



JAPAN

Walking | Cycling | Culture Adventure
14 nights | 04 -18 July 2025

DAY 1 TOKYO

Arrive in Tokyo (international flights included from NZ). Your adventure begins in this dynamic, modern hub and thriving capital of an ancient land. You'll be met on arrival at the airport by your Tour Leader and transferred to the hotel. Afterwards, your leader will take you for a walk around one of Tokyo's most popular hubs. Contradictions are everywhere, as hi-tech gadgetry and neon lights play an integral part in the lives of a population steeped in tradition. Enjoy a welcome dinner to celebrate the start of a new adventure!

DAY 2 TOKYO

The day begins with a visit to the iconic Asakusa Sensoji Temple in the historic Asakusa district. The temple's Kaminarimon Gate and the bustling Nakamise shopping street provide a captivating introduction to Tokyo's rich cultural heritage. Next, the tranquil Meiji Jingu Shrine and the adjacent Yoyogi Park offering a serene and verdant oasis for relaxation and exploration. The adventure continues in the vibrant Harajuku neighbourhood, known for its trendy fashion, unique street art, and diverse culinary scene. The evening will end in Golden Gai, a compact neighbourhood full of tiny bars that can usually only seat six to eight people at a time. After a short orientation walk through the area, take the opportunity in small groups to find a bar and enjoy a drink

DAY 3 TOKYO – NAKASENDO TRAIL

Hop on a train towards the Nakasendo Way – a historic network that connected shukuba (post stations) between Tokyo and Kyoto in the Edo period. We walk a section of the Way between Tsumago and Magome. Take a well-maintained and marked trail through forested countryside past traditional houses reminiscent of the time. Both Tsumago and Magome were towns where weary travellers would rest during their journey along the Nakasendo Way, and tonight you'll stay in a local guesthouse in town, replicating their experience. Before checking into the guesthouse, visit the Toson Memorial Museum, which is dedicated to the life and works of writer Shimazaki Toson.

DAY 4 NAKASENDO TRAIL

This morning a local train to Narai, from where you will start a hike on another portion of the Nakasendo Trail, to Yabuhara. You will have plenty of free time to take in both of these relais stations as well. Take a train back to Tsumago or Magome in the afternoon. Note - The order of this walk might be reversed depending on the conditions on that day.

DAY 5 NAKASENDO - ONOMICHI

We have a morning hike along another section of the Nakasendo trail to Nagiso station. From here a regional train and plus a shinkansen (bullet train) to Furukawa, connecting through to Onomichi. Onomichi marks the beginning of the famous Shimanami Kaido cycling track and the town is associated with a great number of Japanese literary figures. Various temples, pagodas and parks need exploring while here – the most popular walk being Temple Way. Senkoji Park gives us a bird's-eye view of the city and the Inland Sea. Tonight we head into town and grab a ramen dinner in one of the laneway restaurants – these delicious soupy noodles are what Onomichi is known for.

DAY 6 ONOMICHI CYCLING

An early morning has us ready take on a section of the Shimanami Kaido. This cycle path connects six small islands on the Inland Sea between Honshu and Shikoku. Today, you'll ride across three of the connecting islands, arriving on Ikuchijima around midday. The cycling paths are well established, and you'll pass by cafes, shrines, small beaches and gorgeous vistas of the dotted islands and tiny shing villages along the Setouchi Inland Sea. In the afternoon give your legs a rest and visit the Kosanji Temple & Hill of Hope - this unique gem of a temple is very colorful and artistic.

DAY 7 ONOMICHI – KYOTO

Today we take a local train and a shinkansen to Kyoto. Originally founded as Heian-kyo (translating to the tranquillity and peace capital) in AD794, Kyoto was the capital of Japan for over 1000 years before the emperor and government relocated to Tokyo. Because of this, Kyoto is rich in history, with over 2000 temples, shrines and gardens. After dropping your bags off at the accommodation, head out to Fushimi Inari Shrine – one of the quintessential images of Japan. Famous for its thousands of reddish coloured torii gates, get lost in one of the networks of trails, and be sure to snap a few shots of this iconic spot. We a hike up the hill away from most of the

crowds, so you can get the best views and most peaceful feel of the place. Later we visit the historic Gion area, where you might spot a geisha. The day ends with a traditional Tea Ceremony

DAY 8 **KYOTO**

Today we visit Ginkakuji, also known as the Silver Pavilion. Built more than 500 years ago, this structure is surrounded by intricate Japanese landscape architecture and was modelled off the Golden Pavilion, Kinakujji. From Ginkakuji, you'll hike up Mt Daimonji-yama – one of the best short hikes in Kyoto. From the top, you'll get a panoramic view of the city and on a clear day, all the way over to Yoshida-yama Hill. A visit to Japan is not complete without a Sake experience so we visit a brewery and enjoy learning about this Japanese favourite - by tasting it!! A free afternoon in town to check out Kyoto's Kitchen at Nishiki food markets, Nijo Castle and the Imperial Palace, or get lost in the zigzagging lanes of the traditional Ninen-zaka and Sannen-zaka districts. Perhaps try a sentos (traditional bathhouse) in the city – a must-do experience at least once in Japan!

DAY 9 **KYOTO CYCLING**

Jump back on two wheels today. We pick up rental bikes and start exploring Kyoto. Cycle along the beautiful Kamogawa River to Demachiyangiji, stopping at Daitokuji Temple. Learn about Zen Buddhism and find a dose of peace before hopping back on the saddle and continuing to the Kinkakuji Temple – also known as the Golden Pavilion. Cycle back along the Kamogawa River to finish the adventure at the bike shop. Tonight we go out to find the best feed in Kyoto!

