trail

JAPAN - TRIP CODE WJP

WALKING AND TREKKING

### Why book this trip?

Encounter Japan's fascinating blend of ancient and modern influence on a walking holiday that uncovers the country's history and explores its beautiful landscapes. Urban hikes reveal a different side of Tokyo unseen by most visitors. The trip culminates with four days walking along the Kumano Kodo, an ancient pilgrimage trail connecting Shinto shrines on the mountainous Kii Peninsula.

- **Nakasendo Way** - Hike between historic post towns on a highway once travelled by samurai and itinerant merchants
- **Kyoto** - Explore the temples and tea houses of Japan's historic capital on foot
- **Traditional accommodation** - Sleep on a futon and enjoy a hot spring bath at a traditional Ryokan inn



**INCLUDED MEALS**  
Breakfast: 11  
Lunch: 4  
Dinner: 5



**TRIP STAFF**  
Explore Tour  
Leader / Trek  
Guide



**TRANSPORT**  
Boat  
Public Bus  
Train



**ACCOMMODATION**  
8 nights  
comfortable hotel  
1 nights simple  
lodge  
2 nights  
comfortable ryokan



**WALKING GRADE:**  
Moderate



**GROUP SIZE:**  
10 - 16

## Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

### DAY 1 - Join trip in Tokyo; first night welcome meal

The trip starts today in Tokyo, the ultra-modern capital of Japan.

Your Leader plans to meet everyone in the hotel reception at 6.30pm for the welcome meeting. After this we will head out to dinner (included) at a nearby local restaurant where you will have the chance to sample various types of 'izakaya' style Japanese cuisine. There are no other activities planned today. Should you miss the welcome meeting, your Leader will inform you of any essential information as soon as you catch up.

If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive into Tokyo Haneda Airport (HND) or Tokyo Narita Airport (NRT). The city centre is around an hour away from Haneda Airport and an hour-and-a-half from Narita.

If your flight arrives earlier in the day, we recommend taking the train one stop or walking along the Sumida River and then crossing over to see the Edo Tokyo Museum (it takes approximately 20 minutes to get here). This fascinating architectural structure gives a great history of Japan's capital. The museum is next to the sumo stadium so there's also the chance to spot a sumo wrestler in the area! As Monday (day 2 of this trip) is the day that the museums of Tokyo are closed, today will be your only opportunity to visit it. Also nearby is the Hokusai Museum which displays woodblock prints of Japan's most famous artist. Alternatively you can wander around the Asakusa area and explore the back streets. You will find sword shops, street food, goldfish scooping, rickshaws and plenty more just a few minutes' walk from the hotel.



**ACCOMMODATION:**

Asakusa Via Inn (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: DINNER

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## DAY 2 - Walking tour of Tokyo including less-visited neighbourhoods

In the morning we head out to explore this thriving metropolis on a walking tour that will take in some of the residential and more traditional neighbourhoods of the city - Nippori, Yanaka and Nezu, for a glimpse of life in Tokyo far away from the neon lights of the business district. We'll take our time and end in Ueno in time to explore the market and pick up some lunch. The afternoon is left free to explore further. You will be provided with an IC transport card providing unlimited travel on public transport around the city. Possible destinations include the Meiji shrine and Shinjuku area, where the latest electronic gadgets dazzle from glowing shop-fronts or take a boat along the Sumida River for a more relaxing experience.

Today's walking tour will cover approximately eight kilometres and will last around five hours.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Asakusa Via Inn (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 3 - Express train to Matsumoto; visit the impressive castle

We depart from Shinjuku train station (reputedly the world's busiest) on a scenic journey through the Japanese Alps to Matsumoto. Flanked on each side by mountains, Matsumoto is best known for its 500 year-old castle which is Japan's oldest, and one of its most elegant. Known as 'Crow Castle' due to its black, sombre appearance, it retains its original wooden interior. The fascinating design includes a moon-viewing pavilion, a hidden floor for the castle's protecting samurai and various booby traps to aid its defence. After exploring the castle and its grounds there's time to stroll through the town's historic

quarter. For art lovers there's an option to visit the renowned modern art museum or nearby Ukiyo-e woodblock printing museum. Scenes from this traditional art form typically represent famous geisha, sumo wrestlers and kabuki dance-drama actors.

