# Rising Sun Japan Walking Explorer

Trip Code: SGJP

Version:

| WALK & TREK | SELF-GUIDED | 3 LEISURELY |
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## HIGHLIGHTS

- Ride the famous Shinkansen bullet train
- Walk in the footsteps of Samurai warriors on the Nakasendo Trail
- Make a pilgrimage along the sacred Kumano Kodo Trail to Osaka
- Discover Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka with the option to add your own private city guide

### AT A GLANCE

- 13 days walking and sightseeing
- Rail tickets included
- Optional private city guides
- Daily departures
- Join at Tokyo / End in Osaka

### ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

# Introduction

This two-week self-guided holiday is filled with everything you need to truly immerse yourself in Japanese culture, in a country where ancient traditions seamlessly intertwine with modern life. Beginning in Japan's vibrant capital, you will step out onto Tokyo's giant Shibuya crossing, the most photographed in the world. Explore this magnificent city where skyscrapers act as bookends to traditional wooden buildings, then escape the centre to hike up Mt. Takao for far-reaching views to Mt. Fuji - stunning in all seasons. Plus, what is a trip to Japan without a ride on a high-speed bullet train? We have included a trip on the Shinkansen as you travel to the countryside, where you will then step back in time to the Edo period and a life more simple as you hike the famed trade and travel route - the Nakasendo Trail. Walking from one quaint village to another through the Kiso Valley, you will be greeted by warm hospitality along your way. To ensure a full Japanese experience, we have also included time in Kyoto, the most culturally rich city in Asia, where you can enjoy a traditional tea ceremony before continuing your adventures, this time following in the footsteps of Samurai and pilgrims as you hike on the Kumano Kodo Trail to reach the awe-inspiring Nachi Taisha Shinto shrine. You will discover a wealth of traditions, myths, and legends with every step, and have the chance to bathe your body and spirit in one of the oldest onsen in Japan. You will end your trip in the bright lights of Osaka, Japan's second city, where you'll be grinning at every turn. Known as a foodie's paradise with bustling alleys filled with quirky restaurants, bars and shops, and where you'll also find ancient castles, shrines, temples and parks juxtaposed with giant fairground attractions and the famous pinball arcades, this is the perfect place to celebrate your experiences in Japan.

Staying in a mix of 3-star and 4-star hotels on a bed and breakfast basis in the cities, and in traditional minshuku, ryokan and small Japanese hotels with breakfast and dinner included as well in the smaller towns and villages along the trails, you will have the perfect blend of flexibility, local knowledge, and the warm hospitality of old friends. Staying in minshuku and ryokan gives you a unique insight into day-to-day Japanese life including the joys of home-cooked Japanese food.

## Is this holiday for you?

This trip is the ultimate introduction to Japan, and is perfect if you love to travel independently yet are looking for a little help in navigating a completely new culture. We have designed this trip to showcase some of our favourite regions and renowned walking routes in Japan. Walking an average of 11km with around 500m ascent along sections of the Nakasendo and Kumano Kodo Trails, you will also have time to wander as much or as little as you like around some of Japan's best-loved cities as you explore their

highlights and maybe a few of their secrets too. You'll also have the option to undertake a more challenging 24km hike with 820m of ascent towards the end of your trip if you are feeling energetic. Whilst walking on the trails, you will negotiate tree roots underfoot and steps leading you up to the beautiful shrines.

With the freedom to choose your own pace and travel companions, safe in the knowledge that all the logistics is taken care of and a helpful member of staff is at the end of the phone, you can simply get on and enjoy the amazing experiences that this trip has to offer.

Plus, with the option add private city guides as you choose, you can also benefit from local knowledge and get more out of your sightseeing, as well as tips on the best places to eat.

