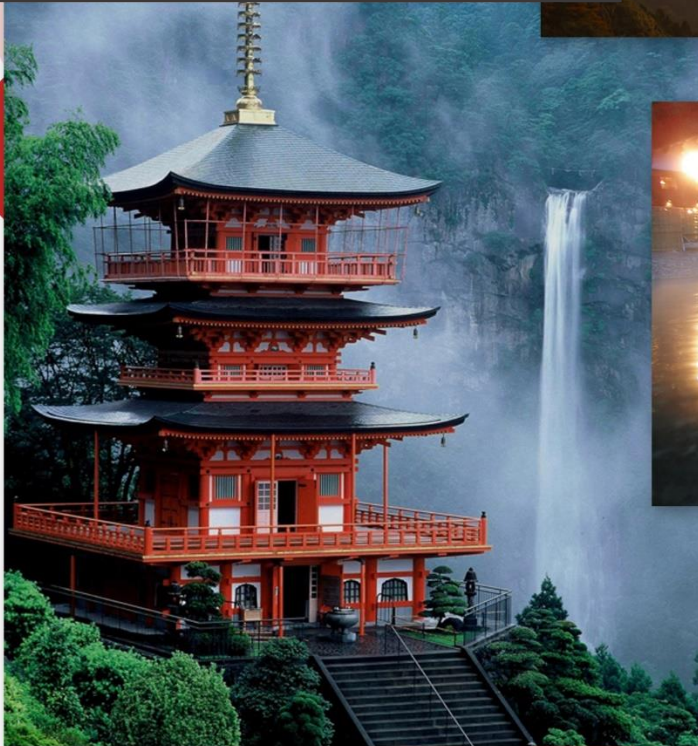
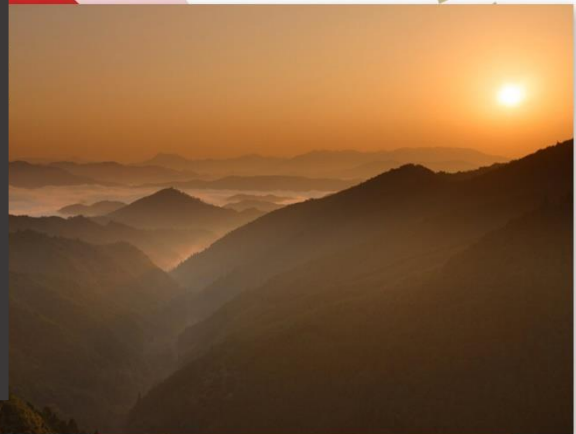


TOUR DOSSIER

ANCIENT TRAILS OF JAPAN



Ancient Trails of Japan

[feat. magnificent Pilgrim Walks]

"The perfect choice for an adventure in search of stunning scenery, mystical trails, hot springs and culinary delights"



Japan is blessed with some of the most spectacular natural scenery in the world, most of which is found deep in the valleys and high in the mountains, miles away from the big cities that most people know. The mountain trails chosen for this tour have been passed for centuries by thousands of pilgrims from all walks of life including retired emperors and samurai leaders. Some particular favourites include the UNESCO recognized 'Sacred Mountains of the Kii Peninsula', Mt Fuji, and the preserved samurai postal route from Tsumago to Magome. We feel that the inclusion of these spectacular locations make this tour one of a kind.



GROUP SIZE: Min. 1 – Max. 16

DURATION: 14 days/13nights

TOUR FARE:

Twin Sharing	EUR 4,200	GBP 3,800	USD 4,850	AUD 6,850
Single Room*	EUR 5,150	GBP 4,700	USD 6,000	AUD 8,500

**If you are willing to share a room with someone of the same gender on this tour, we will do our best to match you with a travel partner. However, if we are unable to find a suitable room mate, single room price will apply.*

ACCOMMODATION CATEGORY:

- 7 nights in city centre comfortable & convenient western hotels
- 6 nights in Japanese style minshiku's & ryokans with hot spring baths (onsen) in rural areas (Kumano Kodo, Mt Fuji & Tsumago)

