

Western Japan Multi-Activity Adventure 15 Days / 14 Nights

Travel west of Tokyo to explore the historically and culturally-rich ancient towns of Japan. Trek the ancient trade route of Nakasendo Walk in the Nagano Prefecture and discover the picturesque Iya Valley and the historical Ochiai Villages of Shikoku. Explore the UNESCO town of Kyoto on two wheels, learn about age-old trades and craft, the eclectic work of modern artists and more.

Highlights

- Discover ancient routes of Nakasendo Walk
- Explore UNESCO town of Kyoto on bicycle
- Learn about iconic art & architecture of Naoshima
- Trek up Mount Aso with stunning views of the region
- Visit the famous Shiratani Unsuikyo Ravine of Yakushima Island

Day 1: Arrive in Tokyo

(-/-/-)

On arrival, be awaited at the gate for the shared shuttle transfer to the hotel.

This evening, be met by the tour leader for a welcome meeting and briefing of the tour.

Overnight in Tokyo.

Service includes:

Shared shuttle transfer from Narita or Haneda Airport to the hotel-

Day 2: Tokyo – Kiso Valley

(B/-/D)

Pre-Arranged Luggage Service:

There is a pre-arranged luggage transfer service from Tokyo to Kyoto. The assistant will arrange to send the luggage in the morning after check-out. Please prepare an overnight pack. The luggage is expected to arrive in the hotel in Kyoto **the next day.**

Breakfast at the hotel.

Start the journey through **Nakasendo** in Kiso Valley, one of the five routes that branched off the former capital of Japan.

Take a limited express to Nagano station, then transfer to another limited express and a local train to Kiso Fukushima station.

Upon arrival at Kiso Fukushima, take a short walking tour. Kiso-Fukushima is a delightful town in Nagano Prefecture on the railway line between Nagoya and Matsumoto in central Japan. It is located roughly half-way along the Nakasendo.

Kiso-Fukushima was an important checkpoint on the route, and its historic sekisho, or barrier station, is one of only two on the Nakasendo. The Fukushima Sekisho-ato (checkpoint) is where travellers on the Nakasendo

were made to wait and present their passes to travel on the highway. The Tokugawa regime was on the look-out for guns and women travelling in disguise; the daimyo (feudal lords) were forced to leave their wives and children in the capital of Edo as virtual hostages under a policy known as sankin-kotai.

Across the Kiso River from the Fukushima Sekisho-ato is Kozenji Temple with an attractive rock garden. Kozenji Temple is free to enter and lovely especially in the fall.

Overnight in Kiso Fukushima

Distance and journey time (approximation):

Tokyo Station to Nagano Station: 1.5 h

Nagano Station to Kiso Fukushima Station: 1.5h

Service includes:

*Luggage Transfer Service from Tokyo to Kyoto, maximum 1 suite case per person

Metro from hotel to Tokyo Station

One-way Train Ticket from Tokyo Station to Nagano/ to Kiso-Fukushima in Ordinary Class

English Speaking guide

Entrance fees mentioned in the itinerary

Public Transfer during the tour

Dinner at the hotel

Day 3: Kiso Fukushima – Tsumago (Nakasendo Walk) – Magome – Kyoto

(B/-/-)

Breakfast at the hotel.

Take an early morning start and head to Nagiso.

Upon arrival at Nagiso Station, ride a local bus to Tsumago, a well-preserved post town.

Tsumago was in its Golden Era during the time when merchants and other noble and prominent people frequently passed through for trade and other formal appointments. In the latter part of 1970, this small town was classified as a Nationally Designated Architectural Preservation Site, thanks to the collective effort of its locals to preserve most of the remaining historical buildings.

Start the journey to **Magome**, one of the post towns that flourished in the Edo Period. The trail that runs from Tsumago to Magome is perhaps the most popular section of Nakasendo.

This ancient trail can be completed in about 3 hours, including some quick breaks (i.e. restroom, tea/coffee).

After concluding the trail, ride a bus to Nakatsugawa, then take trains to Kyoto.

Dinner at leisure and independently.

Overnight in Kyoto.



