



FUJI PATHS TOUR

Details

Duration: 12 Nights Max Group size: 8

Starts in: Tokyo Ends in: Kyoto / Tokyo

Prices

Start Date	Finish Dates	Price	Spaces available	Reference	Hotel Level
16 Jul 2018	28 Jul 2018	£2,950.00	Fully booked	0718FP	Mid
08 Jul 2019	20 Jul 2019	£2,950.00	6	0719FP	Mid
21 Oct 2019	02 Nov 2019	£2,950.00	8	1019FP	Mid

Overview

Mount Fuji is the symbol of Japan – its culture, its values; everything it represents. In times past, Fuji was the pivot of Japan’s ancient road connecting the cultural, spiritual and imperial centre of the country Kyoto with Tokyo, the traditional centre of commerce and political power.

This Dragonfly Mount Fuji Paths Tour 2018 & 2019 takes you through the heart of Japan. Follow the old Nakasendo route from Tokyo, passing Mt.Fuji and on to Kyoto with an inspiring detour to Takayama on the way.

From the peak of Mt. Fuji, way above the clouds, the view stretches for hundreds of kilometres. To the east lies Tokyo where the tour begins, before heading to Kawaguchiko, just north of Fuji, with its five magnificent crater lakes. Here in the great volcano’s shadow you can swim in the lakes, relax in the hot springs and visit a traditional thatched village. Heading northwest, the tour visits the castle town of Matsumoto and passes through the Kiso valley with its preserved towns from the Edo era (1603-1868). Walk along a scenic stretch of the old highway through the old hamlets scattered along the route. Moving off the Nakasendo route briefly, we’ll head further north into the mountains of Takayama, a town celebrated for its preserved old quarter, morning markets and delicious food and sake. The last few days of the tour are spent in the ancient capital, Kyoto with its trove of World Heritage sites and national treasures.

Taking in the best of the country’s feudal era architecture and natural beauty, your journey along Fuji Paths guided by Dragonfly Tours, is the ideal vacation for those who want to travel back to an older Japan.

Please [contact us](#) to find out more about our Fuji Paths Tour or make a booking on the dates you want using the links above.

The Fuji Paths Tour is fully guided; all accommodation, all entrance fees and all transportation is included as well as a lot more. For the full list of inclusions, please check the “Other Info” tab above.

Itinerary

Summary

Day 01	Group Meal; Walking Tour in Shinjuku and Kabukicho.	Tokyo
Day 02	Tsukiji Fish Market; Asakusa; Sumida River Cruise; Shibuya Scramble Crossing.	Tokyo
Day 03	Lake Kawaguchiko; Kachi Kachi Cable Car with views of Mt.Fuji; Kubota Itchiku Silk Museum; Hot Springs; Delicious Kaiseki Dinner.	Kawaguchiko
Day 04	Sea of Forest; Ice Cave; Wind Cave; Afternoon Free to Explore.	Kawaguchiko
Day 05	Matsumoto Castle; Feudal Castle District.	Matsumoto
Day 06	Kiso Valley; Magome - Atmospheric Preserved Post Town	Magome
Day 07	Walk along scenic mountain path to Tsumago.	Magome
Day 08	Takayama Old Town; Sake; Kusakabe Heritage House.	Takayama

Day 09	Morning Market; Higashiyama Walk; Historical Buildings.	Takayama
Day 10	Kiyomizudera (UNESCO); Gion Geisha District; (Optional) Culture Performance.	Kyoto
Day 11	Tea Ceremony; Path of Philosophy; Ginkaku-ji (UNESCO Silver Pavilion and Zen Garden).	Kyoto
Day 12	Ryoanji Zen Garden; Kinkakuji (Golden Zen Pavilion); Nijo Castle. (All three have UNESCO status)	Kyoto
Day 13	Why not stay a few more days to explore the area. We'll help you get right off the beaten track. We would be happy to help with any arrangements.	End of Tour

* Ryokan- Traditional Japanese Inn, sleeping on futons in rooms floored with tatami mats.

* Minshuku- Family run traditional inn, sleeping on futons in rooms floored with tatami mats.

Notes

If you would like to stay a few extra days, we will be happy to help with any arrangements. If you are flying out from Osaka, the airport is just 85 minutes away. Alternatively, Tokyo is 2 ½ hours away by bullet train. For more details about this, including the prices and dates, please email us at info@dragonflytours-japan.com

We recommend arriving in Japan a day or two before the tour starts to help with acclimatization and overcome any jet lag. We can organize any additional nights at the tour hotel and will be pleased to meet you at the airport (at either Narita or Haneda) and transfer with you to the hotel (up to one week before the start of the tour), making your transition as smooth as possible. We'll also run through the maps with you, answering all your questions and setting you off on your first adventures, here in one of the world's greatest metropolises..

