



## Japan: Ancient Traditions, Onsens, & Hiking the Kumano Kodo

**DURATION** | 11 Days

**TRIP LEVEL** | Level 3 - Dynamic

# Trip Overview

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Join AdventureWomen on a high-energy journey through Japan, experiencing ancient traditions, hiking the Kumano Kodo trails, relaxing in hot springs, and meeting fascinating Japanese women. Start in Kyoto, sharing a lively welcome dinner, exploring the Ginkaku-ji Temple, and enjoying a private maiko experience in Gion. In Nara, marvel at cultural treasures like Todai-ji Temple and sacred deer in Nara Park. Return to Kyoto for a traditional tea ceremony before embarking on the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage with yamabushi priests. Enjoy hot springs and traditional ryokan stays. Travel to Ise to explore ancient shrines and learn about Ama Divers. Conclude in Tokyo, visiting Hama Rikyu Gardens, Nihonbashi, and Ginza, and celebrate with a farewell dinner, reminiscing about your incredible journey.

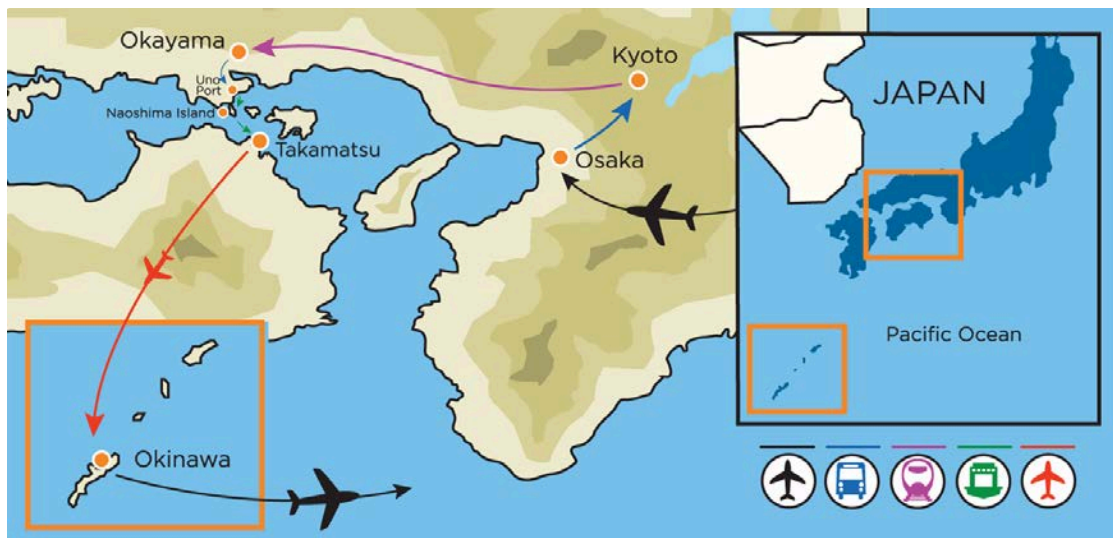
# Trip Highlights

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- Hike the ancient Kumano Kodo pilgrimage route, resting in traditional inns at night.
- Learn about regional traditions from yamabushi mountain priests and meet an Ama diver.
- Experience a formal Japanese tea ceremony and enjoy natural hot spring baths.

# Map View

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Arrival: Arrive in Osaka, Japan (ITM) on Day 1 by 2:00 PM.

Departure: Depart from either Narita Airport (NRT) or Haneda Airport (HND) in Tokyo, Japan on Day 11 after 10:00 AM.



# Trip Itinerary

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## Day 1

### Welcome to Japan!

Begin your journey during cherry blossom season, savoring Japanese feasts, exploring ancient traditions, hiking the Kumano Kodo trails, relaxing in hot springs, and meeting remarkable Japanese women. Arrive in Osaka and transfer to your Kyoto hotel. Meet the group and enjoy a lively welcome dinner, sharing stories with fellow travelers about your excitement for the adventure ahead. Your guide, versed in Japan's culture, traditions, history, and cuisine, and the incredible individuals you meet will make your experience fun and personally fulfilling, cheering you on as you embrace new challenges.

