

Deeper Into Japan – A Custom Journey
Designed by Rebecca Mazzaro @ ATJ

DAY NO. 1

Meals Provided: None

Depart

DAY NO. 2

Meals Provided: None

Tokyo

Welcome to Japan. Upon arrival, clear Immigrations and proceed to baggage claim to collect your luggage. As you exit Customs, you'll be met in the arrivals area by an English-speaking airport representative, who will connect you with your private car and driver. You'll then be privately transferred to your centrally located hotel by sedan.

Settle in with the remainder of the day free at your leisure.

Overnight at the Hotel Gajoen Tokyo (Double Room) - Tokyo

This charming hotel is part of the Small Luxury Hotels groups and is considered as much of a museum as it is a hotel. It's an ideal place to stay while exploring Tokyo.

DAY NO. 3

Meals Provided: B

Tokyo

This morning meet your private guide and enjoy a full day of exploring this fabulous city by private vehicle. Your private tour will be from 9am to 5pm. Below are the things you will be doing today:

*Visit Ginza Kuroda Toen, founded by Kuroda Toutouan (Ryoji Kuroda). Ginza Kuroda Touen is a Japanese art gallery founded in 1935. It specializes in Japanese modern, contemporary ceramics and antiques.

*Visit Oedo Antique Market, the largest outdoor Antique Market in Japan. It boasts of a large number of antique goods including Japanese pottery, Western tableware, kimono and sashes, and accessories to name a few, and attracts many visitors every time.

*Visit Meiji Shrine.

*Visit Harajuku, Shibuya Crossing

*Conclude today with a very unique experience. Enjoy a 90 minute class of Kintsugi in Omotesando. Kintsugi is a Japanese art form in which breaks and repairs are treated as part of the object's history. Broken ceramics are carefully mended by artisans with a lacquer resin mixed with powdered gold, silver, or platinum. The repairs are visible, beautiful, and an antidote to the culture of disposability.

Return to your hotel at 5pm with the evening free at your leisure.

Overnight at the Hotel Gajoen Tokyo (Double Room) - Tokyo

DAY NO. 4

Meals Provided: B

Tokyo

This morning meet your private guide and continue exploring Tokyo by private vehicle. Your private tour will be from 9am to 5pm. Below are the things you will be doing today:

*Visit the bonsai master, Kunio Kobayashi, and his spectacular garden. Here you will learn how to take care of a bonsai and how to work with different species of bonsai. Even if you are a beginner, this art can be mastered.

*Visit Asakusa neighborhood, Sensoji Temple & Nakamise Shopping Street.

*Private Sumo Stable Visit - Visit with a former rikishi. Learn more about the world of a sumo wrestler and how they became a sumo wrestler. Learn all the ins and outs of this Japanese tradition, its harshness and splendor.

*Visit the Sumida Hokusai Museum, a museum dedicated to the ukiyo-e artist Katsushika Hokusai, commonly referred to as Hokusai.

*Visit the Art gallery Roji-to-hito, run by Rika Aki, Miyoko Omura, Helio Kotomizu, and Junko Harada. This is not a gallery but more of a gathering place for artists.

Return to your hotel with the evening free at your leisure.

Overnight at the Hotel Gajoen Tokyo (Double Room) - Tokyo

DAY NO. 5

Meals Provided: B

Tokyo / Nikko / Tokyo

This morning meet your private guide and driver and depart for a full day exploration of Nikko. Your private tour will be from 8am to 6pm as it takes approximately 2 1/2 hours one way to drive from Tokyo to Nikko. Below are the things you will be doing today:

*Visit the Kanmangafuchi Abyss. The Abyss was formed by an eruption of nearby Mount Nantai. This gorge near central Nikko is only a few hundred meters long and can be enjoyed from a pleasant riverside walking trail.

*Visit the Tamozawa Imperial Palace, which was built in 1899.

