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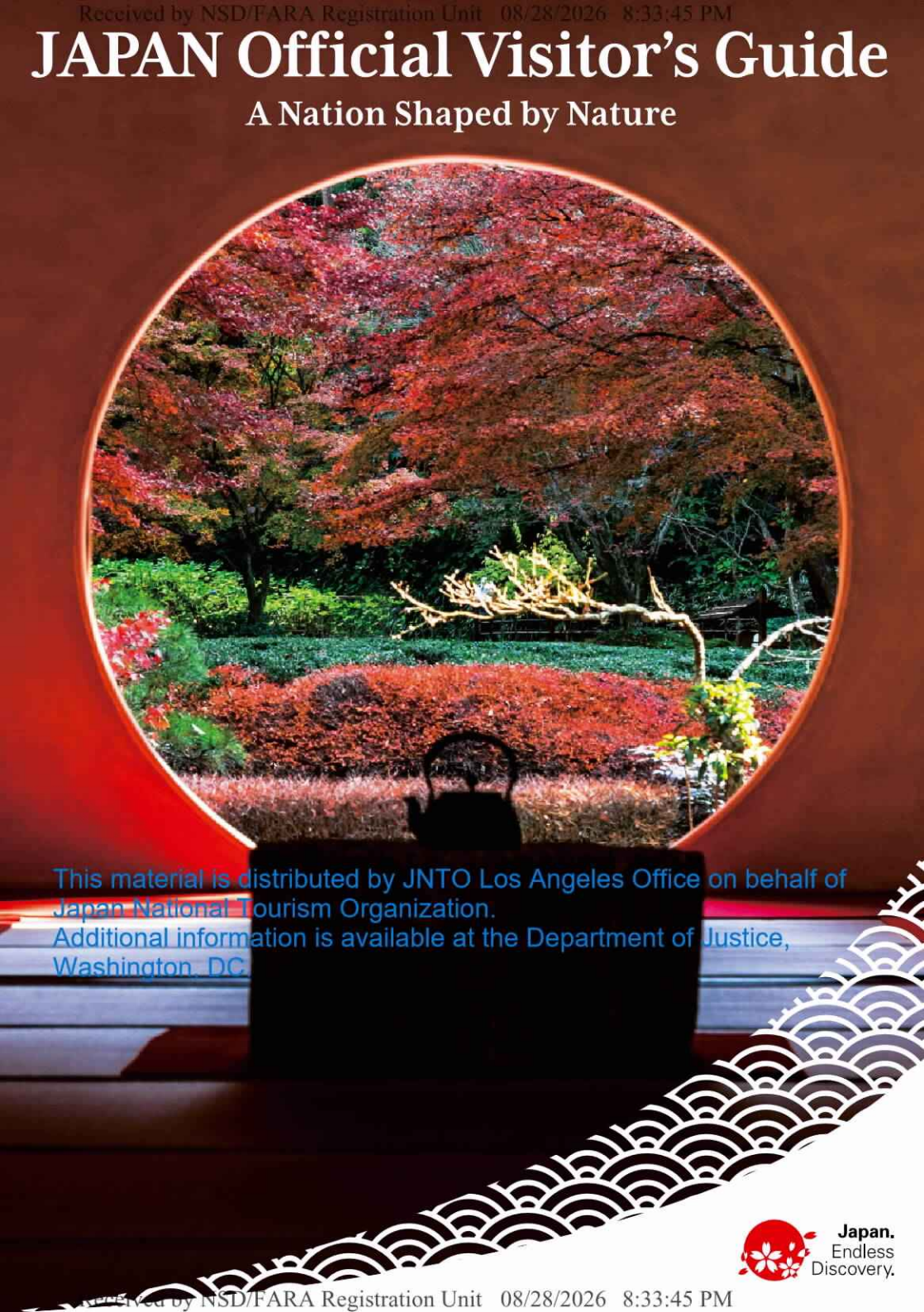
JAPAN Official Visitor's Guide

A Nation Shaped by Nature



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Japan.
Endless
Discovery.

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A Nation Shaped by Nature

Japan, a slender archipelago stretching from north to south, is a treasure trove of diverse natural wonders, with each season painting a unique and vivid portrait. Geographically and throughout the year, the nation is endowed with natural diversity, a defining feature that has intricately shaped its culture.

At the heart of Japan's cultural tapestry lies the distinctive essence of nature, a vital influence throughout its history. The Japanese people's refined aesthetic sensibilities are delicately interwoven with the rhythms of the country's natural landscapes. Whether in the realm of religion, art, or daily life, everything coexists harmoniously, creating a seamless blend with nature.

We invite you to embark on a journey where authentic activities effortlessly meld with Japan's unique natural backdrop. Lose yourself in a cultural experience that transcends the ordinary, a tapestry woven with deep respect for the natural world, a hallmark of the Japanese ethos.

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Cover photo: Meigetsuin Temple (Kamakura)

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Journey Further

Explore Unique Adventures Year-round, Nationwide

Underwater adventure

Japan offers incredible diving variety nationwide, including ice diving, and tropical locales with enchanting coral reefs, all with an array of marine life such as manta rays, sea turtles, and many other critters. This diversity makes the country an alluring diving and snorkeling spot with a season that lasts all year.

Mountain activities

Japan stands out as one of the world's premier mountainous nations, with almost 70% of its land enveloped by majestic peaks. The country offers a wide range of mountain activities, including camping and forest adventures ideal for kids as well as meticulously maintained hiking trails. Whether you are seeking tranquility in a mountain retreat or thrilling adventures, Japan's summer mountain activities cater to every explorer's whims.

Cycling

Discover Japan by bicycle, blending cultural exploration and scenic beauty, facilitated by a bike-friendly infrastructure. Access cycling maps and rental bikes at tourist information centers, guiding you through bustling city roads and scenic countryside vistas through historic temples, charming villages, and vibrant markets. There are six incredible national cycling routes from north to south, including the Shimanami Kaido.

Canyoning and rafting

With its abundance of mountains, Japan boasts numerous pristine streams offering the perfect canvas for canyoning and rafting escapades. Guided by seasoned experts, these exhilarating experiences provide a unique blend of adrenaline-pumping excitement and the awe-inspiring beauty of Japanese nature.

