

# Epworth Kumano Kodo Challenge



## Trip Highlights

Raising vital funds for the Epworth Medical Foundation

Follow ancient pilgrimage trails through the UNESCO listed Kii Mountains

Explore Kyoto

Discover Japan's cultural heartland

Stay at traditional inns and experience rural Japanese lifestyle

Enjoy fantastic home-cooked Japanese food each evening

Trekking through spectacular scenery

Hiking in the mountains to Hongu shrine

Qualifies hikers for Dual Pilgrim status in conjunction with Camino de Santiago



<b>Trip Duration</b>	9 days	<b>Trip Code:</b> EJC
<b>Grade</b>	Introductory to Moderate	
<b>Activities</b>	Charity Challenge Walk	
<b>Summary</b>	5 nights ryokan (traditional Japanese Inn), 3 nights hotel	

## Supporting Your Cause

Epworth Medical Foundation (EMF) opened in 1982 to raise much-needed funds to ensure patients at Epworth Health Care receive the best possible care. Our work is vital, because Epworth is a charitable, not-for-profit hospital. We rely on your generosity to enable us to stay at the forefront of advancements in medical technology, for our patients. Epworth is a private, not-for-profit organisation. We receive very limited funding from government. Instead, we rely on funds raised by Epworth Medical Foundation to continue to provide our patients with the best possible facilities, equipment, surgical expertise and access to research.

By taking part in the Epworth Kumano Kodo Challenge, you will not only enjoy the adventure of a lifetime, you will be helping to give vital support to hundreds of our patients.

## Your Huma Challenge

Thank you for your interest in our Epworth Kumano Kodo Challenge. Huma Charity Challenge is a division of the worldwide adventure travel company World Expeditions. When joining a Huma Charity Challenge you embark on a remarkable journey to discover your inner philanthropist as you raise money for a Charity that is important to you. At the same time you take on the challenge of fundraising and partake in an adventure to discover new worlds, new landscapes and new cultures ... perhaps you'll even discover how far your personal boundaries stretch as you take on a physical challenge like a cycling, trekking or a mountaineering adventure. We are passionate about off-the-beaten track travel experiences as they provide travellers with the thrill of coming face to face with untouched cultures as well as wilderness regions of great natural beauty. Our itineraries are well researched, affordable and tailored for the enjoyment of small groups. Our itineraries provide the very best travel experience, designed by people with vast local knowledge who share our vision of authentic exchange and real exploration with a responsible travel approach at the core.

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## Charity Challenge Payments

Joining Kyoto from:	\$5930
Non Refundable Registration Fee:	\$200
DO - Fundraising target:	\$2500

All prices are per person

## Trip Dates

**2025** 29 Mar - 06 Apr

## important notes

**RF** - Registration Fee

**DO** - Donation, Fundraising target

## What Impact Will My Fundraising Have?

Epworth Medical Foundation - The difference you make

When you donate to the Foundation, your generosity is used to directly benefit our patients. For example, more than half of all medical equipment at Epworth Health Care is funded by the Foundation, and 80 percent of our medical research.

Charitable funds are used to support:

- \*state-of-the-art medical equipment that ensures our patients receive the very best
- \*world-class facilities that maximise patient outcomes, safety and comfort
- \*groundbreaking medical research projects and trials, shared with our patients
- \*staff education and training opportunities to pass best-practice on to our patients
- \*support programs to care for our patients' emotional and financial needs

## Your Adventure

For over 1200 years, Japan's Kii Hanto Mountain ranges were deemed a spiritual region inhabited by the gods. The sacred sites and mountain trails were influential in the development and exchange of Japanese culture and religion. In particular, for its fusion of Shinto and Buddhist beliefs. This evokes a deep connection between the environment, history, traditions and faith as we follow old pilgrimage routes past ancient shrines and through dense forest with its many streams, rivers and waterfalls. The route is overlooking the Pacific Ocean which lead to three sacred sites – Yoshin and Omine, Kumano Sanzan and Koyosan – linked by pilgrimage routes to the ancient capitals of Nara and Kyoto. They reflect a tradition of sacred mountains. The area is a UNESCO World Heritage site due to its unique religious and social importance and is visited for both ritualistic purposes and hiking. The accommodation for this journey is in selected minshuku inns which are perfectly suited to the surroundings.

