Japan is steeped in legend and myth, perhaps the greatest of which is the popular misconception that the country is simply too expensive to visit. The truth is that flights to Japan are cheaper than they’ve ever been, accommodation and food can be great value, while the warm hospitality which awaits every visitor costs nothing at all.

The real secret to travelling around the country on a budget, however, is the Japan Rail Pass. With this pass you can travel on some of the fastest trains in the world as often as you like for as long as you please. Use this comprehensive guide in conjunction with a rail pass to get the most out of your trip to Japan.

- **Practical information** – planning, suggested itineraries, when to go, what to take, getting to Japan
- **City guides and maps** – where to stay, where to eat, what to see in 26 towns and cities; historical and cultural background
- **Rail service summaries** – bullet trains and all routes in this guide
- **Kilometre-by-kilometre route guides** – train journeys from the coast into the mountains, from temple retreat to sprawling metropolis and from sulphurous volcano to windswept desert; 33 route maps
- **Plus** – Japanese phrases, customs and etiquette
- **Fully updated 4th edition**

www.trailblazer-guides.com

**TRAILBLAZER**

**Japan BY RAIL**

**RAMSEY ZARIFEH & ANNA UDAGAWA**

The most affordable and efficient way to travel around Japan is by train with a rail pass.
RAMSEY ZARIFEH (right, beside the line testing and diagnostic shinkansen known as Dr Yellow) was born in the UK but has spent most of his working life abroad. Graduating from Magdalene College, Cambridge, he worked in Japan on the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) scheme, before writing the first edition of this book. He currently works for Al Jazeera English and often returns to Japan. In 2015 he presented Off the Rails, a documentary for Al Jazeera on Japan’s love affair with its train network.

ANNA UDAGAWA (left, at Kawaguchi-ko below Mt Fuji) was born in Sussex. After graduating she worked at the BBC in London before heading off to explore the world, gradually travelling further east. She went to Japan initially to visit a friend but was soon inspired to prolong her stay, working in Tokyo and also Yokohama as an English-language teacher. She met her future husband in Japan but after getting married they came back to Britain. However, Anna returns whenever she can.

ANDREW PICKNELL (right, at the top of Mt Fuji) first visited Japan as an English teacher after working at the National Maritime Museum and the BBC. He taught and has travelled in places as varied as Hokkaido, Kyushu and Shikoku. Now teaching history in Leicester, he goes back regularly to explore more of Japan’s past and continue to indulge his passion for its language, art and landscape.

JAMES HODGSON (right, in the tea-producing region of Uji) read geography at Cambridge and studied Japanese for a year in Kyoto where he rapidly fell in love with the diversity of Kansai culture, food and trains. He now works in the UK writing business plans for railway companies.
PART 5: HONSHU (cont’d)

Kansai
Route guides  Nagoya to Shin-Osaka by shinkansen 234 – Nagoya to Shin-Osaka via the Kii Peninsula 237
City guides  Kyoto 250, Side trips 263 – Nara 265, Side trips 270

Western Honshu
Route guides  Shin-Osaka (Osaka) to Shin-Yamaguchi by shinkansen 272 – Shin-Yamaguchi to Masuda 282 – Masuda to Matsue 286
City guides  Kobe 289 – Okayama 297 – Hiroshima 301 – Matsue 312

Tohoku (North-eastern Honshu)
Route guides  Tokyo to Shin-Aomori by shinkansen 320 – Aomori/ Shin-Aomori to Akita and Niigata 344
City guides  Sendai 353 – Niigata 359 – Aomori 363

PART 6: HOKKAIDO

Route guides  Shin-Aomori to Shin-Hakodate-Hokuto/Hakodate 368
Hakodate/Shin-Hakodate-Hokuto to Sapporo 371 – Sapporo to Asahikawa & Abashiri 377 – Abashiri to Kushiro 382 – Kushiro to Sapporo (or Asahikawa) 388
City guides  Hakodate 393 – Sapporo 399 – Asahikawa 407

PART 7: KYUSHU

Route guides  Shin-Yamaguchi to Hakata (Fukuoka) by shinkansen 414 – Hakata (Fukuoka) to Nagasaki 416 – Hakata (Fukuoka) to Kagoshima-chuo by shinkansen 421 – Kokura to Miyazaki 426
City guides  Fukuoka 434 – Nagasaki 441 – Kumamoto 448
Kagoshima 455

PART 8: SHIKOKU

Route guides  Okayama to Takamatsu 464 – Takamatsu to Tokushima 466 – Tokushima to Kochi 466 – Kochi to Uwajima 473
Uwajima to Matsuyama 475 – Matsuyama to Okayama 477
City guides  Takamatsu 480 – Tokushima 486 – Matsuyama 490

APPENDICES

A: Glossary 496  B: Useful words and phrases 500
C: JR service summaries 504

MAP KEY  513  INDEX  514
Why take the train?

Think of Japan and one of the first images you’re likely to conjure up is that of a bullet train speeding past snow-capped Mt Fuji. For many, what lies beyond this image is a mystery. But hop on board that train and you’ll quickly discover what the country has to offer.

The fascination of Japan lies in its diversity: remote mountain villages contrast with huge neon-lit cities that never sleep; the vast natural landscape of unspoilt forests, volcanoes and hot springs more than compensates for the occasional man-made eyesore; the silent oasis of a Shinto shrine or a Buddhist temple is not far from the deafening noise of a virtual-reality games arcade. Nowhere else in the world do past and present co-exist in such close proximity as in this relatively small country.

The ideal way of seeing it all is by rail, whether on one of the famous bullet trains (shinkansen), on the wide network of local trains, or even on one of the many steam trains. An early 20th-century guidebook advised visitors to ‘make travel plans as simple as possible. The conditions of travel in this country do not lend themselves to intricate arrangements’. Today, however, nothing could be further from the truth. Trains run not just to the minute but to the second, so itineraries can be as complicated or precisely timetabled as you wish. Or you can simply turn up at the station and plan your journey as you go.

The real secret to touring the country is the Japan Rail Pass, deservedly recognised as the ‘bargain of the century’. Rail-pass holders can travel easily almost anywhere on the four main islands.

Japan need not be too expensive as, apart from your rail pass, you can cut costs by staying in hostels, minshuku (Japanese-style B& Bs), or business hotels (mostly Western style). For those with a
larger budget, staying in ryokan (upmarket minshuku) can be an amazing experience, but if you prefer there are world-class five-star hotels throughout the country.

