

**JAPAN WALKING TOUR APRIL 2017 pre-walk extension April 13 -16, 2017
PLUS JAPAN KUMANO KODO WALKING TOUR April 16 – 24, 2017**

April 13: KANSAI AIRPORT

Arrive at Kansai airport midday or evening depending on flights.
Accommodation: Kansai Nikko hotel western hotel with breakfast

April 14: HIYOSHI SHRINE SANNO FESTIVAL

We will travel about 1 hour and 40 minutes to Yumotokan hot spring hotel on Lake Biwa north of Kyoto.



After depositing our luggage we spend the day in the town of Sakamoto where the Hiyoshi Shrine will be celebrating the dynamic and spectacular Sanno festival, which includes the Awazu-no-Goku ritual in which seven portable shrines are carried through town and loaded onto a boat to cross a portion of Lake Biwa.

Accommodation: Hot spring hotel, western or Japanese rooms with breakfast and dinner.

April 15: MT HIEI AND ENRAKUJI

From the town of Sakamoto (approx. 120 metres) we will climb for about 2 hours to the summit of Mt Hiei (848 metres) and visit Enrajuji temple complex on the summit.



Enrajuji, a world heritage site and the head temple of the Tendai style of Buddhism, was founded in 788. The temple area is dotted with more than 100 buildings and towers, including the Konpon-chudo, a national treasure, a large lecture hall, and Shaka-do, all shaded by a

forest of old Japanese cedar trees. Even today, Mt. Hiei is still home to the severe ascetic training called “Sennichi Kaihogyo” (Thousand Day Mountain Walk) wherein practitioners walk around the mountain every day without any days off for one thousand days. We can return to Sakamoto by cable car and then to our hotel for another hot spring bath and sumptuous dinner.

Accommodation: Hot spring hotel, western or Japanese rooms with breakfast and dinner.

April 16: HIKONE

We will travel by train for 1 hour to the castle town of Hikone. We will visit the castle keep and Genkyuen garden located at the base of castle, just outside of the inner moat. After a construction period of twenty years, Hikone Castle was completed in 1622. The hilltop castle served as the seat of the li daimyo (feudal lords) until the end of the feudal age in 1868.

Hikone Castle is an original castle, i.e. it survived the post feudal era without undergoing destruction and reconstruction. Besides the castle's main keep, most of the inner moats, walls, guards' houses and gates also remain intact. Furthermore, parts of the castle's palace buildings have been reconstructed, giving visitors a good impression of a relatively complete Japanese feudal castle.

Accommodation: Japanese style hot spring ryokan with dinner and breakfast.



(April 16: Those not taking up the extension option above will fly into Kansai airport and stay at the Kansai Nikko airport hotel and meet us on route to Tanabe.)

April 17: WALK THE KUMANO KODO April 17 – 24, 2017

Tanabe, where we pick up our maps for our walks, is 1 hour and 40 minutes by train from Hikone. We will meet any of our group who have chosen to not do the extension on route to Tanabe.

Walk to TAKAHARA

In Tanabe we will get our maps and walking notes and have our luggage collected. After a 40- minute bus trip and a steep hike we will arrive at the mountain top village of Tanabe. This walk is a 4.5km consistent climb from 82m to 317m. Takahara is know as 'kiri no sato' village in the mist. The shrine at Takahara is surrounded by camphor trees 800 - 1000 years old.

4.5km 2 - 3 hours

Accommodation: Japanese guest house with hot spring baths, delicious local food, and magnificent views **D, B & L**



April 18: TAKAHARA TO CHIKATSUYU-OJI

We will walk out of the village past houses and fields into the forest and its ancient stone paths. We will see several smaller shrines (oji) originally erected to protect and guide pilgrims and serving as places of worship and rest. The walk is 11.3km, about 4 hours with a rise of 345m before we descend 360m into Chikatsuyu village

11.3km 4 hours

Accommodation: Japanese guest house with hot spring baths & delicious local food

D, B & L



April 19: CHIKATSUYU-OJI TO YUNOMINE

We will walk 5.2km ascending 216m and descending 132m in about 2.5 hours to the massive Nonaka no Ipponosugi 800 year old cedars with up to 8m circumference. Nearby we can fill our water bottles at Nonaka no Shimizu spring, one of the '100 famous waters of Japan'. The walk continues on to Yunomine hot spring village. Yunomine hot spring was discovered over 1800 years ago.

