



LEGENDARY JAPAN: A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY WITH MAGDALENA SOLE

Ever seen hundreds of Jizo statues, stayed at a temple, or wondered how a pilgrimage trail has compelled people for over a thousand years? Have you washed away the day's fatigue in a soothing onsen that is also a World Heritage Site?

Have you smelled Kimchi in the air of a Korean market, or witnessed the bright lights of downtown Osaka? Have you visited a traditional craftsman and National Treasure in his very own thatched-roof workshop? Have you seen a moss garden, or waited for a Geisha to quietly rush from one establishment in Gion to the next?

If you ever wanted to venture further with your photography than what meets the eye, if you are curious and interested in cultural experiences different from your own, then join us for our fall photographic journey in Japan.

TRIP DURATION:
11 days, 10 nights

DATES:
October 18-28, 2015

ACCOMMODATIONS: Hotel Hokousou in Osaka, Hotel Rengejyon in Mount Koya, Hotel Yoshinoya Ryokan in Yunomine, Hotel Gimmond Kyoto in Kyoto, or similars.

PRICE: \$5,795 USD. Add \$495 for single occupancy
Includes: Expert leader, accommodations, internal transportation, all breakfasts, 3 lunches, 4 dinners, entrance fees to all monuments, museums and more per itinerary.



Japan is vibrant and colorful. It is a country where the traditional and the modern collide. Where age-old customs and rituals survive, while the brash thrust of modernity continues to hurtle forward, as evidenced in its neon-lit, concrete cityscapes. Time-honored Japanese traditions, including sumo wrestling, tea ceremony and meditation, are still prevalent practices, but Japan is also a breeding ground for cutting edge subcultures and bold and bright street fashions. With such a multifaceted culture, encompassing so many different aspects, Japanese culture resists easy definition; it has to be experienced from the inside.

On this photographic journey, not only will you get to observe the uniqueness and many contradictions of Japan, but you will also photograph life close-up. Documentary photographers will find interesting backdrops, events and subjects around every corner. The locations visited during the photography journey, which range from ancient mountaintop pilgrimage sites to the steel and the concrete metropolis of Osaka, will be an abundant source of inspiration and will provide photographic challenges to help participants hone their skills.

ITINERARY

October 18 – 20: Osaka

The photo journey begins in Osaka. You will arrive on October 18 and will start exploring the sights the following day.

As one of Japan's main business centers, Osaka is a busy and much-developed metropolis. This high-rise concrete center

plays host to many of the world's most familiar multinational companies. Yet, as you will see during this photographic journey, this corporate image is only one small part of Osaka's identity; the city has many more facets. Having been inhabited for more than 1,500 years, it also has a significant history, boasting impressive monuments including the formidable 16th-century Osaka Castle. This dazzlingly white multi-tiered fortress still stands in Osaka and is set amid an impressive urban park that, during autumn, is awash with fiery red-orange foliage. At the same time Osaka is culturally very distinct from the rest of Japan, home to many different minorities and unique customs.

The city is also famous as a destination for food lovers, and good cuisine is easy to find here. Even the fuss-free street snacks, including octopus dumplings, battered and deep-fried meat skewers and okonomiyaki (savory Japanese pancakes), are of a high standard.

During your time in Osaka, you will document some of the city's most interesting neighborhoods, where photographic opportunities abound. Take in the sights of Osaka's Korean Market and capture the flurry of action as you point your lens at the labyrinth of stalls. This sprawling maze of shops and stands caters to Osaka's sizeable Korean population and sells everything from Kimchi and Bibimbap, to imported k-pop trinkets. As the hustle and bustle of the market swirls ceaselessly around you, wait to capture the perfect moment.

You will also have the opportunity to see the Ebisu Bridge, a prime people-

watching spot with a colorful backdrop: a patchwork of neon advertisements plastered on the surrounding buildings. There will also be opportunities to photograph some of the city's nightlife. Finish up the day by sampling some of Osaka's famous cuisine over dinner in Tennoji, home to the traditional downtown area of Osaka and the Eiffel Tower-inspired Tsutenkaku Tower.

