JAPAN'S CULTURE AND COUNTRYSIDE

TRIP SUMMARY

HIGHLIGHTS

- Traveling the ancient Nakasendo Way
- Experiencing both modern and rural traditional Japan
- Staying in traditional inns with their reputation for hospitality
- Learning about Japanese history and culture
- Visiting two of the most dynamic modern cities in the world

Phone: 877-439-4042    Outside the US: 410-435-1965    Email: info@goodadventure.com
TRIP AT A GLANCE

Location: Osaka, Japan
Activities: Hiking
Arrive: Arrive Kansai (KIX) or Osaka (ITM) International Airports anytime on Day 1.
Depart: Depart Narita Airport (NRT) anytime on the last day.

TRIP OVERVIEW

While Japan has long been known for its dynamic cities, only recently has the beauty and culture of the Japanese countryside begun to gain attention. On this trip we experience both, spending time in the beginning in Kyoto, the cultural heart of Japan, and at the end in Tokyo, a mixture of ancient and modern. In between we will hike some of the best parts of the Nakasendo Way, which linked the two cities during Japan's feudal period. It was the 'road through the mountains' travelled by feudal lords and their retinues, samurai, merchants, and travelers. Each day we will walk a different section of this ancient route, avoiding those parts that have become busy roads. Each evening we will stay in one of the small "post" towns where we'll enjoy the warm hospitality of a traditional country inn, feasting on freshly prepared dishes from the regional cuisine. If you have been wanting an in depth introduction to Japan's history, nature, and culture, please join us. $4695 Maximum group size: 12

Download Trip Summary and Packing List

RATING

This trip is designed for women who want to combine hiking off the beaten track in the Japanese countryside, visits to two of the main cities, and learning about Japanese history and culture while enjoying fresh regional cuisine. Women should be in good physical condition and able to hike for three to five hours a day with elevation gain over a 1,000 feet; and one longer day with elevation over 2,000 feet. Rating: 1  2  [3]  4  5

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- An English speaking female Japanese tour leader and an AGC group leader
- 9 nights double occupancy at western style hotels in the cities and traditional Japanese inns in the countryside
- All activities mentioned in the itinerary, including sightseeing tours in Kyoto and Tokyo
- All breakfasts, 7 lunches, and 6 dinners (see itinerary)
- All transportation during the trip, including bullet and local trains, bus, and sometimes taxi, and airport transfer at the beginning and end of the trip
- Baggage transfer on 3 occasions

What's not included: Travel to and from Japan, airport transfer outside the trip dates, beverages at meals, snacks, 1 lunch and 2 dinners, guide gratuities, travel insurance.
OUR ITINERARY

Below is the itinerary we have planned for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

<table>
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<th>DAY 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Plan to arrive anytime today at Kansai International Airport (KIX) or Osaka International Airport (ITM). We'll arrange a shared taxi transfer from the airport to our Kyoto hotel. We'll gather early evening in the lobby of the hotel where we'll meet our local expert guide as well as each other. After Welcome and Introductions we'll walk to a local restaurant for our first shared meal, where our guide will give us a trip overview and orientation and start to answer the many questions we undoubtedly have. We'll undoubtedly all be ready for an early dinner tonight. Overnight Hearton Hotel or similar western-style hotel. D</td>
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<th>DAY 2</th>
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<td>Today we'll spend getting to know Kyoto, starting with a visit to Fushimi Inari shrine in southeastern Kyoto. Fushimi Inari is known for its rows of vermilion torii gates that snake their way up the mountain from the street level shrine to the upper sanctuary. The gates are left by devotees in gratitude or to seek the good graces of the titular spirit of this Shinto shrine. After ascending the shrine, we'll descend to nearby Tofukuji Temple, a Buddhist temple that is a UNESCO World Heritage temple and shows us another side of the spiritual traditions of Japan. We'll break for lunch and then continue in the afternoon for a walk of the Gion district, famous for its many teahouses and schools that serve a lively community of geisha and maiko, or apprentice Geisha. If we are lucky, perhaps we will spot a colorfully attired maiko on her way to a class or evening appointment. Tonight dinner is on your own so you can choose a restaurant of your liking with the assistance of our guide. Overnight Hearton Hotel or similar. B, L</td>
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<tr>
<th>DAY 3</th>
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<tr>
<td>This morning we send our bags ahead to be reunited with us tomorrow and travel by train to Asuka, a small community on the Yamato plain in Nara prefecture. Before Tokyo, Kyoto, and Nara were political centres of the Japanese archipelago, Asuka claimed that title. The town is associated with Prince Shotoku, who brought the Buddhist faith to Japan. The town is peppered with ancient stone monuments whose origins are not known. On our arrival in Asuka, we'll have a cooking class of a local specialty on an organic farm. We better be good students because for lunch we'll dine on the fruits of our labors. Then in the afternoon we'll take a walk past some of the town's stone monuments and to the Inabushi rice terraces, where there is an observation deck that overlooks them and the mountains. We'll then continue to Nara and dinner at a local restaurant. Hiking: about 3 hours. 3.0 miles; ascent 1375 ft/descent 1390 ft. Overnight Piazza Nara or similar western-style hotel. B, L, D</td>
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DAY 4