Trekking information (approximation):

Metaki Falls to Tsumago-juku: 3.3 km; 60 min
 Magome-toge Pass to Otaki & Metaki Falls: 2.5 km; 50 min
 Magome-juku to Magome-toge Pass: 2.2 km; 60 min

Elevation change (approximation):

Tsumago-juku (beginning part of the trail): at 430 m
 Magome-toge Pass: at 801 m
 Magome-juku (latter of the trail): at 620 m

Distance and journey time (approximation):

Kisofuskushima Station to Nagiso Station: 30mins
 Nagiso Station to Tsumago: 15 min (bus)
 Tsumago to Magome (Nakasendo Walk): 3h

Magome to Nakatsugawa Station: 15 min (bus)
 Nakatsugawa Station to Nagoya Station: 1h
 Nagoya Station to Kyoto Station: 36mins

Service includes:

English Speaking Guide
 Public Transfer during the tour
 One-Way Train Ticket from Nakatsugawa to Nagoya/ to Kyoto in Ordinary Class

Day 4: Kyoto

(B/-/-)

Breakfast at the hotel.

Today's tour will begin at 09:15. Embark on an active day tour of Japan's cultural capital, joining a local guide for this Kyoto by bike experience. Hop on the bikes and pedal a short distance to Nishi Hongan-ji Temple, one of the largest temple complexes in the city.



Then cycle to Nijo Castle, one of Kyoto's UNESCO World Heritage sites. Take a tour through this massive compound, stopping to admire its intricately painted sliding doors and unusual 'chirping' floors. Learn about the history of the castle and the symbolic meaning of its architecture.

Take a break and a quick lunch before returning to the bikes for a ride to Kinkaku-ji Temple. This beautiful structure was built as a retirement village of a shogun but, after his death, was converted into a Zen Buddhist temple. The top two floors are covered in gold leaf, creating a resplendent image that is reflected in the temple's tranquil pond.

Adjacent to Kinkaku-ji is another Zen Buddhist temple called Ryoan-ji. Ryoan-ji is home to one of Japan's most famous rock gardens. Gaze upon this tranquil site while the guide explains the various legends associated with its origin.

Return to the bikes for one last visit. Pedal to scenic Arashiyama, an area famous for its bamboo forest, massive temples and vibrant alleyways. Spend time exploring this colourful neighbourhood before returning to central Kyoto where the tour concludes. **(L)**

Dinner at leisure and personal arrangement.

Overnight in Kyoto.

Time:

Start: 09:15

Duration: 8 h

Journey: approx. 20 km



Service includes:

English Speaking Cycling Guide

Accident Insurance

Day 5: Kyoto – Iya Valley

(B/-/D)

Pre-Arranged Luggage Service:

There is pre-arranged luggage transfer service from Kyoto to Hiroshima. The assistant will arrange to send the luggage in the morning upon check-out. Please prepare a small bag good for 2 nights. The luggage is expected to arrive at the hotel in Hiroshima ***the next day.***

Breakfast at the hotel.

Located deep in the mountains on rural Shikoku Island, the Iya Valley is one of Japan's *Three Hidden Valleys*. It is particularly famous for its vine bridges, stunning scenery, and exciting white water rafting.

Take the Shinkansen from Kyoto to Okayama and then change to a Limited Express train to the picturesque and remote Iya Valley region on Shikoku.

Upon the Ooboke station, be met by the private coach and be taken to see the highlights of Iya valley.

First stop will be the **Manikin Peeing Boy Statue**, from where visitors have a stunning view over the steep surrounding mountains and the turquoise Iya River, flowing more than 200 metres below them.



Then continue to **Iya Kazurabashi** vine-bridge. In the past centuries over 13 of these bridges offered passage over the Iya River, but nowadays only 3 remain.

The next stop will be **Ochiai Village**, a small hamlet in the heart of Iya Valley with a collection of historical farm houses dating back to the mid-Edo era. Perched on a mountain side visitors can get an insight on the rural lifestyle and traditions that have been kept alive until the present day. Visit the **Sanjo Jinja Shrine**, located in the center of the village, which was established in the beginning of the Edo period. Then continue to **Nagaoka-ke** house, a former farm house that has been renovated and is now open to the public.



In the late afternoon, return to the hotel.

