



JOURNEYS OF THE SPIRIT



Kumano Kodo 2019



“I found answers to my deep issues while walking the Kumano and these were very helpful. They arose spontaneously when I was walking in silence. After those answers, I felt as if my journey was complete and the days after were a bonus. Thanks so much for the journey and all the organisation that was needed to make this trip so smooth and fun.” S.D, Japan 2015

The Kumano Kodo Story

A journey into the realm of nature can bring purification to the soul. And it is with that in mind that centuries of Japanese pilgrims have set out to walk the Kumano Kodo, a more than 1,200 year old network of trails that pass cedar forests, cascading waterfalls, and picturesque villages in the Kii Mountains.

Anchored by three Shinto shrines dedicated to nature, Kumano is one of only two ancient pilgrimage routes recognised as UNESCO World Heritage sites (the other is Spain’s Camino de Santiago). For those seeking to experience Japan’s traditional way of life, the Kumano embraces living heritage – villagers tend heirloom orchards of ume plums, pound rice using wooden mallets to make mochi, and welcome the weary to soak tired muscles in onsen hot springs. Travelers sleep in family homestays and ryokans, where kaiseki meals using local ingredients that represent each season are served, as they have been for generations. Walking the Kumano, where Buddhism also fused with Shinto, gives renewed meaning to the old adage that happiness is a journey, not a destination.



Your 13 Day Itinerary

For thousands of years the isolated Kumano route has been an experience of healing and deep connection in the lush mountains of Wakayama – the spiritual heartland of Japan. Stretching across the Kii Peninsula on the island of Honshu, the pilgrimage takes us off the beaten track into a world of stunning scenery, soothing hot springs, delicious food and authentic Ryokan accommodation. We will be walking along the way to the Grand Shrines through tiny villages, along pristine mountain trails shrouded by 800 year old giant trees enjoying the abundance of nature in its autumn glow – truly the land of the Gods. This is only one of the two UNESCO World Heritage walks in the world.

Day 1 Monday 4 Nov

KYOTO



Arriving into Kyoto.

Depending on your flight arrival time, you have much time to explore this charming and uniquely majestic ancient city.

Hotel Daiwa Roynet
Kyoto for 3 nights

Day 2 Tuesday 5 Nov

KYOTO

We begin our day after breakfast using public transport with our local guide, to visit a serene area where you will be able to feel the traditional Kyoto. The area is rarely visited by tourists but is very famous and important for local residents. We will visit one shrine to learn about the relationship of Shintoism with the Japanese people, and a Buddhist temple to further understand Japanese Buddhism.

At the Buddhist temple we will be shown two sub-temples where we can enjoy two different types of Japanese gardens. Both of these are also deeply related to the tea ceremony. We will be introduced here to the philosophy of this special tea ceremony.

Early on in our tour, we will make a stop at a teahouse by the shrine for a cup of green tea and sweets, which are a tradition enjoyed for centuries by the locals since the era of the samurai age.

After lunch we go to an Obi (kimono sash) weaving factory and learn about how important the obi is when a kimono is worn, and the skill of obi weaving.

Your day may end at the city centre where you can explore shopping or food markets, or simply strolling the streets.

| Meals – Breakfast and Lunch

Day 3 Wednesday 6 Nov

KYOTO



We begin our day in a Zen temple for a morning meditation. Led by a Zen monk we will experience a zazen.

After this we will move to the western side of Kyoto and visit a unique temple space within a beautiful bamboo grove. We then will explore our lunch options within walking distance of this area. Or you may choose to go shopping, go back to your hotel, or whatever you feel like doing.

Tonight we will have an amazing backstage, behind the scenes visit to the unique Noh Theatre. It originated in Kyoto and is a form of Opera using masks and costumes on small stages to create a very intimate experience of theatre. We are met by the creator and the owner of this particular theatre. It is a lot of fun !

| Meals – Breakfast and lunch

Day 4 Thursday 7 Nov

KYOTO to KOYASAN

This morning we transfer by train from Kyoto to Koyasan.

