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Japan Tailor-made Tour Guide Book



Japan Brief Introduction

Weather and Map

Located in the Pacific Ocean, Japan is an island country in East Asia. It is made up of 4 major islands and about several thousands of small islands. As a unique civilization blossomed, and today Japan thrives in delicious contrasts of traditional and modern.

The Japanese spirit is strong, warm and incredibly welcoming. Recommended Japan top 20 sightseeing destinations are Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, Mount Fuji, Nara, Yokohama, Hakone, Takayama, Nagoya, Kobe, Sapporo, Hiroshima, Fukuoka, Nagasaki, Noboribetsu, Nikko, Kamakura, Kanazawa, Okinawa and Hakodate.

	Winter (Jan)			Spring (Apr)		
	T(F)	T(C)	P(mm)	T(F)	T(C)	P(mm)
Sapporo	25.4	-4.1	110.7	44.1	6.7	60.9
Sendai	34.7	1.5	33.1	50.2	10.1	98.1
Tokyo	42.4	5.8	48.6	57.9	14.1	130.3
Nagoya	39.7	4.3	43.2	57.4	14.1	143.3
Osaka	42.4	5.8	43.7	58.6	14.8	121.1
Fukuoka	43.5	6.4	72.1	58.6	14.8	125.2
Naha	51.9	16.6	114.5	70.3	21.3	180.7
Summer (Jul)			Autumn (Oct)			
	T(F)	T(C)	P(mm)	T(F)	T(C)	P(mm)
Sapporo	68.9	20.5	67.2	52.3	11.3	124.1
Sendai	71.8	22.1	159.7	58.6	14.8	99.2
Tokyo	77.7	25.4	161.5	64.8	18.2	163.1
Nagoya	78.8	26.0	218.0	63.7	17.6	116.9
Osaka	81.0	27.2	155.4	65.7	18.7	109.3
Fukuoka	80.4	26.9	265.4	65.7	18.7	80.9
Naha	83.3	28.5	176.1	76.8	24.9	162.9

Key: "T" stands for temperature in (F) Fahrenheit and (C) Celsius.



" Novaland Tours Story "

After I grown up, I've learn how difficult to be a parent and hardships of parenting, the loves I received from them were such strong and with no regrets. I have been in searching for ways to return, hope to be able to make their life comfortable, easy and happy.

I'd love travel very much, every well planned and enjoyable trips became a unforgettable experience in part of my life. After hard works, I was always dreaming to visit different cities in different countries, it is not necessary to be a luxury and expensive trip, but a leisure and budget tour. In my mind, traveling is life's most luxurious enjoyment, so I want to arrange a wonderful trip for my parents.

I cannot wait to share my idea with my parents, I believe they would love of my plan. When I announce travel proposals, my father interrupted me, said he doesn't like to travel, he don't want to go out. I am very surprised why he is so against to it. They are not young, it is the time to enjoy life.

"My dear dad, you used to travel a lot, why you want to quit this time?" I asked.

He answer: "You are right, I've done lots of travel before, but none of them could really let me enjoy the time. I had to wake up early morning every day, and rush to each so-call must-to-visit tourism site with very short visiting time or only a photo time; also, I had been forced to shopping, without any consumes, you would receive anger from tour guide immediately. I would rather staying at home than paying money for nothing. Most importantly, many of the tour attractions arranged factually are not what I love. I don't think I enjoyed them but wasted my time and money.

Now, I see what my dad worry about. He always took very old fashioned traveling: Group Departure, which provides economic price with shopping sites, but everything is fixed, you have to stick to all arrangements provided, and there is no chance to have your own time for your favorites, and follow your own interested itinerary.

I explained my dad, we will choose a totally different style of traveling, a Tailor-made itinerary as per our requests, there will be no forced shopping, no rushing, we see what we would like to see, we go where we are really interested in. Finally, dad agreed to go.

Since then, I was thinking what if there was a travel company could do things as below: to tailor made very travel enthusiasts a unique trip, which will be enjoyable, leisure, full of fun and unforgettable memories. The traveling supposed not to be the way as my dad's through; it ought to be : a road full of fun and happiness; a place where you could totally relax; very spots and destination will inspire you; experiencing a different life, which could be beautiful, warm or delightful; it will be unforgettable even you've return home. I guess, it might be the biggest enjoyment of travel.

The Tailor-made Tour Specialist(TTS) In Novaland Tours (NLT), who are familiar in every tourism spots, hotels, transportation, food, attractions in every destinations you are willing to go; fully understand what are your interests; provides you a one-on-one service, design you an exclusive trip ; arrange you appropriate tour guide, driver and hotel ect. let you totally out of tedious prepared and bad experience in the line

So right now, do not waste your time, let's traveling out, to see the world attentively. Let's bring real enjoyments back. This is what NTL's goal is and what we insist to reach.



What makes

Novaland Tours Different from others



10 Reasons Why Novaland Tours is #1 in Tailor-making Tour and You Should Choose Our Good Tour Service in Japan

1. Tailor-making What You Really Love
2. Tailor-made Tour Specialist
3. Flexible, Time-saving, Fast, and Easy Tailor-making Procedure
4. Tailor-made Travel Price According to Your Personal Needs
5. See a Real Japan
6. In-depth Experience Distinctive Japan Culture
7. Worry Free Customer Service
8. 4 Principles of Reception in Travel
9. Standardized and Experienced Management of Reception
10. Wonderful Membership Benefits

Tailor-made Travel / Tailor-making What You Really Love

Novaland Tours are very proud to give you a better travel experience. We specialize in tailor-made tour service based on your personal interests, tastes and budget. Your entire holiday is designed around your personal needs. Explore your interests at your own speed. Enjoy the tour what you really love.

Tailor-made Tour Specialist

Our Tailor-made Tour Specialists (TTS) are experienced and well-trained. Your 1-on-1 TTS pays attention to knowing you — your goals, desires, preferences, etc. He/she is patient, on standby 24-7, and full of useful suggestions. He/she wants to become your friend, think what you think, to arrange your best unique tailor-made tour.

Flexible, Time-saving, Fast, and Easy Tailor-making Procedure

It could be so painful to plan a wonderful tour before journey. You need to do so much studying during your busy daytime job & life. In the end, you probably found that you still have not studied well to arrange a really good tour. In Novaland, you don't need much time to study but just tell us your favorites, and we do the rest. It is flexible, time-saving, fast and easy.

Tailor-made Travel Price According to Your Personal Needs

Tailor-making tour according to your travel budget. For us, tailor-making is not equal to high price. One enjoyable tour must be operated in a reasonable and worthy budget. Although it is truth that you get what you pay for, but it needs the help of professional judgment of what are really suitable for you. How much you spend is closely bound up the tour characteristics you choose. If you are comfortably fixed for money, we can provide more choice and more noble experience. But if you don't want to live frugally after finishing travel, we will definitely recommend you cost-effective, affordable characteristic experience.

Knowing what you really love is important. Your preferences, interests, favorite attractions, habits, travel purpose & budget, etc, please feel free to [fill in the form](#). Or send email to info@novalandtours.com. Then we can tailor-make your most suitable tour proposal free of charge. Easy & save your time!

See a Real Japan

Experience the diversity of modern and tradition, the big differences between countryside and cities, the natural and social complexity, fascinating and beautiful landscapes, and the normal local life.



In-depth Experience Distinctive Japan Culture

Experience distinctive Japan culture is really important to your tour. You can't enjoy them any other places. It is these culture activities which makes Japan image so fascinating and vivid. Wearing Kimono, watch Geisha show, making Sushi and taste delicious Japanese food, relaxing in Japanese hot spring in a beautiful tiny garden, see how to fight between Ninja, walking in Japanese old town and imagine the life of the ancients, etc.. All these in-depth Japan cultural experiences make your tour truly memorable.

Worry Free Customer Service

Over 98% good & excellent satisfaction. 24/7 care while in travel. First time responses and 100% satisfaction of problem-solving. Money back guarantee.



4 Principles of Reception in Travel

4 Principles of Reception for local tour guides, drivers and other suppliers to standardize and ensure service quality and improving customer satisfaction. Principle 1: Who Serves, Who Answers for; Principle 2: Integral Cooperation Service; Principle 3: Standard Excellent Service, Customer First; Principle 4: People First, Safe Tour.

Standardized and Experienced Management of Reception

We are strongly capable of managing every parts of travelling, tour guides, drivers, cars, meals, etc. We have strict, experienced and the whole instructions, rules and specifications to supervise our tour guides, drivers, etc to serve our guests better. Even for emergency problems, we have concluded for a long time and full of experience how to deal with them well. Our operation team are full of passion of never-stop-pursing best service. We don't fear problems or dissatisfactions but will deem them the pedals to be the best one.



Wonderful Membership Benefits

After booking one tour with us, get long-term benefits of Novaland Travel Club. For example: Free-design tailor-made itineraries whenever you need. Free travel guide books regularly elaborately designed for many countries. Freely join in membership activities. Membership club points for gifts. Exclusive tour packages for members. One community for making new friends with same interests. And many other Novaland Travel Club benefits.



Japan TOP 5

Recommended Shrines



Fushimi Inari Shrine (伏見稻荷大社, Fushimi Inari Taisha) is an important Shinto shrine in southern Kyoto. It is famous for its thousands of vermilion torii gates, which straddle a network of trails behind its main buildings. The trails lead into the wooded forest of the sacred Mount Inari, which stands at 233 meters and belongs to the shrine grounds.



Toshogu Shrine (Nikko)

Toshogu Shrine (東照宮, Tōshō-gū) is the final resting place of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate that ruled Japan for over 250 years until 1868. Ieyasu is enshrined at Toshogu as the deity Toshō Daigongen, "Great Deity of the East Shining Light". Initially a relatively simple mausoleum, Toshogu was enlarged into the spectacular complex seen today by Ieyasu's grandson Iemitsu during the first half of the 1600s.



Ise Shrines -- Ise

The Ise Jingu consists of two shrines: the Outer Shrine (Geku), which is dedicated to Toyouke, the Shinto deity of clothing, food and housing, and the Inner Shrine (Naiku), which enshrines the most venerated deity Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess. They are Shinto's most sacred shrines.



Itsukushima Shrine (Miyajima)

The centuries-old Itsukushima Shrine (嚴島神社, Itsukushima Jinja) on Miyajima is the source of both the island's fame and its name. Formerly named Itsukushima, the island is more popularly known as "Miyajima", literally "shrine island" in Japanese, thanks to its star attraction. The shrine is known worldwide for its iconic "floating" torii gate.



