
Off-the-Beaten Track Japan Photography Journey with Harold Davis

Sunday, October 15 to Wednesday, October 25, 2023 — *11 Days and 10 Nights*

Step into the fabled Japan of myth and legend. Journey back in time to a Japan that few westerners are familiar with. Join a small group of compatible photographers led by Harold Davis and a professional guide for this once-in-a-lifetime adventure.

Where: We meet at our hotel in Tokyo, Japan. After exploring the new and old sides of Tokyo, we'll travel back in time through the Japanese Alps via the ancient Nakasendo way. We'll visit well-preserved villages in the Kiso Valley, Matsumoto Castle, the castle town of Takayama, and the World Heritage site of Shirakawago. Following a stop in the culturally important city of Kanazawa, we will wrap up the destination photo workshop with a dreamlike visit to the gardens and temples of Kyoto, where the tour will end. Full details follow below.

Group Size: This is an exclusive, small photo workshop (non-photographer significant others are also welcome) with very limited space availability (the minimum group size is six and the maximum is twelve).

How to Register: Please send us an email expressing interest right away; a completed registration requires a \$1000 deposit, the trip Reservation Form, a copy of your Covid vaccination card, and a copy of your currently valid passport page.

For more information or to express interest, please call Harold at his studio: 510.528.9977 or email: harold@digitalfieldguide.com



Pano Kumano Sanzen

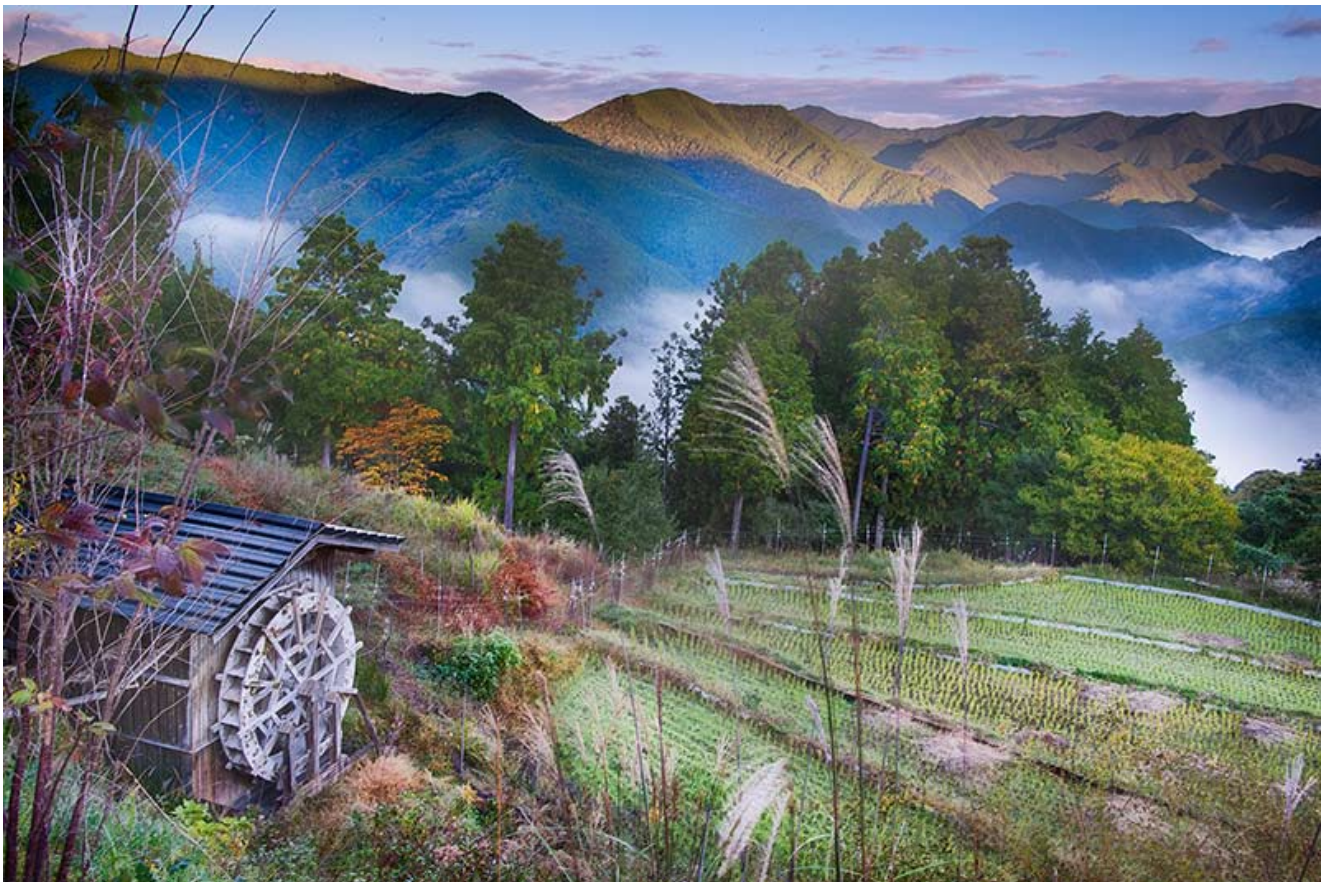
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Journey Details