Overnight in Iya Valley

Distance and journey time (approximation):

Kyoto Station to Okayama Station: 1 h

Okayama Station to Ooboke Station: 1.5 h

Service includes:

English Speaking Guide

One-way Train Ticket from Kyoto to Okayama/ to Ooboke in Ordinary Class

By train to Iya Valley

Entrance fees mentioned in the itinerary

Dinner at the hotel

Day 6: Iya Valley – Takamatsu

(B/-/-)

Breakfast at the hotel.

Today, take the train to Takamatsu.

Upon arrival at Takamatsu station, be met by the guide will be taken on a half-day tour of Takamatsu.

The first stop of the day will be **Ritsurin Park**, one of the designated Special Places of Scenic Beauty in Japan. It is a 75-hectare property set against Mt. Shiun that features thirteen man-made hills, six ponds, oriental bridges, and a wide variety of trees and flowers such as the Crane and Turtle Pine Tree, the Evergreen Oak Tree, irises, and azaleas.



The park was originally built in the 1620s to serve as a private garden for the then leaders of Kagawa prefecture, the Ikoma Family, and after more than a century, the garden was completed and became the villa of the succeeding Matsudaira family. After the restoration of the Meiji era, it was opened to the public and has since become one of the favourites for both locals and foreign tourists.

Take a break and have an afternoon tea at **Kikugetsu-tei**, a teahouse set right in the middle of the park. Spend a pleasant time with a cup of green tea and a view of Nan-ko pond.

Later, head to **Yashima**, the so-called “Roof Island” of Shikoku. Visit the 5-hectare open-air museum of Shikoku Village that features the lifestyle of the locals between the Edo and the Meiji eras. It houses over twenty buildings, four of which are designated Important Cultural Properties, namely, the former Kono and Shimoki Residences and the processing facilities of sugarcane and soy sauce.

Together with the guide, head back to the hotel in the late afternoon.

Dinner at leisure and personal arrangement.

Overnight in Takamatsu

Distance and journey time (approximation):

Ooboke Station to Tadotsu Station: 1 h

Tadotsu Station to Takamatsu Station: 30 mins

Service includes:

English Speaking Guide

One-way Train Ticket from Ooboke to Takamatsu in Ordinary Class

Day 7: Takamatsu – Naoshima – Hiroshima

(B/-/-)

Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning after breakfast, head out for **Naoshima**. Naoshima is one of the small art islands along the Seto Inland Sea that hosts the annual contemporary art festival, more commonly known as 'Setouchi Triennale.'



Catch the ferry to Miyanoura Port, one of the two main ports on Naoshima.

Upon arriving in Miyanoura, board the local bus to Nokyo-mae, the nearest bus stop to a couple of the most famous museums, including the legendary Ando Museum.

Alternatively, stay a bit longer around the area to take some photos of the iconic **red pumpkin**, one of the outdoor sculptures by the Japanese contemporary artist, Yayoi Kusama. Stop by **I Love Yu**, a combination of art and public bathhouse (sentō) that showcases various styles of wall art and design.

On the eastern side of Naoshima is **Ando Museum**. The world-renowned architect who designed the interior of the museum used his signature, plain concrete structure to contrast the museum's façade which is a traditional Japanese-style house.

From Nokyo-mae, take the local bus to **Tsutsuji-so** and find another iconic work of Yayoi Kusama or relax for a while on the beach before catching the bus to go back to Miyanoura Port.

Catch a ferry to Uno port (main island/ Honshu), take a local train to Okayama, and embark on a bullet train and head to today's final destination Hiroshima.

Dinner at leisure and personal arrangement.

Overnight in Hiroshima.

Distance and journey time (approximation):

Takamatsu Port to Miyanoura Port (Naoshima): 25mins / 50mins (Ferry / High-speed Boat)

Miyanoura Port to Uno Port (Okayama): 20mins

Uno Station to Okayama Station: 45mins

Okayama Station to Hiroshima Station:

Service includes:

English Speaking Guide

Ferry ticket from Takamatsu to Naoshima

Public Transfer and entrance fees during the tour in Takayama

Ferry ticket from Naoshima to Uno port

One-way Train Ticket from Uno to Okayama/ to Hiroshima in Ordinary Class

Day 8: Hiroshima & Miyajima

(B/-/-)

Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning be met by the guide at the hotel and go on an exploration of Hiroshima and Miyajima Island.