LOCAL GUIDES:

Less than 6 People: Local guides & assistants at each location

More than 6 People: English speaking tour leader throughout + local guides

TOUR DATES & SEASONAL HIGHLIGHTS:

2019

AUG 19 - 01	APR 12 - 25
NOV 29 - 12	JUL 10 - 23
DEC 24 - 06	AUG 10 - 23
	NOV 27 - 10
	DEC 24 - 06

2020

Seasonal Highlights:

Cherry Blossom Season
River Swimming, Mt Fuji Climb, Festival Season
River Swimming, Mt Fuji Climb, Festival Season
Outdoor River Hot Spring & Autumn Colours
Christmas in Tokyo & New Year Traditions at Kumano Kodo



Itinerary

Itinerary in Brief

Accommodation

DAY 1 [Tokyo]

Arrive in Tokyo Narita or Haneda Airport
Transfer to Tokyo hotel

Meet your group in hotel lobby at 6pm

Welcome dinner at local restaurant (Please pay locally)

Visit Metropolitan building for panoramic night-view of Tokyo city

DAY 2

Breakfast at your hotel

Enjoy a full-day private guided tour of Tokyo City
Our popular Tokyo day tour includes:

- Tsukiji Outer Market
- Hamrikyu Garden
- Edo Museum
- Sumo Stadium Museum
- Asakusa Kannon Temple & Shopping Street
- Tokyo Sky Tree (Exterior only. Same day ticket available for purchase.)

Evening free time. Your tour leader/guide will give you guidance on where to go after dark!

DAY 3 [Kawaguchiko / Mt Fuji]

Breakfast at your hotel

Transfer to Kawaguchiko (one of Mt Fuji Five Lakes)

Lunch at a local restaurant on arrival (Please pay locally)

Enjoy a leisurely day around Mt Fuji with your tour leader/local assistant:

- Oishi Park
- Kawaguchiko Sightseeing Boat
- Mt Fuji 5th Station

Dinner & Hot Springs (onsen) at your ryokan

Optional Highlight for July & August Tours Mt Fuji Climb :

Depart Tokyo very early (1am) to climb Fuji for sunrise
Meet climbing mountain guide on arrival at Fuji 5th station
Begin ascent with small group (Takes approx. 3-5 hours to ascend.
Appropriate clothing/equipment needed but rental can be arranged locally if preferred)
Dinner & rest at your mountain hut between 6th or 8th station
Arrive to summit by sunrise (see next day for more)

Standard Hotel in Shinjuku
or Shibuya District

Kasuitei Oya
(or similar)
[Japanese Ryokan]

(Mountain hut for Climbers
in July & August tour)

(Non-Fuji Climbers)
Breakfast at your ryokan

Today you will move to Kyoto by the famous bullet train

Free time in Kyoto

Your tour leader will show you around the area and give you guidance on where to visit while on your own.

DAY 4

[Kyoto]

Mt Fuji Climbers (July & August Tours):

Arrive at summit and watch sunrise
Walk around Mt Fuji crater
Packed breakfast picnic on the summit

Descend in your own time
Soak in hot spring bath when you descend

Transfer to Kyoto by bullet train (arrive evening)

Breakfast at your hotel

Enjoy a private guided tour of Kyoto City
Our popular Kyoto day includes:

- Nijo Castle
- Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion)
- Lunch at local restaurant (Please pay locally)
- Arashiyama Bamboo Forest
- Fushimi Inari Shrine
- **Highlight:** Finishing up in Gion area featuring a very special meet & greet session with a local Kyoto Geisha in one of Gion's original/authentic tea houses

DAY 5

Daiwa Roynet Hotel Kyoto
(or similar)

Breakfast at your hotel
Free day in Kyoto

Optional day-trips include:

Day-trip to Nara

- Todaiji Temple & Great Buddha
- Nigatsudo Hall
- Kasuga Taisha Shrine

Day trip to Hiroshima & Miyajima Island

- Itsukushima Shrine
- Atomic Bomb Dome
- Peace Memorial Park & Museum

DAY 6

Breakfast at your hotel

Transfer to Kii-Tanabe by train

Meet Kumano Kodo local guide for orientation

DAY 7

[Kumano-Kodo]

Kawayu Onsen local
riverside minshiku
[Japanese style]

2 Nights

Lunch at local restaurant (Pay locally)

Enjoy a **2 Hour WALK** today with your guide (If you are not able to walk, your guide will advise you on what to do in the local area)

Transfer to Kawayu Onsen together

Dinner & onsen (hot springs) at your minshuku

- **April Tour Highlight:** Stunning Cherry Blossom walks & photographic opportunities around Kawayu Onsen area
- **July & August Tour Highlight:** Magical clean and fresh water for swimming in from the banks of Kawayu River (outside your minshuku)
- **November & December Tour Highlight:** Soak in the naturally hot river onsen (walking distance from your minshuku)

Breakfast at your minshuku

Walkers:

Enjoy a leisurely **13km hiking trail** around Kumano Hongu Taisha with your guide
[Picnic Lunch Provided]

DAY 8

Non-Walkers Option:

Take a bus to Kumano Hongu & some of the local villages (Self-Guided / Details provided / Your guide will give you orientation on where to go and how to go there in the morning)

Dinner & onsen at your minshuku

Breakfast at your minshuku

Re-join the Ancient Kumano Trail with your guide. Today is suitable for both walkers & non-walkers. Travel will be using chartered vehicle or public transfer (depending on group size).

Move from Kawayu Onsen towards Kii Katsuura stopping off at:

- Shingu, Kumano Hayatama Taisha Shrine

Continue on to Kii Katsuura to visit

- Kumano Nachi Taisha & Seiganto-ji
- Nachi Waterfall

Hill walk required to reach Pagoda for best view of waterfall

Return to the local village

December Tour Highlights:

Japanese people usually celebrate the end of the year at their local temple. You will experience this first hand by wishing your new year in at Kumano Hayatama Shrine and Nachi Taisha. A very special and unique experience found only in Japan.

Dinner at local restaurant (Pay Locally / arranged by your tour leader)

DAY 9

Kii Katsuura
Ryokan
[Japanese style]

DAY 10
[Nagoya]

Breakfast at your ryokan

Transfer to Nagoya by train (3 hour journey)

Free time in Nagoya (see Nagoya Castle in your free time)

Nagoya Sakae Tokyu Inn
(or similar)

DAY 11
[Kiso Valley]

Breakfast at your hotel

Walkers:

Enjoy a leisurely 8km walk along the Samurai postal road that once linked Tsumago and Magome. Look out for plenty of bear bells around - be sure to ring them! This area is known for having wild bears.

Non-Walkers:

Take local bus along the Samurai postal road. Meet group for tea before making your way to your ryokan.

Dinner and onsen at your ryokan

Hotel Hanasarasa
(or similar)
[Japanese style]

2 Nights

DAY 12

Breakfast at your ryokan

Today you have a free day. If feeling energetic why not try the Nakasendo Trail in the opposite direction. Or, just relax at your ryokan and enjoy country life in the Kiso Valley.

Dinner at your local ryokan

Breakfast at your ryokan

Today you will return to Tokyo.

Free time in Tokyo

DAY 13 *[Tokyo]*

Recommended highlights:

- Harajuku Takeshita-dori Street
- Omotesando & Oriental Bazaar
- Shibuya Scramble Crossing
- Roppongi Hills (Tokyo City View)

Join our Farewell dinner

Standard Hotel in Shinjuku
or Shibuya District

Breakfast at your hotel

DAY 14

Transfer to Haneda or Narita Airport by our local transfer company

Post-Tour Options are available if you wish to see more of Tokyo or its surrounding areas. Enquire with your travel consultant.

