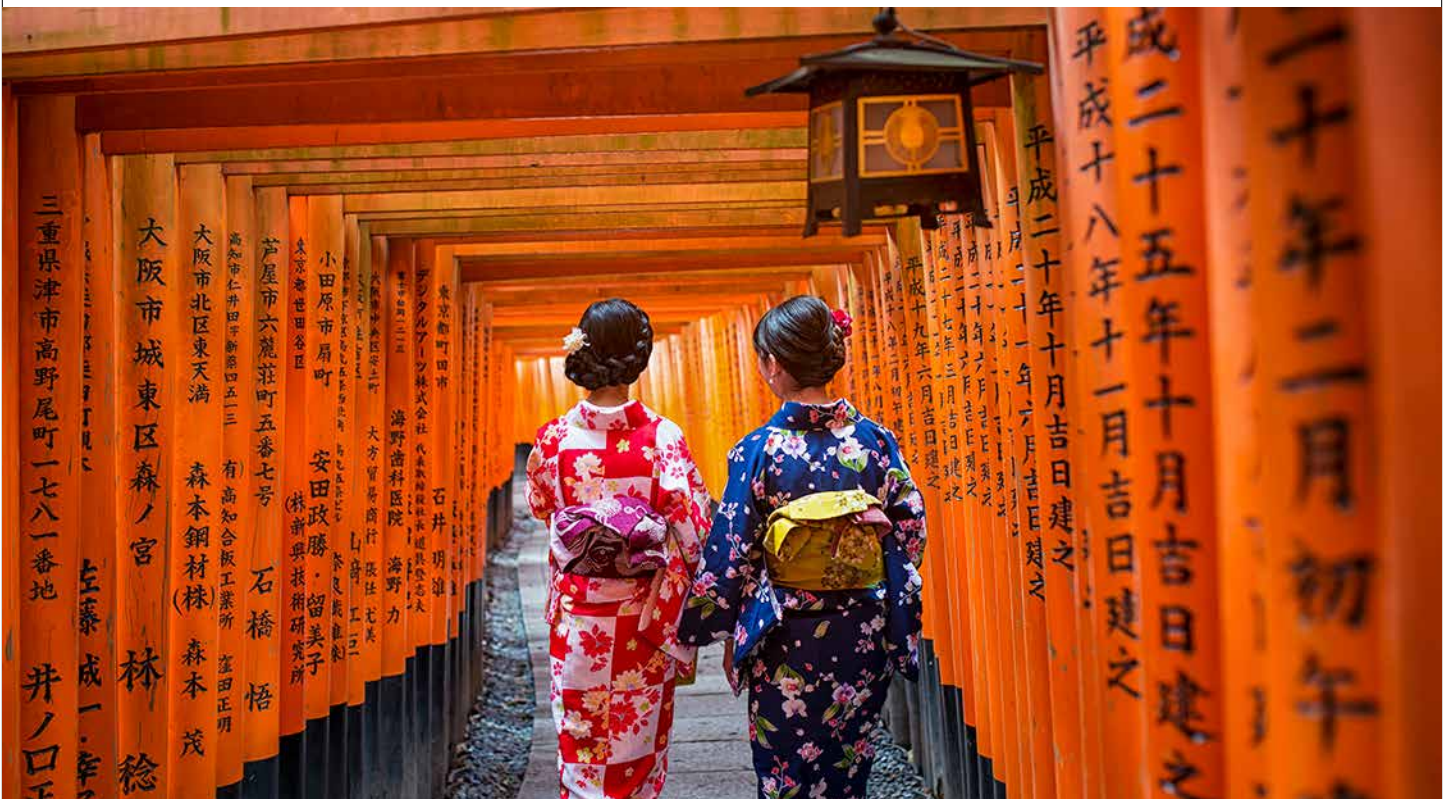


# Shinto Shrines, Pearl Divers, and Pilgrim Trails

KYOTO, THE SHIMA PENINSULA, AND JAPAN'S SACRED KUMANO KODO



## TRIP DATES

2026

March 19-30, 2026

This is one of our special Limited Edition trips, offered only every two to five years. This is the itinerary for the trip from 2024, but please note that changes may be made when the departure is finalized for 2026.