You want to see, do and experience even more? How about continuing the journey west and visit the islands of Miyajima and the art island of Naoshima? For more on these excursions or anything else, please just drop us a line.

Itinerary

Details

Day 1 - Tokyo

Your Tour Leader will meet you at the airport (up to one week before the tour begins) and transfer with you to the tour hotel in the heart of Tokyo, an ideal base from which to explore. In the evening we'll head to **Shinjuku** and the entertainment area of **Kabukicho** where, after a walking tour of the area, we'll feast at a local restaurant. A perfect introduction to local cuisine, and chance to meet the other members of the group. After dinner we'll go up onto the 45th floor of the Metropolitan Building for fantastic 360 degree views of the city.

Day 2 - Tokyo

This morning we'll go to the **Tsukiji fish market**, a fascinating world of chaos, with some of the world's finest sashimi. After having a look around the stalls, why not have some for breakfast?

Later in the morning we'll make our way over to **Asakusa**. The location of the first temple in what is now called Tokyo, and the old gateway to the **Yoshiwara**, the floating world, during the Edo era. It's steeped in history and has a bustling atmosphere. Take some free time here to browse the market stalls and explore the side streets hiding the real treasures.

Following a bite for lunch we'll take the **Sumida River cruise** to Tokyo Bay passing under a number of colourful bridges. From there we'll go to the famous **Scramble Crossing in Shibuya** where hundreds of people swarm over the road as the lights turn green.

Day 3 - Kawaguchiko

After breakfast we set off to **Kawaguchiko** at the base of **Mt. Fuji**, an ideal location from which to view the iconic volcano and explore the surrounding crater lakes. After dropping off your luggage at the ryokan (traditional inn) you make your way to the **Kachi Kachi cable car**, a popular spot to take in the panoramic view of the town, **Lake Kawaguchi**, and Mt Fuji. From here you might want to continue walking up the hiking trail (unguided) to Mt Mitsutoge.

Later, you visit the **Kubota Itchiku Museum** on the northern side of the main lake. The museum displays the truly unique work of the designer Kubota Itchiku, who dedicated his life to the kimono and fabric as art. The museum itself is of exceptional design.

In the evening, after relaxing in the **hot springs** enjoy a delicious traditional **kaiseki meal** served at the inn – immerse yourself within its delicate tastes and textures.

Day 4 - Kawaguchiko

Kawaguchiko is famed not only for its views of Mt. Fuji but also for the lakes and caves created by the volcanic activity in the area. We visit a couple of the caves within the **Sea of Trees**, an unusual forest growing over the waves of laval flow, secret caverns and passages. We see the **Ice Cave** and the **Wind Cave**, both naturally freezing vaults used in the past for storing food.

The afternoon is then free. There are many other things to see in the area, including the Iyashi no Sato village of traditional thatched houses, museums, or how about the **Fuji Q Highland amusement park** with its record-breaking roller coasters.

Day 5 - Matsumoto

This morning we'll take the train to **Matsumoto**, an old **castle town** boasting one of the best preserved castles in the country. Surrounded by a moat and clad in black weatherboard gives the castle a slightly sinister appearance sitting as it has done since the 1580's. Built in a time when the use of firearms were changing the way wars were fought and won, gun holes were incorporated into the design and there is a collection of the firearms from the era on display inside. After taking a look around the castle you'll have time to explore some of the castle district close to the hotel.

Day 6 - Magome

During the Edo era (1603 - 1868) there were five central highways leading to Edo (Tokyo) linking the country together for trade and troop movement. Along these highways were numerous post towns and checkpoints which kept an eye on what was being moved through, collecting taxes, checking papers and always watchful for criminals, spies and insurgents.

At the end of the Edo era as the Emperor regained his power the checkpoints across the country, along with many relics from the feudal times including samurai estates and castles were broken up and destroyed marking a new age of change and modernization. The old highways evolved into the massive concrete road networks which we see today, the old post towns became the immense hi-tech sprawling cities.

One of these old highways connecting Edo to Kyoto was called the **Nakasendo** running through the Japanese Alps and along the **Kiso valley**. Mainly because of the terrain its an area with a much slower pace of development and home to the town of **Magome**, and the neighbouring town of **Tsumago**, two of the best preserved areas from the **Edo period**. These days the locals go to painstaking lengths maintain their towns, preserving the old charm from days gone by.