The first stop will be at the **Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park** in central Hiroshima.

The area where the park now lies was ground zero for the Atomic Bomb on 6th August 1945. After the bombing the Memorial Park was created and dedicated to those who lost their lives in the attack.

Stroll through the park and discover many memorials, monuments and statues, before heading into the Museum itself.

Later on the morning also head to the beautiful **Shukkeien Garden**, Hiroshima's hidden gem.

In the afternoon, bel transferred by private car to Myajimaguchi port.

Here, aboard the ferry to Miyajima, a small wooded island located in the Inland Sea, and find perhaps the most photographed site in Japan - **The Floating Torii Gate**.

Designated as one of Japan's '3 Most Beautiful Views', the shrine dates back to the 6th century and is designed in a pier-like structure. Mere 'commoners' were not allowed to set foot on this holy place, and even now it is forbidden to give birth of die on the island!

Take some time to explore the island and its many shrines and temples, and sample local goodies like maple leaf shaped cakes.

Take the option to hike up to the peak of the island, **Mt. Misen** (approximate 1.5hr walk), to see spectacular views of the surrounding islands or take the cable car, which is included.

Miyajima is small enough to walk around, but keep an eye out for the hordes of tame deer that roam the island.



Dinner at leisure and personal arrangement.

Overnight in Hiroshima.

Time:

Start (guided tour): 09:00

Duration: 8 h

*including pick-up/drop-off and transit times

Service includes:

English Speaking Guide

Public Transport Fees and entrance fees during the tour

Day 9: Hiroshima – Kumamoto – Aso – Takachiho Gorge

(B/-/D)

Pre-Arranged Luggage Service:

There is pre-arranged luggage transfer service from Hiroshima to Kagoshima. The assistant will arrange to send the luggage in the morning after check-out. Please prepare an overnight pack. The luggage is expected to arrive in the hotel in Kagoshima ***the next day.***

Breakfast at the hotel.

Take a bullet-train from Hiroshima to Kumamoto. Head for an excursion outside the Kumamoto city to the Mt Aso area by private coach.

If the weather is nice, this is a great chance to do some trekking on **Mt. Aso**, a small rural town surrounded by five peaks, namely, Kishima-dake, Eboshi-dake, Naka-dake, Taka-dake, and Neko-dake.



Note: Due to volcanic activity, access to the caldera, the hiking & trekking paths, as well as the Volcano Museum may be closed and the operations of the Mt. Aso Ropeway may be suspended. An alternative itinerary will be provided that can include the following (for other preferences, please let us know).

National Park Aso Daikanbo

This is the ideal starting point for a trek on Mt. Daikanbo, the perfect spot from where the five peaks in Aso can be viewed. There are also shops and restaurants/cafes in the park, offering nice refreshments before or after the trek/hike.

Aso Shrine and surrounding shopping arcade

Aso Shrine is one of Japan's many Shinto shrines and has around 2,500 years of history. Strolling around the shrine, visit traditional shops and taste the "prized water" from one of the 20 fountains and water sources in the area.

Then head to today's final destination, Takachiho.

Tonight, enjoy watching 'Takachiho Kagura Dance' at Takachiho Shrine. Outside the official season for Takachiko yokagura, the ceremonial dance performance can still be enjoyed in the version known as Takachiho Kagura. A performance of four representative dances from the kagura repertoire of 33 dances is held every evening from 20:00 to 21:00, at the Kaguraden performance hall on the grounds of the Takachiho Shrine.



Overnight in Takachiho.

Distance and journey time (approximation):

Hiroshima Station to Kumamoto Station: 1.5 h

Kumamoto Station to Aso Daikanbo: 1.5 h (drive)

Aso Daikanbo to Takachiho: 1.5 h (drive)

Service includes:

*Luggage Transfer Service from Hiroshima to Kagoshima, maximum 1 suitcase per person

English Speaking Guide

One-way Train Ticket from Hiroshima to Kumamoto in Ordinary Class

Private Coach and entrance fees during the tour (Kumamoto – Aso – Takachiho Gorge)

Dinner at the hotel

Day 10: Takachiho Gorge - Kagoshima

(B/-/-)

Breakfast at the hotel.