*Visit Toshogu shrine, the world heritage site, where you will participate in a very special Toshogu exploring program with a priest. Here you will visit a Toshogu Shrine with a Shinto priest who serves for the shrine. In addition to basic information about the history and traditions of Nikko Toshogu Shrine, you will be briefed on the numerous sculptures and colors that adorn the shrine grounds. You will then have a chance to view Saishikizu, the most exciting part of this tour. There is a blueprint for all the architecture, sculptures and colors in the temple grounds.

*Visit a local sake brewery "Watanabe Sahei Shoten".

Overnight at the Hotel Gajoen Tokyo (Double Room) - Tokyo

DAY NO. 6

Meals Provided: B D

Tokyo / Kanazawa / Yamanaka

Please note that this morning, we have arranged for your large bags (one per person) to be shipped ahead to your ryokan in Yamanaka (next-day arrival). Please have them ready by 07:30 AM when the bellman will collect them. (Please confirm this with the bellman the night before). Take with you one overnight bag each with the items you will need for your first night stay in Yamanaka. This will alleviate the hassle of taking your suitcases on the trains with you, where baggage space is limited.

This morning you will be met and assisted in transferring by private vehicle to Tokyo Station in time for your train to Kanazawa. Your assistant will help you board your train.

9:32 am - Depart Tokyo Station

12:28 pm - Arrive Kanazawa Station

**Reserved Green Class Seat, tickets to be provided*

Upon arrival in Kanazawa, meet your private guide and driver and enjoy a full afternoon of exploration of Kanazawa. Today you will visit the following places:

*Omicho Market, a lively market located in central Kanazawa with a history of over 280 years. As the Sea of Japan is very close, seafood is delivered fresh every day, including some varieties that are unique to the region. The market also has more to offer besides seafood, including many unique souvenirs.

*Kenrokuen Garden, one of the three most beautiful gardens in Japan.

*21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art - This is a fabulous museum and a must! The architecture of the 21st Century Museum is unique and distinguishes it from other museums and buildings around Kanazawa. The museum is comprised of a circular building, 112.5 meters in diameter, with no facade or main entrance. It was designed without a front or back to discourage its patrons from approaching the museum, and consequently its art, from only one direction.

Afterwards, you will continue by private car to the delightful town of Yamanaka and check in to your very special ryokan, Kayotei. As one passes through the entrance of Kayotei for the first time it is evident that this is a very special Japanese inn. This luxury ryokan is located in the small hot springs village of Yamanaka in Ishikawa prefecture. The village remains much the same as it has for many years, seemingly untouched by time. The inn is surrounded by majestic trees and lovingly nurtured gardens encircled by thickly forested hills. Kayotei's ten suite rooms are arranged in the traditional sukiya style of a tea ceremony pavilion. Guests wear no slippers in this ryokan; the walkways are tatami, as one would in the home of a relative or close friend. These are the rare and subtle differences that make time spent in Kayotei such a warm and welcoming experience. A stroll through Kayotei is one of discovery, for original painted screens, fine works of pottery, and antique tansu adorn the hallways and spaces of this inn.

Overnight at the Kayotei Ryokan (Japanese Room with private toilet & Private Onsen Requested) - Yamanaka

Located in the small hot springs village of Yamanaka and surrounded by majestic trees and thickly forested hill, Kayoutei's ten suites feel virtually frozen in time. Tatami walkways, original painted screens, fine works of pottery and antique furnishings create the feeling of warm hospitality one would expect visiting the home of a dear friend (with exquisite taste). Immerse yourself in the on-site onsen baths and the unbeatable ambiance.

DAY NO. 7

Meals Provided: B D

Yamanaka / Echizen / Yamanaka

This morning enjoy a fabulous breakfast in your room and perhaps a soak in the onsen before heading out for a very special day. Meet your private guide and driver at 9:00am and depart for the small town of Echizen, about an hour and a half drive from Yamanaka.

Echizen is known for a special type of ceramic technique called "Echizen-yaki". Here you will visit various kilns of artists who specialize in this unique craft. This traditional handicraft comes from one of the Six Ancient Kilns of Japan along with Bizen, Tamba,

Tokoname, Seto, and Shigaraki. are the most outstanding Japanese kilns with traditions that remain even today.

