THE KUMANO KODO TRAIL

Walk the 11th century Kumano Kodo pilgrim’s trail through rural Japan to the three grand shrines of Kumano. Walking from village to village, staying in authentic Japanese lodgings each night you will experience the Japan of your imagination.

Now a UNESCO World Heritage site, the Kumano Kodo are a series of pilgrimage routes to Kumano, one of the two centres of Shugendo practice in Japan. The three Grand Shrines of Kumano in the mystical Kii Peninsula – Kumano Hongu Taisha, Kumano Hayatama Taisha, and Kumano Nachi Taisha – have been pilgrimage destinations for the imperial family and aristocrats since the 10th century.

There are five pilgrimage routes leading to the three Grand Shrines and our tour takes you along a section of the Nakasendo route, along which the Imperial family made over 100 pilgrimages from Kyoto during the 10th to 13th centuries. The trail weaves its way through the forested mountains and small villages to the Grand Shrine of Hongu, before finishing at the Pacific Ocean at Nachi Grand Shrine.

This route offers five wonderful days of varied walking along village paths, forested mountains trails, visiting mountain-top villages, soothing hot springs and sacred temples, before finishing at Nachi shrine on the coast. Each night you will stay in small local minshuku where you will be welcomed as one of the family. Impeccable service, beautiful rooms and delicious food are the hallmark of these charming establishments, which will no doubt be a highlight of your trip.

To complete your experience of Japan your trip begins with two nights in Kyoto, the showpiece of traditional imperial Japan, and finishes with a night in Osaka, the food capital of Japan.

Our Kumano Kudo Trail self guided tour includes 2 nights in Kyoto, 5 nights accommodation in hand picked traditional minshuku on the Kumano Kodo, 1 night in Osaka, 8 breakfasts, 5 dinners, train tickets from Kyoto via Osaka to Kii-Tabe, and from Kii-Katsuura to Osaka, a detailed day by day itinerary and walking route notes, a waterproof map, local phone support and a guided tour of Kyoto. If you would prefer you can also book this trip on a “walk only” basis as a 6 day and 5 night package from Takahara to Kii-Katsuura.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Imperial Kyoto, the heart of Japan’s traditional culture.
- Following in the footsteps of Japan’s Imperial family on the Kumano Kodo Trail.
- Walking through stunning rural scenery - Japan as it once was.
- Relaxing in an outdoor bath at Yunomine Onsen
- Exploring the Grand Shrine at Hongu
- Sumptuous evening meals beautifully presented in traditional minshuku

WHY WALK THE KUMANO KODO TRAIL WITH US?

Macs Adventure specialises in self guided walking holidays as we believe that there is no better way to discover a new destination than on two feet at your own pace. Nowhere is this more true than in Japan! You will gain a unique insight into the culture, tradition and hospitality of rural Japan as you follow the ancient Kumano Kodo Trail through the mountains, staying in traditional guest houses each night.

SUMMARY

Tour: Kumano Kudo Trail
Code: WJSKK
Type: Self-Guided Walking Holiday
Price: See Website
Single Supplement: See Website
Dates: April to November
Walking Days: 6 (4 - 8 hours daily)
Nights: 8
Start/Finish: Kyoto / Osaka
Grade: Moderate

Is the Kumano Kudo Trail for me?
Traditional Imperial Kyoto, following in the footsteps of imperial pilgrims, staying in traditional minshuku and buzzing Osaka. All this combined with great walking through the best of rural Japan. It doesn’t get any better than this.

WHAT’S INCLUDED?

- Accommodation: 2 nights in Kyoto and 1 night in Osaka in carefully selected 3 or 4* hotels, 5 nights on the Kumano Kodo Trail in traditional small minshuku or ryokan (guest houses).
- Meals: 8 Breakfasts and 5 Evening meals on the trail included.
- Baggage Transfer: Not included.
- Guided Tour: 1 Day guided tour of Kyoto
- Information Pack: Detailed information pack, day by day itinerary, turn by turn route notes, waterproof map.
- Transfers: Train tickets from Kyoto/Osaka to closest train station at the start/end of the walk.
- Local support: English speaking local support by phone.