Unexpected pleasures also await the traveller: where else do railway staff bow to you as they enter the carriage and also look as smart as they do in Japan? And where else can you buy cans of hot coffee from a vending machine at the top of a mountain, or sip sake whilst sitting in an open-air hot spring bath? It’s said that no gaijin (outsider) can ever fully know Japan but only by visiting and seeing for yourself can you discover what the country is really like: somewhere between the images of traditional past and hi-tech future which flicker worldwide on the small screen.
Routes and costs

ROUTE OPTIONS

So you know you’re going to Japan: the next step is to work out what you want to see and how much ground you want to cover once you’ve arrived. This guide shows you how travelling around Japan by rail is the best way of seeing the country close up and in full colour. And there are few places in the world where it really can be as much fun to travel as it is to arrive. Welcome to Japan by rail.

Below: The red-lacquered Shinkyo Bridge, across the Daiya River; the bridge originally provided the main gateway to the shrines and temples in Nikko. (© AU)
Japan by Rail
Selected highlights

- Shinkansen line
- Other rail line

Nagasaki
Beautiful port city with reminders of its international links; Peace Statue

Tottori
Japan’s ‘desert’ – almost 16km of beautiful sand dunes; optional camel ride

Miyajima
Scenic island known for the ‘floating’ torii gate

Hiroshima
A-bomb dome and Peace Memorial Park

Kyoto
Kinkaku-ji (Golden Temple); Nijo-jo; scenic Arashiyama

Osaka
The antidote to Tokyo: easy-going; 1960s kitsch; ‘eat-till-you-drop’ food culture

Kanazawa
Kenrokuen, one of Japan’s great gardens; temple, samurai and former geisha districts

Takayama
Streets with Edo-period buildings; wonderful festivals; access to picturesque Shirakawa-go, known for its houses with steep thatched roofs

Koya-san
Mountain-top temple town; overnight in a temple

Miyajima
Scenic island known for the ‘floating’ torii gate

Himeji
The picture-postcard-perfect Himeji Castle

Kagaoshima
Access to Sakurajima (volcanic island) and Ibusuki (natural hot-sand bath)

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Kagoshima
Access to Sakurajima (volcanic island) and Ibusuki (natural hot-sand bath)
Using this Guide

Japan Rail (JR) boasts that its network covers every corner of Japan’s four main islands. If you look at the maps in JR’s timetable you’ll see what appears to be something like a bowl of spaghetti. The choice of routes is, if not infinite, at the very least overwhelming. And that is only the JR lines – there are also lines operated by private railway companies. In some places the private railways provide the only service available and in others their stations are in more convenient places for sightseeing; for this edition there’s additional information about these lines.

To simplify travel planning and to reassure the first-time visitor that a qualification in orienteering is not needed, this guide splits the largest island, Honshu, into regions – Central Honshu, Kansai, Western Honshu and Tohoku (North-eastern Honshu) – and suggests (connecting) routes for each of these as well as for the other three main islands: Hokkaido, Kyushu and Shikoku. For example, if you are following the route round Western Honshu you will pass through Okayama, the starting point for the route guide around Shikoku.

Each section begins with an introduction to the area, with information on regional highlights and suggested stopping-off points. Routes can be followed in reverse but in this case all points of interest from the train will be on the opposite side.

Though it’s possible to travel every route by local train, it’s assumed that most travellers will have a rail pass so will use the shinkansen and/or limited express (LEX) services. It is not possible to mention every station so, as a rule of thumb, only stops served by limited expresses (or by shinkansen if the route follows a shinkansen line) are included. Stations served solely by local trains are listed only if they, or the area around them, are of particular interest. The fastest point-to-point journey times are provided for each section of the route.

Even though each route has been divided into different sections it may not be necessary to change train as you go from one section to the next. Occasionally, however, it is essential to change train in order to complete the route described. Such instances are denoted by the following symbol ▲. Places which are served by local trains only are marked ♦.

Sample itineraries are provided on pp41-7.

For the main shinkansen, limited express and local JR services see the summaries on pp504-13.
COSTS

Contrary to popular belief, a visit to Japan doesn’t have to be expensive but it is important to plan your budget as it is an easy country to spend money in.

Package tours which include travel by rail (see pp37-9) rarely offer better value than organising an independent trip. From the UK you’re probably looking at a minimum of £3000 for a 14-day tour including return flights, rail travel, accommodation in basic Japanese inns, some meals and the services of a tour guide. Given the price of a 14-day rail pass (¥46,390: £290/US$408), it would certainly be more cost effective (and more fun) to organise your own trip.

Though the cost of a Japan Rail Pass (see box p30) may seem high, a pass can almost pay for itself in just two journeys on a shinkansen. For example, a 7-day rail pass costs ¥29,100 (£182/US$256; free seat reservations) but the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample daily budgets</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Note:</strong> The budgets below do not include general travel costs because they assume you have a Japan Rail Pass. The exchange rates are rounded up/down for convenience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Low
- **Accommodation** ¥3000+ (£19/US$26+): dorm bed in a hostel, no meals
- **Breakfast** ¥600 (£4/US$5): coffee and toast
- **Lunch** ¥600 (£4/US$5): sandwich or snack and drink
- **Dinner** ¥1200 (£7/US$11): noodles/pasta, or a hostel meal
- **Sightseeing#** ¥1700 (£11/US$15): less if you mainly visit free attractions
- **Total** ¥7100+ (£44/US$63+)

### Mid-range
- **Accommodation** ¥6000 (£37/US$53)+ for a single room, ¥9000 (£56/US$79)+ for two sharing in a business hotel (breakfast is usually included); ¥8000pp (£50/US$70)+ in a minshuku (half board)
- **Breakfast*** ¥800 (£5/US$7): egg, ham, toast and coffee
- **Lunch** ¥1200 (£7/US$11): lunch deal in a café/restaurant
- **Dinner** ¥1700 (£11/US$15): set evening meal at a restaurant
- **Sightseeing#** ¥1700 (£11/US$15): more if you visit lots of galleries/museums
- **Total** ¥11,400+ (£71/US$100+)

### High
- **Accommodation** ¥12,000+ (£75/US$106+) for a single room, ¥20,000+ (£125/US$176) for two sharing in an upmarket hotel; ¥16,000+ (£100/US$141) per person half board in a ryokan
- **Breakfast*** ¥2200 (£14/US$19): buffet breakfast
- **Lunch** ¥4000 (£25/US$35): a three-course meal
- **Dinner** ¥6300+ (£39+/US$55+): à la carte meal
- **Sightseeing#** ¥9000+ (£56+/US$79+): guided city tours and entry fees
- **Total** ¥33,500+ (£209/US$295+)

* If not included in room rate  # including a one-day tram/bus/subway pass
return fare including reserved seat on a shinkansen between Tokyo and Hiroshima costs ¥37,120 (£232/US$327); even just going to and from Kyoto costs ¥27,200 (£170/US$239). A return journey to Kagoshima-chuo by shinkansen from Tokyo works out at ¥59,720 (£373/US$526), more than the cost of a 14-day pass (see p13). For additional sample fares, see box p99.

