

Japan Folding Bike Tour Spring 2023

See Japan from your own folding bicycle!

Japan has reopened to
overseas visitors!



The concept...

- An escorted 2-week, self-supported tour through Japan using your own folding bike in Spring 2023 (tentative)
- Ride Japan Rail trains with your folded bike to each destination (JR Pass)
- Cycle through Tokyo, Kamakura, Kyoto, Shiga Prefecture, and other destinations
- Encounters with craftspeople, artists, shopkeepers, with plenty of room for the unexpected and serendipitous encounter and memories that can last a lifetime
- Stay at inns, guest houses, hostels, and at local people's homes
- Your fully-bilingual guide, Alex Kent, has over 40 years of Japan experience



2016 tour

6 members + guide



Setting out in Tokyo
(6-member group + guide)

2016 Itinerary:

- Tokyo
- Kamakura
- Kyoto
- Kurashiki
- Shimanami Kaido bikeway across the Inland Sea
- Naoshima: Art island

This was a 6-person group, with members from Amherst, MA, New York City, Toronto, Calgary, and New Zealand



Great Buddha (Kotoku-in) in
Kamakura



Garden with “borrowed scenery”
(*shakkei*)



Our guest house in Kyoto
Typical *machiya* house
(sadly, no longer operating, but I'll
find something comparable!)



Conveyor belt sushi
Wait for it...



Kyoto City Hall
Bike safety week



Three bikes:
Read to roll!

2019 tour

8 members + guide



Ready to set out on exploration of Tokyo

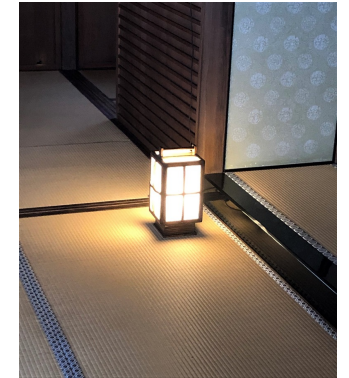


Typical bike setup: Rear rack carries each rider's clothes, etc. with a lightweight carrying bag for the bike. The bike must be fully enclosed in the bag to pass through train station turnstiles to board trains. Lightweight fold luggage cart makes it easy to tow the folded-and-bagged bike without much effort.

2019 Itinerary

8 members, 6 of whom were from the Seattle area plus a couple from Baltimore.

- Tokyo
- Kamakura
- Kyoto
- Shiga Prefecture (classic youth hostel, homestays in farming village)
- Kanazawa
- Takayama in Gifu Prefecture



Old Tokyo: Tsukishima street scene



Cycling along the Kamo River in Kyoto. One of the great urban bicycle routes.

From Kyoto, we boarded a local train to the southern tip of Lake Biwa, Japan's largest lake, and cycled to Omihachiman



At the Omihachiman Youth Hostel, near Lake Biwa, Shiga Formerly a chamber of commerce building, repurposed about 50 years ago as a youth hostel.



Cycling along Lake Biwa, Japan's largest lake A beautiful day, but strong winds!



Our musicologist member finds a traditional instrument shop in Kanazawa and tries out a *shamisen*



Last breakfast together in Takayama, Gifu Prefecture. The food and ambiance here were extraordinary!



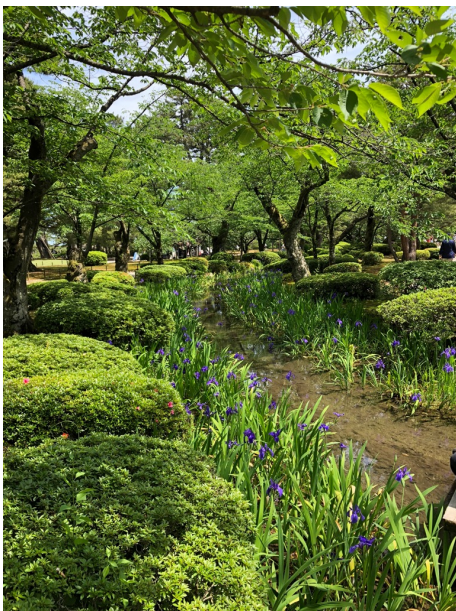
Heading back to Tokyo at the end of our 2-week sojourn



Takayama canal at night

The inn at Takayama. Amazing glass collection. Showcases lining the corridors.





Kenrokuen garden,
Kanazawa, Ishikawa Pref.

Costs

There will be a flat-rate per-person charge for Alex's services. All other expenses (flight, JR rail pass, food, lodging, travel insurance, incidentals) will be the responsibility of each participant.

Alex Kent, Japanese translator, interpreter, and lover of most things Japanese, will be your guide on a 2-week tour of Japan by folding bike in October 2022. This will be for an unforgettable, close-to-the-ground, people-to-people jaunt through Tokyo, Kamakura, Kyoto, and other destinations.

The tour will combine intercity travel by train with local travel under our own power on folding bikes. Why folding bikes? Because it's so much easier to transport them on Japanese trains, and once we reach our destination, the bikes give us the freedom to explore, to experience, to adventure.

You do not need to be a competitive cyclist; this is **not** a race! Daily mileage will vary from just a few miles up to 15~20 miles. You just need to feel comfortable and secure on your bike (we will be riding in traffic).

Tour participants will bring their own folding bikes. Such bikes can easily be folded and carried onto trains at no extra charge. We exit the train station, saddle up, ride over to our lodgings to drop off our bags...and then, FREEDOM! Reverse the process to get back on the train and onward to the next destination.

Often, it's the serendipitous encounter that leaves the most lasting impression: The conversations with the tofu-seller, the middle-aged woman practicing her English, the woodworker whose shop door happens to be open. Don't worry: Alex will be there to interpret for you!

Costs will be kept low by staying at bed-and-breakfasts (*minshuku*), at hostels, and occasionally at hotels. We will try to avoid hotels anyway because they are not the best places to meet people. After all, it is people we will be looking to meet.