Other Long Walks

The Kumano Kodo

Japan

Travelling to Japan

It’s an easy two-week trip from departure to return

It’s a 9-10 hour flight - the same as flying to Europe

The 17-hour time difference is the rough part

Costs are the same to fly to Japan as to Europe

Best time to go is April/May or October/November

You can fly into Tokyo or Osaka (Kansai (KIX))

The Shinkansen (bullet train) makes it easy to get from Tokyo to Osaka/Kyoto

History of the Kumano Kodo

It is an UNESCO World Heritage site and is one of only two UNESCO-designated hiking trails - twinned with the Camino de Santiago.

Founded over 1200 years ago

The original was over 1000kms long but weather, time, and nature have made it impossible to do

Walking the Kumano Kodo

You must book ahead of time for accommodations - there are very few ryokans/inns.

Walk Japan (www.walkjapan.com) will book your self-guided hike and send you maps, guides, etc.

I have walked with Kumano Camino (www.https://www.kumanocamino.com.au/) every year for the past 6 years

Roughly 4-6 days with add-ons on either side of the hike

You're in the mountains in heavy forests for the majority of the hike. Very little road

There are no cafes or services along the way, like the Camino de Santiago

Daily routine

Wake up to traditional Japanese breakfast (bring your own coffee!)

Pack bags (you send your big one ahead every day)

Hike

Check into ryokan by immediately cleansing and changing into traditional yukata before dinner

Dinner

Accommodations

Ryokans

You sleep on futons on the floor

Very comfortable (seriously!)

Onsens

These are “required” and absolutely exquisite

No bathing suits - you must be naked

No tattoos, though I saw a sign just this past month allowing foreigners with tattoos to enter with proof of passport

Eating

Traditional Japanese breakfast and dinners

Depending on the day, we would get a box lunch to eat on the trail or there would be a small place to get food

You’ll never go hungry

Food allergies are pretty hard to accommodate so bring your own supplies

The Pilgrim Passport and Stamps

There are stamp boxes along the way where you get these absolutely beautiful wood block stamps.

BTW - you do not “get” anything when you finish. There is no compostela, no certificate (unless you’re a dual pilgrim)

Dual Pilgrim

If you have walked the Camino de Santiago, then bring your compostela to Japan with you and you will receive your “Dual Pilgrim” certification and pin.

You also get to partake in a very special ceremony just for Dual Pilgrims