



Trails of Japan Women's Adventure

10 Days



The Adventure Company | EST. 1969

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MOUNTAIN TRAVEL SOBEK

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS
AS THE PIONEER OF ADVENTURE TRAVEL

➤ Trails of Japan Women's Adventure

On this enchanted adventure, packed with scenic hikes and immersive cultural encounters, you'll meet some of the bold women behind Japan's incredibly rich culture. Over 10 expertly curated days you'll experience the wonders of Japan as you hike along the centuries-old Kumano Kodo pilgrimage route, witness the traditional Ama practice of free-diving for pearls and seafood, visit Japan's most treasured Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples, and uncover the mysteries of geisha life in Kyoto. You'll even have a chance to try "forest bathing" on this unique women's adventure.

Details

Arrive: Osaka, Japan

Depart: Kyoto, Japan

Duration: 10 Days

Group Size: 6-12 Guests

Minimum Age: 18 Years Old

Activity Level:



Testimonials

"I have taken 12 trips with MT Sobek. Each has left a positive imprint on me—widening my view of the world and its peoples."

Jane B.

"I have traveled extensively around the world. The experience with MT Sobek was by far the best I have ever had. Thank you for such excellence."

Marianne W.

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Why Take This Trip With Us?

REASON #01

MT Sobek has been leading adventures in Japan for over 10 years, working with expert Japanese guides to ensure an immersive experience.

REASON #02

This unique adventure offers a new perspective on Japan and blends active hikes with cultural encounters.

REASON #03

We've included three days on the magnificent, UNESCO-listed Kumano Kodo pilgrimage route.

What to Expect



ACTIVITIES

Moderately paced hikes up to 4 miles a day on paved and dirt trails, plus cultural touring and scenic train rides.



LODGING

Enjoy stays in serene hotels with comfortable rooms and modern amenities, plus traditional ryokans (inns).



CLIMATE

Spring and fall temperatures range from 50°F to the high 70's F. In springtime, there is a fair chance of rain.

Meet Our Guides

Our expert guides and trip leaders are truly the key to our trips' success. Many are locals who live in-country year-round; others have made it their second home—all are passionate, enthusiastic and endlessly knowledgeable. Meet two of the guides that might be on your trip.

Tomomi was born and raised in Tokyo. After completing her degree in international relations, she studied in the UK and the US. Later she lived in Hawaii and Israel for years and traveled extensively in Europe, the US and Middle East. She now lives in Tokyo, close to its center and loves gardening, walking, cycling and yoga. Tomomi enjoys guiding and sharing her knowledge of both traditional and urban cultures of Japan. Meet Tomomi on MT Sobek's Walking Japan adventure.

Tomomi Shimazu

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Itinerary

DAY 1

ARRIVE IN OSAKA

Welcome to Japan! Upon arrival at Kansai International Airport, transfer to your Osaka hotel. Here you meet the group and enjoy a welcome dinner and trip orientation.

Meals: D

DAY 2

JOURNEY TO TOBA, LUNCH WITH AN AMA DIVER

Take a morning train to Toba, a port town in Mie prefecture known for Mitsukoshi pearls and the brave Ama divers who would free-dive for them. This traditional lifestyle is slowly dying as younger people, especially women, choose not to enter this dangerous profession. From Toba, transfer to Osatsu and see this fascinating practice in action and then have lunch with a special guest - a woman Ama diver! Learn about the Ama lifestyle and traditions while feasting on fresh-caught seafood. After lunch, return to Toba and explore the town before settling into your waterfront accommodation.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 3

IMMERSE YOURSELF IN SHRINE CULTURE IN MEIWA

Head to the Saiku Historical Museum, which showcases an ancient Saio palace whose ruins are now an archaeological site. Learn about the Saio - unmarried women of the imperial family - and the life they dedicated to the gods at Ise-jingu, the shrine we visit next. Ise, one of Japan's most significant Shinto shrines, is associated with Amaterasu-Omikami, the female deity from which the Japanese imperial family descended. Pay your respects here and then explore Okage Yokocho, a historical commercial district catering to the earthly needs of pilgrims and visitors.

Activity: 2 hours walking on gravel paths

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 4

EMBARK ON THREE-DAY WALK ALONG THE KUMANO KODO

Today starts your exciting journey along the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Kumano Kodo! Travel to the Aiga area, where you begin your two-day hike on the Iseji, an important route pilgrims followed from Ise-jingu to the three grand shrines (Kumano Sanzan) on the centuries-old Kumano Kodo. This incredibly scenic portion of the trail, which takes in terraced rice paddies and bamboo forests, is partly paved with moss-covered stones to prevent landslides. After crossing the famous Magose Pass, transfer to your Owase accommodation, where you relax in a traditional onsen (hot spring).