Tour Ends ☺

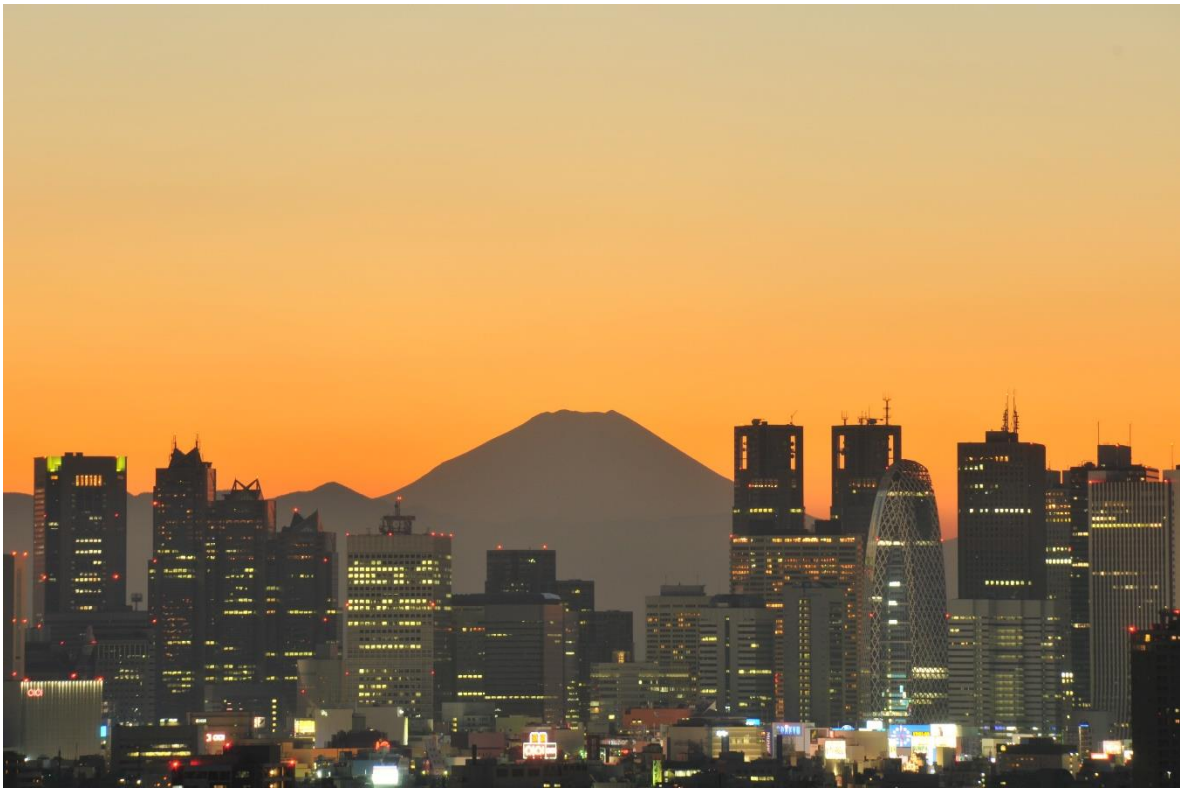
*Post-Tour Options Available
on request*



Destination Highlights

Tokyo

One quarter of all Japanese live in Tokyo or the near vicinity and with a population of over 12 million inhabitants, Tokyo is one of the largest cities in the world. With its huge skyscrapers, underpasses, overpasses and crowds of pedestrians, Tokyo may not seem the most attractive city on the surface, but the city has a vibrant charm all of its own. The street level detail is what makes Tokyo such an incredibly interesting place to explore and at every turn you will be met with an array of sights, sounds and smells to enliven the senses. The city has many major sights to visit such as Senso-ji Temple in the old downtown area of Asakusa or the fashion hub of Shibuya from where all new trends are said to emanate. All in all a stay in Tokyo is to experience one of the world's most vibrant and interesting cities; a capital hurtling headlong into the future whilst maintaining its links with the traditions of ancient Japan.



