

KUMANO KODO

Chikatsuyu-oji to Kumano Hongu Taisha (Nakahechi) | 近露王子から熊野本宮大社へ

Distance: ~25 km

Time: ~8 to 10 hrs

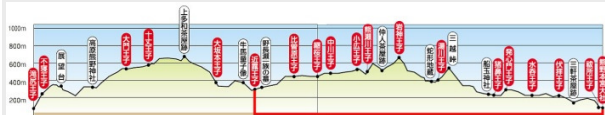
Start : Chikatsuyu-oji

Finish : Kumano Hongu Taisha (Hongu Village)

Access: Local Bus

It is about a 70 minute bus ride from Kii-Tanabe to Chikatsuyu. Busses depart daily from bus stop number 2.

Elevation Chart:



熊野古道

Tsugizakura-oji



Towards Hongu

This section of the Kumano Kodo is a long day walk from Chikatsuyu-oji 近露王子 (290m) to Kumano Hongu Taisha 熊野本宮大社 (93m) in the Hongu village.

This section follows the old highway through Chikatsuyu Village along the south side of Mt. Takao. As the road works its way east you pass a series of collection of houses. There is a short section of dirt path just before trail marker number 29.

The road gradually climbing over 200 meters in elevation before reaching the impressive Tsugizakura-oji.

Tsugizakura-oji

In the shrine grove of Tsugizakura-oji are the massive Nonaka-no-Ipposugi cedar trees (Cryptomeria). Some have a circumference of 8 meters, and are believed to be up to 800 years old.

The branches area all pointing to the south, towards Nachi Falls and the power of Kannon's Fudaraku paradise. They are called "ipposugi", meaning "one direction cedars".

Nonaka-no-Shimizu Spring



Toganoki-jaya



Detour



Hosshinmon-oji



Wood carvings



This shrine, along with its trees, was scheduled to be demolished in 1906 as part of the government's shrine consolidation program.

It was saved by Minakata Kumagusu (1867-1941), an eccentric genius researcher and avant-garde environmentalist. He was fiercely opposed to shrine mergers as they destroyed outstanding pockets of biodiversity, along with the beliefs and faith of the local people.

The Toganoki-jaya Teahouse building is located next to the sanctuary. It has a very photogenic thatch roof, but unfortunately doesn't serve any tea.

The Nonaka-no-Shimizu spring, one of the 100 famous waters of Japan, is located just below the shrine. Fill up your water bottle here for some delicious refreshment.

Into the mountains

The Kumano Kodo follows the old highway from Tsugizakura-oji to Kobiro-toge Pass. There is a public toilet here.

Here the trail enters the forest, climbing and descending a series of passes.

Detour

Because of damage to the trail there is a ~4 km detour from Nakado-jaya Teahouse remains to Jagata Jizo, south of the main pilgrimage route.

The trail follows a forestry road for a short time to a small log bridge across the river to the left. The route then makes the long climb over the Iwagami-toge pass.

The trail then descends to the Jagata Jizo following another forestry road for part of the way.



Fushiogami-oji



View point



View point



Kumano Hongu Taisha



Oyunohara



Mikoshi-toge to Hosshinmon-oji

From Jagata-jizo the trail crosses a small river and climbs to Mikoshi-toge, the last of the major passes on this section. From Mikoshi-toge the path descends from cedar and cypress plantations to the Otonashi-gawa River.

Just before sign post number 59 and the Funatama-jinja shrine, is a trail junction south for the Akagi-goe section of the Kumano Kodo which leads to Yunomine Onsen.

Continue past the Funatama-jinja shrine along the forestry road. After a few minutes the trail climbs to the right to the Hosshinmon-oji.

Hosshinmon-oji

From Hosshinmon-oji to Kumano Hongu Taisha it is a mixture of forest trails and isolated mountaintop villages. Panoramic viewpoints can be found along the way.

Hosshinmon-oji is known as the "gate of awakening of the aspiration to enlightenment" and marks the outermost entrance to Kumano Hongu Taisha's sacred precincts.

The route follows a road through Hosshinmon Village from here to Mizunomi-oji. Keep a look out for the folk-art wood carvings. The trail enters the forest at Mizunomi-oji, the site of an old school house, and exits at the west end of the Fushiogami settlement, with its numerous tea plantations and terraced fields.

