

Kyoto to Wakayama Cycle

From Japan's Ancient Capitals to the Pacific Coast



Trip dates

2027 May 30th – June 8th
September 27 – October 6th
October 31st – November 9th

Tour Price

Per person for twin share/double: JPY 750,000
Single supplement: + JPY 88,000

Highlights

- ✦ Cycle from Kyoto's temple districts through river valleys and tea-growing hills, with a scenic boat journey on the Hozugawa River and a traditional tea ceremony in Uji
- ✦ Ride ancient pilgrimage routes into Japan's spiritual heartland, visiting Nara's historic temples and climbing through cedar forests to Mount Yoshino and Mount Koya
- ✦ Enjoy memorable stays and meals along the way, including a night at a temple lodging on Mount Koya and a celebratory finish at the Pacific coast in Wakayama

Trip duration: 10 days / 9 nights

Grade: Level 2.5 / 5 - Moderate

Accommodation: 9 nights in premium Japanese and Western style accommodation

Overview

Cycle from Japan's ancient capital of Kyoto to the Pacific coast at Wakayama, following rivers, backroads and historic pilgrimage routes through the cultural heart of the Kii Peninsula.

Ride beyond the crowds in Kyoto and Nara, explore the tea fields of Uji and Wazuka, and journey through the sacred mountain landscapes of Yoshino and Mount Koya. Along the way, we dip in and out of the Keinawa Cycle Route, which links Kyoto with Wakayama and forms the natural spine of the journey.

Relax in carefully chosen accommodation, including a stay at a mountain temple on Mount Koya. Savour Japanese cuisine from matcha tea in Uji to fresh seafood in Wakayama, and experience Japan at a pace that allows time for culture, landscapes and connection with the road.





Grading: Level 2-3/5 Moderate

A relaxed pace with time to enjoy cultural sights and landscapes along the way. Daily rides of 40–65 km include more climbing than our Level 2 tours, with several longer ascents through mountain areas. Best suited to recreational riders with moderate fitness. An e-bike is recommended for those who would like to manage the climbs more comfortably.

Important notes:

Single travellers: If you are travelling alone, we will aim to pair you with another traveller of the same gender. If a rooming partner is not available 90 days before departure, a single supplement will apply.

Getting to and from: The tour begins in Arashiyama, Kyoto, which is easily reached by train from central Kyoto and via Shinkansen connections from major cities including Tokyo, Nagoya and Hiroshima. The tour finishes in Wakayama city, with simple onward travel by train to Osaka, Kansai International Airport (KIX) and other parts of Japan. See the FAQ below.

Tour inclusions

- ✦ 9 nights in premium hotels, ryokan and traditional inns
- ✦ 9 breakfasts, 8 dinners and 1 special lunch at Kanou Shoujuan
- ✦ Support vehicles and full mechanical support
- ✦ 3-4 local guides depending on group size.
- ✦ Route GPX files for each day
- ✦ Cultural experiences including a tea ceremony in Uji, a traditional riverboat journey on the Hozugawa River, and a temple stay on Mount Koya
- ✦ Tasty and nutritious drinks, snacks and treats to keep you fuelled for the ride.

What's not included?

- Arrival and departure airport transfers, including any bike transfers to the hotel
- Most lunches (budget JPY 1500 per day)
- Cycle and helmet hire.
- Travel insurance – Please arrange your own

Hire Bikes

We offer a range of high-quality **rental bikes** in a full range of sizes, including **e-bikes**, **carbon road bikes**, and **hybrid/cross bikes**. All bikes are fully serviced before each tour, and the rental price includes a helmet.

Hybrid/Cross Bike:	¥27500
Carbon Road Bike:	¥66000
E-Bike:	¥66000



Detailed Itinerary: (Please note this itinerary is subject to adjustment.)

Day 1: Meet and greet in Kyoto (Arashiyama) Cycle distance: 0km

Meet your guides and fellow guests in the afternoon in Arashiyama, on the western edge of Kyoto. After a tour briefing and bike setup, there is time to relax after arrival, with the option of a short riverside ride for those who wish. In the evening, we come together for a welcome dinner in Arashiyama and our first taste of local cuisine.

Meals included: D

Day 2: Arashiyama to Nagarebashi (Keinawa Cycle Route) Cycle distance: up to 50km

Our first full day of riding follows the scenic Keinawa Cycle Route along the river to the famous Nagarebashi Bridge. Much of today's ride is flat and traffic-free, making it an ideal introduction to cycling in Japan. Guests may choose to ride the full out-and-back route or return by vehicle from Nagarebashi. The afternoon is free back in Arashiyama to relax or explore.

