

Nakasendo Self-Guided Hike 3 Days



trip highlights

- Walk select, scenic sections of the ancient Nakasendo Way
- Explore beautifully preserved Edo-period post towns including Magome, Tsumago and Narai
- Enjoy the freedom of self-guided walking with detailed route notes and luggage transfers
- Stay in traditional minshuku and ryokan, wearing yukata and enjoying home-cooked meals
- Experience rural Japan at a gentle pace through forested valleys and mountain passes



Trip Duration	3 days	Trip Code: NH3
Grade	Introductory	
Activities	Adventure Touring, Hiking	
Summary	3 day trip, 3 day hike, 1 night minshuku, 1 night ryokan	

welcome to World Expeditions

For over 50 years, we've been creating high-quality, expedition-style adventures for active travellers with a curious spirit. From our very first trek in the mountains of Nepal to pioneering remote routes across all seven continents, our journeys are built for those who want to truly explore – not just visit.

At the heart of what we do is a simple philosophy: take the paths less travelled.

This means travelling with care, supporting local communities, minimising our impact, and unlocking experiences that most travellers will never have.

If you're ready to go further and dig deeper, we invite you to join us on the Nakasendo Self-Guided Hike 3 Days, a journey that captures the essence of a unique adventure.

why travel with World Expeditions?

Our Japan journeys are crafted to reveal the country's deep cultural layers and natural beauty in ways most travellers never see. Each itinerary is personally designed to offer genuine connection whether that's staying in traditional ryokan, walking lesser-known trails, or exploring regions shaped by centuries of exchange. We work closely with trusted local partners to continually evolve our trips, ensuring we stay off the beaten track. Above all, we travel in a way that respects local communities, protects fragile environments, and supports a more sustainable future for Japan's regions.



Nakasendo Self-Guided Hike 3 Days

Walk village to village on the loveliest parts of the Nakasendo Way, suitable for families



the trip

This 3-day self-guided walking tour, which includes the highlights of the Nakasendo, is suitable for families, as the length and hiking inclusions are flexible, and can be bypassed by using available local public transport options.

Walk the most scenic sections of Japan's historic Nakasendo Way, once travelled by samurai and merchants journeying between Kyoto and Edo. This self-guided hike links the beautifully preserved post towns of Magome, Tsumago and Narai, following forest trails and quiet rural paths through the Kiso Valley.

Walking at your own pace, you're supported with detailed route notes, luggage transfers and reliable local arrangements. Traditional inns, seasonal landscapes and gentle daily distances make this a rewarding and accessible introduction to rural Japan.

at a glance

DAY 1	TRAIN TO NAGOYA, TORII PASS TO NARAI, TRIP CONCLUDES (6.2KM / 3.9MI, 3 HRS)
DAY 2	HIKE TO NOJIRI, TRAIN TO KISO FUKUSHIMA (18.4KM / 11.5MI, 6 HRS OR 3.7KM / 2.3MI, 1 HR)
DAY 3	TRAIN FROM KISO FUKUSHIMA TO YABUHARA, WALK TO NARAI (6.2KM / 3.9MI, 3 HRS), TRIP CONCLUDES

additional deposits required

In addition to the World Expeditions deposit, you will also be required to pay JPY 40,000 (or equivalent) for accommodation deposits. This is non-refundable. We recommend you take out travel insurance at the time of booking.

what's included

- 2 breakfasts and 2 dinners
- 1 night traditional minshuku on twinshare basis
- 1 night ryokan on twinshare basis
- Local transportation as listed in itinerary
- Information pack including route notes and topographical maps per room booked
- Daily luggage transfers up to Narai Station on Day 3
- Local support by telephone

Local cash payments are becoming increasingly popular with many operators in the adventure travel industry. The policy seems to benefit the tour operators, more than the local economies or travellers, as it avoids local taxes and transfers the cost and risk of cash handling to travellers. In accordance with our Responsible Travel practices we have chosen a policy not to ask for such payments.

what's not included

- International airfare, visa and travel insurance (compulsory)
- Meals and beverages not indicated in the program
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, phone calls, alcohol etc
- Local bus fare from Nakatsugawa to Magome on Day 1 (payable direct at your own cost - approx JPY 800, subject to change)

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trip dates

Daily departure from 25 March through 30 November

important notes

P - Nakasendo Way Self-Guided
- Peak Season Surcharge

Note: - Seasonal pricing supplements may apply at different times of the year. Our consultants will confirm on booking.

