

Walking in Japan - The Nakasendo Way

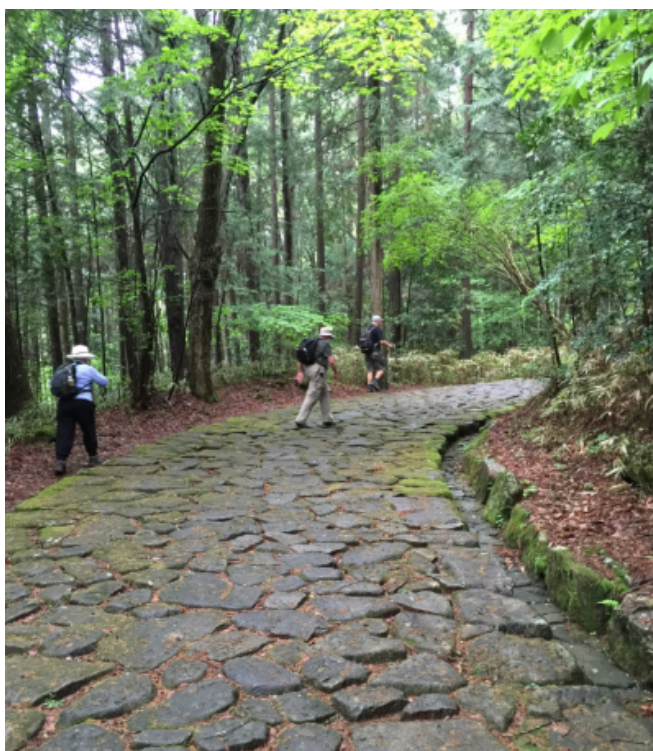
9 October - 25 October 2024

16 nights

TOUR OVERVIEW

The Nakasendo Way explores one of Japan's ancient pathways and follows some of the best preserved and most interesting parts of the old road deep into the mountains. This is a magnificent time to walk this route as the glorious autumn colours are at their best.

The tour starts with three days exploring the ancient capital of Kyoto, which is rich in Japanese culture: temples, Zen gardens, monasteries and a tea ceremony. Your 8 days on the Nakasendo Way include walking through forest, farmland and villages. You will stay in charming traditional inns and be treated to fine Japanese cuisine. A two-night stay in Matsumoto provides a break from the walking. Your tour ends with three days in Tokyo. Though a modern, bustling city now, you will be able to explore sites connected to the Edo period as it was during the 17th century when the Nakasendo was crowded with travellers. Daily walking is 10 — 18 km and your luggage is transferred for you. Transport can be arranged if you want to opt out of some of the walking. This has been our most popular tour for several years, because of its insights into Japan as it was and as it is now.



TOUR EXCLUSIONS

- Airline taxes
- Personal expenses
- Travel insurance
- Meals not specified in the itinerary
- Beverages during included meals, unless specified
- Hotel portage.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- A unique experience that offers insights into Japanese culture, people, society and history
- Fascinating walking tours of Tokyo and Kyoto — the best way to explore these cities
- Boutique accommodation in small, family-run inns
- Traditional Japanese formal multi-course meals
- Getting off the beaten track, enjoying the walks and seeing some lesser known parts of Japan

TOUR INCLUSIONS

- The services of a Calder & Lawson tour manager
- Economy class airfares
- 15 nights accommodation in Japan
- Breakfast daily and other meals as specified in the itinerary
- Luggage transfers between accommodation
- All group transfers
- Admissions as detailed in the itinerary
- All tips for national and local guides
- Pre-tour material

IS THIS TOUR FOR ME?

This tour is suitable for anyone who can comfortably walk on paths for three to four hours. In general the route is gently undulating but also includes some short, steeper climbs. You will be walking most days between 10 and 18 km and you should have recent experience of walking for that long on consecutive days.

Good walking shoes that provide ankle support and have a rigid, shock absorbing sole are recommended. There is more information about the walks in the daily itinerary.

TOUR PRICE

Ex Auckland

Share twin per person	NZD \$14,990
Single supplement	NZD \$1,900

Please contact us if you are interested in a single occupancy place as these are extremely limited

GROUP SIZE Minimum 8, maximum 13

VARIATIONS IN TRAVEL We can make arrangements for any travel you would like to do before or after this tour, or book business class flights. Please contact us to discuss your requirements.