Wilderness Travel

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# Shinto Shrines, Pearl Divers, and Pilgrim Trails

KYOTO, THE SHIMA PENINSULA, AND JAPAN'S SACRED KUMANO KODO

Marvelous Kyoto, rural sites outside Kyoto, the Shinto shrines of the Shima Peninsula, the pearl divers of Toba Bay, and the pilgrim trails of Kumano Kodo—they're all on this unique WT adventure. We'll visit I. M. Pei's masterpiece Miho Museum, set in a nature preserve, go tea- and sake-tasting in the atmospheric ancient city of Uji, then visit Nara's great Todaiji Temple, one of Japan's most famous buildings. After exploring the ancestral shrine of Japan's emperors at Ise, we meet traditional ama (female pearl divers) in beautiful Toba Bay, then finish with walks in the misty forests of Kumano Kodo, the holy ground of Japan, where pilgrims have walked for centuries.



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# Itinerary

## DAY 1

### OSAKA / KYOTO

Arrive in Osaka and transfer to our Noku Hotel Kyoto. We gather for a Welcome Dinner this evening...D

## DAY 2

### KYOTO / SHIGARAKI YAKI / I. M. PEI'S MIHO MUSEUM

We depart via charter bus this morning to the Shiga area. Our first stop will be to visit a 5th generation Indigo artisan. Mori san and his son will show us how to make indigo dye from the plants and give a demonstration of the dyeing process for both silk and washi paper. We continue on to the Miho Museum, an architectural wonder designed by I. M. Pei. The museum winds through forested hills in a 247-acre nature preserve on the outskirts of Kyoto. Its design seamlessly integrates it into the natural surroundings, as we'll see when we approach the museum, walking through a mix of man-made and natural environments. The museum displays fascinating pieces from ancient civilizations around the world collected by Koyama Mihoko, one of the wealthiest women in Japan. We finish out our day in Shigaraki, a gem in the middle of Shiga's countryside. This rural town is known for its traditional shigaraki yaki, a distinctive ceramic recognized as one of Japan's "six ancient kilns" (or rokkoyo). Its origin dates to the making of roofing tiles for the local palace of Emperor Shomu during the 8th century Tenpyo era. We are welcomed by some of Shigaraki's potters to learn about their ancient craft. We visit the studio of Satoshi Arakawa who is an energetic ceramic artist working with a traditional wood kiln. His work has been accepted into the national traditional craft association. We return to Kyoto where we'll have dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight at hotel...BLD

## DAY 3

### KYOTO / GOLD-LEAF ARTISAN / TEXTILE CENTER / DINNER WITH A GEISHA

This morning we visit the Kyoto workshop of Hakuya Noguchi, a fourth-generation, gold-leaf artisan who lives and works in a Meiji-era wooden townhouse. He creates materials for exquisite obis, or kimono sashes, woven from shredded washi-paper "threads" covered with precious metals, and he makes stunning abstract designs on paper. We continue on to Sarah Brayer's studio where she shares her insights on being an artist in Kyoto since the '70's. Her work is now shown internationally. The afternoon is at leisure in Kyoto, and we'll have a myriad of choices, from temple-hopping to museums or just strolling through this ancient city of temples. We will gather back at the hotel and head to a private home for a lovely dinner and entertainment by our own geisha. Overnight at hotel...BD

## DAY 4

### KYOTO / TOFUKUJI TEMPLE / FUSHIMI INARI SHRINE

We head outside Kyoto to Tofukuji, one of Kyoto's oldest temples, with its spectacular gardens and ancient wooden bridges. Founded in the 13th century



## TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

- Length:** 13 days  
**Arrive:** Osaka, Japan  
**Depart:** Osaka, Japan  
**Lodging:** 12 nights ryokans and hotels  
**Meals:** All meals included except 7 lunches and 1 dinner (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)  
**Activity:** Cultural Adventures, Hiking / Trekking  
**Trip Level:** 1 2 3 4 5 6  
Walking, including some steep stairs, 6-7 hours a day, Japanese-style dining (sitting on floor)

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Meet Kyoto's traditional artisans, dine with a geisha
- Explore the ancient pilgrim trails of the Kumano Kodo
- Visit the sacred Shinto shrines of the Shima Peninsula
- Meet the traditional female pearl divers of the Shima Peninsula
- Enjoy several overnights in traditional ryokans

# Itinerary (cont'd)

at the behest of the powerful Fujiwara clan, Tofukuji is one of Kyoto's most magnificent World Heritage Sites yet much less visited because of its distance from the city. We continue on to Fushimi for lunch and a visit to the Sake Museum before heading to the atmospheric Fushimi Inari shrine, where we walk an ancient trail crowned by over 5,000 vibrant orange torii gates as it winds up a mountainside through deep forests. There are five shrines en route, created by the Hata family in the 8th century and dedicated to the gods of rice and sake. Return to Kyoto for overnight at hotel...BD



