



**JAPAN**

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# **PILGRIM TRAILS OF THE KII PENINSULA**

Hosted by Mike Taverner  
3-15 November 2019 | 13 days

# Your tour leader

Your expert tour leader, Mike Taverner, is an experienced group leader and enthusiastic walker having completed many recreational and wilderness walks. He is not a frantic 'must get there quickly' walker but one who enjoys absorbing the sights, sounds and experiences of the surrounds. Mike leads Active Travel groups on walking adventures in West Timor, Nagaland, Peru, Japan and Ethiopia. Having walked the Kii Peninsula many times, Mike is well informed of the local conditions and full of enthusiasm for the amazing environment and its cultural and natural history.



# Highlights

- Visit Koyasan Mountain top temple
- Witness fascinating temple ceremonies
- Walk the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage trail
- View Nachi sacred waterfall
- Enjoy the comfort of traditional Japanese inns
- Wander about local seaside villages
- Enjoy autumn in all its glory!



# What to expect

We use a combination of western style hotels and traditional Japanese inns known as minshukus or ryokans. Both offer fabulous style and integrity and include freshly prepared dinner and breakfast. As well, they offer delightful hot baths to soak in and enjoy.

Autumn is a good time for hiking in Japan. The temperatures are optimal and this season offers a wonderful display of autumn foliage. This area of Japan is famous for its precipitation.

Accommodation is snugly warm but you need to be prepared for both warm to hot days as well as cold and wet. Our trip involves walking up to seven hours on some days at a distance between 5 to 20km. To enjoy this trip, we advise you have a good level of fitness as some days we walk on steep paths. Training beforehand is also advised. To ensure the most comfortable trip it is important to wear well worn in walking shoes with good ankle support. Generally the walking is easy to moderate with three days which would be classified as high moderate due to crossing of passes rather than distance.

Our walking program begins gently in the ancient capital Nara where we explore Japan's oldest and largest temple set with other national treasures in Nara Park.

From Nara we head into the Kii Mountain range to the secluded mountain top religious complex of Koyasan. This epitomises the merging of the worship of temples and the natural environment.

After an experience of temple life in Koyasan, we head south down the Kii Peninsula and along the spine of this stunning mountain range and join the Nakahechi route of the Kumano Kodo pilgrim trails. Over the next five days we'll walk as pilgrims have for more than 1,000 years.

Each day we'll walk 5 to 20km along moss covered paths between small mountain villages where we find local inns, amazing local food and very welcome our hot baths. Along the way we'll enjoy a rest spot for two nights where our bodies are nurtured in open air hot springs.

Our pilgrimage ends at the Grand Shrines of Nachikatsuura where the highest waterfall in Japan is found. This is one of the main fishing ports of Japan and we follow the coast to its southern most point near Kushimoto where we enjoy some coastal walks. From here it is only several hours on Japan's very efficient trains to Osaka and onward flights.

**Day 1: 3 November 2019 | Osaka**

This evening we will meet at our hotel. Overnight in Osaka.

**Day 2: 4 November 2019 | Nara | B**

A morning walk exploring the Castle and its magnificent surrounds. Local trains to Nara and begin to experience its treasure trove of ancient history and culture.

Overnight in Nara.

**Day 3: 5 November 2019 | Koyasan | BD**

Travel by local train and cable car to the spiritual centre of Koyasan as we enter into the sacred mountains of the Kii Peninsula. Explore the mysteries of this place and experience temple life in our overnight lodging.

**Day 4: 6 November 2019 | Ryujin Onsen | BD**

A day to explore Koyasan's temples and highlights spread over the top of a 900m mountain. This place is integral to our pilgrim's journey. The temples have flourished as a religious centre for 1,200 years. In the late afternoon we continue along the skyline road built on the peaks of mountains as high as 1,000m to Ryujin Onsen where we will overnight in a comfortable lodge.

**Day 5: 7 November 2019 | Takahara | BLD**

A gentle start to our walk on the Nakahechi route of the Kumano Kodo pilgrim route. Each day on the trail we carry only daypacks and our bags are transferred to our lodgings. Today we walk just 5km along the trail ending in a mountain village with time to explore.

**Day 6: 8 November 2019 | Nonaka | BLD**

Enter the "passage into the precincts of the sacred mountains" and ease our way into our pilgrim like journey as we walk for about 15km past ancient teahouse remains and small shrines. Tonight, we lodge in a traditional minshuku.

