

## **NAKASENDO WAY (JAPAN)**

### **ITINERARY: 8 DAYS**

#### **Day 1**

##### **MITAKE TO HOSOKUTE (12KM)**

Make your way from the Nagoya train station on the Meitetsu Line to Mitake Station (80 mins travel time). Mitake is where you will have a short briefing before you depart on your walk (meeting times will be in your travel documents). Our local RAW Travel representative will be able to recommend a local lunch spot (own expense) prior to your walk. Leaving the restaurant you will begin your walk through the town and then leave the road and make your way into the forest up a short hill known as the Cows Nose is Missing. This is the true beginning of your Nakasendo Way walk. Stay in the forest on this very scenic section through woodland and lush green countryside, walking on some of the original stoned paving known as ishيداتami. There will be a chance to stop at La Provence Café as you steadily climb towards Hosokute and your accommodation for the evening.

- Meals: D

#### **Day 2**

##### **HOSOKUTE TO ENA (21KM)**

Enjoy your first traditional Japanese breakfast and prepare for an exciting day following in the footsteps of the Samurai. Today you will walk over a very old section known as the 13 passes and 13 peaks. There has been no public access through here, which keeps the area completely undeveloped, save for a golf course. The original way used to go through the golf course; nowadays you will follow the boundary of the course and again you will be walking on traditional stone paths. There is even a section that has only been rediscovered in the last 2.5 years. Continuing on your way through the mountains you will come across the well-preserved post town called Okute. It's here you will discover a sacred cedar tree thought to be 1200 years old. You will travel along the ridge tops

1



before descending into Ena, where you can visit the museum known as the Hiroshiga, which features prints of the Nakasendo Way. Arrive in Ena for a well-deserved break.

- Meals: B D

### Day 3

#### ENA TO NAKATSUGAWA (12KM)

Today is a much shorter day, with gentle and undulating walking. You will pass through towns and villages and parts of the city across rice paddies and fields and even through home gardens, talking to the locals along the way and taking in the Japanese culture. Nakatsugawa was number 45 of the 69 traditional post towns of the Nakasendo Way, and you can spend the rest of the day exploring. Many of the old buildings and shops still work today. You can also visit the Naegi Castle ruins, a 3km walk from your hotel. Tonight you will be staying at a traditional Japanese ryokan.

- Meals: B D

### Day 4

#### NAKATSUGAWA TO TSUMAGO (16KM)

After leaving Nakatsugawa at the ancient Kosatsuba (official proclamation board) you will come across red torii gates just after Nakatsugawa Juku. There will be some steep slopes today before Ochiai and then you will be walking on an old cobblestoned way. It's on this route that you will be walking up to the entrance of Magome, one of the highlights of the Nakasendo Way. Magome (Horse & Basket) is number 43 of the 69 post towns along the way to Edo (Tokyo). It truly is a reminder of how the post towns were in the Edo period (1603–1868).

The Nakasendo Way continues through the centre of Magome past the old shops and inns. The trail begins to climb up to the small settlement of Touge, and there is a good rest break here. You will then walk over the Magome Pass (800m) and slowly descend through peaceful woodland. You'll hear the roar of the Odaki-Medaki waterfalls, which slowly fade as you pass streams and rice paddies coming into the old (smaller) village of O-Tsumago.



Leaving O-Tsumago, the trail climbs briefly before descending into the enchanting village of the main village, Tsumago (number 42 of the 69 post towns). The street is lined with traditional Japanese wooden houses, shops and ryokan (inns). You might want to stroll through the streets after dinner wearing a traditional yukata gown provided by your inn.

- Meals: B D

## Day 5

### TSUMAGO TO KISO-FUKUSHIMA (17KM WALKING; 30KM TRAIN TRAVEL)

Leaving the old town of Tsumago at the ancient Kosatsuba (official proclamation board) you will see on the board the old wooden tablets that state that no Christianity can be practised. The trail ascends steeply up the valley then continues through the forest on what is known as the Yogawa Forest Route on your way to Nojiri, passing through cedar forests and farmland. It is one of the most scenic sections of the walk. The forest walk joins the Kiso River at Nojiri. After a late lunch in Nojiri, we make our way to the train station for a 40-minute ride to Kiso-Fukushima. Located halfway on the Nakesendo Way between Kyoto and Tokyo, Kiso-Fukushima was an important checkpoint during the Edo period.

- Meals: B D

## Day 6

### REST DAY IN KISO-FUKUSHIMA

Today is free for you to explore the town of Kiso-Fukushima. This was one of the four security checkpoints during the Edo period and thus flourished as a political and economic centre in the Kiso Valley. The old-town area and along the river are great spots for a stroll and to view the distinct Edo-style buildings. Along with the Kozenji-Temple, which houses the valley's most famous temple and the largest stone garden in Japan, the Yamamura Residence and the Fukushima Checkpoint are really worth a visit. Both museums have a wonderful collection of weapons, clothing and other artefacts that provide a great insight into the fascinating history of the time.

If you feel like exploring a little further, you may like to take a bus to Mt Ontake, one of Japan's most sacred mountains. There is an option to take a gondola and hike to the top (late April to early November), or perhaps you may enjoy a hike in the lowlands. Once back in town, if you haven't already discovered the free



public footbath on the banks of the Kiso River, we definitely recommend a visit; the steaming, natural hot spring water is wonderfully soothing for tired legs and will help you feel refreshed and ready for tomorrow's walk over the Torii Pass.

## Day 7

### KISO-FUKUSHIMA TO NARAI (8KM WALKING; 14KM TRAIN TRAVEL)

Today you will catch the train from Kiso-Fukushima to Yabuhara and start your final day's walk of the Nakasendo Way, hiking up to the Torii Pass, named after the Shinto Torii Gate, which marks one of four protective sites surrounding Mount Ontake. At 1197m, the Torii Pass is a great vantage point for views of Mount Ontake on a clear day. The descent takes you along narrow mountain paths until you emerge at the outskirts of Narai, a lovely post town and the wealthiest of the post towns along the trail. Explore and relax in the cafes and shops of this well-preserved and atmospheric town.

- Meals: B D

## Day 8

### DEPART NARAI

Today is departure day. After your traditional Japanese breakfast, you can take the train to your next destination.

- Meals: B

