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Hiking and Trekking in the Japan Alps and Mount Fuji

Northern, Central and Southern Alps
by Tom Fay, Wes Lang

The Japanese have long understood the pleasures of the outdoors – from admiring koyo (‘colourful autumn leaves’) to goraiko (‘watching the sunrise from a mountain top’). It’s little surprise that hiking features prominently in Japanese culture, since Japan is home to so many amazing landscapes, offering fantastic opportunities for exploration. This guide presents a selection of 14 walks and 13 short treks in the magnificent mountains of the main island of Honshu. As well as the four main trails to the summit of iconic Mt Fuji – Japan’s highest peak at 3776m – the routes cover the North, Central and South Alps, taking in some of Japan’s most famous mountains and following dramatic ridgelines offering spectacular views.

The graded routes range from gentle walks on well-maintained paths to challenging mountain traverses, some involving scrambling and exposure. The treks make use of the area’s excellent network of mountain huts and campsites, full details of which are presented in the guide. Alongside comprehensive route description and mapping, you’ll find all the information you need to plan a successful walking holiday, with advice on travel, accommodation, bases, equipment and safety. There are also notes on Japanese history and culture, recommendations in case you want to sample some local delicacies and tips on bathing etiquette (since several of the mountain huts boast the luxury of a hot-spring bath). Useful contacts, mountain hut listings and a Japanese glossary are included in the appendices. The stunning colour photography will fill you with the urge to put on your boots and discover these breathtaking mountains.

What’s inside?

- 14 walks and 13 treks of 2–8 days
- Mt Fuji’s Yoshida, Subashiri, Gotemba and Fujinomiya routes
- bases and mountain hut listings

About the authors

Tom Fay is a British writer and teacher based in Osaka, and he has been living in Japan for well over a decade. He has hiked and climbed in many places including Scotland, Iceland, China, South Korea, New Zealand, the Himalaya and every corner of Japan, and writes about travel and the outdoors for a variety of publications and media outlets.

Wes Lang has been exploring Japan’s mountains since relocating to the country in 2001. In 2008 he became the first American (and one of only a handful of foreigners) to climb the Hyakumeizan, Japan’s 100 Famous Mountains. He is the founder of Hiking in Japan, a website providing comprehensive hiking information for the Hyakumeizan and beyond.
JAPAN’S KUMANO KODO PILGRIMAGE

The UNESCO World Heritage trek by Kat Davis

Follow in the footsteps of emperors, samurai and wandering priests as you discover Japan's historic pilgrimage trails...

To hike the Kumano Kodo is to enter another world, a landscape of stunning natural beauty and ancient spirituality. Centred around the three colourful Shinto-Buddhist shrines of the Kumano Sanzan, the traditional flagstone paths and forest trails are lined with moss-covered stone deities and tranquil oji shrines.

This guide describes Japan's Kumano Kodo, a series of UNESCO-listed pilgrimage routes that crisscross the mountainous Kii peninsula, south of Osaka. It covers the 64km Nakahechi and 63km Kohechi trails in full, as well as the Choishimichi route to Koyasan (20km), the Hongu loop (17km) and highlights of the Iseji trail. You’ll find a wealth of practical information to help plan your trip, covering when to go, transport, kit and safety. Clear route description and mapping is accompanied by comprehensive details of accommodation and facilities on route, as well as fascinating notes on local points of interest and inspirational colour photography. There is also a Japanese glossary and helpful advice on Japanese culture and etiquette.

Stay in a traditional inn or temple lodging, sample delicious local delicacies, enjoy a relaxing soak in a hot-spring bath – or simply pause to enjoy the region’s otherworldly beauty. The Kumano Kodo offers a unique experience, blending great hiking with a fascinating insight into Japan’s culture and history.

What’s inside?