# Itinerary

Version:

# Holiday Information

## What's Included

- All accommodation as described
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Self-guided information pack containing your map and route notes
- Japan guide book
- Shared airport transfers
- Stored Value ICOCA Transit Card pre-loaded with 3500 JPY for use on the train journeys Kyoto to Kurama and Kibune to Kyoto
- Other train travel as described
- Tea ceremony (Day 7 subject to availability)
- Kawabune boat ride or taxi transfer to Shingu according to boat availability (Day 12)
- GPX tracks supplied

## What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Travel to Narita Airport
- Travel from Kansai Airport
- Visas (if applicable)
- Some meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Luggage transfers
- Local bus Nakatsugawa to Magome and buses on the Kumano Kodo
- Private city guides (Day 2 Tokyo and/or Day 7 Kyoto)
- Tips for guides
- Personal equipment
- Any additional activities/excursions indicated as optional

## Your Self-Guided Pack & Route Notes

Each self-guided holiday comes with comprehensive route notes and a map or pocket guidebook of the area you are exploring. The route notes contain information about the places you will visit and the local transport you might need, along with the detailed route notes for your daily walks or cycle rides. We even include some tips for the best places to stop for lunch.

You can expect to receive your Self-Guided Pack containing your route notes, a map or guidebook, and all your relevant documents, no later than 3 weeks before your holiday start-date. We will send your documents using a signed-for courier so that you can track your package and know that it is safely on its way to you. For bookings of more than 4 people we will send an additional Self-Guided Pack. If you do not need this additional pack please inform our Sales Team. Your pack will be sent to the lead booker, so please remind them to pack it before setting off.

Should your self-guided trip be part of a longer adventure requiring you to leave home more than three weeks before your holiday start-date, please inform our Sales Team so that we can make alternative delivery arrangements.

## Self-Guided Families

Our Self-Guided Holidays are perfect for your next family holiday and are suitable for children of all ages.

Our partner hotels and accommodations are able to provide cots for young children, and some offer family rooms. We can also arrange hire of children's bikes and tag along bikes for most of our self-guided cycling trips and with trips such as Lake Constance and the Danube offering routes on designated cycle paths you can rest assured in keeping your family safe.

As a parent we trust that you know your own child's capabilities, so please read the itinerary details to ensure the distances covered each day are suitable for your family. If this is a first time walking or cycling holiday for your family, a centre-based trip is a fantastic option as it allows you to easily opt out of a day's walking if a day of building sand castles, swimming in the pool, or visiting museums is calling instead.

Please discuss this further with our Sales Team who will be happy to assist in picking the best trip for your family.

## Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The trip starts at Tokyo Narita Airport, or at your hotel in Tokyo - please advise our Sales Team about where you would like to begin your trip. All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a Land Only basis, allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method that best suits you.

The nearest airport is Tokyo Narita Airport. If you are beginning your trip at this airport, we will include a shared transfer for you from the airport to your accommodation in Tokyo. The journey takes approximately 2 hours and you can expect some great views over the city as you ride the elevated highways to your hotel.

The trip ends in Osaka upon checkout on the last morning of your itinerary. If you are then heading straight to Kansai Airport for your onward journey, we include a shared transfer from your Osaka hotel or a train journey from Osaka's Nanba Station, direct to Kansai Airport. The train option is a short journey of approximately 35-minutes on the Nankai Rapit bullet train with reserved seats for the best train time for your onward journey. If you are making your own onward journey instead, a transfer to Kansai Airport will not be included.

## Meal Plan

This trip is on a bed and breakfast basis throughout, along with 7 included evening meals on the nights you stay in a traditional minshuku, ryokan, or a small Japanese hotel in the smaller towns and villages. We have left your evening meal options open on the nights you stay in the larger cities to give you flexibility to choose from amongst the wealth of options available.

The included evening meals will generally be *kaiseki*-style. This is a traditional Japanese multi-course meal including multiple small dishes freshly prepared using locally-sourced seasonal ingredients. Such meals are generally served at low tables, and you will be required to sit on cushions on the floor. Knives and forks will be rarely seen, so be prepared to use chopsticks. Outside of the cities, breakfasts will also be exclusively Japanese-style.

## Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide for special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your meals with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

## Food & Water

Water from the taps is perfectly drinkable on this holiday - please use this to fill your personal bottles for your daily activities. We do not encourage the purchase of single-use plastic bottles.

Japanese cuisine is fresh, fragrant, and flavoursome. It draws on umami flavours, that really come through thanks to the slow cooking processes used in Japanese cooking to prepare dishes including broths and soups where the flavours are richly intensified. You can look forward to many rice and noodle dishes such as the popular *ramen* (Chinese-style wheat noodles served in broth), *udon* (a thick wheat noodle), and *soba* dishes such as *yakisoba* (a thinner buckwheat noodle).

Seafood and shellfish are staples in Japanese cuisine, not just because in the hugely popular sushi and sashimi, but also grilled or fried in a light tempura batter. Japan has plenty of specialty dishes from the expensive Kobe beef, a type of Wagyu cattle reared in a way that produces melt-in-the-mouth meat, to the traditional warming bowls of ramen, with each region having its own take on the dish. However, a favourite of ours here at KE are the *takoyaki* octopus balls of Osaka. This is a deliciously moreish street food of consisting of pieces of octopus and other ingredients such as tempura scraps, green onion, and pickled ginger bound together in a wheat-based flour batter to create balls that are then grilled or fried in a specially moulded pan a bit like a Dutch pancake grill. These delectable balls are then served topped with teriyaki sauce, tempura batter scraps, and mayonnaise. We highly recommend trying them, although we warn you it is a test of patience to wait for them to cool down before taking a bite! If you are not a fan of octopus, fear not, as you can also find *takoyaki* made without the octopus, often switching it for pieces king oyster mushroom instead. Yum!

Other fantastic Japanese cuisine experiences include *teppanyaki*, where diners sit at a hot iron grill and watch their dishes being cooked in front of them (usually with some theatrics). Another is *shabu-shabu*, where diners sit around a large cooking pot filled with broth and are served a selection of tofu, raw meat (usually thinly sliced pork and beef) and vegetables that are then dipped in the boiling broth and dipping sauces before being eaten.

For food on the go, you can always be sure to find *bao* buns and *onigiri* in local convenience stores. *Bao* buns are parcels of steamed dough containing a tasty filling, often pork, and grabbing one is the Japanese version of grabbing a sandwich. *Onigiri* are rice parcels, usually triangular, with a tasty sour or salty filling such as pickled plum or salted salmon, and come wrapped in *nori* seaweed. Both make great snacks for while you are out exploring.

As in most of Asia, breakfast is really a version of lunch or the evening meal. At breakfast in Japan you generally won't find a croissant or bowl of cereal - instead you're likely to find a warm bowl of ramen or perhaps *omu-raisu*, an omelette made with thin fried scrambled egg, filled with fried rice, and topped with ketchup.

If you are vegetarian, please be advised that, outside the cities, vegetarianism is not a concept that is widely understood. Whilst vegetarian options are available they are limited, and it is difficult to guarantee that 'vegetarian' dishes are 100% vegetarian as most Japanese dishes contain *dashi*, which typically contains fish. Strict vegetarian diets, vegan diets, and or gluten-free diets will be difficult to accommodate in Japan.

The included evening meals will generally be *kaiseki*-style - this is a traditional Japanese multi-course meal consisting of several small dishes freshly prepared using locally-sourced seasonal ingredients. Meals are generally served at low tables, and you will be required to sit on cushions on the floor. Knives and forks are rarely seen, so be prepared to use chopsticks.