Kumano Nachi Taisha -- Kumano

Kumano Nachi Taisha is one of the three Kumano shrines, situated a few kilometers inland from the coastal hot spring resort of Katsuura. The shrine is part of a large complex of neighboring religious sites that exemplify the fusion of Buddhist and Shinto influences that is particular to the Kumano region. The site also boasts the tallest waterfall in Japan.

Japan TOP 5 Recommended Temples

Kotoku-in Temple (Kamakura)



Kotoku-in Temple is renowned for one of Japan's most famous landmarks, the Great Buddha. This monumental bronze statue stands more than 40 feet in height – it is the second tallest bronze Buddha statue in Japan, surpassed only by the statue in Nara's Todaiji Temple, and has been proposed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Kiyomizu-dera Temple (Kyoto)

Kiyomizudera, whose name means “clear water,” was built around the Otowa Waterfall, and it's said that visitors who drink from the waterfall can get their wishes granted. It is one of the most celebrated temples of Japan and was added to the list of UNESCO world heritage sites in 1994. The beauty of Kiyomizu-dera is enhanced by the cherry blossoms and fresh verdure in spring and colored leaves in autumn.



Ryoan-ji Temple (Kyoto)

Ryoanji, known as the Peaceful Dragon Temple, is the site of Japan's most famous rock garden, which attracts hundreds of visitors every day. Deceptively simple in design, it consists of 15 rocks surrounded by white sand that is raked carefully into patterns each day by the monks. The composition invites contemplation, and the meaning behind the placement of the 15 rocks has been debated for nearly all of the rock garden's 500-year history.



Horyuji Temple (Nara)

Despite the fact that Todaiji Temple with its Great Buddha gets all the glory, true seekers of Buddhist art and history head to the sacred grounds of Horyuji Temple with its treasures and ancient buildings. Horyuji is one of the country's oldest temples and contains the world's oldest surviving wooden structures.



Kinkakuji Temple (Kyoto)

Kinkaku-ji is one of Kyoto's leading temples. Constructed in the 14th century as a shogun's retirement villa, this three-story pavilion shimmers in gold leaf and is topped with a bronze phoenix; it's a beautiful sight when the sun shines and the sky's blue. Recognized by UNESCO as a World Cultural Heritage, Kinkaku-ji is one of the historical buildings most representative of Japan.



Himeji Castle (Himeji)

Himeji Castle (姫路城, Himejijō), also known as called White Heron Castle (Shirasagijo) due to its elegant, white appearance, is widely considered Japan's most spectacular castle for its imposing size and beauty and its well preserved, complex castle grounds. The castle is both as a national treasure and a world heritage site. Unlike many other Japanese castles, it was never destroyed by war, earthquake or fire and survives to this day as one of the country's twelve original castles.



Nijo Castle (Kyoto)

Nijo Castle (二条城, Nijōjō) was built in 1603 as the Kyoto residence of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first shogun of the Edo Period (1603-1867). His grandson Iemitsu completed the castle's palace buildings 23 years later and further expanded the castle by adding a five story castle keep.

Matsumoto Castle (Matsumoto)

Matsumoto Castle (松本城, Matsumotojō) is one of the most complete and beautiful among Japan's original castles. It is a "hirajiro" - a castle built on plains rather than on a hill or mountain. Matsumoto Castle is unique for having both a secondary donjon and a turret adjoined to its main keep. The castle structures, in combination with their characteristic black wainscoting, give off an air of grandeur and poise.

Kumamoto Castle (Kumamoto)

Kumamoto Castle (熊本城, Kumamotojō) is one of the most impressive castles in Japan. With large castle grounds and a variety of buildings, Kumamoto Castle offers its visitors one of the most complete castle experiences in Japan. Only a few structures have survived the centuries since the castle's construction in 1607 intact. The castle keep and most other buildings are modern reconstructions, but the reconstructions are mostly of a high quality and new buildings are continually being added.

Osaka Castle (Osaka)

The construction of Osaka Castle (大阪城, Ōsakajō) started in 1583 on the former site of the Ishiyama Honganji Temple, which had been destroyed by Oda Nobunaga thirteen years earlier. Toyotomi Hideyoshi intended the castle to become the center of a new, unified Japan under Toyotomi rule. It was the largest castle at the time.



Theme Parks (Tokyo / Osaka)

Don't miss out on a visit to one of the famous theme parks in Japan with your family. The kids will have a blast on the various rides and magic adventure. The top theme parks recommended for you:

- Tokyo Disney Resort
- Osaka Universal Studio
- Sanrio Puroland (Tokyo) (Hello Kitty Land)

Aquarium (Tokyo / Osaka)

As an island country, Japan has a history and culture that are inseparably tied to the sea. Taking your kids to visit one aquarium will definitely richen your family tour to Japan.

Osaka Kaiyukan is one of the largest public aquariums in the world with themes focusing on "Ring of Fire" and "Ring of Life". Also worthy of mention is the various amusement spots near the aquarium, which include a gigantic ferris wheel which offers a spectacular panoramic view of Osaka Bay and its vicinity, and the cruise ship "Santa Maria", reproduced to be twice the size of the original sailing ship, that offers both day and night cruises.

Tokyo Sea Life Aquarium is another one of the fun aquariums. Your toddlers and small children will love the colorful fish, sharks, sea horses and penguins.

Odaiba (Tokyo) / Tokyo Dome City

Head to Odaiba for the day and enjoy the fascinating sites on this man-made island. The kids will enjoy a visit to the uniquely designed Fuji TV building where you can head to the observation deck for great views. Hit the arcades and try out the latest and greatest in electronic games

Tokyo Dome City is a leisure complex in central Tokyo consisting of the Tokyo Dome-baseball stadium, an amusement park, spa "LaQua", a variety of shops and restaurants and Dome Hotel. You can enjoy various rides, entertainment facilities including kids play room, roller skating, bowling, watching hero show, baseball game, horse racing, game centers, spa, shopping mall, restaurants and Japanese garden.

Museums (Tokyo)

Studio Ghibli Museum: A wonderful imaginative place where your children can learn about the process of animation. They will love playing on the big fluffy cat bus, seeing the robot soldier on the garden roof, and watching the short animation films in the theater.

Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation (Miraikan): Where the kids can enjoy the interactive exhibits, including robots! Or visit the hot springs and bathe in the water pumped from deep in the ground. You can even rent a dog and take him for a walk or hang out in a cat playpen and pet the kitties.

National Museum of Science and Nature: Check out the dinosaur, animal and space exhibits. Be sure to visit Theater 360 where you stand on a bridge in a sphere and watch a movie in 3D, this creates a floating sensation.

Anime & Manga (Tokyo)

Manga and Anime are very famous in Japan. Take your kids to visit the poplar districts if they are a fan of Manga & Anime. Akihabara: Teenagers and children will love Akihabara where you can get every gadget under the sun. This area is chock full of electronics stores offering the latest and greatest in technology. There is also loads of toy stores offering anime characters and other figurines.

Harajuku: one of the fashion capitals of the world. Visit Harajuku with your children, and check out the interesting street fashion and various costumes worn by the young people who gather on Sundays. Your teenagers will love this place.

Ikebukuro: J-World located in the Namja Town plaza in Ikebukuro is an indoor theme park for Naruto, One piece, and Dragon Ball and Narruto.

Japanese Festivals are unique, exciting parts of Japanese culture. With every distinct season are numerous festivals to compliment the season. Many festivals feature lavishly decorated floats, festive music, traditional costumes, beautiful lanterns, and thousands of participants and spectators.



Gion Matsuri (Kyoto)

Gion Matsuri (祇園祭), the festival of Yasaka Shrine, is the most famous festival in Japan. It takes place over the entire month of July. There are many different events, but the grand procession of floats (Yamaboko Junko) on July 17 is particularly spectacular. Very enjoyable, are also the festive evenings preceding the procession (Yoiyama). From 2014, a second procession of floats was reintroduced on July 24 after a hiatus of 48 years. The second procession features fewer and smaller floats than the one on July 17.

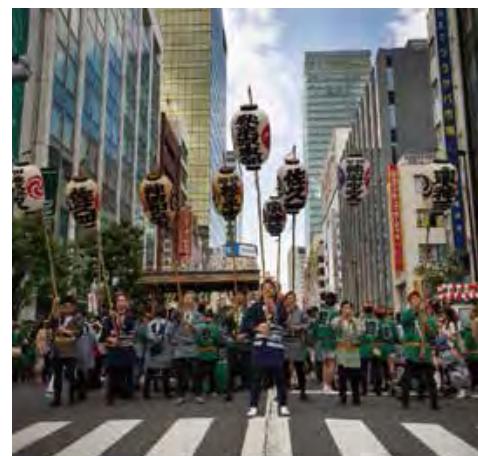
Kanda Matsuri (Tokyo)

The Kanda Matsuri is one of Tokyo's three most famous festivals, along with the Sanja Matsuri and the Sanno Matsuri. It takes place in mid May in odd numbered years, alternating with the Sanno Matsuri which is held in even numbered years. The Kanda Festival consists of numerous events held over an entire week, but the main action usually happens over the weekend closest to May 15. The highlights are a daylong procession through central Tokyo on Saturday, and parades of portable shrines (mikoshi) by the various neighborhoods on Sunday.



Tenjin Matsuri (Osaka)

The Tenjin Festival (天神祭, Tenjin Matsuri) of Osaka is ranked as one of Japan's top three festivals, along with the Gion Matsuri of Kyoto and the Kanda Matsuri of Tokyo. The festival started in the 10th century and today takes place on July 24 and 25 every year. The main celebrations are held on the festival's second day, July 25, including a land procession and a river procession with fireworks.



Takayama Festival (Takayama)

The Takayama Festival is the collective name for the Sanno Matsuri of spring and the Hachiman Matsuri held at Sakurayama Hachimangu Shrine in October, and is considered one of the most beautiful festivals of Japan. A large parade of 1,000 people is staged, making you feel as if you have slipped back to the 15th Century, especially because of the costumes and music performances.

Sapporo Yuki Matsuri (Sapporo)

The Sapporo Snow Festival (Sapporo Yuki Matsuri) is held during one week every February in Hokkaido's capital Sapporo. It is one of Japan's most popular winter events. The Sapporo Snow Festival was started in 1950, when high school students built a few snow statues in Odori Park. It has since developed into a large, commercialized event, featuring spectacular snow and ice sculptures and attracting more than two million visitors from Japan and across the world.

Japan TOP 5 Recommended Hot Springs

Hakone-onsen Hot Spring (Kanagawa)

Hakone-onsen is a generic name for several hot springs located around Mt. Hakone-yama, situated in the center of Fuji Hakone Izu National Park. This hot spring was very popular during the Edo Period (1603-1867) as an important site located on Tokaido Street. Each hot spring has a different atmosphere and spring quality, and many variations of Japanese hot springs can be enjoyed here. Also, there are a number of sightseeing points such as the range of mountains from Mt. Kami-yama (the highest elevation in Hakone) to Mt. Komagatake over the central cone, Lake Ashino-ko (a caldera formation) on the crater basin, sacred Mt. Fuji in the west, and the magnificent scenery of Suruga-wan and Sagami-wan bays in the southeast.