Koyasan a Buddhist retreat settled in a mountain plateau and one of the most sacred sites in Japan. It is the centre of the Shingon esoteric school.

The village is small but blessed with hundreds of temples featuring classic architectural designs, and elegant Japanese gardens.

Staying at a temple is one of the extraordinary experiences of Koyasan where you can dine on Buddhist cuisine and attend prayer sessions.

You have a free afternoon to explore this exquisite little town. Dinner will be held at the Joki-In temple.

Overnight at Joki-In temple for two nights, Koyasan

| Meals - Breakfast and Dinner



Day 5

Friday 8 Nov

KOYASAN



Every morning guests are welcome to join the ceremony in the worship hall. Waking up to the smell of incense and rhythmical chanting of the monks primes the soul for a day of spiritual journeys. Koyasan is roughly divided into two areas the Danjo Garan and Okuno-in. The Danjo Garan is the symbolic center of Koyasan, the heart of a lotus flower with the surrounding mountains like pedals embracing the divine plateau. Okuno-in is the inner sanctuary where Kobo Daishi, the founder of Koyasan, is believed to be in a state of eternal meditation.

Over 300,000 tombstones are densely distributed beneath giant 500 year old trees creating a spiritual atmosphere and profound religious cultural landscape. You have a 4 hour walking tour with a volunteer guide today beginning at 9am from the lobby of Fudo-In temple. Your guided tour today will highlight the many unique aspects of Koyasan.

Overnight at Joki-In, Temple | Meals – Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6

Saturday 9 Nov

KAWAYU

After the morning rituals and meals we say goodbye to this mystical monastic centre and head south deep into the mountains.

We journey by train to JR Kii-Tanabe Station and meet our local guide Maki. Within walking distance we visit Tokei Jinja Shrine – the original building of Hongu Shrine can be seen here. If you would like have lunch in the area Maki can advise of options. Take a shuttle bus to Hotel Harvest. Free time until dinner.

The next 5 nights are at Midoriya Ryokan, Kawayu Onsen | Meals – Dinner

Day 7

Sunday 10 Nov

KUMANO KODO

After breakfast, we start our walk on the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage route. The Nakahechi route is the oldest of the ways to the sacred sites of Kumano, which were first walked over 1000 years ago by the imperial family that resided in Kyoto.

The faith of Kumano is a syncretic mix of indigenous nature worship and Buddhism. We take a jumbo taxi from the Hotel to the small Takijiri-oji shrine, which is the starting point of our walk. It is here that the passage into the sacred mountains begins—the entrance to the abode of the gods and Buddhist paradises of rebirth. The walk is short, but steep through the forest to the ridge top village of Takahara.

We end at Gyuba-doji. Lunch can be taken at a local cafe with panoramic views across the lush, green mountains. Continue to Watarase Onsen – our ryokan for the next 4 nights – for dinner. Your luggage will be transferred with Maki to your next ryokan after check out in this morning.



Midoriya Ryokan, Kawayu Onsen. | Meals – Dinner

Day 8

Monday 11 Nov

KUMANO KODO

For the next three days, we will be working with you to create our exact walking route, time and distances. We will need to be a bit flexible, as we need to consider the weather, the current condition of the Kumano Kodo, and take into consideration your walking requests for distances based on how you feel.

For today, tomorrow and the 18th October, I am leaving the itinerary below as what we had planned for you prior to the typhoon, just to give you an idea of possibilities. You will access to the service of the hotel shuttle bus so you can enjoy flexibility for your walking starting and end points.

The walk today starts from Chikatsuyu-oji, a sleepy hamlet with a clear river running through it, and we walk deeper into the mountains. During the golden era of the imperial pilgrimages, processions of up to 800 people at a time wove their way along these trails. Remnants of their passing and legends line the way, sometimes in stories such as the one of the worship of the three-fold moon. Today we can be flexible with our walking distances, based on how you feel from yesterday.

