





CAMINOS SUMMER

type :	Self-Guided Hiking Tours Caminos
level :	   
duration :	7 days
period:	Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
code:	

Walk the Nakasendo Trail -

7 days, Price On request



Step back in time on the Nakasendo Trail, one of Japan's most historic walking routes. Once a vital road linking Kyoto and Tokyo during the Edo period, this ancient path winds through the mountains of central Japan, connecting perfectly preserved post towns, cedar forests, tea houses, and alpine villages.

This self-guided 7-day journey offers an unforgettable blend of cultural immersion, nature, and nostalgia. Follow the footsteps of samurai, merchants, and travellers as you walk between traditional inns (ryokan and minshuku), soak in hot spring baths, and savour the elegance of multi-course kaiseki dinners. You'll sleep in futons on tatami mats and wake up to the sound of temple bells or birdsong in mountain villages unchanged for centuries.

Route

Day 1 Arrival in Ena

Ena, formerly known as Oi-juku, was once the 46th of the 69 post towns along the Nakasendo Way. In 1834, there were 41 guesthouses here, welcoming travellers making their way between Edo and Kyoto. Spend the day visiting the Hiroshige Museum, home to stunning woodblock prints that beautifully capture the essence of the Nakasendo by Utagawa Hiroshige and other artists. It's the perfect start to your journey through Japan's cultural and artistic past.

Day 2 Ena to Nakatsugawa (12.5 km)

Begin your walk through small rural towns, passing rice paddies and gardens that give you an intimate glimpse of daily life in Japan. Arrive in Nakatsugawa, post town number 45, and explore its charming old town and traditional shops—perhaps sampling sweets or sake. If you're up for it, take a detour to the ruins of Naegi Castle for sweeping views (but be ready for a few extra kilometres!).

Ascent: 271 m | Descent: 241 m

Day 3 Nakatsugawa to Tsumago via Magome (17/ 9 km)

Today's route is among the most iconic. Pass red torii gates and climb gradually to the famous village of Magome (post town 43), beautifully restored and full of traditional charm. Climb to Magome Pass (800 m), wander through forest trails and waterfalls, and arrive in picturesque Tsumago, with its long rows of preserved wooden houses—post town 42 of the original route.

Ascent: 846 m | Descent: 745 m

Day 4 Tsumago to Kiso-Fukushima via Nenouetoge Pass (16 km)

This is a day of deep immersion in nature. Follow a historic detour route over the Nenouetoge Pass—the Yogawa Route—once used during floods and landslides. Walk through cedar forests and mountain villages, tracing rivers and ridge lines. In autumn, the foliage here is truly spectacular.

Ascent: 1044 m | Descent: 925 m

Day 5 Kaida Plateau (Optional 6 or 14 km walk)

Today you can choose your own adventure. Take a break from the Nakasendo to explore the stunning Kaida Kogen Plateau, with scenic forest trails, waterfalls, and views from Jizo Pass (1,335 m). Walk as little or as much as you like—either 6 or 14 km, depending on your route. Prefer a rest? Explore Kiso-Fukushima and its quiet streets, or enjoy a short walk to Gongen Waterfall.

Day 6 Yabuhara to Narai via Torii Pass (7 km)

Take the train to Yabuhara and begin your final walk in the Kiso Valley. Cross the historic Torii Pass and descend into Narai, one of the most charming and beautifully preserved post towns on the route. After your walk, board a train to Nagano and continue by Shinkansen to Karuizawa.

Ascent: 507 m | Descent: 500 m

Day 7 Karuizawa to Yokokawa via Usui Pass (16.5 km)

Your final walk takes you through the hills of Karuizawa and over the scenic Usui Pass. Enjoy mountain views from Miharashidai, visit tea houses or the Kumano Kotai Shrine, and descend through autumn forests into Yokokawa. The last stretch follows the old railway line—an atmospheric finish to your journey

Ascent: 701 m | Descent: 1253 m

Practical info

How to Arrive & Depart

Arrival – Getting to Nakatsugawa

Your journey begins in the historic town of Nakatsugawa, nestled in the Kiso Valley along the Nakasendo Trail. The most convenient way to reach it is via Nagoya, which is well connected by bullet train (Shinkansen) from both Tokyo and Osaka.

From Tokyo:

Take the Tokaido Line Shinkansen from Tokyo Station to Nagoya (approx. 1 hr 45 min). Tip: Sit on the right-hand side of the train for views of Mt. Fuji on clear days.

From Osaka:

Take a local train from Osaka to Shin-Osaka, then board the Tokaido Line Shinkansen to Nagoya (approx. 50 min).

From Nagoya to Nakatsugawa:

From Nagoya Station, take the JR Chuo Line (Rapid) to Nakatsugawa (approx. 1 hr 15 min). Both Rapid and Local services are available for the same fare. If you are not using a JR Pass, buying a Non-Reserved Seat on the Shinkansen can save you money. Tickets can be purchased at the JR ticket window just before the Shinkansen gates.

Tip: Download the Japan Transit Planner or Japan Direct app – both are excellent tools for navigating Japan's rail system, offering schedules, prices, and routes with or without a JR Pass.

Departure – After the Walk

From your final destination (often Tsumago or Magome), you can travel back to Nakatsugawa Station by local bus or taxi. From there, retrace your steps via Nagoya to Tokyo, Osaka, or your next destination in Japan.

Included

- Explore the Kaida Kogen Plateau, a quiet and scenic alpine area in the hills north of Kiso-Fukushima, far from the rush of modern Japan.
- Walk light, walk free – your main luggage is transferred for you on most days, so you can enjoy the trail with just a daypack.
- Stay in authentic Japanese accommodations – 5 nights in family-run minshuku, ryokan or traditional inns, where you'll be welcomed with warm hospitality and thoughtful details.
- Delicious daily meals included – start and end each day with beautifully prepared Japanese breakfasts and multi-course dinners that celebrate local flavors.
- Flexible itineraries – walking days can be shortened or adjusted, and extra rest days added if you prefer a slower pace.
- Comprehensive route notes and maps created by local walking experts, so you can explore with confidence and ease.
- 24/7 local support throughout your journey — we're here if you need anything along the way.