



WOMEN'S KUMANO KODO

Japan

9 days | 8 nights

OVERVIEW

Join women walkers to the southern region of Japans Kii Peninsula, an ancient and mysterious land where pilgrimage and spiritual training have occurred for centuries.

You will follow the Nakahechi Pilgrimage Route from Takijiri-oji through spiritual countryside to Hongu. Walking the Main Trail, plus Dainichi-goe, and Kogumotori-goe sacred trails, a distance of approximately 60km over 5 days. From Koguchi a traditional boat then journeys you to Shingu along the Kumano-gawa River. On this fully guided trek you will experience the challenge of this hilly pilgrim route on autumn forest trails, visit all 3 Grand Shrines and learn about spiritual practices, culture and traditions along the way.

Enjoy walking with just a daypack and have your main luggage transferred daily to your overnight accommodation. At each mountain village you will stay in varying traditional-style accommodation, dine on lovingly prepared meals, and soak in onsens.

Dual Pilgrims and adventure seekers, come and immerse yourself in 1000 years of Japanese culture and history. Bring your boots, your day pack and an adventurous spirit for our exclusive women's only walking tour on the Kumano Kodo.

DETAILS

- Type: Women's Trips
- Adventure: Women's Kumano Kodo
- Destination: Kii Peninsula, Japan
- Group Size: Max 10 plus leaders

ITINERARY

Day 1 | Welcome to Tanabe

Welcome to Japan and the beautiful autumn colour that awaits.

If travelling with our Big Heart Adventures leader from Australia, you will travel from Osaka Kansai Airport by train to Tanabe. If travelling separately, we can assist you in coordinating any plane and train transport you require pre-tour.

This afternoon we provide a casual walking tour including Tanabe's beach and main streets before checking into your overnight accommodation. Your accommodation is located only a short walk from Kii-Tanabe Station.

Tonight we enjoy dinner together at a local restaurant nearby in the Ajikoji district.

Meals Included: Dinner
Walking Distance: n/a

BIG HEART ADVENTURES
more than just a trek...

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Day 2 | Takijiri-oji to Takahara

This morning we send our main luggage ahead and travel by bus to the Nakahechi trailhead behind Takijiri-oji. Following lunch we prepare ourselves to take the passage into the sacred mountains. The start of the Kumano Kodo is a chance for you to experience a purification ritual, understand the Oji and collect your first pilgrim stamp.

The climb to Takahara is short and steep. Along the way you will enjoy a couple of side trips including a cave believed to offer women safe passage, and a lookout over the stunning Kii Mountains.

Our accommodation tonight is at a beautiful ridge-top lodge

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Walking Distance: 4km

Day 3 | Takahara to Chikatsuyu

After breakfast we collect our pack lunch and continue our journey to Hiki-gawa River. Today's walk has some steep inclines and downhill slopes on uneven terrain as we follow the trail from Takahara. The trail winds its way along stunning mountain paths, past thick moss, and shades of green and changing autumn colour (subject to season).

You climb the Hashiori-toge Pass where the small Gyuba-doji statue is located. This statue shows Kazan, one of the first abdicated emperors to pilgrimage to Kumano, sitting on a horse and cow. Also, there is an optional steep side trip to the site of the legendary Three-Fold Moon before arriving at your overnight accommodation.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Walking Distance: 10km

Day 4 | Chikatsuyu to Hosshinmon-oji

Today you walk to Hosshinmon-oji, importantly marking the outermost entrance to Hongu Taisha's sacred precinct. We then catch a local bus to our nearby accommodation in Kawayu Onsen.

Your days trek begins on paved roads between Chikatsuyu village and Kobi-roji, before entering the forest. We climb and descend a series of passes and follow some semi-permanent detours. Along a small stream we walk to a statue of Jagata Jizo, this statue is said to protect you from evil fatigue-inducing spirits.

Our accommodation tonight is a combination of Japanese and Western style rooms. You can enjoy long soaks in the Onsen and relax during your 2 night's stay here at Kawayu.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Walking Distance: 18km

Day 5 | Hosshinmon-oji to Hongu

It's a short bus ride back to Hosshinmon-oji, the starting point for

your downhill walk to Hongu. Today's trail traverses through forest and includes isolated mountaintop villages with panoramic views. Including a spectacular view of ancient Oyunohara and the majestic giant Torii gateway.

Upon reaching Hongu we explore and reflect at the Kumano Hongu Taisha and at Oyunohara. If you're eligible for Dual Pilgrimage status, you have time in Hongu today to receive your certificate and drum ceremony.

Mid-afternoon, we walk the beautiful Dainichi-goe trail to Yunomine. Here, at Yunomine we boil eggs in the natural waters then catch the local bus back to nearby Kawayu Onsen.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Walking Distance: 10km

Day 6 | Ukegawa to Koguchi

Today we follow the Kogumotori-goe section of the Nakahechi Route from Ukegawa to Koguchi.

This section takes you into forested mountains and over passes as we begin our journey to the Grand Shrines of Kumano Hayatama Taisha and Kumano Nachi Taisha. At the highest point of the trail today you are welcomed with beautiful panoramic views of the 3600 peaks of Kumano.

Your accommodation tonight is downhill at Koguchi nestled in a valley by the Akagi-gawa River.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Walking Distance: 15km

Day 7 | Traditional boat to Shingu

You swap your walking-legs for boat-legs this morning with a scenic traditional boat cruise along the mighty Kumano-gawa River. This is a unique way to experience the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage route by water, arriving at Shingu and the nearby Kumano Hayatama Taisha. You have time to reflect and explore this Grand Shrine before we walk to Gotobiki Iwa.

