



Summer in Japan

Higher humidity and temperatures are always excellent reasons to head either to the coast or higher altitudes. Japan, with a 30,000km coastline encompassing one of the most mountainous countries on earth, is not short of interesting and enticing destinations for summer vacations.

Walk Japan's [Hokkaido Hike](#) and [Summer Nakasendo Way](#) tours both visit Japan's alpine regions. The former takes us to the vast landscapes of Japan's most northerly island, where snow can remain well into the summer, while the latter leads us along the ancient and historical Nakasendo Way where it passes through the mountains of central Japan.

Meanwhile, our [Yaeyama: Okinawa Voyage](#) visits sub-tropical islands in Japan's far south. Here the azure South China Sea is our backdrop as we explore mangroves, jungle, deserted beaches and cays using sea kayaks, paddle boards and snorkels as well as our own two feet in traditional Walk Japan style.

[Contact us](#) for further information about our summer tours.



Further snowy adventures



Hiroshige's Tokaido

The Snow Country Trek is our first winter-only tour that explores the wonderful landscape of Japan's famed *yukiguni* snow country; a northerly region where Yasunari Kawabata, who won Japan's first Nobel Prize for Literature, set his classic tale of the same name. The beautiful panorama of deep snows, so elegantly described in his prose and which we enjoy on the Snow Country Trek, are so famed throughout Japan one may be forgiven for thinking that it was the only region to experience snow in abundance.

However, Japan's Tohoku and Hokkaido regions also score highly for their winter scenery and, in recent years, we have been exploring them as we develop two new snow trekking tours for Winter 2016/17.

We travelled through Tohoku to the very north of Japan's main island and beyond to Hokkaido's east coast. On snow shoes we explored landscapes left by volcanic explosions both pre-historic and recent, visited elegant temples while recalling the exquisitely beautiful yet sparse words of Japan's most famous poet Basho, and every night luxuriated in *onsen* thermal hot spring baths. We also trekked through the unusual and ethereal *juhyo* snow monsters, perhaps Tohoku's greatest natural symbol of winter.

In Hokkaido, we reached some of the remotest areas of Japan, where Siberian Russia is the nearest neighbour. Here in Japan's last major wilderness wildlife plays through snowy vistas that stretch over the expansive plains to the Sea of Okhotsk, where ice floes are the foreground to spectacular sunsets.

Over the coming months we will be providing details of these new tours. In the meantime photos in this [gallery](#) should whet your appetite.

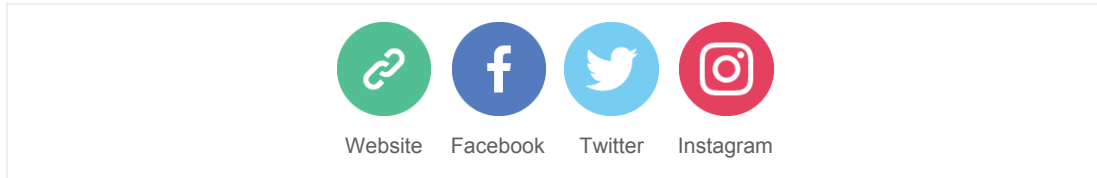
We invite you to join Walk Japan's Managing Director, Llew Thomas, for an exploration of the Tokaido, the greatest of Japan's ancient highways, on a journey through the heartland of Japan between Kyoto and Tokyo.

Today's usual method of travel, the high-speed Tokaido Shinkansen bullet train, thunders between these great cities in 2.5 hours leaving little time to know or contemplate this historical route. However, our much more leisurely journey over six days on foot and local trains lead us along the Tokaido's best remaining sections to now little-known places seemingly forgotten since their heyday well over 140 years ago.

Woodblock artist Ando Hiroshige's (1797-1868) most famous work, The Fifty-Three Stages of the Tokaido, is our historical visual companion. Hiroshige's depictions of the old road contributed greatly to making the Tokaido a popular route in the mid-19th Century and cemented its iconic status in Japan's modern mythology. It is still possible to match the scenery today with Ando's prints, which also featured *meibutsu* famous food delicacies. So good are they that many meibutsu are still created to this day and we have ample opportunity to sample these on our travels together. Photographs from our route along the Tokaido are available [here](#).

Hiroshige's Tokaido, a [Level 2~3 walking tour](#), is scheduled from Sunday, 4 December to Saturday, 10 December 2016. Accommodation is in Western-style hotels and traditional Japanese inns, two of the latter boast *onsen* thermal hot spring baths. The maximum group size is limited to eight persons. Single accommodation provision is very limited.

Please [contact](#) Walk Japan for more details and to book this tour.



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