Our journey begins in the cultural centre of Kyoto and ends in Osaka. You will taste traditional Japanese delicacies prepared by local chefs, wander the gentle cobbled stairways past ancient shrines and statues and soak in centuries-old thermal springs. With every step, you will be helping others who are not well enough to physically join you on this journey. The money you raise or donate to take part in this adventure will be used to support vital resources and programs for patients at Epworth HealthCare.

## Fundraising Options

There are a number of ways you can approach your fundraising:

1. Simply pay the \$2500 yourself.
2. Fundraise some or all of the amount. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

The wonderful team at Epworth will provide you with support and resources to make your fundraising easy and stress-free.

## Online Fundraising Portal

When fundraising for the charity donation component of this challenge you must seek permission of your charity before beginning to fundraise in their name. The team at Epworth will be in touch with you upon registration to give you the details of the online fundraising page and permission to fundraise. The minimum fundraising target is \$2,500 per person.



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## Fast Facts

### Countries Visited:

Japan

### Visas:

Please check visa requirements with your reservations consultant\*

### Vaccinations:

Please consult a travel vaccination specialist for up to date information

### Group Size Min:

10

### Group Size Max:

12

### Singles:

A single supplement is not available for this trip.

### Advice for people with limited mobility

This trip is not suitable for people with limited mobility.

\*Ask our staff for more information

## Itinerary at a Glance

DAY 1	ARRIVE KYOTO
DAY 2	EXPLORE KYOTO CITY
DAY 3	TRAIN TO TANABE, TREK TO TAKAHARA, LUGGAGE TRANSFER TO CHIKATSUYU
DAY 4	TREK TAKAHARA TO CHIKATSUYU
DAY 5	TREK FROM CHIKATSUYU TO KOBIRATOGE PASS, TRANSFER THEN WALK TO HONGU
DAY 6	HIKE UKEGAWA TO KOGUCHI
DAY 7	OPTIONAL WALK FROM KOGUCHI TO KII KATSUURA OR LOCAL PUBLIC BUS
DAY 8	TRAIN FROM KII KATSUURA TO OSAKA
DAY 9	DEPART OSAKA

## What's Included

- Trip escorted by Epworth Medical Foundation representative
- 5 nights in ryokans (traditional Japanese Inns)
- 3 nights hotels twin share
- All transportation, mostly by public transport
- Meals included as indicated in the itinerary. Most lunches will be bento lunch boxes
- Expert bilingual guide
- Medical kit
- Luggage transfer from Kyoto to Chikatsuyu, from Chikatsuyu to Koguchi and Koguchi to Osaka (1 large piece of luggage per person)
- \*Please note you will need to carry essentials for 2 nights in between luggage transfers

## What's Not Included

- International Airfare ex Melbourne
- Meals and beverages not indicated in the program
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, phone calls, alcohol
- Visa
- Tips and gratuities

## Detailed Itinerary

### DAY 1 Arrive Kyoto

After all the preparation and fundraising, you have finally arrived in Japan!

There are no direct flights from Melbourne to Kyoto so you will need to fly to Osaka and take the short transfer by train from Osaka Airport directly to Kyoto. On arrival, make your way to the Hotel.

Originally known as Heian-kyo, the capital of peace and tranquility, Kyoto was home to the Imperial Court for 11 centuries, before it moved to Tokyo in the late 19th Century. Kyoto is one of the great cultural cities of the world.

Your guide will meet you in the hotel lobby later this evening for a pre-trip briefing. Later this evening head out for your first Japanese meal together as a group.

Overnight Abest Kiyomizu Hotel (or similar)

**meals: D**



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## Responsible Travel

The natural environments that you'll travel through are fragile; the cultures and traditions precious and often the communities we pass through are reliant on tourism. It is our responsibility as visitors to minimise the impact of our presence, protect what is precious and where we can leave a positive impact. Learn how you can do this by downloading the Thoughtful Traveller booklet from our website.

## Adventure Travel

By its very nature Charity Challenges involve an element of the unexpected. In remote and developing countries do not expect standards you are used to at home. Remote areas are sometimes unpredictable and itineraries may be altered. To get the most out of your adventure it is important that you are suitably fit, flexible, positive and eager to take on all the challenges that arise. If you are uncertain about your suitability for this trip we recommend that you speak with your charity representative or one of our team.