Fushiogami-oji

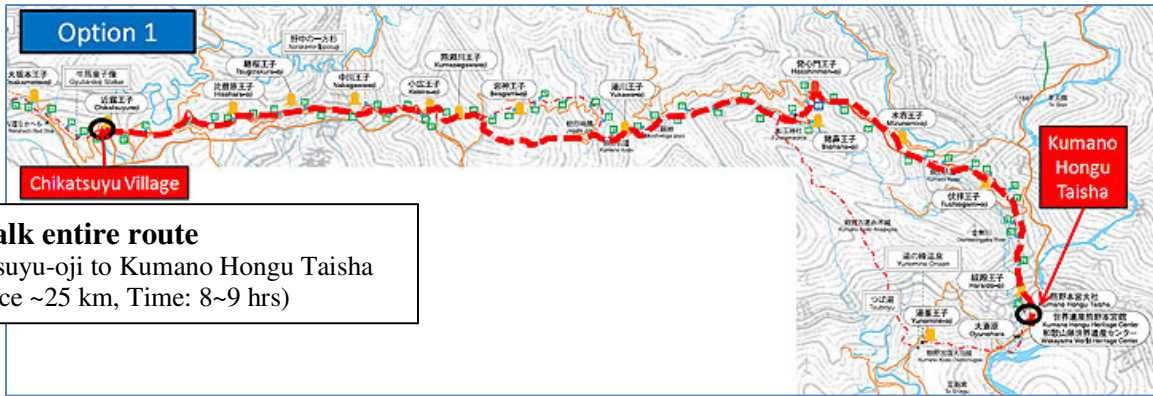
Fushiogami-oji is where pilgrims fell to their knees and prayed after catching their first glimpse of the Grand Shrine in the distant valley below.

There is a covered rest area here where locals serve handmade snacks and coffee made with hot spring water (days in operation may change).

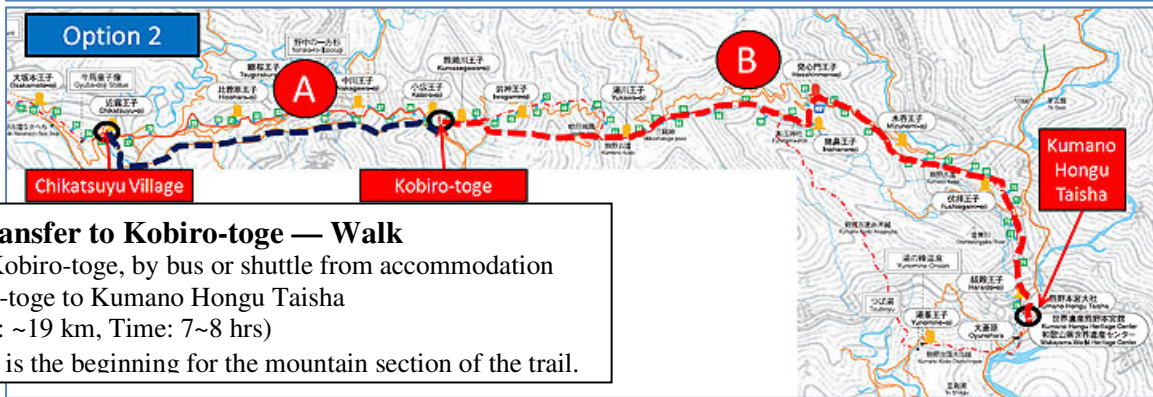
From here the trail descends through the forest past Sangen-jaya to the austere Kumano Hongu Taisha. Halfway between Sangen-jaya and Kumano Hongu Taisha is a short side trail to a lookout point that is not to be missed!