TO BOOK PLEASE VISIT WWW.MACSADVENTURE.COM OR CALL +44 (0) 141 530 8886
**DETAILED ITINERARY**

Days: 9  
Nights: 8  
Walking Days: 5

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**DAY 1**  
**Arrive Kyoto**

Arrive in Kyoto and check-in to your hotel or ryokan in central Kyoto.

Kyoto is one of the world’s most culturally rich cities scattered with hundreds, if not thousands, of pockets of incredible beauty. The city has 17 UNESCO World Heritage sites, 1600 Buddhist temples, over 400 Shinto shrines and 24 museums. As home to the Japanese Imperial family from 794 to 1868 it has been central to Japanese history and is a city that must be on your list.

**Overnight:** Kyoto hotel or ryokan

**DAY 2**  
**Guided tour in Kyoto**

Today you will fall in love with the Japan of your imagination as you discover the secret gardens, hidden courtyards and floating temples of Kyoto. Perhaps even catching a glimpse of an elusive geisha.

Your local guide will meet you at your hotel in the morning, and you will have a full-day tour using a mixture of public transport and walking. We suggest visiting Kiyomizu Temple, Sanjusangendo Temple, and a walk along the Philosopher’s Path or you can choose your own itinerary.

**Overnight:** Kyoto hotel or ryokan

**DAY 3**  
**Takijiri Oji to Takahara**

Taking the train, you will travel to the mystical Kii Peninsula via Osaka. Your train will hug the coastline until you reach the small town of Tanabe. From there you will board a bus (payable locally) and then start the walk on the Kumano pilgrimage route from Takijiri. From the start at Takijiri Oji, the path climbs steeply up to the ridge-top village of Takahara (2 hours). Stay at a lovely ryokan with both Japanese and western style rooms,

**Walk:** 4.5km, 370m ascent, 2 hours  
**Dinner & Overnight:** Organic Hotel Kiri

*Run by local Jian Shino who speaks English, Spanish and Chinese (as well as his native Japanese), this welcoming ryokan/hotel has both western and Japanese style rooms, all with spectacular views over the valley and mountains beyond. If you are lucky, Shino-san may even serenade you with some flamenco guitar!*

**DAY 4**  
**Takahara to Chikatsuyu**

The Nakasheji has been established as one of Japan’s National Historic Roads and here the paths are clearly defined, and flagstones have been laid in some places to make the climbs easier. Today’s walk undulating walk through gorgeous rural scenery passes several oji shrines before descending to the small village of Chikatsuyu.

**Walk:** 10 km, 480m ascent, 520m descent, 4-5 hours  
**Dinner & Overnight:** Chikatsuyu Minshuku

In the small town of Chikatsuyu, this minshuku (guesthouse) has its own hot spring baths next door, and some of the freshest and tastiest food you will enjoy in Japan!

**DAY 5**

**Chikatsuyu to Yunomine**

Today’s walk continues through the mountains from Chikatsuyu to the grand shrine Kumano Hongu Taisha at the heart of the sacred Kii mountains. Kumano was said to be the entrance to the land of Yomi, the ‘other world’ which spirits travelled to in Japanese mythology.

From the shrine, you take a bus (payable locally) to Yunomine Onsen, one of the oldest natural hot spring onsen villages in Japan.

**Walk:** 24 km, 820m ascent, 1060m descent, 8 hours. (Possible to shorten to 21 or 7 km using local buses.)  
**Dinner & Overnight:** Yoshinoya Ryokan, Yunomine

Located in the hot spring village of Yunomine, Yoshinoya has its own hot spring baths with a ‘rotenburo’ outside bath to enjoy after a day’s hiking.