Note: - Availability is limited on these trips and changes quickly. We encourage you to contact us early if you are interested in this trip.

fast facts

Countries Visited:

Japan

Visas:

Please check visa requirements with your reservations consultant*

Vaccinations:

Please consult a travel vaccination specialist for up to date information

Singles:

Single travellers must pay a single supplement on this trip.

Leader:

This journey is unescorted

Advice for people with limited mobility

This trip is not suitable for people with limited mobility.

detailed itinerary

DAY 1 Train to Nagoya, Torii Pass to Narai, trip concludes (6.2km / 3.9mi, 3 hrs)

Train tickets are provided for your journey from Tokyo or Kyoto to Nakatsugawa, including a ride on the famous Shinkansen to Nagoya. On arrival, you travel by local bus to Magome, where your walk begins over the Magome Pass toward Tsumago, one of the most evocative and beautifully preserved post towns on the Nakasendo Way. The trail winds through cedar forest, stone paths and rural hamlets, offering a gentle introduction to the historic route. In the evening, enjoy the quiet charm of Tsumago after day-trippers depart, strolling the lantern-lit streets in a supplied yukata.

Elevation gain: 326m / 1069ft of ascent and 430m / 1410 ft of descent

Accommodation: Minshuku (Family-run Guesthouse), Nagiso

Note: luggage transfer from Magome included

meals: D

DAY 2 Hike to Nojiri, train to Kiso Fukushima (18.4km / 11.5mi, 6 hrs or 3.7km / 2.3mi, 1 hr)

Today offers the longest and most varied walking day of the journey, following a remote section of the Nakasendo through forested valleys, bamboo groves and quiet rural landscapes. You may choose the full walk to Nojiri or opt for a shorter alternative to Nagiso, allowing flexibility depending on energy and weather. After your walk, continue by train to Kiso-Fukushima, a historic town at the heart of the Kiso Valley. Tonight you stay in a traditional onsen ryokan, where a soak in the hot-spring baths is the perfect reward after the day's walk.

Elevation gain: 723m / 2275ft of ascent and 644m / 2112ft of descent

We offer a shorter alternative of 1 hour (3.7km / 2.3miles). You can choose which option you prefer on the day - no need to decide in advance.

Note: please leave your luggage for transfer at the front desk of your accommodation by 08:30am.

Accommodation: Onsen ryokan or similar

meals: B,D

DAY 3 Train from Kiso Fukushima to Yabuhara, walk to Narai (6.2km / 3.9mi, 3 hrs), trip concludes

After breakfast, return by train to Yabuhara, the starting point for today's walk over the Torii Pass to Narai. The trail climbs gently through forest before descending into Narai, one of the best-preserved post towns in Japan, with long rows of traditional wooden houses lining the main street. Take time to explore the village, visit small

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thoughtful travel

Our World Expeditions adventures are grounded in a deep commitment to regenerative travel, going beyond minimising harm to actively restoring and enriching the places we visit. We partner closely with local communities, ensuring that our trips support cultural preservation, fair livelihoods, and community-led initiatives. Each expedition is designed to protect and regenerate natural ecosystems through low-impact practices, climate action, and education that fosters respect for biodiversity. We prioritise meaningful connections between travellers and place, encouraging a sense of stewardship that lasts well beyond the journey. By embedding sustainability into every layer of our operations, we aim not only to explore the world responsibly but also to leave it healthier, more resilient, and more vibrant for future generations.

trip grading Introductory

This trip is rated as introductory but the trip does involve days hiking along steep and undulating terrain through the countryside.

We therefore recommend 1 – 2 hours of good cardiovascular exercise 2 - 3 times per week for 2 - 3 months prior to undertaking the trip. Remember the fitter you are the more this will enhance your experience.

adventure travel

By its very nature adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected. In remote and developing countries do not expect standards you are used to at home. Remote areas are sometimes unpredictable and itineraries may be altered. To get the most out of your adventure it is important that you are flexible, positive and eager to take on all the challenges that arise. If you are uncertain about your suitability for this trip we recommend that you speak with your consultant or travel agent.

museums or enjoy a coffee in one of the restored merchant houses. Collect your main luggage at Narai Station. Your journey concludes here, with onward train connections to Kyoto or Tokyo in the afternoon.

Elevation gain: 344m / 1128 feet of ascent and 270m / 885 feet of descent

In Kiso-Fukushima we offer an optional, fairly strenuous, circular walk to a local waterfall. The circular walk is 7km / 4.3mi with 632m / 2,075 ft of ascent, 637m / 2,090ft of descent and takes 2-3 hours. You can take this walk in the morning, before heading onwards to Yabuhara.