Kawaguchiko

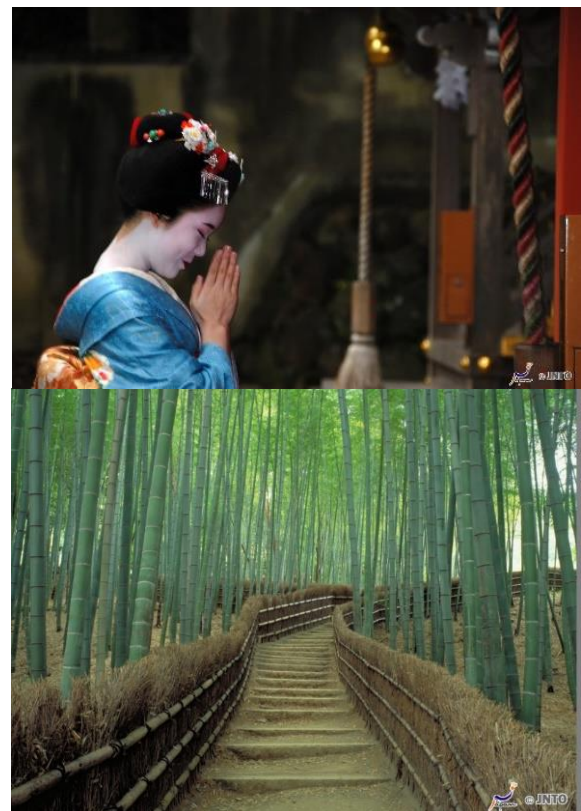
Today you take a bus from Shinjuku to Kawaguchiko where you will marvel at one of the most iconic sights in Japan, Mt Fuji. Those members of the group who wish to climb this sleeping giant will start from Kawaguchiko 5th station where they will meet our experience Mt Fuji climb guide and from where they will begin their ascent. Make your way up to the 8th station where you will stop off in a mountain hut for dinner and some rest. Wake in the early hours and continue your hike all the way to Mt Fuji's summit where you will wait for Fuji's spectacular sunrise. Many people prefer the views of Mt Fuji from its surrounding lakes. For those who would rather not tackle the hike you will enjoy lunch at a local Kawaguchiko restaurant before visiting nearby Oishi Park which is famous for its stunning views of

Mt. Fuji over Lake Kawaguchi and the surrounding natural landscape. Voyage out across Lake Kawaguchi on the Kawaguchiko Sightseeing Boat before settling in for dinner at your hotel.



Kyoto

Kyoto is one of the most culturally rich cities in Asia. Home to 17 UNESCO World Heritage sites, over 1,600 Buddhist temples and 400 Shinto shrines, this ancient city showcases the heart and soul of traditional Japan. Kyoto boasts an array of world-class gardens, majestic festivals and delicate cuisine, all of which make much of the rhythms of nature and the changing of the seasons. On first glance however, visitors will see that like any large Japanese city, grid-like Kyoto has its fair share of neon and concrete. But the discerning eye will soon pick out Kyoto's treasures: sacred shrines tucked in among shopping arcades, time-honoured teahouses nestling among modern businesses and mysterious geisha scuttling down backstreets among the tourists and souvenirs. Kyoto's charm lies in these details and whether you're here for four days or four years, the closer you look, the more you'll discover.



Nara (Day trip from Kyoto (Self-Guided))

Nara lies just 40 minutes by local train from Kyoto and is renowned for the wealth of its Buddhist and Shinto heritage. Nara was formerly the end of the Silk Road and was for this reason the area which first saw Buddhist teaching making the transition across the ocean from China. The daibutsu or big Buddha is hugely impressive as is the huge wooden structure which houses it, to this day the world's largest wooden building despite the current structure being a third smaller than the original. The myriad of shrines and temples are all set against the backdrop of the low lying mountains and in the midst of Nara Park, which is famously home to a vast population of pesky deer. Given half a chance they'll happily munch on your guide books, umbrellas, scarves, and about anything else they can get their noses into! You can also buy official deer cookies to feed them with but do so at your own peril.