When to go

In general, Japan has a mild climate, though it’s difficult to talk at all generally about a country which stretches for some 3000km north to south. It can be below freezing and snowing in Hokkaido while southern Kyushu is enjoying sunshine and mild temperatures.

April and May are often considered the best time to visit, when the worst of the Hokkaido winter is over and the rest of Japan is not yet sweltering in humidity. The cherry blossom season is eagerly anticipated and the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA; www.jma.go.jp) has an internet page dedicated to reporting when the blossoms are forecast to flower. Although each year is different, the season starts in Kyushu, generally mid to late March, and progresses northwards climaxing in Hokkaido in May.

However, try to avoid the school/university holidays from late March to early April and the so-called Golden Week (29th April to 5th May), which includes four national holidays and can feel as if the entire country is on the move; hotels and trains are booked out and prices rise to meet demand. The latter part of May is a lovely time to be in Japan as the weather is often good but it isn’t too hot.

The rainy season in June/July (with occasional typhoons) marks the change from spring to summer but the showers are soon replaced by heat and humidity. Humidity is high throughout the summer months so carry bottled water if you are planning long days of sightseeing at this, the hottest, time of the year. Hokkaido is by far the coolest and least humid place in summer, which also makes it one of the busiest. The school holiday season in August is another busy time, particularly around mid August during the Obon festival when people head back to their home towns.
The high temperatures and – particularly in the south – blistering heat can last well into September and often there is a lot of rain then. Typhoons strike coastal regions, particularly in Kyushu, Shikoku and Kansai in late summer. Fortunately these are usually predicted a day or two before they hit so it’s unlikely you will be taken unawares.

By the beginning of October things usually cool down and dry up. Late October and November are the months for viewing the autumn leaves (koyo); this can be a spectacular time to visit. The sky is often clear so views are better and you also have more chance of seeing Mt Fuji. The autumn colours begin their magnificent display in Hokkaido and gradually move south through the islands, in the opposite direction to the cherry-blossom wave.

If you don’t mind the cold, December and January are also good times, especially for skiing.
New Year is another major holiday period and even though the weather may be fine many places get crowded.

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

Japan observes 16 national holidays when all banks, offices and post offices, and most shops are closed. Museums and tourist attractions are usually open but will close the next day. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, the following day is a holiday. Nearly everything, apart from public transport and larger shops, closes from 31st December to 3rd January for the New Year holiday. The period from 29th April to 5th May is called Golden Week and is a prime holiday time, as is Obon (around 11th-16th August though the dates vary depending on the region).

- **1st January**  Shogatsu (New Year’s Day) – traditionally people visit a shrine; many women dress up in a kimono
- **Second Monday in January**  Seijin no hi (Coming of Age Day) – girls who have reached the age of majority (20) don gorgeous kimonos and visit the local shrine
- **11th February**  Kenkoku Kinenbi (National Foundation Day) – commemoration of the legendary enthronement of Japan’s first emperor, Jimmu
- **20th March**  Shunbun no hi (Vernal Equinox Day) – graves are visited in the week around this day
- **29th April**  Showa no hi (the late Emperor Hirohito’s birthday)
- **3rd May**  Kenpo kinenbi (Constitution Day)
- **4th May**  Midori no hi (Greenery Day) – to celebrate the former Emperor’s (Emperor Hirohito) love of nature
- **5th May**  Kodomo no hi (Children’s Day) – kite-flying events are held all over the country; also expect to see koinobori streamers flying near rivers
- **Third Monday of July**  Umi no hi (Ocean Day)
- **11th August**  Yama no Hi (Mountain Day) – celebrating the country’s many mountains; this is a new holiday from 2016
- **Third Monday of September**  Keiro no hi (Respect for the Aged Day)
Around September 23rd  Shubun no hi (Autumnal Equinox Day)
Second Monday in October  Taikun no hi (Health and Sports Day) – this commemorates the opening day of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics
3rd November  Bunka no hi (Culture Day)
23rd November  Kinro kansha no hi (Labour Thanksgiving Day)
23rd December  Tenno no tanjobi (The Emperor’s Birthday)

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS
Japan is truly a land of festivals (matsuri); hardly a day goes by when there is not a celebration taking place somewhere. These can be huge, lively, atmospheric events attracting thousands of visitors – such as Sapporo’s Snow Festival, Aomori’s Nebuta, Tokushima’s Awa Odori Festival, or Kyoto’s Gion Festival – or local festivals in towns and villages which are little known outside the area.

Parades of large floats, street processions to the tune of taiko drummers, firework displays, and colourful costumes are all part of the festival experience. Eating and drinking while walking around in public is generally frowned upon but this rule is broken at festival time; street stalls serve foods such as yakisoba, takoyaki, okonomiyaki.

Listed below is a selection of the many festivals and events that are worth including in your itinerary if you are in Japan at the correct time of year. For more details see the relevant city guides. JNTO also publishes a comprehensive list (www.jnto.go.jp/eng/location/festivals).

The dates for religious festivals, which are based on the lunar calendar, vary every year but other festivals are held on fixed dates.

February  Yuki Matsuri (Snow Festival), Sapporo, Hokkaido; Fuyu Matsuri (Winter Festival), Asahikawa, Hokkaido.
Setsubun (3rd Feb) is held in temples and shrines everywhere; people throw soy beans around to celebrate the end of winter (by banishing the evil spirits) and welcome the start of spring.

March-May The cherry-blossom season is a highlight of the year. Popular spots for hanami (blossom-viewing) parties (see p14), include: Ueno Park and Shinjuku-gyoen, Tokyo; Kamakura; Tetsugaka-no-michi (Philosopher’s Way), Heian Jingu and Maruyama-koen in Kyoto; Yoshino-yama; Nagoya Castle area, Nagoya; Kakunodate; and Hirosaki.

April Takayama Spring Festival; Yayoi Festival, Nikko; Kamakura Matsuri; Yabusame Festival, Washibari-Hachimangu Shrine, Tsuwano; Hi-watarishiki
Sanja Matsuri takes place over the third weekend of May at Asakusa, Tokyo. This important Shinto festival is one of the biggest in Japan.

Central to the event is the parade in which participants carry the three portable shrines which give the festival its name. (© TK)

a feature of most summer festivals. The largest in Tokyo is the Sumida River Fireworks Display. The National Japan Fireworks Competition is held in Omagari, Akita, at the end of August.