After spending all morning here, break for lunch (on own expense) before continuing on to visit Eiheiji Temple. Eiheiji is a large temple complex and active monastery standing on a cedar-covered slope in the mountains just outside Fukui City. Spend the afternoon here before heading back to Yamanaka for another special evening.

Overnight at the Kayotei Ryokan (Japanese Room with private toilet & Private Onsen Requested) - Yamanaka

DAY NO. 8

Meals Provided: B

Yamanaka / Kyoto

Please note that this morning, we have arranged for your large bags (one per person) to be shipped ahead to your hotel in Kyoto (next-day arrival). Please have them ready by 07:30 AM when the bellman will collect them. (Please confirm this with the bellman the night before). Take with you one overnight bag each with the items you will need for your first night stay in Kyoto. This will alleviate the hassle of taking your suitcases on the trains with you, where baggage space is limited.

This morning meet your private assistant who will assist you in transferring to Kagaonsen Station in time for your train to Kyoto.

10:19 am - Depart Kagaonsen Station for Kyoto

12:09 pm - Arrive at Kyoto Station

**Reserved first class seat, tickets to be provided*

Upon arrival, meet your private guide and enjoy an afternoon of private touring by private vehicle.

Begin at the Nishiki market, a narrow shopping street lined with more than 100 shops where various kinds of food, including many Kyoto specialties, are sold. This market has a history of several centuries, and many stores have been operated by the same families for generations. Depending on the store, most are open from 09:00 AM to 18:00 (6:00 PM), and generally closed one day a week, either Wednesday or Sunday.

Next, enjoy an exclusive sake brewery visit. You will visit a very special sake brewery which is not open to the public. This particular brewery was founded about 350 years ago. Their sake production is completely hand-made. During your visit, you will witness how much time & effort is needed to brew sake the old traditional way. Not a single grain of rice or drop of sake is ever wasted. This brewery produces several kinds of sake and you will be able to taste all of them on the spot. Enjoy!

Finally, end your day with a visit to the magnificent Fushimi Inari Shrine, made famous as a filming site in the critically acclaimed *Memoirs of a Geisha*. Here there is a pathway covered by more than 3,000 red painted torii gates stretching nearly two miles up the hillside to the main shrine.

Overnight at the Hiramatsu Kyoto (Deluxe Room) - Kyoto

This luxury hotel has been designed in the style of a Kyoto machiya (traditional townhouse), but with modern comforts. The hotel has 29 spacious guest rooms, a kappo restaurant, and an Italian restaurant. It's an ideal place to stay while exploring Kyoto.

DAY NO. 9

Meals Provided: B

Kyoto

This morning meet your private guide and driver and enjoy a full day exploration of Kyoto. Today you will visit the following areas and tour from 9:00 am - 5:00 pm.

*Kinkakuji Temple, a Zen temple in northern Kyoto whose top two floors are completely covered in gold leaf.

*Stroll around Arashiyama district located in the western outskirts of Kyoto. One of the highlights here is walking through Arashiyama's famous bamboo groves.

*The last visit of the day will be an exclusive tea ceremony experience at Korin-in temple.

Afterwards, return to your hotel around 5:00pm with the evening free at your leisure.

Overnight at the Hiramatsu Kyoto (Deluxe Room) - Kyoto

DAY NO. 10

Meals Provided: B

Kyoto

This morning meet your private guide and driver and enjoy a full day exploration of Kyoto. Today you will visit the following areas and tour from 9:00 am - 5:00 pm.

*Visit Kiyomizudera Temple, one of the most celebrated temples of Japan.

*Visit Ninenzaka, Sannenzaka Slopes & Gion

*Drive about one hour to visit various kilns. This afternoon you will visit various kilns of Japanese ceramic technique "Shigaraki-yaki". This is an exclusive visit. This type of pottery is made around the town of Shigaraki in Shiga prefecture. Clays such as kibushi,

mizuchi, or gairome are kneaded to make a strong clay that can be used to make thick and large pottery vessels.

Return to Kyoto with the evening free at your leisure.