Minakami Tourism Association

Hiking and trekking

Japan's captivating landscapes offer a perfect blend of tradition and nature for avid hikers. Diverse routes weave through sacred mountains, ancient pilgrimage routes, shrines, and temples. Experience lush forests and tranquil valleys, and unwind in rejuvenating hot springs, making every step a unique adventure.

Japan's famed snow travel

From December to March, visitors from around the world gather in search of the perfect powder snow. Japan's coveted slopes make it an ideal destination for beginners, experts, and families alike. Dip in steamy hot springs for post-sports relaxation. The sight of trees blanketed in snow and rime ice formations known as "snow monsters" is simply amazing.

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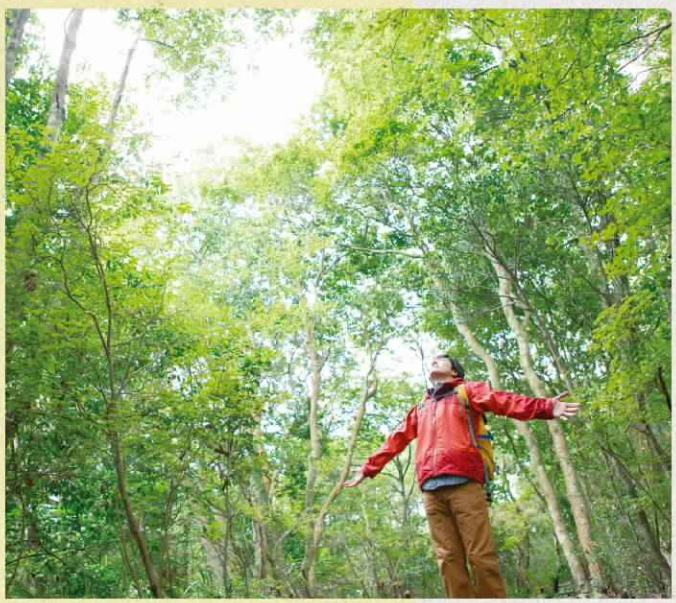


Forest bathing

Ever tried the simple yet therapeutic practice of forest bathing (*shinrin-yoku*)? This simply means spending time in a forest to appreciate nature: the myriad sounds, the gentle sunlight filtering through the trees, and the clean, fragrant air. Known to enhance mood and reduce stress, visit one of Japan's many wooded wonderlands to escape from the digital world and urban chaos, and find tranquility in nature's embrace.

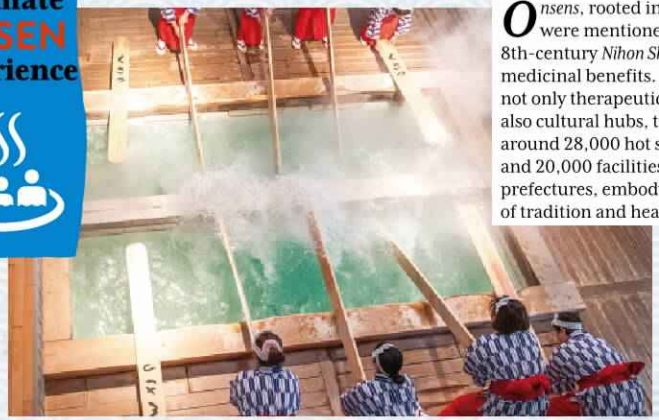
The Healing Power of Nature

Rediscover Yourself Through Japan's Unique Art of Relaxation

Zen meditation

Start your transformative journey with the ancient practice of *zazen*, a serene, seated meditation amidst the idyllic ambiance of Japanese temples and their meticulously crafted gardens. Soak in the gentle sounds of flowing water and rustling leaves, where the rhythmic breath is a gateway to inner tranquility. Zazen sessions are offered at temples throughout Japan.

The Ultimate ONSEN Experience



Hot springs

Onsens, rooted in Japan's history, were mentioned in the 8th-century *Nihon Shoki* for their medicinal benefits. Evolving into not only therapeutic retreats but also cultural hubs, today there are around 28,000 hot spring sources and 20,000 facilities across all 47 prefectures, embodying centuries of tradition and healing properties.

Onsen ryokan

For the quintessential onsen experience, immerse yourself in the charm of a *ryokan*, a traditional Japanese inn, for an exceptional hot spring experience, with many boasting luxurious features. Indulge in the pinnacle of relaxation by opting for a room with a private onsen. Beyond the soothing waters, savor local cuisine and explore nearby attractions. This holistic approach ensures an all-encompassing, tranquil, and rejuvenating experience during your visit.

Incredible diversity

Japan's onsens offer creative themes for fascinating experiences. Some replicate Edo period towns with historical architecture, while others feature scenic outdoor baths. These themed onsens enhance the hot spring experience by blending cultural and sensory delights. With hot springs classified into roughly 10 types based on chemical components, from skin-pampering alkaline to sterilizing acidic and therapeutic sulfur, each offers a unique experience. How many will you try?

Healing retreats

Many people embark on extended stays in hot spring areas to participate in *toji*, a form of balneotherapy aimed at recovering from illness or restoring well-being. With roots dating back around 1,500 years, toji enthusiasts engage in this practice not only for relaxation but also with the belief that the minerals and warmth of the hot springs can offer various health benefits.

Hot spring towns

Nestled in nature's embrace, these captivating destinations provide more than just soothing thermal waters. Immerse yourself in the diversity of local life as you wander charming streets with eateries offering regional delights. Discover hidden gems in souvenir shops, engage with authentic arts and traditions, and embrace the essence of the hot spring town in a traditional *yukata* robe.

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Culinary Excellence: Nature's Bounty, Artisan Dedication

A Trip Through Japan's Gastronomic Delights

Sake

Japanese sake, a rice-based alcoholic beverage, derives its nuanced flavors from an abundant natural environment, including pristine waters from lush forests. Primarily split into *Junmai-shu*, *Ginjo-shu*, and *Honjozo-shu*, distinctions arise from the degree of rice polishing and production method. Compare different varieties to savor the diverse influences of Japan's nature. And don't miss Japan's international award-winning whiskies and wines.