To make today's journey by train easier, we make use of Japan's excellent luggage forwarding services and send our main luggage on to our hotel for tomorrow night in Kyoto. You'll need to pack your overnight things in your daypack.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Alpico Plaza Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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#### DAY 4 - Hike on Nakasendo Way from Magome to Nagiso; bullet train to Kyoto

We make an early start today and catch a train to Nakatsugawa. From here it's a journey of around 30 minutes by public bus to Magome in the tranquil Kiso Valley, running alongside the Central Alps. We hike from here along a section of the Nakasendo Way, an historical trail that connected Kyoto to Edo (now modern day Tokyo). The Nakasendo's origins date back to the Edo Period (1603-1868) when the Japanese Shogun created a comprehensive communications network of roads to help stabilise and rule the country. Towns like Magome and Tsumago, which we also pass through on the hike, were post towns, providing accommodation and supplies for travellers on the route, an eclectic mix of soldiers, merchants and monks among them. These towns have been lovingly preserved to retain their Edo period atmosphere and the streets are lined with traditional wooden buildings. Our hike today takes us on a mainly stone-paved undulating path through beautiful countryside and small hamlets to Nagiso. We catch an express train from Nagiso to Nagoya, then change to the super fast 'shinkansen' a.k.a. the 'bullet train' that speeds us on to our base for the next three nights, the one time historic capital of Japan - Kyoto.

Today's 12 kilometre walk is expected to take around four-and-a-half hours with a total ascent of 450 metres and descent of 610 metres.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Elcient Kyoto (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel





SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 5 - Walking in Kyoto including Philosophers Way and temple visits**

At the heart of Japanese culture and influence for over 1,000 years, Kyoto lay at the centre of events that helped to shape the destiny and history of this most fascinating of cultures. One of the only major cities to survive the extensive bombing of WWII, Kyoto can boast more than 2000 temples and shrines, many set in landscaped gardens, making this captivating city the cradle of all things uniquely Japanese.

Today we head to the north of the city to spend a full day walking and sightseeing in the Higashiyama District along the lower slopes of Kyoto's eastern mountains. This is one of the city's best preserved historic districts. Walking among the narrow lanes, wooden buildings and traditional merchant shops, we can catch a glimpse of what the old capital city must have been like. In the morning we follow the Philosophers Path, along a cherry tree-lined canal, stopping to visit some of the city's most important temples including the Silver Pavilion and the Eikando and Nanzenji temples. The route is named after the influential 20th century philosopher Nishida Kitaro who walked here in his daily meditation. In the afternoon we continue to the Heian Shrine, a reconstruction of part of the Imperial Palace as it would have looked 1,200 years ago. The shrine is known for its beautiful traditional Japanese garden which contains multiple ponds in which tortoises, egrets, koi carp and other wildlife can often be seen. From here we pass through the cobbled streets to Kodaiji where you can see a perfectly groomed towering bamboo grove, a Zen rock garden, and a pair of historic tea houses.

Today's 12 kilometre walking tour is expected to take around six hours including time spent sightseeing.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Elcient Kyoto (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 6 - Train to Nara; walking tour around the city's parks and temples**

We spend today in Japan's first capital Nara, travelling there by train (in around 50 minutes) and exploring on foot. Perhaps one of Japan's friendliest and greenest cities, Nara sits on the edge of a

sprawling park that provides a picture-perfect backdrop for the city's magnificent temples and shrines. Nara is known for the 1,200 deer that roam free in the streets and parks. Believed to be messengers of the gods, the deer are protected by city law. We plan to take in the best of the town's sights including the world's largest Bronze Buddha at the magnificent Todaiji temple and the shrine of Kasuga Taisha before returning to Kyoto for the night.