Overnight at Hotel Hokousou or similar

October 20 – 22: Osaka - Mount Koya

Leave Osaka and travel south to Mount Koya, a sacred mountain site located in a peaceful rural area of Wakayama Prefecture. Set in an epic natural location high above the cedar-covered valleys and surrounded by forested mountain peaks, this monastic complex is one of Japan's holiest sites and the headquarters of the Shingon Buddhist sect.

While at Mount Koya, not only will you get to explore the monasteries of Koya san, but you will also get to follow in the footsteps of ancient pilgrims. With a camera in hand, trek along ancient pilgrimage trails that lead up the forested slopes. You will stay overnight in a traditional temple lodging, one of several dotted around the hills. Gain insight into age-old traditions as you lodge with the monks, witnessing their meditation and prayer ceremonies — rituals that date back a millennium and often more.

While exploring the sacred mountain complex and its surroundings, get tips on how best to approach photographing quiet moments, while remaining respectful of the sacred sites. You will

also receive practical advice on expanding your photographic technique by reviewing the grammar of photography.

Overnight at Hotel Rengejyon or similar

October 22: Mount Koya - Yunomine

Leave Mount Koya by private bus and depart for Yunomine, a small and quaint village tucked away in a valley amid the forested emerald slopes. Yunomine is home to some of the oldest hot springs in Japan and the isolated town is built around these bubbling pools. In the past, weary pilgrims would have stopped here and performed water purification rituals in the piping springs en route to worship at nearby sacred sites. While here, you can bathe in the onsen and use them to rest and rejuvenate. Tsubo-yu, the famous onsen in the center of town is renowned for being the oldest hot spring in Japan and the only hot spring bath that is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Onsen play a central role in Japanese culture and they are still commonly used as a gathering place for friends, as well as for their health benefits. Spend a leisurely night in this secluded hot-spring resort.

Overnight at Hotel Yoshinoya Ryokan or similar

October 23: Yunomine - Kumano Kodo -Kyoto

Today, you will discover another of Japan's sacred mountain sites, and walk along the UNESCO-listed Kumano Kodo. The Kumano Kodo is a series of ancient pilgrim routes that crisscross the Kii Hantō, the largest Peninsula of Japan, connecting Mount Koya, the Three Grand Shrines, and many other important holy sites.

Our bus will leave us off at the trail head in the Kii Mountain Range, marked by a little shrine from where we will begin a half day modest hike along the millennium old sacred pilgrimage trail of the Kumano Kodo. We will walk through cedar forests, see mountain ridges, old villages and

farmhouses along the way. The path will lead to the Kumano Hongu Taisha shrine, one of three grand shrines in the Kumano area and a stunning example of Japanese shrine architecture. Like many of Japan's shrines, it was built using no nails and instead is propped up through meticulously fitted and labor-intensive joint work. After admiring the tranquil environs of the grounds we will take a short walk to the Hosshinmon-oji gate. Known as the "gate of awakening of the aspiration to enlightenment", it marks the threshold to the divine precincts of Kumano, which are set in the most awe-inspiring natural setting. As evening falls, we will travel north by bus and train through the mountains and along the sea to reach Kyoto.

Overnight at Hotel Gimmond Kyoto or similar

October 23-28: Kyoto

Kyoto, the ancient capital, is a photographer's dream. Home to more than 2,000 remarkable Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples, just a little exploration here can turn up an abundance of photographic opportunities. There are shimmering gold pavilions, robed monks, calming Zen gardens, narrow cobbled streets lined with old wooden houses juxtaposed to a modern, dynamic and sprawling city.

During four days in Kyoto, you will have the opportunity to visit the Tenjin-san flea market, a monthly event that sees as many as 1,000 vendors set up shop at the Kitano Tenmangu shrine to sell everything from antiques to food. You will also get to visit the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Kokedera temple, famous for its exceptionally beautiful moss garden — the design for which dates back to 1339. Though not big, the garden is ethereal and especially beautiful after rain when the sun casts its dappled light on the glistening moss-covered surroundings. With entrance numbers restricted here, it makes a quiet and intriguing place to shoot, or just to spend some time reflecting.