AFLO

Wagashi

Traditional Japanese sweets, or *wagashi*, encompass an extensive range, from meticulously crafted seasonal delicacies resembling works of art as well as everyday treats available even in supermarkets. Primarily crafted from wholesome ingredients like rice and beans, wagashi offers a healthy indulgence. Try your hand at wagash-making at one of the many programs throughout Japan.

Source:Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries website (https://www.maff.go.jp/e/policies/market/k_ryouri/search_menu/2702/index.html)

Sushi

Sushi transcends mere cuisine—it's an art form with a rich history. From upscale to casual settings, sushi bars nationwide unveil a symphony of taste, from *nigiri* to *makizushi* to other inventive combinations. Coastal markets offer a front-row seat to sushi craftsmanship and the freshest catches. Delve into regional specialties like Toyama's *masuzushi* and try *narezushi*, the ancient prototype of modern sushi made by fermenting fish with salt and rice.

Izakaya culture

Izakayas are popular havens where both aficionados of various alcoholic beverages and non-drinkers can casually drop in for a good time, offering not only a diverse selection of drinks but also delicious meals. These establishments serve as favored venues for socializing with friends or colleagues and provide a respite from the stresses of work. They are also a great dining and drinking choice for visitors to Japan.

Ramen

Ramen, a staple in Japanese cuisine, comes in endless variations. Local renditions feature the robust umami of *miso* and savory depth of *shoyu* (soy sauce) to the hearty richness of *tonkotsu* (pork bone broth) and the simplicity of salt-flavored variations. Try unique options like Sapporo's miso broth ramen, Kumamoto's garlic-infused broth, or even vegan varieties, found everywhere from bustling urban ramen shops to hidden gems in local neighborhoods.

Kaiseki cuisine

Kaiseki cuisine is considered the most refined form of *washoku* (Japanese cuisine), which was designated as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO. Originally derived from simple meals served at tea ceremonies, kaiseki has evolved into an elegant and artistic multi-course dining experience. Highlighting seasonal ingredients, the beautifully presented dishes are not only flavorful but also visually stunning.

Tempura

MinowaStudio/AFLO

Legend has it that Portuguese missionaries introduced *tempura* to Japan in the 16th century. Today, it's a fusion of culinary histories—seafood, vegetables, and more coated in wheat flour batter, deep-fried. The taste varies based on the quality and characteristics of the ingredients and the artisan's skill. Many tempura restaurants offer an immersive experience, showcasing artisan skills up close.

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Exploring the Wonders of Japanese Heritage

Where Traditional and Pop Culture Converge

Traditional Culture

Sumo wrestling

Sumo, a quintessential Japanese sport, has transcended its ceremonial roots to become a widely beloved sport across generations. Boasting a legacy of over 1,500 years, sumo stands as a profound and enduring element of Japan's rich history and cultural tapestry. Six grand sumo tournaments are held in Japan each year.

Shochiku Co., Ltd./Kabuki-za Co., Ltd.

Kabuki

Kabuki is a traditional Japanese performing art where music, dance, and drama seamlessly intertwine. It captivated people from all walks of life—commoners, samurai, and nobles alike—gaining enthusiastic popularity. Starting from "Kabuki *odori* (dances)" in Kyoto, Kabuki has gradually evolved into carefully crafted theatrical performances, continuing its journey to the present day.

Tea ceremony —The way of tea

The tea ceremony, where the host meticulously prepares and serves tea according to traditional rituals based on the concept of a once-in-a-lifetime encounter, elevates hospitality into an art form. It is an opportunity to cultivate serenity, savor the taste and aroma of matcha, and appreciate the refined ambiance of a carefully curated space.

Japanese blades

Recognized internationally as the "Samurai sword," Japanese blades embody a longstanding cultural tradition, dating back to ancient times. Renowned for their global appeal and beauty, this traditional art form's craftsmanship and artistic finesse endure in the production of a varied array of blades—from everyday knives to scissors—suitable for contemporary use.

Popular Culture

Akihabara, Tokyo

Akihabara, hailed as the holy grail of subculture, leads the charge in Japan's avant-garde realms of *otaku* culture, anime, gaming, offbeat cafes, and beyond.

© EDO WONDERLAND

Edo Wonderland

Explore the rich cultural heritage of the Edo period in this expansive cultural park. Stroll along faithfully recreated streets, post towns, merchant districts, a ninja village, and samurai residences that bring the era to life.

© Studio Ghibli

Ghibli Park

This park is designed to capture the hearts of fans globally by bringing to life the world of Studio Ghibli. Wander through five distinct areas set amidst beautiful natural surroundings. Tickets are available by reservation only.

Kusama Yayoi, *Tsumari in Bloom*, photo Nakamura Osamu

International arts festivals

Throughout Japan, international arts festivals showcase the unique essence of each region, including the globally acclaimed Setouchi Triennale and Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale. Step beyond museum walls to embrace contemporary art, whether or not you are familiar with the art world.

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Festivals

Nagaoka Fireworks Festival
(Niigata, August)

Initiated in 1879 to wish for world peace, this event is one of Japan's three major fireworks festivals along with the National Fireworks Competition "Omagari Hanabi" in Akita and the Tsuchiura All Japan Fireworks Competition in Ibaraki. Over two days, an astounding 20,000 fireworks light up the night sky, including the breathtaking "Reconstruction Phoenix Fireworks" spanning approximately two kilometers in launch width.

Hakata Gion Yamakasa Festival
(Fukuoka, July)

Dating back almost 800 years, this festival features around 14 vibrantly decorated one-ton *yamakasa* floats displayed across the streets of Fukuoka. The event concludes with a dynamic race, as men in traditional costumes carry the yamakasa through Hakata's streets on the final day as a dedication to Kushida-jinja Shrine.