## DAY 5

### UJI / BYODOIN TEMPLE / TEA AND SAKE TASTING

We travel to Uji to soak up the atmosphere of this ancient city, prominently featured in *The Tale of Genji*, Murasaki Shikibu's classic 11th century novel. Our afternoon in Uji finds us at the serene Byodoin Temple, a striking example of pure Buddhist architecture. The temple's large Phoenix Hall is one of the finest surviving examples from the Heian Period (794-1185 AD) and is often referred to as the most beautiful building in Japan. Uji's green tea (Uji matcha) is famous throughout Japan and used to flavor everything from pastries to parfaits. We'll have a tea tasting, then finish our day sampling sake at a local brewery before heading to our ryokan. Dinner tonight will be kaiseki-style, a traditional Japanese meal consisting of six to 15 unique small courses meant to be enjoyed slowly and deliberately, each course designed to reflect the season and the locale where it was made. Overnight at Hanayashiki Ukifune-en...BD

## DAYS 6-7

### NARA PARK AND TODAIJI / HORYUJI'S WOODEN TEMPLES

A short train ride brings us to Nara, Japan's first permanent capital, founded in the early 8th century, and a surprising number of buildings survive from this era. We'll walk the trails of leafy Nara Park, with its 1,200 free-wandering deer (in Shinto, deer are considered to be messengers of the gods). The park holds the great Todaiji Temple, one of Japan's most famous buildings, with a colossal bronze Buddha. Todaiji is one of the world's largest wooden structures. We enjoy a relaxing dinner tonight at our inn. The next day, we head to the outer areas of Horyuji, where some of the oldest surviving wooden temples in the world still stand. They were the first Buddhist monuments in Japan and had a strong subsequent influence on the nation's religious architecture. The main Horyuji Temple itself was completed in 607 AD for Prince Shotoku. After returning to Nara proper, our afternoon is at leisure. Dinner is on your own (the Trip Leader will be happy to make recommendations). Overnight at Hotel Nikko Nara...BD (Day 6), B (Day 7)



## DAYS 8-9

### ISE SHIMA SHRINES / SHIMA PENINSULA / AMA DIVERS

We head out to visit the Grand Shrines of Ise, the ancestral shrine of the emperors of Japan, dedicated to the sun goddess, Amaterasu, with an adjacent shrine dedicated to the food goddess, Toyouke. These shrines are completely rebuilt every 20 years at a staggering cost, reflecting an important Shinto belief in the death and renewal of nature and the impermanence of all things. In

Shinto, the indigenous religion of Japan, divinity is manifested within nature itself, and Shinto practices express the Japanese people's relationship with their land and the cycles of the earth. We spend the afternoon exploring this atmospheric setting. The next day, we journey by train to the Shima Peninsula, with its island-dotted coastline, sacred Shinto shrines, and pearl divers. From Toba, a ferry brings us into beautiful Ago Bay, known as Japan's Aegean for its teal-blue waters. We first visit the more commercial but historical Mikimoto Pearl Island as the museum there has a fabulous display on farming pearls. Our bus picks us up and we continue on down the gorgeous coastline where we'll have an authentic visit with traditional female pearl divers known as ama ("women of the sea"), enjoy a lunch among them, and learn about the unique pearl-diving culture, which dates back to the 8th century. Nowadays these women mainly dive for shell fish, lobster, and other joys from the sea, hence our delicious lunch! We drive back stopping along the way for the views of this magnificent coast. Overnights at hotel...BD (Day 8), BLD (Day 9)

#### DAYS 10-12

#### SHINGU / EXPLORE THE KUMANO KODO NACHI PILGRIM TRAILS

A train journey of about 3.5 hours brings us along the coast to the small coastal city of Shingu, where we overnight before beginning our two-day exploration of the Nachi section of the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage path. Kumano is the holy ground of Japan, and pilgrims have walked these trails for centuries. Shrines, mist, waterfalls, and deep forests create the perfect walking environment, and we'll be immersed in rural Japan. We'll overnight at Hotel Urashima Resort and Spa. On Day 11, we explore the precincts of the Nachi shrine as well as Nachi-no-Otaki, Japan's highest waterfall that has been protected since ancient times. It is used for ascetic training by mountain monks who practice Shugendo, a mixed religion of foreign and indigenous beliefs. We return to Urashima for another chance to enjoy the cave baths and bountiful buffet this evening. We will walk on the Kumano Kodo path on Day 12, then drive to the lovely Fujiya Ryokan, where we end our journey with a Farewell Dinner. Overnights at Hotel Urashima (Days 10-11), Hotel Fujiya Ryokan (Day 12)...BD (Day 10), BLD (Days 11-12)