## Accommodation

On this trip, you will experience several different types of accommodation in keeping with the locations in which you are staying, to provide you with a true taste of Japan. Whilst in Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka, you will stay in comfortable 3-star or 4-star hotels with all the facilities you would expect from a city hotel including en-suite bathrooms, air-conditioning, TV, and (in most) a small fridge too. Space is at a premium in Japanese cities, so hotels are multi-storey and rooms are generally compact and cosy.

Whilst on the trails you will have the opportunity to stay in smaller traditional accommodations, including ryokan and minshuku, for a classic Japanese experience. Ryokan are traditional Japanese-style inns and may take the form of a modern concrete or a traditional wooden structure. They generally have tatami rooms that have a tatami (straw matting) floor on which a traditional futon mattress is laid out directly by staff in the evening, in time for going to bed. There may also be cushions and/or chairs and a table - all very low to the ground - in such rooms, so be prepared to be able to get all the way up and down. The rooms are private and many ryokan have both en-suite facilities (with the exception of some older buildings) as well as access to communal hot spring style baths (segregated by gender). They are the classic Japanese experience. In the evenings, meals are enjoyed together with other guests and are lovingly prepared by your hosts.

Minshuku are also a type of family-run inn or homestay built in a traditional style with tatami matting and futons, however you may be required to lay out your futon yourself in the evening and they do not usually offer en-suite facilities. These are a slightly less formal style of accommodation, a home from home, with warm hospitality and excellent food. Staying at a minshuku feels as if you are staying with friends, and provides a real off-the-beaten-track experience.

It is possible to arrange additional nights' accommodation in Tokyo / Osaka at the start / end of your trip if you wish to enjoy more time exploring here - please ask our Sales Team for details.

Japan is a cash society, particularly outside of cities and large towns, so having a supply of cash in Japanese Yen would be a good idea.

When it comes to tattoos, it is important to note that attitudes can vary significantly among different accommodations. If you have any tattoos, you should be respectful and cover these when using onsen or communal baths.

## Optional Activities

**Private Tour Guides**

We offer the option of adding 1 or 2 days of private guiding to help you get the most out of your sightseeing in the cities of Tokyo (Day 2) and / or Kyoto (Day 7). Please let us know your preferred sightseeing choices no later than 60 days prior to departure. Private guiding incurs an additional cost of £300 per guide per day.

Should you choose to add a private guide for either or both of these days, one of our knowledgeable, friendly, professional guides will meet you at your hotel after breakfast and lead you on a full-day tour of Tokyo or Kyoto. You can opt to travel by bus and subway, or by taxi. Your guide will return you to your hotel around 5pm or, if you prefer, will leave you in an alternative location of your choosing.

We are proud of our guides and we engage them directly with our local partner, not via agencies or other third parties.

**Includes:**

- The guide's fee.

- The guide's own transport by public transport (the guide will pay for their own).

- Entry for the guide to *some* cultural heritage sites (your guide will advise if there is a fee to be paid for their entry).

**Does not include:**

- Your own transportation between locations.

- Public transport for you (you should pay for this using your Stored Value Transit Card).

- Taxi transport for you or your guide if you prefer to travel by taxi (needs to be paid by you on the spot).

- Admissions to the sites you visit for you, and for your guide where this is not free for the guide.

- Cost of refreshments for you or your guide, such as a coffee break and lunch.

- Tips for the guide as an expression of thanks for time well spent together, although this is not expected or compulsory (a suggested tip amount is JPY 1000 per person per day).

**Private Guide Options Day 2 Tokyo:**

We have devised three fantastic itineraries for you to choose from, including some of the most famous sights and some lesser-known spots.

**Option 1. Yanaka - Echoes of Old Tokyo**

Yanaka is one of the coolest areas of Tokyo, where you can experience the traditional and modern side of the city all at once. The area avoided major damage during natural disasters and world wars, so it still oozes charms from times gone by.

- Start from Kiyosumi garden in the quiet residential area where the famous Edo period business

merchant, Kinokuniya Bunzaemon, used to live.