Welcome to a photographic journey that not only presents a visual journey of Japan, but also a deep dive into its history from the pulsing present-day capital of Tokyo, back into rural areas in the central mountains along paths where shoguns and samurai once tread, and then on to the ancient capital of Kyoto, Japan's spiritual, political, and cultural center for 1400 years.

After discovering the new and old sides of modern Tokyo, we will jump back 400 years and from Tokyo Bay to the Japanese Alps. In feudal times people travelling from Kyoto to Tokyo would use the Nakasendo way ñ the road through the central mountains ñ one of a network of ancient highways. We will visit one of the best-preserved sections in the Kiso Valley, where the lovely villages of Tsumago and Magome have been immaculately restored.

In the Hida region, we will visit the castle town of Takayama, isolated by a barricade of mountains. The superb local crafts and architecture are much in evidence in the old town, with the preserved merchants' houses, tea houses, local sake, and crafts shops specializing in lacquerware, pottery, and furniture. Further north is Shirakawa-go, a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1995, where we will discover the traditionally thatched gassho-zukuri houses. These large wooden houses have steep thatched roofs, designed to withstand heavy snow, and the term gassho-zukuri refers to the shape of praying hands formed by the roofs.



Dawn in the High Fields

© Harold Davis

From the mountains, we will move to Kanazawa, a city that retains many traces of its important political past. Here we will discover old geisha teahouse districts, one of Japan's most famous gardens, a lively market, and a strong cultural heritage.

From Kanazawa, we will travel to Kyoto, Japan's capital for more than a thousand years. The city is home to more than 1600 Buddhist temples, hundreds of Shinto shrines, imperial palaces and formal gardens. There will be ample time to explore this historical city, and also enjoy some of the wonderful Kyoto cuisine, with its refined preparation and artistic presentation.

Acclaimed photographer and bestselling photography book author Harold Davis will help guide this trip and share his love for photographing Japan throughout the tour. The tour will include guided photography sessions, tips about technique, informal discussions of photography goals and style, optional assignments, and one-on-one availability with Harold.

Fitness Level: Moderate; to fully enjoy *Off-the-Beaten Track Japan Photography Journey with Harold Davis*, you should be able to comfortably walk a moderate distance (two or three miles) at a leisurely pace while carrying a backpack with a camera and a few items such as a water bottle and a raincoat.



Buddha Samadhi

© Harold Davis

Assisting with Air Travel Arrangements: We're happy to consult and advise regarding air travel arrangements to Tokyo on request. Directions for transferring from Narita Airport to our meeting-point hotel will be provided.

Cost: \$8,995 per person (single supplement \$1,320 as explained below).

Single supplement: The single supplement covers single rooms in Tokyo, Matsumoto, Kanazawa, and Kyoto. Outside these cities, please understand that single rooms may not be available in ryokans, which are smaller, traditional accommodations. We will be traveling Japanese-style, where group members of the same sex may be paired, particularly in smaller country inns.

Our in-bound travel partner is Oku Japan.

Day	Activity	Overnight	Meals
1	Arrive Tokyo and meet at your tour hotel; Tour orientation and Welcome Dinner	Tokyo (hotel)	D
2	Sightseeing in Tokyo	Tokyo (hotel)	B
3	Post towns of Magome to Tsumago, optional 3 hour walk on the Nakasendo	Tsumago (minshuku – small traditional inn)	B, D
4	Morning shooting in Tsumago, 1 hour walk to Nagiso, Train to Kiso Fukushima, afternoon sightseeing Kiso Fukushima	Agematsu (ryokan – Japanese inn)	B, D
5	Train to Narai, sightseeing in Narai, 1 hour walk from Narai to Kiso Hirasawa, train to Matsumoto	Matsumoto	B
6	Morning sightseeing and shooting in Matsumoto, highway bus to Takayama	Takayama (ryokan – traditional Japanese inn)	B, D
7	Sightseeing and shooting in Takayama	Takayama (ryokan – traditional Japanese inn)	B, D
8	Excursion to Shirakawago en route to Kanazawa	Kanazawa (hotel)	B
9	Train to Kyoto, sightseeing in Kyoto	Kyoto (hotel)	B
10	Sightseeing and shooting in Kyoto, Farewell Dinner	Kyoto (hotel)	B, D
11	End of tour		B