Taiko drummers at Aomori’s Nebuta Matsuri (festival) which takes place in August. (© KU)

● May Hakata Dontaku Festival, Fukuoka, Kyushu; Sanja Matsuri, Asakusa, Tokyo; Aoi Matsuri, Kyoto.

● June Hyakumangoku Festival, Kanazawa; Yosakoi Soran Festival, Sapporo.

● July Hakata Gion Yamakasa Festival, Fukuoka; Gion Matsuri, Yasaka Shrine, Kyoto; Tenjin Matsuri, Osaka.

● Late July and August Fireworks (hanabi) festivals Spectacular firework displays are a feature of most summer festivals. The largest in Tokyo is the Sumida River Fireworks Display. The National Japan Fireworks Competition is held in Omagari, Akita, at the end of August.

● August Nebuta Matsuri, Aomori; Neputa Matsuri, Hirosaki; Kanto Matsuri, Akita; Tanabata Matsuri, Sendai; Yosakoi Festival, Kochi; Awa Odori Festival, Tokushima; Asakusa Samba Carnival, Tokyo.

● September Yabusame at Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine, Kamakura.

● October Takayama Autumn Festival; Toshogu Shrine Autumn Festival, Nikko; Jidai Matsuri, Heian Jingu, Kyoto.

● October to December Well-known places for viewing autumn leaves (see p15) include: Daisetsuzan, Hokkaido; Nikko; Hakone; Miyajima; Arashiyama and Philosopher’s Way, Kyoto.

● November Hi-watarishiki (fire-walking ceremony), Daishoin Temple, Miyajima; International Balloon Festival, Saga, Kyushu.

● December Kasuga Wakamiya’s On-matsuri, Nara.

Opposite: A maiko (apprentice geisha) in Gion, Kyoto. This photograph was taken during the cherry blossom season which is perhaps why this maiko has chosen pink flowers for her hair ornament (kanzashi). (© LR)
Japan by rail – the best
Best gardens

- **Kenrokuen, Kanazawa** (see p226) Rated one of the top three landscape gardens in Japan, the others being Korakuen and Kairakuen (both below)
- **Korakuen, Okayama** (p297) Okayama Castle forms the perfect backdrop
- **Kairakuen, Mito** (p143) Best known for its many plum trees and particularly popular in Feb-Mar when they are in blossom
- **Adachi Museum of Art, Yasugi, near Matsue** (pictured here, © AU, see also p316) Unusual because it is also an art gallery; should be on everyone’s itinerary
- **Ritsurin-koen, Takamatsu** (p480) Landscape garden set below wooded Mt Shiun
GENERAL ITINERARIES

The following general itineraries are for holders of 7-, 14- and 21-day Japan Rail Passes and do not include days before/after the rail pass is used. The itineraries are arranged to start from and end in Tokyo, but most include Kyoto so could be adapted if you are arriving at Kansai Airport.

Seven-day itinerary: the classic route
● Day 1 Spend the day and night in Tokyo, Japan’s dynamic capital.
● Day 2 Take a shinkansen west to Mishima to see some of the Hakone region (Mt Fuji and Lake Ashi) then continue on to Kyoto, Japan’s ancient capital, for the night. If the weather is bad go straight to Kyoto, best known for its temples.
● Day 3 Spend the day and another night in Kyoto.
● Day 4 Spend the day and another night in Kyoto, or have a day trip to scenic Arashiyama, or to Nara to see Japan’s largest statue of the Buddha at Todai-ji temple.
● Day 5 Take a shinkansen to Himeji and visit the stunning and recently restored castle; continue to Hiroshima and visit the Peace Memorial Park. Overnight in Hiroshima.
● Day 6 Visit Miyajima, an island famed for its scenic beauty, Itsukushima shrine and for the torii gate that rises out of the sea. Then take the shinkansen back to Tokyo, perhaps stopping at Okayama to visit Korakuen, one of Japan’s ‘three great gardens’.
● Day 7 Spend the day in Tokyo, or go to Kamakura to see the second largest statue of a Buddha in Japan.

Seven-day itinerary: off-the-beaten track
● Day 1 Take a shinkansen from Tokyo to Nasu-Shiobara and then transfer to a JR bus to visit Shiobara-onsen, an onsen town popular in the past with the Imperial family because of its fresh air.
● Day 2 Hop on a bus back to Nasu-Shiobara and then take a shinkansen to Ichinoseki and go to Hiraizumi, a compact town with some historic temples in scenic surroundings, for the night.
● Day 3 Take a shinkansen back to Tokyo and then transfer to the Nagano (Hokuriku) shinkansen and go to Nagano for the night.
● Day 4 Pick up the Wide View Shinano LEX to Nagoya and stop off at Narai, one of the traditional post towns in the Kiso Valley. Continue on to Nagiso and then take a bus to Tsumago, another post town where a number of traditional inns cater for the weary (rail) traveller.
● Day 5 Walk to Magome (2-3hrs) along the path used in the past to go between Kyoto and Edo (now Tokyo), and then pick up a bus to Nakatsu-gawa, or return to Nagiso and take the train to Nagoya from there. Spend the night in Nagoya.
● Day 6 Pick up a Kodama shinkansen as far as Kakegawa. Transfer to the conventional JR Tokaido line to Kanaya for a side trip on the Oigawa steam railway. Return to Tokyo.
● Day 7 Have a day trip to Narita Town to experience the Goma (Sacred Fire), ceremony at Naritasan Shinsho-ji.


Rice, Noodle, Fish: Deep Travels Through Japan’s Food Culture Matt Goulding, Nathan Thornburgh (HarperWave, 2015)  An exploration of aspects of Japan’s culinary history focusing on seven regions including Kyoto (kaiseki), Hiroshima (okonomiyaki) and Fukuoka (ramen). Also in effect a travel guide focusing on food; all accompanied by lots of colour photos.

Life in Japan (fiction)

The Last Concubine Lesley Downer (Corgi, 2009)  A tale of Japan in the 1860s and the life of Sachi, a village girl, who becomes the last concubine of the reigning shogun.

Memoirs of a Geisha Arthur Golden (Vintage, 1998)  Golden’s novel about a trainee geisha’s life has become a modern classic and a Hollywood blockbuster. Sayuri is born in a fishing village but is sold to a Kyoto geisha house from where she rises to become one of the city’s most famous and sought-after geisha.

Number 9 Dream David Mitchell (Sceptre, 2002)  The British novelist, who taught English in Hiroshima for eight years, presents an extraordinary post-Blade Runner Japanese world which has been variously described as terrifying and exhilarating.

In the Miso Soup Ryu Murakami (Bloomsbury, 2005)  A gritty, frightening story about life in the backstreets of Tokyo.