Kusatsu-onsen Hot Spring (Gunma)

Kusatsu-onsen is a therapeutic bath that has been popular since ancient times, as believed to be found by Prince Yamatotakeru-no-mikoto in Japanese mythology. It is said that this hot spring can cure any disease except love sickness. Its unique way of bathing called Jikan-yu is what makes this hot spring well known: 100% pure hot spring water, just sourced, is experienced at one of the highest acid levels and temperatures in Japan. Close to "Yubatake," the facility symbolizing Kusatsu-onsen in the center of town, you can partake in strolling and foot bathing at "Yukemuri-tei" around the clock. Kusatsu-onsen is one of three of the most famous hot springs in Japan.

Arima-onsen Hot Spring

(Hyogo)

Being one of the oldest hot springs in Japan, Arima-onsen is regarded as one of the country's three most famous hot springs. It is also well known as the spring cherished by Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598), and recently the remains of his bath have been found. It has two individual qualities: One utilizes hot water of a red-brown, ferruginous base called "Kisen (gold spring)" and the other is a colorless carbonate spring called "Gisen (silver spring)." At Tansan-sengen-koen Park (a carbonate spring park), you can drink cold carbonate water, from which some say that Japan's very first soda pop was made. It is conveniently located and easily accessible from Osaka (1 hour) and Kobe-San-no-miya (30 min).



Noboribetsu-onsen Hot Spring (Hokkaido)

Noboribetsu-onsen attracts people by its various springs incorporating nine different qualities, including the sulfur spring (the most popular one among all) as well as a ferruginous spring and an alum spring which makes the skin beautiful. This much variety is hard to find in hot springs anywhere else in the world. The water volume of the natural discharge is 10,000 t per day, while the water temperature ranges between 45°C and 90°C. Jigoku-dani Valley, designated as one of Hokkaido's heritage sites, is a few minutes' walk from the hot spring area. There, you can experience the dynamics of jigoku, or "Hell," named as such for its strong smell of sulfur while hot water, vapors and volcanic gas escape from the crater, formed approximately ten thousand years ago.

Yufuin-onsen Hot Spring & Beppu Hatto (Oita)

Beppu Hatto is one of Japan's largest hot spring town consisting of eight hot springs, including Beppu, Kannawa, and Myoban-onsen located in the city of Beppu. 10 out of 11 types of spring qualities existing in the world are evident here, displaying various unique appearances. "Jigokumeguri" is a popular sightseeing tour for visiting all of these examples. The technology to manufacture the bath agent called "Yunohana," made from the hot spring water, is designated as the nation's significant intangible folk cultural asset. If you wish, you can observe its manufacturing process at "Yunosato" of Myoban-onsen.

Yufuin-onsen, known as "Bungo Fuji" is a hot spring town of tranquil vistas lying at the foot of Mt. Yufudake. You can see steam from the hot water rising from everywhere over vast rice fields, and fog at dawn on cold but sunny winter days, which is unique to this region. On frigid days, the steam rises up from the surface of Lake Kinrin-ko (located in the center of the city) creating a fantastic atmosphere, as both hot and cold water springs from the lake bottom. There are a number of galleries, old folk house cafés, and communal baths here.

Japan

TOP 5

Recommended

Mountains & Volcanoes

Mount Fuji (Shizuoka, Honshu)

Mount Fuji needs no introduction. It is one of the most famous mountains in the world. With its majestic cone, this dormant volcano has been depicted in countless photographs and artworks over the years. Mount Fuji is the tallest among Japan's three great mountains and all other mountains in Japan, towering at 12,388 feet above the ground.



Mount Aso (Kumamoto, Kyushu)

Mount Aso is the largest active volcano in Japan, and is among the largest in the world. It stands in Aso Kuju National Park in Kumamoto Prefecture, on the island of Kyushu.



Sakurajima (Kagoshima, Kyushu)

Sakurajima is one of Japan's most active volcanoes and the symbol of Kagoshima. The volcano smokes constantly, and minor eruptions often take place multiple times per day. Located in the middle of Kagoshima Bay, Sakurajima is the area's most prominent geographic feature, having an elevation of 1117 meters and a circumference of about 50 kilometers.



Mount Meakan (Akan, Hokkaido)

Mount Meakan is an active stratovolcano located in Akan National Park in Hokkaido, Japan. It is the tallest mountain in the Akan Volcanic Complex. The volcano consists of nine overlapping cones that grew out of the Akan caldera, on the shores of Lake Akan. According to its name and local legend, Mount Meakan is the female counterpart to Mount Oakan on the other side of Lake Akan.



Mount Kusatsu-Shirane (Kusatsu, Honshu)

Mount Shirane is often called Kusatsu-Shirane to differentiate it from other mountains called Shirane. It is a series of volcanic peaks just outside the town of Kusatsu Onsen. It is a popular outdoor recreation area which offers hiking in the spring and summer, autumn colors in the fall and skiing in the winter.



Japan TOP 5

Recommended
Gardens

Kanazawa Kenrokuen (Kanazawa)

Kenrokuen (兼六園) in Kanazawa is justifiably classified as one of Japan's "three most beautiful landscape gardens" alongside Mito's Kairakuen and Okayama's Korakuen. The spacious grounds used to be the outer garden of Kanazawa Castle and were constructed by the ruling Maeda family over a period of nearly two centuries. Opened to the public in 1871, Kenrokuen features a variety of flowering trees which provide the garden with a different look for each season.



Ritsurin Garden (Takamatsu)

Ritsurin Koen (栗林公園) is a landscape garden in Takamatsu City, built by the local feudal lords during the early Edo Period. Considered one of the best gardens in Japan, it is often suggested that Ritsurin Koen deserves a spot on the list of the "three most beautiful gardens of Japan" alongside Kanazawa's Kenrokuen, Mito's Kairakuen, and Okayama's Korakuen.

The spacious park features many ponds, hills, historic trees and beautiful pavilions divided into a Japanese style garden in the south and western style garden in the north. The gardens are set in front of wooded Mt. Shiun which serves as a wonderful background and great example of borrowed scenery.



Ritsurin Garden

Katsura Imperial Villa (Kyoto)

Katsura Imperial Villa (桂離宮, Katsura Rikyū) is one of the finest examples of purely Japanese architecture and garden design. The villa and garden in their present form were completed in 1645 as the residence for the Katsura Family, members of Japan's Imperial Family.



Katsura Imperial Villa

Sankeien Garden (Yokohama)

Sankeien (三溪園) is a spacious Japanese style garden in southern Yokohama which exhibits a number of historic buildings from across Japan. There is a pond, small rivers, flowers and wonderful scrolling trails that make you think you are in Kyoto rather than Yokohama.

The garden was built by Hara Sankei and opened to the public in 1904. Among the historic buildings exhibited in the park are an elegant daimyo (feudal lord) residence, several tea houses and the main hall and three storied pagoda of Kyoto's old Tomyoji Temple.



Sankeien Garden

Senganen Garden (Kagoshima)

Senganen Garden (仙巖園), also known as Isoteien (磯庭園), is a Japanese style landscape garden along the coast north of downtown Kagoshima. One of the garden's most striking features is its use of Sakurajima and Kagoshima Bay as borrowed scenery. The garden also includes small ponds, streams, shrines and a bamboo grove.

Senganen was constructed in 1658 by the wealthy Shimazu Clan, one of the most powerful feudal clans during the Edo Period (1603-1867). The Shimazu ruled the Satsuma domain (present day Kagoshima) for almost 700 years until the end of the feudal age in 1868. They continued to be influential into the modern era as some of the earliest adopters of Western science and technology.

Japan TOP 5 Recommended National Parks

Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park

is a national park in Yamanashi, Shizuoka, and Kanagawa Prefectures, and western Tokyo Metropolis, Japan.

Boasting magnificent Mount Fuji at its core, this popular weekend getaway beckons vacationing Tokyoites with its many hot-spring spas, stunning close-up views of Mount Fuji, sparkling lakes, historic attractions relating to the famous Feudal-Era Tokaido Highway, and coastal areas of Izu Peninsula. One of the best ways to see Hakone is via a circular route that involves travel on a two-car mountain streetcar, a cable car, a ropeway, and a boat; the delightful journey offers wonderful scenery and interesting sights along the way.



Nikko National Park:

is a national park in the Kantō region, on the main island of Honshū in Japan.

Both a UNESCO World Heritage Site and national park, Nikko offers visitors a large variety of natural and cultural attractions including the Toshogu Shrine, Kinugawa Onsen, Nasu-Shiobara, and the lakes, mountains and waterfalls of Okunikko. The popular park is an easy side trip from Tokyo

Shikotsu-Toya National Park:

is located in the southwest part of Hokkaido and is composed of three parts: the area from Lake Shikotsuko to Noboribetsu, the area which includes Lake Toyako and Mt. Usuzan, and the area centering around Mt. Yoteizan.

The main features of the park are volcanoes and lakes. Noboribetsu Onsen Spa is one of the major spa resorts in Japan and is known for its diverse spring qualities and abundant yield of hot water. Visitors can see bountiful geysers of fumarolic gas and hot water here.

Daisetsuzan National Park:

is located in a mountainous area in the center of Hokkaido which is called the "Roof of Hokkaido". It is the largest national park in Japan and the whole park area is covered with subarctic natural forests, which give it primeval looks.

Daisetsuzan boasts three volcanic chains, fir- and birch-covered hillsides, impressive Sounkyo Gorge, and plenty of skiing and hiking opportunities. The rich natural environment in this area provides a home to a variety of animals and plants. The park is also known as the habitat of pikas, a relict species from the ice age.



Japan Alps (Chubu Sangaku) National Park:

Chubusangaku National Park is a mountainous park located in the center of the Hida Mountain Chain which is called the "Japan Alps", the highest mountain range in Japan towering over the central part of the main island.

Large, steep rock walls, beautiful lakeside woods in plateaus and glacier-eroded U-shaped valleys – this national park has astonishingly diversified natural beauty. Many communities of alpine plants grow and large raptors live in mountainous areas. It is a park in the mountains which enjoys abundant nature. Mt. Tateyama in the northern part of the park is characterized by heavy snowfall and large snowfields.

TOP 5 Japan Recommended Cherry Blossom Viewing Places

Shinjuku Gyoen (Tokyo)

Shinjuku Gyoen features more than one thousand cherry trees of over a dozen varieties, including numerous early and late blooming trees. There are spacious lawn areas, and the atmosphere is calm and peaceful.