Included in the tour cost

- Accommodation in hotels, Japanese-style inns (ryokan, minshuku)
Japanese-style accommodation will generally be in tatami-mat rooms
- Meals are included as marked at the bottom of each day's itinerary and in the table above
- All transportation between tour locations is included. This will normally be by train (bullet trains and local), bus and sometimes taxi
- Full-time services of a tour leader
- Entrance to museums, temples, etc. as indicated in the itinerary
- Luggage transfer as detailed below

Not included in the tour cost

- Flights to and from Japan
- Airport transfers
- Meals not listed as included
- Drinks (such as wine and beer), snacks and miscellaneous items
- Entrance fees to museums, temples etc. not included on the itinerary

Accommodation notes

The following types of accommodation are used on this tour:

Hotel (Tokyo, Matsumoto, Kanazawa, Kyoto)

Modern western-style hotels are used in Tokyo, Kanazawa, and Kyoto. The rooms are generally smaller than equivalent hotels in the West. All have en-suite facilities, air-conditioning, TV and fridges in rooms

Ryokan (Takayama, Kiso Fukushima)

Ryokan are traditional Japanese-style inns. They may be in modern concrete or older wooden buildings but the rooms are always in the Japanese style with tatami (straw) matting and futons laid out in the evening by the ryokan staff. Evening meals are served together usually in the dining room, and are exquisitely prepared multi-course meals. Many ryokan have both en suite bathrooms (with the exception of some older buildings) and communal hot spring style baths (segregated by sex). They are the classic Japanese experience.

Minshuku (Tsumago or O-Tsumago)

Minshuku are usually family-run traditional Japanese-style inns. They have tatami-mat rooms, with futons laid out in the evening for sleeping. Most minshuku do not have en suite bathrooms as they are in older traditional wooden buildings. Compared with a ryokan, they are usually (but not always) slightly less formal, but the service and food is just as good.

Single rooms

We offer the option of a single room in Tokyo, Matsumoto, Kanazawa, and Kyoto. Single rooms may not be available in ryokan and we may pair up members of your group of the same sex. In Japan ryokan rooms are less intimate spaces and we will travel the way the Japanese do.



© Harold Davis

Meals

Most meals will be Japanese cuisine. Vegetarian options are available, but limited. Alcoholic drinks are not included. Tips are not required in Japan.

Baggage handling

Luggage will be sent ahead by courier on four occasions (Tokyo on Day 3 to Kiso Fukushima on Day 4, Kiso Fukushima on Day 5 to Takayama on Day 6, Takayama on Day 8 to Kyoto on Day 9). You will be without your main luggage for one night on each occasion, so please prepare an overnight bag or daypack to carry your overnight items. A small backpack that can also be used to carry camera gear is best for these overnights.