The railway


Shinkansen: From Bullet Train to Symbol of Modern Japan Christopher Hood (Routledge, 2006)  A comprehensive and readable account of the history of the bullet train. See also www.hood-online.co.uk/shinkansen.

Fauna

Birds of East Asia Mark Brazil (Helm/Princeton Field Guides, 2009)  A comprehensive, well-illustrated guide; the author lives in Hokkaido.

A photographic guide to the birds of Japan and North-east Asia, Tadao Shimba (Helm Photographic Guides, 2007)  The first photographic field guide in English.
Minamoto (also known as Genji) and the Taira (or Heike). The epic war, now steeped in as much legend as historical fact, finally climaxed in a decisive sea battle in 1185, and the Tairas were routed. But peace was short lived and the feudal era had begun.

**The first shogun: 1185-1333**

The bloody corpses of the defeated Taira had hardly washed away before Yoritomo Minamoto, victorious leader of the Minamoto clan, moved the capital to Kamakura and was sworn in as the country’s first shogun. The Imperial Court remained in Kyoto but real power had shifted geographically and politically to the samurai. Government of the country remained in the hands of successive shoguns for the next 700 years, until the Meiji Restoration of 1868.

The popularity of Buddhism grew during the Kamakura period. The Zen sect in particular, with its emphasis on a life of simplicity and austerity, appealed to the warrior class, which had always been ill at ease with the effete world of Heian culture. Instead of ushering in a new era, Yoritomo Minamoto’s death in 1199 prompted his widow and her family to assume control. The political capital remained in Kamakura until 1333, when Emperor Go-Daigo succeeded in overthrowing the shogunate.

**Eruption of civil war, West and East meet: 1336-1575**

The Emperor’s moment of triumph turned out to be unexpectedly brief. He was soon booted out of Kyoto by Takauji Ashikaga, the military turncoat who had defected from the Kamakura court in time to become the Emperor’s right-hand military man and assist in the rebellion against the Kamakura shogunate. Rightly or wrongly expecting credit for this assistance and anticipating the title of shogun as due reward, Ashikaga was aggrieved when Go-Daigo completely overlooked him. Seeking revenge, Ashikaga forced Go-Daigo into mountain exile and appointed a new emperor, who was gracious enough to name him shogun.

The Golden and Silver pavilions, two of Kyoto’s major tourist draws, were constructed as villas for the shoguns during this period. As in the Heian period, culture and arts took centre stage, with Noh theatre, the tea ceremony and flower arranging all being established in the latter half of the Muromachi period. But war was also becoming commonplace as rival feudal lords clashed over territory and isolated skirmishes spiralled into full-scale civil war.

As the nation fought with itself, Christianity made its first appearance in Japan when the missionary Francis Xavier sailed into Kagoshima in 1549, carrying with him enormous ambition: to convert emperor and shogun alike. He failed, but relations with the West developed further in Nagasaki, where the port was opened to trade with the Portuguese.

**Reunification: 1575-1603**

The long road to reunification began in 1568 when Nobunaga Oda, descended on Kyoto. He soon cemented his authority by building the first castle stronghold and setting a trend that was to be repeated by feudal lords all over Japan. Castles, each one grander and its defences safer than the last, became a must-have for every lord needing to prove his power over the people he ruled. Sadly,
colourful performances, where men dress as women, the make-up is as bright as the costumes are lavish, and members of the audience frequently shout out their appreciation when actors take to the stage, strike a dramatic pose or deliver a famous line.

The kabuki theatre comes equipped with a seridashi, a trap door in the floor which allows actors to enter the stage from below, as well as a gangway through the audience which lets the actors make a dramatic, sweeping entrance, their silk costumes rustling behind them as they step gracefully towards the stage. It would be hard to find a more lively or entertaining theatrical experience in Japan. A useful website with more information and details of what performances are on, and where, is www.kabuki-bito.jp.

Also originating in the 17th century and closely related to kabuki is bunraku (puppet play). Puppets up to two-thirds the size of humans are dressed in costumes which are just as elaborate as those worn by actors on the kabuki stage. The puppets are operated by three stage hands while a fourth narrates the story to the tune of the traditional shamisen (see below).

Less immediately accessible than kabuki is Noh, a classical form of theatre which dates back more than 600 years. Performances combine music and dance: movements are highly stylised and the dancing is choreographed to represent actions such as crying and laughing and is accompanied by flutes and drums. Most of the actors wear masks depicting a range of expressions and emotions. Performances, on a special raised stage with a roof and a sparse set, often take place by firelight during the summer months in the precincts of Shinto shrines.

Shamisen, koto and taiko Proficiency on traditional Japanese instruments such as the shamisen (a wooden instrument covered in cat skin with three
few have a ladies-only floor or rooms specifically for women. The newest even boast automatic check-in where you feed your money into a slot and receive an electronic key card in return.

Rack rates vary from ¥5000 for the most basic singles up to ¥8000 for a room with slightly more breathing space. Expect to pay ¥8000-13,000 for a twin or double room. Online rates are often less than rack rates and since many business hotels accept online bookings and have websites in English it is worth booking in advance. Most also offer rates including breakfast; in general this is a buffet-style meal, though the quality and range of options varies. Many **business hotel chains** operate nationwide; for more details, see the box opposite.

Other **Japanese hotel chains** include the JR Hotel group (see box above) and those listed in the box opposite. In addition there are many **Western hotel chains** (see also box opposite) in Japan. The best way to find out about independently owned hotels is through an accommodation agency (see box p69).

**Accessible Japan** (www.accessible-japan.com) has useful information on hotels which offer specially adapted rooms for the disabled and also on sightseeing with a disability.

**Ryokan**

Ryokan offer the most traditional Japanese accommodation and you really should plan to stay at least one night in one. They are more upmarket and have better amenities than minshuku. Rooms are generally spacious and may include **shoji** (sliding paper-screen doors) and an alcove (**tokonoma**) or two containing a Japanese fan, vase or scroll. Often you will also have a lovely view over a garden, though admittedly that may be a very small one.

In luxury ryokan particularly, where per-person (pp) rates start from around ¥20,000, every guest is a VIP. From the moment you arrive you’re waited on by your own kimono-clad maid, who will pour tea as you settle in, serve you meals (usually in your room) and lay out your futon. You may also have en suite facilities and your own Japanese-style bath. But you don’t have to stay in a luxury property to enjoy first-class service. Standard ryokan charge around ¥9500-12,500pp including half board (breakfast and an evening meal). However, note that if you are travelling on your own it may be hard to book a room, especially for a Saturday night, without paying a higher per person rate, or even the rate for two people.
When Commodore Perry appeared off the coast of Japan in 1853 with the US Navy’s ‘Black Ships’ (see p56), the country, like many others, had no railway whatsoever. But in the years since Japan ended its policy of self-isolation, its rail network has become the envy of the world. This transformation, given the country’s topography and history of devastating earthquakes, is nothing short of extraordinary.

