



Full Itinerary & Trip Details

# Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage Hike



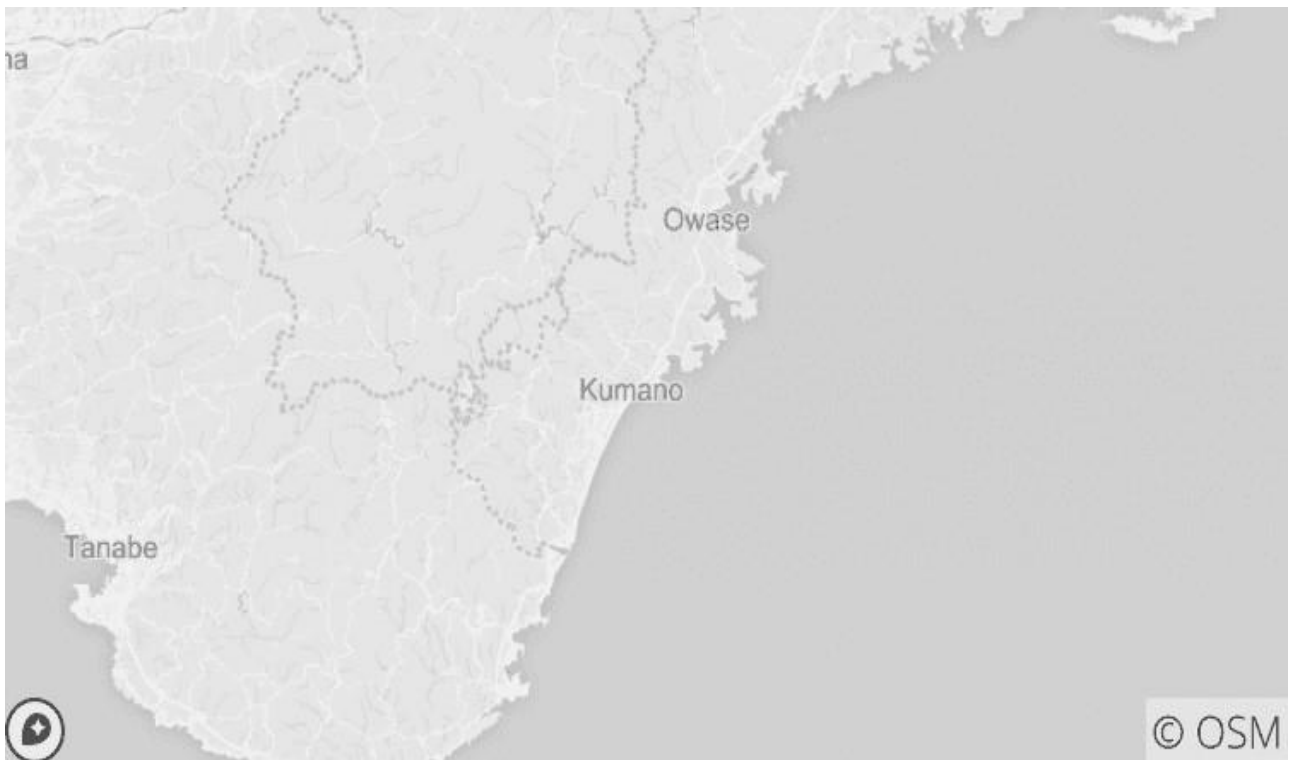
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# Trip Overview



## PRICE STARTING FROM

\$1,793

## DURATION

5 days

## IDEAL AGE

16 to 80 year olds

## STARTS IN → ENDS IN

Kumano → Kumano

## STYLE

Hiking & Trekking

# Itinerary

## Introduction

For over 1200 years, Japan's Kii Hanto Mountain ranges were deemed a spiritual region inhabited by the gods. The sacred sites and mountain trails were influential in the development and exchange of Japanese culture and religion. In particular, for its fusion of Shinto and Buddhist beliefs. This evokes a deep connection between the environment, history, traditions and faith as we follow old pilgrimage routes past ancient shrines and through dense forest with its many streams, rivers and waterfalls. The route is overlooking the Pacific Ocean which lead to three sacred sites – Yoshin and Omine, Kumano Sanzan and Koyosan – linked by pilgrimage routes to the ancient capitals of Nara and Kyoto. They reflect a tradition of sacred mountains. This beautiful area is visited for ritualistic purposes and hiking. The area is a UNESCO World Heritage site due to its unique religious and social importance. The accommodation for this journey is in minshuku inns which are perfectly suited to the surroundings.

## Day 1: Join Tanabe, welcome meal & briefing

You will make your own way from Shin-Osaka by Kuroshio Express Train to Kii-Tanabe Station. Kii-

Tanabe is the gateway to the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage trails. Make your way out of the station (there is only one exit) and turn left. You will immediately see a row of bus stops. Go to bus stop for busses bound for Hongu Taisha mae which will be written in English. You need to be there by 16:00 at the latest, as the last bus leaves at 16:25. The bus journey will take approx. 1.5 hours. Get off the bus at Yunomine Onsen. There will be English audio announcements on the bus of approaching stops, but also tell the bus driver that you want to get off there.