Hakatayamakasa

Kishiwada Danjiri Festival
(Osaka, September)

This spirited festival in Osaka with a history of approximately 300 years begins with a prayer for a bountiful harvest and features around 30 colossal *danjiri* (floats) standing about four meters tall and weighing four tons. Teams vigorously pull these spectacular floats through the streets, accompanied by powerful shouts and the beat of drums.

Hanami
(Cherry blossom viewing)

Experience the enchanting beauty of *hanami*, a captivating tradition where cherry blossoms paint the landscape in delicate hues between March and May, depending on the location. Join locals in joyous celebrations under blooming *sakura* trees, sharing food, drinks, and stories, and immerse yourself in this cultural spectacle.

Discover Local Gems

From north to south, each region in Japan showcases a distinct climate and culture. This diversity gives rise to a wealth of gems, including unique cuisines, traditions, and festivals spread across the country. Beyond the bustling metropolises of Tokyo and Osaka, a trove of hidden treasures awaits your discovery.

And getting there couldn't be easier with a fantastic transportation network unparalleled by other countries. From domestic flights and luxurious Shinkansen (bullet trains) to quaint local trains with just one carriage, services are consistently comfortable and punctual. Ferries, local buses, long-distance buses, and taxis are also incredibly reliable. Don't miss out on various discount passes designed for international travelers.

Local communities throughout Japan extend a warm welcome to travelers. Regardless of the destination, you'll discover people, nature, and unique experiences that are bound to become cherished gems in your personal journey.

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Extensive, Reliable, Comfortable Travel

Japan is an archipelago comprising the four main islands of Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu, with over 14,000 islands in total. A comprehensive transportation network, including a well-developed railway system and domestic flights, extends to every corner of Japan for convenient travel across these diverse regions. Shinkansen trains depart every few minutes to various destinations, with a journey from Tokyo to Osaka taking a mere 2.5 hours.

National Parks and World Heritage Sites in Japan

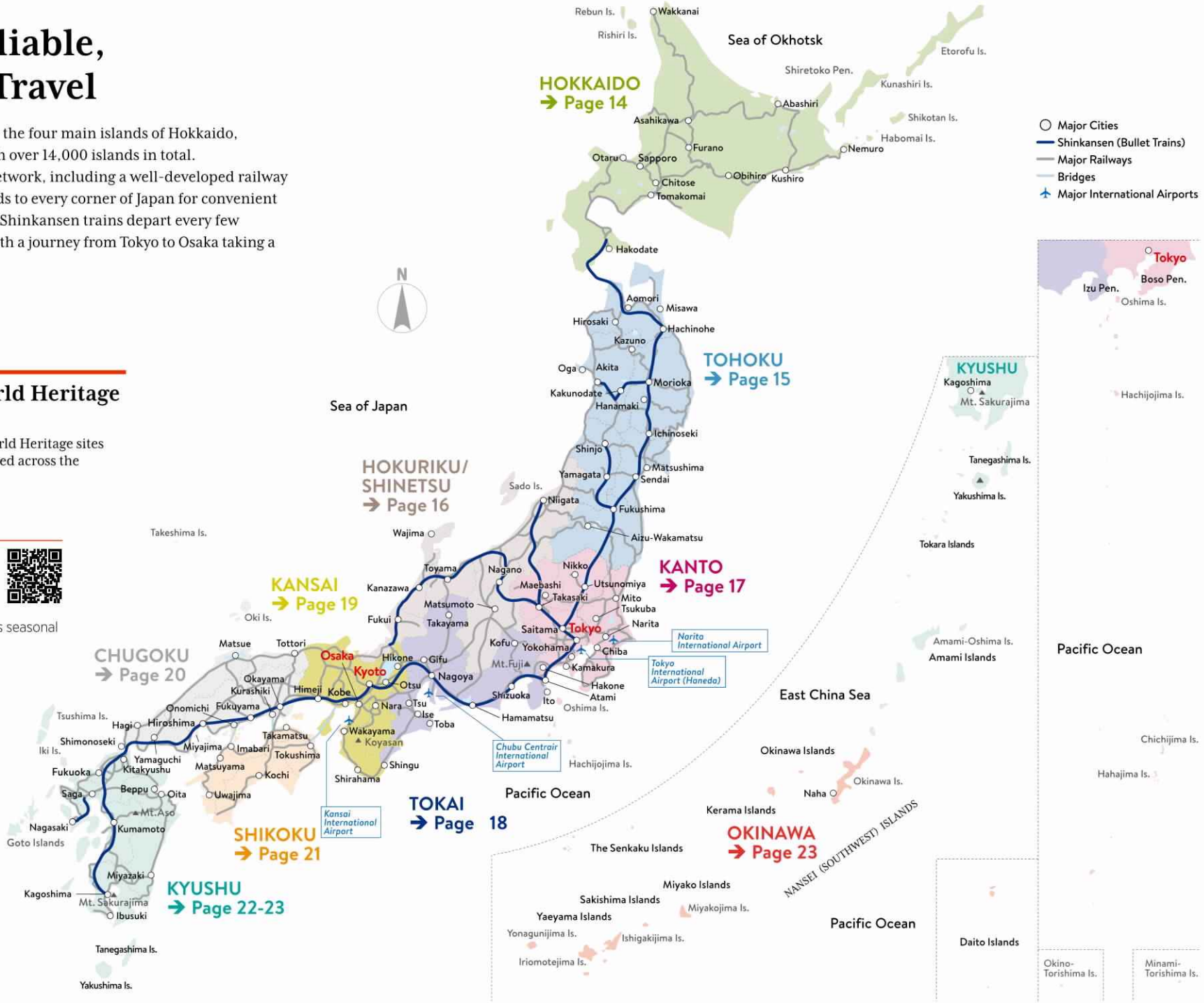
There are 34 national parks and 25 World Heritage sites (20 cultural and five natural sites) dotted across the country.

National Parks

Japan's captivating national parks nationwide preserve pristine nature and landscapes, offering exquisite wildlife, plants, rich historical and cultural elements, outdoor activities, and various seasonal and nature experiences.

World Heritage Sites

Uncover Japan's rich World Heritage Sites, spanning ancient temples, landmarks pivotal in Japan's modernization, and incredible natural wonders such as Shirakami-Sanchi's beech forests and Yakushima Island's enchanting landscapes.