Hiroshima & Miyajima Island

(Day Trip from Kyoto (Self-Guided))

Hiroshima is a city that needs little introduction. It is of course infamous for being the site of one of two atomic bombs dropped on Japan at the end of the Second World War. Despite its tragic past, Hiroshima is now a bustling and vibrant city which has risen phoenix-like from the ashes. The Peace Park and Museum are a poignant reminder of the reason for Hiroshima's fame and everyone should spend an afternoon in this part of town. Other attractions in Hiroshima include Hiroshima Castle and the baseball stadium. The Shukkei-en garden is well worth an afternoon stroll with a number of tea houses dotted about the grounds. The Hiroshima Prefectural Museum of Art contains some wonderful paintings by both Japanese and



Western artists. There is also the Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art which has many pieces inspired by the 1945 bombing. There are also some great views of the city from here. The local food is okonomiyaki, a kind of Japanese savoury pancake. You choose the ingredients and then cook the pancake yourself at your table.

Miyajima Island, located just off the coast of Hiroshima, is one of Japan's most loved places with a charming rural atmosphere to match the beautiful surroundings. The island is perhaps best known for the red torii gate of Itsukushima Shrine which appears to be floating in the sea. There are many pleasant walks on Miyajima among the temples and along the bustling shopping street in the island's small village. You may also see some of the island's native fauna; the sacred deer are easy to spot as they roam freely, but you'll have to work a little harder to spot any of the resident monkey population; keep your eyes peeled! Miyajima is a wonderful place to slow down, unwind and relax, so take your time and let the magic of this island enchant you!



Kumano-Kodo

For over 1000 years people from all over Japan, regardless of social class, including retired emperors and aristocrats, have made the pilgrimage to Kumano. These pilgrims used a network of routes, now called the Kumano Kodo, which stretched across the mountainous Kii Peninsula. The walk itself was an integral part of the pilgrimage process as they undertook rigorous religious rites of worship and purification. Walking the ancient Kumano Kodo is a fantastic way to experience the unique cultural landscape of Kumano's spiritual countryside.

Kawayu Onsen

Kawayu Onsen is a geological thermal wonder located on the Oto River, a tributary of the Kumano-gawa River. "Kawa" means "river" and "yu" means "hot water". In Kawayu Onsen hot spring water bubbles to the surface of the crystal clear river. The defining feature of Kawayu Onsen is the river. On the north side is a collection of places to stay including a diversity of ryokans, minshukus, and hotels. On the south side of the river is a green forested mountainside. The world heritage Kumano Hongu Taisha and Kumano Kodo pilgrimage routes are close by. One of the best ways to enjoy Kawayu Onsen is to soak in the soft evening light while watching the warm mist from the river rise slowly into the clean mountain air. You can dig your own bath or bathe in a prepared one. Kawayu Onsen is perfect for a visit all year round. If you come in the winter months, don't miss the giant Sennin-buro bath. Summer is perfect for cooling down with a swim. Spring and fall colours are best viewed relaxing from water level. If one digs a hole in the gravel river bed, hot thermal water percolates in, creating an onsen bath! You can regulate the temperature by diverting cold water from the river into the mix. Many of the accommodations in Kawayu have shovels for guests use. If you don't have the energy to dig your own, just use one



of the pre-dug basins. From December to February, nature's forces are adapted to create a giant bath in the river called Sennin-buro. "Sennin" means "one thousand people", implying that it is so large that one thousand people can bathe at the same time. "Sennin" also means "mountain man", or "immortal mountain hermit", a mysterious character that lives far in the mountains. "Buro" means bath. Sennin-buro is approximately 40 meters by 15 meters in size, and a depth of 60 centimetres. The hot spring water is 73 degrees Celsius, but is cooled down by the river water to ~40 degrees Celsius. Temperature of the water can change often, so try out different spots to find the right temperature for you. On special days the bath is lit with lamps.