#### DAY 13

#### OSAKA / DEPART

Depart early in the morning via chartered bus to Osaka Airport...B



# Trip Cost, Payment & Insurance

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## TRIP COST

**Prices are per person, valid through 2026**

To be announced

To offer the lowest possible cost, our trips are priced according to the number of participants on the trip. All costs are per person, based on double occupancy. If you wish to have a single room, you must pay the single supplement fee. **Note: Single travelers will share accommodations at the ryokans.** Please note that Wilderness Travel staff, or guests of Wilderness Travel such as travel writers, photographers, or leaders-in-training, are not included in the tier pricing count.

## CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATE

Because the prices published for our program are set so far in advance of the trip dates, we are occasionally faced with exceptional cost increases and/or currency fluctuations that affect the actual cost of running the trip. In most years, no price changes are necessary. However, we do reserve the right to raise or lower the trip price if there is a significant change in costs or exchange rates. If this is the case, your final invoice will reflect the difference in trip cost.

## TRIP COST INCLUDES

- Expert leadership of a Wilderness Travel Trip Leader and local guides
- Accommodations in comfortable ryokans and hotels
- All meals included except 7 lunches and 1 dinner as indicated in the Detailed Itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Ground transportation using Japan Rail System
- Site and entrance fees as part of the itinerary
- Land transportation as noted

## TRIP COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

International airfare, airport transfers, any meals not specified after each itinerary day in the itinerary, fees for optional activities, airport departure taxes, optional tipping or gratuities to leaders or staff, additional hotel nights that may be necessitated by airline schedule changes or other factors; pre-trip expenses of medical immunizations (if any), travel insurance, or passports and visas; and other expenses of a personal nature (alcohol, laundry, etc.).

## PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation: \$600

90 days prior to departure: Balance

## CANCELLATION AND TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE

Up to 91 days prior to departure: No charge!

61-90 days prior to departure: 25% of trip cost

46-60 days prior to departure: 50% of trip cost

45 days or less: 100% of trip cost

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

We highly recommend you purchase travel insurance. You can take advantage of a comprehensive Travel Protection Plan designed for Wilderness Travel by Travelex, or purchase other insurance on your own. See our website for details: [www.wildernesstravel.com/insurance](http://www.wildernesstravel.com/insurance)

# Arrival & Departure

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## ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Upon confirming your trip reservation, we will send you a Welcome Packet that includes a list of documents (passport, visas, etc.) required for your trip. Please feel free to call if you would like this information before making your air arrangements.

## ARRIVAL & MEETING PLACE

Noku Roxy Kyoto

Kyoto, Japan

**Date & Time:** Day 1, evening

**Suggested Arrival Airport:** Kansai International Airport (KIX)

**Suggested Flight Arrival Time:** 4:00 pm or earlier

We suggest you plan to arrive into Osaka in the afternoon to allow for time to transfer to the hotel and arrive before the group meeting that evening.

Upon arrival at Kansai you will need to clear customs and immigration. There is a currency exchange on the arrival floor outside the customs area, should you wish to change money into Japanese Yen.

We recommend that you make use of Japan's excellent rail network and take a train to the hotel. The JR (Japanese Rail) train is located within the airport and you can purchase your tickets there. Approximate train fare is ¥3500 (about \$35). Trains run frequently (2-3 times per hour) to Kyoto Station. Upon arrival at the Kyoto station, take the subway Karasuma Line for an 8-minute ride to the Marutamachi Station.

## DEPARTURE

Osaka, Japan

**Date:** Day 13

**Suggested Airport for Departure:** Kansai International Airport (KIX)

**Suggested Flight Departure Time:** After 4:00 pm

On Day 13, trip members will travel by charter bus to Kansai International Airport. If you are departing from Osaka International Airport Itami (ITM), you will need to allow additional time to make your way there. A bus runs between the two airports and takes approximately 1.5 hours.

If you are planning on traveling on your own before or after the trip, a good website for arranging public transportation is [www.hyperdia.com](http://www.hyperdia.com).

## INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAVEL

You are responsible for making your own arrangements for flights to and from Japan. Airlines with the most convenient schedules for this trip include:

### All Nippon

800-235-9262

[www.fly-ana.com](http://www.fly-ana.com)

### United Airlines

800-521-0810

[www.united.com](http://www.united.com)

### Japan Airlines

800-525-3663

[www.japanair.com](http://www.japanair.com)

There are many online consolidators for booking travel, but for more personal help arranging air transport, you can contact Exito Travel at 1-800-655-4053 in the US or 1-800-670-2605 in Canada. They are very adept at putting flight itineraries together, to even the most far-flung places. More information can be found on Exito's website at [www.exitotravel.com](http://www.exitotravel.com).

Depending on your routing, it is necessary to depart from the US one day prior to Day 1 of the trip itinerary. The name on your airline ticket must match the name on your passport exactly, and your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of return to the US.

**Please do not purchase your tickets until you are confirmed on the trip.** Once your tickets have been purchased, please forward s a copy of your email confirmation from the airline. It is your responsibility to ensure your flight times coordinate with the arrival and departure logistics for this trip.

# Lodging



## NOKU KYOTO

*Kyoto, Japan*  
*Days 1 to 4 (4 nights)*

Noku puts us in the heart of Kyoto, right next to the Imperial Palace. While we soak up 1,000-year-old Japanese history, we also appreciate the artistry of modern Kyoto. The hotel's guest rooms are sleek and modern, embellished with art pieces reflecting the cultural essence of Kyoto, and each one has a private bathroom. Craft galleries, machiya (townhouses) and scrumptious restaurants are located just out the door. Noku Café serves fresh-roasted coffee, homemade pastries, and traditional Japanese as well as Western breakfast options, a great place to start your day in Kyoto.



## HANAYASHIKI UKIFUNE-EN

*Uji, Japan*  
*Day 5 (1 night)*

Located in a tranquil setting dotted with maples and cherry blossoms, Hanayashiki Ukifune-en looks out over the peaceful Uji River. The ryokan has 28 guest rooms featuring Japanese-style bedding, tatami floor mats, and floor-to-ceiling windows. No ryokan would be complete without common baths and this one has two, both infused with mineral-rich black silica for extra health benefits. One of the baths is on the rooftop of the third floor where views of the Uji River and Kyoto stretch across the skyline. There are two restaurants — a Japanese steakhouse which serves dinner, and a kaiseki-style Japanese restaurant which serves both lunch and dinner.



## HOTEL NIKKO NARA

*Nara, Japan*  
*Days 6 to 7 (2 nights)*

The Hotel Nikko Nara is connected to the JR Nara train station and is not far from the Todai-ji Temple and Nara Park, making it the perfect location to head out and explore Japan's original capital city. A respite from the bustling city, the guest rooms with western beds and private bathrooms are simple, clean, and offer a quiet place to relax. Four restaurants in the Nikko Nara have different menu options ranging from steak, seafood, Chinese, Japanese, and a buffet with a both European and Japanese items. Additionally, the hotel has a large public bath, beauty salon, fitness room, and karaoke.





## HOTELS IN THE TOBA AREA

*Days 8 to 9 (2 nights)*

### RYOSO UMINOCHOU

The Japanese spirit of *omotenashi* (hospitality) will make you feel right at home at this wonderful rural hotel. We stay in western-style rooms with Japanese influences—tatami mats but a comfortable bed to sleep on. The hotel offers a private beach and an outdoor swimming pool. Be sure to indulge yourself with a soak in the outdoor bath with grand views of Ise Bay.



### TOBA INTERNATIONAL HOTEL

Gorgeous views of Toba Bay stretch far and wide from this sleek hotel. Rooms feature modern décor and offer a combination of Western beds and Japanese tatami floor mats. Each room has a private bathroom and either an ocean or mountain view. The hotel has two restaurants, a waterfront café, and a library and bar with a wide range of sake and elegant seating. The Seahorse Restaurant provides a breakfast buffet with both Japanese and Western dishes. Guests are free to use Ryokan Shiojitei's indoor and outdoor hot spring baths, and the hotel has its own spa with massages incorporating the essence of pearls.



### HOTEL URASHIMA

*Katsuura, Japan*

*Days 10 to 11 (2 nights)*

This gleaming resort and spa lies along the edge of the Pacific Ocean buffered by green mountains and cavernous hot springs. Hotel Urashima has five uniquely styled bath houses teeming with fresh waters from the surrounding 200 hot springs in Nachikatsuura. Four restaurants offer up to 80 buffet items as well as chef-prepared meals. Each night chefs show off their carving skills by demonstrating how to fillet locally caught tuna. Rooms range from Western to Japanese style, some with ocean and mountain views. Within the hotel's four buildings, there are three karaoke bars, a massage parlor, shopping mall, game room, and a tea shop featuring a huge selection of rare comic books. The hotel is also home to the Spacewalker—an escalator with the longest altitude difference in Japan.