On today's hike we follow in the footsteps of warriors who took this route from Nara to the sword-making village of Yagyu. The full hike is a challenging 12 miles, but we'll take a shorter 7.3 mile option from Enjo-ji Temple. The hike ends with a wonderful stroll through Nara Park, with its famous deer and temples. We'll visit Todaiji Temple in the afternoon. Tonight we'll choose from among the many restaurant options in Nara.

Hiking: about 5 hours. 7.3 miles; ascent 790 ft/descent 1755 ft. Overnight Piazza Nara or similar western-style hotel. B, L, D

DAY 5

Today we begin walking the Nakasendo Way. We travel by a combination of regional trains and the shinkansen, or bullet train, to Nakatsugawa. At Nakatsugawa we board a local bus for the short journey to Magome. We then walk 3.5 hours along the Magome Pass to O-Tsumago, a small hamlet on the Nakasendo Trail. We'll have some time to continue on an additional 20 minute's walk to Tsumago to visit the post town before returning to our rural country minshuku. Our main luggage will be sent ahead to the ryokan in Kiso-Fukushima where we stay tomorrow night, so today we'll carry only what we need for the night.

Hiking: about 3.5 hours. 5.2 miles; ascent 1070 ft/descent 1410 ft. Overnight at a Minshuku, a traditional Japanese Inn. B, L, D

DAY 6

Continuing on the Nakasendo Way, we'll walk out from our inn to continue to Tsumago to spend a bit more time. We then continue on our longest walk - a beautiful and varied hike from Tsumago to Nojiri. The trail travels through small valleys and past forests of bamboo and Japanese cedar, through some of the least-developed scenery on the tour. We'll finish our journey by train to Kiso-Fukushima, where we'll stay at a lovely hot spring ryokan set in a remote valley above the town. After enjoying the ryokan's lovely indoor and outdoor hot-spring baths, we'll feast on a Japanese dinner with fresh local produce.

Hiking: about 6 hours. 11.5 miles; ascent 2275 ft/descent 2112 ft. Overnight at Japanese Hot Springs inn, a ryokan. B, L, D

DAY 7

This morning we take the train to Yabuhara, to hike over the Torii pass to Narai (about 3.5 hours). We will have some time to explore this evocative village before checking in to our Edo-period minshuku in the heart of the village.

Hiking: about 3.5 hours. 4 miles; ascent 1130 ft/descent 885 ft. Overnight at a Minshuku. B, L, D
DAY 8
We'll finish our journey on the Nakasendo Way with a short walk to the small town of Kiso-Hirasawa, famous for its lacquerware. After spending some time exploring the town with its many small shops selling beautifully-crafted tableware and furniture, we board a train at Kiso-Hirasawa station for our onward journey to Tokyo. We arrive at Shinjuku station - one of the busiest rail stations in the world and a bit of a culture-shock after our sojourn in the countryside. After lunch, before we discover the modern side of Tokyo tomorrow, we'll enjoy the view over the vast Tokyo conurbation from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Buildings. We'll then settle into our hotel in late afternoon and have a free evening to explore Tokyo cuisine on your own. Hiking: about 1 hour. 1.6 miles; negligible ascent and descent. Overnight at Shiba Park Hotel or a similar Western-style hotel. B, L

DAY 9
We can't be in Japan and not spend some time seeing one of the world's great cities. We start in Asakusa, an old quarter in Tokyo's shitamachi ('low city') which still displays some narrow streets reminiscent of Edo period Tokyo. Its main attraction is Senso-ji, a large Buddhist temple with a five-story pagoda, dating originally from the 7th century and rebuilt after its destruction during World War II. Leading up to the main temple buildings is the Nakamise-dori, a pedestrian street lined with shops selling a variety of Japanese arts and crafts and souvenirs. At the end of the street is the Kaminari-mon, the famous entrance gate to the temple. In the afternoon, we continue on to the modern Harajuku district. We'll visit Meiji Jingu, a shrine to the Emperor and Empress Shoken who were instrumental in bringing Japan into the modern age. Empress Shoken in particular had a deep love for poetry and it is possible to buy a fortune at the shrine that takes the form of a poetic verse. After a stroll through Harajuku and Omotesando, we'll have some free time before we convene again for a farewell dinner at a nearby restaurant. Overnight at Shiba Park Hotel or similar. B, D

DAY 10
This morning we bid farewell to Japan and our Japanese guide. She'll assist us with our limousine bus tickets to Narita Airport for our departure flight from Japan, which you can schedule for any convenient time. B

ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION
GETTING THERE

Kyoto is served by two international airports and we will arrange a shared taxi transfer from either airport to the hotel on Day 1. At the end of the trip we will arrange a limousine bus from the hotel to Narita. Please note that transfers are not available from Haneda Airport.

