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Photo Credits

Welcome



A dirt path with a mountain in the background — Sabari Nathan

There is a moment, somewhere around the fifth station, when the forest falls away and the mountain reveals itself in full. The trees — ancient cedar and pine that have lined the lower path for centuries — give way to open volcanic slope, and suddenly you understand why this peak has been worshipped for over a thousand years. Above you, the great cone of **Mount Fuji** rises in a series of darkened lava ridges, each one steeper than the last, disappearing into cloud or, on a clear morning, into a sky so blue it seems almost impossibly saturated. Behind you, the Fuji Five Lakes shimmer in the valleys below, and beyond them, the patchwork plains of Yamanashi Prefecture stretch toward the horizon. You are standing on the flank of Japan's most sacred mountain, and everything — the cold air catching in your lungs, the crunch of volcanic gravel beneath your boots, the distant clang of a station bell — feels entirely, unmistakably real.

The **Yoshida Trail**, also known as the **Subashiri-Yoshida Trail** in its upper reaches, is the oldest and most storied of Mount Fuji's four official climbing routes. For centuries, pilgrims dressed in white robes walked this very path from the town of Fujiyoshida, purifying themselves at the **Fujisan Sengen Shrine** before beginning the long ascent to the crater rim. They carried wooden staffs branded with the names of each station they passed, collecting stamps as spiritual proof of their endurance and devotion. Today's hikers carry trekking poles and hydration packs, but the pull of the mountain remains unchanged. Something ancient is at work here. You feel it in the weight of the air, in the way other climbers fall instinctively quiet as they climb, in the profound silence that settles over the upper slopes in the hours before dawn.

Rainfall figures at the 5th Station can be misleading, because precipitation at the summit is considerably heavier and less predictable. Even on days when the lower mountain is clear, the summit cone can be shrouded in fast-moving cloud that brings sudden, drenching rain. The lesson is simple: **always carry full waterproof layers regardless of the morning forecast.**

Average Temperatures by Altitude During Climbing Season

Location / Altitude	July Avg. Temp	August Avg. Temp	September Avg. Temp
5th Station (~2,300m)	14°C	16°C	13°C
8th Station (~3,400m)	8°C	10°C	7°C
Summit (3,776m)	5°C	7°C	4°C
Summit (wind chill)	-5°C to 0°C	-3°C to 2°C	-7°C to -1°C

Wind deserves special attention in your planning. The summit of Mount Fuji is one of the windiest places in Japan, with gusts regularly exceeding **50–70 km/h** during storm events. Even on calm days, persistent winds of 20–30 km/h are common above the 8th Station. At these speeds, the temperature drop is significant and the risk of hypothermia rises sharply for anyone who has been sweating on the ascent. Layering strategy — specifically the ability to add and remove insulation quickly — is therefore one of the most important practical skills you can bring to this mountain.

When checking forecasts, use **tenki.to** or the **Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA)** website, both of which provide mountain-specific forecasts for Fuji. The dedicated Fuji weather page on the JMA site gives summit-level wind speed, temperature, and cloud cover up to several days in advance. Check it the evening before your climb and again on the morning of departure.

2.3 Permits & Booking

Since 2024, climbing Mount Fuji on the Yoshida Trail now requires advance planning in a way it did not previously. In response to overtourism and safety concerns, **Yamanashi Prefecture introduced a daily cap of 4,000 climbers** on the Yoshida Trail along with a mandatory climbing fee. Understanding the current system before you travel is critical — showing up at the 5th Station without the correct documentation will mean turning back.

The **climbing fee is ¥2,000 per person** (approximately USD \$13 / £10 / €12 at the time of writing), payable at the official gate near the 5th Station before you begin your ascent. This fee is separate from any conservation donation. When the daily cap of 4,000 climbers is reached, the gate closes and no further climbers are permitted to pass — even if they have paid. Because the cap can be reached on peak summer weekends by mid-morning, arriving early is not just good advice for summit timing; it is now a logistical necessity.

Rockfall and Trail Etiquette Safety

The upper Yoshida Trail funnels thousands of hikers through narrow volcanic gullies. **Helmet use is strongly recommended above the 7th Station** — rental helmets are available at the 5th Station. Never dislodge rocks, step outside marked trail boundaries, or overtake aggressively on steep sections. If you hear rocks falling above, press against the uphill slope and shout "*Raku-seki!*" (落石 — rockfall) to warn those below you.

Descending on volcanic scree is where most Fuji injuries happen. Lean slightly back, take short shuffling steps, and let the loose surface absorb your momentum. Do not run, regardless of how tempting the cushioned surface feels.

4.3 Weather Management & Decision Framework

Fuji's Weather Personality

Mount Fuji generates its own meteorology. Even on mornings when Fuji is perfectly visible from Kawaguchiko town, the summit cone can be enveloped in cloud by mid-morning. The mountain sits at the intersection of Pacific and continental air masses, making its upper atmosphere volatile and fast-changing. **Afternoon thunderstorms are common throughout the official season**, with convective activity building from late morning and typically peaking between 13:00 and 16:00. This single pattern shapes every strategic decision you make on the trail.

Pre-Departure Weather Assessment

Do not rely on a standard weather app's forecast for the summit — town-level forecasts are meaningless above 3,000 metres. Use dedicated mountain weather resources:

- **Tenki.to Mountain Weather (tenki.jp)**: Japan's most accurate dedicated mountain forecast, free and in English
- **Mountain Forecast (mountain-forecast.com)**: provides summit-specific forecasts including wind speed at altitude
- **Japan Meteorological Agency (jma.go.jp)**: official source for storm warnings and typhoon tracking
- Check forecasts the evening before and again at 04:00 on summit day

Decision Framework for Changing Conditions

The most important safety discipline on Fuji is establishing personal weather thresholds before you start climbing, so that decisions under pressure are already made. Emotion and summit fever are poor meteorologists.