Overnight at the Hiramatsu Kyoto (Deluxe Room) - Kyoto

DAY NO. 11

Meals Provided: B D

Kyoto / Koyasan

Please note that this morning, we have arranged for your large bags (one per person) to be shipped ahead to your ryokan (next-day arrival). Please have them ready by 07:30 AM when the bellman will collect them. (Please confirm this with the bellman the night before). Take with you one overnight bag each with the items you will need for your overnight in Koyasan. This will alleviate the hassle of taking your suitcases on the trains with you, where baggage space is limited.

This morning you will be privately transferred to Namba Station in time for your train to Koyasan.

10:10 am - Depart Namba Station

11:55 am - Arrive at Koyasan Station

Upon arrival, meet your private guide and driver and begin exploring this delightful area. Koya-san is the center of Shingon Buddhism, a Buddhist sect which was introduced to Japan in 805. In this small town, there are over one hundred temples all surrounded by mountains and giant cypress trees that are hundreds of years old. At an elevation of approximately 3,500 feet, Koya-san will be a bit cooler than the lowlands.

Spend the afternoon exploring countless temples in the area. Some that you may visit include the following:

*Danjo Garan

*Kogobuji Temple

*Okunoin

You will then check in to your very simple but comfortable accommodations for the evening.

Overnight at Ekoin Koyasan (Japanese Room) - Koyasan

Simple yet delightful, this is a fine place to rest while exploring Koyasan.

DAY NO. 12

Meals Provided: B D

Koyasan / Tamba / Arima

This morning meet your private guide and driver and transfer by private car to Koyasan Station in time for your train to Namba.

9:28 am - Depart Koyasan Station

11:23 am - Arrive Namba Station

Upon arrival, along with your guide, continue by private car to the small town of Tamba, roughly a 1 1/2 hour driver. Upon arrival in Tamba, enjoy lunch (on own expense) before spending the afternoon visiting various artists in the area.

This afternoon visit various kilns of Japanese ceramic technique "Tamba-yaki". Very special arrangements have been made to visit the various artists in the area. Tamba-tachikui ware (called Tamba-tachikui yaki in Japanese) is a form of pottery produced around Konda in the city of Sasayama, Hyogo prefecture. It is one of Japan's six ancient kilns. Together with Bizen, Tamba, Echizen, Seto, and Tokoname, Tamba-tachikui ware is considered to be one of the most outstanding Japanese kilns with traditions that remain even today. Since the kiln opened eight hundred years ago, ceramics for daily use have been baked at this kiln. This craft has a unique ash covered color which appears while baking for around sixty hours in a climbing kiln* at a temperature of approximately 1300°C (about 2372°F). You will learn much more about this process.

Afterwards, continue about an hour's drive to Arima where you will check in to your delightful hotel.

Overnight at the Gosha Bessho (River View Villa Suite with private onsen) - Arima

A 1.2 acres villa resort Nestled in the foothills of Rokko mountain, 5 mins walk from the heart of Arima. The hotel is established in a symbolic place, where it used to be the site of Arima Kiyomizu Temple, and later during the very early Meiji period (1872), became an inn for the first western visitors to Arima-onsen. The architecture, design, and cuisine are a harmonious blend of east and west, and the interior is a fusion of spontaneity and sophistication. A perfect choreography to treat and purify the senses. 10 villas only, each with a private thermal room.

DAY NO. 13

Meals Provided: B D

Arima / Bizen / Naoshima Island

This morning meet your private guide and driver and continue your artisan journey. Depart your hotel at 9:00 am and drive roughly an hour to the town of Bizen. Here you

will be visiting the kilns of Japanese ceramic technique "Bizen-yaki" Bizen ware is one of Japan's Six Ancient Kilns. Together with Shigaraki, Tamba, Echizen, Seto and Tokoname, Bizen ware is considered to be one of the most outstanding Japanese kilns with traditions that remain to this day. Bizen ware has a unique manufacturing method as it does not use glaze. You will learn about this technique in depth.

Enjoy lunch (on own expense) and then continue by car to Uni Port in time for your ferry to Naoshima Island where your guide and private vehicle will join you.