## Important Note

These trip notes represent the most current information for this itinerary, and may supersede any other supplied information, including but not limited to the itinerary and price. The itinerary should be seen as a guide only. This itinerary may change at any time due to inclement weather, forces of nature and other circumstances beyond our control.

### DAY 2 Explore Kyoto city

You have a full day to explore Kyoto, utilising the efficient local trains and bus, the best way to navigate this fascinating city. Accompanied by our experienced guide you will visit sights including the Fushimi Inari Shrine and the Nishiki Food Market, Ninnenzaka and Sannenzaka.

Overnight Abest Kiyomizu Hotel (or similar)

**meals: B**

### DAY 3 Train to Tanabe, trek to Takahara, luggage transfer to Chikatsuyu

This morning you transfer to the train station and head southwards to Tanabe. Today your main luggage will be transferred to Chikatsuyu Minshuku from Tanabe so you will need to carry the clothes you need for tonight and tomorrow's walk. Kii-Tanabe is the gateway to the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage trails. On arrival in Kii-Tanabe you will enjoy a local seafood lunch before taxi'ing to the trail head to begin your days walk. At the end of a steep, two-hour climb from Takajiri-Oji, you will be rewarded with spectacular views of the mountainous peninsula, and the Buddhist statues that line the ancient highway. On arrival at Takahara, visit the Takahara Kumano-jinja shrine before checking into your traditional lodge. Dinner tonight at the lodge.

Overnight Takahara

Walking approx 5km

**meals: B,D**

### DAY 4 Trek Takahara to Chikatsuyu

After breakfast at the lodge, you will hit the trail which starts with a short but steep uphill walk through the Takahara settlement to the Hashiori-Toge pass. Continue through undulating forest terrain until you descend to the village of Chikatsuyu nestled in a valley. On route you will pass by Osankamoto-oji shrine and a number of stone markers related to the Kumano Kodo history. From Chikatsuyu you will be transferred by taxi to the Ryokan. Dinner tonight at the Ryokan.

Overnight Chikatsuyu Minshuku

Walking approx 10km

Note: Today you will carry Bento box lunch in your daypack.

**meals: B,L,D**

### DAY 5 Trek from Chikatsuyu to Kobiratoge Pass, transfer then walk to Hongu

Today your walk is split into 2 sections. You start with another steep climb before the trail levels out and joins a cobbled path that leads you to Tsugizakura-Oji, famous for giant cedar trees and a spring. Continue on forest paths and mountain-top villages until you reach Kobira-doge where you meet the bus which takes you to Hosshinmon-oji. From here you continue the walk to Hongu Town for overnight.

Your main luggage will be transferred to Koguchi so you will need to carry the clothes you need for tonight and tomorrow's walk.

Overnight Kawayu Onsen

Walking approx 17km

Note: Today you will carry Bento box lunch in your daypack.

**meals: B,L,D**



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## DAY 6 Hike Ukegawa to Koguchi

After breakfast at the ryokan, your luggage will be collected and transferred to Kii Katsuura. The group will take a 10 minute bus ride to Ukegawa where today's hike begins. The walk takes you along forest trails winding for approximately 13km including a steep uphill section to Hakkengura lookout. The hike to the lookout is rewarded by amazing views across the Kumano mountains. From here the trail is a gradual downhill to Koguchi Village, passing by the remains of several old tea houses.

Overnight Koguchi

Walking approx 15km

Note: Today you will carry Bento box lunch in your daypack.

**meals: B,L,D**

## DAY 7 Optional walk from Koguchi to Kii Katsuura or local public bus

Today you have the option of a challenging walk over 15km of steep terrain covering a mountain pass between Koguchi and Kumano Nachi Taisha. This is definitely the toughest day, but a spectacular and rewarding undertaking if you can manage the hike. Once you start the walk there is no way to opt out or shorten the walk so careful consideration must be given prior to agreeing to participate. The members who do not complete the walk will be given instructions on taking the public bus directly to Kii Katsuura to meet the group as they come in from their trek.

Overnight Hotel Nagisaya (or similar)

Walk approx 17km

Note: Today you will carry Bento box lunch in your daypack.

For those taking the bus option the cost of lunch and the bus is at your own expense.

