



JAP130506/2



Active Japan

Hiking, Biking, and Sea Kayaking

Combine your thirst for adventure with your desire to get active on this slightly different take on Japan.

From the neon lights and modern glitz of Tokyo, we head into the countryside where we encounter old-world Japan and myriad opportunities for hiking, biking and sea kayaking.

The food will keep you going, the scenery will amaze, and the hospitality of the Japanese will make you want to come back for more.

Highlights:

- Day 1 - Day 3: Tokyo
- Day 4: Mount Fuji
- Day 5 - Day 7: Kamikochi
- Day 7 - Day 8: Kyoto
- Day 9 - Day 10: Koyasan
- Day 11 - Day 13: Kyoto
- Day 14: Tokyo

Physical Preparation

- A reasonable level of fitness is required for this trip.
- You should be able to complete a 20 kilometer walk in a day and be comfortable on a full day's bike ride (3 days of bike activities are included).
- No prior rafting experience is needed.

Style:

- Thrilling adventures is the simplest way to describe these trips.
- As you'd expect, activity is the key - though we're talking cycling, kayaking and walking rather than rock climbing or paragliding, we'll leave the extreme sports to the experts!
- Active trips offer real life experiences, combining a challenging day's hike with a night's stay in a hill-tribe village.
- You don't need to be super fit for all Active trips, but they're ideal if you want a physical challenge along with plenty of cultural interaction.

Itinerary:

Day 1 - Day 3: Tokyo

- You can arrive at any time on day 1 as there are no activities planned until the welcome meeting. Your leader will leave a note at reception telling you where and when this important meeting will take place.
- Information will be left at the hotel for those who arrive early to do some sightseeing. On a clear day you will see Mt Fuji standing boldly in the distance to the west of the city.
- To stay in a ryokan is a traditional Japanese experience as this is how a typical family lives. Rooms have a tatami (straw) mat floor and are furnished sparingly, often with just a low table. You will sleep in the traditional style, using a futon spread out on the tatami mat. During the day the futon is kept in the closet, then the ryokan staff will prepare your bed for you before bedtime. Shoes are removed at the main entrance to the ryokan, where you put on the slippers provided. Slippers are used for walking around but should be removed before stepping onto the tatami mat. A yukata (Japanese bathrobe) is also provided, to be worn during your stay. The yukata can be used for both walking around the ryokan and as pajamas.
- From this central base we visit a sumo stable to watch the wrestlers train (seasonal) and Tsukiji fish market for a morning sushi fix. In the afternoon why not get a street level view of this great city's best sites by bike?
- There are endless options for hiking, cycling, rafting, kayaking and martial arts (judo, aikido, kendo, ninja weapons) in and around this great metropolis. At the end of an active day, soak in an onsen (hot spring) in a beautiful mountain setting of spring-fed rivers and lakes, bamboo forests and rice terraces.
- On Day 3 it is your own free day. We recommend going to the beautiful mountain area of Minakami (70 minutes on the bullet train from Tokyo) for outdoor activities such as kayaking, rafting or mountain biking.

Itinerary:

Day 4: Mount Fuji

- Early this morning we take a bus from Tokyo for our day trip to Mt Fuji (approx. 2.5 hrs each way), arriving at the 5th station.
- Starting the climb early, the goal is to reach the summit from the 5th station start point (2305m) in around 5 or 6 hours. Hiking at your own pace, the climb will be at a slow and easygoing speed. This will help your body acclimatise to the altitude. Stopping for rests at the mountain huts on the way will help hiking the final stages. The terrain is a mixture of dirt, ash, hard lava, stone steps and concrete paths.
- Weather permitting, you have time to hike the crater for an hour or two and check out the spectacular views of Mt Fuji's different sides. You also have the opportunity to send some post cards to your friends and family from the post office on the summit.
- After a leisurely descent to the 5th station we head back to Tokyo, for a hot shower and a good night's sleep.

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR CLIMBERS ON MOUNT FUJI:

- Alert your guide if you have any difficulty. The weather on the summit can deteriorate in a matter of minutes, with thick mist reducing visibility to 3m. Rainstorms and wind up to 120km/h can occur at times. Please hold the rope, which will lead you to safety. If you are separated from your guide or lose sight of the trail, STOP IMMEDIATELY, stay where you are and raise attention to your location. PLEASE DO NOT TRY TO FIND YOUR WAY OUT.
- When climbing the summit please make sure that you carry with you the following things: warm clothes; a torch/flashlight; a rain coat; and some energy food and water.

- To avoid altitude sickness you should tackle the mountain at a slow pace and make frequent breaks. If you do not allow your body sufficient time to adjust to increases in altitude you may experience altitude sickness. Symptoms can include headache, dizziness and nausea.
- The completion of the climb to the summit is subject to weather conditions, your fitness and appropriate clothing. The decision will be your guide's.

Itinerary:

Day 5 - Day 7: Kamikochi

We travel by train (approx. 4 hrs) followed by a bus ride (approx. 1 hr) from Izu into the Alps to Kamikochi.

The Alps area of Japan offers a mixture of tough and rewarding walks in a quiet and wonderfully relaxing settings, especially in our lovely log cabins. Known locally as one of the most beautiful areas in the entire country it is home to jagged mountains, virgin forest and pristine streams making it perfect for serious hikers or bushwalkers. A great place for anyone who loves the outdoors.

Our quiet riverside Japanese style hotel in Kamikochi is surrounded by forest, with views of the 3,000m peaks nearby. Beautiful outdoor onsen is must try.

Day 7 - Day 8: Kyoto

After a morning walk in Kamikochi, we travel by bus (approx. 1 hr), express train (approx. 3 hrs) and bullet train (approx. 1 hr) to the former imperial capital city of Kyoto. The flat and chessboard layout of this amazing city makes it perfect for a day on the bike discovering some of the 17 UNESCO world heritage listed sites here. We will spend a day visiting a mixture of gardens, temples, shrines and castles at their best in certain seasons. The stunning inland sea is a short train ride away and we will spend another day swimming and sea kayaking our way around some uninhabited islands and beaches. With the former capital protected by close by mountains running on three sides, there is a great chance to use some free time to head for the hills and the many mysterious Shinto shrines, Buddhist mountain retreats (some from the 7th century) or isolated tea growing areas and make a nice touch to a day or half day hike.

Itinerary:

Day 9 - Day 10: Koyasan

We will travel by bullet train, local train, and cable car, and we will get to Mt Koya in 3 hours from Kyoto. Koyasan is the center of the Shingon Buddhism sect which was introduced to Japan in 805 by Kobo Daishi (also known as Kukai). The secluded temple town has developed around the sect's headquarters that Kobo Daishi built on Koyasan's wooded mountain top. It is also the site of Kobo Daishi's mausoleum and the start and end point of the Shikoku 88 Pilgrimage route.

We will experience temple lodging (Shukubo) where you can get a taste of a monk's lifestyle, eating vegetarian monk's cuisine (Shojin ryori) and attending morning prayers.

It is a great place to go for a hike, putting yourself into an ancient time while walking the path where people walk to get to this sacred spot from all over Japan.

Day 11 – Day 12: Kyoto

Back to Kyoto in the early afternoon. Free time for you to explore Kyoto.

The following day, we will go for a hike at Daimonji, just behind Ginkakuji - the Silver Pavilion. There are lots of stairs, but you can enjoy the spectacular view from the top. Looking over the whole Kyoto city and even Osaka and Awaji island. We will continue to Fushimi Inari shrine, shrine famous for the thousands of Shinto Torii gates lined up along the path.

Day 13: Kyoto

Free day. Optional activities recommended will be sea kayaking in Yuasa Wakayama.

In the evening, we all gather for our farewell dinner with Maiko.

Day14 Tokyo

There are no activities planned for day 14 and your leader will be taking you back to Tokyo on bullet train.

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