2:25 pm - Take the ferry to Naoshima Island

2:45 pm - Arrive on Naoshima Island

Upon arrival, spend the afternoon exploring Naoshima Island by private car with your private guide. Your exploration is flexible.

Visit Chichu Art Museum - constructed in 2004 as a site rethinking the relationship between nature and people. The museum was built mostly underground to avoid affecting the beautiful natural scenery of the Seto Inland sea. Artworks by Claude Monet, James Turrell, and Walter De Maria are on permanent display in this building designed by Tadao Ando.

Around 5:30pm, you will check in to the very unique Benesse House. After checking in, please visit the site on your own since this property is next to the hotel you are staying at.

The Benesse House Museum opened in 1992 as a facility integrating a museum with a hotel, based on the concept of "coexistence of nature, art and architecture." Designed by Tadao Ando, the facility is built on high ground overlooking the Seto Inland Sea and features large apertures that serve to open up the interior to the splendid natural surroundings.

Please note: Benesse art facilities has a regular holiday for each island. Naoshima's facilities are closed every Monday as of now. The schedule may change and there is a possibility to-not suit the open schedule.

Overnight at the Benesse House Art Resort (Museum Deluxe Room) - Naoshima

Moving far beyond the concept of a traditional hotel or guesthouse, this property is in fact a museum of contemporary art housing a permanent collection of highly regarded works. Designed by Tadao Ando with accommodation facilities on site, here one dwells in "coexistence of nature, architecture and art," a theme that infuses the complex with a contemplative and erudite air. The building faces the Sea of Japan from its perch on a low-rise hill.

DAY NO. 14

Meals Provided: B D

Naoshima Island / Teshima / Inujima / Naoshima

This morning meet your private guide and head out for a full day exploration of the neighboring islands of Teshima and Inujima. Depart by taxi to the port and take the 9:20am ferry arriving on Teshima at 9:42 am. You will explore Teshima by local taxi.

This morning visit the Teshima Art Museum. Uniting the creative visions of artist Rei Naito and architect Ryue Nishizawa, Teshima Art Museum stands on a hill on the island of Teshima overlooking the Seto Inland Sea. The museum, which resembles a water droplet at the moment of landing, is located in the corner of a rice terrace that was restored in collaboration with local residents.

Next visit "Les Archives du Cœur", by Christian Boltanski, which permanently houses recordings of the heartbeats of people throughout the world. Christian Boltanski has been recording these heartbeats since 2008. You can even record your own heartbeat!

You will then continue as you take the 12:40pm ferry to Inujima Island arriving at 1:05pm. Explore with your private guide via taxi.

This afternoon visit the Inujima Seirenscho Art Museum. Breathing new life into the ruins of a former copper refinery, Inujima Seirenscho Art Museum was built around the idea of "using what exists to create what is to be". Exhibited here are works created by Yukinori Yanagi who used Yukio Mishima as a motif, a vocal critique of Japan's modernization, together with the remodeled architecture designed by Hiroshi Sambuichi.

Then continue to the Inujima "Art House Project" which was launched with the objective of inspiring the local community of Inujima, allowing them to experience the beautiful landscapes of everyday life and the familiar natural environments that extend beyond the artworks. Three galleries, F-Art House, S-Art House, and I-Art House, designed for special displays, and Nakanotani Gazebo (a rest area) were first opened on the island in 2010.

You will then take the 3:47pm ferry back to Naoshima Island arriving at 4:30pm. Return to your hotel by taxi and take in all the incredible art you witnessed today.

Please note: Benesse art facilities have a regular holiday for each island. Teshima's facilities are closed every Tuesday and Inujima's facilities are every Wednesday as of now. The schedule may change and there is a possibility to-not suit the open schedule.

Overnight at the Benesse House Art Resort (Museum Deluxe Room) - Naoshima

DAY NO. 15

Meals Provided: B D

Naoshima Island / Okayama / Hiroshima / Miyajima Island

This morning you will be met by an assistant and transfer together by taxi to the port where you will take the ferry to Uno Port. Upon arrival at Uno Port, you will be transferred by private vehicle to Okayama where you will then take the train to Hiroshima.