27km 8 hours

Alternative: Bus from Nonaka no Shimizu to Hosshinmon-oji and walk to Yunomine

12.3km 5 hours

Accommodation: Japanese onsen ryokan with indoor & outdoor hot spring baths

D, B, L

April 20: YUNOMINE - HONGU – SHINGU - KAWAYU

We will have a short walk over a rise of 180m from Yunomine to Hongu Taisha. The grand shrine is set amongst giant cedars and camphors. There is an excellent history and local information centre. We then travel by traditional boat on the Kumano River to the town of Shingu. We will transfer to the onsen village of Kawayu by bus. In Kawayu onsen hot water bubbles to the surface of the crystal clear river. The ryokan and guesthouses are spread out along the river. You will have the opportunity to bathe in the ryokan's indoor and outdoor baths and also bathe under the stars in the warm waters of the river.

3.4km 2 hours

Accommodation: Japanese onsen ryokan with indoor & outdoor hot spring baths

D, B



April 21: KAWAYU TO KOGUCHI

The trail starts with a 5.5km climb to an impressive lookout with a panoramic view of the 3600 peaks of Kumano.

16km 5 - 6hours

Alternative: Have a rest day and catch the bus from Kawayu to Koguchi.

Accommodation: Old junior-high school converted to guesthouse accommodation

D, B, L

April 22: KOGUCHI - NACHI - KII-KATSUURA



Today is our last day of walking and our toughest with the first section climbing 800m in 5km. Our reward will be the view of Nachi falls which at 133 meters boasts the longest drop in Japan, with one ton of water dropping down the cliff every second. The 14.5km walk with a total ascent of 980m and

descent of 920m will take us 7 - 8 hours. As well as the waterfall, Nachi has the Kumano Taisha shrine and a very atmospheric 5th century Buddhist temple. We will take a bus 30 minutes to the fishing port of Kii-Katsuura. Our onsen hotel is on an island and we will be able to relax in the outdoor onsen baths surrounded by the sounds of the sea.

14.5km 7 - 8hours

Alternative: spend the morning travelling by bus and train to Daimonzaka which is the base of the staircase walk (1km, about 40 minutes) to Nachi falls.

Accommodation: Japanese onsen ryokan with indoor & outdoor hot spring baths
D, B, L

April 23: HAYATAMA SHRINE AND KII-KATSUURA

As it will be a Sunday, after breakfast we can visit the morning market. Those who wish can travel approximately 30 minutes by train to Shingu. In Shingu we can visit Hayatama Shrine, the last of the three grand Kumano Shrines and climb the very steep 538 stone steps to Kamikura Jinya and its 'toad rock' that has been venerated for at least 1600 years. On our return you can explore this small fishing port, stretch your legs on the island's walking track, try to catch a fish, or pamper yourself with hot spring baths and massages. Or maybe you'll just want to spend the whole day relaxing at our island resort.

Accommodation: Japanese onsen ryokan with indoor & outdoor hot spring baths
D, B



April 24: KII-KATSUURA TO KANSAI AIRPORT OR ELSEWHERE

Our Kumano Kodo experience ends here.

You may choose to travel to the airport for flights home or extend our journey.

A. WALKING TOUR PLUS EXTENSION: APRIL 13 – 24, 2016

COST: \$6,180 per person

All accommodation, 12 breakfasts, 10 dinners, 5 lunches and all transfers and entries

B. KUMANO KODO WALKING TOUR: APRIL 16 – 24, 2016

COST: \$4,680 per person

All accommodation, transfers, luggage shuttle, 9 breakfasts, 7 dinners, 5 lunches

International airfares not included