

# methodfitness

## Kumano Koda Trail in Spring

New Farm Travel  
Innovative Travel Solutions



### Trip Highlights

- Discover Tokyo's hidden food scene and try some authentic Japanese foods with a tour that will discover hidden gems only known by the locals
- Hike the 1000 year old ancient trail UNESCO Heritage listed pilgrimage
- Stay in traditional Japanese guesthouses along the ancient trails
- A final nights dinner in the beautiful city of Kyoto

### Trip Dates

2018 14 Apr – 24 Apr

### Trip Cost

\$5500 twin share ex Brisbane (due to the style of adventure the price is an estimate and can only be fully confirmed once the trip is fully booked)

Trip Duration

10 days

Grade

Moderate to Demanding

Activities

A day in Tokyo with a food tour, Trekking 4 of the 5 days on the trail with 5 to 9 hours per day carrying a Day Pack (4-7kg), overnight bag being transported to each nights accommodation

Summary

10 days trip, 5 days on trail trekking 66.5km, 3 nights hotel, 1 nights hotel/guesthouse, 6 nights traditional guesthouse accommodation

### At a glance

Day 1 Depart Brisbane International Airport - Arrive Tokyo

Day 2 Tokyo - Food Tour

Day 3 Train travel to Kii-Tanabe, Afternoon tour briefing, Overnight Kii-Tanabe

Day 4	Bus transfer Kii-Tanabe to Takijiri – Hike Takijiri to Chikatsuyu/Tsugizakura (Distance 18km 9 hours) Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Day 5	Hike Chikatsuyu/Tsugizakura to Kumano Hongu - overnight Yunomine Onsen or Kawayu Onsen (Distance 21km 9 hours, Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Day 6	Explore Hongu area, Overnight Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
Day 7	Hike Hongu area to Koguchi (Distance 13km 6 hours) Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Day 8	Hike Koguchi to Kumano Nachi Taisha (Distance 14.5km 7 Hours) Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Day 9	Train travel Kii-Katsuura to Kyoto, Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
Day 10	Train Travel Kyoto to Tokyo – Depart Tokyo to Brisbane

