



Journey into

JAPAN 日本

WALKING JAPAN

A HIKING TOUR INCLUDING MT. FUJI AND HOKKAIDO HAUTE ROUTE

- ☞ Hike to the summit of **Mt. Fuji** (3775M).
- ☞ Descend via the ancient trails to the **Sengen Shrine** at magnificent Fuji five lakes.
- ☞ Hike the "**Haute Route**" of central **Hokkaido**.
- ☞ Superb walking tracks through **fields of wild flowers** with magnificent views and **active volcanoes**.
- ☞ Spend two nights in **Tokyo**.
- ☞ Stay in **traditional Inns** & eat **delicious Japanese food**.
- ☞ **Soak in hot spring baths** and thermal pools after a day's walking.
- ☞ **Bilingual** tour leader.

Introduction

I first climbed Mt. Fuji in the spring of 1989. I had been in Japan for 8 years and had been drawn by the stature and iconic nature of this revered mountain. Of course, this was a trip with crampons and ice axes and skis and the hope of good weather.



One of my abiding memories of this trip was not actually the climbing and skiing and summiting, which were all very special, but our choice to descend via an old rarely used track that harks back to the history of this great mountain.

Most modern day walkers in summer use buses to go to the starting point half way up the mountain and to catch a bus down the mountain from this half way point at the end of their walk. However, hidden away in the great forests that blanket the lower

slopes are the traditional hiking routes that saw centuries of pilgrims, monks and warriors seeking enlightenment as they attained the summit of Mt. Fuji.



Although on this summer walk we will give way to pragmatism and catch a bus up to the half way station, we will be using one of the old routes to descend to the turquoise waters of Lake Kawaguchi at the base of the mountain. Along the way we will walk through towering

conifer forests, past ancient temples and Inns redolent of early times, before finishing at the Sengen shrine, a symbolic gateway whose deities have guarded Mt. Fuji for hundreds of years.

From there we will return for a night in Tokyo, where we can explore the bright lights of one of the most exciting cities in the world, before heading north to the clear beauty of the high mountains of central Hokkaido.

Daisetsusan National Park, in central Hokkaido is Japan's largest national park and boasts active volcanoes, crystal clear caldera lakes, snow draped peaks, superb wild flowers and stunning alpine views. Of course you have to also factor in the superb Inns we stay in, with their ever present hot spring baths, a great way to sooth the body after a day on the trail.



I have fashioned this part of the walk as the 'Haute Route' of central Hokkaido. Although smaller than its European counterpart, you will be travelling across the top of most of the high mountains, with vehicles carrying your luggage from Inn to Inn.

This walk is designed for those who are fit and looking to combine the great joys and beauty of the outdoors with the chance to experience and see first hand Japanese culture. I look forward to you joining us.

John Morrell - Director

Tour Details 2009/10

2009: July 28-August 8. 2010: July 27-August 7.
\$A5690 Ex Tokyo* **Includes:** 11 nights accommodation twin or group share (no single option available); bilingual guide ; 8 dinners and 10 breakfasts; all transfers including economy class air fares between Tokyo and Hokkaido. Asahi Dake ropeway. *Meet Tokyo airport evening day 1.

Not Included: all items of a personal nature; travel insurance (compulsory); lunches; dinners in Tokyo; entry fees; lift passes; alcohol.

How to Book: Download a booking form from our site or contact us below. Send the booking form with \$A250 deposit/person. All credit cards accepted. Full trip notes will then be sent which includes equipment list and other details.

Trip numbers: 10-12

Please note this tour is operated through AWAY WE GO TOURS LN:2TA5460.

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OUTLINE

Day 1 - Meet Tokyo Narita airport. Transfer to hotel in central Tokyo

Day 2 - Bus to Lake Kawaguchi. Store extra luggage and bus to 5th station, our starting point. After briefing, begin walking up this mighty scree covered mountain to about 3000M where we will stay in a stone Inn for the night.



Day 3 - 3:00 am breakfast! Sunrise on Mt. Fuji is the goal of our climb so we start early. After resting and spending several hours here we will descend to the 5th station to stay in a famous mountaineering hut.

Day 4 - Descend through the old conifer forests to the Sengen Shrine and Lake Kawaguchi. Collect our excess baggage and return to Tokyo by bus to enjoy a night exploring this vibrant city.

Day 5 - Today we fly from Tokyo to Hokkaido and transfer by bus and train to the heart of the Daisetsusan National Park where we spend the night in the first of many superb Japanese Inns with inside and outside hot spring baths.