**DAY 6**

**Yunomine to Koguchi**

Take a short bus ride to Ukegawa (payable locally). A shorter hike today, over to the small village of Koguchi. A warm welcome and good food await at our small inn, and there will be time for lazing by the river or another soak in the bath.

**Walk:** 12.4 km, 520m ascent, 500m descent, 4 hours  
**Dinner & Overnight:** Momofuku Minshuku

This charming traditional guest house has only...
three guest rooms and offers an intimate insight into family life in rural Japan.

**DAY 7**
Koguchi to Nachi-san
The final section of the Kumano Kodo trail takes you over the Ogumotorigoe Pass, where you should catch a glimpse of the Pacific Ocean. It then descends to Nachi-san, the location of Nachi Taisha (Grand Shrine), one of the three ‘Grand Shrines of Kumano’ and Nachi-taki waterfall, Japan's highest.

**Walk:** 15.1 km, 980m ascent, 920m descent, 6 hours

**Dinner & Overnight:** Mitaki Sanso, Nachi-san
A modern building decorated in traditional Japanese style Mikaki Sanso promises a feast of traditional food that you won’t forget in a hurry.

**DAY 8**
Transfer to Osaka
Today you have a final short walk of 45 minutes from Nachi shrine to the coast at Kii-Katsuura where you board the train to Osaka (4h).

Osaka is the heart of Kansai and second only to Tokyo as a thriving urban environment. Food is what drives Osaka and it is deservedly known as Japan’s food capital.

**Walk:** 45 minutes

**Overnight:** Osaka Hotel
Conveniently located in the heart of Osaka your comfortable modern hotel is the perfect base from which to explore Osaka.

**DAY 9**
Onward Travel
Your trip ends this morning. Fly out from nearby Kansai Airport, or extend your trip with one of suggestions below.

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**TRIP EXTENSIONS**

Why not extend your stay in Japan with one of the following extensions, contact us to arrange:

**Asuka-mura**
A lovely town south of Nara with some of Japan's earliest Buddhist temples, as well as kofun burial mounds from the 5th century. Asuka is a perfect town to explore on foot or why not rent a bicycle from the train station and explore at a relaxed pace? We will arrange a night at one of the small minshuku in the town.

**Mount Koya**
This atmospheric temple complex south of Kyoto is home to around 100 temples and shukubo (pilgrim’s lodging). Founded by the monk Kobo Daishi in the 10th century, Mount Koya is the spiritual centre of Shonagon (True word) Buddhism, and he is enshrined at Oku-no-in. Located at 800 metres altitude in the Wakayama mountains, you reach Mount Koya via the scenic Nankai railway. There are many optional local walks.

**HOLIDAY INFORMATION**

**Accommodation**
In Kyoto and Tokyo we use carefully selected western-style hotel. We use local family-run accommodations on the walking section. They are generally simply furnished and less formal, but have excellent food and a wonderful personal service.

**Meals**
Japanese cuisine is the highlight of many people’s visit to Japan and this is especially the case on the Kumano Kodo Trail. Your trip includes all breakfasts and 5 evening meals whilst on the trail.

Most meals will be Japanese cuisine, though breakfast in western-style hotels usually includes more familiar choices. Dinner and breakfast in ryokan and minshuku are set meals, usually with a whole succession of different dishes which will delight you. Alcoholic and soft drinks are not included with meals. Tipping is not customary at hotels and restaurants in Japan.

**Luggage Transfer**
Luggage transfer is not included during your walk. Your accommodation during the walk provide robes to wear in the evening and shoes are not worn inside, so you only need your hiking gear and can travel very light.

In Japan there is an overnight luggage forwarding service which is cheap, reliable and costs about £12 per bag per day.