- Stroll through the peaceful streets of Nezu and Yanaka to feel the traditional Edo atmosphere.

- Enjoy snacks from a legendary ice-cream shop or sweet stall on the way to Nezu shrine (one of Japan's oldest shrines).

- Try a lunch of delicious fresh soba noodles at one of the area's famous noodle joints.

**Option 2. Harajuku - A Meeting of Old and New**

Harajuku, the area around Tokyo's Harajuku Station, is famous for extreme teenage culture and fashion, however there's more to this area than may first meet the eye. In a neaby green oasis you'll find one of Tokyo's major shrines, and the spacious Yoyogi Park. Beautiful ukiyo-e paintings are exhibited in the small Ota Memorial Museum of Art, and the Nezu Museum has an impressive collection of Asian art and a traditional Japanese garden.

- Savour the finest pieces of Japanese art with a visit to the Nezu or Ota museums.

- Stroll along the modern Omotesando avenue with its dual role as gateway to the Meiji Jingu shrine (memorial to the 122nd Japanese Emperor) and modern shopping mecca.

- See exciting modern Japanese architecture and spot the latest fashion trends among the shops and customers of Harajuku.

- Do some crowd-watching at the world-famous intersection in Shibuya to finish the day.

**Option 3. Edo Castle and Asakusa - From Shogun to Emperor**

(Note: this option not available on Mondays or Fridays).

Edo Castle was home to the powerful Tokugawa shogunate for 260 years, so was the centre of Japan's politics and much intrigue too. Where the castle once stood you'll now find the stately Imperial Palace along with its serene gardens and interesting museums.

Asakusa was Tokyo's leading entertainment district and in the Edo period was home to kabuki theatres and a large red light district. Today it is an area of striking contrasts as large parts of the area were destroyed in air raids in 1945. However the main attraction today is Sensoji, a popular Buddhist temple built in the 7th century. There are fabulous contrasting views towards the modern, monumental 634m-tall Tokyo Sky Tree, Japan's tallest building, on the other side of the Sumida River.

- Explore the site of the former Edo Castle, now the Imperial East Gardens, and imagine its colourful history of fire, love, revenge, and conspiracy.

- Take a break in the Ginza area, Tokyo's traditional shopping mecca.

- Experience striking contrasts between old and new in Asakusa at Sensoji temple and its arcades of traditional shops.

**Private Guide Options Day 7 Kyoto:**

We have devised three fantastic itineraries for you to choose from, including some of the most famous sights and some lesser-known spots.

**Option 1. The Bamboo Forest**

Arashiyama is a scenic area nestled at the foot of the mountains on the western outskirts of Tokyo and has deep historical connections with Zen Buddhism. Here you'll find Tenryuji, one of Japan's oldest temples. Dating from 1339, it is designated as number one amongst Kyoto's five major Zen temples. Tenryuji has a very beautiful garden and Sogen Pond, and is famous for its use of 'shakkei' (borrowed scenery). The gardens here were laid out by Muso Soseki, an eminent Zen master. Arashiyama is also famous for its captivating natural bamboo grove.

- Visit Tenryuji, the Temple of the Heavenly Dragon.

- Marvel at the Sogen Pond and 'borrowed scenery' as you walk through Tenryuji's famous gardens.

- Immerse yourself in the sights and sounds of the Arashiyama Bamboo Grove as you stroll through this majestic emerald green tunnel.

- Glimpse into the world of Japanese poetry with a visit to the lovely old residence of famous Haiku poet Mukai Kyorai.

- Ride on Kyoto's only tram, the hundred-year-old Randen.

- Enjoy the paintings, gardens, and buildings of the exquisite lesser-known Zen Buddhist temple of Myoshinji, founded in the 14th century.

- Explore central Kyoto and the exciting Nishiki food market.