Meals: dinner | Overnight: The Royal Park Hotel Kyoto Sanjo (or similar)



### The Royal Park Hotel Kyoto Sanjo (or similar)

Conveniently located in downtown Kyoto, this hotel has one restaurant and one bar.

Amenities: en suite bathrooms with complimentary toiletries, hair dryer, safe, flatscreen TV, Wi-Fi, air conditioning



# Trip Itinerary

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## Day 2

### Explore Kyoto's Temples, Pathways, and Geisha Traditions

Begin your day with a visit to Ginkakuji Temple, known for its beautiful gardens and tea house, then stroll along the Philosopher's Path, lined with craft shops, cafés, shrines, temples, and cherry trees. Stop at Nanzenji, a tranquil Zen Buddhist temple from the mid-13th century. After lunch at a private restaurant, meet a Maiko, an apprentice Geisha, or a Geiko, a fully qualified Geisha, and learn about their revered traditional arts. In the afternoon, explore the back lanes and traditions of Gion, a district famous for its tea houses and geiko. Enjoy dinner on your own with recommendations from your guide.

Meals: breakfast, lunch | Overnight: The Royal Park Hotel Kyoto Sanjo (or similar)



# Trip Itinerary

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## Day 3

### Nara's Historic Temples and Sacred Deer

Visit Todaiji Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage site, renowned for housing the world's largest bronze statue of Buddha Vairocana and one of the largest wooden buildings in the world. Walk through Nara Park, home to over 1,000 sacred deer, considered messengers of the gods. After lunch on your own, explore Naramachi, an old town section with craftspeople, boutiques, restaurants, and cafés. Return to Kyoto for a traditional Japanese tea ceremony and enjoy dinner at a local restaurant in the evening.

Meals: breakfast, dinner | Overnight: The Royal Park Hotel Kyoto Sanjo (or similar)



# Trip Itinerary

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## Day 4

### Journey from Kyoto to the Historic Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage

This morning, take the train from Kyoto to Kii Tanabe, then a bus to Takijiri. After lunch, start your 2.8-mile hike on the Nakahechi portion of the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage route. The path climbs steadily for about 1,200 feet over two hours to the ridge-top village of Takahara. Enjoy a delicious evening meal made with organic, locally sourced ingredients.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Yunomineso (or similar)



### Yunomineso (or similar)

Offering tranquil outdoor hot-spring baths with nature views, Yunomineso is a perfect place to put your feet up after a few days on the trail. The traditional rooms have sliding paper screens, floor cushions, and Japanese futon bedding on a tatami (woven straw) floor.

Amenities: En suite toilet; communal bathing area with soap, shampoo, hair dryer; electricity; Wifi in lobby area



# Trip Itinerary

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## Day 5

### Hiking the Kumano Kodo and Local Traditions

Start your day with an early Japanese breakfast before embarking on a 6.5-mile hike through the peaceful countryside, passing several Oji shrines and ascending 1,575 feet. After descending to the village of Chikatsuyu, enjoy a late lunch and meet a local women's group preserving traditional crafts. Relax before dinner at your family-run guest house and soak in the hot springs bath.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Kawayu Onsen Fujiya (or similar)



### Kawayu Onsen Fujiya (or similar)

Offering tranquil hot-spring baths and river views, Kawayu Onsen Fujiya is a great place to relax. The traditional rooms have sliding paper screens, floor cushions, and Japanese futon bedding on a tatami (woven straw) floor.

Amenities: en suite bathrooms, communal bathing area with complimentary toiletries, Wi-Fi



# Trip Itinerary

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## Day 6

### Pilgrimage to the Kumano Grand Shrine

Take a bus to Hosshinmon-oji and hike a gentle 4-mile section to the Kumano Grand Shrine, accompanied by a female yamabushi, learning about Shugendo faith. Visit the main sanctuary in Hongu Taisha. Enjoy lunch at a local café, then spend the night in Yunomine Onsen with a relaxing soak and a delicious dinner.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Kawayu Onsen Fujiya (or similar)