Since the vast majority of people who visit Japan will visit Tokyo, where better to suggest than the capital's very own Shinjuku Gyoen - a large park located right at the heart of the city, within walking distance of one of its largest and busiest entertainment and business hubs.

One of the best places to see cherry blossom in Tokyo is undoubtedly Shinjuku Gyoen, which is home to over one thousand cherry trees of both early- and late-blooming varieties, meaning that the sakura season here lasts longer than elsewhere in the city.



Mount Fuji (Hakone)

The only thing better than one Japanese national icon is two Japanese national icons - and for a couple of months each year you can get two for the price of one as Mount Fuji is surrounded by cherry blossom. There are numerous places from which to view Mount Fuji, but our favorites are Hakone and the Fuji Five Lakes region. Fuji Five Lakes is perhaps better than Hakone when it comes to sakura, and two of the best spots are the northern shores of Lake Kawaguchiko and the Chureito Pagoda, built in the hills of Fujiyoshida City.

Goryokaku Park (Hokkaido)

Several thousand cherry trees are planted around the reconstructed Matsumae Castle, the only feudal castle on Hokkaido, and in the spacious park that extends far into the hills behind. Matsumae Park offers a wide range of cherry tree varieties that bloom at different times, resulting in a long hanami season that lasts almost an entire month. Imagine how impressive the landscape would be when all the trees are lit up at night.

Mt. Yoshino (Nara)

As one of Japan's top 3 places to go to for sakuras, you will be amazed at the grand blooming of about 30,000 Shiroyama Zakuras.

Mount Yoshino (吉野山, Yoshinoyama) in Yoshino Town, Nara Prefecture, is Japan's most famous cherry blossom spot. It features over 30,000 cherry trees planted around the slopes which visitors can admire as they walk along the roads that lead up the mountain.

In 2004, Yoshino, together with Mount Koya and Kumano, was designated a cultural UNESCO World Heritage Site named the "Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range".

Philosopher's Path (Kyoto)

Kyoto's Philosopher's Path is a lovely stone walkway that follows a canal through the northern part of the city's Higashiyama district. It gets its name from a particular philosopher - Nishida Kitaro - who was said to wander down the path in meditation on his way to Kyoto University. The path runs for about two kilometres and as well as plenty of restaurants, cafes and shops it is lined all the way with cherry trees, which explode into colour in early April - providing one of Kyoto's most popular hanami spots.

Japan TOP 5 Recommended Lakes

Masyuko Lake (Kushiro Area, Hokkaido, Japan)

Masyuko Lake, also known as Lake Mashu is a magnificent landlocked lake formed in the caldera of an active volcano. This beautiful lake is a part of the Akan National Park on the Hokkaido island in Japan. The lake is one of the clearest lakes in the world. The lake is walled by a 200 m high crater's wall. It was formed around 32,000 years ago and the caldera was created after a volcanic eruption which occurred around 7,000 years ago.



Lake Akan-ko (Akan Area, Hokkaido, Japan)

Lake Akan-ko is a lake of mystery and beauty. It is well known for 'marimo' - a curious looking species of moss that grows into large green balls, a natural monument that is unique to the lake. The elegant Mt. Oakan-dake overlooks the eastern shore of Lake Akan-ko. Lake Mashu-ko is internationally famous for having the highest level of clarity in the world. There is also a primeval forest of spruce and white fir trees located nearby. Akan National Park attracts many visitors throughout the year with its magnificent scenic wonderland.

Those who visit Akan National Park can also see traditional Ainu (an ethnic group indigenous to Hokkaido) dances at their 'kotan' (village), and enjoy outdoor activities such as canoeing, mountain bike tours and camping. The hot spring baths on the lakeside will surely help you to unwind and relax at the end of an exciting day.



Lake Towada (Aomori, Japan)

Lake Towada is the largest crater lake in Japan, and the 12th largest lake in Japan. With a depth of 327 meters, the lake is the third deepest in Japan. The water is so translucent that you can see down into it for 10 meters. It is located in an active volcano caldera, with the last big eruption dating back about 13,000 years. The lake is actually situated in a double caldera, as a smaller eruption caused another caldera under the lake to collapse about 5,400 years ago. The volcano's eruptions stretch well into recorded history, and the last known eruption was about 1000 years ago, causing devastating ash and pyroclastic flows to retard crops, and lower the temperature considerably bringing with it a very cold winter and harsh famine.

Lake Kawaguchiko (Fuji Five Lakes, Japan)

Lake Kawaguchiko is also known as the starting point for climbing Mt. Fuji, as well as a mecca for sports fishing. The best views of Mount Fuji can be enjoyed from the lake's northern shores and are particularly breathtaking during the cherry blossom season around mid April and autumn colors around the first half of November. One of the nicest spots for cherry blossoms is the seaside promenade near the Kawaguchiko Music Forest, while photographers will enjoy the "Koyo Tunnel" for autumn colors, a maple tree covered road section along the lake's northern shore.

Directions

Lake Toya (Lake Toya Area, Hokkaido, Japan)

Lake Toya, which is situated in the southwestern part of Hokkaido, belongs to Shikotsu-Toya National Park. This caldera lake lies 11km east and west, 9km south and north and measuring 43km around. The active volcano that stands proudly near the lake with white smoke rising above it is Mt.Usu. It is one of the most active volcanoes, with repeated eruptions on a cycle of between 30 and 50 years. Its most recent eruption was in 2000. Live craters and the remains produced by volcano eruption can be closely observed. It was registered in world Geopark for the first time in Japan in 2010. Lake Toya hot spring, which stretches out along the lake, is one of the best spa resorts in Hokkaido. Various events such as fireworks are held throughout the year. The G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit was held in 2008. Many people from around the world gathered at Lake Toya. Abundant in nature, it is an excellent place to exchange world view on the global environment and climate change. There are many places of interest around Lake Toya including the Volcano Science Museum where they show visual images of the eruption that occurred in 1977 and 2000, complete with a special sound

Japan

TOP 5

Recommended Arts & Crafts

Kimono (Kyoto&Tokyo)

The kimono is a traditional Japanese dress. In modern day Japan, it is worn only sparingly or during special occasions such as weddings, tea ceremonies, formal traditional events and funerals. An appropriate style and color of kimono is to be worn depending on the occasion and the person's age and marital status. Men's kimono usually have more subdued colors and are made typically from matte fabrics. Partly for this reason, it is the women's kimono that generate more interest because their beautiful designs make them art pieces as much as they are garments. The women's kimono is traditionally made of silk, but these days they are also made of polyester. Decoration techniques include embroidery, yuzen painting and dyeing.

Japanese dolls (Takasaki&Northern Honshu& Fukuoka)

Dolls have been manufactured since the early days of Japanese culture. Today, there exist various types of Japanese dolls. The following is a description of only a few of the most famous ones:

Daruma dolls are spherical dolls with a red painted body and a white face, but without pupils. They represent the Zen monk Bodhidharma. It is the custom to paint one of the doll's pupils in the beginning of a new year, make a wish and paint in the second pupil, if the wish comes true. Takasaki's Shorinzan Daruma Temple is the birthplace of daruma dolls as good luck charms.

Kokeshi dolls are simply shaped, wooden dolls from Northern Honshu, which originated as souvenirs distributed at hot spring resorts during the Edo Period. Kokeshi dolls have neither arms nor legs, but a large head and a cylindrical body.

Hakata dolls are clay dolls manufactured in Fukuoka Prefecture on Kyushu. They are worked out in great detail and painted beautifully.



Geta (Store in Shizuoka/at Shitamachi&Asakusa in Tokyo)

Geta (下駄) are a form of traditional Japanese footwear that resemble both clogs and flip-flops. They are a kind of sandal with an elevated wooden base held onto the foot with a fabric thong to keep the foot well above the ground. They are worn with traditional Japanese clothing such as kimono or yukata, but (in Japan) also with Western clothing during the summer months. Sometimes geta are worn in rain or snow to keep the feet dry, due to their extra height and impermeability compared to other footwear such as zōri. They make a similar noise to flip-flops slapping against the heel whilst walking. When worn on water or dirt, flip-flops may flip dirt or water up the back of the legs. This does not tend to happen with the heavier Japanese Geta.

Yosegi (Hakone)

Yosegi-zaiku is a type of traditional Japanese parquetry which originated during Japan's culturally rich Edo Period. It has been increasingly well reputed in foreign countries. The mosaic work is made by making use of natural fine grains and textures of wood. Timbers of different colors are cut into oblong rods of desired sections. Spindle tree (*Euonymus spp.*) and *Ilex macropoda* are used for white, aged Katsura tree (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*) for black, *Picrasma quassioides*, mulberry (*Morus alba*) and Chinese lacquer tree (*Toxicodendron vernicifluum*) for yellow, camphor tree (*Cinnamomum camphora*) and *Maackia* for brown, black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) for purple, Japanese cucumber tree (*Magnolia obovata*) for blue and Chinese cedar (*Toona sinensis*) for red. The rods are then glued together to form the section of geometrical design pattern. The sectional surface is sliced into thin plates of wood, which are glued onto boxes and other handicraft works. To add to the glaze and sturdiness of the surface, finishing coatings of lacquer are applied.

TOP 10 Japan Recommended Historic Buildings & Districts



1. Geisha Districts

Gion -- Kyoto

Gion (祇園) is Kyoto's most famous geisha district, located around Shijo Avenue between Yasaka Shrine in the east and the Kamo River in the west. It is filled with shops, restaurants and ochaya (teahouses), where geiko (Kyoto dialect for geisha) and maiko (geiko apprentices) entertain.

2. Former Merchant Districts

Takayama Old Town -- Takayama

Takayama's old town has been beautifully preserved with many buildings and whole streets of houses dating from the Edo Period (1600-1868), when the city thrived as a wealthy town of merchants.

3. Former Samurai Districts

Nagamachi Samurai District -- Kanazawa

Nagamachi (長町) was a samurai district located at the foot of the former Kanazawa Castle, where samurai and their families used to reside. The area preserves a historic atmosphere with its remaining samurai residences, earthen walls, private entrance gates, narrow lanes and water canals.

4. Farming Towns

Ogimachi Village -- Shirakawa-go

Ogimachi is the largest village and main attraction of Shirakawa-go. Declared a UNESCO world heritage site in 1995, the village is home to several dozen well preserved gassho-zukuri farmhouses, some of which are more than 250 years old.

5. Post Towns

Tsumago -- between Kyoto and Edo

Tsumago (妻籠) was a post town on the Nakasendo route between Kyoto and Edo. It is known today as one of the best preserved post towns in Japan. The town and its residents go to great lengths to recreate the ambiance of the Edo Period. Cars are prohibited on the main street in the day and phone lines and power cables are kept concealed, allowing visitors to imagine they have slipped back to an earlier time.