Kumano Hongu Taisha

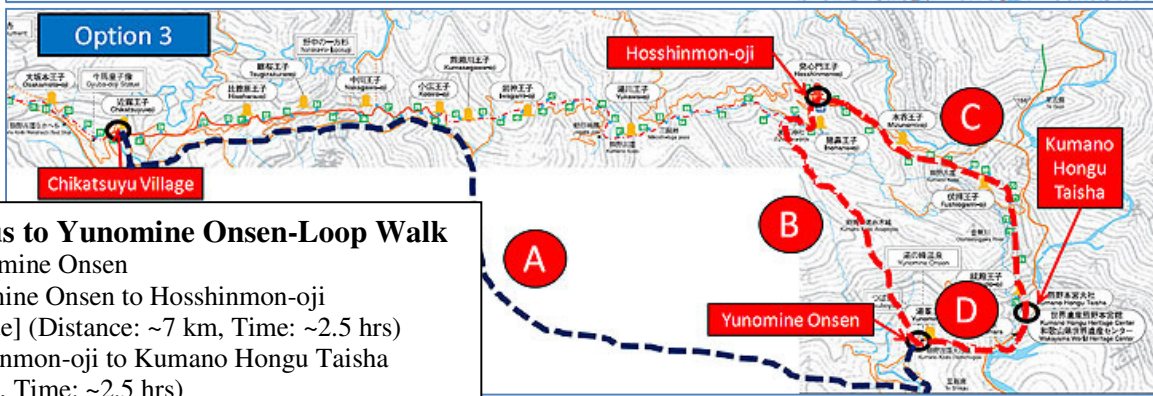
A short walk through a set of houses leads to the rear entrance to the Kumano Hongu Taisha grand shrine. The stairs at the front of the shrine lead to route 168. Across the road is the Kumano Hongu Heritage Center with many excellent exhibitions and information counter. Oyuohara, and Japan's largest Torii gate is next to the center



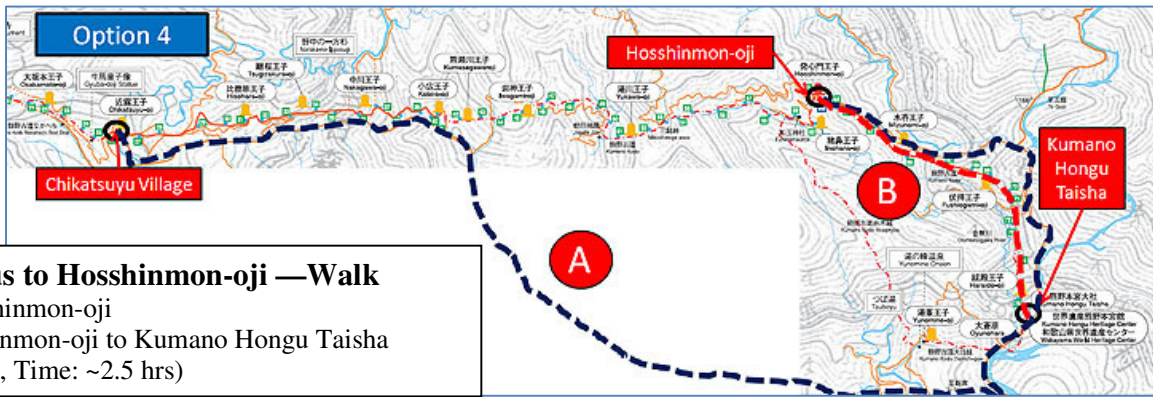
Option 1 | Walk entire route
 A. Walk Chikatsuyu-ji to Kumano Hongu Taisha
 (Distance ~25 km, Time: 8~9 hrs)



Option 2 | Transfer to Kobirotoge — Walk
 A. Transfer to Kobirotoge, by bus or shuttle from accommodation
 B. Walk Kobirotoge to Kumano Hongu Taisha
 (Distance: ~19 km, Time: 7~8 hrs)
 ※ Kobirotoge is the beginning for the mountain section of the trail.



Option 3 | Bus to Yunomine Onsen-Loop Walk
 A. Bus to Yunomine Onsen
 B. Walk Yunomine Onsen to Hosshinmon-ji
 [Akagi-goe route] (Distance: ~7 km, Time: ~2.5 hrs)
 C. Walk Hosshinmon-ji to Kumano Hongu Taisha
 (Distance: 7 km, Time: ~2.5 hrs)
 D. Walk Hongu to Yunomine Onsen
 [Dainich-goe route] (Distance: ~3.5 km, Time: ~1.5 hrs)



Option 4 | Bus to Hosshinmon-ji — Walk
 A. Bus to Hosshinmon-ji
 B. Walk Hosshinmon-ji to Kumano Hongu Taisha
 (Distance: 7 km, Time: ~2.5 hrs)