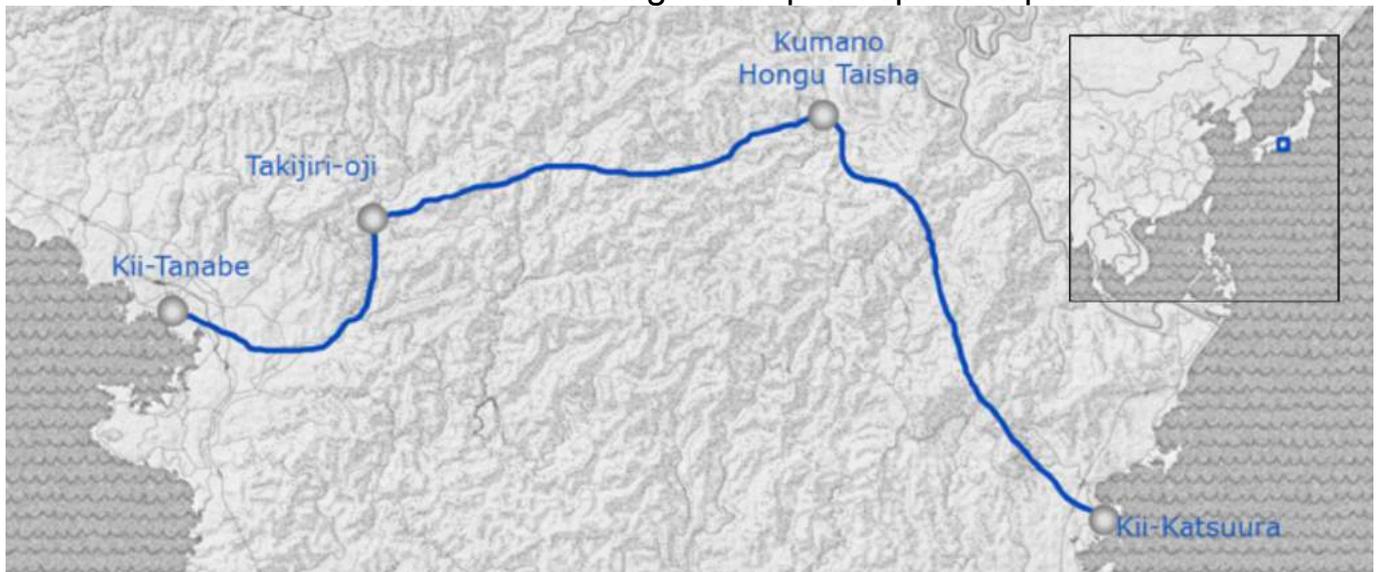
## What's included

- 10 Week Training Program with a weekly scheduled training walk plus a shopping trip to make sure you have the right gear
- Economy Air flights ex Brisbane to and from Tokyo
- Travel Insurance (compulsory)
- 2 nights accommodation in Tokyo
- Food tour of Tokyo
- 1 nights accommodation in Kii-Tanabe (hotel / guesthouse – private bathroom)
- 5 nights accommodation along the trek (traditional Japanese guesthouses – shared bathroom facilities)
- Daily meals as listed in itinerary
- Luggage transfers on all trekking days
- Briefing in Kii-Tanabe at the start of your trek
- Pre-departure pack including track notes, information packs, maps and a Japanese phrasebook
- Final farewell dinner at Kyoto
- Transport – all group transport by train
- Method Fitness Adventure Pre Departure Trek Check

## What's not included

- Meals that are not included in the itinerary
- Drinks other than water at meals
- Expenses of personal nature
- Bus travel on the walk. There are a few short sections along the Kumano Kodo where bus travel is necessary and or recommended. Bus tickets

cannot be pre-purchased – these will need to be paid in cash once in the bus. Detailed instructions will be given in pre-departure pack at Kii-Tanabe.



## Detailed itinerary

### Day 1 Arrive in Tokyo

CONFIRMED FLIGHT QANTAS AIRWAYS LTD. QF 61

Check in at Brisbane International

Booking Reference PM3C3F

14 Apr 18 Sat Depart Brisbane 10:55 Economy

14 Apr 18 Sat Arrive Tokyo Narita 19:10 Non-stop

14 Apr 18 Sat Arrival in Tokyo Terminal 2

Aircraft Type

Airbus Industrie 330-333

Flight Meals

Brisbane - Refreshments

Brisbane - Lunch

Total Journey Time

9hrs 15mins

Arrive into the Japanese capital where you transit to the Hotel Shiba Park Hotel for 2 nights (or similar) by train. Once checked in you can explore the city nightlife or have an early night.

### Day 2 Explore Tokyo

A day to explore Tokyo with a food and cultural tour to discover some hidden food gems that only the locals know about.

### Day 3 Train travel to Kii-Tanabe

It's an early departure from Tokyo travelling by train to Kii-Tanabe. Approximately 5 ½ hour transit. Kii-Tanabe is the gateway town to the Imperial Route of the Kumano Kodo and a city surrounded by the Pacific Ocean on one side and mountains on the other. Your hike orientation will be scheduled with the staff here. The evening is free for you to explore the town and enjoy great atmosphere at the Ajikoji Restaurant and Entertainment District, and perhaps stroll down to the Ogigahama Beach for sunset views.

#### Day 4 Walk Takijiri-oji to Tsugizakura-oji (18km)

It is an early morning start today and after checking out and picking up your lunch box, you will take a 40-minute bus ride to Takijiri (paid locally), start of the walk. The first section of today's walk will be a climb up from Takijiri-oji to Takahara, a rural hamlet on a ridge, noted for its ancient shrine surrounded by giant kusu-noki, or camphor trees, and a spectacular view over the surrounding Hatenashi Mountain Ranges. Reminders of the past, including Buddhist statues and oji shrines, line the route along the ancient highway as you climb upwards.