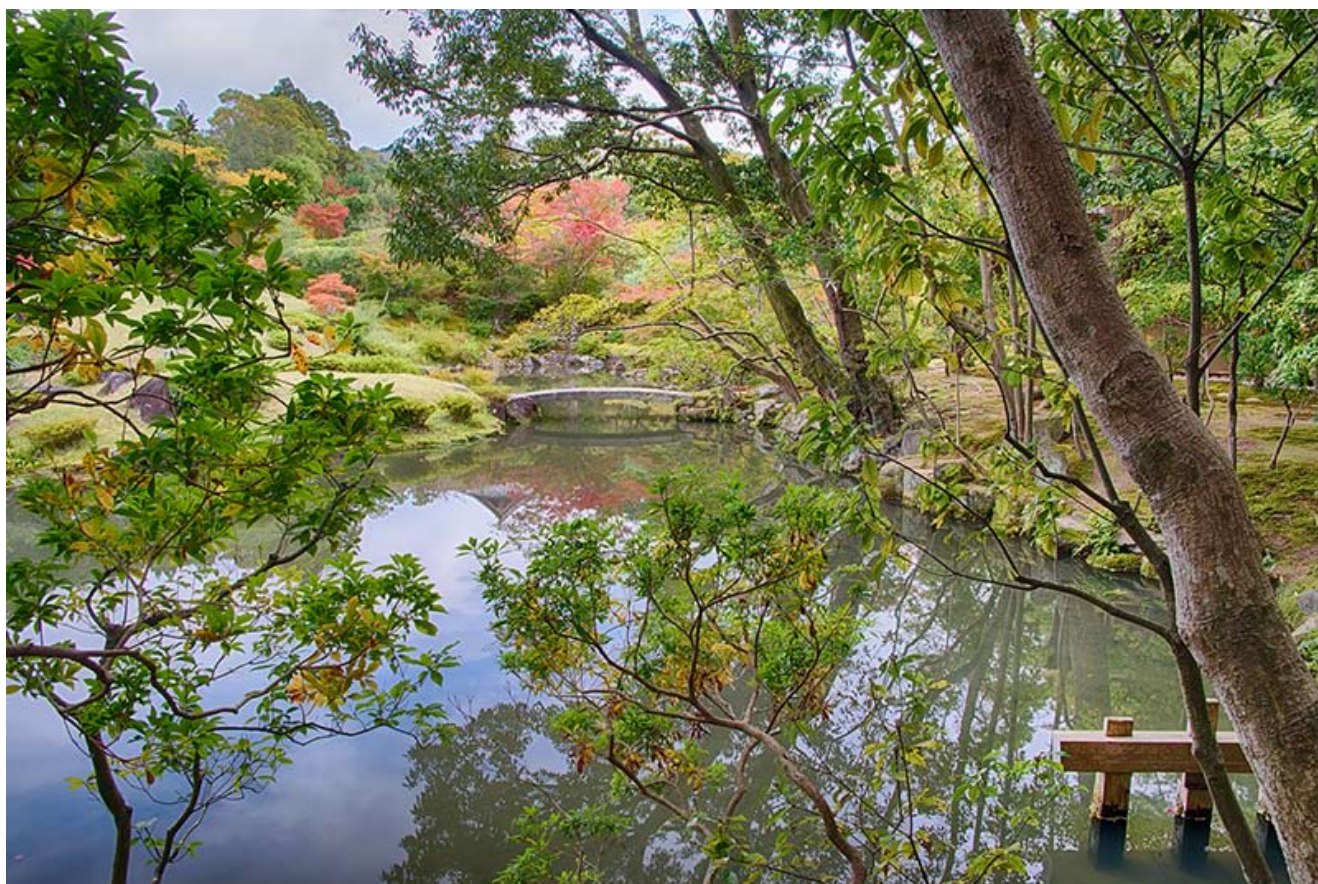
Clothing and equipment

Yukata (simple cotton kimono) are provided at each ryokan or minshuku, and you can wear this during your stay in the Japanese style accommodation both indoors and outdoors. Yukata and slippers provided by regular hotels are normally only used in the private rooms. This will allow you to pack lightly for the walking sections. Soap and shampoo are always available at any accommodations.

Equipment

Hairdryers are provided in the regular hotels and in the public bathrooms in Ryokan. They are usually available in some minshuku, too.

Bathing suits cannot be used in the public bathrooms.



© Harold Davis

For autumn tours: long sleeves are recommended during the Nakasendo walking, but you should not need heavy sweaters. You should have a light windbreaker or a rain jacket, and bringing a selection of light layers to wear will be most helpful.

If bringing any appliance please note that most North American appliances can be used in Japan. Please ensure your appliance has a plug with 2 flat prongs. Outlets in Japan do not accept 3 prong grounded plug types. Some of the minshuku may only have a limited number of outlets in the room so if you are charging more than one item of equipment, you may wish to bring a small multi socket charger.

One bag will be shipped ahead daily for pickup at the next hotel except on Day 3 and 4 and Day 8. Limit yourself to one duffle or soft-sided suitcase for your hiking gear so that the baggage transfer can be done efficiently. You will be responsible for the cost of additional bags. There are no porters for this trip, so you will carry your own baggage on/off the trains from and to the airport. Porterage may be provided at hotels only where this service is available. Your suitcase should weigh no more than 30–35 lbs. at time of departure. The total dimensions of the bag when you add the bag's external length, width, and height should be no more than 62 inches. (For example, a piece of soft-sided luggage that measured 25 x 18 x 14 would have total dimensions of 25+18+14 or 57 inches and be within these size limits).

On the hikes, guests will need to carry a daypack large enough to hold their water bottle, camera and equipment, rain gear and anything else they'll need for the day, and any extra items such as a change of clothes and overnight items for the overnight on Day 3 and 4 and Day 8, when guests will not have access to their luggage. Don't forget other essentials such as necessary medications.