Today's 7 kilometre walking tour is expected to take around six hours including time spent sightseeing.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Elcient Kyoto (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 7 - Train to Kii Peninsula; hike through ancient forest on Kumano Kodo trail

Today we head into rural Japan and the mountains of the Kii Peninsula, much of which is covered in dense rainforest. Travelling first by train and then bus, we arrive at the small village of Takijiri-Oji, the starting point for our hike on the Kumano Kodo. Kumano Kodo is the name given to a network of pilgrimage routes that connect three great Buddhist shrines: Hongu Taisha, Nachi Taisha, and Hayatama Taisha - known collectively as the Kumano Sanzan. Emanating from these three shrines, various pilgrimage trails trace their way through dense forest and across high mountain passes and stunning valleys, linking the various sacred sites of the area. Awarded UNESCO World Heritage status in 2004 the Kumano Kodo remain in use as pilgrimage routes to this day.

Our hike this afternoon takes us through ancient forest filled with giant camphor trees and sacred caves to Takahara, a ridge-top settlement at around 300 metres known locally as 'Kiri-no-Sato' (village in the mist) thanks to the blankets of mist that create a sea of clouds over the valleys below. Our accommodation is in the midst of natural scenery and we'll enjoy a hearty dinner made from fresh local produce. The lodge has a mix of Japanese-style rooms, where futon beds are rolled out each night on the traditional tatami mat flooring, and those with Western-style beds. Depending on the size of the group, rooms may be twin share or shared by up to three guests (of the same sex). All rooms have en suite toilets with sinks whilst bathing takes place in a separate traditional hot spring bath. A relaxing experience after walking.

Your main luggage will be forwarded on this morning from Kyoto so you'll need to pack your things for the next two nights in your daypack. Due to the availability of this evening's lodge, if you are travelling on the 9th May or 7th November 2021 departures, you will arrive into Takahara and drive on a short way to Kawayu Onsen, a hot spring town located along a river, where you will spend the night (as well as the subsequent two nights) in a comfortable ryokan in twin share or single rooms. The walks will remain the same as Kawayu Onsen is well located for all routes on the Kumano Kodo trail.

Today's four kilometre walk is expected to take around two hours with a total ascent of 430 metres and descent of 200 metres.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Kiri no Sato Takahara Lodge (or similar)

Grade: Simple Lodge



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### DAY 8 - Kumano Kodo walk with sweeping countryside views

It's a longer hike today from Takahara to Chikatsuyu, a route that takes us past the ruins of the Uwada-jaya Teahouse and across the Hashiori-toge Pass, with its iconic Gyubadoji statue of one of the first pilgrim emperors. We'll be treated to stunning views of the surrounding countryside from various points along the way before eventually arriving at our accommodation for the night.

After visiting the shrine we'll take a shuttle bus on to our hotel at Kawayu Onsen, a hot spring town located along a river. There should be time to take a rejuvenating dip in the hot spring waters here before dinner. The Kawayu Midoriya is a larger property than the previous night and all of its Japanese-style rooms have en suite facilities. We'll be accommodated here in twin share or single rooms. If you are travelling on the 9th May or 7th November 2021 departures, you will have already spent the previous night here.

Today's 14 kilometre walk is expected to take around four-and-a-half hours with a total ascent of 590 metres and descent of 640 metres.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Kawayu Midoriya (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Ryokan



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### DAY 9 - Walk to Kawayu Onsen visting Hongu shrine en route

Today's hike takes us over the mountains to the Hongu Taisha, at the very heart of the Kumano Kodo and the region's most important shrine, serving as the head shrine for over 3,000 Kumano shrines across Japan. It's also known for its huge torii gate, the largest in Japan, dwarfing the pilgrims passing under it.

Today's 14 kilometre walk is expected to take around six hours with a total ascent of approximately 600 metres and descent of 950 metres. Please note it is possible to take a public bus for part of today's route if you wish to shorten the length of the walk.