# Trip Itinerary

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## Day 7

### Explore Nachi Shrine and Waterfall

Visit Nachi Shrine and the nearby Nachi waterfall, set in a primeval forest with an ancient stone approach. The waterfall, a focus of traditional worship, adds to the spiritual experience. Have lunch at a local café, then enjoy dinner at your hotel.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Kamenoi Hotel Nachi Katsuura (or similar)



### **Kamenoi Hotel Nachi Katsuura (or similar)**

This hotel offers spacious, comfortable Japanese-style rooms with great views out onto the sea, and boasts both indoor and outdoor baths, each with a view of Nachi Falls in the distance. The inn also boasts a great selection of delicious dishes, prepared using tuna fresh from the morning market, beautifully decorated with locally sourced seasonal vegetables.

Amenities: En suite bathrooms with soap, shampoo, hair dryer, Wi-Fi

# Trip Itinerary

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## Day 8

### From the Kumano Kodo to Ise

Send your large bag ahead to Tokyo and take the train to Ise, where you'll visit the outer shrine dedicated to the spirit of food, clothing, and housing. Explore Okage Yokocho, a relocated area of old pilgrimage route buildings, now housing shops and restaurants. Enjoy lunch on your own before driving to Toba and dining at your hotel.

Meals: breakfast, dinner | Overnight: Toba Hotel International (or similar)



### Toba Hotel International (or similar)

Sophisticated hospitality welcomes you at the Toba Hotel International. Relax on the terrace, enjoy hot spring baths, and the breathtaking views of the ocean.

Amenities: en suite bathrooms with complimentary toiletries, hair dryer, safe, flatscreen TV, Wi-Fi



# Trip Itinerary

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## Day 9

### Meet an Ama Diver and Travel to Tokyo

Spend the morning with an Ama Diver, learning about her unique profession and enjoying a special seafood lunch. Take regional and bullet trains to Tokyo. Dinner will be a bento meal eaten on the train.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Prince Park Tower (or similar)



### Prince Park Tower (or similar)

Rising above Shiba Park and located by Tokyo Tower, this property offers spacious rooms with skyline views and is within walking distance to various train stations.

Amenities: en suite bathrooms with complimentary toiletries, bathrobes, hair dryer, minibar, electric kettle, flatscreen TV, Wi-Fi



# Trip Itinerary

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## Day 10

### Explore Tokyo's Gardens, Shopping, and Shrines

Visit the Hama-Rikyu gardens, contrasting the historical villa site with the modern Shiodome business area. Explore the Ginza shopping district and the Grand Meiji Shrine near Harajuku, dedicated to Emperor Meiji. Enjoy lunch along the way and have a farewell dinner with your AdventureWomen friends, celebrating your journey through Japan.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Prince Park Tower (or similar)



# Trip Itinerary

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## Day 11

### Departure from Tokyo

Transfer to the airport and say goodbye to your AdventureWomen friends. Depart from Narita International Airport (NRT) or Haneda Airport (HND) after 10:00 AM. Enjoy breakfast before your departure.



# What's Included

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## What's Included

- Accommodations as per itinerary based on double occupancy
- All meals as listed in the itinerary
- All ground transportation
- Airport transfers on scheduled arrival and departure days by shared taxi
- Guided sightseeing and activities as indicated in the itinerary
- Entrance fees for sites listed in the itinerary
- English-speaking guide(s) throughout the trip
- Drinking water available in large jugs to refill personal bottles
- Soft drinks, tea, and coffee at meals
- Snacks in vehicles
- Gratuities for drivers, hotel staff, wait staff, and luggage porters

## Not Included

- International airfare to and from Japan
- Optional activities
- Meals not specified in the itinerary
- Alcoholic beverages (unless otherwise specified)
- Fees for passport, visas, immunizations, or travel insurance
- Cost of hospitalization or evacuation
- Items of a personal nature
- Gratuities for guides

*Please note: AdventureWomen will attempt to adhere to the itinerary as much as possible. However, certain conditions (political, climatic, environmental, and cultural) may necessitate changes in the itinerary. AdventureWomen reserves the right to alter any itinerary at any time if necessary. We will attempt to notify participants of changes as far in advance as possible. Costs incurred by such changes will be the responsibility of the participants.*

