

Walk Japan Launches Izu Geo Trail



Walk Japan Photos

If you are looking for an informative walking tour in Japan, Walk Japan offers a variety of tours along with their newest trek along the Izu Peninsula.

“YOU HAD BETTER LIKE SEAFOOD IF YOU TAKE THIS NEW TOUR,” Paul Christie smiled. “There is not much meat available.” The Walk Japan’s CEO was in Singapore to promote the company’s new 7-day, 6-night tour and with us as we all enjoyed an exquisite Japanese meal at Ki-sho on Scotts. With food this good, why do you need meat?

Appreciating the Place

While taking a walking tour of this duration it might sound as if you would need all the protein you can muster

Paul assures that with a Walk Japan trek, this is not the case. “We take an easy pace,” he explains. “About three to four miles an hour, which is very easy. Some people like to set out like they are in a race, but our approach is that you are there to take in your surroundings, appreciate the history and the culture and enjoy yourself.”

Walk Japan is the pioneer of off-the-beaten track Japanese tours having started in Hong Kong when a couple of professors took their students to

Japan to introduce them to the beauty and culture and history of the country. Since then they have introduced thousands of people from around the world to the extensive world of Japan. Places steeped in history. Now they are introducing a new trail to meet the growing demand for authentic and adventurous travel experiences.

Fully Guided

The Izu Geo Trail is the latest addition to Walk Japan’s tours that deliver a fascinating up-close and personal



experience with Japanese culture, its people and their way of life. The Izu Geo Trail is a fully-guided, Level 3 tour suitable for anyone who is an occasional walker and can walk for more than three to four hours in comfort. In general, the route is gently undulating but also includes some short, steep ascents and descents.

The maximum number of people that Walk Japan will take on the Izu Geo Trail is 12. The first excursion will set off in November 2016 in an in-depth exploration of a fascinating and diverse corner of Japan and one of the most unique geological areas on Earth. Although only 150km from the giant metropolis of Tokyo, Izu – with its distinctly different landscape and climate akin to a sub-tropical island – is a world away from the capital.

Fantastic Scenery

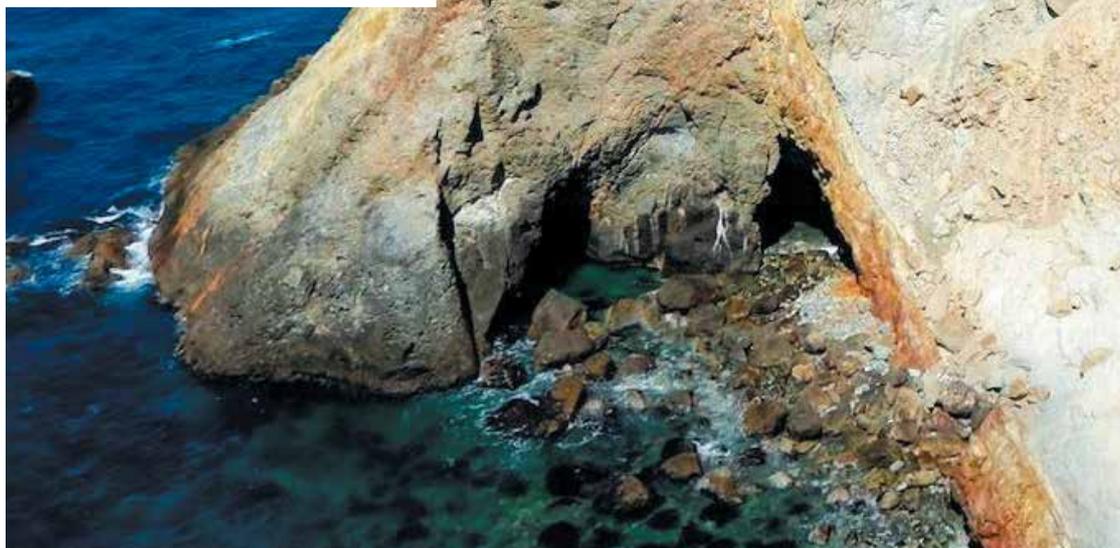
The Izu Geo Trail weaves its way south along the peninsula's east coast and mountainous central spine to its southernmost tip at Cape Irozaki before returning along the west coast to Shuzenji, a charming and atmospheric onsen thermal hot spring resort town. The cobalt-blue Pacific Ocean almost completely surrounds Izu and provides the backdrop to a rugged and intricately carved coastline of bays and soaring precipices.