- the Nakahechi and Kohechi trails, Choishimichi route, Hongu loop and highlights of the Iseji trail
- accommodation and facilities
- Japanese history, spirituality, culture and etiquette

About the author

Originally from Melbourne, after graduating from university, Kat moved to Japan, where she worked as an adventure tour guide, seeking out the local hotspots and developing a love for hiking. Now based in London, she has walked over 10,000km in Spain, Portugal, England, Italy, Japan and America.
Nilgiri 7,061m Annapurna Massif, Nepal Himalaya
Attempt of Unclimbed North Face
Takuya Mitoro

“The Nilgiri Himal is a range of three peaks in the Annapurna massif in Nepal. It is composed of Nilgiri North (7,061m), Nilgiri Central (6,940m) and Nilgiri South (6,839m). Nilgiri North was first ascended in October 1962 by the Netherlands Himalayan Expedition: the team leader was a famous French climber, Lionel Terray. The first ascents on Nilgiri South and Nilgiri Central were made by Japanese climbers in 1978 and 1979 respectively.”
Expedition members: Takuya Mitoro, Meiji University Alpine Club
Tatsuya Aoki, Tokai University Alpine Club
Period of expedition: September 26 ~ November 5, 2018
Highest point to have reached: 5,900m

ITINERARY

Acclimatization and reconnaissance
October 2 arrived at Jomson 2,700m, looking up Nilgiri immediately south
October 3~5 ascended to Toron Pass 5,400m for acclimatization
October 7~9 ascended to Mandala Pass 5,000m for reconnaissance of descent route on lower part of east ridge
October 11~15 ascended to C3 5,700m and back, C3 is on wide terrace

Assault
October 1 leaving Jomsom BC 2,700m to C1 4,000m with a cook and a porter
October 20 C1 to C2 5,100m, October 21 C2 to C3 5,600m
October 22 C3 to C4 5,750m, October 23 C4 to 6,000m back to C3
October 24 C3 to C1, October 25 C1 to Jomsom BC

Aerial view of Nilgiri N face
(Pokhara~Jomsom flight)
CLIMBING

Ropes were unnecessary from BC to C2. Three pitches (180m) rock ridge appeared just beneath C3. Climbing started from C3 wearing crampons. The rock ridge to C3 was not easy for loose rock layers apt to collapsing. From C3 to the wall a huge seracs zone had to be passed traversing the base of wall, but seracs tumbled down 2 to 3 times in a day. Roping each other we hurriedly passed the base of wall. Elevation from C3 to the base of wall was almost the same. We repeated traverse and climbing the snow-ice wall for five hours in snow deep to knees. Then we could reach the base of wall for tackling the unclimbed north face of Nilgiri.

On October 22 we came to the base of wall noontime. We climbed two pitches of ice wall and fixed 60m rope. On the following day we gained further three pitches. The lower part
of wall on which we had fixed rope was the ice wall being possibly secured by protection. However, the following pitches were in different conditions. Angle of the wall became larger than expected. The snow wall was almost vertical even overhung in some parts. Protection was hardly possible because of soft snow and ice. Even rocks were with less cracks to suit gears. 10 meters run-out was forced. We climbed very carefully. We could gain only 150m vertical distance though we climbed longer distance in zig-zag pitches.

The vertical wall upward refused us to continue our challenge. Now it was the time to give up further attempt. Descent was very fast. We descended to C4 by three times rappelling and to C3 safely. On October 24 we rappelled down three pitches of the rock ridge below C3 and descended to C1. On the 24 we returned to Jomsom BC. To our disappointment we defeated leaving 1,000 formidable but attractive challenging wall of the north face.
Started climbing north face

Lower part C1 ~ C2
Climbing north face

Difficult pitch before C3
C3 wide terrace

View to summit from C3
Looking up unclimbed route from C3
Lecture by Tom Nakamura at Peking University

北京大学

- Alps of Tibet & Beyond -

THE LAST FRONTIER 最後の辺境

270 Unclimbed 6,000m Peaks in Alps of Tibet 2019

Tom Nakamura
MAPKU-Peking University Mountaineering Association 30th Anniversary dinner
高处有世界

北大山鹰30年

攀登是一种信仰

Peking University Mountaineer Association 30th Anniversary
登山户外安全手册

OUTDOOR SAFETY HANDBOOK

中国登山协会 编

人民体育出版社
MOUNTAINEERING AND OUTDOOR SPORTS IN CHINA

中国登山户外运动

(中文版)

中国奥林匹克委员会
Chinese Olympic Committee
中国国家地理

封面报道
深空摄影：夜空原来是这样

主打报道
柴达木“克隆”火星
惊鸟绝活：除了团队操，还会做头发
幺妹峰：最牛登山家的领奖台
阿拉斯加：给加拿大换个冰花花边
“比基尼”下的核爆伤疤
天下粉笔出应城