6. Pilgrimage Towns

Higashiyama District -- Kyoto

The Higashiyama District along the lower slopes of Kyoto's eastern mountains is one of the city's best preserved historic districts. It is a great place to experience traditional old Kyoto, especially between Kiyomizudera and Yasaka Shrine, where the narrow lanes, wooden buildings and traditional merchant shops invoke a feeling of the old capital city. Recent renovations to remove telephone poles and repave the streets have further improved the traditional feel of the district.



7. Port Towns

Tomonoura -- Fukuyama

Tomonoura (鞆の浦) is a port town at the southern end of Fukuyama City, Hiroshima Prefecture. Situated at a bay facing the Seto Inland Sea, the picturesque port town features an endearing old-fashioned fishing townscape, with a calm and laid-back atmosphere. Tomonoura is part of the Setonaikai National Park.

8. Geisha Districts

Higashi Chaya District -- Kanazawa

A chaya (lit. teahouse) is an exclusive type of restaurant where guests are entertained by geisha who perform song and dance. During the Edo Period, chaya were found in designated entertainment districts, usually just outside the city limits. Kanazawa has three, well preserved chaya districts, Higashi Chayagai (Eastern Chaya District), Nishi Chayagai (Western Chaya District) and Kazuemachi.

9. Farming Towns

Miyama -- Kyoto

Miyama (美山) is a remote, rural area in the mountains 30 kilometers north of central Kyoto. The area is famous for its traditional, thatched roof (kayabuki) farmhouses of which over 200 can be seen dotting the countryside. Unlike those found in many other historic towns and districts around the country, the majority of Miyama's old houses survive as residential dwellings where people still live and work. This in turn lends a very nostalgic atmosphere to the area, and gives visitors a chance to experience the traditional, authentic feel of rural Japan.

10. Post Towns

Ouchijuku -- Aizu

Ouchijuku (大内宿, Ōuchijuku) is a former post town along the Aizu-Nishi Kaido trade route, which connected Aizu with Nikko during the Edo Period. Restrictions set by the shogunate required travelers to make their long journeys on foot and as a result, post towns developed along the routes to provide travelers with food, accommodations and rest.

Japan UNESCO Sites

Japan's UNESCO World Heritage Sites

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is an agency of the United Nations that aims to promote the preservation and growth of the world's intellectual and cultural property. UNESCO is probably best known for designing World Heritage Sites, cultural or natural sites that show "outstanding universal value". There are currently 18 world heritage sites in Japan.

Most Recommended UNESEO Sites to Visit:



Fujisan/Fuji Mountain

Added in 2013

Japan's most iconic volcano and highest mountain, Mount Fuji, has been worshiped as a sacred mountain for centuries and had an immeasurable impact on Japanese culture, while it is recognized as a symbol of Japan across the world.

Himeji Castle

Added in 1993

Himeji Castle is the most beautiful and complete surviving example of a Japanese feudal castle.

Shirakawa-go and Gokayama

Added in 1995

Shirakawa-go and Gokayama are remote regions in the mountains of Gifu and Toyama Prefectures, famous for their solid houses built in the gasshozukuri architecture style.

Monuments of Ancient Nara

Added in 1998

Over half a dozen shrines, temples and other sites in Nara, including

Todaiji

Kofukuji

Kasuga Taisha

Yakushiji

Shrines and Temples of Nikko

Added in 1999

Nikko has been a center of Shinto and Buddhist worship for many centuries. Today, it is most famous for its lavishly decorated Toshogu Shrine.

Tomioka Silk Mill and Related Sites

Added in 2014

The Tomioka Silk Mill in Gunma Prefecture served as the model factory for revolutionizing Japan's silk industry after the end of the feudal era. The factory complex is well preserved close to its original state.

Shiretoko

Added in 2005

The Shiretoko Peninsula in eastern Hokkaido, is one of Japan's most beautiful and unspoiled national parks.

Wearing Kimono / Yukata Experience

The Japanese kimono is one of the world's instantly recognizable traditional garments. The word kimono literally means "clothing", and up until the mid 19th century it was the form of dress worn by everyone in Japan. That began to change slowly with the import of suits dresses and other western fashions during the Meiji Era. Thanks to the popularity of ukiyo-e woodblock prints in the West at the beginning of the last century, the kimono-clad maiden became one of the quintessential images of Japan. Dressing up in the kimono and other accoutrements of the geisha or maiko is still one of the more popular activities for visiting tourists.



Have you ever seen the beautiful lady wearing Kimono walking down the historical alley, temple & shrine, enjoy the beautiful sunshine, or wearing Yukata at a traditional Japanese inns enjoy the food and onsen and put yourself in the beautiful natural. Now you can experience all of these yourself in Novaland Tours!



Geisha / Maiko Show

Geisha are traditional Japanese female entertainers who act as hostesses and whose skills include performing various Japanese arts such as classical music, dance, games and conversation, mainly to entertain male customers.

In Novaland Tours, enjoy the dances performed by geisha & maiko right before your eyes. Kyo-mai Dance, Flower Arrangement, Tea Ceremony, Koto Zither, Gagaku Court Music, Kyogen Theatre, Bunraku Puppet Theatre. Lose yourself in traditional performing arts in the heart of Kyoto's Gion district and Tokyo.

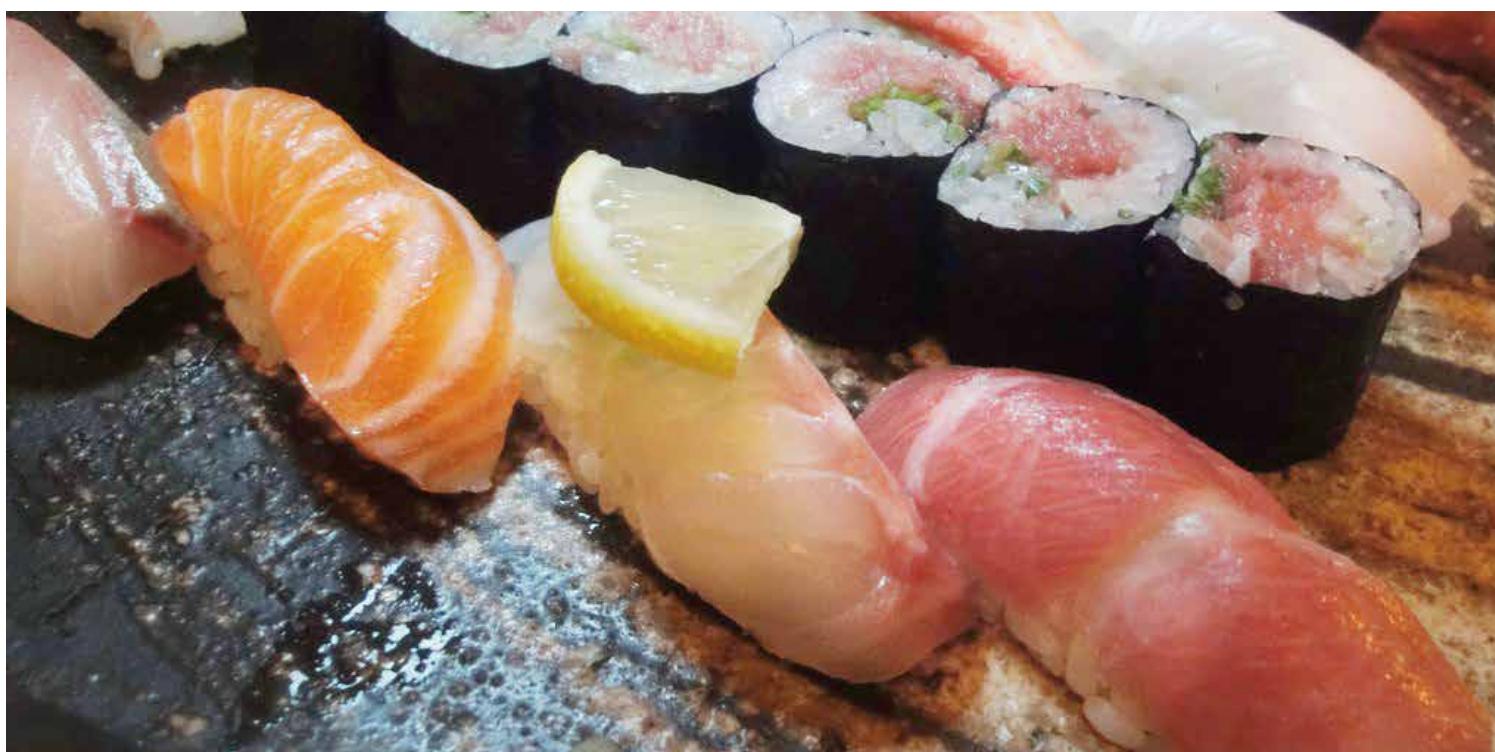


Making Sushi Japanese Tea Ceremony

Making Sushi

Perhaps the most well-known Japanese food, sushi has become increasingly popular worldwide. It traditionally consists of seafood placed on top of a small, bite sized portion of vinegared white. The seafood is usually a sliced piece of raw fish such as tuna, salmon, yellow tail, or seafood such as shrimp or uni. Depending on the sushi restaurant, there can be either a small or large variety in the fish they serve.

We specially arrange the Sushi making experience for you. There you may have chance to turn the ingredients you just bought at the Tsukiji Fish Market into your own sushi. And will have lesson on how to pick, how to choose fresh ingredients and how to make the delicious Sushi!