The Izu Dancer

As with all Walk Japan tours, the Izu Geo Trail tells a tale of its own – the Izu Peninsula was immortalised in Yasunari Kawabata's short story *The Izu Dancer*. The author, who was awarded Japan's first Nobel Prize for Literature in 1968, fictionalised his

own juvenile experience falling in love with a young itinerant dancing girl while travelling through Izu – from time to time the journey coincides with Kawabata's route.

Izu is also renowned for the momentous events that unfolded at Shimoda, at the southern end of the peninsula. In 1854, Admiral Perry arrived here with his fleet of 'Black Ships', forcing Japan to open its ports to foreign trade. This shock set in motion the fall of the shogun in 1868 and launched Japan on its rapid path of modernisation and industrialisation. The Izu Geo Trail visits Shimoda, today a quiet backwater; its hand-built streetscape belies the turmoil once unleashed here.



Tokyo Start

The 7-day, 6-night walking trip also offers private tours available for groups of family and friends. The first scheduled tour starts on 15 November 2016 in Tokyo and finishes in Shuzenji in Izu. This trail explores the Izu Peninsula, one of the most unique geological areas on Earth. Izu with its distinctly different landscape and climate akin to a sub-tropical island – is a world away from the capital.

Izu was created by the tectonic forces that still shape the Japanese islands. Volcanic submarine activity some 20 million years ago wrought a landmass that was forced into collision with Honshu, Japan's main island, as the Philippine Sea Plate pushed against the Eurasian Plate – a process which continues to this day.

The landscape of this former island,

now the Izu Peninsula, is redolent of Earth's most primeval forces, bubbling with seismic and geothermal activity, peppered with volcanoes and carved by both river and sea. Izu has constantly been renewed and remoulded, and the result is a fascinating geological treasure trove to explore and enjoy.

Onsen Evenings

While you weave your way south along the peninsula's east coast to its southernmost tip at Cape Irozaki all you are going to have to push along your plate is some of the most delicious seafood that you will ever experience.

Then you will return north along the west coast to Shuzenji, a charming and atmospheric onsen thermal hot spring resort town. The cobalt-blue Pacific Ocean almost completely surrounds Izu and provides the backdrop to a rugged and intricately carved coastline of bays

and soaring precipices. Symmetrical columnar cliffs, formed by rapidly cooling lava, tower over the ocean, which has in turn eroded fissures in the cliffs, carving out sea caves that echo to the sound of crashing waves. In the sheltered inlets, tiny fishing villages, evocative of a more sedate age, are watched over by ancient shrines built to protect against the forces of nature and to give thanks for the seas' bounty.

Wow the Wasabi

In the peninsula's mountainous and forested hinterland, myriad natural springs provide a continuous supply of pure water that cascades over numerous waterfalls, through gorges and valleys, to the coast. In the mountains, the water nurtures wasabi green horseradish, an essential complement to Izu's prized seafood.

The surrounding seas vary from



shallow coastal waters to depths of 2,000m (6,562ft) or more and provide a rich environment for varied and abundant sea life. Not surprisingly, seafood is a significant part of the local diet, so much so that Walk Japan cannot recommend the Izu Geo Trail to anyone who does not care for it. For those who do, Izu is a fish-lovers' paradise and on this trek you can enjoy some of the freshest available. Depending on the season meals may include spider crab, squid, lobster, sea bream and many more varieties.

Connections by Train

All accommodation, most of which sits beside the ocean, incorporate onsen thermal hot spring baths for a delightful and leisurely way to relax before the evening's culinary feast. The Izu Geo Trail ventures to some of the most scenic areas of the Izu Peninsula and includes, on clear days, spectacular

views of Mt. Fuji. The group meets in Tokyo and travels by train to Izu Kogen, where a dedicated vehicle awaits that will be used for much of the journey.

Importantly, the pace is easy to moderate and there is no rush to negotiate any climb. The main baggage travels in the vehicle except for the train from Tokyo to Izu. Onward journeys at the end of the tour from Shuzenji to Tokyo and other areas of Japan are easily accomplished by train. Walk Japan provides tour participants with easily followed, detailed instructions on how to join the tour.

No Minimum

What is included and not included? A fully guided tour including local travel from tour meeting point to finishing point; accommodation for six nights; six breakfasts and six evening meals, baggage transfers and entrance fees.

Not included are flights, all lunches and drinks with meals.

The small, intimate nature of the tour makes the maximum group size 12 people. There is no minimum size. If Walk Japan accepts a booking the tour will take place. **A**

POCKET GUIDE

Contact Walk Japan for more information and to book this tour.

Detailed information about the Izu Geo Trail can be found on Walk Japan's website <http://www.walkjapan.com/tour/izu-geo-trail/> and on the Walk Japan Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/walkjapan?fref=ts>