

# People and Nature Thriving together on Mount Fuji



## Story

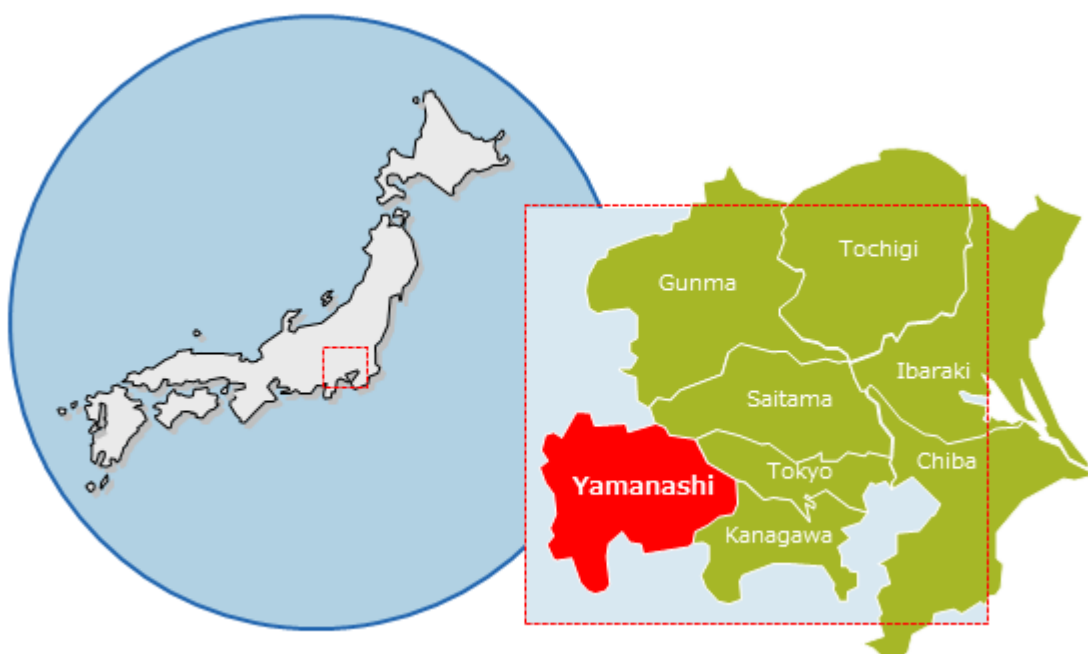
Aokigahara Jukai forest extends at the northern foot of Mount Fuji over an area that was formed some 12,000 years ago by the largest volcanic eruption known in Japanese history. Standing on a field of igneous rocks, the forest is noted for its beautiful tree formations, moss-covered ground and caves. With your guide, follow the nature trail as it rises and falls through the dense forest to discover the otherworldly beauty of Aokigahara and appreciate why this national treasure is known as the Sea of Trees. During this hike discover two astonishing "Ice Cave" and the "Wind Cave" and learn about lava fields, pits and the mysteries of the volcanic ecosystem. Aokigahara Jukai forest, where the Hollywood movie "The Sea of Trees" was filmed, is often said to affect the needle of a compass, turning the forest into a maze. Aokigahara Jukai Forest is one of a number of places in the foothills of Mt. Fuji where the energy of nature is palpable. Under Fuji Mountain's omnipresent gaze, discover your own inner energy through canoeing and cycling on and around Lake Kawaguchi.

Visit Ide Sake Brewery, which has been in business since the Edo period (1603-1867), and understand why creative people such as 20th-century textile artist and Fuji-worshipper Kubota Itchiku and Yoshino Takahiro the Zen Chair craftsman who is dedicated to preserving the forests around lake where he grew up, made this area their home.

**Highlights:**

- Hike through Aokigahara Jukai to experience the forest's energy and mystique. The hiking trail is like a maze through the forest.
- Canoe on Lake Kawaguchi with Mt. Fuji as your backdrop.
- Cycle around Lake Kawaguchi while admiring Mt. Fuji, worshipped by Kubota Itchiku, and the forests of Lake Kawaguchi, so beautiful that Yoshino Takahiro made the decision to protect them.
- Visit Ide Brewery to learn from the owner of a sake brewery that has been in business for over 320 years about the history of Lake Kawaguchi and the changes that have taken place.

**Location:** Lake Kawaguchi, Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan



**Main Activity:** Hiking, Cycling

**Difficulty level:** 2

**Tour Period:** April-October recommended (wintertime is also possible)

**Pax:** Minimum 2, Maximum 10

# Itinerary

## Day 1 – Aokigahara Jukai Hiking Adventure

(Your luggage is forwarded to your accommodation in Kawaguchiko the day before.)

After breakfast, head to the Shinjuku Expressway Bus Terminal and board the express bus departing at 9:15. Arrive at Kawaguchiko Station, the starting point of the tour, at 11:00. There, you will find restrooms, souvenir shops and also many options for your lunch around the station. Your local guide will meet you at 13:00 at Kawaguchiko Station and give you all the information you need for the two days. The bus bound for Narusawa Ice Cave departs at 13:35 and arrives at 14:05. Together with your guide, enter Narusawa Ice Cave, a 153-meter (502 feet) long circular pit covered with ice all year round. The icicles that have formed from water dripping from the cave ceiling are a must-see. After visiting this first cave, have an exciting 30 minutes hike inside Aokigahara Jukai forest, one of Japan's largest primeval forests. Following your guide on a well-maintained rugged trail inside a sea of trees, you will experience the mysterious sensation of walking over an ancient lava flow.