11:23 am - Depart Okayama Station for Hiroshima

12:03 pm - Arrive at Hiroshima Station

**Reserved first class seat, tickets to be provided*

Upon arrival in Hiroshima, meet your private guide on the platform and begin exploring by private vehicle. Before you dive in to visiting the various sites, stop for lunch (on own expense).

After lunch, begin touring Hiroshima, a city with a tragic history that will forever be a part of our consciousness. Tour Peace Memorial Park, with its museum displaying relics and photos of the A-bomb devastation. The A-bomb Dome has been left in ruins as a reminder of the supreme destructive potential of nuclear weapons.

Afterwards, continue by car to board the ferry to Miyajima Island, a World Heritage site, considered by the Japanese to be one of Japan's "three most beautiful places." The island is most famous for the picturesque Itsukushima Shrine, which, together with its large, red torii gate, stands in the ocean during high tide. Deer move freely around the island.

Please note that the torii gate is undergoing reparations, during which it will be partially covered. The entrance to Itsukushima Shrine will remain unobstructed but the scenery may be affected.

Upon arrival, your guide will walk with you to your lovely hotel for check in. Settle in with the evening free at your leisure. Dinner is provided by the hotel this evening.

Overnight at the Kurayado Iroha (Japanese Western Style Room - Sea View Requested) - Miyajima Island

Kurayado Iroha Hotel boasts luxury rooms incorporating a contemporary and traditional private residence concept coupled with sleek amenities and spectacular views of the Seto Inland Sea. Indulge yourself with their delicious Kaiseki cuisine, rooftop bath and hospitality.

DAY NO. 16

Meals Provided: B D

Miyajima Island

This morning meet your private guide and spend the day strolling around Miyajima Island. You will visit various sites today including Itsukushima Shrine, taking the cable car or hiking up Mount Misen, the famous 'floating' torii gate, Senjokaku or Hokoku Shrine and then end the day with a fun visit to the Sakurao Distillery via ferry to Miyajimaguchi. You will drive a short distance to the distillery. This distillery produces a western-style liquor and is a unique place. You will return to Miyajima Island afterwards for another wonderful evening.

Be sure to go see the torii gate lit up at night.

Overnight at the Kurayado Iroha (Japanese Western Style Room - Sea View Requested) - Miyajima Island

DAY NO. 17

Meals Provided: B D

Miyajima Island / Hiroshima / Tanabe / Takijiri / Takahara

This morning meet your assistant and transfer together by ferry back to Miyajimaguchi. Here you will transfer by private car to Hiroshima Station in time for your train to Tanabe Station via Shin-Osaka. An assistant will meet you at Shin-Osaka Station and assist you with your train transfer.

8:42 am - Depart Hiroshima Station

10:07 am - Arrive at Shin-Osaka Station

10:15 am - Depart Shin-Osaka Station

12:34 pm - Arrive at Kii Tanabe Station

**Reserved first class seat, tickets to be provided*

Upon arrival at Kii Tanabe Station, you will be met by your private guide who will accompany you over the next several days as you hike the Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage Trail. This journey will be a 5 day, 4 night walk and you will go at your pace.

Your luggage will be shipped ahead to your various inns and will be awaiting your arrival.

Begin by taking the local bus to Takijiri. The bus stop is located just in front of the station.

12:50 pm - Depart Kii Tanabe by local bus for Takijiri

1:28 pm - Arrive at Takijiri

Upon arrival in Takijiri, visit the Kumano Kodo Kan Pilgrimage Center. This is a great place to have an introduction to this wonderful walk.

You will then begin your walk to Takahara. Today's walk is 4km or 2.5 miles and should take around 2-3 hours. This is a short but steep walk from Takijiri to the ridge top settlement of Takahara.

Elevation gain: 430 m or 1411 feet

Elevation loss: 200 m or 656 feet

Takahara is a small settlement on a ridgeline with panoramic views of the Hatenashi mountain range. It is the site of the mystical Takahara Kumano-jinja shrine, one of the oldest buildings along this section of the pilgrimage route. The shrine grounds are home to giant camphor trees, over 800 years old! Takahara is known as "Kiri-no-Sato" (Village in the Mist) because the scenic vistas are often blanketed with mist. The valley below dramatically fills with fog, creating a beautiful sea of clouds.