Midoriya Ryokan, Kawayu Onsen. | Meals – Dinner

Walking distance today: As above approximately 9kms



We start our walk today at Hosshinmon-oji. “Hosshin” means spiritual awakening or aspiration to enlightenment and “mon” means gate. Passage through this gate was a transformational rite marking initiatory death and rebirth in the Pure Land paradise. It is not a physical gate, but one of devotion.

This day is a combination of passes, rising up and down, over a series of forested passes. Walking the way to Kumano is an integral part of the pilgrimage process as pilgrims, the physical demands helping the pilgrims reach their sought after enlightened state.

After the descent from Hosshinmon-oji to Futatama Jinja shrine, we take the side trail of Akagi-goe to Yunomine Onsen, one of the oldest hot spring areas in Japan and directly connected to the Kumano pilgrimage as the site of hot water purification rituals. You can walk directly from the trail to your ryokan today (this is an additional 4kms)

Midoriya Ryokan, Kawayu Onsen. | Meals – Dinner

Walking distance today: 7.5kms

Day 10

Wednesday 13 Nov

KUMANO KODO & KUMANO HONGU TAISHA

Today's walk can depart from Hosshinmon-oji and we take a different route than yesterday. It is 4kms to our first lookout point at Fushigami-oji where pilgrims finally got their first glimpse of their goal, the Kumano Hongu Taisha. Or we can begin our day from Fushigami-oji.

The Kumano Hongu Taisha is one of the three grand shrines of the Kumano Kodo. Pilgrims traditionally fell on their knees and prayed, which is what the word “Fushigami” means. At the lowest point in the valley lies Oyunohara, the holy sandbank where the Kumano Hongu Taisha was originally located until a flood destroyed it in 1886. The salvaged remains were used to rebuild the shrine on higher ground. The austere construction of the shrine pavilions of Kumano Hongu Taisha seem to have grown organically from the forest; indeed much of the material to make it comes from the surrounding sacred woods.

Take a moment to take in the symbols of this sacred site and watch the people as they worship for hints into the depths of meaning of the Kumano faith. Tour the information rich Kumano Hongu Heritage Center before returning to your ryokan.

Walking distance today: 8.5kms from Hosshinmon-oji, or 4.5kms from Fushigami

Midoriya Ryokan, Kawayu Onsen. | Meals – Dinner

Day 11 Thursday 14 Nov

KUMANO KODO & KUMANO HAYATAMA TAISHA SHRINE



After breakfast and checking out from the Watarase Onsen, a van will pick us up and drop us off to begin our walk today at Takanosaka-origuchi and continue to Kumano Hayatama Taisha shrine, another of the three important shrines on the Kumanokodo.

On our walk today you will get a glimpse of the Pacific Ocean, the only time you will see this on this pilgrimage.

The path continues along the beach side for a while and then into the city of Shingu. Lunch will be along the way. Your luggage will be transported separately to your next inn, awaiting your arrival later.

Walking distance today: 8kms

Dinner tonight is a treat – at a local izakaya restaurant – serves small, shared dishes in the middle of the table much like tapas (dinner is not included).