Gotobiki Iwa is said to be the site where the Kumano deities first descended. It's a large boulder half-way up Mount Gongen and rests near Kamikura-jinja shrine. It's an ancient stone staircase that takes you to this sacred place with panoramic views over the Pacific Ocean.

This afternoon we travel by local bus to Nachisan and our overnight accommodation.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Walking Distance: 3km



Day 8 | Nachisan, Katsuura and return to Tanabe

With the stunning waterfall and pagoda, Nachisan's a place for self-reflection and respect for those who have made the pilgrimage both past and present. Here, the sacred precinct including the Kumano Nachi Taisha Grand Shrine can be visited. Also, it's a short walk to the worshipped Nachi-no-Otaki waterfall which is the tallest in Japan.

An ancient cobblestone staircase known as Daimon-zaka takes us down to the lower valley. It's at the lower valley where we board a local bus for our 10 minute drive to Katsuura. Here, we enjoy lunch together at a little eatery, or you may choose takeaway. Following lunch, we board our train and travel back to Kii-Tanabe station. This afternoon we say goodbye to our local guide and relax at our accommodation.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Walking Distance: up to 3km

Day 9 | Farewells and departures

Following breakfast we say our goodbyes and best wishes for ongoing journeys. Your walking trip for women along the Kumano Kodo ends here in Tanabe.

If travelling to Australia, you can travel to Osaka Kansai Airport by train with our Big Heart Adventures leader. If you are extending your stay in Japan, ask us how to create an extended spiritual experience to Koyasan. Or a longer itinerary to the cities of Kyoto, Hiroshima, Osaka, Tokyo and more.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Walking Distance: n/a

INCLUSIONS

Travel

Luggage transfers daily to accommodation (1 bag per person)

Traditional boat ride on Kumano River

Train from Kii-Katsuura Station to Kii-Tanabe Station on day 8

Meals

All meals and snacks as per the itinerary

B x 8 | L x 6 | D x 7

Accommodation

2 nights 'Western Style' room in Tanabe on first and last night

6 nights 'Japanese Style' twin share while on the trail

(Accommodation will change based on each days finishing location)

An Onsen (Japanese bath) is offered at each night's accommodation

Activities

Professionally guided walk along the Kumano Kodo Nakahechi route

Traditional boat journey

Visit the Kumano Sanzan (all 3 Great Shrines)

Gotobiki Iwa

Daimon-zaka staircase

Nachi-no-Otaki waterfall

Oyunohara Torii Gate

Drum ceremony for Dual Pilgrims

Nature connection activities on trail

Safety

2 Guides – our local guide (bilingual) and a leader from Australia

Group First Aid kit and emergency communication device

Leaders certified in Remote Area/Wilderness First Aid

Qualified Bushwalking Leaders

Environmental

Small group guided experience

Leave No Trace principles

Invitations to connect with nature

Reduce waste through recycling, reusing and composting

Park entry fees

Big Heart Extras

Big Heart Adventures designed ioMerino hiking top

Big Heart Adventures designed head sock

Big Heart Adventures journal

Guided pre-departure training walks and or program (trip specific)

Discount card for pre-departure purchases at Exurbia

A charity contribution to our Give Back program

EXCLUSIONS

- International and domestic flights
- Travel arrangements to the start and from the end of the tour
- Local bus tickets during the tour (budget AU\$45)
- Comprehensive Travel Insurance (compulsory)
- Meals and drinks not stated on itinerary
- Items of a personal nature

FITNESS REQUIREMENT

- A good level of fitness is required to walk the trails on this trip
- You will be walking pack free (day packs only)
- You will walk on a variety of surfaces on undulating trails including some steep inclines/declines and rocky trail
- Our longest walking day is 18km and we walk 5 consecutive days on this adventure
- Trail rating: Moderate

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Eligible Past Traveller Discount applies if you've travelled with us on any of our guided tours which were 5 days duration or longer
- Read terms and conditions before booking
- Itinerary and price subject to change at any time
- Travel Insurance is recommended. Get a quote from Covermore or Go Insurance
- Note weather, group member welfare and a range of circumstances outside our control can mean last minute changes to our itinerary are necessary once on tour. Detours may be in place
- A very limited number of single rooms are available on a first-come basis
- Please contact us before booking any flights. Depending on flight arrival and departure times extra nights accommodation may be required at own expense
- A minimum number of travellers are required for this trip to depart so ask someone to join you. If minimum numbers aren't reached, we may decide to still go or we will provide a full refund
- Rooming is twin share on the trail
- Japanese style accommodation and food is traditional on the Kumano Kodo. Sleeping upon futons placed on the floor and a variety of cuisines is offered exclusively for the region. Not all dietary requests may be catered for and must be declared at the time of booking. Please note that dietary requirements cannot be added while travelling on this tour
- If you have additional needs please connect with us, we're committed to being inclusive and accessible

ADVENTURE LEADERS

Our experienced and knowledgeable local guide (bilingual) and a leader from Australia are with you for the journey (2 leaders). Our team is qualified, experienced and super friendly. We will ensure you have a fun and connecting adventure. Leaders are certified in Remote or Wilderness First-Aid. All leaders carry a group first-aid kit, emergency communications device, emergency documentation and equipment.

PACKING LIST

A detailed packing list is provided prior to travel

- Gear you will need:
- Rainproof jacket and pants
- Daypack (35 litre approx.)
- Water bottles/hydration kit (min 2Ltrs)
- Personal medications
- Clothing suitable for walking that is quick drying and breathable – consider merino/synthetic clothing
- Sun protection such as hat, sunglasses and sunscreen, insect repellent
- Sleeping attire

ACCESSIBILITY

Requires following bush trails carrying a day pack with some steep sections. Accommodation and transport includes stairs. Please talk to us about your accessibility needs before booking