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HOKKAIDO

Nestled in Japan's north, Hokkaido is celebrated for its pristine wilderness, top-tier powder snow, exquisite seafood, and rich indigenous culture. Just a short flight from Tokyo or a shinkansen ride from Tohoku, the island offers an all-year escape into nature and a distinctive cultural experience, captivating those seeking natural tranquility.

PICKUP

Provided by Asahiyama Zoo

Asahiyama Zoo

Home to around 100 species, mainly those accustomed to cold climates, this zoo provides a habitat closely mirroring their natural surroundings. The penguin walk and polar bear dives never fail to amaze.

Courtesy of The Foundation for Ainu Culture

The Ainu, Japan's Indigenous People

The Ainu are an indigenous people from the northern part of Japan, particularly Hokkaido. The Upopoy National Ainu Museum and Park, situated in southwestern Hokkaido, serves as an ideal place to experience their culture.

Delectable Hokkaido Seafood

Hokkaido, surrounded by the ocean, is a seafood haven. Indulge in the classic delight of fresh sushi and *sashimi* rice bowls and create your own original dish by selecting preferred ingredients at local markets.

Northern Wonders

Shiretoko Five Lakes (ABOVE)

Set against the majestic Shiretoko mountain range and located within the Shiretoko National Park, a World Natural Heritage Site, the Shiretoko Five Lakes beckon with incredible panoramic views. Enjoy trekking in summer and snowshoeing in winter.

Niseko's Perfect Powder Snow (LEFT)

Niseko consists of four ski resorts renowned for their unparalleled powder snow, catering to beginners and advanced skiers and snowboarders alike. A wide range of accommodation and restaurants are the perfect complement to the thrilling slopes.

TOHOKU

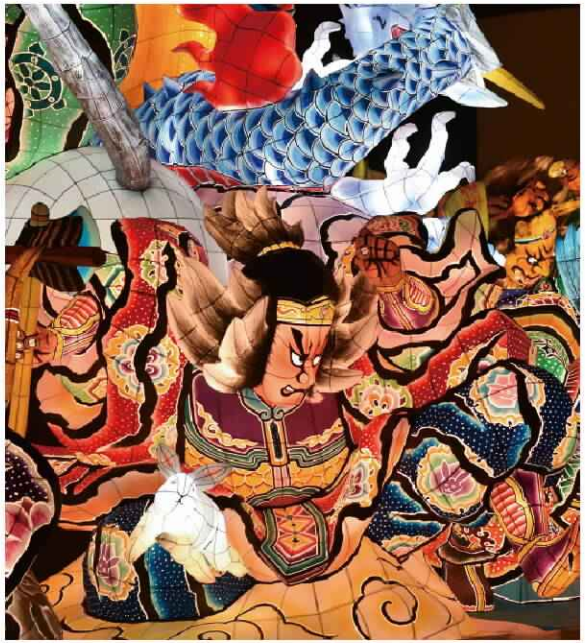
This vast region comprising six prefectures in northeastern Honshu features diverse landscapes, rich traditions, and warm hospitality in addition to powder-covered mountain slopes. Accessible by shinkansen, its historic festivals, traditional crafts, hot springs, and local sake make it a perfect destination for a short getaway from Tokyo.

Kakunodate (Akita) (ABOVE)

Kakunodate's Bukeyashiki District, often called Northeastern's Little Kyoto, is adorned with beautiful cherry blossoms that bloom later in spring. The enchanting townscape and the awe-inspiring sight of weeping cherry blossoms make it a must-visit.

Aomori Nebuta Festival (Aomori) (RIGHT)

This festival features large, illuminated paper lantern floats made using *washi* (Japanese paper) and bamboo frames. It is one of the most spectacular events in Japan attracting three million visitors per year.



Scenic, Historic, and Cultural

PICKUP

Wanko Soba (Iwate)

Wanko Soba is not just a meal; it's a traditional and playful dining experience where servers continuously replenish the *soba* bowls until the diner decides to signal they've had their fill by covering it with a lid.

Ginzan Onsen (Yamagata)

Experience the charm of Ginzan Onsen, a secluded hot spring resort on a former silver mine in rural Yamagata. Traditional inns along the river and the soft glow of gas lamps evoke a fantastical ambiance.

Aizuwakamatsu Tourism Bureau

Aizu Nuri (Lacquerware) (Fukushima)

Aizu Nuri, dating back to the late 15th century, showcases distinctive lacquerware characterized by intricate decorative techniques and elaborate designs with striking patterns.

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HOKURIKU SHINETSU

The Hokuriku Shinetsu region is easily accessible with an approximately 2- to 3-hour shinkansen ride from Tokyo. The area boasts soaring mountains of the Japanese Alps, picturesque coastal landscapes, and culturally sophisticated cities. Niigata and Nagano Prefectures also offer some of the best skiing and snowboarding in Japan.

Kamikochi (Nagano) ABOVE
Situated at an altitude of 1,500 meters and part of a national park, Kamikochi invites exploration with the allure of both scenic strolls and more serious mountain treks, and includes multiple accommodation options.

Gokayama (Toyama) RIGHT
Gokayama paints a village scene reminiscent of a bygone era. UNESCO-listed *gassho*-style architecture with thatched roofs resembling hands joined in prayer was designed to endure heavy snow loads and facilitate easy snow shedding.

Nature's Gateway

PICKUP

Daihonzan Eiheiji (Fukui)
Daihonzan Eiheiji, founded by Zen Master Dogen in 1244, is a solemn Soto Zen Monastery deep in the mountains of Fukui where about a hundred monks dedicate themselves to the practice of Zen.

Echigo Yuzawa (Niigata)
A historic hot spring resort area just over an hour from Tokyo, Echigo Yuzawa offers a paradise for enthusiasts with 12 ski fields that benefit from an abundant and prolonged period of powder snow each year.

Kenrokuen Garden (Ishikawa)
Crafted during the Edo period by the Maeda family, this garden stands among Japan's top three gardens. In winter, *yukitsuri* ropes protect trees from heavy snowfall, creating a magical atmosphere.