Kii-Katsuura

Katsuura Onsen is located on the southeast coast of the Kii Peninsula. It is in essence a fishing port turned hot spring resort. Both sides of the village can be easily experience with a short stroll through town. There are multiple hot spring baths located throughout the village and are almost entirely located in hotels, ryokan, etc. Most of these baths are also available for day use. A complete list of Onsen baths and footbaths is available at the Information Center located in the JR Kii-Katsuura Station. During your stay at Katsuura Onsen town, you will use this as a base to visit Kumano Nachi Taisha, a Shinto shrine located halfway up Nachi Mountain, about 350 meters above sea level. It has its religious origin in the ancient nature worship of Nachi-no-Otaki. This grand shrine is part of the Kumano Sanzan and major pilgrimage destination. Located within viewing distance of the Shrine is the Nachi-no-Otaki, a 133 meters high and 13 meters wide waterfall, known as the tallest waterfall in Japan and can be seen from far out on the Pacific Ocean. Nachi-no-Otaki's water source is the surrounding broad-leaf evergreen primeval forest. It is a sanctuary of Kumano Nachi Taisha and thus has been protected since ancient times and is used for ascetic training by mountain monks who practice Shugendo, a mixed religion of foreign and indigenous beliefs. While staying in Katsuura you will get to sample the freshest of tuna and other fish.



Nagoya

Nagoya is not on most visitors to Japan's list of destinations but is a real Japanese city. There are very few Western tourists around the place and you can get a real feel for everyday urban life. There are also some great museums (including the fantastic Toyota museum which charts the development of Toyota Corporation from its origins in weaving to the automobile giant of modern times and the fascinating Tokugawa museum which tells the story of the Tokugawa shogunate which ruled over Japan for some 260 years), the huge Asahi beer factory and one of Japan's finest castles (located at Inuyama) to visit. You may also be interested in a tour of one of Toyota motor corporation's high tech car plants. The tours are free, conducted in English, and give a real insight into one of Japan's most successful companies. Nagoya also has great shops and a lively night life if you fancy hitting the clubs for a night out!



Tsumago & Magome

Tsumago was once a post town on the old Nakasendo highway linking the ancient capital of Kyoto with Matsumoto. Today, Tsumago is loved for the residents' efforts to preserve the town's Edo Period ambiance. Power lines are hidden away and cars banned from the main roads during the daytime so that the beautiful, traditional buildings and flag-stone streets can be seen in their true glory. A stay in Tsumago is to step back in time and experience old Japan; a world away from the robots, gadgets and gizmos that many associate with modern Japanese cities. Tsumago is situated in the picturesque Kiso Valley and the hike between Tsumago and Magome along the old post route is highly recommended. This trek will take anything from 2.5 hours to 4 hours, depending on your level of fitness (8km long). Magome is also preserved to its original character and has a rich history, displaying an untarnished view of a more traditional Japan.



Tour Inclusions:

Service	Description
13 Nights Accommodation*	7 nights in western hotels and 6 nights in Japanese style ryokans or minshiku *We will do our best to accommodate special sleeping requests but please note that this tour has 6 nights in traditional guest houses and/or ryokans with no option for a western bed. You will be sleeping on futon in tatami matted rooms – a uniquely authentic Japanese experience)
English speaking locals/assistants along the way	When 6 or more are in the group you will be escorted by our English speaking tour leader. If your group is less than 6 people, you will be doing the tour on a semi-escorted basis (Met in each area by our local assistants and guides).
Private Tour Guides	Private Guides in Tokyo, Kyoto and Kumano Kodo (Total 5 Days))
Airport Transfers	Arrival and Departure Airport/Hotel transfers included
Entrance Fees	Included into all sights listed on itinerary
Cultural Experiences	Tokyo Sights by Day & Night, Meet & Greet with Kyoto Geisha, World Heritage Temples and Shrines in Kyoto, Mt Fuji climb (July/August/Optional), Overnight at Mt Fuji ryokan, bullet train journeys, 4 day journey through the World Heritage 'Sacred Mountains of the Kii Peninsula', meeting local villagers along the Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage route, Nara, Hiroshima & Miyajima day trips (optional), old Samurai postal hiking route from Tsumago to Magome (wondering through preserved villages from samurai era), and back to Tokyo for some last minute shopping or late night fun!
Meals	Breakfast daily, packed lunch in Kumano Kodo & 5 Japanese Evening Meals