PIONEERING EARLY DAYS

One of Perry’s gifts on his second trip to Japan in 1854 was a quarter-size steam locomotive and accompanying track. However astonishing the sight of this miniature railway set up on the beach must have been, it would be a mistake to believe that the Tokugawa shogunate was entirely ignorant of technological developments outside Japan.

From the tiny Dutch enclave in Nagasaki, the only point of contact with the outside world in 265 years of self-imposed isolation, the Shogun had received an annual report on developments in the rest of the world. In 1865 Thomas Glover (see box p441) brought the first steam railway locomotive to Nagasaki and tested it on a line he built there. But it was not until the Meiji Restoration of 1868 (see pp56-7) that the idea of constructing a proper railway in Japan began to take root.

The Japanese government employed a number of British engineers and pioneering railwaymen to assist in the development of the country’s rail network, notably Edmund Morel (1841-71); Morel was appointed chief engineer but died a year before the opening of Japan’s first railway line.

In October 1872, 92 years before the inauguration of the Tokaido shinkansen between Tokyo and Shin-Osaka, Emperor Meiji and his entourage set off on the country’s first official train ride, a 30km journey from Shimbashi, in Tokyo, to Yokohama, though services from the then Shinagawa station had been operating for a month. The driver for this historic journey was British and the coach the Emperor rode in was made in Birmingham. Some Japanese
MAKING SEAT RESERVATIONS

Seat reservations are free if you have a JR pass (though for some regional passes you can only make a limited number of reservations) so it’s always worth making one, particularly if travelling at peak times. Thanks to JR’s computerised system, you can book seats up to the very last minute. Only at peak travel times (see pp14-16) are seats booked weeks in advance. Seat reservations can be made from one month before the date of travel for shinkansen, limited express and express services (rapid & local trains are all non-reserved).

Pass holders are not penalised for not using a seat reservation – if you change your plans hand in your seat-reservation ticket so it can be cancelled. If you sit in a reserved carriage without a seat reservation the conductor will charge you the appropriate supplement, even if you have a rail pass.

At any JR station, find the reservations office (‘Midori-no-madoguchi’ or in the JR Tokai/Central area look for ‘Shinkansen and JR line tickets’). If there are long queues, try a Travel Service Center (TSC); these are JR-run travel agencies which also handle seat reservations; they are found in larger stations. The regional JR companies call their TSCs by different names but they all offer the same service. The names to look out for are JR Tokai Tours (in the JR Central area), View Plaza (JR East), Travel Information Satellite (TiS; JR West), Warp (JR Shikoku), Joyroad (JR Kyushu) and Twinkle Plaza (JR Hokkaido).

You can make a seat reservation at any JR station so at busy periods it may be worth going to a smaller station and/or out of peak hours. If you are planning to book a lot of journeys, it helps staff if you can show them a typed itinerary detailing dates, times and departure & arrival stations: JR Hokkaido (see box p370) and JR Shikoku (see box p466) have codes for each station (and by 2020 JR East will) so these can be used instead of the name. Say if you have any special requests regarding window or aisle seats and which side of the train you want to sit; for the classic view of Mt Fuji from the shinkansen, ask for a seat on the right side coming from Tokyo, and on the left side from Kyoto.

Standing in line

The British may be known for queuing but the Japanese have turned standing in line into an art form. At mainline stations, including all shinkansen stops, locator maps of trains are found on each platform. These show the layout and configuration of your train and indicate precisely where you should wait on the platform. Look along the edge of the platform for numbered signs which indicate the stopping point for each carriage. You can be sure that the train will stop where it should and the doors of each carriage will open opposite the appropriate platform markers. At busy stations the number of signs telling you where to stand can be bewildering. If you’ve got a seat reservation ticket show it to someone; they are sure to help you. But don’t get unduly stressed about standing in the right line: the carriages are interconnected so you can easily find the way to the right compartment once you’re on board.
Tokyo 東京

It will come as no surprise to first-time visitors that Tokyo is one of the most populous cities in the world; over 13 million people are packed within its perimeters. There’s no denying this makes Tokyo seriously overcrowded. Rumours that staff are employed at some stations to push passengers on to trains are true, at least during peak times. But if you avoid the morning and evening rush hours, it’s possible to travel around Tokyo in comfort. And whatever the time of day, there is a frequent and reliable service on both the JR trains and the subways.

More surprising than the mass of people is the fact that Tokyo became Japan’s official capital only in 1868, when Emperor Meiji was restored to the throne (see pp56-7). For centuries before, it was an undiscovered back-water and might have remained so but, in 1603, Ieyasu Tokugawa chose Edo (which was renamed Tokyo in 1868) as the seat of government for the Tokugawa shogunate. Right up until the collapse of the shogunate in 1867, Japan’s official capital remained Kyoto but the Emperor who resided there exercised no real power.

In the years since Edo was renamed Tokyo and snatched the capital prize from Kyoto, the small town has become a thriving city of commerce, industry, entertainment and luxury – and in 2020 will host the summer Olympics for the second time; the first time was in 1964. Little of the old Tokyo remains but one area worth seeking out for its atmosphere is Asakusa, home to one of Japan’s most vibrant temples and packed with narrow streets which are a world and at least a century away from Tokyo Skytree, the skyscrapers of Shinjuku, and the city-within-a-city in Roppongi.

Some arrive in Tokyo and never leave, captivated by the neon, designer stores and relentless energy of the place. Others arrive and never leave their hotel rooms, terrified of the noise and sheer number of people who fill the streets day and night. The answer is somewhere between these two extremes. Stay just long enough to get a feel for the city but get out in time to make full use of the rail pass and discover how much lies beyond this metropolis.

Ah! what memories! Myriad thoughts evoked by those cherry trees! (Matsuo Basho)
NAGANO TO NAGOYA VIA MATSUMOTO

[Table 5, p506]

Distances by JR from Nagano. Fastest journey time: 3 hours.

Nagano to Nagoya

Nagano (長野 0km) From Nagano, pick up the Wide-View Shinano LEX, which runs along the Shinonoi Line towards Nagoya. The Shinano has large panoramic windows, hence the name.

Shinonoi 篠ノ井 (9km) The first stop after Nagano by limited express.

After Shinonoi there are views, to the left, of the valley and towns below the rail line. A few limited expresses call at Hijiri-Kogen 聖高原 (31km). There’s one very long tunnel shortly before arriving in Matsumoto.

