

The Second Golden Route

– Discover the new Japan –

[PR]

The journey from Tokyo, through Nagoya and onto Kyoto, Nara and Osaka is well known as Japan's 'Golden Route'. Where to go next? A side trip will provide you with an enormously enriching cultural experience and breathtaking scenery: a Second Golden Route.

Route 1: Nagoya - Takayama - Shirakawago - Kanazawa - Kyoto

Approximately two and a half hours from Nagoya by train, Takayama is a beautiful, historical town with projecting latticework and eaves of uniform heights. The Takayama festival, considered one of Japan's three most beautiful festivals, is held twice a year, in spring and autumn. The festival showcases the extraordinary craftsmanship of *Yatai* floats, and elaborate classical marionettes. With women resplendent in *Kimono*, and men in *Hakama*, why not take a stroll through this charming town?

Nestled in the mountains outside Takayama is Shirakawago, a village famous for its old farmhouses built in the traditional *Gasshozukuri* style. Elegantly tailored to the natural environment with thatched roofs angled to avoid collapse under the weight of snow, more than a hundred traditional houses remain scattered across the landscape. Many of these buildings are still in daily use, and the whole village was registered as a World Heritage Site in 1995.

Located on the Sea of Japan side, the city of Kanazawa prospered as a castle town for more than 300 years. Kanazawa hosts one of the three chief gardens of Japan, the scale and beauty of which is breathtaking. Vividly changing with the seasons, the Kenrokuen is a stunning experience.



Takayama



Shirakawago



Ise Shrine



Konpon Daito in Koyasan

Route 2: Nagoya - Ise Shima - Kumano Kodo - Koyasan - Osaka

Approximately 140km south west of Nagoya, Ise Shima is a national park noted for its shrines and pearl farm. With the Grand Shrine of Ise, the most venerated of all Shinto shrines in Japan, as its central feature, the park boasts truly magnificent seascapes that go on for miles.

Ancient Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage Routes are World Heritage registered and offer the sight of the Kumano Sanzan - the Three Grand Shrines of Kumano. In the 11th century these Grand Shrines became a pilgrimage destination for the imperial family and aristocrats. Deep in the forest, embrace the solemn majesty of nature as you walk a route steeped in the history of centuries of faith.

North of Kumano Kodo stands Mt. Koyasan. At the peak of Mt. Koyasan, surrounded by mountains, is Kongobuji, the Head Temple of Esoteric Buddhism. Lodging facilities are provided by the temple and *Shojin-Ryori*, a special vegetarian cuisine, is served there.

Encounter the powerful history and natural beauty of Japan first-hand, a world away from the ultra-modern urban districts, on the Second Golden Route. 

Information:

Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) www.jnto.org.au

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