On the third day in Kyoto (October 26), leave the city for a day and travel to the countryside outside Kyoto to visit a National Treasure, Japan's famous indigo textile artist Hiroyuki Shindo. Located in a quaint village of thatched-roof farmhouses, you will visit Shindo's workroom and gallery, which offers insight into the practice and the work of this highly acclaimed and respected indigo dyer and artist. After exploring the studio, you will have the chance to capture images of traditional village life in the surrounding thatched dwellings.

Spend the final day in Kyoto exploring the Gion district, a remnant of Old Japan. This neighborhood is home to one of Japan's few surviving geisha districts. Geishas can still be seen hushing from one establishment to another in the narrow alleys in their vivid and elaborately draped kimonos. With numerous traditional teahouses, historic buildings and busy people-watching spots, you can capture timeless and evocative scenes of traditional city life in the old imperial capital.

Overnight at Hotel Gimmond Kyoto or similar

October 28: Kyoto to Osaka Itami Airport

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

This class is for photographers of all levels.

REQUIREMENTS

Each student is responsible for bringing their own camera and equipment, including a laptop.

ABOUT MAGDALENA SOLE



Magdalena Magdalena Sole is a social documentary photographer. She is best known for her vibrant and complex color work. Visual language has been her life's work. In 1989 she founded TransImage, a graphic design studio, in New York City. In 2002 she graduated with a Masters of Fine Art in Film from Columbia University. Her last film, "Man On Wire", on which she was the Unit Production Manager, won an Oscar in 2009. She has taught in Europe and the US.

Her projects span the globe. Her current work includes: Kamagasaki — a photo documentary on the shunned elderly day laborers of Japan. Japan — "After the Water Receded", an exploration of the aftermath of the great 2011 Tohoku disaster, which was shown at the Sidney Mishkin Gallery in April 2012 in New York City. Most recently her photographs of the Mississippi Delta have been selected as a PDN Photo Annual 2011 Finalist. Her book "New Delta Rising", published by the University Press of Mississippi, was released in February 2012. It has won the Silver Award in 2011 at PX3 Prix de la Photographie, France. She is also winner of the Silver Prize 2011 at Slow Exposures, Concord, GA. Other shows in 2012 are Voices from Japan at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine in New York City, Dante and the Delta at Doma Gallery in Charlotte, NC, The Delta at WilJax Gallery in Cleveland, MS, and Sous Les Étoiles in New York City. The Mississippi Delta is on view until February 22, 2013 at the Leica Gallery in New York.

Born in Spain, raised in Switzerland, she arrived in New York City in 1984, where she lives with her family. She speaks seven languages.

www.solepictures.com

TERMS & CONDITIONS

To reserve space in this workshop, a \$500 per person deposit is required at the time of making the reservation. Deposits are due no later than 90 days prior to departure. Final payment is due no later than 60 days prior to departure unless indicated otherwise in the description of the tour or workshop. All payments must be made by credit card or wire transfer to Photo Xpeditions, LLC, and instructions for payments will be mailed upon confirmation of participation.

Photo Xpeditions reserves the right to cancel a reservation if full payment has not been received by 60 days prior to departure. For reservations made within 60 days of the departure date, full payment is required when the reservation is accepted. All cancellation notices must be received in writing and will become effective as of the date of the postmark. If you cancel 90 days or more prior to departure, a refund less an administrative fee equal to 50% of your deposit will be made. Per person charges for cancellations that occur less than 90 days prior to departure are as follows:

60–90 days prior to departure: 100% of your deposit amount;

45–60 days prior to departure: 50% of the expedition cost;

45 or fewer days prior to departure: 100% of the workshop cost.

PhotoXpeditions reserves the right of canceling the workshop at any time if the minimum amount of students required for the workshop is not reached. If a workshop needs to be cancelled for this reason, a full refund will be given to all participants.

If you need more information or have questions, give us a call or drop us an email, we will respond promptly.

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