# Lodging (cont'd)



## FUJIYA RYOKAN

*Kawayu Onsen, Japan*

*Day 12 (1 night)*

Set at one end of the hot-spring village of Kawayu Onsen, the family-run Fujiya Ryokan is one of the most traditional of the local ryokans. Large, comfortable guest rooms look out on the Oto River, where hot-springs bubble to the surface, and are decorated in traditional Japanese style. You can have your choice of onsen for a soak—indoor, outdoor, or in ponds dug in the riverbanks (you can go for a swim afterwards to cool off!). Meals here are wonderful—seasonal and locally sourced—and the kaiseki (traditional multi-course dinner) is excellent.

These are our signature accommodations for this trip. Although it is highly unlikely, we may make substitutions when necessary. To see more photos and descriptions, please visit our *Shinto Shrines, Pearl Divers, and Pilgrim Trails* webpage and click on the “Lodging” tab.

# Trip Leader

Wilderness Travel Trip Leaders have a passion and a joy for creating an unforgettable journey. We are extremely proud of them and the incredible travel experiences they make possible. The Trip Leader for each departure is listed on the “Dates & Prices” tab on our *Shinto Shrines, Pearl Divers, and Pilgrim Trails* webpage: [www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/japan/pilgrimage-trail-hiking-mikimoto-peal-shigaraki-uji-temple](http://www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/japan/pilgrimage-trail-hiking-mikimoto-peal-shigaraki-uji-temple)



## LUCY WHITEHEAD

Having grown up in rural Tasmania, Lucy developed a deep love of nature and the outdoors through exploring the bush around her home on horseback and hiking with her family. She began her independent exploration at a young age with a week in the South West World Heritage area at the age of 11, and a school exchange in Japan at the age of 15. She is a world traveler who has lived in Europe, Japan, and Central America. After a year of working in Japan, she studied Japanese at the University of Tasmania, and later returned to Osaka on a scholarship to study Japanese literature along with anthropology, film, and ceramics. During her seven years in Japan, she taught English, hitch-hiked around Hokkaido, climbed Mt. Fuji, and walked the Kumano Kodo. She currently lives in Tasmania, one of her favorite places in the world, and works as a guide in both Tasmania and Japan. Lucy’s partner is a well-known sushi chef from the countryside of Wakayama. Together they relish camping and diving in Tasmania’s pristine wilderness, dining on internationally inspired dishes using home-grown produce, and surfing and snorkeling on the coast. Lucy is fluent in Japanese and is keen to share her love of Tasmania, Japan, and all the places in between, with travelers and friends.



# Trip Details

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## WHAT THE TRIP IS LIKE

The trip is Level 2, Easy to Moderate, according to our trip grading system. This adventure trip features lovely walks in cities and villages. Although not physically demanding, the trip will yield greater rewards if you are in good physical condition and able to stay on your feet for 6-7 hours per day. There is much to see, and a fair amount of walking is necessary to take it all in—and you will find there are many steps to climb! Japan is a land of staircases and hills and you will enjoy the trip more if you are dressed comfortably and are in good physical condition. Please remember we will be sleeping on futons and eating at floor level, so it is important that you are able to sit down on, and get up off, the floor without much difficulty.

We make the most of our time in Japan. After rising and eating breakfast, we leave our ryokan for a walking tour. Daily mini-lectures by our Trip Leader help provide insights into the past and future, the history, politics, geography, and food of Japan. On some days, we visit temples and shrines, and other days, we follow the pathways of the shoguns or visit sites of breathtaking natural beauty. We ride the subways and buses, but we do most of our sightseeing on foot.

We will have a mix of free time and group time, providing the opportunity for independent exploration. Our breakfasts and some dinners are eaten together and we have time to share our experiences and new discoveries over these meals.

The Japanese dress well, and we'll find we are struck by the ongoing westernization of this society and curious about the lifestyles of the modern Japanese. Our delight in the traditional aspects of Japanese life is gratified by the sights of kimono-clad women boarding the subway, the smell of incense wafting from a neighborhood temple, and the sense of aesthetics and design prevalent in daily life.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Japan is a blend of the traditional and modern, and our trip encompasses this unique mixture. We will stay at traditional ryokans as well as Japanese-style hotels. The quiet world of the ryokan is a venerable cultural institution—a way to experience a simple, timeless way of life. After being warmly welcomed, we trade our street shoes for slippers. Once inside, we remove our slippers as we step onto the

finely woven tatami mats covering our sleeping room floors. Our rooms are spacious and pleasant with low tables and comfortable futon mattresses with quilts and blankets. Ryokans have double rooms (singles are sometimes possible). Some of our rooms will have attached toilets; at other times, we share the “down the hall” facilities. Although a few ryokans have western baths in the rooms, most have an ofuro (a Japanese-style bath).