**ACCOMMODATION:**

Kawayu Midoriya (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Ryokan**



**MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER**

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### **DAY 10 - Kumano River boat trip to Hatayama shrine; train to Kii-Katsuura**

We take a break from walking today and start the day with a leisurely boat trip along the Kumano River to Hatayama Taisha, the second of the three great Kumano shrines. This is how pilgrims traditionally approached the shrine, which is located near the river mouth. The nature in and around the shrine is an integral part of this grand shrine's precincts and annual rituals. We've time to explore here before continuing a short distance by train to our destination for the night, the coastal town of Kii-Katsuura. Once a quiet fishing port, the town's fortunes changed when an abundance of hot springs were discovered here. Kii-Katsuura's other attraction is the early morning fish market which you may wish to visit tomorrow.

Your main luggage is forwarded on this morning to the final nightstop of Osaka, so you'll need to pack your overnight things in your daypack.



**ACCOMMODATION:**

Hotel Charmant (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



**MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER**

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### **DAY 11 - Hike to Nachi shrine; train to Osaka**

This morning we take a bus to Daimonzaka Chushajo, from where it's around a one-hour walk to the Kumano Nachi Taisha, the last of the Kumano Kodo's three great shrines. This walk takes you part of the way along the Daimonzaka, an impressive 600 metre cobbled stairway with a total of 267 stairs, lined with towering Japanese cedar and bamboo groves. Nachi Taisha, the culmination of today's walk, boasts a magnificent red pagoda and stands against the striking backdrop of Nachi-no-Otaki, Japan's tallest



waterfall. We take some time to marvel at this amazing sight before taking the bus back to Kii-Katsuura Station, from where it's a four-hour train ride around the peninsula to our final destination of the holiday, the large metropolis of Osaka, Japan's second city. Osaka is one of the best places to try Japanese food - whether its octopus balls from a street-side stand, okonomiyaki savoury pancakes (a regional speciality), or some of best sushi in the world.

Your main luggage is forwarded on today to Osaka to save you having to take it on the train.

Today's three kilometre walk is expected to take around an hour with a total ascent of 50 metres and descent of 200 metres.



**ACCOMMODATION:**  
Rihga Place Higobashi (or similar)

**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



**SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE**



**MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST**

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## **DAY 12 - Trip ends in Osaka**

The trip ends after breakfast this morning at our hotel in Osaka.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Osaka at any time. If your flight is departing later in the day luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you need to depart from either Kansai International Airport (KIX), around an hour's drive from the hotel, or Osaka International Airport, around 40 minutes' drive.

If you have time to spend here, Osaka has all the galleries and museums you'd expect of a large city including the unusual Instant Ramen Museum where visitors can have a go at creating their own cup noodle! Or take a walk around the Namba area, one of Osaka's most vibrant and interesting districts where kilometres of covered arcades criss-crossed by canals and rivers, open up to back streets filled with history and small shops.



**MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST**

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## **Trip information**

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## Climate and country information

### Japan

#### Climate

Japan's climate is mostly temperate, with five distinct seasons. Summer is from June to September with temperatures reaching 30°C, although it can vary from warm to very hot. After mid-July. July and August can be humid. Spring and Autumn are mild throughout Japan. Winter, October to April, is cold with snowfall. The main rainy season is June. Japan can be prone to short, tropical cyclones in August to October. October / November although cooler is a great time to see the Autumn colours. For trips that visit the Snow Monkeys at Jigokudani Onsen, you're very likely to see them all year around, aside from in October/November when there is enough food in the forest to prevent them coming down to the baths. You may still see some at this time but not in the numbers found during the rest of the year.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+9	2 Pin Flat	Buddhism, Christian and Shinto	Japanese

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## Budgeting and packing

### Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

#### Tokyo:

Water bus from Asakusa to Hamarikyū Gardens - 980JPY

Koishikawa Korakuen Gardens - There are a few wonderful gardens in Tokyo and this is one of them - 300 Yen.

Tokyo Sky Tree - By far and away the tallest structure in Japan (double the height of the tallest building). If it is a clear day the views cannot be beat - 2060 Yen to first observatory (additional 1030 Yen to upper observatory - we recommend only the first).