In the morning, visit Takachiho Gorge, probably one of the most famous places in Takachiho district in the Kyushu Mountains. Gokase-gawa flows in the middle of the basalt columns, offering its visitors the chance to row down the river and get the chance to see a close up view of the surrounding cliffs and the 17m high Minai Falls. For those who enjoy a short hike, Takachiho Gorge also offers paved pathways along the edge of the gorge. This kilometer long trail also leads its visitors to the 1200 year-old Takachiho Shrine.



In the afternoon, return by train to Kagoshima.

Overnight in Kagoshima

Distance and journey time (approximation):

Takachiho to Nobeoka: 1 h (drive)

Nobeoka Station to Miyazaki Station: 1 h

Miyazaki Station to Kagoshima Station: 2 h

Service includes:

English Speaking Guide

Private Coach to Nobeoka

One-way Train Ticket from Nobeoka to Miyazaki / to Kagoshima in Ordinary Class

Private Transfer to the hotel

Day 11: Kagoshima - Yakushima

(B/-/D)

From Kagoshima, embark on the last part of the journey to **Yakushima**. The island lies 60 kilometres south from the southernmost tip of Kyushu and since 1993 it has been declared as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage site due to its unique biome.

The subtropical island is home to the *Yakusugi* Cedar trees, some of the oldest living trees of Japan. Ranging anywhere between 1000 and 7000 years, the massive imposing Cedars are truly a sight to remember. The wonders of Yakushima are not limited to flora but also fauna, as the island is known as the spawning ground for the Loggerhead Turtles as well as the home of the Yaku deer and macaques.

Distance and journey time (approximation):

Kagoshima Hotel to ferry port: 30 mins

Kagoshima ferry Port to Miyanoura Port on Yakushima: 4 h

Service Include:

English speaking guide

Taxi to Port

Ferry Kagoshima – Miyanoura Port

Day 12: Yakushima

(B/-/D)

On this day, explore the beautiful Yakushima Island and its primordial forests on the journey to **Shiratani Unsui-kyo Ravine**. The ravine offers multiple hiking trails through the lush green forests with varying overall total distance, elevation and intensity. The trail is dotted with multiple ancient Cedars and will ultimately lead to a part of the primordial forest that served as the inspiration for the Studio Ghibli masterpiece – Princess Mononoke.



Details of Hike:

Total distance	Elevation	Intensity	Duration	Notes
14.5km	460m	2,3	6 hours	

Time:

Start (guided tour): 09:00

Duration: 8 h

Service Include:

English speaking guide

Day 13: Yakushima

(B/-/D)

There are multiple options on how to spend the final day on Yakushima before departing for Fukuoka. On this day, opt for the hike to **Yakusugi Land**. This nature park is populated by many ancient cedar trees and offers multiple well developed and easily walkable routes to choose from. Optionally, select the longest trail, leading

to the peak of nearby Mount Tachudake. In the afternoon relax and unwind, making full use of the spas and facilities as a reward after the hike.

Alternatively, opt for the more strenuous full day hike for the most venerable living tree in Japan - the **Jomonsugi**. Estimated roughly to be anywhere between 2000 to 7000 years old, the massive cedar takes its name after the prehistoric Jomon period to which it dates back to. Even though it might not be as tall as a few other Cedar trees, it is 5 meters in diameter.



To reach the Jomonsugi, embark on a longer journey through the island. A roundtrip can take as long as between 9-10 hours depending on the hiking pace so sufficient consideration and preparation are recommended. There is an option to stay at the Takatsuka lodge near the Jomonsugi, however please be advised the shelter is unattended and it is necessary to bring person supplies including food and bedding.

Time:

Start (guided tour): 09:00

Duration: 8 h

Service Include:

English speaking guide

Day 14: Yakushima – Kagoshima

(B/-/-)

This morning, be taken by the tour leader on a jetfoil tour back to Kagoshima, arriving just past noon. After dropping the luggage at the hotel, have a quick lunch before embarking on a half-day tour of Sakurajima.