Normally, a fresh cotton yukata (robe) is provided for each guest. These light kimonos can be worn anywhere in and around the ryokan and we often wear them to meals (make sure to wear the left side over the right). For many of our breakfasts and dinners, beautifully presented meals are served as we sit on the floor at low tables on our tatami mats.

## JAPANESE BATHING

In Japan, bathing is a time-honored tradition, a relaxing daily event. While staying in our ryokans, we will bathe as the Japanese do—using the ofuro system. In separate men and women's sides, the custom is to wash and rinse before entering the ofuro, a large tub of hot water where we can sit back with legs extended, submerged to the neck (this trip is not for the very modest!). Early Shinto was a religion of cleanliness and purification. Ritualistic bathing began during this time and has been perfected over the centuries. Either as a divine imperative or a luxury, bathing in Japan has always been regarded as more than a hygienic chore. The ofuro is the perfect way to finish a hectic day of travel. After a relaxing bath, we gather for the evening meal.

## JAPANESE CUISINE

A highlight of any visit to Japan is its superb cuisine defined by fresh ingredients and artful presentation. We will have ample opportunity to sample both familiar and new dishes. We will sample many types of Japanese food, and usually the first “bite” is with our eyes, the presentation being a tantalizing array of fresh fish, beef, vegetables, tofu, miso soup and, of course, rice, all served on individual plates and bowls of exquisite sizes, patterns, and proportions. We eat with chopsticks and are usually seated at low tables on the floor. At some ryokans, you may choose between a Japanese breakfast of fish, rice, miso soup, tofu, vegetables, pickled condiments and tea, or a western breakfast consisting of eggs, toast, salad, and coffee. Many places, however, offer only Japanese food.

During our stays in major cities, you will have some dinners and all lunches on your own, allowing you ample opportunity to sample the endless variety of Japanese food. When we are traveling, we may try an obento (box lunch), and we sample the snack foods of Japan and/or get a bowl of udon, ramen or soba noodles at one of the local spots. We often eat lunch at noodle shops, sushi bars and small neighborhood lunch spots, avoiding the infamous high-priced meals of Japan. Napkins are not used except at western-style restaurants; bring your own handkerchief.

Keep in mind that Japanese food is very different from what we are used to, and with the limited availability of American foods, your food intake will be a big part of the Japanese adventure.

Please note that vegetarian options are available, but limited. Strict vegetarian diets, vegan diets, or gluten reduced diets will be difficult to accommodate due to the pervasiveness of the fish-based stock dashi and the use of soy sauce and miso in Japanese cuisine. Gluten free cuisine will not be available.

### WEATHER

Japan's climate and temperature range are similar to the east coast of the US, with four distinct seasons. In March and April, the weather is turning spring-like and we hope to enjoy the cherry blossoms. Viewing the blossoms is somewhat of a national pastime in Japan. However, as the spring is a transitional season, we can expect some rain. In autumn, the weather in Japan turns pleasant, as the humidity of the summer months leave the air. Because the occasional typhoon does occur in the autumn, we may expect some rain. Temperatures should range from the 50s to the 70s °F. In the mountains, the weather is unpredictable and we may encounter rain.

### CHOOSING THE RIGHT TRIP

Adventure travel often involves exotic destinations, unusual levels of physical exertion, or activities you may not have participated in previously. We work hard to help you choose the right trip for you, paying attention to your individual interests, abilities, and needs. If you have questions about the level of comfort or any of the activities described in this itinerary, please call Wilderness Travel at 1-800-368-2794 and ask for the Pacific Manager or email us at [pacific@wildernesstravel.com](mailto:pacific@wildernesstravel.com).

### REFERENCES

We'd be happy to put you in touch with a past client that has traveled with us on this or a similar trip.

### VISIT OUR WEBSITE

At [www.wildernesstravel.com](http://www.wildernesstravel.com), you can find out about added departures, last-minute deals, and special WT Expeditions that aren't listed in our catalog. You can also access a complete library of our detailed itineraries and browse the customized reading guides for each of our adventures.

### HELPFUL LINKS

Wilderness Travel has compiled a list of useful websites for travelers. Find the Client Forms & Helpful Links page of our website: [www.wildernesstravel.com/toucan/links](http://www.wildernesstravel.com/toucan/links).