Japanese Tea Ceremony

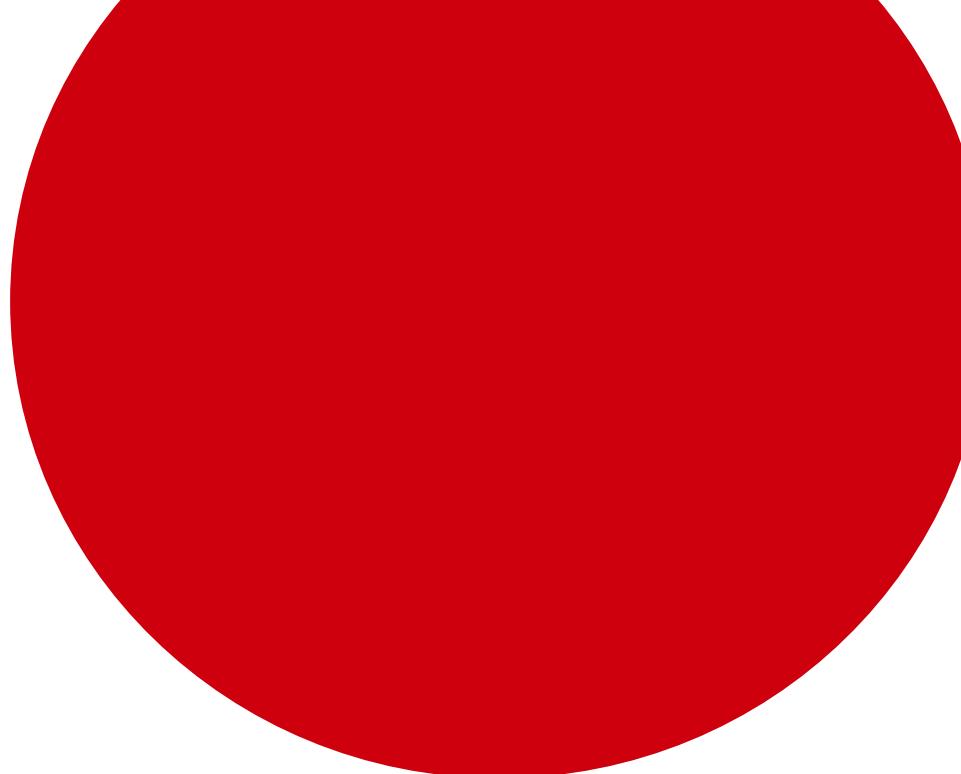
Tea ceremony (the way of tea) is one of Japan's traditional cultural practices, represents the true essence of Japanese hospitality. It is a name given to an art that synthesizes the preparation and drinking of tea together with spirituality, history, architecture, the appreciation of handmade tea utensils.

In Novaland Tours, enjoy authentic tea-making procedure at the venerable teahouse. By observing certain rules and aesthetic values, you will see how true tea ceremony is performed, and how great-tasting green tea is made.



Ninja Show & Experience

Ninja or shinobi was a covert agent or mercenary of feudal Japan specializing in unorthodox arts of war. The functions of the ninja included espionage, sabotage, infiltration, and assassination, as well as open combat in certain situations. The ninja, using covert methods of waging war, were contrasted with the samurai, who had strict rules about honor and combat.

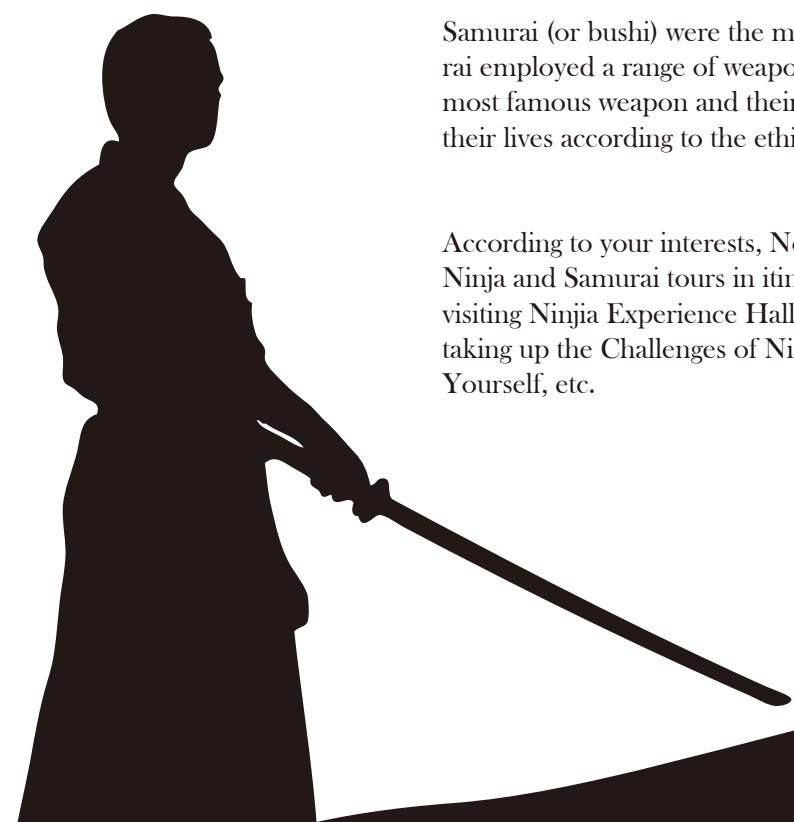


Ninja Show Samurai & Traditional Swordplay

Samurai & Traditional Swordplay

Samurai (or bushi) were the members of the military class, the Japanese warriors. Samurai employed a range of weapons such as bows and arrows, spears and guns; but their most famous weapon and their symbol was the sword. Samurai were expected to lead their lives according to the ethic code of bushido ("the way of the warrior").

According to your interests, Novaland Tours could especially arrange different kinds of Ninja and Samurai tours in itineraries, including watching Ninja show or Samurai show, visiting Ninja Experience Hall to learn about Ninja history and the secret of Ninja, or taking up the Challenges of Ninja or Samurai Training to Become a Ninja or Samurai Yourself, etc.



Kabuki Show

Bunraku Show

Kabuki Show

The origin of the name of the public entertainment Kabuki is the verb kabuku, meaning to be eccentric or extraordinary or outstep the bounds of common sense.

In the Azuchi-Momoyama period and early Edo period, people who had striking hairstyles, wore clothes in the peak of current fashion, and rebelled against the order of society, were called kabukimono. The history of Kabuki can be traced back to the Kabuki-odori of Izumo no Okuni, but the name came from the fact that Okuni imitated the costumes and makeup of the most advanced kabukimono so symbolic of those times; this type of entertainment began to be called Kabuki.

Kabuki developed strongly and flexibly by avidly taking in other entertainments and fashions while overcoming various difficulties in each period in its history of about 400 years, passing down the spirit that prevailed when Kabuki was born. As a result, Kabuki as we have now inherited it is a "comprehensive art" incorporating various elements of Japanese theatrical performances, dance and music.



Bunraku Show

Bunraku is the traditional puppet theatre of Japan, a high-level stage art of which Japan can be very proud. Bunraku was originally the name of the theatre in which this puppet drama was performed, but gradually it came to be used as the name of the art itself and is today used as the official name of the puppet theatre. The art only came to be known as "Bunraku" around the end of the Meiji era (1868-1912); up until that time, the art was known as ayatsuri joruri shibai ("puppet joruri plays") or ningyo joruri, or "puppet narrative drama." Now, joruri is a type of shamisen music, and the name reflects that the puppet plays were performed to a joruri accompaniment. Bunraku's world renown stems not only from its high-quality artistic technique, but also from the high level of its joruri music and the unique nature of manipulating the puppets—each puppet requires three puppeteers to bring it to life. Throughout the world there are a number of types of puppet theatre, and they all treat with simple stories such as myths and legends. There is no other art that requires a whole day for its long, serious drama to unfold. Furthermore, in most of the world's puppet theatres, great pains have been taken to hide the manipulation of the puppeteers from the audience. There are several methods of achieving this: suspending the puppet from strings attached to the ceiling, as with marionettes; placing a hand within the puppet and moving it with the fingers, as with guignol puppets; and casting shadows upon a screen, as with the wayan kulit shadow puppets. But in Bunraku, the manipulators appear openly, in full view of the audience. These two characteristics, which make it completely different from the other puppet theatre traditions around the world, can be said to be the reason that Bunraku is called the most highly developed puppet theatre art in the world.



Kyougen Show Nohgaku Show

Japan's traditional performing arts of Noh and Kyogen developed together in the 14th century during the Muromachi period (1333–1573). Today, they are thought of together as the art of Nogaku, or as Noh & Kyogen.



Kyougen Show

Kyogen is a kind of spoken drama that is based upon laughter and comedy. In contrast to Noh, it uses the everyday life of the common people in feudal society or folk tales as its subject, and realistically depicts a kind of "Everyman" figure. This dynamic art—whose typical main character is a servant named Taro Kaja—evokes a gentle and entertaining humor.

Nohgaku Show

Noh is a kind of symbolic drama colored with the graceful aesthetic effect of quiet elegance that is expressed through the word yugen ("elegant, refined, and elusive beauty"). Its subjects are taken from history or classical literature, and it is structured around song and dance. Its most obvious characteristic is that the main actor performs while wearing a mask of exceptional beauty. Its themes are more concerned with human destiny than with events, and it developed into a highly stylized and refined performing art that takes place upon a very simple stage. The play known as The Well-Curb is often used as typical of the vision-like Noh plays of its dramatic world. When audiences experience Noh, they are touched with a feeling different from that evoked by other theatrical forms.



Anime Tour

See Sumo Training or Tournament

Anime Tour

Anime is an integral part of Japanese culture, capturing the attention of millions of fans worldwide. We have organized several Japan anime tours for anime fans to visit the country of origin, relive your favorite anime moments, and add limited edition collectibles to your impressive anime and manga collections. Our Japan Anime Tours take you to all the major anime spots including the mecca of anime Akihabara, Pokemon Center, J-World, Animate, Ghibli Museum, life-size Gundam Front, and more. Anime Japan Tours scheduled during the great AnimeJapan Event, one of the world's largest conventions of its kind, include admission to the event where you can meet thousands of other anime fans, cosplayers, and manga artists. Our Anime Japan Tours also venture out to cities like Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, Hiroshima, and even further down to islands like Kyushu and Shikoku to truly show you all of Japan and its beauty.



See Sumo Training or Tournament

Sumo is a competitive full-contact wrestling sport where a rikishi (wrestler) attempts to force another wrestler out of a circular ring (dohyō) or into touching the ground with anything other than the soles of the feet. The characters 相撲 literally mean "striking one another".

In Novaland Tours, we can arrange you watch Sumo Training Tour, walk in Sumo town or Sumo Museum to experience culture of Sumo, and watch Sumo tournament, etc.

1. Sumo Training Tour

A typical day in the life of a sumo wrestler starts with early morning practice. It's a spectacle to see these powerful wrestlers battling it out in these morning sessions. You will witness up close the massive size of these wrestlers, which could not be truly appreciated from the sidelines.

2. Sumo Town Walk

Ryogoku (両国) is a district of Tokyo where the sumo stadium, many sumo stables, chanko restaurants and other sumo related attractions can be found. It is the center of the sumo world.

3. Watch Sumo Tournament

<http://www.sumo.or.jp/en>



Ski Japan Beach - Okinawa



Ski

Fittingly, Japan offers many popular destinations for snow seekers.

There are over 500 ski resorts across Japan, which vary in size from large resorts with dozens of runs to small one-lift slopes. The best resorts and snow conditions are found in northern Japan (Hokkaido and Tohoku) and in the mountains along the Sea of Japan Coast (especially Niigata and Nagano). For those who are interested in experiencing snow, but who do not wish to ski or snowboard, most resorts have play zones designed for families with small children.