**Option 2. Philosophical Eastern Kyoto**

The Philosopher's Path is named after Dr. Kitaro Nishida, the most significant and influential Japanese philosopher of the 20th century. It weaves its way along the strip of temples that sit at the base of the Higashiyama Mountains. Visit Nanzenji, Eikando, and Ginkakuji temples, all of which have a fascinating history and beautiful gardens.

- At the start of your walk lose yourself as you explore the expansive grounds and sub-temples of Nanzenji, the headquarters of the Rinzai school of Zen.

- Be intrigued by the unusual Buddha statue and the Hojo pond with its quaint shrine at Eikando temple.

- Meander along paths through symbolic raked white sand sculptures, around a beautiful pond, through pine trees and mosses, at Ginkakuji temple until you reach the Silver Pavilion, one of Kyoto's most notable monuments.

- If you wish, you can visit Hakusasonso, former home of the painter Hashimoto Kansetsu. His wife planted all the cherry trees along the Philosopher's Path for future visitors like you.

**Option 3. A Taste of Southern Kyoto**

Southern Kyoto is famous as the home of 10,000 torii (shrine gates), and plenty of stunning temples.

- Stroll through streets with white walled old houses.

- Wander through seemingly endless arcades of spectacular vermillion torii.

- Take a sip of sake at the Fushimi Sake Brewery which was founded here, where the purest water flowed down from the mountains.

- Ride the local train to Tofukuji to admire its unique Zen rock garden.

- Walk to the stunning shrine complex of Fushimi Inari to see its myriad vermillion torii gates.

- Experience a traditional Japanese tea ceremony, the traditional form of hospitality that treasures the unique opportunity and serendipity of every meeting.

## Baggage Allowance

For this holiday, we recommend a bag/case with wheels for ease of transport. You will also require a daypack for whilst you are out walking on the trails. Whilst walking on the Nakasendo Way you will not have access to your main luggage and will need to carry any items you require for Days 3-6 in your daypack. You will also be required to carry any items that you may need whilst on the Kumano Kodo on Days 9-11, as well as on Days 12-13 (note that latterly you will have access to your main luggage on Night 11). Space is limited in traditional accommodations such as the minshuku and ryokan, so packing light in your daypack whilst your main luggage is forwarded to the larger towns and cities is much more practical. The minshuku and ryokan provide meals, toiletries, and a yukata (cotton robe) and slippers for you to wear after arrival and for dining (shoes are not worn inside Japanese homes or these styles of home-from home-accommodations), so you really can pack light for when you are out walking on the trail.

### LUGGAGE FORWARDING SERVICE

You will notice when travelling in Japan that nobody seems to be carrying large luggage. Nobody other than foreign tourists that is! This is because Japan has an extremely extensive, efficient, and reliable delivery service available known as *takuhaibin* or *Takkyubin* (*Takkyubin* is the brand name of the best-known service provider). The Japanese never travel with their luggage unless they are driving to their destination, and there is no need for you to do so either!

The service is secure, efficient, and economical - and it can be arranged at your accommodation. It must be paid for locally and typically costs around 3,000 Japanese Yen per bag per transfer. This service is required on Day 3 to forward your main luggage to Kyoto, and on Day 9 to forward your main luggage to Yunomine Onsen or Kawayu Onsen depending on where you are staying, and on Day 12 to Osaka. Full information regarding the *takuhaibin* will be provided with your travel documents.

# General Information

## Passport & Visas

**The information that we provide is for UK passport holders.**

A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required**,** and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates** *(see Health & Vaccinations below),* **and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check the FCDO for the latest advice for **each country visited** before travel.

**Visa Japan**

UK and USA passport holders do not require a visa for short stays.

## Health & Vaccinations

**Vaccinations:**

You should be up to date with the routine vaccinations recommended in the UK for overseas travel.

You must also contact your doctor or travel clinic to check if there are specific vaccinations or other preventive measures that you need for the area you are visiting, in good time before you are due to depart.