Day 6 - Begin our Japanese 'Haute Route' as we descend out of our Inn to the Plateau of Lakes and the summit of Mt. Nakayama. Today's walk takes us past mountain lakes, classic alpine views and superb wild flowers. Finish the day by descending a cable car to the village of Asahi Dake Onsen where again we spend the night in a superb Inn with hot spring baths.

Day 7 - After ascending the cable car, we climb the highest peak in Hokkaido, Asahi Dake 2290M, and explore the central peaks before returning to our Inn.

Day 8 - We leave Asahi Dake and follow a trail that takes us through the forests of Silver Birch and Hokkaido Red Pine to the small hot spring resort of Tenninkyō, famous for its columnar basalt cliffs, steep gorges and clear mountain streams. From there we catch our bus to the Shirogane Hot Spring resort, at the base of Mt. Tokachi in the south of the park.

Day 9 - Today we ascend the Tokachi Volcano. Here the route takes us over volcanic scree, past tenacious wild flowers that seem to grow out of pumice stone, old snow drifts, and past the smoke pouring from the vent of the volcano. After enjoying the stunning views from the summit we ascend on a different path to our next lodge, the famous Ryonkaku, at the base of Mt. Furano. A great feast awaits after your soak in an outside hot spring bath with superb views.

Day 10 - Our last day's hiking takes us to the classically shaped Mt. Furano, at the southern extremity of the park. Here we enjoy superb wild flowers and breath taking views before descending once more to our comfortable lodgings.

Day 11 - Today is our rest day/weather day in the mountains, which can be used for further hiking or to simply relax and enjoy the views from our lodgings.

Day 12 - Depart by bus train for Sapporo Chitose airport. Chitose/Tokyo. International departures.

FITNESS

Due to the altitude of Mt. Fuji (3775M) we rate this walking trip as strenuous. Daily walking hours will be about 4-6, with the longest day being day 2 on Mt. Fuji, about 7 hours. Please contact us to discuss suitability if you are unsure of your fitness requirements.

In regard to pack weights, on Mt. Fuji you will carry the essentials, such as clothing for cold weather, torch, first aid items and any other items you may wish to carry, basically, a big day pack. Your extra luggage will be stored in lockers at Kawaguchi Ko Station while on Mt. Fuji. While hiking in Hokkaido, your luggage will go by transport to the next night's accommodation and you will carry only a day pack.

THE INNS

Japanese Inns are wonderful and are a focal point of all our tours. They are run by friendly staff, are comfortable and add to the joy of experiencing this country. They vary in many ways from western hotels that you may be used to. The rooms have straw mat floors and 'futon's to sleep on. These are folded in the cupboards and are put out of a night time by the Inn keepers. In some instances we will have western rooms, depending on the availability of the rooms and the make up of the group. Of an evening, relax in a hot muscle soothing Japanese bath. The bathrooms also have showers. Please note on Mt. Fuji we will be staying in mountain huts which are basic bunk rooms, with breakfast and dinner provided. There are no baths or showers on Mt. Fuji.

Many of the Inns have natural hot spring baths and relaxing in their soothing waters with a beer in your hand is the best way to end a day of fun and adventure in Japan.



The meals at the Inns consist of healthy Japanese food. Most Japanese meals, based around meat, fish, or chicken are filling, healthy and delicious. Raw fish is a regular side dish, and is considered a succulent delicacy. All meals are different and the variety will add to your eating pleasure.

OTHER DETAILS

Extra Costs

Following are some current costs (as at July 2008) in Japanese yen that you can use as a guideline only. The current exchange rate is around 95 yen to the \$A dollar, but please check for an accurate rate. Be sure to keep some cash for temple/castle entry fees and souvenirs.

Lunches:

- Noodle dishes • 500 -950
- Curry rice, Spaghetti dishes, fried rice • 550 - 1000
- Cutlets and rice with egg sauce • 500 - 750
- Sushi or Japanese take away • 350 - 2000

Dinner in Tokyo and Osaka enroute:

- Japanese style "Izakaya" • 2500 - 3000 including drinks and a variety of small dishes such as sashimi (raw fish), chicken on sticks, rice, fish, etc.
- Japanese style at hotel. • 1000 plus. A variety of meals based on fish, chicken or other seafood.
- Western style • 2000 plus. No top end here.
- Coffee or tea in coffee shop • 300 - 400