Matsumoto 松本 (63km) [see pp213-17]
Matsumoto is a historic castle town set amid fine mountain scenery and a terminus for the JR Oito Line to Itoigawa (see pp180-1).

Should you wish to return to Tokyo pick up the Azusa/Super Azusa LEX (1/hr), which takes just under three hours to Shinjuku (see p111).

Shiojiri 塩尻 (76km) If planning to visit Narai (see below), you’ll need to change from a limited express to a local train here.

Follow signs for the East Exit and take the escalator down to street level for lockers (¥300-600) and the tourist information office (www.city.shiojiri.nagano.jp; daily 9am-5pm) which has information in English. There is a kiosk and soba stand (soba from ¥290), as well as a café (Midori) in the station; the café also offers take-away coffee and bento (lunchboxes).

From Shiojiri, the Shinonoi Line becomes the Chuo West Line, though there’s no need to change trains as limited expresses run direct to Nagoya. The line runs through the beautiful Kiso Valley, surrounded by the Central Alps to the east and the Northern Alps to the west.

♦ Narai 奈良井 (97km) Narai is the first in a series of ‘post towns’ along this route that were
okoshi daiko drum, carried by a team of men dressed in white loincloths. Throughout the year, a few of the floats are on display at Hida-Furukawa Matsuri Kaikan 飛騨古川祭り会館 (daily 9am-5pm, to 4.30pm in winter; ¥800, or ¥1000 inc the Crafts Museum), a 10-minute walk from the station. In addition to seeing the festivals as well as displays showing how the marionettes on the floats work, you can watch an amazing 3D film of the festival parade; it really brings the event to life.

Across the street is Hida Crafts Museum 飛騨の匠文化館 (Hida-no-Takumi Bunkakan; daily 9am-5pm in summer, Wed-Mon 9am-4.30pm until end Feb, to 5pm in March; ¥300, or ¥1000 inc Festival Hall), a heritage centre which displays techniques and tools used by local craftsmen, particularly carpenters. From there it is a short walk to the canal area lined with old houses, breweries and storehouses.

Takayama 高山 (89km) [see pp218-24]
From Takayama, the line continues to follow roughly the course of Hida-gawa. The best part of the journey is the next 50km to Gero, with stunning river and mountain scenery on both sides of the track.

Some of the Wide-View Hida services that start in Takayama also stop at Kuguno 久々野 (103km), Hida-Osaka 飛騨小坂 (117km), and Hida-Hagiwara 飛騨萩原 (129km).

Gero 下呂 (138km) Gero-onsen 下呂温泉 (www.gero-spa.or.jp) is one of the best-known spa towns in Japan. This onsen resort dates back over 1000 years and is mainly popular with elderly Japanese holidaymakers. The town is also known for its tomato juice, considered to be a healthy tonic after a day wallowing in a hot tub.

Turn right out of the station for the tourist information centre (daily 8.30am-5.30pm); the staff there can give you a map of town and if it is raining will lend you an umbrella. From there take the passage under the railway tracks to the main part of town. There are several places
KANAZAWA TO KYOTO, OSAKA OR NAGOYA

Kanazawa to Fukui [Map 7; Table 7, p507]

Kanazawa 金沢 (0km)  [see pp226-32]

Distances quoted are from Kanazawa. Fastest journey time to Osaka 2hrs 34 mins.

Now that the shinkansen line to Kanazawa is open construction work is focusing on the extension to Tsuruga, expected to be completed in 2022. There are already shinkansen tracks in view as you leave Kanazawa. However, one compensation is that you can still see the Alps in the distance.

A few services stop at Matto 橋上 (9km) and most, but not all, stop at Komatsu 小松 (28km) and Kaga-onsen 加賀温泉 (42km). Some limited expresses stop at Awara-onsen 芦原温泉 (59km).

Fukui 福井 (77km) History has not been kind to Fukui; the city has been completely destroyed twice, once by war and soon after by an earthquake. However, the prefecture now prides itself on being ranked Japan’s happiest in a recent survey.

The main reason for stopping here is to take a side trip to Eihei-ji (see below). The tourist information booth (daily 8.30am-7pm) is by the East Gate Exit; here you can pick up information about getting to Eihei-ji and maps of Fukui city. For online information visit www.fuku-e.com. Lockers (all sizes) are available all around the station.

Hotel Riverge Akebono ホテルリバーゲアケボノ (☎ 0776-22 1000, www.riverge.com; from ¥6800/S, ¥12,600/Tw) has rooms in two buildings; those in the East (new) building are more expensive and are both Western- and Japanese style. Ask for a room with a view of the river. The hotel is a 10-minute walk from the station, has good-value rooms, a good breakfast buffet and a hot spring bath on the roof.

Side trip to Eihei-ji 永平寺

Eihei-ji (daily summer 5am-5pm, winter 5.30am-4.30pm, except on festival and ceremony days; ¥500; a booklet in English is available in the temple, not at the ticket booth), built onto a mountainside to the east of Fukui, was founded in 1244 by the Buddhist monk Dogen as a centre for Zen training. The name means ‘Temple of Eternal Peace’, though with so many tour groups piling through it’s best to arrive early to appreciate the tranquillity.

The site includes over 70 buildings connected by corridors and thus it is one of the largest temple complexes in Japan. The most sacred building inside the compound is the Joyoden (Founder’s Hall), in which Dogen’s ashes are kept along with those of his successors. Sanshokaku Hall is known for the
The closest accommodation option is Kourakukan 後楽館 (☎ 0269-33 4376, www.kanbayashi-onsen.com/kourakukan.htm; from ¥12,000pp inc half board) as it is about a 5-minute walk from the monkey’s hot springs. Staying here means you can have the monkeys to yourself in the morning – for a bit! The other advantage is that there is a rotemburo you can get into; the downside is that there is no road access from the bus stop/car park so you have to carry your luggage to the ryokan.

A very helpful English-speaking guide who lives in Shibu-onsen 渋温泉, a spa resort two kilometres from Yudanaka station, is Zeno Kubicek. He is a Slovakian expatriate and runs his own website (www.yudanaka-shibuonsen.com), which is a one-stop-shop for local hotel/ryokan reservations and sightseeing tours off the beaten track.

MATSUMOTO 松本
Surrounded by mountains, Matsumoto is an ancient castle town and a gateway to the north-western corner of Nagano prefecture. The 3000m peaks of the Japanese Alps form a backdrop to the west of the city. Locals like to think of Matsumoto as not the heart but the ‘navel’ of Japan. Whichever it is, thousands visit to see one of the country’s best-preserved castles.

What to see and do
Matsumoto is easy to walk around but if you prefer a bus see p216 for details of the Town Sneaker bus and pass (TS Pass).