Leaving Takahara behind, you head further into the mountains along the old trail, past bamboo forest and then into the pencil pine. You continue to pass by reminders of the old highway, including an ichirizuka distance marker and the sites of old former tea houses, which provided rest and shelter to pilgrims up until the early 20th century. Continuing on you crest the Hashiori-Toge pass after a short climb. The trail then descends past the Three-Fold Moon viewing area, from where it is a short climb to the small but famous Gyuba-doji statue. This ancient statue shows Kazan, one of the first abdicated emperors to pilgrimage to Kumano, sitting astride both a horse and a cow. Your descent takes you along a cobbled path and staircase to Chikatsuyu, a small village and one of the few places where you can get limited supplies or drinks.

Your final stretch of the day takes you on a climb to Tsugizakura-oji and your accommodation for the evening. Nearby is a grove of giant cedar trees, some of which are reputed to be 800 years old! Accommodation tonight is in a small local minshuku guesthouse. If Tsugizakura accommodation is full on your chosen dates or if you are travelling with a larger group, you may stay in Chikatsuyu instead on this night.

9 hours walking Meal: B L D

#### Day 5 Walk Tsugizakura-oji to Kumano Hongu Taisha (21km)

Today's walk will bring you along many forest paths and eventually some mountain top villages before descending to Hongu. The walk starts with climbs over a number of passes and there is a permanent detour in place due to landslides on the main path. There are few facilities on the first part of today's route, which is through the forest before eventually leading you to the shrine at Hosshinmon-oji. At this point you also have the option to take a local bus (paid locally) as the road intersects here, or carry on down into the valley to Hongu. You will continue through small settlements and get your first glimpse of the great Kumano Hongu Taisha Shrine and the giant torii gate called Oyunohara in the valley below.

Kumano Hongu Taisha is the main shrine in the area, to which all roads in the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage lead. A long stone staircase leads to the sacred grounds of the shrine, located on a ridge and surrounded by giant cedar and cypress trees. After looking around the impressive shrine you will jump on a local bus (paid locally) to our evening destination at nearby Yunomine Onsen or Kawayu Onsen, charming little hot spring villages.

Arriving at your overnight location is a treat for tired walkers as the steam billows from the thermal rivers and there is the promise of a relaxing onsen after your exertions. The onsen thermal hot spring baths are an important part of the Kumano Kodo traditions with pilgrims performing hot water purification rituals in preparation for visiting the shrine. For us it will be more a preparation for a delicious Japanese meal in your accommodation.

9 hours walking Meals: B L D

#### Day 6 Rest Day in Hongu Area

Today you can either completely relax and take in the local onsens or perhaps return to Hongu village for further explorations. If you wish to stretch your legs a little then walk back to Hongu on the Dainichi-goe route from Yunomine Onsen – this is a steep but delightful walk, passing some remarkable old carved statues at Hanakake Jizo, overgrown by tree roots.

Hongu village is home to the Kumano Hongu Taisha, one of the Kumano Sanzan, three grand shrines of Kumano, and head shrine of over 3,000 Kumano shrines across Japan. Kumano was said to be the entrance gateway to the land of Yomi, the ‘other world’, which spirits travelled to in Japanese mythology. Across the Kumano Hongu Shrine is the Kumano Hongu Heritage Centre, featuring a diversity of exhibitions on the Kumano Kodo – all permanent exhibitions and videos include English translations. Just nearby the centre you will find Oyunohara, the largest torii shrine gate in the world at 34 meters tall, signifying the division of the secular and the spiritual worlds.

Be sure to also visit the tiny Tsuboyu onsen in a wooden cabin at the centre of town in Yunomine Onsen, which is the only UNESCO world heritage listed spa and the oldest in Japan at 1200 years old! The bath can be booked for a 30-minute private bathing and works on a first come first serve basis.

Meals: B D

#### Day 7 Walk Hongu Area to Koguchi (13km)

This morning you will take a short bus ride (paid locally) to Ukegawa to begin your walk. The Kogumotori-goe section is a fairly gentle trek with a climb and descent over a pass, and is mostly in the forested mountains with some nice ridge-walking sections.