Today, after checking out we'll hop on the train to Magome, tucked away in the beautiful area of the Kiso Valley, also known for its lacquer ware among other crafts. Here you'll be staying in a **minshuku**, a traditional family run Japanese inn.

Day 7 - Magome

Today we'll walk along a stretch of the old **Nakasendo Highway**. We'll pass hamlets, and old farmhouses, forests and paddy fields passing an old notice board with messages from the federal days stating decrees and laws by the shogun. The Rekishi Shiryokan museum is also worth a visit with an extensive collection. Enjoy, and soak in the atmosphere.

Day 8 - Takayama

It's time to visit **Takayama**, a city nestled high in picturesque mountains and it's a beautiful train ride to get there. After dropping your bags at the hotel, it's off to the old town. Takayama is traditionally a city of merchants, who have bequeathed a fine old quarter that evokes times long gone. The **old town** is packed with shops showing off arts and crafts or local delicacies, cafes and restaurants selling traditional fare, and is a delight to explore. You stop at a **sake brewery** to sample a variety of the local rice wines and you will have a chance to try the famed local beef dishes. The old town is also home to a number of **heritage houses**, old merchants homes preserved as museums, and here you can travel deeper into old times.

Day 9 - Takayama

Continuing to explore Takayama, you visit the fascinating **morning street market** whose stalls sell anything from local produce to crafts to souvenirs. Getting out of the hubbub of the market we'll next enjoy the peace and calm of the woods to the east of the old town on the **Higashiyama Walk**. The trail takes you past numerous shrines and temples and the ruins of Takayama castle. Later, you have the choice of exploring more of the old town and the heritage houses or you might strike out to Shirakawago, a UNESCO World Heritage Site comprised of ancient thatched houses in a distinctive local style.

Day 10 - Kyoto

This morning we'll continue our journey to **Kyoto** by winding our way down from the mountains to Nagoya. From there we'll catch the bullet train on the final stretch to Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan and the centre of history and culture.

In Kyoto we'll visit the grand stilted temple of **Kiyomizudera** with World Heritage status perched in the Eastern Mountains with its legendary platform and 3 water springs said to have magical properties. You'll have the chance to browse some of the souvenir shops on the main slope from the temple before we walk through the old cobbled streets to **Gion**, a preserved geisha district where today's tour will be concluded. Later, in the evening you'll have the opportunity to see a cultural show of performing arts.

Day 11 - Kyoto

You'll have the option this morning to start the day off with the **tea ceremony** at a tea house that has been performing the ceremony for 7 generations. Not only will you observe the intricate ritual, but you'll also have the chance to make some matcha. It's not as easy as it looks.

Later, walk along the **Path of Philosophy** to **Ginkaku-ji**, the Silver Pavilion with its outstanding Zen Garden dating back to the 15th century. After this you can either hop on the bus back to the hotel or downtown, or you can walk with your tour leader through the quiet local residential area to the Kyoto Craft Centre.

Day 12 - Kyoto

Today we'll hit the "big three". Three of the best World Heritage Sites in Kyoto starting with **Ryoanji Zen Garden** famous for its 15 stones where only 14 can be seen from any single point. Around the back of the temple there is a water receptacle with 4 kanji chiselled on it saying something so simple, but so profound that you'll know you've been Zenned.

If you have been to Japan before you will no doubt have visited many of the major sights around Kyoto. We are happy to provide suggestions and guidance for lesser known spots if you prefer.

Next on the itinerary is a trip just up the road to **Kinkakuji** - the Golden Pavilion, another of the "must see" sights of Japan with it's immense beauty reflected in the surrounding pond.

After a bite for lunch one of the local restaurants and perhaps a glass of beer too, we'll head over to Nijo, (**Nijo Castle**) to complete this day of history and culture. With elaborate national treasures painted on the sliding doors, the squeaky nightingale floorboards, and complex ceilings what more could you want to finish the day?

For those who still have the energy, there is also the option of a trip to the excellent **Nishiki Food Market**.

Day 13 - End of Tour

There is nothing scheduled on today's itinerary. If you decide to fly out from Osaka, the airport is just 85 minutes away by train. If you decide to fly out from Tokyo, Tokyo is only 2½ hours away by bullet train. Let us know and we'll be happy to help with any arrangements. Alternatively why not stay a few extra nights in Kyoto - there is plenty more to see and do in the area!