First, take the 15-minute ferry to the volcanic island of **Sakurajima**. Visit the **Sakurajima Visitor Centre** which has exhibits about the history of the Sakurajima and its eruptions, located by the ferry terminal.



Have a pleasant walk along the **Nagisa Lava Trail**, a nice walking trail of about three kilometers in length, which cuts through the lava zone of the great 1914 eruption. Soothe the feet in the volcanically heated foot baths near in **Nagisa Park**.

Later, opt to take the tourist loop bus, leading around the island and arriving at all the important places on this volcanic peninsula.

In the late afternoon, take the ferry back to Kagoshima port and return to the hotel with the guide, or continue to explore this beautiful port city individually.

Dinner at leisure and personal arrangement.

Overnight in Kagoshima

Time:

Start (guided tour): 09:00

Duration: 8 h

*including pick-up/drop-off and transit times

Service includes:

English Speaking Guide

Ferry to Sakurajima

Local bus

Day 15: Departure from Kagoshima

(B/-/-)

Breakfast at the hotel.

Spend the rest of the day at leisure until the departure flight from Kagoshima Airport.

Service includes:

Shared transfer from hotel to airport

*****END OF SERVICES*****

“An itinerary may at times be altered by our guides due to local conditions, the skill of participants and other unexpected circumstances. Our priority is always the experience and safety of our clients.”

RATES & CONDITIONS

ACCOMMODATION:

City	Hotel	Hotel Category	Room
Tokyo	Shinjuku Washington Hotel	First Class	Twin Room
Kiso-Fukushima	Komanoyu	Superior	Japanese Style Room with private bath & toilet
Kyoto	Hotel Resol Shijo Muromachi	First Class	Standard Twin Room
Iya Valley	Wano Yado Iya Onsen	Superior	Japanese Style Room with private bath & toilet
Takamatsu	JR Hotel Clement	Superior	Standard Twin Room
Hiroshima	Granvia Hotel Hiroshima Station	Superior	Deluxe Twin Room
Takachiho	Hotel Takachiho	Superior	Japanese Style Room with private bath & toilet
Kagoshima	Dormy Inn Kagoshima	First Class	Standard Twin Room
Yakushima	Seaside Hotel Yakushima	First Class	Standard Twin Room

Accommodation Note: If the above hotels are unavailable, we will arrange a hotel of similar standard.

PRICING: in USD per person for shared twin/double and single

Rates are valid for 2020

PRICING FROM: (excluding flight ticket and options.)

Persons	1	2	3-4	5-6	7-10	11-15	Single sup
Rates	19,735	12,485	10,029	8,109	7,255	6,455	855

- * The above prices are per person, depending on the number of participants.
- * Our tour prices are based on Twin/Double and Single room.
- * After that time we reserve the right to adjust the price in case prices from our suppliers are increased.
- * If any of the listed accommodation is unavailable at the time of booking, we will organize a hotel of a similar standard.
- * Reservations during weekends, peak periods and Japanese public holidays will be subject to supplementary charges.

Our Services Do Not Include:

- Meals other than mentioned above
- Personal expenses (e.g. drinks, laundry, telephone, and other expenditures of a personal nature)
- Travel insurance (please see below)
- Visa arrangements
- Other services not clearly indicated in the package inclusions above

Important Notes:

- We strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance (covering emergency medical evacuation)
- Valid 30 days from date of offer. Past this date price and conditions may be readjusted
- This trip can be done by Road Bike as well, but clients need provide their own bikes.
- Reservations during peak times (Christmas, New Year, National Holidays) may be subject to supplementary charges
- Rooms at hotels are available only from 1400 on arrival day till 1200 on departure date. A supplement will be added if early check-in or late check-out is desired
- Please note that all the above services & tours have yet to be booked, they are proposed for your information only and we will not make any reservations before we receive your confirmation to do so
- If one or some proposed service(s) is (are) not available at the moment of booking, we will try to find other possibilities/options or other similar service(s) in order to avoid changes to the program.
- **Payment/ cancellation:** 30% non-refundable deposit at the time of booking, balance due 60 days prior to departure. All payments to be made in NZ\$ using latest exchange rates at the time of booking/ balance due date. Cancellation conditions/ charges per our [T&Cs](#).