[CLICK HERE TO BOOK ONLINE](#)

TOUR MANAGER: Pat Mandeno

After retiring from her career as a registered nurse, Pat became a Tour Manager with Calder & Lawson in 2010. Pat enjoys playing her part in your travel experiences and sees her role as bringing people together, and making sure the whole journey goes smoothly so that her group can relax and thoroughly enjoy the experience. Pat treats every day on her tours as an adventure, full of fun, learning, and making new friends. She makes sure everyone feels included, especially solo travellers. Pat also likes to find out if her group has any special interests, such as art, cuisine, or gardening, which she makes a special effort to incorporate into the tour. Pat's enthusiasm is infectious and you can't help but have fun on her tours.



DAILY ITINERARY

Wednesday 9 October 2024

Auckland – Tokyo

Meals: In flight

Overnight: Tokyo

Depart Auckland in the morning on your direct flight to Tokyo. Overnight stay in Tokyo.

Thursday 10 October

Tokyo - Kyoto

Meals: B/D

Train: 2 hr 30 min

Overnight: Kyoto

Catch the famous shinkansen bullet train to Kyoto, where the afternoon is the start of several days exploring this fascinating city.

Nijo Castle contains magnificent audience halls built for the Tokugawa shoguns, the most successful rulers in Japanese history. Rokuon-ji temple contains the Golden Pavilion. Coated in gold leaf and reflected in the still lake surrounding it, this is probably one of Japan's most recognisable icons.

Dinner is at an izakaya — a traditional Japanese pub that is the 'local' for salarymen heading home after work. The large and varied set menu will cater for all tastes.

Friday 11 October

Kyoto

Meals: B/L

Overnight: Kyoto

The Silver Pavilion is a Zen temple built in the 15th century and set in beautiful gardens. After exploring it you can take a leisurely stroll along the Philosopher's Path, through quiet suburbs and past many temples to the Heian Shrine. Here you'll delve into the roots of Shinto, Japan's national religion, and gain an idea of how Kyoto used to look in its earliest days. A nearby museum is the setting for an entertaining introduction to the many and splendid crafts of the city.

Daitoku-ji temple is one of Japan's finest Zen monasteries. Lunch is in the temple complex at a restaurant specialising in delicious vegetarian temple cuisine, after which you can soak up the serene atmosphere and learn about the temple's greatest resident, the tea master Sen-no Rikyu.

Take a short stroll to a delightful tea house where you'll meet the tea master who will give an expert and insightful introduction to chado, a wonderful and little understood art that is firmly at the centre of Japanese culture. Your tour manager will be able to recommend restaurant options for dinner.



DAILY ITINERARY

Saturday 12 October

Kyoto

Meals: B/L

Overnight: Kyoto

In the morning visit nearby Ryoan-ji temple and its world famous garden, considered to be the epitome of a Zen garden. Can you manage to see all 15 rocks from any vantage point, or does one always stay hidden?

Then stroll to a small train station from where you will ride a tram/train to Arashiyama in west Kyoto. Though still in Kyoto, an easy walk through the renowned bamboo groves and low hills is more reminiscent of rural Japan than a city.

Here you visit a thatched-roof temple set in a superb moss garden. After lunch by the banks of Katsura River you take another train back to central Kyoto, where it is a short walk back to your hotel. The afternoon and evening will be free.

Sunday 13 October

Kyoto - Takenami - Ena

Meals: B/D

Walking: Approximately 10km

Total elevation gain 175m

Overnight: Ena

It's time to leave the sights of Kyoto and head off to the Nakasendo way. Travel by shinkansen bullet train and a local train to Takenami on the Nakasendo way.

Your first walk is on a gently undulating route along ridge tops that offer many fine views of the distant mountains. This section of the highway dates back to the 7th century when the valleys on either side remained uncultivated and virtually impassable. The modern highway lies far away to the south so the walk is uninterrupted by traffic.

In the afternoon you arrive at Ena, a small city that was known as Oi in its heyday as a post town. Before heading to your accommodation you'll visit the Hiroshige Print Museum. It has a fine collection of prints of this master's works and a good exhibition on the print making process — you can even try your hand at making your own print. Catalogues and postcards of the prints, few and far between on your travels, are available to buy here.

Your accommodation is a historic inn on the Nakasendo Way run by three generations of women (the 13th, 14th and 15th generations to be precise). It is known for its excellent macrobiotic kaiseki food



DAILY ITINERARY

Monday 14 October

Ena - Shinchaya

Meals: B/D

Walking: Approximately 18km

Elevation: Start at 270m, end at 494m. Highest elevation 494m.

Total elevation gain 425m

Overnight: Shinchaya

This morning's walk takes you across undulating countryside to Nakatsugawa, an old post town. In the afternoon the path climbs steadily, but superb views of the way ahead and the way you have come make this a memorable walk.