The highlight of today’s walk is the Hyakken-gura pass, where a beautifully positioned Buddhist statue on a hilltop has a backdrop of the most spectacular views of the trip. The impressive Hyakken-gura lookout surprises walkers with a lovely panoramic view of the 3600 peaks of Kumano. Take a moment to enjoy this stunning view, as pilgrims have been doing for over 1000 years.

The trail continues to rise and fall, sometimes gradual and the other times steeper when you continue towards the Sakura-jaya teahouse remains. The views from the Sakura-jaya teahouse remains down to the valley and across the mountains are impressive. It is said that when the owners of teahouses saw pilgrims approaching from far off in the distance, they would start to cook mochi rice cakes and boil water for tea, to have things ready to serve just as the pilgrims would arrive at the teahouse. From here the trail continues on a forest track and eventually descends into Koguchi, a small and isolated village surrounded by mountains and rivers.

6 hours walking Meals: B L D

#### Day 8 Walk Koguchi to Kumano Nachi Taisha (14.5km)

The Ogumotori-goe is the second day of a two-day trek from the Hongu area to Kumano Nachi Taisha. It is one of the toughest sections of the Nakahechi section and a big day's walk so we recommend an early start as you begin with a 2.5-hour uphill climb up the Dogiri-zaka slope. Dogiri-zaka can be directly translated as "Body Breaking Slope", and is an appropriate name for this 5km uphill section that rises 800 metres to the Echizen-toge Pass.

Afterwards, you pass the Jizo-jaya teahouse remains to the Moja-no-Deai, 'Abode of the Dead'. It is believed that the souls of the dead gravitate to these higher mountains, where spirits inhabit this section of the trail. The walk continues through forest and along ridges, the path ascending and descending, until at Funami Toge pass the Pacific Ocean spreads out before you.

From here the trail descends to the Nachisan sanctuary and the brightly colored Kumano Nachi Taisha shrine, another of the three grand shrines of Kumano. Also nearby is the wonderful wooden Seiganto-ji temple and the spectacular Nachi-no-Otaki waterfall, which is the highest in Japan and can be seen from far out on the Pacific Ocean. Tonight you will either overnight in Nachisan near the Kumano Nachi shrine or Kii Katsuura, a small fishing village approximately 20-minute bus ride from Nachisan. Relax and enjoy the completion of your extraordinary Kumano Kodo walk!

7 hours walking Meals: B L D

#### Day 9 Train travel to Kyoto

Today enjoy a leisurely breakfast and then transfer by train to Kyoto. Check-in to Hyatt Regency Kyoto (or similar) for one night's accommodation. Spend the afternoon at leisure seeing the sights of Kyoto. The evening will see dinner where we can celebrate and reminisce our time on the Kumano Kodo.

Meals: B D

#### Day 10 Train travel to Tokyo and Departure to Brisbane

Today you will have the morning at your leisure to sightsee around Kyoto. Departing Kyoto at midday to transit back to Tokyo Narita International Airport Terminal 2 by train approximately 3 ½ hours.

## CONFIRMED FLIGHT QANTAS AIRWAYS LTD. QF 62

Check in at Narita Terminal 2	Booking Reference PM3C3F
23 Apr 18 Mon Depart Tokyo Narita 20:50	Economy
24 Apr 18 Tue Arrive Brisbane 06:55	Non-stop
24 Apr 18 Tue Arrival in Brisbane International	

Aircraft Type	Airbus Industrie 330-333
Flight Meals	Tokyo - Refreshments Tokyo - Dinner
Total Journey Time	9hrs 05mins

### Important note

The Kumano Kodo is a popular walk at certain times of year and guesthouses/hotels sometimes get fully booked. This itinerary is a guide to a possible route. Details may change and the actual accommodations booked may vary from what is written here, dependent on client numbers, wishes and availability. This adjustment with accommodations may alter the exact distance walked in a day so the above itinerary should be used as an indication only to overnight stops/distances.