Please ensure you are looking at the recommendations for all countries visited on your holiday plus recommendations for any borders you cross.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dental check-up.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates.**

**Please check the FCDO and Travel Health Pro. For all of your intended destinations for up-to-date advice.**

**Severe Allergies:**

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips.

## Currency

The unit of currency in Japan is the Japanese Yen.

## Preparing for your Holiday

The advantage of a self-guided walking holiday is that you decide the pace however getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. You should be comfortable with walking 3 to 4 hours for consecutive days with two 8 hour days on the Kumano Kodo. The walks are leisurely in length, however the terrain can be steep in parts and paths rocky with tree roots underfoot and you should be confident on uneven terrain.

## Climate

Japan has a temperate climate, in that it has four distinct seasons. However, a variety of influences, including the Siberian air stream and various Pacific Ocean currents, give the country a complex climatic pattern. In April and May, you can expect average temperatures of around 8 - 20 degrees centigrade; in September and October it will be hotter, with highs of around 28 - 30 degrees centigrade. The summer months are the hottest, and August temperatures can reach 35 degrees centigrade or more. Rainy seasons occur from mid-June to July and, especially, in September and October, when there can be torrential rains associated with tropical cyclones. Always be ready with your waterproofs just in case!

## Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's **'Travel Aware'** campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. All other nationalities should check their government websites for relevant information.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

## Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

### Books

Japan - Lonely Planet

A Geek in Japan - Hector Garcia

Geisha, A Life - Mineko Iwasaki

Rice, Noodle, Fish: Deep Travels Through Japan's Food Culture - Matt Goulding

Etiquette Guide to Japan - Boye Lafayette De Mente / Geoff Botting

Abroad in Japan - Chris Broad

### Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our Travel Insurance page for further information and to get a quote.

# Equipment Information

### Self Guided Equipment List

- Hiking boots with good-grip soles
- Hiking socks
- Long / short hiking trousers
- Functional base layer top and leggings
- T-shirts
- Fleece / extra warm layer
- Windproof jacket

- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Hat, gloves, and neck gaiter
- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Sunhat
- Small first aid kit inside your rucksack
- Water bottle or hydration pack
- Mobile Phone (ensure your data package covers your destination)
- Power bank
- Waterproof phone cover
- Camera (and batteries / memory card)
- Reusable sealable picnic boxes for picnics
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping to avoid the use of plastic bags
- Walking poles
- Headtorch with spare batteries
- Personal wash kit
- Your self-guided route notes
- Rucksack (approx. 20L)

### Land Only Information

Please note that our 'from' price listed is based on 4 persons on twin or double occupancy, however we can quote for any number of travellers including solo travellers - contact our Sales Team for a quote.

**This trip is extremely popular and space tends to be limited (there is only so much accommodation along the trails), so we recommend to book very well in advance.**

When considering your travel dates, you might like to investigate any seasonal opening times of attractions and points of interest.

All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. You may even wish to make this holiday part of a bigger adventure or pair it with one of our other holidays. We can arrange additional nights' accommodation before your self-guided trip (in Tokyo) or after your self-guided trip (in Osaka) - please ask our Sales Team to find out more about this.

Please DO NOT book your flights before you have received your booking confirmation and your deposit has been taken.

Our Sales Team will also be happy to provide you with a quote for scheduled flights from your nearest regional airport (where possible). Flight prices are subject to change depending on availability and seasonality. Flight prices will only be confirmed to you when all services have been arranged and confirmed for your requested dates.

# Why Choose KE

### Why KE?

This trip gives you the ultimate insight into Japanese culture, ancient and modern. As well as visiting the key cities, you will also walk along parts of the Nakasendo and Kumano Kodo trails.To help give you the quintessential Japan experience we have included a bullet train journey, a tea ceremony, and the option to add private guided tours in Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka.

**Please Note** This document was downloaded on 19/11/2026 and the trip is subject to change