WAVSS Kumano Kodo 2018

AURORA ADVENTURES

Departing: 11th - 18th October
8 participants maximum.

Price: $7,250pp* (ex Kyoto)
*twin share only

Journey with Aurora Adventures and WAVSS to the spectacular Kumano Kodo Trail in Japan to explore part of the UNESCO World Heritage 'sacred sites and pilgrimage routes' in the Kii Mountain Range.

PROVIDING SUPPORT SERVICES FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE.

The aim of this challenge is to support Working Against Violence Support Services (WAVSS) in fundraising to help provide their much needed services.

Money raised will help provide information, support and counselling for people experiencing domestic and family violence.

The Kii Peninsula points south away from Kyoto and Osaka and is one of the most remote and mystical areas of Japan, despite its proximity to these great cities. Long a place of pilgrimage, the Kii Peninsula is the site of the three Grand Shrines of Kumano (Kumano Sanzan).

From the 11th century, successive emperors and their families made the long and difficult pilgrimage to Kumano from Kyoto. Several pilgrimage trails were established, among them the Nakahechi-do, Kohechi-do and Ohechi-do, collectively known as the Kumano Kodo ('Old Road of Kumano').

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Inclusions

Your trek cost includes:

- Accommodation in hotels, Japanese-style inns (ryokan, minshuku). Japanese-style accommodation will generally be in tatami-mat rooms
- Meals included
- Entrance to museums, temples, etc. as indicated on the itinerary
- Baggage will be transferred on 2 occasions: Kyoto to Yumomine Onsen and Yumomine Onsen to Osaka
- Professional Licensed Guides
- Your pre-adventure training package and 4 workshops to learn Japanese culture such as Origami, Stamp Carving, Calligraphy and a Traditional Tea Ceremony
- Dedicated Australian Wilderness Trek Medic & medical kit
- Personal travel insurance
- All transfers and transport in Japan
- Shirt and cap

Exclusions

- Personal expenses such as phone call costs and alcoholic beverages at the hotel
- Boots and a small amount of personal trek clothing
- Inoculations and medication
- International Return Flights

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Itinerary

Day 1

We will meet in Kyoto, where our local guides will meet us and provide the first briefing for the trip. We will enjoy dinner in a local restaurant before heading back to the hotel.

Day 2

A day to explore Kyoto with your guide. This morning we walk the Philosopher's Pathway from Nanzenji Temple. In the afternoon we enjoy a walk through the famed Nishiki market before a walking tour of the Gion district.

Day 3

Today, we travel by train from Kyoto to the small town of Kii Tanabe on the mystical Kii Peninsula, gateway to the historic Kumano Kodo Trail. The railway line runs close to the ocean for the latter part of the journey and offers fine views out over the sea. The journey from Kyoto is around three hours. On arriving at Kii Tanabe station, we board a local bus and travel 40 minutes to Takijiri. This is where our walk on the Nakahechi portion of the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage route begins. From Takijiri the path climbs steadily to the ridge-top village of Takahara, and takes around two hours. The small Japanese-style hotel in Takahara has both Japanese and western-style rooms, all with wonderful views over the valley and mountains.

Day 4

After our Japanese breakfast we leave our accommodation and follow the trail as it winds through small settlements and peaceful countryside. We will pass several Oji shrines before finally descending to the village of Chikatsuyu. Arrive in Chikatsuyu in time to relax before dinner at Nonaka Sanso guest-house.

Day 5

From Chikatsuyu, the trail continues through the mountains to Hongu. The trail passes through small villages and forest trails over the Kii Mountains to the Kumano shrine at Hongu, one of the three 'Grand Shrines of Kumano'. At the heart of these sacred mountains, Kumano was said to be the entrance to the land of Yomi, the 'other world' which spirits travelled to in Japanese mythology.

From the Kumano shrine at Hongu, a short bus ride brings us to Yunomine Onsen, one of the oldest natural hot spring onsen villages in Japan, or to Kawayu Onsen hot spring famous for the thermal water bubbling to the surface of the crystal clear river.
Enjoy a relaxing soak in a Japanese bath before or after our delicious, multi-course dinner.

Day 6

Before or after breakfast, take time to explore the atmospheric village where we spent the night. Today's journey begins with a short bus ride to Ukegawa on the banks of the Kumano River. From Ukegawa, you start on the Kogumotorigoe path, which heads up to the Kogumotorigoe Pass before descending to the remote village of Koguchi. The trail is not difficult and today's hike takes us about 4 hours. A warm welcome and good food await us at the engaging lodge created from a former school building. Explore along the river.

Day 7

The final section of the trail takes us from Koguchi up to the Ogumotorigoe Pass with a glimpse of the Pacific Ocean. It then descends to Nachi-san, the location of Nachi Taisha Grand Shrine, one of the three 'Grand Shrines of Kumano' and Nachi-taki waterfall. Stay overnight in the small village of Nachi-san close to the shrine. Enjoy dinner and breakfast served by our hosts at our accommodation.

Day 8

Kii-Katsuura is an active fishing port and has a lively early-morning fish market. Enjoy the views out over the island-studded bay. There are intriguing backstreets and a traditional covered shopping arcade to explore, too. We provide train tickets for you to board a train at lunchtime, travelling back around the Kii Peninsula and arriving in Osaka mid to late afternoon. Check in to your hotel in central Osaka and enjoy a night in the neon-bright streets of Japan's food capital. It is from here we say goodbye to our trekking team and continue on our individual journeys.