Hokkaido -- Niseko

Niseko, a spectacular snow resort town in Hokkaido, is probably the most visited ski resort by foreign travellers and is very English friendly. The almost guaranteed powder snow and fantastic views of Mt. Yotei make this a very popular destination. Although a day trip from Sapporo is possible, Niseko is best enjoyed over a few days.

Japan Beach - Okinawa

The best beaches for sunbathing and swimming are found in Okinawa to the south, but nice beaches exist in other regions, too.

Subtropical Okinawa Prefecture is famous for its white sand beaches, turquoise waters and warm climate with temperatures barely falling below 15 degrees in winter and beaches that are open all year round. The best time to go swimming is usually from around late May until October. When using the beaches, always beware of strong currents that can pull you out to sea and poisonous creatures such as Habu Jellyfish, a type of box jellyfish, that are most prevalent from June to October.



Japan Food & Useful Words in English & Japanese

Rice Bowl

A bowl of plain cooked rice is served with most Japanese meals. For breakfast, it is sometimes mixed with a raw egg and soya sauce (tamago kake gohan) or enjoyed with natto or other toppings.

Sushi

Sushi may refer to any dish that contains sushi rice, cooked white rice flavored with seasoned rice vinegar. There are various kinds of sushi dishes, such as nigirizushi (hand formed sushi), makizushi (rolled sushi), and chirashi (sushi rice topped with raw fish). Sushi is the most famous Japanese dish outside of Japan, and one of the most popular dishes among the Japanese themselves.

Sashimi

Sashimi is raw seafood. A large number of fish can be enjoyed raw if they are fresh and prepared correctly. Most types of sashimi are enjoyed with soy sauce and wasabi.

Yakizakana

Yakizakana means grilled fish. Many varieties of fish are enjoyed in this way, including mackerel (saba), salmon (sake), mackerel pike (sanma), horse mackerel (aji), Okhotsk atka mackerel (hokke), sea bream (tai) and sweetfish (ayu).

Noodle Dishes

There are various traditional Japanese noodle dishes as well as some dishes which were introduced to Japan and subsequently Japanized. Noodle dishes are very popular in Japan, and are served both hot and cold depending on the season. Noodle restaurants and food stands are ubiquitous, and it is common to find noodle stands along train platforms.

Tempura

Tempura consists of seafood, vegetables, mushrooms, or meat coated with batter and deep fried. The resulting food has a light, but crispy texture, that may be seasoned with salt or dipped in a light sauce before eating. Tempura was introduced to Japan by the Portuguese in the 16th century, and has become one of Japan's most famous dishes internationally.

Soybean Dishes

Tofu, natto, miso and many other important ingredients of Japanese cooking are made of soybeans.

Nabe Dishes

Nabe, or hot pot dishes, are prepared in a hot pot, usually at the table. Typical ingredients are vegetables such as negi (Japanese leek) and hakusai (Chinese cabbage), various mushrooms, seafood and/or meat. There are many regional and personal varieties, and they are especially popular in the cold winter months.

サモン刺身	Salmon Sashimi	天麩羅丼	Tempura Selection On Rice
マグロ寿司	Tuna Sushi	鰻丼	Broiled Eel Rice
鮭寿司	Trout Sushi	鮭子丼	Salmon Eggs Over Rice
鯛刺身	Snapper Sashimi	海鮮丼	Seafood Over Rice
カニ肉	Crab Leg Meat	チャーハン	Fried Rice
帆立貝	Surf Clam	豚骨ラーメン	Tonkotsu Ramen
明太子寿司	Roe Sushi	醤油ラーメン	Soya Sauce Ramen
鰯寿司	Skipjack Sushi	塩ラーメン	Salt Taste Ramen
味噌汁	Miso Soup	味噌ラーメン	Miso Ramen
海老寿司	Shrimp Sashimi	うどん面	Udon
玉子寿司	Egg Sushi	蕎麦面	Soba Noodles
貝類	Shellfish	焼きそば	Fried Noodles
タコ寿司	Octopus Sushi	餃子	Dumpling
イカ寿司	Sleeve-fish Sushi	テッパン焼き	Teppanyaki
鰻寿司	Eel Sushi	懷石料理	Kaiseki Cuisine
カニの寿司	Crab Roe Sushi	おにぎり	Onigiri
豚肉丼	Pork Over Rice	焼き魚	Baked Fish
豚カツ丼	Deep Fried Pork In Egg On Rice	すき焼き	The Japanese Beef Hot Pot
親子丼	Parent-child Over Rice	肉じゃが	Potato Stew
牛丼	Rice With Beef	唐揚げ弁当	Fried Chicken

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Japan Money & Currency



The Japanese yen (円, symbol: ¥; code: JPY) is the official currency of Japan. It is the third most traded currency in the foreign exchange market after the United States dollar and the euro. It is also widely used as a reserve currency after the U.S. dollar, the euro, and the pound sterling.

The current series: Bills come in 1,000 yen, 2,000 yen (very rare), 5,000 yen and 10,000 yen denominations. Coins come in 1 yen, 5 yen, 10 yen, 50 yen, 100 yen and 500 yen denominations.

Cash is still the preferred payment method, especially when it involves small amounts. Big bills are readily used and accepted in Japan; you are unlikely to be frowned upon for using a 10,000 yen bill to pay even for low-cost items, although smaller denominations are appreciated for payments made in taxis, smaller shops, temples and shrines. The likelihood that credit cards are accepted decreases in small cities and towns, and thus it is advisable to keep cash at hand when visiting rural areas.

Cash is usually the only way to pay for small entrance fees at tourist sights, at smaller restaurants and small shops. The majority of lockers also require coins. Preparing coins in advance when using buses and trams is a good idea. Buses generally do not accept bills above 1000 yen, and the bus driver may not carry any larger bills. Vending machines typically accept 10, 50, 100 and 500 yen coins and 1,000 yen bills. Newer machines typically also accept 5,000 and 10,000 yen bills.

Electricity & Voltage in Japan



Electricity & Voltage in Japan

The voltage in Japan is 100 Volt, which is different from North America (120V), Central Europe (230V) and most other regions of the world. Japanese electrical plugs have two, non-polarized pins, as shown above. They fit into North American outlets.

Japanese power outlets are identical to ungrounded (2-pin) North American outlets. While most Japanese outlets these days are polarized (one slot is slightly wider than the other), it is possible to encounter non-polarized outlets in some places.

Some North American equipment will work fine in Japan without an adapter and vice versa, however, certain equipment, especially equipment involving heating (e.g. hair dryers), may not work properly or even get damaged. If you intend to purchase electronic appliances in Japan for use outside of Japan, you are advised to look for equipment specifically made for oversea tourists.

The frequency of electric current is 50 Hertz in Eastern Japan (including Tokyo, Yokohama, Tohoku, Hokkaido) and 60 Hertz in Western Japan (including Nagoya, Osaka, Kyoto, Hiroshima, Shikoku, Kyushu); however, most equipment is not affected by this frequency difference. A possible exception are timing devices such as clocks.

Free WIFI in Japan

Free WIFI in Japan

Thanks to recent efforts by businesses and governments, public Wi-Fi networks for free use by foreign tourists have become more and more readily available. Tourists will encounter these networks at international airports, major railway stations (including all Yamanote Line stations and many shinkansen stations), selected coffee, fast food and convenience store chains and many tourist information desks.

There are currently three major, nationwide products available that make connecting to Wi-Fi hotspots easier:

Free Wi-Fi Passport

Two weeks (extendable) free access to approximately 400,000 Softbank hotspots at restaurants, cafes, major train stations, hotels and other locations across Japan. Registration is made by calling a toll-free number (*8180) from a foreign cellphone while connected to the Softbank network. Calling the number will get you a password that can be used on up to five devices.

Travel Japan Wi-Fi

A smartphone app that provides two weeks (extendable) free access to over 60,000 Wi2 hotspots across Japan. Registration is not required, however by getting a "premium code" from one of several partners (e.g. JAL or selected shops in Japan), the number of hotspots can be increased to over 200,000.

Japan Connected-free Wi-Fi

A smartphone app that unifies the registration process of over 100,000 free tourist hotspots by numerous companies and organizations so that visitors can use them easily without having to register for each service individually. Registration of some personal data is required.



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Tokyo Shopping Sites

Anyone who loves shopping knows that Tokyo is one of the most renowned shopping cities in the world. It should come as no surprise that Japanese people love style and fashion as designers from around the globe know that Tokyo is a hot spot for their label to be featured. It is here that well-established Japanese shops and famous brand names like Gucci, Chanel, Armani, Louis Vuitton, and others stand side by side on the various blocks that make up the center of the Ginza shopping area. Tokyo also serves as a hub of artistic ingenuity as art galleries and purely Japanese modern architecture are visible throughout the entire city.



Shinjuku - One of Tokyo's largest shopping and entertainment districts

Centered around Shinjuku Station, a major transportation hub and the busiest train station in the world, this district is home to half a dozen major department stores, including several companies' flagship stores; as well as outlets of Japan's largest electronics retailers combined with a host of other shops and boutiques along its streets and underground shopping arcades.

Ginza - Tokyo's premier upmarket shopping district

The Ginza features high end department stores, boutiques, art galleries and designer brand stores. Nearly every leading Japanese and international brand name fashion and cosmetics company has a presence here, as well as major electronics brands such as Sony and Apple. The shopping extends into the nearby Yurakucho area with more department stores, boutiques and electronic retailers.

Shibuya - Center of youth fashion

Around Shibuya Station is another large shopping district that is the birthplace of many of Japan's youth fashion trends. It is home to some well known, trend setting clothing stores such as Shibuya 109, as well as dozens of small fashion stores along its streets. Small boutiques, including high fashion and designer brands, continue to be found through to Aoyama and Daikanyama where the atmosphere is more subdued compared to the electric brightness of Shibuya.

Nihonbashi - historic merchant district featuring traditional goods and local foods

The Nihonbashi district served the capital as one of the leading centers of trade and commerce during the Edo Period. It is the site of the flagship branch of Mitsukoshi, Japan's first department store and many smaller shops with centuries-long histories. Thanks to tasteful, recent redevelopment that built on the district's history, Nihonbashi will delight shoppers with an interest in traditional products and regional foods.

Kyoto / Osaka Shopping Sites

Kyoto features a unique mix of shopping, where modern, high end fashion shops can be found alongside stores with centuries of history selling traditional Kyoto crafts or specialty foods. This is well expressed in the city's largest shopping district along Shijo Street at the heart of central Kyoto.