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Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 – Arrive in Tokyo, Tour Orientation, Welcome Dinner

Welcome to Tokyo! Make your way to your tour hotel from the airport or your pre-tour travels and meet your guide and the other members of your group in the lobby of your tour hotel at approximately 7pm. Then, we enjoy dinner at a local restaurant, and a tour orientation over dinner as you get to know the other members of your group and tour leader Harold Davis.

Meals: Dinner

Accommodation: Park Hotel or similar (Tokyo tower rooms subject to availability)



© Harold Davis

Day 2 – Sightseeing in Tokyo: Traditional Tokyo morning, Modern Tokyo afternoon

This morning we walk from our hotel to the Hama-Rikyu gardens, located near the mouth of the Sumida-gawa, a large river flowing through Tokyo. The garden is divided into two major sections. The southern garden was the site of a villa where the Shogun could relax, enjoy duck hunting and entertain visitors, including feudal lords, during the 17th to 19th centuries. It contains the Shio-iri-no Niwa (garden with a tidal pond) which is on the sea, and thus its scenery varies with the ebb and flow of the tide. There is a striking contrast between the gardens and the gleaming towers of the new Shiodome business area beyond.



Via Oku Japan

From Hama-Rikyu garden, we will sail up the Sumida river to Asakusa. Asakusa is an old quarter in Tokyo's shitamachi ('low city') which still displays some narrow streets reminiscent of Edo period Tokyo. Its main attraction is Senso-ji, a large Buddhist temple with a five-story pagoda, dating originally from the 7th century and rebuilt after its destruction during World War II. With Asakusa Shrine nearby, the complex serves as the site for several religious festivals throughout the year. Leading up to the main temple buildings is the Nakamise-dori, a pedestrian street lined with shops selling a variety of Japanese arts and crafts, traditional snacks and souvenirs. At the end of the street is the Kaminarimon, the famous entrance gate to the temple.

We pause in Asakusa for lunch, and then continue on by subway to discover modern Tokyo. We begin with a visit to Meiji Jingu Shrine. The grand Meiji Shrine was built in the early 20th century as a memorial to Emperor Meiji (reigned 1868-1912) and his consort, Empress Shoken. The shrine is located in a large wooded park which you enter through the southern gate, near Harajuku station. Many Shinto ceremonies are held in the main building of Meiji Shrine and you may spot a wedding procession going by. Emperor Meiji is credited with opening Japan to the modern age. Just yards away from this quite setting, we continue on to see famous Harajuku - Tokyo's district known for its avant-garde street fashion, centering in Takeshita-dori, its main shopping street, lined with boutiques and cafes. From here, we walk along to the famous Shibuya Scramble and enjoy the pulse of urban Japan. The Shibuya area is a great location for blue-hour shooting of the lights and hum of the city. Tonight dinner is on your own so you can shoot to your heart's content in Shibuya. There are a large number of options in the area, and in particular in the many buildings around Shibuya that contain shops and restaurants.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: Park Hotel or similar (Tokyo tower rooms subject to availability)

NOTES: Today is best suited for hand-held shooting. Tripod shooting is not permitted at Hama-Rikyu Gardens or Senso-ji temple. The Asakusa area can be crowded on the main streets but the back streets can be somewhat quieter which would also make tripod shooting very difficult. In the morning, subject to weather, it may be possible to shoot Tokyo Tower from Hama Rikyu Gardens as the sun is typically on the tower rather than coming from behind it.

Day 3 – Travel by Bullet train and Limited Express Train into the countryside, Visit Magome and Tsumago, Optional hike on the Nakasendo Trail

Today we travel by one of Japan's famed bullet train to Nagoya, and we connect to a limited express train to Nakatsugawa, where we begin our exploration of the Nakasendo Trail. This morning, we will send our main luggage ahead of us overnight to meet us again on day 4 at our accommodation in Kiso Fukushima. Please bring with you the equipment you would like to use to shoot today and your overnight essentials. We recommend a backpack style bag for your essential items.



Via Oku Japan

Magome is a picturesque post town on the Nakasendo Trail, and the main street of the town winds its way up the side of the mountain. On each side are traditional Edo period inns. Small canals of water run along parts of the street, and waterwheels lazily make their turn. Magome is home to woodcrafters, as is the case in many of the post towns of the Nakasendo. The Kiso Valley area where we travel has longstanding traditions of wood working.