Note: please leave your luggage for transfer to Narai Station at the front desk of your accommodation by 08:30am.

If you wish to arrange instead for your main baggage to be sent ahead by Takkyubin courier to your post tour accommodation in Kyoto or Tokyo (for retrieval the following day), your accommodation can assist you to book the luggage transfers (payable direct at your own cost).

meals: B

This itinerary is subject to change with any change in Community regulations as well as Governmental changes and natural circumstances beyond our control.

country information

Japan is a captivating blend of deep-rooted tradition and cutting-edge modernity. Stretching from the snowy mountains of Hokkaido in the north to the subtropical islands of Okinawa in the south, the country offers a remarkable diversity of landscapes, cultures and experiences. In the cities such as Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka you'll find a dynamic mix of futuristic architecture, vibrant street life and refined aesthetics. In contrast, rural Japan reveals a quieter side: forested hills, wooden temples, rice paddies and traditional villages that reflect centuries of cultural continuity.

Japan's history spans thousands of years, shaped by powerful feudal clans, shoguns, emperors and a long period of isolation before opening to the world in the 19th century. The country's heritage is preserved in ancient castles, Buddhist temples, Shinto shrines, and traditional arts such as calligraphy, tea ceremony and Noh theatre. Despite rapid post-war modernisation, Japan maintains a strong connection to its past with cultural traditions still playing a central role in daily life. Visitors will experience a society that values respect, harmony and detail, with omotenashi (hospitality) at the heart of every guest encounter.

Food is another highlight of any journey from regional specialities and street-side ramen to some of the world's most refined cuisine, meals are crafted with seasonality, balance and presentation in mind. With an efficient transport network, including the famous Shinkansen (bullet trains), travel between regions is smooth and comfortable. Japan's blend of natural beauty, cultural depth and modern energy offers travellers a rewarding and richly layered experience.

climate

Japan experiences four distinct seasons, each offering unique appeal for travellers. Spring (March to May) is one of the most popular times to visit, with cherry blossoms in bloom and mild daytime temperatures ranging from 10–20°C (50–68°F) across much of the country. Summer (June to August) begins with a brief rainy season in early June, followed by warm to hot conditions and high humidity, particularly in cities like Tokyo and Kyoto. Temperatures often reach 28–34°C (82–93°F), though it can feel warmer with humidity. Autumn (September to November) is widely regarded as one of the best seasons for walking and cultural travel. Days are typically clear and pleasant, with temperatures between 15–25°C (59–77°F) and vibrant autumn foliage throughout the countryside. Winter (December to February) is cold in the north and at higher elevations, with heavy snowfall common in regions like Hokkaido and

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important note

These trip notes represent the most current information for this itinerary, and may supersede any information on our website, including but not limited to the itinerary and price. The itinerary should be seen as a guide only. This itinerary may change at any time due to inclement weather, forces of nature and other circumstances beyond our control.

the Japan Alps. Temperatures in northern areas can fall below 0°C (32°F), while southern regions such as Kyushu and Shikoku remain relatively mild, averaging 5–12°C (41–54°F) during the day. Because Japan stretches across a long north–south axis and includes significant mountain ranges, conditions vary considerably. Coastal cities tend to be milder, while alpine areas can be much cooler and subject to rapid weather changes year-round. Travellers should be prepared for a range of conditions and pack layered clothing, including a waterproof jacket, regardless of the season.

a typical day

This 3-day self-guided walking tour, which includes the highlights of the Nakasendo, is suitable for families, as the length and hiking inclusions are flexible, and can be bypassed by using available local public transport options.

A mixture of paved village paths and unpaved forest trails. This is an easy-to-moderate walk suitable for a variety of levels. The longest day (Day 2) includes 6 hours of walking, and we offer a shorter alternative of just 1 hour. On days 1 and 3, you walk for around 3 hours, giving time for sightseeing in the lovely old Nakasendo post towns. The route follows the Kiso Valley, and has some gentle climbs over low passes.

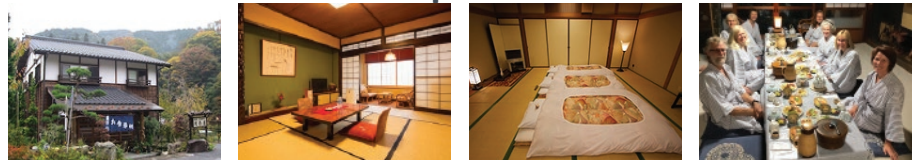
Meals on this trip:

Most meals will be Japanese cuisine. Vegetarian options are available, but limited. Strict vegetarian diets, vegan diets, or gluten free 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.

dietary requirements

Provided we are advised in advance of your departure we are able to cater for vegetarian diets and can assist with medically recommended diets (allergies and intolerances). Please ensure you discuss your requirements with us well in advance (at least 1 month prior to your trip) to determine whether we can cater to such dietary requirements on your chosen adventure. Please note that options are likely to be limited in very remote locations or alternatives may be more expensive or unavailable. There may be times when those with special requirements may need to provide their own food. We are unable to guarantee a peanut-free or allergen-free trip, and therefore, we strongly encourage that travellers with life-threatening or severe allergies take all necessary medical precautions to prepare for the possibility of exposure. Passengers must travel with all necessary medications for food allergies and be capable of self-administering these medications.

accommodation on the trip



Minshuku are usually family-run traditional Japanese-style inns. They have tatami-mat rooms, with futons laid out in the evening for sleeping. Most minshuku do not have en suite bathrooms as they are in older traditional wooden buildings. Compared with a ryokan, they are usually (but not always) slightly less formal, but the service and food is just as good.

pre and post tour accommodation

Please notify your Reservations Consultant of your pre tour accommodation details - this must be a hotel with a staffed reception desk. This is required for our local Japan partner to courier

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your Information pack including route notes, topographical maps and transport tickets, which will be available at check-in.

We strongly recommend to have a pre-/post-night stay in the start and end cities rather than scheduling flights on the same day. While Japan's transport system is known for its punctuality, unexpected delays or cancellations due to weather or other circumstances can occasionally occur. These extra nights not only provide peace of mind in case of travel delays, but also allow for a more relaxed start and end to the trip.

We also recommend the post tour accommodation be at a hotel with a staffed reception desk, so they can receive the Takkyubin Luggage transfers.

what you carry

In your daypack you will need to carry some warm clothing (depending on the altitude, location and season), a rain jacket, water bottle, valuables and personal items such as sunscreen, lip balm etc.

equipment required

Specialist gear required include walking boots and day pack (a comprehensive gear list is provided in the pre-departure information provided on booking).

vehicles & safety

During the course of your trip, we will use a variety of vehicles, all of which are fit for purpose and the conditions encountered. It should be noted that laws governing transportation safety may differ from those in your home country and whilst wherever possible, vehicles with seatbelts are provided, on occasion some vehicles may not have seat belts fitted.

visas

The following passport holders can travel to Japan for up to 3 months without a visa:

Australia
New Zealand
USA
UK (6 months)
Canadian

If you are travelling on any other type of passport we would request that you contact us, or your travel agent, to check the visa requirements.

Please bear in mind that visas may be required for countries you are visiting en route or transiting through on the way to your destination. It is important that you check the requirements of all countries you will visit. Visa costs and requirements do change regularly so we suggest you check with your travel agent or World Expeditions reservations consultant. It is your responsibility to obtain all necessary visas.

webinars & events

Catch a Webinar – Live or On Demand - to learn more about a particular trip. Make sure the trip you choose is right for you. Watch them live, so you can ask our presenters a question, or catch the recording later at your leisure and watch it On Demand. Visit our website or keep an eye on our newsletter for upcoming presentations.

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private groups

The adventures that you see on our website are just a starting point. We operate many of our trips, which means we can be flexible and create an itinerary to suit your interests and dates. Talk to our team, you'll be surprised how much more affordable it can be when you get a group of friends, colleagues, a club – you name it, to travel with you!

subscribe to our e-newsletter

Never miss another deal or spot on an exciting new trip! Be part of our adventure community, head to our website to subscribe to our free e-newsletter.

social networking

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Subscribe to our channel at [youtube.com/worldexpeditions](https://www.youtube.com/worldexpeditions)

Share the love

Use the hashtag #WorldExpeditions on your best travel photos and videos to be featured.

trip availability

We operate small group adventures, which means availability is always worth checking early. Check trip availability online or call our team who might be able to dig a little deeper for you to find what you want, when you want.

Many adventures require services that, if not available at the time you book (like an internal flight or permit) could mean the trip is unavailable. So, book early to avoid missing out on your dream adventure.

how to book

Check trip availability and book your tour online, or call or visit one of our offices. To book a trip, you will need to complete a Booking Form (online or request a PDF) and pay a non-refundable deposit. Please note that when booking our tours to not confirm any additional arrangements until all services related to your tour are confirmed by your dedicated Reservations Consultant.