If you would like help with any travel plans we recommend contacting our travel agency, Exito Travel. Start by submitting the form you can find here: https://pay2.exitotravel.com/referral_form?affiliate_id=1090&client=1. If you prefer to call, the number is 800-655-4053; be sure to tell them you are traveling with Adventures in Good Company.
**ACCOMMODATIONS**

We will be staying in three different types of accommodation. In Kyoto, Nara, and Tokyo, we will stay in modern western-style hotels (6 nights). While rooms are generally smaller than in the US and Canada, all have en-suite facilities. In Kiso-Fukushima we will stay at a hot springs ryokan. A ryokan is a traditional Japanese-style inn, usually older wooden buildings with rooms in the Japanese style with tatami (straw) matting and futons laid out in the evening by the ryokan staff. Evening meals are served communally in the dining room, and are exquisitely prepared multi-course meals. Many ryokan have both ensuite bathrooms (with the exception of some older buildings) and communal hot spring style baths (segregated by sex). In two towns we stay in minshuku, which are smaller family-run inns. They are more informal and less likely to have ensuite bathrooms. Both ryokan and minshuku are classic Japanese experiences.

Please note: Vegetarian options are available, but limited. Strict vegetarian diets, vegan diets, or gluten free diets will not be possible to accommodate due to the pervasiveness of the fish-based stock dashi and the use of soy sauce and miso in Japanese cuisine.

**TRAVEL INSURANCE**

WE RECOMMEND TRIP CANCELLATION/TRIP INTERRUPTION INSURANCE, WHICH CAN HELP COVER YOUR COSTS IF YOU NEED TO CANCEL OR INTERRUPT YOUR TRIP. Travel protection plans can also include coverage for Emergency Medical and Emergency Evacuation/Repatriation, Trip Delay, Baggage Delay and more. Adventures in Good Company will send you information about travel insurance with your registration information, or you may purchase coverage through your own insurance company. For your convenience, we offer travel protection through Travelex Insurance Services. For more information on the available plans or to enroll, visit www.travelexinsurance.com or contact Travelex Insurance Services at 800-228-9792 and reference location number 20-0016. The product descriptions provided here are only brief summaries. The full coverage terms and details, including limitations and exclusions, are contained in the insurance policy. Travelex Insurance Services, Inc CA Agency License #0D10209. All products listed are underwritten by, Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance Company, NAIC #22276. 11.17 83I

**CANCELLATION POLICY**

Cancellation charges reflect the many expenses Adventures in Good Company cannot recover if you cancel, even if you must do so due to illness, injury, or personal emergencies. These fees are not meant to be punitive. The charges made reflect the expenses Adventures in Good Company has incurred in administering your reservation and planning for your participation. We recognize that the majority of those who cancel their reservations do so out of necessity. Please note that we do not make any refunds for any unused portion of your trip, not arriving, arriving late, or leaving the trip early.

To qualify for any refunds, we must receive notification in writing, by fax, email or mail to: Adventures in Good Company, 5913 Brackenridge Ave, Baltimore, MD 21212, Fax: 410-435-3084. Cancellation date is the date the notice is received by Adventures in Good Company in writing, either by fax, email or letter.

In the unfortunate event that you must cancel your trip, your refund will be determined by the following formula:
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<tr>
<th>Days Prior to Trip</th>
<th>International</th>
<th>Domestic</th>
<th>Refund</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>120 + days</td>
<td>90+ days</td>
<td>All but $50</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>120 - 60 days</td>
<td>90 - 45 days</td>
<td>50% of trip fee</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>59 days or less</td>
<td>44 days or less</td>
<td>No refund</td>
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If you have paid in full, we have a waiting list, and we can fill your spot from that list, everything but your deposit will be transferred to another trip of your choosing for which you register in the next 365 days. Trip fees may be transferred from one person to another if, in the opinion of the Adventures in Good Company staff, it is determined that the other person is in the proper physical condition to participate in the trip activity.

Adventures in Good Company reserves the right to cancel or alter a trip due to unforeseen weather, unsafe conditions, low registrations or other circumstances. On the rare occasion when Adventures in Good Company must cancel a trip, all payments received to date will be refunded, including the non-refundable portion of your deposit.

Adventures in Good Company is not responsible for expenses incurred in preparation for any canceled trips, including airplane tickets.