

JAPAN – TOKYO MOUNT FUJI & THE HISTORIC NAKASENDO PATH

12-days / 11-nights hotel & ryokan based guided walking & sightseeing tour with Nikko extension



This magical journey to Japan takes us from the bustling street of Tokyo along the historic Nakasendo Path to the historic capital of Kyoto. With a stay in the Hakone National Park for spectacular views of Mount Fuji, we see ancient Japanese traditions and the ultramodern Japan of today combined in this fascinating country.

As well as seeing some of the highlights, this holiday introduces parts of Japan seldom visited by tourists. Pass through small post towns, and lovely mountain scenery with a multi-day walk on a path through the Japan Alps, combined with staying in a traditional inn (ryokan) for a taste of traditional Japan.

Highlights:

- Walk on the historic Nakasendo Path through the Japan Alps
- Explore the gardens and shrines of ancient Kyoto
- Walk by lakes and mountains in the shadow of Mt Fuji
- See the modern sides of Japan in Tokyo and Kyoto
- Stay in a ryokan, a traditional Japanese inn, for an authentic experience
- Try delicious and varied Japanese food

Dates: 10th May, 27th September, 18th October & 8th November 2017

Cost from: \$7015 per person twin share (single rooms with a supplement on request)

Includes: 11 nights' of comfortable 3 or 4-star accommodation in en-suite rooms (except in the ryokans, which usually have shared facilities), half board from dinner on arrival to breakfast on departure (except 1 dinner), also includes 2 lunches, a full program of guided walks led by an experienced local leader, all sightseeing, entrance fees, travel by coach/minivan, train and public transport.

Not included: International flights, other meals, drinks, visa or passport charges, personal expenses.

Grading: Easy to Moderate. A mixture of part-day walks, moderate trails and city sightseeing. Walking over easy to moderate terrain, ranging from level countryside paths to trails of up to 8km with 510m of ascent. Days on the Nakasendo Path are unhurried with plenty of time to enjoy the scenery.

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Suggested itinerary:

Day 1: Arrive Tokyo Afternoon arrival and transfer to our accommodation in central Tokyo (2 nights). There will be some free time to explore before a welcome dinner.

Day 2: Tokyo - Full day guided walking tour of Tokyo and its collection of different districts, each with their own individual character. From the ultra-modern to historic temples and gardens, a guided stroll around the city gives us an insight into Japanese life.

Day 3: Yudanaka Onsen & the "snow monkeys" - Journey through rural Japan to the traditional hot spring village nestled in the mountains of Nagano. A short walk takes us to visit the "snow monkeys", bathing in the hot springs. The monkeys started coming to warm themselves in the outdoor springs here over 40 years ago, and a local lodge owner built them their own bath after feeling sorry for them during the cold winters. Our accommodation in nearby Yudanaka has its own natural hot springs (humans only!), where you can relax this evening.

Day 4: The Nakasendo Path - Over the next two days we walk in the remote Kiso valley, exploring rural Japan, an area of the country that few overseas visitors reach. We walk by day from village to village, staying by night in small, family-run country inns (ryokan) and country guesthouses (minshuku). We carry our overnight items in a small daypack, while our luggage is taken ahead to Kyoto. We start near Midono, one of the 11 'post-towns' along the Kiso valley section of the Nakasendo, at Nagiso. Post-towns were resting places, where travellers could find accommodation as they walked between Kyoto and Edo (now Tokyo). In days past this route was used by traders, feudal lords, and samurai as they made their way to and from the imperial capital. We walk to the charming post town of Tsumago. After some time to explore the town and a short rest, we continue walking an additional 30 minutes to O-Tsumago.

Day 5: Nakasendo Path - A lovely walk again today, from Tsumago to Magome. After some free time to explore Tsumago in the morning, we continue our journey over the Magome Pass, to the small village of Magome. Here we stay overnight in a minshuku, where our friendly host may introduce us to 'minyo', traditional rural dances and singing.