Overnight at Katsuura Gyoen for two nights | Meals – Breakfast

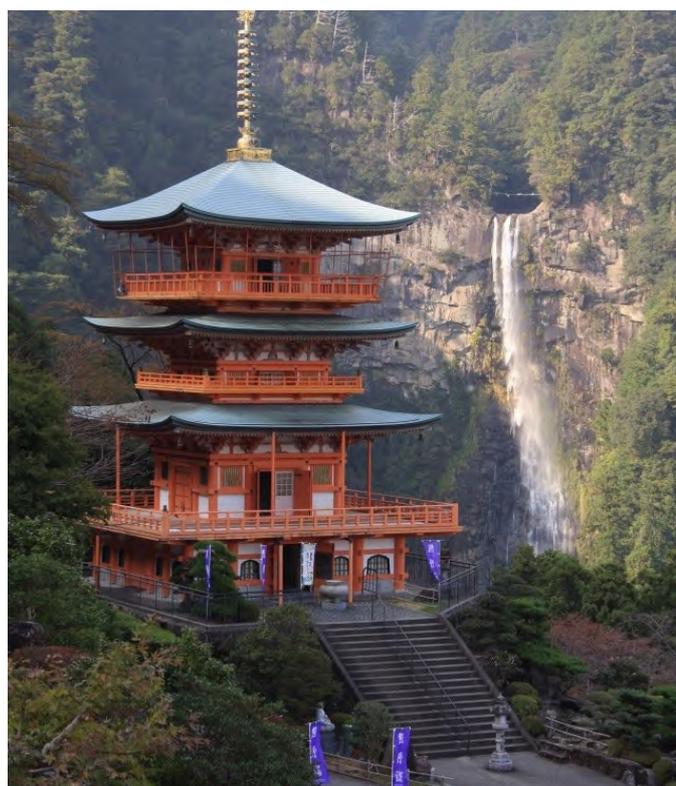
Day 12 Friday 15 Nov

KUMANO KODO FINAL WALKING DAY

After breakfast we transfer by van back into the mountains to the Irokawa-tsuji, the final leg of our spiritual journey awaits us. Through the Moja-no-Deai, Mt Myoho is considered the "Mount Koya for women" the historic headquarters for the Kumano Bikuni nuns. The vastness of the Pacific Ocean spreads out before us on a clear day at Funami-toge pass, where you can see the rugged coastline. The trail sharply descends here into the valley where the tallest waterfall in Japan greets pilgrims with its majestic cascade, connecting earth and heaven. A truly breathtaking way to complete your Kumano Kodo.

Walking distance today: 7kms

We have reserved a table at a different izakaya restaurant for you tonight. (dinner not included)



Overnight at Katsuura, Gyoen | Meals – Breakfast



After a leisurely breakfast it is time to say arigato gozaimasu for our enchanting experience together and journey onward or home.

For most it will be a train journey from Kii-Katsuura station (5 minute walk from our inn) to Osaka. And then onward to explore more of Japan or fly home.

Important Note:

Whilst every effort is made to adhere to this itinerary, please keep in mind that this is adventure travel in a remote part of Japan. There may be changes to this itinerary - from the hotels we use, to the places we visit & due to circumstances outside our control like weather, road conditions and last minute changes to government policy.

Journeys of the Spirit will do everything possible to ensure a memorable and exciting trip for you whatever situation presents itself, however it is highly recommended to take your lead from the locals and let go and let the magic of the Kumano Kodo take over...

We thank you in advance for your flexibility and your open mind.

About your guide

Peter Bliss

Peter is a dynamic business educator who has a very practical yet holistic approach to business and lifestyle. Using a range of techniques based on ancient philosophies, Peter helps both individuals and businesses gain clarity and direction.

Today Peter is an international key note speaker and executive coach, a skilled Mindfulness, Meditation, Tai Chi and Qigong teacher, an accredited Demartini Method facilitator and a loving father of five children.

For over 15 years he has been delivering original, uplifting and dynamic workshops, presentations, meditation classes, business consulting services and one-on-one mentoring sessions designed to help others discover the bliss in their lives and reach their full potential.



Peter pictured "blissed" out at one of the many stunning onsen's (hot water springs) on the Kumano Kodo Trail