We then have the option of hiking with the guide over the Magome pass to the Tsumago area. The hike is beautiful, winding its way through hamlets and past small houses and shrines. From Magome pass the trail descends to Tsumago, passing waterfalls, stands of bamboo, and even old sections of ishidatami – cobblestones along the trail. We walk to the small and peaceful hamlet of O-Tsumago and stay either in O-Tsumago or Tsumago area.

We spend the night at a family-run Minshuku in Tsumago, with a delicious home-cooked Japanese dinner and breakfast included. After dinner, enjoy a stroll through the village streets in the magical quiet of the evening, wearing the yukata gown supplied by your inn.

NOTES: Today, handheld shooting is of course possible. You may find it handy to have a lightweight collapsible tripod for shots of the town. The streets, particularly in Magome, which is on a steep incline, can be uneven. Within the post towns of Magome and Tsumago there are woodturners and craftspeople working in wood. With a polite request, they may be happy to allow you to take a photo of them at work. Early morning and early evening are great times to take photos, and in the autumn, sunset will be quite early – at or before 5pm. Your guide will assist you with timings, but please be aware that at the small family run inns on the trail, breakfast and dinner are typically served at set times. We are happy to ask if the inn may slightly delay dinner for your group so you can take best advantage of the twilight.

Walking distance: 8.3km / 5.2 miles

Elevation gain: 326m / 1,069 feet of ascent and 430m / 1,410 feet of descent

Time required: About 3 hours

Accommodation: Minshuku (Family-run Guesthouse)

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 4 – Morning shooting in Tsumago, 1 hour walk to Nagiso, Train to Kiso Fukushima, afternoon sightseeing Kiso Fukushima, Accommodation Agematsu

This morning, we enjoy a traditional Japanese breakfast and have some time to shoot in Tsumago before day-trippers arrive. We then walk along a short and relatively flat 1 hour route to Nagiso where we board the train in mid-morning to Kiso-Fukushima. We will enjoy some free time for lunch. A favourite are soba noodles, a traditional mountain specialty, but there is also a supermarket with sandwiches available for those who wish to 'grab and go'.

Travel along the Nakasendo was very strictly controlled during the Edo period, and Kiso Fukushima is the location of one of the four major checkpoints on the trail. The town also contains the historic Uenodan district which sits on a hillside above the Kiso River, and features a number of Edo period buildings. We will stroll the picturesque areas of the town and along the Kiso River for a few hours before travelling onward to Agematsu and our inn for the evening. Our luggage will meet us at our accommodation.

Accommodation: Nezame Ryokan (traditional inn)

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Via Oku Japan

Day 5 – Train to Narai, sightseeing in Narai, 1 hour walk from Narai to Kiso Hirasawa, train to Matsumoto

This morning, send our bags ahead from Agematsu to Takayama. We enjoy an early breakfast, and then travel by train to Narai where we enjoy some time this morning to shoot in this beautiful small town that still a vibrant and active community. We arrive in Narai in the morning and will have 2.5 hours to shoot here and some time for lunch on our own.

Narai was once known as "Narai of 1000 inns," as this was the most prosperous of the 69 post towns along the Nakasendo Trail. Travellers prepared or recovered in the many inns here before and after tackling the steep Torii-toge. Residents of Narai chose to renovate their historic houses and impose strict rules on ownership and use, which led to a number of them surviving today. We will take a short one hour, largely level walk from Narai to the neighbouring post town of Kiso Hirasawa. Kiso-Hirasawa has a long history of producing lacquerware, and while just a few makers remain, we may be able to see this craft during our walk to and through the town.



Via Oku Japan

At Kiso-Hirasawa's small station, we board a train to the regional city of Matsumoto, where we stay in a hotel.

Accommodation: Marunouchi Hotel

Meals: Breakfast

Day 6 – Morning shooting in Matsumoto, Travel to Takayama

This morning, we set up early for shooting of Matsumoto castle and will also have time for a visit. Matsumoto is known for its castle, often referred to as the 'crow castle' due to its dark exterior. It is ringed by a moat replete with koi and offers beautiful views of the Shinshu area. We'll visit the city's preserved streets, where kura or former storehouse buildings have been transformed into shops and restaurants. We will then board the long-distance highway bus for the scenic through the Alps to Takayama. We arrive in Takayama in the afternoon and have some time to explore and perhaps catch the last of the evening light to capture this beautiful mountain town.



Via Oku Japan

NOTES: Today, handheld shooting is possible. You may find it handy to have a lightweight collapsible tripod for shots of the castle from outside the moat. Tripods may be used in the park outside the castle moat but can only be used within the castle grounds with a special permit. The castle is well-photographed at sunrise from the Western side, with the vermillion footbridge (closed) in view. For the kura district, exteriors may be shot with handheld cameras.