KANTO

Explore Tokyo's vibrant blend of modernity and tradition, then venture into Kanto's diverse offerings—hot spring resorts, unspoiled mountains, pristine beaches, UNESCO World Heritage sites, and cultural treasures—just a stone's throw from Tokyo, or escape to the subtropical Ogasawara Islands.

Naritasan Shinsho-ji Temple (Chiba) ABOVE
Meander along the enchanting Narita Omotesando shopping street to find Naritasan Shinsho-ji Temple, a sprawling complex dating back to A.D. 940, renowned for its impressive architecture, diverse events, and convenient proximity to Narita International Airport.

Nikko (Tochigi) LEFT
Discover World Heritage shrines and temples, then trek sacred mountains, wander the scenic lakeside trails of Lake Chuzenji, and marvel at the stunning Kegon Waterfall.

Where Old and New Converge

PICKUP

Kamakura (Kanagawa)
Kamakura, just an hour from Tokyo, captivates with historic temples, including the iconic Great Buddha, and famous cherry blossom spots. Experience the many shops along the approach to Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine in this ancient capital.

Hitachi Seaside Park (Ibaraki)
Featuring a floral extravaganza throughout the year, this park dazzles with blooms from famed sky-blue nemophila in spring to vibrant sunflowers in summer, autumn's magenta-hued kochia and winter's ice tulips.

Kawagoe (Saitama)
Kawagoe, a charming town just north of Tokyo steeped in the ambiance of the Edo period, unfolds like a living museum with its historical architecture and streets. Enjoy inexpensive and fun sweets known as *dagashi* as well as many other confections.

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TOKAI

Served by the shinkansen between Tokyo and Kyoto and embracing both tradition and modernity, this quintessentially Japanese region includes the iconic Mt. Fuji, historic Shirakawa-go with its thatched-roof cottages, vast green tea plantations, numerous time-honored castles, and Japan's revered Ise-Jingu shrine.

Timeless Charm

Mt. Fuji (ABOVE)

Iconic and majestic, Mt. Fuji stands as Japan's highest peak, an active stratovolcano, and a symbol of beauty and resilience. A must-see destination for spiritual traditions, breathtaking vistas, and cultural significance.

Nagoya Castle (Aichi) (RIGHT)

This castle, symbolizing Nagoya, was built in the 17th century. Beautifully reconstructed after WWII, it boasts historical exhibits, golden fish-like *shachihoko* statues on the rooftop, seasonal events, and friendly samurai.

PICKUP

Hida Takayama (Gifu)

This picturesque town is celebrated for its beautifully preserved Edo period streets, traditional wooden houses, opulent festivals, and local crafts. Held in spring and autumn, the Takayama Festival is one of Japan's three most beautiful festivals.

Japan's Ama ("Women of the Sea") (Mie)

These female free divers have been diving for abalone and other underwater bounties dating back millenia. Experience their unique diving garb, join a traditional dance, and feast on freshly caught seafood.

Fruits and Wine (Yamanashi)

Yamanashi is renowned for its exceptionally tasty fruits, including peaches and grapes. Visitors can enjoy fruit-picking in orchards and explore approximately 90 wineries scattered throughout the prefecture.

KANSAI

Explore diverse experiences in Kansai, from vibrant nightlife to serene temples and soul-enriching pilgrimages. Shaped by iconic castles, Zen gardens, and historical capitals like Kyoto and Nara, Kansai offers a rich blend of culture. Delve into religious heritage at Koyasan and embrace the lively entertainment and scenic views of Osaka and Kobe.

A Spiritual and Cultural Hub

Kuidaore (Eat Till You Drop): Dining Osaka-style (ABOVE)

Dotonbori is Osaka's culinary sanctuary. Along the riverside promenade, enjoy *takoyaki*, ramen, and *okonomiyaki*, or savor more traditional dining options along quaint cobblestone streets in lantern-filled Hozenji Yokocho.

Kumano Kodo (Wakayama) (LEFT)

Embark on the ancient Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage Route, a thousand-year-old World Heritage trail winding through Honshu's Kii Peninsula. Modern travelers come here for quiet contemplation, communion with nature, and a profound spiritual journey.

PICKUP

Lake Biwa (Shiga)

Easily accessible from Kyoto and Osaka, Lake Biwa, Japan's largest freshwater lake, fascinates with its scenic beauty, biodiversity, and cultural significance. Enjoy glamping and water activities like canoeing and kayaking amid the serene landscape.

Himeji Castle (Hyogo)

Japan's best-preserved castle, Himeji Castle, dubbed the White Heron Castle, is a national treasure and UNESCO World Heritage site. With over 600 years of history, it is a must-visit for history enthusiasts.

Todaiji Temple (Nara)

This World Heritage Site houses the Great Buddha in the Daibutsu-den, one of the world's largest wooden structures. Originally founded during the Nara period, it has been designated as one of the Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara.

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CHUGOKU

Comprising five prefectures on Honshu's western edge, Chugoku is steeped in tradition, culture, and great historical significance, exemplified by UNESCO sites such as Itsukushima Shrine and the Atomic Bomb Dome. The region also boasts abundant natural wonders, inviting exploration of its scenic beauty.

Kurashiki (Okayama) (ABOVE)
This picturesque city mesmerizes with Edo period architecture, a willow-lined river, and the renowned Kurashiki Bikan Historical Quarter, offering a nostalgic journey featuring beautiful white walls and *namako* walls with distinctive diamond-grid patterns.

Izumo Taisha (Shimane) (LEFT)
Experience divine inspiration at Japan's revered Izumo Taisha with its ancient Shinto architecture and the sacred rope. The *sengu* ritual involves rebuilding the main shrine every 60 years.

Historic Marvels, Natural Beauty

PICKUP

Tottori Sand Dunes (Tottori)
Japan's largest coastal sand formation, these dunes captivate with golden expanses along the Sea of Japan. Ideal for sandboarding, camel rides, and capturing stunning sunsets, featuring undulating landscapes and impressive 47-meter-high sand walls.

Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Hiroshima)
A poignant symbol for nuclear disarmament, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, centered on the Atomic Bomb Dome World Heritage site, pays homage to victims with various memorials, attracting 1.7 million annual visitors.

Yamaguchi Blowfish (Yamaguchi)
Savor the pinnacle of Japanese gourmet cuisine with a beautifully presented dish of *fugu*, thinly sliced raw blowfish. Only licensed chefs in Japan can prepare this delicacy, offering diverse options like fried fugu and hot pot.

Discover Local Gems

SHIKOKU

Shikoku enchants with a rich blend of nature and culture, boasting numerous picturesque islands that grace the Seto Inland Sea. Delight in legendary *udon* noodles, embark on the sacred Shikoku 88 Temple Pilgrimage, engage in the excitement of Bon Dance, and unwind in magnificent hot springs.

Scenic, Serene, Spiritual

Awa Odori Festival (Tokushima) (ABOVE)
Join the incredible Awa Odori, Japan's famed 400-year-old Bon Dance, with over a million summer revelers annually. Take in lively traditional performances, music, and colorful costumes, highlighted by a vibrant parade.

Shimanto River (Kochi) (BELOW)
The beautifully clear and tranquil Shimanto River, the longest in Shikoku, spans 196 km. Watch local fishermen catch sweetfish and eel and enjoy cycling and canoeing amidst striking landscapes, traditional villages, and sinking bridges.

PICKUP

Henro (Shikoku 88 Temple Pilgrimage)
Embark on the sacred Henro pilgrimage through Shikoku, visiting 88 temples. Discover serene spots, seek enlightenment, and indulge in warm hospitality as locals graciously offer food and drinks.

Dogo Onsen (Ehime)
Savor a timeless experience at Japan's oldest hot springs resort. Enjoy ornate baths, eclectic shops, and rickshaws in a laid-back atmosphere.

Sanuki Udon (Kagawa)
Sanuki udon is known for its chewy texture and flavorful broth derived from Japanese anchovy. It comes with a range of toppings such as eggs and tempura, offering delightful variations to savor.

Discover Local Gems

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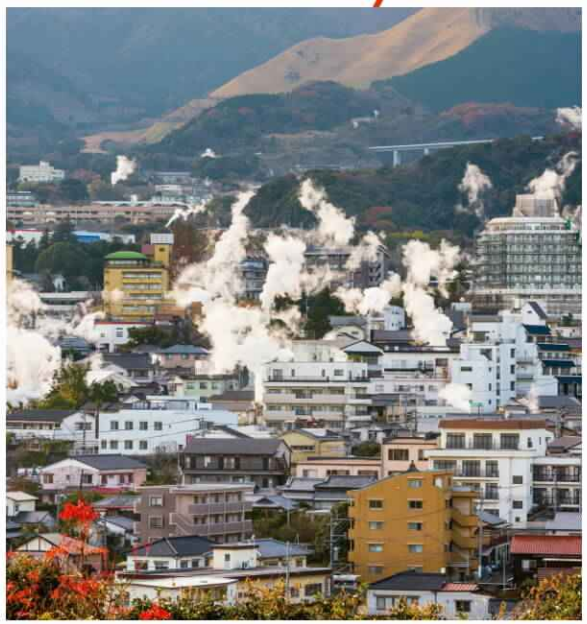
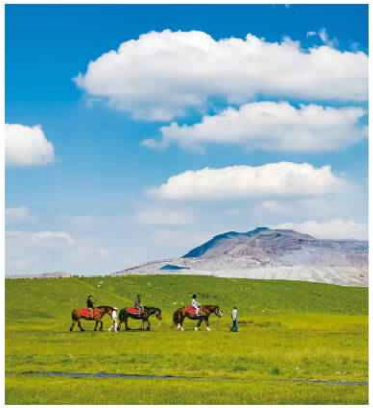
KYUSHU

Kyushu, Japan's southwestern gem, entices with diverse attractions. Explore volcanic wonders, soak in rejuvenating hot springs within breathtaking landscapes, visit peaceful beaches, and indulge in a vibrant food scene. Experience a storied history and uncover traditional crafts honed over centuries. Kyushu promises a rich tapestry of culture, nature, and adventure.

Natural Splendor, Rare History





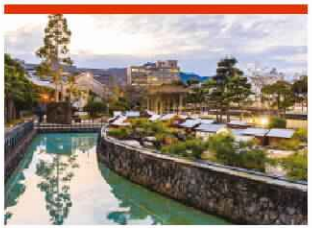
Aso (Kumamoto) (ABOVE)
Set against the active volcano Mt. Aso, this region entices with dynamic landscapes, hot springs, and cultural encounters. Its vast grasslands epitomize humanity's enduring bond with nature. Adventure awaits with hot air ballooning, horseback riding, and paragliding.

Beppu Onsen (Oita) (LEFT)
Navigate around Japan's *onsen* oasis, featuring eight distinctive hot spring towns offering everything from milky waters to mud baths. With Japan's highest number and discharge of hot springs, relax the body and mind.

PICKUP

Arita & Imari (Saga)
Wander through narrow alleys adorned with ceramics in two of Asia's greatest pottery towns. Lose yourself in traditional Japanese artistry, characterized by the distinctive white porcelain and vibrant red paintings.

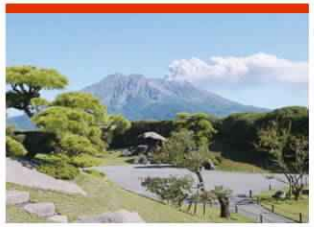
Food stalls in Nakasu (Fukuoka)
In the heart of Fukuoka, sandwiched between two rivers, Nakasu is an entertainment area where you can surround yourself with a variety of delicious street food and mingle with locals.



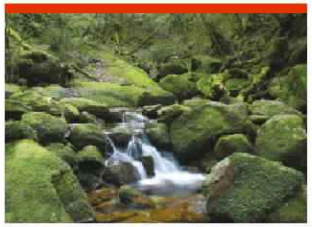
Dejima (Nagasaki)
Japan's ancient window to the West, Dejima initially isolated the Portuguese to prevent Christianity's spread. Later, it housed the Dutch Trading Post, becoming a hub for European trade. Explore faithfully reconstructed buildings and immerse in history.