Prices and Inclusions

4 to 16 November 2019

A \$7900 per person double / twin share

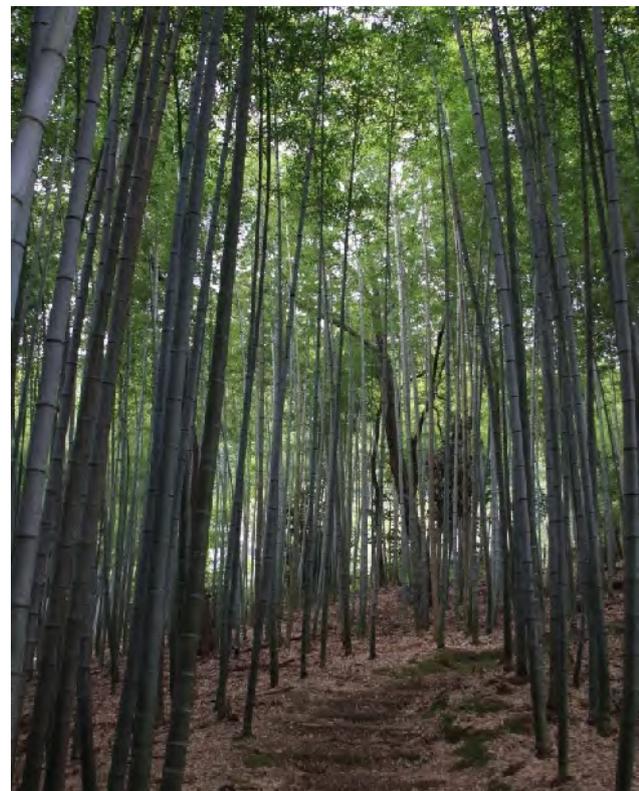
A \$680 single supplement

Your journey includes ...

- 3 nights at the Hotel Daiwa Roynet Kyoto Ekimae, in Kyoto
- All walking and guided experiences in Kyoto as per our itinerary
- Transport from Kyoto to Koyasan by train
- 2 night Joki-In Temple, Koyasan – with shared onsen bath.
- Transport from Koyasan to Shirahama – the beginning of our Kumano Kodo.
- Private vehicle every day for our Kumano Kodo journey
- 5 nights Midoriya Ryokan, Kawayu Onsen –ensuite bathroom.
- 2 nights Katsuura Gyoen,
- Breakfasts at all accommodations on our Kumano journey
- Dinners at all of our accommodations on our Kumano journey except for Katsuura
- Guided by Peter Bliss in Japan
- All prices are in Australian Dollars

· This cost excludes:

- International return flights to Japan
- Our journey begins in Kyoto and ends in Kii-Katsuura. The closest international airport to both of these is Osaka. Train travel from Osaka to Kyoto is inexpensive and quick. Also from Kii-Katsuura to Osaka.
- Any other options not included in the itinerary
- Items of a personal nature (laundry, mini-bar, phone expenses etc)
- Travel Insurance



Booking Form

Japan with Peter 4 – 16 November 2019

SURNAME _____ & FIRST NAME AS PER PASSPORT _____

NAME YOU LIKED TO BE CALLED _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE CONTACTS: HOME PHONE _____ MOBILE _____

EMAIL _____ Do you have FaceTime? _____

DEPARTURE DATE: _____ FROM (CITY): _____

ROOM TYPE: SINGLE _____ OR DOUBLE/TWIN SHARE: _____ COST: \$ _____

ANY ADDITIONAL PRE OR POST TRAVELLING ARRANGEMENTS?

FLIGHTS TO OSAKA ORGANISED BY YOURSELF _____ OR OUR TRAVEL AGENT _____

PREFERRED AIRLINE _____ FREQUENT FLYER MEMBERSHIP _____

FLIGHT SEATING PREFERENCE (IF ANY) AISLE _____ WINDOW _____

TRAVEL INSURANCE POLICY ISSUED _____ OR QUOTE REQUIRED _____

PASSPORT NATIONALITY _____ PASSPORT NUMBER _____

EXPIRY DATE _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

ANY DIETARY ALLERGIES _____

MEDICAL CONDITIONS WE NEED TO BE AWARE OF: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT – NAME _____ NUMBER _____

NON REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT – AUD \$1500 PER PERSON DUE WITHIN 7 DAYS OF BOOKING PAID _____
(Please refer to your Terms and Conditions for payment options)

FINAL BALANCE – DUE ON OR BEFORE THE **4 SEPTEMBER 2019** PAID _____

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT US? _____

I have read, understood and agree to the attached Terms & Conditions for my Journeys of the Spirit Retreat