**meals: B,L,D**

## DAY 8 Train from Kii Katsuura to Osaka

After breakfast, transfer to the train station for the 4 hour train to Osaka. On arrival you can check into the hotel before exploring the town at your leisure.

Tonight you will join together for your final dinner to celebrate the end of an incredible journey.

Overnight Namba Kuromon (or similar)

**meals: B,D**

## DAY 9 Depart Osaka

After breakfast transfer to the airport for your flight to Melbourne.

**meals: B**

This itinerary is subject to change with any modifications in Community regulations as well as Governmental changes and natural circumstances beyond our control.

## Country Information

A geologically volatile archipelago, 85 per cent of Japan is mountainous. It is a relatively "young" land. The landscape is rugged and rocky, porous with natural springs, and the scenery has been perfectly depicted in famous historic paintings and woodblock prints: tiered mountains, streams, sculpted pine trees and many flowering plants, with a rich variety of bird life.



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The population is concentrated in clustered centres on the coast of the main islands, with the remainder in small towns dispersed through the fertile hinterland. Since the big cities are all in lowland plains, the mountains are left largely to agriculture, forestry and national parks. Buddhism arrived from the mainland about 1,600 years ago, and its many traces overlap with those of the much older native belief system, Shinto.

## Climate

Japan has a generally temperate climate, but since the country stretches for 3000 km, from sub-Arctic in the extreme north to sub-tropical in the far south, there is plenty of variation throughout the year. Summer is hot and sticky, winter chills the bones, and the highest precipitation falls during the rainy season, roughly from mid-June to mid-July.

## Dietary Requirements

Provided we are advised in advance of your departure we are able to cater for vegetarian diets and can assist with medically recommended diets (allergies and intolerances). Please ensure you discuss your requirements with us well in advance (at least 1 month prior to your trip) to determine whether we can cater to such dietary requirements on your chosen adventure. Please note that options are likely to be limited in very remote locations or alternatives may be more expensive or unavailable. There may be times when those with special requirements may need to provide their own food. We are unable to guarantee a peanut-free or allergen-free trip, and therefore, we strongly encourage that travellers with life-threatening or severe allergies take all necessary medical precautions to prepare for the possibility of exposure. Passengers must travel with all necessary medications for food allergies and be capable of self-administering these medications.

## Accommodation on the Trip



The Japanese ryokan and minshikus (generally family operated) are such a delicate environment, with compact spaces and displayed heirlooms, that for the first encounter something of a bull-in-a-china-shop feeling is inevitable - especially in the entrance as shoes are put on and removed. But this reaction normalises as we and the innkeepers get used to each others ways! Traditional-style accommodation means sleeping on "futon" bedding laid out on tatami floors. In the mountains it is usual for groups to sleep together in the same room, modified by sliding partitions. Our inns understand that westerners may be more comfortable with privacy, and assign two-person rooms when there are few other guests. But privacy throughout is difficult to guarantee without paying a premium. Please check with our office staff if you require more information on this.

The ryokans with twin rooming but bathing and toilet facilities will be communal and shared, of course men and women separated. Please also note that bedding will be provided in the form of futons laid on the Tatami flooring.



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## What You Carry

In your daypack you will need to carry extra warm clothing (depending on the altitude, location and weather), a rainjacket, water bottle, camera, valuables and personal items such as sunscreen, lip-eze etc. \*PLEASE NOTE you will need to carry an overnight bag with all your essentials for days 3 and 5 between luggage transfers.

## Equipment Required

No specialist gear is required except for a comfortable pair of walking shoes and a day pack (a comprehensive gear list is provided in the pre-departure information provided on booking).

## How To Book

To register on this Charity Challenge please complete the registration form and email to [megan@humacharitychallenge.com.au](mailto:megan@humacharitychallenge.com.au) or make your booking online by using the REGISTER NOW button found at the bottom of the relevant Charity Challenge page on our website [www.humacharitychallenge.com.au](http://www.humacharitychallenge.com.au)

The Epworth Medical Foundation staff are able to answer any questions you may have as well as provide you with all the support you need as you fundraise for your challenge. Please contact Kathryn Johnston on telephone 03 9426 6359 or email [kathryn.johnston@epworth.org.au](mailto:kathryn.johnston@epworth.org.au) who will be happy to talk with you.

