

# KUMANO KODO

Takijiri-oji to Chikatsuyu-oji (Nakahechi) | 滝尻王子から近露王子へ (中辺路)

**Distance:** 13 km

**Time:** ~5 to 7 hrs

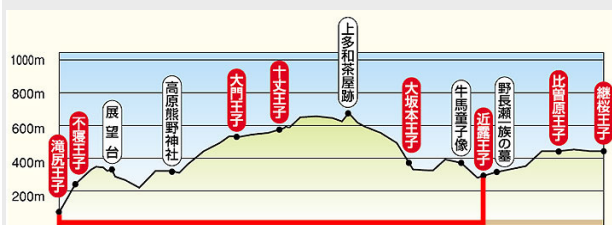
**Start :** Takijiri-oji

**Finish :** Chikatsuyu-oji (Chikatsuyu Village)

**Access:** Local Bus

It is about a 40 minute bus ride from Kii-Tanabe to Takijiri. Busses depart daily from bus stop number 2.

**Elevation Chart:**



## 熊野古道

### Takijiri-oji



### KUMANO KODO KAN Pilgrimage Center

Hours: 9:00~ 17:00



### Entrance to Kumano Mountains

This section of the Kumano Kodo is a day walk from Takijiri-oji 滝尻王子(82m) to the Chikatsuyu-oji 近露王子(290) in Chikatsuyu village (290m).

The round Kumano Kodo Kan Pilgrimage Center is located across the river from Takijiri-oji and has introductory exhibitions about the pilgrimage route.

Inside is a small corner selling outdoor goods such as walking sticks, raingear, hats, etc. for those who need to buy last minute gear. Toilet facilities are located in front of the building.

The trailhead starts from behind the Takijiri-oji, which is considered to be where the passage into the precincts of the sacred mountains begins.

There is a small shop in front of Takijiri-oji which sells souvenirs. There are also vending machines here to buy drinks for the walk.

Walk to left side of the building and around the back there is a stone staircase which climbs up around a large rock.

### The walk

The trail starts off very steep, so take your time and set a slow pace.

### Tainai-kuguri



### Takahara Kumano-jinja



### Takahara village approach



Please watch your step as there are some tree roots and rocks along the trail which can be slippery, especially when wet.

Around 15 minutes into the climb, there is a set of large boulders. Some of these form a cave called Tainai-kuguri, where you can test your faith by climbing through the crack at the far end.

Another boulder, the Chichi-iwa rock, is associated with a local legend.

There is a lookout point shortly after signpost 3 where a small climb up some stairs offers a glimpse over the mountains. Follow the stairs down the other side of the peak to join up with the main route below.

The trail crosses the road to Takahara between signposts 4 and 5. Cross the road and continue up the ridge. The last set of climbs brings you past an old TV tower which marks the entrance to Takahara village.

### *Takahara Kumano-jinja Shrine*

Follow the gravel road past a series of houses and you will pass by the Takahara Kumano-jinja shrine surrounded by giant Camphor trees. This shrine is one of the oldest buildings along this section of the pilgrimage route.

Take a peak around the back of the buildings to see more ancient trees which are estimate to be 800 to 1000 years old.

### *Takahara village*

Just down the road from the shrine is a parking area with wonderful panoramic views of the Hatenashi mountain range to the north.

Takahara is known as "Kiri-no-Sato" (Village in the Mist) because the scenic mountain vistas are often blanketed with mist. The valley below sometimes fills with fog, creating a beautiful sea of clouds.

Minamoto-no-Michikata, a nobleman who accompanied the retired emperor Gotoba on his pilgrimage to Kumano, composed the following waka poem:

In Takahara the moon  
Rising above the mountaintop  
Shines on a 1000-year-old pine

### *Past Takahara*

From the Parking area the trail runs along a small walking path between houses and terraces fields. This path is located directly south of the Takahara parking area on the other side of the road, look for a Kumano Kodo signpost pointing the way.

### Takahara views



The trail from Takahara continues to climb into the mountains from the east end of the tiny settlement through the forest.

About 1.5 hours past Takahara is the Jujo-oji clearing, a popular spot for picnic lunches. There is a toilet here.

The highest part of this trail is the remains of the Uwada-jaya Teahouse (~690 meters above sea level) near signpost number 18.

### Kumano Kodo



The trail then descends quickly past the Three-Fold Moon Viewing area to the creek by Osakamoto-oji.

The Three-Fold Moon is a legend about a Yamabushi mountain ascetic and his miraculous encounter with the Kumano dieties.

### *Kumano Kodo Nakahechi Michi-no-Eki*

From Osakamoto-oji the trail follows a small creek until the pilgrimage route connects with to Highway #311. Across the highway is the Kumano Kodo Nakahechi Michi-no-Eki rest stop. The store sells local souvenirs, snacks and drinks, and has a collection of vending machines. The public toilets are next to the parking lot.

### Gyuba-doji statue



The Gyubadoji-guchi bus stop is directly in front of the rest stop.

### *Gyuba-doji statue*

A short climb from the rest stop leads to the Hashiori-toge pass and a collection of statues.

The one on the left is known as Gyuba-doji and depicts Retired Emperor Kazan (968-1008) as a boy riding a horse and cow. He was one of the first to make an imperial pilgrimage to Kumano.

To its right is a stone carving of Ennogyoja, the legendary founder of Shugendo, a mixed religion based on mountain ascetic practices. A third monument, a Hokyoin-to stupa dating from the 12th century.

### Chikatsuyu village



### *Chikatsuyu*

A short walk 10 minute walk descends to the valley bottom and Chikatsuyu village. Chikatsuyu-oji is located on the left just past the bridge. There are public toilets here. Vending machines and a bus stop are a short walk up