**Day 7: 9 November 2019 | Kawayu Onsen | BLD**

Today our walking gets more serious as we traverse the Mikoshitoge pass along the many ups and downs of this 22km section of the trail into Hongu with its World Heritage listed shrine, the Kumano Hongu Taisha. Tonight, we stay in traditional and outstanding lodgings at nearby Kawayu Hot Spring.

**Day 8: 10 November 2019 | Kawayu Onsen | BD**

Instead of resuming the pilgrim walking trail, today we experience Kumano on the river as pilgrims have done for 1000 years. This vital section of the Kumano Kodo will take us by traditional flat-bottom boats to Shingu and the Kumano Hayatama Taisha. We return to Kawayu Hot Spring.

**Day 9: 11 November 2019 | Kawayu Onsen | BLD**

Back onto the trail for our 13km walk over three passes that follow a trail of poem monuments. This is the Kogumotori-goe section of the trail it is a good day's walk and we'll be doing it north to south, ending our walk back in the very comfortable Kawayu Onsen.

**Day 10: 12 November 2019 | Nachi | BLD**

We re-join the walking trail at Koguchi on the Ogumotori-goe section and for our final day on the Kumano Kodo. Our walk of 15km takes us over three quite challenging passes. Our pilgrim's way ends at the Grand Shrine: Kumano Nachi Taisha where we stay in a nearby minshuku in Nachi. Overnight in Nachi.

**Day 11: 13 November 2019 | Kii Tahara | BD**

Spend the morning exploring the sights of Nachi including the sacred waterfall and walk the fabulous paved path lined with ancient cedar trees on Daimonzaka Hill. After exploring the nearby fishing port of Katsuura we take the scenic local train to the southern tip of the Kii Peninsula where we stay in the village of Tahara.

**Day 12: Thursday, 14 November 2019 | Kii Tahara | BD**

Explore the local seaside community and coastline and maybe even touch base again with a little known section of the Kumano Kodo.

**Day 13: Friday, 15 November 2019 | Osaka | B**

From nearby Kushimoto the train takes us through Wakayama where we can then transfer to Kansai airport. Alternatively, you can easily continue on. If you are not returning to Osaka Kansai Airport, please sure to advise Mike who can assist you make arrangements to your next destination.

**\$5578pp twin share**  
**Single supplement \$817**

## Inclusions

12 nights accommodation in comfortable hotels and traditional Japanese inns  
Meals as indicated including a selection of fabulous fresh Japanese dishes  
12 x **B**reakfasts, 5 x **L**unches, 10 x **D**inners  
Sightseeing, transport, entrance fees to attractions listed  
(\*some local transport not included)  
Luggage transfer between accommodations  
Hot baths to soak away any soreness  
Services of Mike Taverner as a tour leader



## Exclusions

International flight tickets  
Sightseeing not included in the itinerary  
Any pre- or post-tour arrangements  
Travel insurance  
Items of personal nature  
Any other items not mentioned above

## Booking information

Booking your place A minimum number of tour guests is required to confirm and guarantee this tour's departure. Spaces are limited; book early to avoid disappointment.

All deposits and interim payments are non-refundable and no exemptions can be made for any tour guest who has paid a deposit and can no longer attend the tour. Progressive payments will be required for this tour.

Deposit	\$500.00 per person upon booking your place on the tour
Interim payment:	\$1,000.00 per person due within one week of the tour becoming a confirmed departure
Final payment:	Balance due 60 days prior to departure

TravelPay allows you to pay for your holiday by interest-free monthly instalments on your own credit/debit card. You choose: you can pay over 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 10 months. Ask us for more details today.

\*The tour price may change, subject to confirmation of all services. As the tour cost is based on the US dollar, a currency surcharge may be applicable if the US dollar exchange rate falls prior to final payment.

Travel insurance Travel insurance is required for all tour guests. We suggest taking out a comprehensive insurance policy on payment of your deposit to protect your non-refundable payments in the unlikely event of an unforeseen cancellation. Disinclination to travel is not covered by travel insurance. It is the responsibility of each tour guest to ensure that their travel insurance covers their personal requirements and any pre-existing medical conditions.

We offer all our clients a 15% discount on policies purchased through Active Travel. Contact us for a quote today.



**For all enquiries please contact Active Travel**

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