

# KUMANO KODO

Hosshinmon-oji to Kumano Hongu Taisha (Nakahechi) | 発心門王子から熊野本宮大社へ

Distance: ~7 km

Time: ~3 hrs

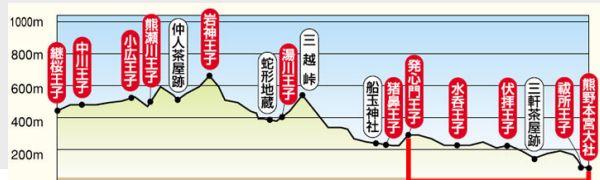
Start : Hosshinmon-oji

Finish : Kumano Hongu Taisha (Hongu Village)

Access: Local Bus, Shuttle from lodgings

It is ~2 hour bus ride from Kii-Tanabe (via Yunomine & Kawayu) to Hosshinmon-oji. Some accommodations in the Hongu area, such as in Kawayu Onsen offer free shuttles (15~20 min) to Hosshinmon-oji.

Elevation Chart:



熊野古道

## Hosshinmon-oji



## Shop along trail



## The Walk

The section from Hosshinmon-oji to Kumano Hongu Taisha it is a mixture of forest trails and isolated mountaintop villages, and makes for a wonderful highlight day walk, with panoramic viewpoints to be found along the way.

There are toilets and vending machines just east of Hosshinmon-oji. The Hosshinmon-oji bus stop is the last stop.

## Hosshinmon-oji

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 east through Hosshinmon village from here to Mizunomi-oji. Keep a look out for the folk-art wood carvings.

## Mizunomi-oji

Mizunomi-oji is known as a shrine with a water source. A stone monument was erected here in 1723 by the feudal lord of the Kishu domain (present-day Wakayama prefecture).

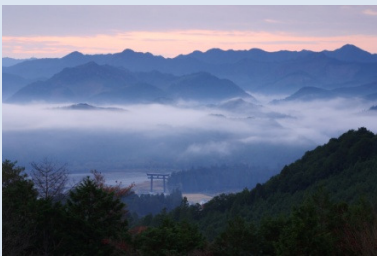
### Fushiogami-oji



### View point



### View point



### Kumano Hongu Taisha



### Oyunohara



There are also small stone Jizo statues to the left of the fountain. Jizo is a Bodhisattva, or a being that compassionately refrains from entering nirvana in order to save others, and is one of the most popular deities in Japan.

Jizo is the saviour and protector of children and travelers, but also takes on other forms of folk belief. The small Jizo on the right is split horizontally in the middle. People put coins in the crack and pray for relief from their backaches.

There is an eco-toilet just before Mizunomi-oji.

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. The trail through the Fushiogami settlement is on the road.

### *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). This is a popular place to eat a picnic lunch box. There are good toilet facilities here.

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 (near number sign post 73) 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. Notice the graceful cypress bark roof and three legged crow motifs, the symbol of Kumano.

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.

### *Oyunohara*

Oyunohara, and Japan's largest Torii gate is next to the heritage center.

This is the original site of the Kumano Hongu Taisha, up to around 120 years ago when it was destroyed in a flood and moved to its current location.