Shinjuku Gyoen - More of a park than a garden but still a wonderful place to stroll. You will still be able to see many of Tokyo's skyscrapers but at a tranquil distance - 200 Yen

#### Matsumoto:

Ukiyoe Woodblock Museum - Although it is a bit out of town, this museum is well worth visiting for anyone who enjoys Japanese woodblock prints - 1200 Yen entrance plus either taxi (10 minutes) approximately 1500 Yen each way or train (infrequent - approximately 5 minutes and 20 minutes walking) 170 Yen each way.

Matsumoto City Art Museum - A museum with both traditional and contemporary art. Notable for its Kusama Yayoi collection because she is originally from the city - 410 Yen for permanent exhibition.

## Clothing

Bring light and comfortable clothing that can be layered according to the temperature. The weather conditions in the mountains can be changeable, and it can become cool, especially at night, so bring warmer layers. Tops made from wicking materials which keep you drier and warmer are recommended as a base layer, and walking trousers are preferable to trousers of heavier material such as jeans. A waterproof jacket is essential at all times in case of rain and wind.

- Breathable wind and waterproof jacket (you may also wish to bring waterproof trousers)
- T-shirts
- Long sleeved tops
- Sunhat
- Long trousers
- Shorts (if you prefer to walk in them)
- Swimwear
- Midlayer Fleece/pullover
- Socks

## Luggage

20kg

### Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack. For logistical reasons your main luggage will be forwarded from Tokyo to Kyoto on day 3, from Kyoto to Kawayu Onsen on day 7 and from Kawayu Onsen to Osaka on day 10. Your daypack should therefore have sufficient space for your overnight things in Matsumoto and Kii Katsuura and for 2 nights on the Kumano Kodo trail (nights 7 and 8) as well as for carrying all your daytime hiking essentials such as a waterbottle, suncream, snacks, rain wear and camera. A capacity of 30 to 40 litres should be sufficient if you pack light. For your main luggage, a lockable compact suitcase or holdall with wheels is ideal.

## Equipment

- Sunglasses
- Sun cream
- Small Torch (with spare batteries and bulb)
- Walking poles (if you usually use them)
- Personal first aid kit - On each walk a first aid kit is carried but you should have your own blister kit, supply of plasters, aspirin and other essentials.
- Insect repellent
- Small waterproof dry bag (for items such as your mobile phone)
- Reusable water bottle (minimum 1 litre) - Get 15% discount on a Water-to-Go bottle [www.explore.co.uk/about-us/responsible-travel/water-to-go-discount-with-explore](http://www.explore.co.uk/about-us/responsible-travel/water-to-go-discount-with-explore)
- Lunch box/Tupperware (for packed lunches)

## Tipping

### Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. You may however, want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend between £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

## Japan

### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£8	£15-20	£4	£1.00 - 2.00

### Foreign Exchange

Local currency	Recommended Currency For Exchange
Yen.	It is preferable to take money in Yen or traveller's cheques.

### Where To Exchange

Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

### ATM Availability

All post offices have international ATMs. Some other ATMs do not accept Western bank/credit cards. Your tour leader will advise you locally.

### Credit Card Acceptance

In major restaurants and stores.

### Travellers Cheques

It should be noted that outside of the major cities it is difficult to change traveller's cheques. Where available it takes 30-45 minutes, the best places to exchange them is at the airport on arrival.

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## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Boat, Public Bus, Train

### Accommodation notes

In the more rural and traditional places along the Kumano Kodo on nights 7, 8, 9 and 10 we will stay in

Japanese-style accommodation, sleeping on futon beds that are rolled out each night on the traditional tatami-mat (woven soft 'igusa' straw) flooring. Generally the rooms are simply decorated with a low 'kotatsu' table to sit around, a scroll or picture in an alcove and a Japanese tea set. Shoes are taken off in the entrance way to the room. Bathing takes place in a hot spring bath, etiquette requires you to shower yourself clean before entering the water. We refer to these as Japanese guesthouses or ryokan.