Yunomine Onsen is a small hot spring village. There is only one road through the village. Your accommodation will only be a few minutes walk from the Yunomine Onsen bus stop. You will arrive at around 18:00 where your guide will be awaiting you with a delicious traditional Japanese dinner. Following dinner and trip briefing, the evening is free for you to enjoy a soak in the hot spring water. Overnight: Traditional Inn

## Day 2: Hike the Northern mountains to Hongu Shrine

After a traditional Japanese breakfast, we will start our walk from Yunomine Onsen along the Akagigoe trail of the Kumano Kodo which leads us along a ridge line to Funatama Shrine. From there we join the Nakahechi trail of the Kumano Kodo in the direction of the Kumano Hongu Shrine. This walk provides sweeping views of terraced rice fields and tea plantations before arriving at the entrance of Hongu Shrine. We explore this beautiful shrine as well as Oyunohara, an island in the Kumano River where the Hongu Shrine originally stood. Here we can admire Japan's largest torii gate and wonderful views of the Kumano River. On our way to Oyunohara, we will be passing through the main part of Hongu Town where there are some lovely souvenir shops and places to stop for lunch (own expense). After exploring Hongu, we commence our hike along the Dainichigoe section of the Kumano Kodo trail, which will lead us from Hongu Town back to Yunomine Onsen. Alternatively, we can take a bus from Hongu to Yunomine (~10mins). We will have a traditional dinner at our accommodation in Yunomine. After dinner there is time to explore this picturesque little onsen village and even try the famous Tsubuyu Onsen, the only UNESCO World Heritage listed onsen (hot baths). Hiking distance: ~17km/ 6-7hrs Overnight: Traditional Inn

## Day 3: Visit Nachi Taisha, hike from Nachi to Koguchi

Today we will have a very early start taking the bus from Yunomine Onsen to Shingu (~30mins). From Shingu we take the local train to Kii Katsura where we catch a bus toward Nachisan, our starting point for today's hike. Our first stop will be to explore Nachi Taki, Japan's highest waterfall before we walk up to Nachi Shrine, the second of the Three Kumano Grand Shrines. Near the shrine is a Seigandoji, a Buddhist Temple of the esoteric Tendai Sect which marks the starting point of the 33 Temple Pilgrimage dedicated to Kannon, the Goddess of Mercy. It is also a centre for Shugendo, an ancient tradition of mountain worship. Many yamabushi (mountain ascetics) still come here to worship and practice. We will have an early and quick lunch (around 11am) in the Nachi area before starting our hike. Today we walk the Ogumotorigoe trail of the Kumano Kodo. This is probably the most challenging walk but the temples and countryside views along the way make it one of the most rewarding. Our goal is to reach Koguchi, from where we can catch a local bus (~30mins) to our accommodation and awaiting meal in Kawayu Onsen. In winter, we can experience the famous 1,000 people onsen in the Kawayu River. During warmer seasons we can dig our own pool in the riverbed. Please note that you will need a swim suit to join the locals sitting in the river where the hot onsen water bubbles to the surface. Hiking distance: ~14.5km/ 6hrs Overnight: Traditional Inn

## Day 4: Kogumotori-goe Pilgrim trail

Following breakfast, we venture out for our final day on the Kumano Kodo trails. We catch the bus for our short journey (~25mins) to the trail head of the Kogumotori-goe at Ukegawa. This trail is one of the most remote trails and so we'll be provided a bento box packed lunch to enjoy along the way. The trail gently sweeps up and down and includes some great ridge-line sections. The Hyakkengura lookout offers scenic vistas of the sacred Kumano Mountains and is one of the highlights of the Kogumotori-goe trail. We'll reach Koguchi in the afternoon from

where we'll catch a bus (~28mins) to our accommodation at Kawayu Onsen. Your guide will bid his farewells this evening after providing information for your onward journey the following day. Enjoy your home cooked meal then relax in the geothermal wonders of the Oto River.  
Hiking distance: ~13km/ 4hrs Overnight: Traditional Inn

## Day 5: In Kumano, trip concludes

After a large and filling local breakfast and another soak we bid our farewells to this great area and our gracious hosts. Your guide would have advised you on which bus to catch from Kawayu Onsen to Kii-Tanabe Station (own expense). From there you will catch the Kuroshio Express Train back to Shin-Osaka (own expense), where you continue your onward journey to Kyoto, Tokyo or other destinations. In case you would like to make your way back to Kansai International Airport, your guide will advise you about the best train connection.

# What's Included

## Accommodation

Luggage transfer between accommodation

## Guide

Expert bilingual guide

## Meals

4 breakfasts and 4 dinners

## Transport

Transportation as listed in itinerary

## Others

4 nights ryokans (traditional inn)

Medical kit

# Question & Answers



**Is there a surcharge for travelling solo on this tour?**

There is a separate price for the single traveller. Please contact us for more details.



**What is the closest international airport on this tour?**

The closest international airport for this tour would be the Osaka international airport.



**Please can you advise of the finishing time of this tour and approximately how long it will take me to get back to Tokyo from our departure point?**

You can finish the tour at any time you like - it ends after breakfast & your local guide can help with transport back to Tokyo. It takes approximately 5 & 1/2 hours to catch the train back to Tokyo from Kii-Tanabe station (via Osaka) & about 2 hours from Kawayu Onsen to Kii-Tanabe station.



**I am curious about how our luggage moves around ?**

On the tour it will be a mix with your luggage being transferred but there will also be occasions where you will have to move your luggage yourself, for example on the first



ay. You would need to get from Tokyo area to Osaka, probably best by fast speed train and then on to Kumano by another train.

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