On the Kumano Kodo tour we recommend forwarding your luggage from Kyoto (or wherever you are staying before the walk) to Yunomine Onsen. You then carry overnight essentials for your nights in Takahara and Chikatsuyu. You then forward your luggage from Yunomine Onsen to wherever you are staying after the walk; you carry your overnight essentials for your

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**WALK ONLY ITINERARY**

If you would prefer to make your own arrangements before and after your walk we offer a 6 day/5 night itinerary on just the Kumano Kodo Trail. This itinerary runs from day 3 to day 8 of the above itinerary and does not include the two nights in Kyoto at the start and one night in Osaka at the end.

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nights in Koguchi and Nachi. Our information pack has full details of how to use this service, which is really easy.

Navigation
The route is partly way marked (in English and Japanese) and we provide detailed route notes and topographic maps so you should have no problem following the trail.

Equipment
Your information pack has a detailed equipment list which includes standard walking gear such as good walking boots or shoes, lightweight clothes, waterproofs and a day pack.

Solo Walkers & Single Rooms
This trip is available to solo walkers and a limited number of single rooms are available, although a single/solo supplement is payable.

AVAILABLE & PRICES

Availability
You can start the Kumano Kodo Trail on any day that suits you although we recommended the best time to walk is from April until November.

Accommodations are busy and may charge extra during the following Japanese holiday periods: New Year (29 December to 04 January), Golden Week (29 April - 05 May), and O-bon (09 - 17 August). Please enquire for availability and pricing if your trip falls within those dates.

Price
Please see our website for current prices.

Included
- 2 Nights 4* hotel accommodation in Kyoto.
- 5 Nights minshuku (guest house) accommodation on the Kumano Kodo trail.
- 1 Nights 4* hotel accommodation in Osaka.
- 8 Breakfasts
- 5 evening meals (on the Kumano Kodo)

- Train tickets from/to Kyoto or Osaka.
- 1 Day private guided tour of Kyoto.
- Detailed information pack with local travel information, detailed route notes, topographical maps and hints and tips.
- Telephone support from our local, English speaking, representative.

Not Included
- International flights and travel to Kyoto/from Osaka.
- Drinks with meals.
- Lunches.
- Evening meals in Kyoto & Osaka.
- Local buses on day 3, 5 & 6 should be paid locally (around ¥2500, £18 or $28).
- Baggage forwarding is not included, though we provide instructions for how this can be easily arranged.

Travel Information

Getting to and from Japan

By Air: The best airport to arrive at is Osaka Kansai Airport (KIX), which has flights from international destinations.

You can also fly into Tokyo Narita (NRT) and take an internal flight or the shinkansen (bullet train) to Kyoto (3h30).

Getting around

Your package includes train tickets from/to Kyoto or Osaka. The public transport system in Japan is world class and your pre departure information pack has detailed information on tickets, trains and how to use public transport easily.

Visas

Please check your visa requirements with the foreign office or the embassy in your country of residence before travelling to Japan.

British nationals wishing to visit Japan for three months or less for business, tourism or family purposes etc (but not to work for a local employer) may do so without a visa. You must have a valid passport and an onward/return ticket. Please visit www.fco.gov.uk for up to date information.

HOW TO BOOK

When you are ready to book you can book securely online at www.macsadventure.com or by phone on +44 (0) 141 530 8886.

BOOK WITH CONFIDENCE

Financial Security

In accordance with "The Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations1992" all passengers booking with Macs Adventure Ltd are fully protected for the initial deposit and subsequently the balance of all monies paid to us, including repatriation if required (this insurance will not cover repatriation to the country of origin for the passengers outside of the EU), arising from cancellation or curtailment of your travel arrangements due to the insolvency of Macs Adventure Ltd.

ABTA Member Statement

Macs Adventure Holidays is a Member of ABTA. ABTA and ABTA members help holidaymakers to get the most from their travel and assist when things don’t go according to plan. We are obliged to maintain a high standard of service to you by ABTA’s Code of Conduct.

For more information on ABTA, the Code of Conduct and the arbitration scheme available to you if you have a complaint, contact ABTA, 30 Park Street, London SE1 9EQ, tel 020 3117 581.