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## **Essential Information**

### **Government Travel Safety Advice**

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

#### **Under 18 immigration guidance**

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

### **Price Guarantee**

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

### **Visa and Passport Information**

Japan: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens.

Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

### **Booking conditions**

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and [Booking Conditions](#).

### **Transfers**

Find out more about [Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions](#) before you book.

### **Booking a land only package with Explore**

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

### **Joining Tour Abroad**

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

### **Insurance**

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

### **Flight information**

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them [here](#).

### **Flight Information**

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

## Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## Japan

### Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory. We recommend protection against typhoid, tetanus, infectious hepatitis and polio. The use or possession of Vicks inhalers and some other common prescription and over-the-counter medicines (e.g. for allergies and sinus problems or even certain mild painkillers, such as those containing certain levels of codeine) are banned under Japan's strictly enforced anti-stimulant drugs law. Customs officials may not be sympathetic if you claim ignorance about these medicines. If in any doubt about customs procedures for such items, you should check with the nearest Japanese Embassy before visiting Japan. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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## Walking and Trekking information

DAILY DISTANCES		
Day 2	8km	4hrs
Day 3		
Day 4	12km	4.5hrs
Day 5	12km	7hrs
Day 6	11km	6.5hrs
Day 7	5km	2.5hrs
Day 8	10km	6hrs
Day 9	7km	3.5hrs
Day 10		
Day 11	3km	1hr

### Walking grade

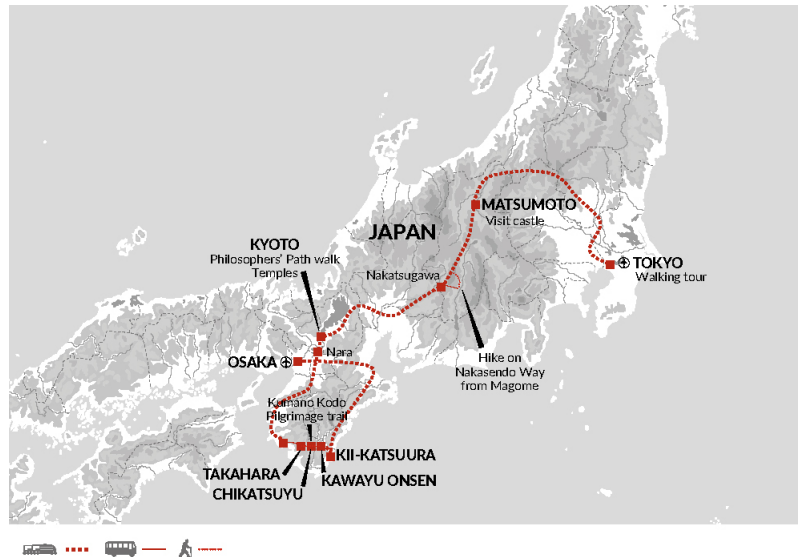
Moderate

## Trek details

Walks on 8 days for between 1 to 6 hours. The urban walking in Tokyo, Kyoto and Nara includes time for sightseeing and is mainly flat. The Nakasendo Way and Kumano Kodo trail undulate on stone and paved trails across forested hills with sections of steps in places.

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## Additional Information



## Why book this trip

This trip is led by Kiyoko Se, an expert on the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage routes and the old Nakasendo highway. She has been guiding visitors from all over the world since 2004. Originally from Osaka, Kiyoko Se loves travelling and her adventures include hiking the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu in Peru, trekking the Camino de Santiago in Spain, climbing Mount Roraima in the Guiana Highlands in Venezuela and walking in the jungles in Rwanda to see mountain gorillas. Kiyoko Se enjoys mountaineering, taking part in tea ceremonies and sawanobori (climbing waterfalls). One of her favourite aspects of Japanese culture is the spirit of ichigo-ichie (to cherish every encounter as though it is a once-in-a-lifetime experience).

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## Reviews

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**AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS**