

backroads of japan



trip highlights

Wander the bustling streets of Tokyo, Japan's capital city
Behold the iconic, perfectly formed Mt Fuji and its glistening five lakes

Hike through postal towns & forest trails on the Nakasendo Way
Be enthralled by the world class attractions of Kyoto, incl the geisha district and The Golden Pavilion, Kinkakuji

Stay in traditional ryokan inns to experience the real Japan
Savour Japanese delicacies with many included meals

Explore and experience the markets of Osaka

Walk along ancient pilgrim trails leading to the sacred peak of Omine in Nara



Trip Duration	15 days	Trip Code: B0J
Grade	Introductory	
Activities	Adventure Touring, Hiking	
Summary	15 day trip, 6 day hike, 9 nights hotel, 6 nights traditional inn	

welcome to World Expeditions

Thank you for your interest in our Backroads of Japan trip. At World Expeditions we are passionate about our off the beaten track experiences as they provide our travellers with the thrill of coming face to face with untouched cultures as well as wilderness regions of great natural beauty. We are committed to ensuring that our unique itineraries are well researched, affordable and tailored for the enjoyment of small groups or individuals - philosophies that have been at our core since 1975 when we began operating adventure holidays. Our itineraries will give you the very best travel experience, designed by people with incredible local knowledge who share our vision of authentic exchange and real exploration with a responsible tourism approach. Whether you like your adventures to include trekking, touring, cycling, mountaineering, kayaking or cruising World Expeditions can make it happen for you. We hope you will join us for a life changing experience.

why travel with World Expeditions?

Our Japan operations are designed to showcase the rich cultural history and natural beauty of the country. Innovative themed itineraries, guided by a team of bilingual expert leaders, have been created personally to provide you with a unique and truly Japanese experience. Our partners in Japan continually work with us to improve our itineraries to ensure we are taking the 'paths less travelled'. Most importantly, we always aim to benefit the local people we interact with, safeguard the ecosystems we explore, and contribute to the sustainability of travel in the regions we experience.

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For competitive airfares and stopover ideas to join this adventure, contact our expert staff today to receive a detailed quote.

the trip

Fly over Japan and you will see that the entire archipelago is mountainous except for a narrow strip of coastal shelf, a few broad inland basins and some river valleys. Those flatter lands are where the bulk of the population lives. The mountains – the main terrain of this tour - are surprisingly unpopulated. From a distance it may seem that the old Samurai-and-Geisha traditions have given way to the mechanical marvels of consumer culture, but come closer and you will find a society shaped by deeply ingrained values, with many living traditions.

This walking tour wanders around the cultural barrier and into territory that Japanese hold sacred. Accompanied by expert leaders, you will hike through places of natural beauty and hinterland sites of deep significance. The itinerary is interspersed with interesting urban explorations. It begins with a brief immersion into the maze of Tokyo, before heading into the countryside to gaze at the nation's symbol, Mount Fuji from a suitable ringside seat: the top of one of its surrounding hills. Travelling by train and bus we head to the Kiso Valley and hike along an historic trail, the legendary trade route which connected the Sea of Japan with the Pacific Ocean.

Japan's original Buddhist monks proved their faith on this trail in the 7th century, when the mainland religion found its place among the esoteric native Shinto. Between these hinterland adventures are a few special days in Kyoto the "Florence of Japan" due to its endless fine art treasures, unique sense of identity, and walk-friendly environment.

Keeping to the backroads theme we have discrete opportunities to experience temple gardens, peerless Buddhist arts and architecture and the bohemian street culture of the ancient capital. The journey ends in another throbbing metropolis - Osaka, a mercantile Mecca. At every step of the way craft and cuisine will round out your Japanese experience, with encounters with locals adding a memorable human dimension.

at a glance

DAY 1	ARRIVE TOKYO
DAY 2	EXPLORE TOKYO, TO FUJI FIVE LAKES
DAY 3	HIKING AROUND MT FUJI
DAY 4	TRAVEL TO KISO VALLEY
DAY 5	OLD NAKASENDO HIGHWAY, TRAIN TO KYOTO
DAY 6	VISITING KYOTO'S TEMPLES
DAY 7	CLIMB MOUNT DAIMONJI
DAY 8	IN KYOTO FREE EXPLORATION
DAY 9	HIKE & TRAIN TO ASUKA
DAY 10	HIKE TO YOSHINO
DAY 11	HIKE & BUS TO DOROGAWA
DAY 12	HIKING AROUND DOROGAWA
DAY 13	MITARAI GORGE, TRAVEL TO OSAKA
DAY 14	IN OSAKA
DAY 15	IN OSAKA, TRIP CONCLUDES

what's included

- 14 breakfasts, 3 lunches and 7 dinners
- Comfortable accommodation on twin share basis
- Traditional 'ryokan' inns
- Expert bilingual guide
- Luggage transfers as listed in the itinerary
- Sightseeing and entry fees as listed in itinerary
- All transportation by train, bus and taxi

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trip dates

2020 13 Sep - 27 Sep
27 Sep - 11 Oct
04 Oct - 18 Oct
18 Oct - 01 Nov
01 Nov - 15 Nov

2021 07 Mar - 21 Mar
21 Mar - 04 Apr
04 Apr - 18 Apr
18 Apr - 02 May
16 May- 30 May
30 May- 13 Jun
12 Sep - 26 Sep
26 Sep - 10 Oct
03 Oct - 17 Oct
17 Oct - 31 Oct
31 Oct - 14 Nov

important notes

H - High Season

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

Private Groups:

Private group options are available for this trip*

Singles:

A single supplement is available for this trip*

Advice for people with limited mobility

This trip is not suitable for people with limited mobility.

*Ask our staff for more information.

→ Medical kit

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

detailed itinerary

DAY 1 Arrive Tokyo

On arrival you will need to make your own way to the group hotel. We will have an important tour briefing at approximately 6.00pm, so please check with reception for the exact time and location. Following the meeting your guide will take you to a local restaurant (meal is at own cost) followed by an optional night tour, typically to Shinjuku and/or Shibuya, to sample Tokyo's neon lights (transport is at own cost). First impressions of the industrial outer suburbs of Tokyo - a seemingly endless display of concrete and elevated highways - give little clue about the natural pleasures of coming days. Tokyo is a hive of activity, with a mind-boggling range of shops, restaurants and businesses that make it one of the world's most energetic cities. The train is quite an experience, particularly during peak hours where the standard practice is to squeeze as many people possible into each carriage! And Japan does not need to be expensive. The following is a small suggestion for places that you can enjoy for free - the Imperial Palace East Garden; Ryogoku Fireworks Museum; Sumo Museum and the Beer Museum Ebisu.

Overnight: Sunroute Asakusa or similar

meals: NIL

DAY 2 Explore Tokyo, to Fuji Five Lakes

After breakfast we head off to explore a small part of this incredible city. We begin with a subway trip to the Tokyo Metropolitan Central Wholesale Market (closed Sunday). This fish market is the biggest wholesale fish and seafood market in the world and also one of the largest wholesale food markets of any kind. This market is located in Tsukiji, central Tokyo, and is more commonly known as the Tsukiji market. From the fish market we continue to Tokyo's downtown area near Sumida River where we visit Sensoji Temple - the oldest temple in Tokyo, and walk through Nakamise shopping street which is lined with stores from the Edo period (1603 - 1867). In the early afternoon we will collect our bags before we travel by train to the bus station for our journey to Lake Kawaguchi at the base of Mount Fuji (approx 3 hours). Lake Kawaguchi is located in the centre of Fujigoko (Fuji Five Lakes) and is famous for its spectacular views of Mt Fuji from its northern shore. If we are lucky we may get to see the mountain in its full glory, however Mt Fuji is notoriously shy, and is prone to swift changing winds and temperature fluctuations so there is no guarantee that it will show itself through the ever-changing cloud cover that often shroud it. If time and weather allows, we will start exploring the area with a short introduction walk along the shores of Lake Kawaguchi.

Overnight: Route Inn Kawaguchiko or similar

meals: B,D

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thoughtful travel

The natural environments that you'll travel through are fragile; the cultures and traditions precious and often the communities we pass through are reliant on tourism. It is our responsibility as visitors to minimise the impact of our presence, protect what is precious and where we can leave a positive impact. Learn how you can do this by downloading the Thoughtful Traveller booklet from our website.

trip grading Introductory

Backroads of Japan 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.

DAY 3 Hiking around Mt Fuji

After breakfast, we will head out for today's guided hike. Your guide will select the best trail for the group. This might be a trail at the base of Mount Fuji or climbing one of the lower mountains in the area. Ideally, Mount Fuji will show itself (weather permitting) for excellent photo opportunities of Japan's most sacred mountain. Mt Fuji stands at a height of 3776m and the average temperature at the summit is between 4.8° - 5.8° C (40.5° - 42.5° F) during the summer months of July and August. The official season for climbers is July and August and it takes about 6 hours from the 5th station to the summit. Considered a sacred mountain during the Edo period, Mt Fuji is still climbed by worshipers. The afternoon is free time (non guided) but your guide will help advise you on best places to visit and how to get there. There are many local attractions to visit including hot springs, temples and shrines, quirky museums such as the Kawaguchiko Kinohana Art Museum or the Kawaguchiko Music Forest Museum. Alternatively you may wish to hike around the shores of one of the smaller nearby lakes or rent a bicycle to venture further.

Hiking: ~4.5km (1½hrs) or ~12km (4hrs) dependent on group

Overnight: Route Inn Kawaguchiko or similar

meals: B,D

DAY 4 Travel to Kiso Valley

A series of train and bus journeys through the morning will get us to Tsumago, one of the historic mountain-bound towns of Kiso, an historic trade route through a thick-forested valley. Our base in Tsumago, is a town preserved more or less as it stood in the 18th century.

Kiso Valley, in the southwestern part of Nagano, is the most mountainous prefecture located in Central Japan. Surrounded by the Central Alps to the east and the North Alps to the west, the deep valley formed by the Kiso River is filled with the fragrance of woodland trees.

After settling in at our traditional ryokan accommodation, we'll set out on foot to explore this charming old town on the historic Nakasendo Highway. The old Nakasendo Road was completed in the Edo period as a trunk road between Kyoto and Tokyo. The day ends at a traditional-style inn where you will enjoy a feast of seasonal dishes.

Note: For group sizes of seven travellers and more, private vehicles will be used instead of public transport. This morning you will need to pack a small overnight bag. Your main luggage will be sent to the accommodation in Kyoto.

Overnight: Hanaya ryokan or similar

meals: B,D

DAY 5 Old Nakasendo Highway, train to Kyoto

We spend the morning hiking along the ancient Nakasendo Way which connects the old capital Kyoto, to the new capital, Tokyo. Magome and Tsumago, the southernmost post towns have single main streets that are lined with shops selling traditional foods and local crafted goods, chiefly wood and lacquer. They are an architectural fantasy in timber. In the afternoon we travel by train, descending through the Central Alps to Nagoya, where we will change to the Shinkansen (bullet train) bound for Kyoto. With temples and teahouses, shrines and geisha, Kyoto is Japan's cultural heart. From the end of the Nara Period (794) Kyoto has functioned as the crossroads of Japanese history. Kyoto, which was Japan's capital for more than 1000 years, is a veritable open air museum. All over the city you can find countless shrines, temples, palaces and other historical sites which are best discovered by foot.

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important note

These trip notes represent the most current information for this itinerary, and may supersede any information in the current brochure, 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.

Our first evening in the historic downtown streets of the former capital will include a guided walk through the famous Geisha district of Gion which was originally developed in the Middle Ages, in front of Yasaka Shrine. The district was built to accommodate the needs of travellers and visitors to the shrine. It eventually evolved to become one of the most exclusive and well-known geisha districts in all of Japan.

Hiking: ~8km (3hrs)

Overnight: The Palace Side Hotel or similar

meals: B

DAY 6 Visiting Kyoto's Temples

There is a great deal to see by day in Kyoto, and the content of our days here may be re-shuffled to optimise weather conditions and local events from the busy communal calendar of festivities.

The highlights of today's guided tour will be visiting at least two of the Kyoto's many Buddhist temples. Your guide will suggest temples, possibly some of the temples tucked into the range of hills containing the city on its east side. The day will also include a walk through the city centre. By evening you will have enjoyed an orientation of this city.

Overnight: The Palace Side Hotel or similar

meals: B

DAY 7 Climb Mount Daimonji

The low lying plains and river scenery of the Kyoto Basin have been the stage for some of the most edifying and poignant episodes in Japanese lore. A guided climb to the lookout atop the mountain known colloquially as Daimonji will give us a bird's eye view of history. The hike up the mountain takes about 60 minutes and is well worth the effort. Part of the East Mountains, Daimonji-yama offers the most accessible and expansive view of the city. It is so high that on a clear day the skyscrapers of distant Osaka can be seen. For those who prefer to stay at base level, there is the option of walking along the Philosophers' Path by yourself.

The rest of the day will be occupied with sightseeing based on personal preferences as not everyone will have the same list of must-do activities. While this is not guided, your leader will be pleased to assist you and point you directly to the sites that will give you the most pleasure. Why not visit Heian Shrine built to commemorate Kyoto's founding, Kinkakuji (Golden Pavilion), or even try your hand at a cooking class, join a traditional tea ceremony or dress like a Geisha (please notify your guide beforehand as these activities need to be pre-booked).

Hiking: ~2km (2hrs)

Overnight: The Palace Side Hotel or similar

meals: B

DAY 8 In Kyoto free exploration

Essentially a free day for you (non guided), today you will have the opportunity to explore this fascinating city at your own pace. You may want to catch up on some shopping, write some postcards, or just reflect on the experience of recent days by

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the bank of the Kamo River. By this stage you may be feeling the urge to inhale the meditative atmosphere of Kyoto's Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines in the privacy of your own thoughts or explore nearby Nara (day-trip out of Kyoto).

About 42km south of Kyoto, Nara was the old capital of Japan (710-784) and was the cradle of arts, crafts and literature. Buddhism first flourished here under the strong patronage of successive Emperors and walking through the quiet streets is like walking through the pages of history.

Overnight: The Palace Side Hotel or similar

meals: B

DAY 9 Hike & Train to Asuka

Following an early breakfast we board our train to the Nara Basin (our main luggage will be forwarded to Dorogawa). Gradually leaving suburbia behind, we can now look forward to the next couple of days of our walking adventure. In the 6th Century the first mainland Asian-style capitals of Japan emerged here, and between them ran the country's oldest transit route - the Yamanobe Road. In the subsequent centuries the power centre moved elsewhere and the area simply de-urbanised into a rural zone of small-hold agriculture. Most of today will be spent weaving through farms, rice paddies and bamboo groves at the foot of sacred Mount Miwa. In the late afternoon we will travel by public transport to the next valley to the south. We end the day in Asuka, one of the most romantic sites in Japanese history.

Asuka is a small region in Nara prefecture (about 25 kilometers south of Nara City) which had a pivotal role in Japanese history. Lending its name to the Asuka Period (538-710), the region was the site of Japan's first capitals from where the early Japanese national character emerged. A few monuments of that period remain, but the area is now mostly fields and rural villages.

Note: this morning you will need to pack a small bag for our walk for the next 2 nights. Your main luggage will be sent to the accommodation in Dorogawa (day 11).

Hiking: ~16km (5hrs)

Overnight: Minshuku Wakimoto or similar

meals: B,L,D

DAY 10 Hike to Yoshino

In the morning we will walk through the historic Asuka region, along trails connecting mysterious domed tomb mounds and several of Japan's oldest temples.

The remnants of the Asuka Period that remain today are mostly limited to stone monuments and archaeological excavations. Burial tombs such as the Ishitutai Tomb or the Takamatsuzuka Tomb are preserved in their original state, while artefacts and recreations are on display at local museums like the Asuka Museum, or the Complex of Manyo Culture. In the afternoon we will transfer by train and shuttle bus to mountainous Yoshino. For over a millennium Yoshino was a major way station along the pilgrim's trail into Omine (Great Peak) and since 2004 it has enjoyed UNESCO World Heritage status. If time allows, we will explore the many small shops in Yoshino Town, or visit Zaodo Temple, base of Japan's mountain ascetic monks. A dinner feast will fortify us for tomorrow's hike.

Hike: ~6km (3hrs)

Overnight: Kam Kam ryokan or similar

meals: B,D

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DAY 11 Hike & Bus to Dorogawa

The trail we follow out of Yoshino today weaves through mountains thick with cherry trees, and as we climb higher these mix with fir, pine, and cedar. We will stop to rest at wayside shrines and panoramic mountain passes as we follow a famous pilgrim trail to Omine. From here the scenery changes as we pass through farmlands on our way to Kurotaki before travelling by bus to Dorogawa.

Dorogawa is a secluded area famous for its sweet spring water and traditional herb and fungus medicines. The village is beautiful with interesting scenic points such as Ryusenji Temple with its bright red maple trees and a waterfall to where pilgrims cleanse before visiting the sacred mountain of Omine.

Our accommodation in Dorogawa boasts an onsen, a naturally heated thermal bath, a great way to relax after our walk.

Hiking: ~12km (4hrs)

Overnight: Hanaya Tokubei ryokan or similar

meals: B,L,D

DAY 12 Hiking around Dorogawa

Today we explore the riverside trails and mountain passes surrounding the village of Dorogawa. Your tour leader will choose a route to walk depending on the weather conditions and season and you are welcome to join him or her, or explore on your own. For those wishing simply to spend the day relaxing, there is the luxury of observing the slow pace of the day in a country town.

Overnight: Hanaya Tokubei ryokan or similar

meals: B,D

DAY 13 Mitarai Gorge, travel to Osaka

Following a river this picturesque walk through Mitarai gorge takes us up some steep stairs and across a few suspension bridges. During early summer the gorge is a mass of bright green leaves which change to various shades of red and yellow with the onset of autumn. Arriving at the junction of Kawai, we have a bento lunch (traditional Japanese lunchbox) and then take the bus to Shimoichiguchi station then on to Osaka city. The Kansai metropolitan area, which includes Osaka, has a population that exceeds 20 million, making it one of the largest metropolises in the world. The city of Osaka was first incorporated in 1889 and has become known as the food capital of the world and this port city has had a history of a flourishing economy in part due to trade and travel made possible by its sea and river routes. On arrival at our hotel in Osaka we have time to freshen up before a guided orientation of this exciting city. Osaka can boast some of the most exuberant nightlife in Japan - a walk through the Dotonbori neon light area certainly won't disappoint.

Note: this morning you will need to pack a day bag. Your main luggage will be sent to the accommodation in Osaka.

Hiking: ~4.5km (1½hrs)

Overnight: Shin-Osaka Esaka Tokyu REI Hotel or similar

meals: B,L

DAY 14 In Osaka

Early this morning we will explore some of the sights in Osaka's Shinsaibashi area, for example Kuromon market - a 580m long market for fish, fruit, vegetables and other foods which has been open since the mid-Taisho period (1912-1926) - or Sennichimae Doguya-Suji, a narrow street with many shops dealing in equipment and utensils used

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in restaurant and coffee shops. Restaurant owners come here to buy plastic models of dishes used to display their menus in the window. These miniature food imitations are a great souvenir. The afternoon is free time (not guided) to discover Osaka on your own. There is so much to see and do in this city, for example the Museum of Oriental Ceramics, with its extensive collection of Korean and Japanese ceramics, or the Floating Garden Observatory. If you have any special interests your guide will be able to give you recommendations. This evening we will meet for a final farewell dinner to celebrate the end of a fabulous trip.

Overnight: Shin-Osaka Esaka Tokyu REI Hotel or similar

meals: B,D

DAY 15 In Osaka, trip concludes

The trip concludes today after breakfast. For those travelling to the Kansai International Airport the journey takes approximately 90mins. From Osaka to Tokyo Narita International Airport, takes the best part of six hours.

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

A geologically volatile archipelago, 85 per cent of Japan is mountainous. It is a relatively "young" land. The landscape is rugged and rocky, porous with natural springs, and the scenery has been perfectly depicted in famous historic paintings and woodblock prints: tiered mountains, streams, sculpted pine trees and many flowering plants, with a rich variety of bird life. Volcanic eruptions are not uncommon - although not on our route!

The population is concentrated in clustered centres on the coast of the main islands, with the remainder in small towns dispersed through the fertile hinterland. Since the big cities are all in lowland plains, the mountains are left largely to agriculture, forestry and national parks. Buddhism arrived from the mainland about 1,600 years ago, and its many traces overlap with those of the much older native belief system, Shinto.

A feudal society for most of its history, Japan has been a parliamentary democracy since World War II, and is on the surface a very modern country. Modern Japanese profess not to be religious, yet the landscape is dense with the traces of a great spiritual legacy, including temples, shrines, tombs and wayside markers. Japanese people are very conscious of their local roots, and from region to region there is a pleasing variation in dialect, cuisine and even, to a certain extent, appearance. Except for Tokyo, which has drawn immigrants from the northern and central regions, the regions of Japan engender a great deal of local pride.

climate

Japan has a generally temperate climate, but since the country stretches for 3000 km, from sub-Arctic in the extreme north to sub-tropical in the far south, there is plenty of variation throughout the year. Summer is hot and sticky, winter chills the bones, and the highest precipitation falls during the rainy season, roughly from mid-June to mid-July.

This tour takes place in the mild seasons outside these phases; but since we are travelling into rather lush regions, rain is a real possibility. Touring in this season, keep occasional warm and cold fluctuations in mind, it makes sense to dress in thin layers that can be easily added or removed according to weather and altitude.

'Backroads of Japan' departs in both spring and autumn, and each season has its characteristics. As the snows of winter retreat in the first quarter peach and plum blossoms appear. But to the Japanese it is the blossoming of the flowering cherry, or Sakura, from April into May that truly

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signals the spring. Days are generally short-sleeve warm, sometimes hot, but with sudden short drops.

By the time summer arrives the sun rises very early, before 6.00 am. In autumn cooler temperatures of 15° to 20° C (59° to 68° F) prevail. Humidity evaporates into clear blue skies. With many of the trees deciduous - particularly the Japanese maple and ginkgo - the change in foliage is spectacular.

a typical day

Trip Organisation

Where transport connections are complex, luggage will be sent ahead by courier. Note that it will take two days to arrive, with one interim night for which a small back pack will be useful. There will be town and country walking in the form of half-day and full-day round trips from our lodgings. Some of this will be hilly, but always on well defined trails. At night, staying in traditional inns, there will be opportunities to enjoy local 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



In the countryside we stay in atmospheric, family-run inns, with comfortable western-style hotels in the major cities. The Japanese "ryokan" is such a delicate environment, with compact spaces and displayed heirlooms, that for the first encounter something of a bull-in-a-china-shop feeling is inevitable - especially in the entrance as shoes are put on and removed. But this reaction normalises as we and the innkeepers get used to each others ways. Traditional-style accommodation means sleeping on "futon" bedding laid out on tatami floors. In the mountains it is usual for groups to sleep together in the same room, modified by sliding partitions. Our inns understand that westerners may be more comfortable with privacy, and assign two-person rooms when there are few other guests. But privacy throughout is difficult to guarantee without paying a premium. Please check with our office staff if you require more information on this.

Please note that hot showers and tub bathing is at the end of the day when a communal bath is heated (women and men are separated), but usually only wash basins are available in the morning. Japanese love bathing together, communing as they soak. This is a surprisingly good opportunity to meet the locals. However, if privacy is an issue this may be arranged by careful scheduling within the group.

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what you carry

In your daypack you will need to carry extra warm clothing (depending on the altitude, location and weather), a rainjacket, water bottle, camera, valuables and personal items such as sunscreen, lip-eze 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.

info nights

World Expeditions invites you to attend our inspiring adventure travel information nights. These special evenings are designed to inform and entertain and are hosted by our most experienced and passionate adventure travellers and mountaineers. Ask our staff for a info night schedule or register on our website - www.worldexpeditions.com. Shows can fill early so it is important to register your attendance so we know to save a seat, or two.

private groups

The adventures featured in our brochures, and on our website, are just a starting point for many of our private group travellers. Working closely with our Groups Department we can organise custom designed itineraries for groups of friends, clubs, charity's, schools or even work colleagues. Our team will assist you with all aspects of your private group adventure from itinerary design to group flights. Contact our team today.

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trip availability

If this trip seems right for you then we encourage you to call us now to check availability. There are many reasons why you may not be able to join your desired departure and limited space on our small group departures is just one of them. Many of our adventures require us to secure services on your behalf; such as trekking permits, train travel and visa invitation letters. The demand is increasing each year making it difficult to join a trip last minute. To ensure we can assist you onto your adventure of a lifetime we ask that you check your trip availability with our team at your earliest convenience.

how to book

To book a World Expeditions trip, you will need to complete a booking form and pay a non refundable deposit which you can do by using our online booking function for most trips, or if you prefer, download a booking form from the website and return to us by fax, or mail your booking form and deposit to your nearest World Expeditions office or travel agent. We can also help you with any additional arrangements that you require, such as competitive airfares to get you to your destination, stopovers, pre or post trip accommodation or any additional tours that you wish to take in conjunction with the main World Expeditions trip.