Day 6: To Kyoto - Transfer to Kyoto, the western end of the Nakasendo Way and Japan's ancient capital, now a World Heritage Site, for a 3 night stay. Evening walk in Gion, Kyoto's geisha district where there is always the possibility of seeing a geisha or maiko (apprentice geisha) making their way through the narrow streets.

Day 7: Kyoto - Morning guided walking tour to Kinkaku-ji, the Golden Pavilion, surrounded by a Japanese garden, and originally built by the Ashikaga Shogun at the end of the 14th Century. From there, walk to the nearby Ryoan-ji to see its famous Zen rock garden. This afternoon walk along the 'Philosopher's Path', a delightful walk beside a canal lined with cherry trees in eastern Kyoto, followed by some free time to explore the area further or shop for crafts.

Day 8: Kyoto - Today is free to explore Kyoto. Your guide will be happy to help with suggestions of places to visit, such as Nijo Castle, the former residence of the Shogun in Kyoto, or Kiyomizu Temple with its wonderful view of Kyoto.

Day 9: Hakone - to Hakone, a famous hot spring town with wonderful views of Mount Fuji (weather permitting). We stay at a lakeside hotel, with wonderful views of Mount Fuji. The hotel has its own hot spring baths. After checking in, we walk to the Hakone Check-Point Museum before enjoying some free time before dinner. Our luggage will be sent ahead today to Tokyo, so you will need to pack overnight items for the 2 nights in Hakone.

Day 10: To Hakone National Park - A full day in Hakone, beginning with a walk along the 'sugi-namiki', lined with Japanese cedar trees, to Lake Ashi-no-ko where we may be able to see demonstrations of Japanese parquetry in the workshops there. We then continue on the old Tokaido highway, once the alternative to the Nakasendo, stopping for lunch along the way.

Day 11: Hakone & Tokyo - A morning boat ride across Lake Ashi-no-ko, to travel on a series of funicular railways through the Hakone volcanic ranges. We walk to see the volcanic fumaroles bubble up, before enjoying lunch on the other side of the mountain. After lunch we take the bus back to Tokyo for the evening.

Day 12: Departure day - Morning transfer for our return flight home.

Optional extension to Nikko (at extra cost): Nikko is an historic town set against a stunning backdrop of wooded hills and national parklands, about 2 hours north of Tokyo. Nikko has been sacred to the Japanese for 1200 years, it is now a UNESCO world heritage site and the ornate buildings of the Toshogu Shrine were created in memory of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the shogun who united feuding lords to create a unified nation of Japan.

Day 13: Travel to Nikko by train from Tokyo, afternoon guided sightseeing in Nikko. Overnight in Nikko - Japanese style inn (dinner)

Day 14: Walking in Oku Nikko, an area of outstanding natural beauty north of Nikko. Overnight in Nikko - Japanese style inn (breakfast and dinner)

Day 15: Return to Tokyo by train, afternoon at leisure in Tokyo. Overnight in Tokyo - western style hotel (breakfast)

Day 16: Tour ends after breakfast.

Included in Nikko extension: Nikko transport pass, 2 dinners and 3 breakfasts, 2 nights in Japanese style inn, 1 night in western style hotel, entrance fees for sites in Nikko, guide services on the afternoon of day 13, and all day on day 14.

Your guide on the main tour will advise of the best way to reach Tobu Asakusa station (at own cost), and will provide all necessary documentation. It is advisable to travel with a smaller backpack to Nikko, and leave your main luggage in Tokyo. On arrival in Nikko you will be met by your local expert guide who will introduce you to the magnificent sights of the UNESCO site of Nikko.



Outdoor Travel offers guided or self-guided walking holidays in many parts of the UK, Ireland and in Europe. Popular are England's **Coast-to-Coast** trail or Scotland's **West Highland Way**, the **Ring of Kerry** in Ireland the **Camino de Santiago** in France and Spain, Italy's **Amalfi** or **Cinque Terre Coast** or **Via Francigena**.

Contact **Outdoor Travel** or your travel agent for more details, travel brochures and reservations:

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