UJT's Additional **Services:**

Standard on all of our trips to Japan are the following services:

- ✓ Comprehensive tailor-made travel pack
- ✓ Local Emergency Contact
- ✓ All taxes and service charges
- ✓ Financial Protection
- ✓ Installment Payment Plan (optional)

Not Included:

- Meals other than those detailed above
- International Flights
- Baggage Handling (Don't worry, we will advise on how and when to send)
- Tour Guide / Driver Gratuity (optional)
- Pre or Post Nights (available on all small group tours)

UJT's Essential **Travel Pack**

At Unique Japan Tours we aim to make your adventures in Japan run as smoothly as possible. To facilitate this we will provide a detailed Travel Pack, tailor-made for your specific trip including:

- ✓ Tips, hints and information covering subjects as diverse as transport, food, language and bathing etiquette!
- ✓ Detailed step-by-step itinerary
- ✓ Destination guides giving you up to date information on each place you visit.
- ✓ Local Area Maps, Vouchers, and Emergency contact details.

Why Choose Unique Japan Tours?

1. FULLY BONDED – FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Unique Japan Tours is a member of the The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited, so rest assured, your tour is fully protected no matter what country you are paying from. Full details of this will be clearly explained in our terms and conditions.



2. 20 YEARS EXPERIENCE WITH JAPAN

UJT's Founder, Darina Slattery MBS, BA (hons), began her research over 20 years ago at Meiji Gakuin University in Tokyo. Today, she leads a team of Japan travel experts, working with hundreds of local suppliers in Japan directly, selling tours to Japan globally. This **invaluable knowledge & expert advice** will ensure you make the most out of your time and money spent in Japan.



3. A PERSONAL SERVICE & FAMILY FRIENDLY

Our work ethic is **family & customer focused**. Darina grew up in the hotel industry (family-run) where hospitality and service were key to its success. UJT prides itself on offering a professional **personal service** from start to finish. We also welcome face-to-face meetings in our city centre Dublin office (54 Dawson Street, Dublin 2).

4. FULLY FLEXIBLE & TAILOR-MADE

If this trip does not suit your needs, then why not ask for a Tailor Made Trip or have a look at any of our other small group tours. Our range of tours vary and cover the length and breath of Japan. And remember, our team of Japan Travel Experts are capable of just about anything when it comes to traveling in Japan.

5. JAPAN BASED

Our Japan based operation, **UJT Services G.K.** based in Tokyo is ready to help/assist you on the ground offering peace of mind throughout every step of your journey. You will be provided with an emergency and local phone number to contact at any time, if the need arises. Our team in Japan are a mix of Japanese and International staff, all of whom will know your tour inside out!





Useful Information

Below you will find the process on how Unique Japan Tours booking process works. If, for any reason, we have to make any changes, we will inform you in advance.

- ✓ Read and agree our **Full [Terms & Conditions](#)**
- ✓ Pay your **non-refundable booking deposit** to secure your place
- ✓ Once secured, you are not required to do anything else until closer to the date. We will be in touch with you as necessary with updates on hotels and any other services
- ✓ Fill out your details on your own Unique Japan Tours **[Travel Portal](#)** (your travel consultant will send you this once deposit is received)
- ✓ Final Payment is due 8 weeks prior. Payments can be made online or by bank transfer. Stage payments may be requested depending on your tour. Payment dates will be clearly stated on your final invoice.
- ✓ Your **Travel Pack** is sent to your postal address **2 weeks prior** to your start date (if you need it sooner we can be flexible but advance notice is needed)



How to Book

To secure your place on **Ancient Trails of Japan** Tour we require a (non-refundable) booking deposit of €250 / USD300 / GBP200 / AUD350 per person.

Pay Deposit Online: <https://www.uniquejapantours.com/online-payment/>

Tour Reference: Booking Deposit **Tour Name:** Ancient Trails of Japan