Meals included: B

Day 3: Arashiyama to Kameoka, Hozugawa boat ride, transfer to Uji Cycle distance: up to 35km / 700m

We ride into Mizuo's quiet mountain valleys, passing yuzu orchards and clear spring water stops along the way. Lunch is at a local soba café before changing pace with a two-hour Hozugawa riverboat journey, following the historic route once used to carry timber and supplies into Kyoto. In the late afternoon, we transfer to Uji for the next stage of our journey.

Meals included: B, D

Day 4: Uji tea country loop ride and Kanou Shoujuan Cycle distance: up to 45km

Today's ride forms a loop from Uji into the surrounding tea-growing hills. We climb to panoramic viewpoints and pass Amagase Dam before descending toward Kanou Shoujuan, where we enjoy lunch and a tea ceremony introducing Uji's long tea-making tradition. There is time to visit the bakery, pottery studio and café before continuing the ride back to Uji. Guests may choose to complete the full loop or return by vehicle after lunch and spend the afternoon exploring Uji's tea shops, riverside paths and Byōdō-in Temple.

Meals included: B

Dinner at leisure in Uji

Day 5: Uji to Nara via Wazuka (Keinawa Cycle Route) Cycle distance: up to 50km

Leaving Uji, we rejoin the Keinawa Cycle Route and follow the river south before turning inland into the rolling tea hills of Wazuka. The route winds through terraced tea fields and quiet farming villages before joining an old road leading into the ancient capital of Nara. Lunch is planned in Wazuka before continuing on to our hotel in Nara.

Meals included: B, D

Detailed Itinerary continued: (Please note this itinerary is subject to adjustment.)

Day 6: Rest day in Nara – optional ride or sightseeing Cycle distance: optional 40km

Today is a chance to enjoy Nara at your own pace and recharge before the mountain stages ahead. Guests may choose to join an optional loop ride, beginning with a gravel path through Nara Park before heading out of the city on quiet roads that follow part of an ancient pilgrimage route. Alternatively, the day can be spent exploring Nara's temples, gardens and famous deer, or joining an optional guided walk through the historic centre. In the evening, we come together for a special dinner at one of Nara's standout local restaurants.

Meals included: B, D

Day 7: Nara to Mount Yoshino Cycle distance: up to 62km

We leave Nara and return to the Keinawa Cycle Route, following the river south through quiet countryside. From the valley, we climb into the historic town of Mount Yoshino, a long-standing centre of mountain pilgrimage and one of Japan's most famous cherry blossom areas. There is time in the afternoon to explore the village streets, temples and viewpoints before dinner.

Meals included: B, D

Day 8: Mount Yoshino to Mount Koya (temple stay) Cycle distance: up to 65km / 1,400m

A true mountain stage following an ancient pilgrimage route through the heart of the Kii Mountains. We ride through cedar forests and remote valleys, tracing paths once used by pilgrims travelling between sacred mountain sites. After a lunch stop in the small mountain village of Tenkawa, we continue the final climb toward Mount Koya. We stay overnight in a traditional temple lodging, with time to explore the atmospheric streets of this sacred town.

Meals included: B, D

Day 9: Mount Koya to Wakayama (Keinawa Cycle Route) Cycle distance: up to 55km

The day begins with the option to join the temple's morning prayers, followed by a traditional breakfast at our lodging. We then enjoy a long descent through forest and valleys, returning to the river and joining the Keinawa Cycle Route once more. Following the river all the way into Wakayama city, we complete our journey from Kyoto to the Pacific coast. We celebrate our final night together with a farewell dinner in Wakayama.

Meals included: B, D

Day 10: Departure from Wakayama Cycle distance: 0km

After breakfast, the tour comes to an end. Wakayama has easy onward connections by train to Osaka, Kansai International Airport (KIX), or onward travel to other parts of Japan.

Meals included: B

FAQ: Here are some common questions we get asked:

Our tour starts in **Arashiyama, on the western edge of Kyoto city**. Kyoto is a major transport hub with direct **Shinkansen (bullet train)** services from Tokyo, Nagoya and Hiroshima, making it easy to reach from across Japan. Arashiyama itself is easily accessed from central Kyoto by local train. The closest major international airport is **Osaka Kansai (KIX)**, with straightforward train connections to Kyoto.

We finish in **Wakayama city**, on the Pacific coast. Wakayama is well connected by rail, with:

- Direct train services to **Osaka** (around 1 hour)
- Easy onward access to **Kansai International Airport (KIX)**
- Regular train services to continue on to other parts of Japan

If you'd like help working out the best route based on your wider travel plans, we're happy to assist.