Signature _____ Date _____

Konichiwa

Email your booking form to spirit@iinet.net.au
or text a photograph to Julie Baker at +61 42 77 66 716

Terms & Conditions

Bookings:

All reservations can be made directly to **Journeys of the Spirit** by:

Phone/sms/Whatsapp/Viber/Facetime:

In Australia: 0427 766 716 International: +61 427 766 716

Email: spirit@iinet.net.au

Skype: [julie.baker.journeys](https://www.skype.com/people/julie.baker.journeys)

Web: www.journeysofthespirit.com.au

To assist us in fulfilling your requirements efficiently, please provide us with the following details for each person on your completed and signed Booking Form:

- ◆ Your passport details – nationality, number, expiry date
- ◆ Your surname and first name **exactly** as per your Passport
- ◆ Date of birth
- ◆ Any special requirements ie special dietary meals, seating requests, frequent flyer details, medical conditions and any other details we need to be aware of.

Deposits

A non refundable deposit of AUD \$1500 per person or as otherwise stated on your Booking Form is required within 7 days of booking to secure your reservation.

Currency

All prices are subject to currency fluctuation prior to final payment. If your journey is priced in another currency other than Australian Dollars (usually US Dollars or Euro), it will be converted on the day of your payment. These currency conversion rates fluctuate from day to day.

Final Balance

Due **8 weeks prior** to your Journeys of the Spirit retreat departure, or as otherwise specified.

Payment

Payments can be made by cash, cheque, telegraphic transfer, direct credit, credit card or PayPal. If paying by credit card or Paypal please email us so we can send you the link to do this online. The merchant fee for using credit card or PayPal is between 2 – 3%, dependent on your card. Please make these payable to **Journeys of the Spirit Pty Ltd. *Payment plans are available.***

Bank Account details:

BSB: 016 376

Account: 298625571

Name: Journeys of the Spirit Pty Ltd Trust account

SWIFT code: ANZBAU3M

ANZ Melville, Western Australia

Please put your surname and trip / date as the reference and advise us via email or sms of your receipt number.

Travel Insurance

It is a mandatory condition of booking any Journeys of the Spirit holiday that you are adequately insured for the duration of your journey. In some instances, credit card insurance may not be adequate coverage for some destinations.

Prices and itineraries are subject to change without notice due to weather, political and social unrest, currency fluctuations and any other unforeseen circumstances. If these arise, the Journeys of the Spirit journey/retreat may be affected.

Cancellation Policy

Time	Cancellation fee
Deposit paid & prior to full payment	Full deposit
After full payment and more than 21 days prior to departure	Deposit + AUD \$800 per person + any ground operator/supplier cancellation charges
Less than 21 days prior to departure	100% cancellation fee per person

Refunds

No refund is available for cancellations or amendments after the journey/retreat has commenced, or in respect of any transportation, accommodation, meals, treatments or any other services not utilised. Please contact your Travel Insurance company regarding your insurance claim.

Journeys of the Spirit Pty Ltd and its agents act only as an agent for passengers in all matters relating to accommodation, transport, sightseeing, tours, restaurants, guides services, spa and retreat facilities and it's facilitators, and shall not be liable for any accident, death, irregularity, injury, loss or damage caused by or arising out of services offered by Journeys of the Spirit Pty Ltd.



JOURNEYS OF THE SPIRIT

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Website: www.journeysofthespirit.com.au

Immersing, connecting and learning from the wisdoms of our indigenous healing elders and sacred sites of our world, Journeys of the Spirit creates wellness retreats, spiritual journeys and unique travel experiences to a range of destinations such as Bhutan, Spain, India, Italy, Japan, Scandinavia, Peru, France and Hawaii.

Journeys of the Spirit takes a holistic approach in creating these journeys and designs personalised itineraries that provide a balance of exploration and indulgence. These are no ordinary holidays. They are an extraordinary opportunity for you to feel rested, energised, engaged, connected & excited about life!



JOURNEYS

OF THE SPIRIT

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Website: www.journeysofthespirit.com.au

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