Accommodation: Asunaro Ryokan or similar

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 7 Sightseeing and shooting in Takayama

Takayama was formally an enclave for skilled carpenters working for the imperial courts in Kyoto and Nara. It has retained much of its traditional architecture and is well-known for its crafts, particularly yew-wood carving, Shunkei lacquerware, pottery and furniture. It is equally renowned for its spring and autumn festivals, where elaborately decorated and animated portable shrines make their way through the streets of the city.

We recommend that you rise early to visit and photograph the Takayama morning market, which takes place from 6:00 am to 12:00 pm. There are small markets outside Takayama Jinya and also along the river. The quiet of the early morning also offers an opportunity to shoot in the picturesque Sanmachisuji district, also known as the Furui-mach-nami, a preserved area of Edo period wooden lattice buildings that are home to merchant shops, sake breweries, and in the neighbouring streets, local residences.



Via Oku Japan

When the sun rises high in the sky, we'll visit some of the interesting sites to be found in Takayama, including Yoshijima-ke, a fantastically well-preserved merchant's residence, for a look inside one of the fabulous historic buildings. The residence is often cited by architects as a fine example of this type of residence, but the beauty of the building itself makes it worth a visit. We'll also enjoy some free time for the group to take lunch in the town. Hida Beef is a specialty of the area.

We then meet up once again for a stroll through the Hida Kokubun-ji temple with its 1200 year old ginkgo tree, bell tower, and lights. Or, we might also explore the Higashiyama district of Takayama, where a number of temples snake their way along the hillside. In the afternoon light these can be very picturesque.

Accommodation: Asunaro Ryokan or similar

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 8 – Excursion to the UNESCO World Heritage area of Shirakawago, onward travel to Kanazawa

Today we send our luggage ahead to Kyoto and depart Takayama early by private vehicle to visit the UNESCO world heritage site of Shirakawa village, and have time to explore the area.

Within the Shirakawa-go area of the Sho-kawa valley is the village of Ogimachi. The village is home to a large number of gassho-zukuri houses, and has been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1995. These large wooden houses have steep thatched roofs designed to withstand heavy snow, and the term gassho-zukuri refers to the shape of praying hands formed by the roofs. Inside, the houses could accommodate large extended families of up to sixty people. Your accommodation here will be one of these traditional houses.



Via Oku Japan

To grasp the whole view of the beautiful village, we recommend ascending to the Shiroyama Viewpoint either on foot (15–20-minute walk from the centre of the village). Travelling through the town and seeing the steeply pitched roofs, one can imagine how isolated the community is and how the residents of the town rely on each other to survive the harsh winters.

We then continue on to the city of Kanazawa. In the late afternoon, the guide will bring you to one of the teahouse districts to discover these old streets where geisha entertained with dance and song. Some of the teahouse districts still have active communities of Geisha today. (Tripod shooting will be possible in Shirakawago and in the teahouse districts in the late afternoon.)

Accommodation: ANA Crowne Plaza Kanazawa or similar

Meals: Breakfast

Day 9 – Travel by train to Kyoto, Afternoon sightseeing and shooting in Higashiyama

This morning, the group travels by train to Kyoto. We then travel on to the picturesque Higashiyama district - a picturesque older area of Kyoto on its eastern side, where traditional architecture and craft shops, cafes, shrines, and temples capture the imagination.

We will walk up the approach to Kiyomizu temple, founded in 798. The approach is lined with vendors selling Kyoto's famous pickles, kiyomizu-yaki pottery, and traditional crafts and goods. It is typical of the routes leading to and from temples. The temple has a large veranda that offers a wide view of Kyoto, and the present buildings were built in 1633, without a single nail being used. Kiyomizu means 'clear water' and refers to a waterfall that is supposed to grant the wishes of anyone who drinks it. The temple has recently re-emerged from extensive conservation works and stands proudly above the city. From Kiyomizu temple, we will meander our way along Kiyomizu-zaka Street and Sannen-zaka Street, letting the atmosphere of the streets carry us along.



Via Oku Japan

We then continue on foot to our hotel, located in a district with residences and small businesses. Here is where we see Kyoto exposed as residents see it – in the quieter side streets and off the main thoroughfares where we might spot a small neighbourhood shrine, perhaps an off-duty maiko purchasing treats at a local traditional sweet shop – who knows what joys serendipity will bring to us.

