



Inner Peace: Exploring Japan and Mindfulness

Mindfulness is something now practised by millions around the world as an antidote to the stresses of modern life. However, mindfulness is not a new practice in Japan, in fact it's something which has been ingrained into the very fabric of its culture.

What images spring to mind when thinking about mindfulness? Zen temples, rock gardens, meditating monks, and forest bathing might be a few of the visions you conjured up! While these may be amongst what is commonly sold as mindfulness, it goes much deeper into Japanese culture than that.



Mindfulness can be woven into the simple everyday acts which make up our lives. Even folding your clothes can be turned from a mundane household task into a feat of mindfulness. Popularised by Marie Kondo - showing gratitude to the garments, being aware of the fabric, slowing down and honouring the article of clothing, this can all be mindfulness. This awareness of the moment and paying attention to what may be perceived as the small mundane things that make up our lives has the power to ground us and keep us conscious of what we are doing.



Of course, at the other end of the spectrum, there are many ways one can practise mindfulness as an act on its own. Something which has become part of many people's day to day lives is meditation - with apps like Headspace guiding many on a journey towards better mental health. What may be considered the origin of this, seated Buddhist meditation or [zazen](#) can still be seen practised in Zen temples across Japan. Members of the public can even get their own taste of [zazen](#) at temples which offer this experience. Be prepared for some leg numbing meditation as you're expected to sit still for up to an hour at a time!

Mindfulness can be something which provides a regular respite from the speed of modern life and brings us back to the present, living in the moment. On your visit to Japan will you take time to try out one of the many mindful activities available? Head to our blog post below to find out more about [Yamabushi](#) and their more extreme form of mindfulness pursued in the mountains of Japan.



Blog Post

Head to our blog to read all about our Yamabushi experience

[Read more](#)

Expert Profile: Alia

See what Alia has to say about her recent Yamabushi hike...



WHY WOULD YOU RECOMMEND A YAMABUSHI HIKE?

Not just a challenging exploration of nature, this experience gives you personal insight into ancient aspects of Japanese culture. The mindfulness and reverence for all life embodied by the yamabushi can be very inspiring, energising you through difficult parts of the hike.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE EXPERICE ON THE HIKE?

I hiked with a yamabushi in Yamagata. Climbing up the masses of steps surrounded by massive ancient cedar trees was memorable in it's own right, but the impressive austere structure of the pagoda combined with the reverberation of the yamabushi's conch horn is unbeatable.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PRACTICING MNIDFULNESS?

As someone who regularly practices mindfulness as part of faith, I see the opportunity to stop and check in with yourself as massively beneficial. Taking an intentional moment from the stresses of life to take stock and connect to your immediate environment in the present allows you to resume on your own terms, rather than just be dragged along where life takes you.



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