PICKUP

Takachiho (Miyazaki)
Takachiho is celebrated for its mythological significance and the grandeur of Takachiho Gorge, shaped by vast lava flows from Mt. Aso. The cobalt-blue gorge and nightly Kagura performances reveal the town's irresistible charm.



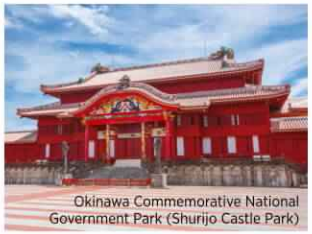
Sengan-en (Kagoshima)
Kagoshima's esteemed garden envelops visitors in the legendary samurai lifestyle. Enjoy panoramic views of Sakurajima and Kinko Bay, or participate in a glasswork workshop and try on samurai armor.



Yakushima (Kagoshima)
Discover the allure of Japan's first UNESCO World Natural Heritage site, featuring ancient Yakusugi cedar trees over 1,000 years old, moss-covered forests, immaculate beaches, and Japan's premier sea turtle nesting site.

OKINAWA

Okinawa, with its numerous islands, captures Japan's southern magnetism. Featuring a warm climate, pristine beaches with vibrant reefs, and lush ancient forests, the region offers a blend of rich cultural and historical heritage, and a tropical ambiance. Savor unique Ryukyuan cuisine and indulge in the laid-back island lifestyle.



Okinawa Commemorative National Government Park (Shurijo Castle Park)

Shuri Castle (ABOVE)
Shuri Castle, a symbol of the Ryukyu Kingdom's glory from the 15th to the 19th century, was devastated by a fire in 2019.
* The castle is currently undergoing restoration and is scheduled to reopen in 2026.

Iriomote (RIGHT)
Marvel at Iriomote and Yubu Islands' unique beauty, subtropical wonders, and botanical garden. Take a traditional water buffalo cart from Iriomote to Yubu Island, serenaded with Okinawan songs played on the *sanshin*.

Mix of Tropical and Mythical

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List of Japan's National Parks and World Heritage Sites

National Parks

World Heritage Sites

National Parks

Hokkaido
- Akan-Mashu National Park
- Daisetsuzan National Park
- Kushiroshitsugen National Park
- Rishiri-Rebun-Sarobetsu National Park
- Shikotsu-Toya National Park
- Shiretoko National Park

Tohoku
- Bandai-Asahi National Park
- Sanriku Fukko (reconstruction) National Park
- Towada-Hachimantai National Park

Hokuriku-Shinetsu
- Chubusangaku National Park
- Hakusan National Park
- Joshin'etsukogen National Park
- Minami Alps National Park
- Myoko-Togakushi renzan National Park

Kanto
- Chichibu-Tama-Kai National Park
- Nikko National Park
- Ogasawara National Park
- Oze National Park

Tokai
- Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park
- Ise-Shima National Park

Kansai
- Yoshino-Kumano National Park

Chugoku
- Daisen-Oki National Park
- San'inkaigan National Park
- Setonaikai National Park

Shikoku
- Ashizuri-Uwakai National Park

Kyushu
- Amamigunto National Park
- Aso-Kuju National Park
- Kirishima-Kinkowan National Park
- Saikai National Park
- Unzen-Amakusa National Park
- Yakushima (Island) National Park

Okinawa
- Yambaru National Park
- Keramashoto National Park
- Iriomote-Ishigaki National Park

Daisen-Oki National Park

World Heritage Sites

Hokkaido
- ■ Shiretoko

Tohoku
- ■ Hiraizumi – Temples, Gardens and Archaeological Sites Representing the Buddhist Pure Land
- ■ Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan
- ■ Shirakami-Sanchi

Kanto
- ■ Ogasawara Islands
- ■ Shrines and Temples of Nikko
- ■ The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement
- ■ Tomioka Silk Mill and Related Sites

Tokai
- ■ Fujisan, Sacred Place and Source of Artistic Inspiration
- ■ Historic Villages of Shirakawa-go and Gokayama

Kansai
- ■ Buddhist Monuments in the Horyu-ji Area
- ■ Himeji-jo
- ■ Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto (Kyoto, Uji and Otsu Cities)
- ■ Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara
- ■ Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group: Mounded Tombs of Ancient Japan
- ■ Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range

Chugoku
- ■ Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome)
- ■ Itsukushima Shinto Shrine
- ■ Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape

Kyushu/Okinawa
- ■ Amami-Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island, Northern part of Okinawa Island, and Iriomote Island
- ■ Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu
- ■ Hidden Christian Sites in the Nagasaki Region
- ■ Sacred Island of Okinoshima and Associated Sites in the Munakata Region
- ■ Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining
- ■ Yakushima

■= Cultural heritage sites
■= Natural heritage sites

Konjikido (Golden Hall), Chusonji Temple (Hiraizumi)

Discover Local Gems

Useful Information

Tourist Information Centers in Japan

We recommend that you make the most of the JNTO-certified information centers while traveling in Japan. The certified information centers with this logo are located in places such as major airports, train stations, and tourist destinations. You can check the details of each information center at the following website.

www.japan.travel/en/plan/tic/

Japan Safe Travel Information (by JNTO X & Weibo Accounts)

Follow "Japan Safe Travel" for safety tips and the latest information on natural disasters.

@JapanSafeTravel

m.weibo.cn/

JNTO Japan Visitor Hotline

Available in English, Chinese and Korean

050-3816-2787 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Police

110 (24 hours a day, at no charge)

Ambulances / Fire Service

119 (24 hours a day, at no charge)

NHK WORLD-JAPAN

International broadcasting by Japan's public broadcaster. Check the latest news regarding natural disasters and other unexpected events.

www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/

Safety tips

Japan Tourism Agency's official app to receive push notifications in case of an earthquake, tsunami, etc.

For iPhone

For Android

List of Medical Institutions

Search for medical institutions by a clinical department and a language.

www.jnto.go.jp/emergency

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https://www.japan.travel/en

Instagram

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YouTube

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