NOTES: Tripods are not allowed at Kiyomizu temple and the streets and lanes of Higashiyama are often very busy with visitors. Handheld shooting is the way to go here, allowing you to capture the details of the area and its atmosphere. This evening is free for you to make your own dining choice. You may wish to wander along Kiyomachi or the Pontocho district with camera in tow, and be prepared for evening shooting. These picturesque and lively areas not only offer a variety of Japanese cuisine to try, they are also very photogenic with competing signage seeking to entice night diners in as they stroll along the small canal.

Accommodation: The General Hotel or similar

Meals: Breakfast

Day 10 – Sightseeing in Kyoto: Fushimi Inari Shrine, Kinkakuji Temple, Farewell Dinner

This morning, we depart early to visit Fushimi Inari shrine in southern Kyoto. The most famous shrine to Inari, the Shinto god of rice whose messengers are foxes, it is known for its rows of brightly-colored torii gates that wind around the wooded mountain behind the shrine. According to Shinto religion, Inari uses foxes as messengers, and shrines to Inari are characterized by statues of foxes. An early start is necessary to capture this popular site in relative quiet.



Via Oku Japan

Then, in the afternoon we visit the famous Kinkaku-ji, the Golden Pavilion, originally built by the Ashikaga Shogun in the 14th century as a place of contemplation and rest. The pavilion takes its name from the gold leaf applied to the upper portions of the building. On a pleasant day, the building seems to shine, and leaves its own reflection in the pond below. The grounds around the temple contain a beautiful strolling garden that climbs the hill behind the pavilion.

In the afternoon you have a choice of free time to make your own discoveries before we meet again in the evening for our farewell dinner together at a local restaurant.

NOTES: Tripod shooting is not permitted at Fushimi Inari shrine and the shrine respectfully asks that guests do not take photos of the shrine sanctuary as this is a focus of worship. Tripods are also not allowed at Kinkaku-ji temple.

Accommodation: The General Hotel or similar

Meals: Breakfast, Farewell Dinner

Day 11 – End of tour

This morning, your tour ends following breakfast. If you are departing from Kansai International Airport, there is regular train service from Kyoto station to the airport. Or, make your way to your onward destination.

Terms and Conditions

Subject to Change

All itinerary details are subject to change depending upon conditions before and during the workshop.

Refunds

We will refund your trip deposit at your request until June 30, 2023.

You should purchase travel insurance as we will not be able to offer refunds or credits under any circumstances, other than refunding your deposit until June 30, 2023. It is the participant's responsibility to protect their investment in the Destination Travel Workshop.

Travel Insurance

You should purchase Travel Insurance (sometimes called Trip Insurance) for this Destination Travel Workshop in case of any unforeseen emergency or situation that requires you to cancel, or should there be a reason that you cannot attend. This includes, but is not limited to, natural disasters, health safety, outbreaks, epidemics, illness, acts of God, or closures that prevent the workshop from taking place on schedule. It is your responsibility to protect your investment in this Destination Travel Workshop.



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Travel Insurance, continued

Since we will not be able to offer refunds or credits after June 30, 2023, please do purchase Travel Insurance. You should check to make sure that the insurance policy you purchase covers potential medical expenses and medical evacuation, as well as the cost of the Destination Travel Workshop, and airfare. There are advantages to purchasing insurance within 14 days of sending your registration and deposit (typically, pre-existing health limitations do not apply; check the policy for details).

In addition, please be aware that you may not be protected without purchasing Cancel For Any Reason (CFR) Insurance. Please do check the details of the insurance to make sure that it provides the coverage that you really want; for example, an unexpected event, such as a pandemic, should be covered.

There are many highly-regarded travel insurance companies, and you should probably price compare. Be sure to read all terms and conditions carefully. Some reputable travel insurance companies are [Travel Insurance International](#), and [World Nomads](#).

We must emphasize to travel comes with risk. We are not responsible for global pandemics, acts of God, terror, accidents, thefts, delays, weather, or any unforeseen event or catastrophe. Please be sure to protect your investment in the Destination Travel Workshop by purchasing travel insurance when you send in your registration.

Covid-19 Policies

Covid-19 vaccination is required to join this adventure. Please submit a copy of your Covid-19 vaccination card when you register, along with a copy of your passport and deposit.

You may be required to present proof of a negative Covid test before boarding the airplane, on arrival in Japan, and before return to the United States. We will advise you as to whether these are required closer to the time of departure. You will be responsible for any required testing prior to departure, and (if it is needed) we will help facilitate Covid testing prior to return to the United States (at your expense).

During the destination workshop, we will follow all health protocols in place at the destination as well as CDC recommendations.



Temple Dragon © Harold Davis