The shopping area along Shijo Street is centered around the intersection of Shijo and Kawaramachi streets where you will find the Takashimaya and Marui department stores. A Daimaru department store, as well as high end fashion brands like Louis Vuitton, stand nearby. If you continue along Shijo Street across the Kamo River toward Yasaka Shrine, the large stores give way to smaller shops selling fashion and Kyoto specialty foods and crafts.

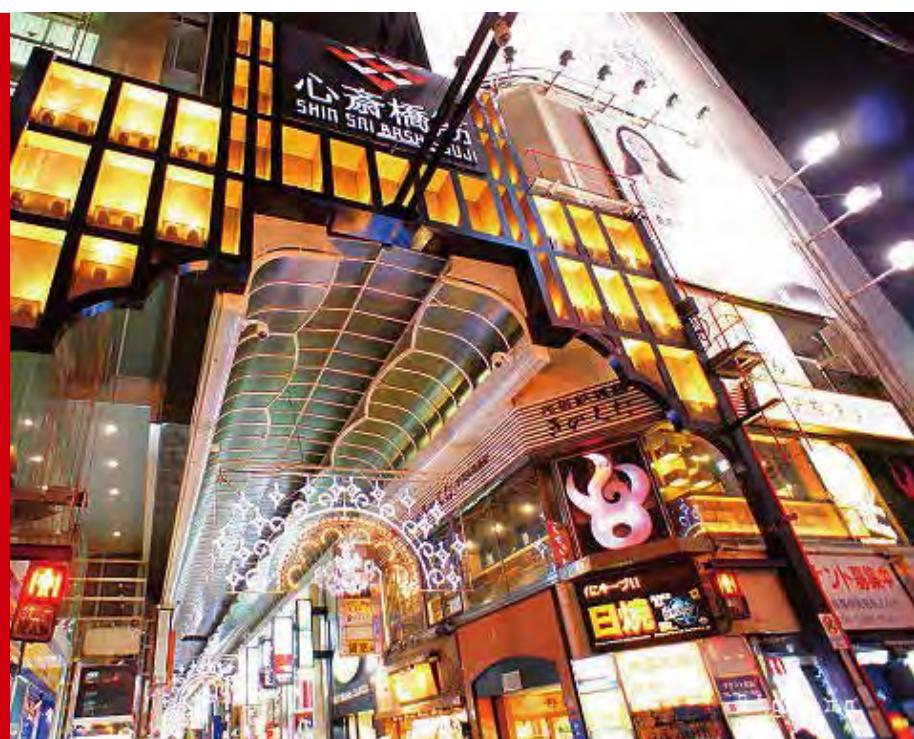


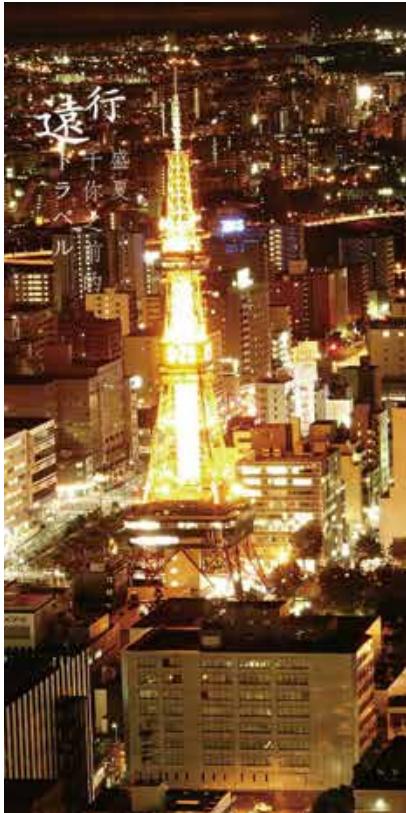
Kyoto's second largest shopping area is around JR Kyoto Station and includes the extensive Porta underground shopping mall, a massive Aeon shopping mall south of the station and big retailers such as a Bic Camera electronics store. The Kyoto Station building itself houses a large Isetan department store and "The Cube" shopping center with various souvenir shops, boutiques and restaurants.

Osaka has several world class shopping districts and miles of shopping arcades, malls and streets. Osaka's shopping combines upscale, brand name and designer goods with inexpensive thrift shops and discount chains.

The city's two largest shopping districts are Umeda in the north and Namba in the south. The Umeda area (also known as Kita) is served by JR Osaka Station and Umeda Station, while the Namba area (also known as Minami) is served by Namba Station. Both areas have large concentration of department stores, shopping arcades and some of Japan's most extensive underground shopping malls.

In between Umeda and Namba is the covered shopping arcade Shinsaibashi Suji, one of Osaka's oldest and busiest shopping destinations which runs about 600 meters in length. Shinsaibashi Suji's collection of brand name shops, chain stores, independent boutiques and variety of restaurants makes it popular with nearly every kind of shopper. At Dotombori, Shinsaibashi Suji becomes Ebisubashi Suji, though the same shopping atmosphere remains.





If you are planning to do a spot of shopping during your stay in Sapporo, you won't be disappointed. Sapporo is home to a number of large underground shopping malls, department stores and local shops selling a range of gift ideas, ranging from paper fans and kimonos, to jewellery and electrical goods.

The Tanuki Koji Shopping Arcade, close to the Susukino train station, is amongst the largest and most historic malls in the city of Sapporo and boasts in excess of 200 individual stores and a good selection of eateries.

Most shops in Sapporo usually open on a daily basis, although the smaller shops may not open on Sundays and open from 09:00 and 17:00 during the rest of the week. The largest department stores often open from 10:00 until as late as 19:00, while supermarkets generally open seven days a week, from 09:00 or 10:00 until 17:00. Some department stores do choose to close for one of two days each month.

Sapporo Shopping Sites

Plenty of shopping opportunities await you all around Sapporo and include the popular Parco department store, which is spread over ten floors and is full of high-street fashion, together with an impressive restaurant on the top floor, where the views of the cityscape are excellent. Close to the Sapporo train station you will find more than 100 shops at the underground shopping mall of APIA, and plenty of further outlets in the Arc City Mall, which also boasts accommodation and a cinema complex.

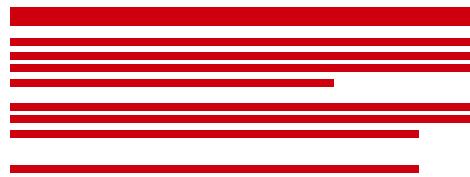
Also near to the Sapporo train station is the Paseo shopping centre, where you will find in excess of 200 shops and restaurants, with a strong focus on fashion. Another popular shopping mall in Sapporo is Aurora Town, close to the Odori Subway and located underground, with around 150 shops and eateries, including many of Japan's favourite high-street stores.



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Basic Useful Japanese Characters



ホテル (hoteru) = Hotel

トイレ (toire) = Toilet

トイレはどこですか (toire wa doko desu ka) = Where's the toilet?

時間 (jikan) = Time

空港 (kuukou) = Airport

駅 (eki) = Station

タクシー (takushi) = Taxi

水 (mizu) = Water

飲み物 (nomimono) = Drink

食べ物 (tabemono) = Food

レストラン (resutoran) = Restaurant

ありがとうございます (arigatougozaimasu) = Thank You

すみません (sumimasen) = Excuse Me

ごめんなさい (gomennasai) = Sorry

おはようございます (ohayougozaimasu) = Good Morning

こんにちは (konnichiwa) = Good Afternoon

こんばんは (konbanwa) = Good Evening

さようなら (sayounara) = Good bye

タクシーを呼んで下さい(takus i o yonde kudasai?) = Could you call a taxi please?

おなかすいた (onaka suita) / はらへった (hara hetta) = Hungry

コンビニ (konbini) = Convenience Store

悪い (warui) = Bad

いい (ii) = Good

熱い (atsui) = Hot

寒い (samui) = Cold

一 (ichi) = One

二 (ni) = Two

三 (san) = Three

四 (shi/yon) = Four

五 (go) = Five

六 (roku) = Six

七 (shichi) = Seven

八 (hachi) = Eight

九 (ku) = Nine

十 (juu) = Ten

百 (hyaku) = 100

千 (sen) = 1,000

万 (man) = 10,000

円 (en) = Yen

hai = Yes

iie = No

doko? = Where?

ikura? = How much?

kippu = Ticket

VISA to Japan

If you are from the countries below and your stay in until 15 days as a tourist, visa is not required. For more than 15 days, please contact the Embassy of Japan in your country or visa agent to know the specifics.



Asia	Brunei (15 days), Malaysia, Korea, Singapore, Thailand (15 days), Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan
North America	Canada, United States
South America and Caribbean	Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Surinam, Uruguay
Oceania	Australia, New Zealand
Middle East	Israel, Turkey
Africa	Lesotho, Mauritius, Tunisia
Europe	Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom

Other countries to apply Japan visa, here are examples of Visa Requirements (Links to the Japanese Foreign Ministry's Website):

Indonesia	http://www.id.emb-japan.go.jp/visa_listI.pdf
Philippine	http://www.ph.emb-japan.go.jp/visiting/visa%20application%20through%20agency.htm
China	http://www.cn.emb-japan.go.jp/index.htm
United Arab Emirates	http://www.uae.emb-japan.go.jp/E%20UAE.pdf
Iran	http://www.ir.emb-japan.go.jp/fa/visa/visa.html
Qatar	http://www.qa.emb-japan.go.jp/en/consul/new%20consul.html
Kuwait	http://www.kw.emb-japan.go.jp/english/visa/visa_main_e.htm
Saudi Arabia	http://www.ksa.emb-japan.go.jp/services/VisaApplication.htm
Russia	http://www.uae.emb-japan.go.jp/E%20Russian.pdf

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Flexible, Time-saving, Fast & Easy Tailor-making Procedure

Step 1 Know Your Personal Needs & Interests

Tell us as much as possible about your ideal tour, such as your tour purpose, your special needs and interest, and your approximate travel budget, etc.

Step 2 Tailor-made Tour Proposal from Your 1-On-1 Tailor-made Tour Specialist(TTS)

Email you within 24 hours (it may take up to 48 hrs on weekends or major public festivals).

Step 3 Based Our Communications, Get Several Prices Proposal.

Several prices according to different types of tour, then revise pricing according to your travel budget and personal needs.

Step 4 Choose the Most Suitable Price & Tour Proposal

Step 5 Arrange Tour According to Your Preferences

Your preferences include food, tour guides, sleeping habits, etc, to ensure the best travel experiences for you.

Step 6 Enjoy Your Most Unique Tailor-made Travel.

Step 7 Your TTS Call You in Tour and Ask for Your Valuable Feedbacks After Travel.

Your TTS will call you 2-3 days after your tour started to see if everything is in good hands. Please feel free to communicate with your TTS during your tour.

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