Accommodation



Comfortable, clean & efficient hotel close to Kyoto station, the hub of the city. The hotel has coin-laundry facilities; computers are available for use in the lobby and it also has an onsen (hot spring bath) and free ramen noodles in the evening!
All rooms have LAN & Wifi.

Breakfast included.

Please note that the accommodation above is standard for the Fuji Paths Tour but is at times subject to change to a similar or better hotel.

All hotels have been selected with location and comfort in mind.



Traditional Japanese Inn with hot spring facilities and great meals situated a walk away from the centre of town.

Wifi in lobby.

Breakfast and dinner included



Modern business hotel in central location.

All rooms have LAN & Wifi

Breakfast included



Atmospheric and homely traditional Japanese inn with superb meals in a beautiful location.

All rooms have Wifi

Breakfast and dinner included.



A comfortable, clean, and efficient business hotel with helpful staff situated in a great location near Tokyo Station and the Imperial Palace. As you would expect for such a prime piece of real estate, the rooms are not so big but it has everything you need and much more!
LAN and Wifi available.

Breakfast included

Other Information

Flexibility

The itineraries in our tours are flexible, and do vary occasionally, sometimes due to weather or on-going events such as festivals which guests may want to see.

In addition if there is something else you'd like to do or see on your trip please mention this to your tour leader and we'll try our best to ensure you can do it.

Age / Requirements / Fitness

The Fuji Paths Tour is suitable for ages of around 12 and upwards, and is ideal for families, couples, and singles alike. All ages are welcome and the eldest guest we've had on one of our Small Group Tours, to date, is 87 – she was one of the fittest members in the group!

Our only hard and fast requirements are English speaking ability (all tours are conducted in English) and a zest for life! While Olympic levels of fitness are not necessary, on average we cover around 3 to 5 kilometres a day and some of the tourist sites we visit have steps, as do some of the stations.

Having said all that, walking is done at an easy pace, with plenty of stops for ice cream and to absorb the sights. In the unlikely event that an excursion is going to be too taxing or if you have another preference, you are welcome to break away from the group at any time. No part of the itinerary is compulsory; we like to keep things as fun and flexible as possible!

Transportation

As with all our Small Group Tours we use the extremely efficient, clean, safe and reliable public transportation network. - It's the most efficient way to get around, and by far it's the best way to experience the country and its people. This is not a tour bus holiday with fixed tourist trap set lunches and carpet sales in the afternoon!

Baggage Forwarding

We do at times forward your main cases ahead from one hotel to another (one case per person) allowing you to travel light and easy keeping things as fun as possible. If you bring too much luggage with you, or buy too many souvenirs during the tour and require additional use of the service, this can easily be arranged.

Minimum Numbers

The minimum number of passengers on the Fuji Paths Tour is two as we believe it's unfair to cancel tours when larger numbers are not met.

Single Supplement

Because we keep the group size to a maximum of 8, unfortunately we have to charge a single supplement of £ 400 if travelling alone. For this you'll be ensured to have a room to yourself for the entirety of the tour, except for when staying at the ryokan (traditional inns), here we may ask you to share a room with another member of the group of the same sex. If you have any questions about this, please drop us a line.

What Is Included?

- ALL accommodation. (12 nights)
- The support of your Tour Leader for the entirety of the tour.
- ALL local and city to city transportation while with the guide following the itinerary. (Any non-guided side-excursions at personal expense)
- Suica card - An electronic travel card with JPY1,500 credit on it for your convenience (saves messing around with tickets especially while in Tokyo!)
- Meet & greet at the airport in Tokyo (either Narita or Haneda) on arrival and transfer (guided) to the tour hotel in Tokyo up to 1 week before the starting date of the tour.
- Airport transfer at the end of the tour (non-guided)
- Baggage forwarding for one bag / case per person, two times (from Tokyo to Matsumoto and from Matsumoto to Takayama) allowing you to travel light and easy. If additional baggage forwarding is required, this can easily be arranged
- Authentic Tea Ceremony at a tea house in Kyoto
- Sumida River Cruise in Tokyo
- Kachi Kachi Ropeway (cable car) in Kawaguchiko
- Breakfast every morning.
- Group meal on Day 1 (Alcoholic drinks included!)
- Dinner on Days 3 and 4 (Kaiseki Ryori at Kawaguchiko)
- Dinner on Day 6 & 7 (Teishoku at Magome).
- Tour Info-Pack.
- 100% payment protection through the TTA.

What's Not Included?

- Meals, except for the ones mentioned above.
- Travel Insurance. You must take out travel insurance before travelling to Japan, we suggest this is done soon after a booking has been made.
- Flights to and from Japan!