DAY 10 **KYOTO – KOGUCHI**

This morning we train to Shingu. Visit Kumano Hayatama Taisha Shrine – one of the three main shrines part of the Kumano Kodo network. Visit Kamikura Shrine – one of the oldest and most sacred shrines in Shingu which has stunning views over Shingu city out to the Pacific Ocean. Change to a local public bus through to Koguchi, where we rest for the night and get ready for tomorrow's hike.

DAY 11 **KAMONO KODO**

Today we head out to hike part of the famous Kumano Kodo – one of the only two UNESCO World Heritage-listed pilgrim routes in the world. The Kumano Kodo is a network of ancient routes that connect three major religious sites – known collectively as the Kumano Sanzan. Throughout the centuries, the pilgrim route has been used by imperial families, nobility, warriors and common folk alike as part of their spiritual practice. For the first couple of hours it's an uphill climb that rises over 800 m. After reaching the Echizen-toge Pass, follow the forest ridge for another couple of kilometres until you reach the highest point – Funami-jaya teahouse at 868 m. From here, head mostly downhill to Nachi Taisha – another of the three Kumano shrines. See the Nachi Falls along the way, too, then take a bus down to Kii Katsuura for the night

DAY 12 **TOBA**

Take the train to Toba today. Toba is the perfect place to wind down after a few days of hiking and cycling. A short orientation walk in the old town of Toba and the option to have a fresh seafood barbecue for lunch – oysters, anyone? In the afternoon we visit the famous Mikimoto Pearl Island

Museum. Toba's claim to fame is it's the birthplace of the cultured pearl industry and here, you'll be able to witness how Ama divers (female pearl divers) collect pearls in the traditional way. In the evening, check out the onsen at our hotel – there's no better way to relax tense muscles than soaking yourself in the hot springs with an amazing view over the bay.

DAY 13 **TOBA – OSAKA**

In the morning we return to Osaka by train. Arrive at lunch time and take a street food walking tour to the famous Dotombori district, popular for its shopping, food and entertainment. At night, this place is lit by hundreds of neon lights and signs, including the famous Glico Running Man sign and Kani Doraku crab sign. “Japan’s kitchen” as the city is often called, has a department’s underground floor called “depachika” – which is where delicious treasures, both sweet and spicy, are hidden. Finish the day with a final dinner at one of the many amazing restaurants.

DAY 14 **OSAKA**

Perhaps partake in a Calligraphy or Cooking class this morning and then enjoy some free shopping time in this fabulous city. A special farewell dinner tonight.

DAY 15 **DEPART**

There will be a departure transfer at an appropriate time for outbound flights.

DATE

Start: 04 July 2025

End: 18 July 2025

PRICE

\$12,995 per person twin/double share – land & air package

\$1530 single supplement

Twin share option with same gender subject to availability

INCLUDES

- Return economy class airfares ex-Auckland
- Return airport transfers & transportation
- English speaking guide
- 5 Hike days
- 3 Cycle days – standard bike (\$120 additional for Ebike)
- 14 nights accommodation | Hotel 10 nights, Ryokan 2 nights, Minshuku 2 nights
- 13 Breakfasts, 1 lunch, 4 dinners
- Included Activity/Entry Fee: Meiji Jingu Shrine – Yoyogi Park – Asakusa Sensoji Temple – Shibuya walking tour – Golden Gai orientation walk – Nakasendo Trail – Toson Memorial Museum – Shimanami Kaido cycling – Ikuchijima – Kosanji Temple & Hill of Hope – Fushimi Inari-Taisha – Gion District walk – Tea Ceremony – One day metro & bus pass – Ginkakuji

Temple (Silver Pavilion) – Daimonjiyama hike – Sake Brewery & Tasting – Kyoto Cycling – Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion) – Daitokuji Temple – One day metro & bus pass– Hiking Kumano Kodo – Kumano Nachi Shrine – Mikimoto Pearl Museum – Dotonbori walking with 1 street food snack & 1 drink – Depachika visit with 1 snack – Farewell Dinner

EXCLUDES

- Meals not mentioned in itinerary
- Optional tours
- Transportation on free days
- Travel Insurance (compulsory)
- Ebike upgrade NZ\$120

ECONOMY CLASS FLIGHTS INCLUDED

04 JUL Depart Auckland 10.15am arrive Narita 6.15pm on Air NZ

18 JUL Depart Kansai 2.25pm arrive Narita 3.40pm on All Nippon Air

18 JUL Depart Narita 8.00pm arrive Auckland 9.35am on 19 JUL on Air NZ

GROUP SIZE

14

FITNESS

The active nature of this trip means that the fitter you are, the more you'll be able to enjoy the activity on offer. It is expected that travellers joining this trip will have had some experience hiking and cycling before they join. On some hikes, you'll need to be able to carry a small overnight pack on the trail because we will forward your main luggage to the next destination. Hiking distances vary from 3 to 15km per day with no more elevation change than 60 to 900 m. The cycling distances are around 30 km each. The hikes on the Kumano Kodo and Nakasendo Way include sections rather than the whole trail, which gives you an experience of the trails without needing to commit to multiple days of strenuous trekking. In some destinations you may be staying in a Ryokan, which is a Japanese-style inn with shared facilities. It's a great taste of tradition, but not everyone finds futon mattresses on a tatami mat or small bathrooms and proximity to other guests as comfortable as Western-style hotels.