Settle in to your simple accommodations. Enjoy a simple but delicious dinner.

Overnight at Kiri-no-Sato Takahara Lodge or simple - Takahara

DAY NO. 18

Meals Provided: B L D

Takahara / Chikatsuyu

This morning after breakfast, depart with your guide as you continue your pilgrimage on the Kumano Kodo trail. Your hotel will arrange a packed lunch for you to bring along with you today.

Today's walk is 10 km or 6.2 miles. It should take between 4 and 6 hours depending on your pace. Take your time and enjoy the journey. This walk continues into the forested mountains east of Takahara climbing up and over ridges into the next watershed, descending into the village of Chikatsuyu

Elevation gain: 590 m or 1936 feet

Elevation loss: 640 m or 2100 feet

This afternoon arrive at the village of Chikatsuyu where the clear Hiki-gawa river runs through the valley. Enjoy strolling around the village and meeting the locals.

Enjoy dinner at your hotel.

Overnight at a minshuku guesthouses - Chikatsuyu

DAY NO. 19

Meals Provided: B L D

Chikatsuyu / Hongu Taisha-mae / Hosshinmon-oji / Kumano Hongu Taisha / Yunomine Onsen

This morning after breakfast, depart with your guide as you continue your pilgrimage on the Kumano Kodo trail. Your hotel will arrange a packed lunch for you to bring along with you today.

This morning begin with a bus journey from Chikatsuyu to Hongu (Meiko Bus).

9:07 am - Depart Nakahechi Bijutsukan (Nakahechi Museum)

9:37 am - Arrive at Hongu Taisha-mae

10:10 am - Depart Hongu Taisha-mae

10:25 am - Arrive at Hosshinmon-oji

**Please note that there is a direct bus from Chikatsuyu to Hosshinmon-oji but it departs at 7:36am if you prefer.*

From here you will continue your walk on the Kumano Kodo trail as you walk to Kumano Hongu Taisha. Today's walk is 7km or 4.3 miles and should take around 2 to 3 hours. This is a beautiful half day walk as you pass through a mixture of ridge top settlements and forested trails. Enjoy the stunning panoramic lookouts along the way.

Elevation gain: 190 m or 623 feet

Elevation loss: 460 m or 1509 feet

This afternoon visit Kumano Hongu Taisha. This is one of the three grand shrines. It stands on a small ridgeline in the northern part of the village. You can also visit the Kumano Hongu Heritage Center.

You will then take another bus to Yunomine Onsen. The bus departs from the Kumano Hongu Heritage Center.

4:58 pm - Depart Hongu Taisha-mae by local bus

5:09 pm - Arrive at Yunomine Onsen

Yunomine Onsen is one of the oldest hot springs in Japan and directly connected with the Kumano Kodo. It is a quaint little collection of inns tucked into a small valley. Tsuboyu is an historic bath which was used by pilgrims past to purify themselves with the hot water.

Settle in to your simple accommodations and enjoy soaking your tired muscles.

Overnight at a simple ryokan, minsuku lodge or similar - Yunomine Onsen

DAY NO. 20

Meals Provided: B L D

Yunomine Onsen / Kumano-gawa River / Shingu / Kii-Katsuura

This morning after breakfast, depart with your guide. Your hotel will arrange a packed lunch for you to bring along with you today.

Today you will enjoy a traditional flat bottom boat tour on the Kumano-gawa retracing the historic Kumano Kodo water pilgrimage route. You will also visit Kumano Hayatama Taisha and Katsuura Onsen, a coastal hot spring fishing village famous for its hot springs.

8:31 am - Depart Yunomine Onsen

9:08 am - Arrive Michi-no-Eki Kumano-gawa

Enjoy your boat journey from 10 - 11:30am. You will visit Kumano Hayatama Taisha, one of the three Kumano grand shrines which is located at the mouth of the Kumano-gawa river.