At the other end of the path, enter a second cave, Fugaku Wind Cave, designated a national natural monument. Inside, the average temperature is 3° Centigrade (37.4° Fahrenheit). Once used as a natural refrigerator for storing silkworms and preserving seeds, the cave features icicles that never melt, even in summer. Other intriguing features of this cave are the inner basalt walls that absorb the sound, the lava shelves and ropey lava running through the pit.

Catch the 16:44 bus from Fugaku Wind Cave to arrive at Lake Kawaguchi at 17:15. Walk to the hotel, collect your luggage at the front desk and check-in. Enjoy a multi-course Kaiseki dinner at the hotel.

### Lunch

- On own

### Dinner

- Multi-course kaiseki diner

**Activity:** Visiting Caves and Aokigahara Jukai hiking: Approx. 3 hours

**Difficulty level:** 2

# Itinerary

## Day 2 – Lake Kawaguchi Canoeing and Cycling

(Besides a one-day bag, your luggage is forwarded to your next destination. Any small belongings can be left at the bike rental store.)

After breakfast at the hotel, meet your guide at the front desk. If necessary, ask your guide to help with your luggage transfer. Walk to the bike rental store in front of the station to get an e-bike (electric bicycle) and ride to Lake Kawaguchi at 9:15. The distance of 5.5 kilometers (3.4 miles) takes about 30 minutes by e-bike. At 9:45, arrive at "Lake Systems" for Canadian canoeing experience on Lake Kawaguchi, one of the Fuji Five Lakes. Mt. Fuji looks particularly beautiful when seen from the perspective of the lake. The instructor will teach you basic paddling techniques and give you safety tips. This activity is a great way to interact with nature and can be enjoyed all year round. After canoeing, have lunch at T's Café in Fuji Oishi Hana Terrace near Oishi Park from 12:20 to 13:00. The Café serves delicious Western dishes like pasta, pizza, sandwiches and savory ice cream made with milk fresh from the foothills of Mt. Fuji. At 13:15, visit Yoshino Takahiro's studio, also situated in Oishi Park. Yoshino, a former carpenter is the inventor of the Zen Chair, a custom made wood crafted chair that fits the clients skeleton to allow a correct posture when seated. Raised in Yamanashi prefecture's forest area, Yoshino moved his studio when he realised that lake Kawaguchi's climate was perfect for woodwork. He is also very active in the preservation of the local forests, which cover some 78 percent of Yamanashi Prefecture. (\*The studio keeps irregular hours. If closed, spend time in Oishi Park appreciating the seasonal flowers.)

At 13:45 p.m. leave Oishi Park and cycle 1.8 kilometers (1.1 miles) to discover outstanding kimonos at Itchiku Kubota Art Museum. The ride takes about 10 minutes. Artist Itchiku Kubota (1917-2003) is famous for reviving a long lost tie-dye technique called tsujigahana. This technique from the Muromachi period (1336-1573) combined stich dyeing, hand painting, gold and silver embroidery. Integrating this old method with new materials and designs, Kubota's sumptuous kimono creations show a unique level of artistry. Toward the end of his life, Kubota witnessed a crimson Mt. Fuji lighted up by the morning sun and created many pieces directly inspired by the vision of the sacred mountain. In that impressive museum at the foothills of Mount-Fuji, Kubota's resplendent art continues to fascinate people from around the world.

At 14:55, return to lake Kawaguchi Station by bike. The ride covers 4.6 kilometers (approx. 3 miles) and takes 25 minutes. [O8], walk about five minutes to the tour's final Ide Brewery. In addition to the sake tasting experience, listen to the brewery owner as he tells the story of Lake Kawaguchi and recounts 320 years of history in which humans have thrived under the watchful eye of Mt. Fuji.

### Breakfast

- American-style breakfast at the hotel

### Lunch

- Pasta, pizza and ice cream made with milk from the foothills of Mt. Fuji

**Activity:** Lake Kawaguchi canoeing: 2 hours, water depth: 15 m (50 ft.)  
Lake Kawaguchi cycling: 65min., 12.4 km (7.7 miles) in total

**Difficulty level:** 2



# Reference Price

JPY 77,300 per person~

\*In case of 1 room for 2 persons

## What's included

- Round trip express bus ticket (Shinjuku-Kawaguchiko) \*All seats reserved
- Hotel charges (for lodging, 2 meals)
- Aokigahara Jukai tour guide
- Local bus fare (lake Kawaguchi-Narusawa Ice Cave & Fugaku Wind Cave-Kawaguchiko Station)
- Fugaku Wind Cave admission fee
- Narusawa Ice Cave admission fee
- Bike rental fee
- Cycling guide fee
- Canoeing fee
- Itchiku Kubota Art Museum admission fee

## We provide & What to bring

### We provide

- Rental equipment (canoe, life jacket, paddles)

### What to bring

#### Aokigahara Jukai Hiking

- Loose-fitting clothes that may get a little dirty
- Sports shoes/sneakers. Please do not wear sandals or high heels, which are difficult to walk in and can be dangerous.
- Sunhat to prevent heat stroke and protect your head when entering caves
- Thick outerwear. The temperature inside the caves ranges from 0°C (32°F) to 4°C (39.2°F) all year round. The experience is similar to spending 15 minutes in a fridge. You won't freeze but if you are concerned, please bring a warm jacket.
- Raincoat
- Drinking water to prevent heat stroke during hot weather

#### Canoeing

- Please wear loose-fitting clothes and comfortable shoes that are suitable for the season. Your shoes and clothes may get wet.

#### Cycling

- Loose-fitting clothes and comfortable shoes

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**Tour Operator / Contact****JTB Global Marketing & Travel Inc.**

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