### Accommodation on the trip

Accommodation is on a twin share basis when staying in hotels. On the Kumano trail the majority of the accommodation is either ryokans or minshukus (Japanese-style inns) that offer a great chance to meet local people and enjoy a Japanese atmosphere. Ryokans and minshukus are fairly basic in style with most having shared toilet and bathroom facilities, but have great character and friendly hosts. Most rooms are Japanese-style, with straw tatami mats used for flooring. Guests sleep on futons, which are thin mattresses that are spread on tatami mats at night and stored folded in closet during the day.

Most accommodation along the trail offer an onsen (hot spring bath), which is part of your Japanese experience. Bathing is communal through segregated by sex and people bath and undress before entering the onsen bath. Bathing in an onsen is a great way to rejuvenated tired muscles after a long day of trekking and leaves you feeling refreshed and clean.

### Dietary requirements

Please be aware that most of the food served along the trek is traditional Japanese style cuisine. There are no options for western style food to be requested and all guests are cooked the same meals in small guesthouses. These guesthouses cannot cater for dietary requirements so this trek is not suitable for those with severe allergies or strict dietary requirements. Having said that the

traditional Japanese food served along the trek is a real highlight of the trip. Please discuss prior to booking if you have any dietary concerns.

## Fitness

A good level of fitness is required. You will need to practice hiking on a hill or mountain environment with your equipment (boots especially!) that you'll be taking to the Kumano Kodo. Hill/stair climbing (with a pack) is the best training, as this is the very activity you will be doing on trek. To ensure you are fit for your adventure, you should undertake training specifically for trekking, training three to four times a week, alternating interval training, endurance training with cross training such as swimming, yoga and stretching. Rest and a good diet are equally important.

You will be supplied with suggested 10 Week Program outlining the training required. This 10 Week Program allows adequate time to implement a solid fitness-training program and ensures that all the correct clothing and equipment is obtained.

It also allows you to be well prepared mentally and committed to the trip objective. Age and gender do not have a great bearing on one's suitability for a trip of this sort. The level of fitness, measured by aerobic capacity and stamina is more important as is the ability to be consistent in your performance and state of mind throughout the trek. Being relaxed in the outdoors (in all of nature's moods!) in a foreign country is a very important quality to have to get the most amount of enjoyment from the experience!

During this ten week period there will be one scheduled walk, which will be specifically tailored for the trek.

If you're not located in Brisbane then you must follow training recommendations from the trainer, using Method Fitness 10 Week Program. Should you be training outside Brisbane, your trainer will require you to "check in" and report on your training each week in the months leading up to your trip. You'll need to prepare for walking several hours (5-9 hours a day) with ascents and descents, so your training will need reflect this. Choose hills to train on and push yourself to do long days to prepare yourself adequately. Although the Kumano Kodo trails are well defined and well signed, the majority of the trail is rugged with exposed tree roots, steep up and down sections, loose rocks and stone steps which can be slippery underfoot. The more training and better prepared you are, the more you will enjoy this beautiful world heritage listed walk.

## Climate

The weather in April is very comfortable as the average daily temperatures rise to around 15C. However, the gap between morning low and daytime high is larger in April. It will be cold in the morning and evening and warm during the day. The average high is 15C and low 10C. The Kii- Peninsula is a wet region and should be prepared for some rain.

## What you carry

You will carry a good daypack on the trek. Your main luggage will be transported by private van on all trekking days. It will be picked up from your accommodation each morning and then it will be waiting for you in the evening at next accommodation.

## Equipment required

A comprehensive gear list is provided in the pre-departure information supplied on booking.

## How to book

To book this trip you will need to sign and agree to the Method Fitness Guidelines Form, complete the New Farm Travel Agency Booking Form and pay a non-refundable deposit on \$1000. A refund will be given should the trip not be fully booked and does not proceed. We can also help you with any additional arrangements that you require, such as airfare upgrades or post trip accommodation.

The cost of the trip is an estimate and can only be confirmed once it is fully booked; this is due to the style of adventure.

If you have any additional questions please call 0438 219 106