Visit Kamikura-Jinja, a gigantic rock located halfway up Gongen Mountain and is revered as a deity.

You will then depart Shingu by local train and enjoy fabulous coastal views. Be sure to sit on the lefthand side of the train.

3:30 pm - Depart Shingu Station

3:53 pm - Arrive at Kii-Katsuura

Upon arrival in Kii-Katsuura, a fishing port on the rugged Pacific coastline, settle in to your simple ryokan, guesthouse or minshuku and enjoy the fabulous coastal views as you soak your bones.

Overnight at a simple ryokan, minsuku lodge or similar - Kii-Katsuura

DAY NO. 21

Meals Provided: B

Kii-Katsuura / Daimon-zaka / Kii-Katsuura / Nagoya

This morning after breakfast, depart Kii-Katsuura for Daimon-zaka by local bus.

8:25 am - Depart Kii-Katsuura by local bus

8:44 am - Arrive at Daimon-zaka

Upon arrival, continue your hike as you walk along the scenic Daimon-zaka slope until you reach the Nachi waterfall, the tallest in Japan. This walk typically takes about 1 hour

and is 2km or 1.2 miles. This hike is a short by scenic cobblestone staircase rising out of the valley lined with ancient trees.

Elevation gain: 190 m or 623 feet
Elevation loss: 460 m or 1509 feet

Along the way visit the Kumano Nachi Taisha, one of the three grand shrines located halfway up Nchi Mountain, about 350 m or 1148 feet above sea level. The reward is reaching Nachi Falls at 133 meters or 136 feet high and 13 m or 43 feet wide. It is the tallest waterfall in Japan.

Afterwards, you will return to Kii-Katsuura by local bus.

11:44 am - Depart Nachi-no-Taki-mae
12:08 pm - Arrive at Kii-Katsuura

Upon arrival, enjoy lunch (on own expense) at a local restaurant. You will then be transferred by private car to Nagoya.

Settle in to your hotel with the evening free at your leisure.

Overnight at the Nagoya Marriott Associa (Deluxe Room) - Nagoya

DAY NO. 22

Meals Provided: B

Nagoya / Visit local artists / Tokyo

This morning meet your private guide and driver and depart for a full day tour of visiting more local kilns. You will drive about 45 minutes to visit one of the kilns of Japanese ceramic technique "Tokoname-yaki". Tokoname ware (Tokoname yaki in Japanese) is a form of ceramic pottery that is produced in the area around the city of Tokoname in Aichi prefecture. This traditional craft comes from one of the Six Ancient Kilns of Japan. Along with Bizen, Tamba, Echizen, Seto, and Shigaraki, Tokoname is one of the most outstanding Japanese kilns with traditions that remain even today.

Enjoy lunch at a local favorite spot (on own expense) before heading to another kiln, roughly an hour's drive away. This afternoon visit the kilns of Japanese ceramic technique "Seto-Sometsuke-yaki". This is an exclusive visiting of work studio and kilns of "Seto-yaki" Seto Sometsuke ware (called Seto Sometsuke yaki in Japanese) is ceramic ware produced near the cities of Seto and Owariasahi in Aichi prefecture. The term sometsuke is normally used when designs are painted on porcelain with an indigo blue pigment, but for this craft, it also includes painting on ceramics.

Afterwards, you will be transferred to the Nagoya Station in time for your train to Tokyo.

3:59 pm - Depart Nagoya Station

5:36 pm - Arrive Tokyo Station

**Reserved first class seat, tickets to be provided*

Upon arrival, you will be met and transfer by foot to your nearby hotel.

Overnight at the Tokyo Station hotel (Palace View Premium Deluxe Room) - Tokyo

Meticulously refurbished when the hotel reopened in 2012, the 150 guestrooms and suites deftly balance the refined elegance of classic European décor with modern comfort and technology, while charmingly retaining the vestige of the station building's rich heritage and significance.

DAY NO. 23

Meals Provided: B

Tokyo / Depart

This morning you will be privately transferred to the airport in time for your international flight back home.

Designed by **Rebecca Mazzaro** | Travel Specialist