Average Daily Max/Min °F												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Osaka	48/35	50/36	56/41	65/50	75/60	82/70	88/76	91/77	82/69	77/58	65/45	56/42
Shingu	40/42	51/43	57/48	65/55	72/65	78/72	83/75	85/79	78/71	75/65	65/55	57/49
Rainfall - Inches												
Osaka	1.9	2.0	4.0	5.0	5.5	8.3	7.0	5.0	7.0	5.0	3.0	1.9
Shingu	2.5	3.0	5.0	7.0	8.0	9.9	8.0	6.9	10.0	7.0	4.5	2.2

# Toucan Club Rewards & Discounts



MEN'S T-SHIRT



WOMEN'S T-SHIRT



PATAGONIA SYNCHILLA FLEECE VEST  
PLUS INSULATED CAMELBAK WATER BOTTLE



PATAGONIA R1 PULLOVER

We are very proud to have one of the highest rates of repeat travelers in the business, and have established the Wilderness Travel Toucan Club to reward you for your loyalty. For more information, please visit the Toucan Club page of our website at [www.wildernesstravel.com/toucan](http://www.wildernesstravel.com/toucan).

Here's how it works:

## YOUR FIRST TRIP

As a first-time traveler, you receive a lightweight Wilderness Travel T-shirt and set of durable WT Luggage Tags. On subsequent trips, we're happy to send you a new WT T-shirt and set of Luggage Tags by request.

## YOUR SECOND TRIP

A top quality Wilderness Travel insulated stainless steel water bottle by CamelBak and a cozy Wilderness Travel fleece vest by Patagonia (\$130 value).

## YOUR THIRD TRIP

A versatile Wilderness Travel R-1 pullover by Patagonia (\$140 value).

## YOUR FOURTH TRIP

Discounts on the cost of your trip begin! You receive a 4% discount on the tour cost.

## FIVE AND MORE TRIPS

You receive a 5% discount on the base trip cost. On your sixth trip, you receive a 6% discount, and so on up to your 10th trip. The maximum discount is 10%, with a ceiling of \$500.

*Note: Due to special pricing considerations, Toucan Club discounts do not apply to our Private Journeys or Special Events. However, your participation on these trips does count toward your Toucan discount on future departures of Wilderness Travel's regular adventures.*

## TERMS & CONDITIONS

Toucan Club travel discounts cannot be used in conjunction with any other discount, unless otherwise specified. Discounts are deducted from the base trip cost and shown on the final invoice. The base trip cost is the main land/tier cost and does not include single supplement fees, extensions, internal airfare, or other additional charges. Bonus gifts (T-shirts, luggage tags, vests, water bottles, and pullovers) will be mailed approximately three weeks prior to trip departure. Terms and conditions of Toucan Club bonuses are subject to change or cancellation at the discretion of Wilderness Travel, Inc.

# Travel Notes

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## WILDERNESS TRAVEL HAS BEEN AWARDED:

**Best Travel Specialists in the World:** *Conde Nast Traveler*, 2024, 4-time winner

**World's Best Tour Operators:** *Travel + Leisure*, 11-time winner

**Best Wildlife, Hiking & Walking Trips:** *AFAR Magazine*, 3 years in a row

**Best Adventure Travel Companies:** *USA Today*

**Trip of the Year:** *Outside Magazine*, 9-time winner

**50 Tours of a Lifetime:** *National Geographic Traveler*, 9 years in a row

**Best Adventure Travel Companies:** *National Geographic Adventure*, 3-time winner

Please be advised that California has established a Travel Consumer Restitution Fund under the California Seller of Travel Law that took effect January 1, 1996. This fund is designed to protect consumers from unscrupulous practices by discount airfare ticket sellers or air charter operators. Unfortunately, this law does not cover non-California residents and, even in the case of California residents, it does not cover any foreign travel where the foreign "providers of transportation or travel services" are not in compliance with the Sellers of Travel Law (compliance being defined as registered as a Seller of Travel in California and a participant in the Travel Consumer Restitution Fund). Thus none of Wilderness Travel's tours qualify and we are required by law to advise each client that they are not covered by the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires sellers of travel to maintain a trust account or bond. This business has a trust account. California Seller of Travel #100769640

While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities and trip routing, rather than an inflexible schedule of events; it is subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. This trip is subject to the Limitation of Liability and all the terms and conditions as detailed in the General Information section of the Wilderness Travel Catalog.

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