The inn tonight is at Shinchaya or New Tea House, and is steeped in history. It's a climb to get there, but the last section passes along one of the best preserved parts of the old highway. You can see some of the original stone paving known as ishيداتami.

Tuesday 15 October

Shinchaya - O-Tsumago - Kiso-Fukushima

Meals: B/D

Walking: Approximately 10km

Total elevation gain 461m

Overnight: Kiso-Fukushima

From your inn it is a short walk to Magome, a well preserved post-town that nestles on a hillside surrounded by beautiful countryside. Magome retains a charming character, and there are many cafes for a mid-morning coffee break. You can either buy a picnic lunch here to take with you to eat in a forest clearing, or the group might eat at a restaurant.

From the town climb up the Magome Pass. After crossing it, meander slowly downhill through the woods and pass a pair of historic waterfalls before you reach the small hamlet of O-tsumago. From there wander on to Tsumago, the best preserved and arguably the most attractive of all the post towns. Take a guided tour of a former high-class inn, once reserved only for the top samurai and now a museum. Transfer to your inn for dinner and optional evening bath at the local onsen thermal hot springs.

Wednesday 16 October

Nagiso - Nenoue Pass - Kiso-Fukushima

Meals: B/D

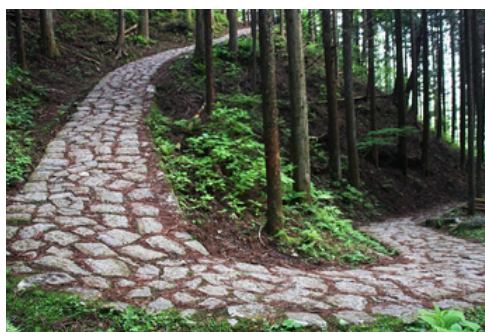
Walking: Approximately 17km

Elevation: Start at 441m, end at 522m. Highest elevation 861m

Overnight: Kiso-Fukushima

Transfer to Nagiso and start on part of the original route of the Nakasendo. Over 3 to 4 hours it takes you gradually higher through quiet farming hamlets until you climb through a forest to a pass.

At many points along the climb you'll see the remains of the extensive narrow-gauge logging railway system that once reached far into the mountains. From the pass it is a steep descent for an hour to Nojiri train station, where a 40-minute rail journey takes you back to Kiso-Fukushima.



DAILY ITINERARY

Thursday 17 October **Kiso-Fukushima - Kaida Plateau**

Meals: B/L/D

Walking: Approximately 14km

First pass elevation: Start at 1139m, end at 1158m, highest elevation 1355m

Second pass elevation: Start at 1133m, end at 1130m, highest elevation 1425m

Overnight: Yamakanoyu

Kiso-Fukushima was an important check-point on the Nakasendo and its historic barrier station, where tolls were collected and undesirables turned away, is one of only two remaining.

After visiting the barrier station, a short transfer takes you to the day's walk. This follows an ancient path up over the Jizo Pass and then down onto the Kaida Plateau. The woodland and scenery are worth the effort.

The plateau is dominated by Mt Ontake, an active volcano that is considered sacred by an esoteric Buddhist sect. The afternoon walk is an excursion over another high pass that, on a clear day, provides fabulous views high over the plateau to Mt Ontake. Descend from here to your lodgings, a delightful local inn with hot springs.

Friday 18 October **Kaida Plateau - Narai - Matsumoto**

Meals: B

Walking: Approximately 10km

Elevation: Start at 926m, end at 934m. Highest elevation 1197m

Overnight: Matsumoto

A bus and train journey take you to Yabuhara, where you begin the Torii Pass climb. The pass is named after the Shinto torii or gate that marks one of four protective sites surrounding the sacred Mt Ontake. At 1197 metres, the Torii Pass is also the second highest point on the Nakasendo.

The descent into Narai post town takes you along narrow mountain paths until you emerge at the outskirts of this traditional post town next to a joyato (stone night lantern). After free time this afternoon, transfer by train to Matsumoto and your accommodation. Dinner is not included tonight but your tour manager can recommend restaurants.

Saturday 19 October **Matsumoto**

Meals: B/L/D

Overnight: Matsumoto

Spend the day exploring the charming town of Matsumoto beginning with its castle, one of only four in Japan to be designated a national treasure. Learn about miso manufacture at a local factory and stay for a delicious (and unusual) lunch .

On the way back into town visit Matsumoto City Art Museum, featuring works by Yayoi Kusama, a local artist who is one of Japan's most famous contemporary artists. The local buses are adorned with polka dots in homage to one of her favourite themes.



