Shikoku 88 Pilgrimage
Self-guided walking
5 days

Introduction

Shikoku is Japan’s fourth-largest island, home to some of the country’s most spectacular and undeveloped scenery. The island is also the setting for an ancient walking trail, the challenging Shikoku 88 Pilgrimage. The trail connects 88 Buddhist temples and the full walk covers more than a thousand kilometres. Pilgrims, known as O-henro, cover the journey over many weeks, staying at Shukubo temples which provide overnight lodging. Our tour takes in some of the most beautiful hikes and breathtaking scenery on the trail, as well as enchanting temples and overnight stays in Shukubo temple lodgings and hot-spring Ryokan inns, offering delicious traditional Japanese meals, exceptional service and warm hospitality.
TOUR LENGTH AND PRICES

5 days
Please see the website for the prices we offer in each currency.

TYPE AND LEVEL OF TRIP

Our Shikoku 88 Pilgrimage tours include carefully-selected sections of the ancient pilgrimage trail. Walking is generally on quiet town and country roads, and unpaved forest trails. Together with the 8-day version, this tour offers the most demanding walking and is classified as ‘Challenging’.

WALKING SEASON

All year (the region may occasionally experience snow from December to March)

WHAT’S INCLUDED

4 nights at Japanese inns on Shikoku Island; 4 breakfasts and 3SS dinners; Round-trip transportation from Kyoto or Osaka & 2 pre-paid taxis; Detailed day-by-day itinerary, walking directions and Shikoku Island guidebook; Topographical maps; Local support by telephone

ITINERARY

DAY 1 > Tokushima (Temples 1 to 3)
Start from Kyoto or Osaka and travel by long-distance bus to Tokushima Prefecture. Begin your pilgrimage with a gentle introduction to the walks on Shikoku through quiet neighbourhoods of Tokushima. Visit three of the most eye-catching temples on whole trail – Temple 1 Ryozen-ji, Temple 2 Gokuraku-ji and Temple 3 Konsen-ji. Spend your first night as all pilgrims should - with a stay in a Shukubo pilgrims lodge. There is also the option of staying at a city-centre Ryokan for this first night.

Walking distance: 5.8km / 3.6 miles
Elevation gain: Negligible ascent and descent
Time required: About 2hours
An optional additional walk along paved roads to Temple 7 Juraku-ji can extend the day by 3km / 1.9 miles and around 45 minutes.
Accommodation: Shukubo (Pilgrims Lodging) or Ryokan (Travellers Inn)

DAY 2 > Tokushima (Temples 11 to 12)
Travel south by pre-booked and pre-paid taxi to Temple 11 Fujii-dera, a fascinating hillside temple complex. From Fujii-dera undertake a challenging hike to Temple 12 Shosan-ji. The full walk is one of the longest and most strenuous on the tour, but very rewarding with beautiful scenery. Travel by bus to Tokushima for your overnight stay in a city-centre Ryokan (travellers inn) or western-style hotel.

Walking distance: 19.2km / 11.9 miles
Elevation gain: 1330m / 4365 feet of ascent and 1210m / 3970 feet of descent
Time required: About 7-8 hours
Accommodation: Ryokan (Travellers Inn) or Hotel

DAY 3 > Tokushima (Temples 20 to 21)
Travel by bus from Tokushima to enjoy one of the most beautiful and varied hikes from the entire 88 route. After a short but steep uphill walk to Temple 20 Kakurin-ji, the trail descends to the hamlet of Anan, crosses the Nakagawa river and climbs again to Temple 21 Taiyu-ji. End the day with a cable car ride with wonderful views over a cedar forest and the small town below. Return by bus to Tokushima for your overnight stay.

Walking distance: 11.4km / 7.1 miles
Elevation gain: 900m / 2960 feet ascent and 490m / 1600 feet descent
Time required: About 5 hours
The walk can be shortened to about 3 hours (8.2km / 5.1 miles) by using a taxi at the start.  
*Accommodation:* Ryokan (Travellers Inn) or Hotel

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**DAY 4 > Kagawa (Temples 82 to 80)**
Leaving Tokushima, travel by train, bus and finally pre-booked and prepaid taxi to a rewarding hike in northern Kagawa Prefecture. Walk through lovely scenery and visit a fine collection of temples - Temple 82 Negoro-ji, Temple 81 Shiromine-ji and finally Temple 80 Kokubun-ji. Travel onwards by train for an overnight stay in the old hot-spring town of Kotohira Spa.

*Walking distance:* 13.5km / 8.4 miles  
*Elevation gain:* 335m / 1100 feet ascent and 655m / 2150 feet descent  
*Time required:* About 5 hours  
The walk can be extended by 1.5 hours (5km / 3.1 miles) by walking the first section instead of travelling by taxi. The section climbs 290m / 950 feet along a paved road with some traffic, but good views too. The walk can be shortened by 1.5 hours (5.4km / 3.4 miles) by omitting the round-trip diversion to Temple 81 Shiromine-ji.  
*Accommodation:* Ryokan (Travellers Inn)

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**DAY 5 > Tour ends**
After breakfast, spend some time exploring Kotohira Spa. Board a train after lunch for the return journey to Osaka or Kyoto, arriving late afternoon.

* WE ALSO OFFER 4-DAY, 6-DAY, 8-DAY AND 10-DAY VERSIONS OF THIS TRIP.  
Our 4-day tour is the easiest option, classified as ‘Active’. The 6-day and 10-day tours are ‘Strenuous’. Our 5-day and 8-day tours offer the most demanding walking and are classified as ‘Challenging’. 