What kind of bikes do you hire?

We offer a range of high-quality Specialized and Giant rental bikes to suit different riding styles and abilities, including carbon road bikes, hybrid/cross bikes and electric bikes. For more details and photos, please check the [bike rental section on our website](#).

If I bring my own bike, how can I get it to the start of the tour?

If your bike is packed in a bag or box, you can take it on most Japanese train services, including the Shinkansen (bullet train). However, a seat reservation with extra luggage space is required, and handling the bike on busy trains can be challenging.

An alternative is to use one of Japan's reliable courier services, which can transport your bike from airport to hotel, or hotel to hotel. This can be a much easier option, especially if you're traveling with other luggage.

If you're planning to bring your own bike, we're happy to help with advice or recommend courier options—just let us know!

What is Japanese style accommodation?

Japanese-style accommodation, known as a *ryokan*, features traditional elements such as tatami mat flooring and futon mattresses that are laid out each night for sleeping. Rooms are typically minimalist and serene, reflecting Japanese aesthetics.

Many ryokan also include shared bathing areas or onsens (hot spring baths), which guests are welcome to use. You'll also be provided with a *yukata*—a casual cotton robe—that you can wear to dinner, breakfast, and while relaxing around the property.

The ryokan we use are of a very high standard, have private bathrooms, and also offer rooms with Western-style beds. If you have a preference, feel free to let us know and we'll do our best to accommodate it.

What is an onsen?

'Onsen' refers to natural hot springs, typically in the context of a public spa. Some of the regions we traverse on this tour are famous for onsen and many of the places we stay have one that you can use. In Japan bathing is ingrained into the culture and can be a real highlight of a trip here, especially a cycling one. Public baths are segregated by gender and swimsuits are not worn. For those who aren't keen, all our accommodation options have a private shower.

How are the roads for cycling?

The roads we ride on this tour are great cycling roads. Quiet, with very few cars. Japan drives on the left and drivers are incredibly courteous to cyclists.

Standard cross/hybrid/road/gravel bikes with 28mm+ tyres are all suitable for this tour.

I'm worried about the climbing. What are the options?

While daily riding distances are not especially long, the route does include a reasonable amount of climbing, including one major mountain stage into Mount Koya with around 1,400 m of elevation gain. If this is a concern, we strongly recommend considering an e-bike, which makes the longer climbs far more comfortable and allows you to enjoy the scenery rather than focus on the effort. Our support vehicle is always on hand, and you are welcome to skip or shorten any section if needed. The roads are generally well built and graded, so while there is climbing, gradients are mostly manageable rather than extreme. Once the tour begins, our guides will assess your riding ability and can advise you on which sections you may wish to ride or bypass.

I'm not a cyclist but my partner is. Can I join the tour?

Yes of course! While this is a cycling tour it's still a fantastic trip even without the riding. The great thing about Japan is there is always a beautiful shrine or temple to explore, a local market to peruse or a short hike to do. There will also be opportunity to check into the hotel early and unwind in the spa.

What kind of food do we eat on tour?

Japanese cuisine has an incredible variety of fish, meat and vegetarian dishes and there are opportunities to sample many kinds of local specialities on this trip. At the hotels we stay at, dinner and breakfast are often buffet style. This is great because it allows you to try lots of different dishes and avoid the ones you don't like. If you have any dietary requirements, please let us know in advance and we will do our best to accommodate.

When is the best time of year to come?

We run this tour in both the spring and autumn. Both seasons are extremely beautiful and perfect for cycling. Expect cooler temps in early April, especially up in the mountains. Average day time temps between 16 – 20 degrees Celsius (60 – 68F). In May and October/November it is a little warmer with temps often in the mid 20's (68-75F). To decide which season is best we suggest you come multiple times and let us what you think! We love cycling here all year round.

Yokoso! Welcome to We Ride Japan!

We Ride Japan was founded by Will and Tamie Turner in 2023. After meeting in Japan in 2005 they spent 2 years travelling the world on bicycles before settling in New Zealand. In 2020 they returned to Japan to embark on a new adventure. Through their work and life experiences in both the cycle and tourism industries, and their current work in regional tourism development in Japan, Will and Tamie offer professional well-planned and unique itineraries. Our goal is to give our guests once in a lifetime experiences in the country we love. Small groups, local guides and the spirit of adventure is what we're all about.

Thanks for your interest! We look forward to hosting you!