DAILY ITINERARY

Sunday 20 October
Matsumoto - Karuizawa
Meals: B/D
Overnight: Karuizawa

Transfer this morning to Karuizawa, once an old post town on the Nakasendo Way and the epitome of a high-class mountain resort in Japan. Karuizawa was first developed by Christian missionaries as a cool summer retreat, and John Lennon used to frequent the town with Yoko Ono. The town was really put on the map in the 1950s when the previous emperor, as crown prince, wooed his commoner bride on the tennis court there. The rest of the day is free, and this evening you stay at a historic inn on the edge of town.

Monday 21 October
Karuizawa - Yokokawa - Tokyo
Meals: B/D
Walking: Approximately 16km
Elevation: Start at 976m, end at 387m. Highest elevation 1205m
Elevation gain 438m
Overnight: Tokyo

Head off this morning through maple forests to the Usui-toge Pass, from where you have you spectacular views of the active volcano Mt Asama. At 1180 metres this pass is the second highest point on your Nakasendo walk.

Descend on a footpath through mixed forest. Near the bottom of the descent there is a dramatic view of the valley and the next post town of Sakamoto. The final section of the walk is along a disused track bed of the cog railway that connected the plains with the highlands of Karuizawa and beyond. Local and bullet trains take you to Tokyo.

Tuesday 22 October
Tokyo
Meals: B
Overnight: Tokyo

Your first stop in Tokyo is Nihonbashi, which was the centre of Japan in the Edo period and the start of all the nation's principal roads including Nakasendo and Tokaido. Walk via the modern business district of Marunouchi to the Imperial Palace. At the palace stroll through the core of the former castle grounds and exit via a gate used by the shogun's ladies-in-waiting when they ventured into the city.

Ride the subway to just beyond the original extent of Edo Castle to lidabashi, originally a small distribution point for goods that along with nearby Kagurazaka grew into one of the city's largest geisha entertainment districts. You'll have lunch here, and in the afternoon walk to Koishikawa Korakuen, one of the best examples of a Japanese garden in Tokyo. Stroll through the gardens then take a train to Fukagawa Edo Museum which consists of a large, covered, life-size replica of a Tokyo shitamachi neighborhood from around 1840. This evening is free, with your tour manager available to offer suggestions for dining.



DAILY ITINERARY

Wednesday 23 October Tokyo

Meals: B/D

Overnight: Tokyo

Visit the old temple district and charming downtown neighbourhood of Yanaka. This is a quiet quarter, with winding streets, narrow alleyways, local shops and an intimate feel — providing the closest approximation to how life once was in downtown Edo through to Tokyo's pre-war years.

From Yanaka head to Ueno Park then onto Ameyokocho, a bustling downtown street market. Lunch beneath the railway viaduct before taking the subway to Asakusa, home of Tokyo's oldest temple and largest amusement quarter in the city up until World War 2. Asakusa is now considered the home of Eddoko, or the original townspeople of Edo/Tokyo. This area has long been famous for its Senso-ji temple, which was also an entertainment area for both samurai and commoner. You have time to explore the surrounding streets which will give you a sense of the local culture that is still connected to its roots in Edo and early Tokyo.

Your farewell dinner will be held tonight in a local restaurant.

Thursday 24 October Tokyo - Auckland

Meals: B/in flight

This morning is free to continue exploring Tokyo. Mid-afternoon you'll transfer by airport limousine bus from the hotel to Narita Airport for your overnight flight to Auckland.

Friday 25 October

Arrive in Auckland in the morning.



HOW TO SECURE YOUR PLACE ON THIS TOUR

A deposit of \$1,000 is required to secure your place on the tour. When minimum numbers are reached, the tour will become a 'confirmed departure' and your deposit will be non-refundable. At that point we will advise when the tour payment is due.

Click below to complete the online registration form, pay the \$1,000 deposit and your place in this tour is secured. Or you can complete a paper registration form. You can download one from our website www.calderandlawsontours.co.nz/forms/ or give us a call and we will email or post one to you.

[CLICK HERE TO BOOK ONLINE](#)

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Can be found on our website www.calderandlawsontours.co.nz/forms/, on the back of the paper registration form or on the summary page when you complete an online registration. There is a 1.5% surcharge if you pay by credit card.

Flights

The planned flights for this tour are:

Auckland to Tokyo - Air New Zealand
Departs Auckland 9 October 2024 @ 09:50 AM

Tokyo to Auckland - Air New Zealand
Departs Tokyo 24 October 2024 @ 18:30 PM
Arriving in Auckland 25 October 2024 @ 09:00 AM

Options for upgrades to Premium Economy and Business class will be available. Please ask us for an price.

This information is accurate as of 14 July 2023 and is subject to change based on airline schedules and availability.