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Activity: 3 hours/3 miles hiking with 1,053'/1,148' elevation gain/loss

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 5

CONTINUE "FOREST BATHING" ON THE ISEJI

Day two on Iseji is a bit more challenging, but every bit as scenic. As you walk along the trail, experience the Japanese wellness concept of shinrin yoku, or forest bathing - a sense of well-being that arises from immersing yourself in the power of nature to escape modern-day stimulation and improve overall health. Feel yourself enveloped in the natural environment along this ancient route, with cypress and cedar trees stretching above and moss-covered stone paths below.

Activity: 3 hours/3 miles hiking, 1,000' elevation gain/loss

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 6

DISCOVER TWO GRAND SHRINES, WALK WITH A MOUNTAIN PRIESTESS

Transfer to the Hayatama Taisha, the first Kumano Kodo grand shrine, and continue to Hosshinmon-oji, the "gate of awakening of the aspiration to enlightenment." Walk a scenic, gentle portion of the Kumano's Nakahechi route with a yamabushi - a mountain priestess of the Shugendo faith. Shugendo blends reverence for the sacredness of nature with elements of Buddhism and other Eastern religions. Hike to the Hongu Taisha, the Kumano's second grand shrine - whose symbol of the mythological three-legged raven represents all three grand shrines - before completing today in your onsen's soothing waters.

Activity: 2 hours/4 miles hiking, 395'/1,180' elevation gain/loss

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 7

VISIT THE THIRD GRAND SHRINE, ARRIVE IN KYOTO

Travel to the Daimonzaka, the traditional approach to Nachi Taisha (the Kumano's third grand shrine) and Nachi Taki (Nachi waterfall). The Daimonzaka features traditional broad stone stairs that meander through the forest to Nachi Taisha. You may see pilgrims in traditional dress as they follow in the footsteps of those who walked many centuries before. Arrive first at Nachi Taisha, known for its stately vermilion pagoda, and then at Nachi Taki, Japan's tallest single-drop waterfall and part of the yamabushi's ascetic practice. Enjoy lunch on your own in Daimonzaka before boarding a train to Kyoto.

Activity: 1.5 hours/1.5 miles hiking, 490' elevation gain

Meals: B, D

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DAY 8

EXPERIENCE THE MAGIC OF KYOTO

Revel in a full day discovering Kyoto. Start at UNESCO-listed Nijo-jo, a palace-like castle built in 1603. Learn about court life and Murasaki Shikibu, a noblewoman who wrote The Tale of Genji under a nom de plume. Walk through Gion and discover the mysterious world of geisha and maiko (apprentice geisha) - a traditional means for women to make their way in the world - while lunching with a maiko. Then step into the quieter, lesser known geisha district, where you learn about the revered tea ceremony and the aesthetic concepts of wabi sabi.

Activity: City touring

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 9

TAKE IN TRANQUIL ARASHIYAMA & EXPLORE MORE OF KYOTO

Begin today walking in the historical, peaceful district of Arashiyama. Make your way from the upper reaches of town to Tenryu-ji, one of Kyoto's preeminent Zen Buddhist temples. Here enjoy a special lunch of shojin ryori (Buddhist vegetarian cuisine) before an afternoon at your leisure to explore the area further, or return to central Kyoto to browse the many craft shops for that perfect souvenir. This evening celebrate with a jovial farewell dinner, and raise a glass to the trailblazing women of Japan - and the wonderful women on your tour!

Activity: City touring

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 10

DEPART FROM KYOTO

After breakfast at the hotel, say farewell to Kyoto and transfer to Kansai International Airport for your homeward-bound flight.

Activity: 90-minute airport transfer

Meals: B

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Dates

May 22 - 31, 2020

Oct 8 - 17, 2020

For full terms and conditions please visit www.mtsobek.com/terms. Please note that our itineraries may be subject to change.

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Pricing

2020

\$ 7,895 per person

Additional Cost

\$ 1,300 Single Supplement

PRICE INCLUDES

- Expert leadership from experienced adventure guides
- Accommodations as noted in the itinerary
- Meals as noted in the daily itinerary
- Potable water and snacks throughout
- 1 glass of wine or beer at dinner
- All tips and gratuities for support staff with the exception of your lead adventure guide(s)
- All group entrance fees, activities, and ground transportation

PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE

- International airfare, any airport taxes, or excess baggage charges
- Lunch on Day 7
- Optional tips to your lead adventure guides
- Personal expenses such as medical immunizations, phone calls, laundry, or souvenirs
- Airport transfers
- Optional travel protection

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At Mountain Travel Sobek, we believe life is an adventure and adventure is life.

As the originators, innovators and leaders in adventure travel for more than five decades, we passionately create, craft and share indelible, transformative journeys to the world's most memorable places. Our more than 200 unique and once-in-a-lifetime trips are designed to inspire and exhilarate, enliven and excite--opening eyes and minds through profoundly personal connections with nature and culture.

Our small group and custom adventures span the globe, and the spectrum—of interests, environments and activities—every one expertly planned and knowledgeably and passionately guided. And our commitment to making every experience a remarkable one has earned us preferred travel outfitter status for National Geographic Active Expeditions, Active New York Times Journeys, and Smithsonian Active Journeys.

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