Fifteen minutes on foot north of the station is Matsumoto Castle 松本城 (Matsumoto-jo; www.matsumoto-castle.jp; 8.30am-5pm; ¥610 inc Castle Museum, or ¥550 with TS Pass, inc City Museum) considered to be one of the finest castles in Japan. A small fortress was first built here in 1504 but this was remodelled and expanded in 1593 to become what still stands today. The fortification once dominated the city skyline but the view is now obscured by office blocks and the castle remains invisible until the final approach.

The 5-storey donjon is one of several in Japan known as a ‘Crow Castle’ because the outside walls are mainly black. The design is unusual because although the castle is built on a plain, rather than a hill, it still contains traditional defensive elements: the hidden floor, sunken passageways, specially constructed holes in the wall to drop stones on the enemy below and incredibly steep stairs to make an attack on the castle difficult for intruders. Tacked on to the side is the moon-viewing room, where guests could stare up at the moon while enjoying a cup or two of sake. This was a later addition and was only possible to add in a time of peace as anyone sitting there is very exposed.

If on a Town Sneaker Northern Course bus get off at Matsumotojo-Shiyakushomae. The only entrance to the castle is at Kuromon Gate; Uzumibashi, the red bridge, on the west side of the castle is not an entry point.

The nearby Matsumoto City Museum 松本市立博物館 (matsu-haku.com; daily 8.30am-5pm; ¥300, or ¥250 with TS Pass, ¥610 inc castle), also known as the Japan Folk Crafts Museum, focuses on the history of the city from ancient times through to the Meiji era. Exhibits include a very uncomfortable-looking box-shaped pillow used by geisha to protect their hair when sleeping and some weapons used by the police which most people would want to stay well away from. Everything is well labelled and it is definitely worth a visit.

If you walk to the castle along Daimyo-cho-dori, look out for Seikando 青翰堂, a second-hand bookshop whose roof is shaped like the castle. It is actually best seen from the right-hand side of the road as it is squeezed between two buildings. Also worth looking out for all over town are the wells where you can have a drink of clear spring water.

The large frog sculpture at the entrance to Nawate-dori 縄手通り, on the Daimyo-cho-dori side, makes the street hard to miss.
In the early years horse carriages weren’t allowed down this road so Yohashira Shrine, a small Shinto shrine here, and the businesses that had opened up on the street decided to promote it by saying people can buy frogs (kaeru) here but also go home safely (kaeru also means ‘to return’); the kanji for these are different but if written in hiragana かえる, they are the same. Not surprisingly Nawate-dori is often now called Frog Street, but aside from this it is a characterful Edo period stone-paved street with a variety of shops including several selling sembei (snacks) – but also models of frogs.

Nakamachi-dori 中町通り (http://nakamachi-street.com) is another stone-paved street with several old buildings including some originally used as warehouses (kura); these are now converted to cafés, craft and antique shops as well as places to stay (see Where to stay). Also on this street is the unusual Matsumoto City Scale Museum 松本市はかり資料館 (Tue-Sun 9am-5pm; ¥200, or ¥150 with TS Pass). There are few labels in English but ask for the leaflet in English when you buy your ticket. It is a fascinating chance to see the wide variety of instruments used to weigh and measure things including a device to separate male and female cocoons; Matsumoto was a major centre for silk production in the Meiji era. Behind the museum are some kura (former warehouses) which you can also wander around.

Ten minutes on foot north of the castle, but also a stop on the Town Sneaker Northern Course bus, is Kyū-Kaichi Gakko 旧開智学校 (Tue-Sun 8.30am-5pm; ¥300, or ¥250 with TS Pass), a former elementary school that was built in 1876. The oldest Western-style school building in Japan, it remained open for 90 years and is now open to all.

Proving that, contrary to popular belief, the education system in Japan was not all work, the school has a room dedicated to extra-curricular activities, which included ice-skating (note the ‘geta-skates’ that look uncomfortable and dangerous to wear). There are few labels in English but you should be given an explanatory leaflet when you buy your ticket.

Matsumoto Timepiece Museum 松本市時計博物館 (Matsumoto Tokei Hakubutsukan; Tue-Sun 9am-5pm; ¥300, or ¥250 with TS Pass; English pamphlet available) is by the river and features a large pendulum clock (supposedly the biggest in Japan) outside. If possible, get here on the hour when you can see many of the clocks on display swing into action and chime. It’s a small museum but watch- and clock-lovers will be in heaven. You’ll find everything from tiny intricate pocket watches to enormous clocks – look out for the 19th-century cannon-shaped sundial from England. Inexplicably there is also a small selection of antique gramophones. The museum is on the Town Sneaker Eastern Course route.

See also pp217-18 for details of side trips from Matsumoto.

**Practical information**

**Station guide** As trains pull into Matsumoto station, a female voice virtually sings the station’s name to arriving passengers. The JR Shinonoi Line (also known as JR Chuo East), for services to Shinjuku in Tokyo, JR Chuo West (for services to Shiojiri and Nakatsugawa), JR Oito Line...
(for Shinano-Omachi) and the private Matsumoto Dentetsu Kamikochi Line (for Kamikochi) call here. The latter is on the Alps Exit (West Exit) side of the station.

Follow the signs for the Castle (Oshiro; East) Exit. On the station concourse is a branch of JR East’s View Plaza travel agency. There are lockers (daily 5.15am-12.30am; ¥300-500) in the waiting room to your right as well as opposite the entrance to MI DO RI department store before you take the escalator down to street level and by the East Exit. There are also cafés such as Vie de France (1st/ground floor) and Starbucks (3rd floor) in the station.

Tourist information The tourist information centre (TIC; ☏️ welcome.city.matsumoto.nagano.jp; daily 9am-5.45pm) is in front of you as you exit the ticket barrier. Friendly, English-speaking staff can assist with same-day reservations and will provide sightseeing information. There is also a tourism information centre (TIC; daily 9am-5.45pm), on the way to the castle, with basically the same information.

Getting around Matsumoto is compact enough to visit on foot. Another option is to rent a bicycle (9am-5pm; free) from either Sui Sui Town (available at eight sites around town including the City Museum and Clock Museum), or Rikisha (available at 32 shops/hotels in the centre of the city. For further details ask at either TIC.

However, if you really need it the Town Sneaker bus (TS; ☏️ www.alpico.co.jp/traffic/matsumoto/townsneaker; ¥200 flat fare, ¥500 1-day pass) runs on four different loops (Northern, Eastern, Southern & Western; approx 9am-5pm; 1-2/hr) from outside Matsumoto station. Note that the Western Course leaves from the West (Alps) side of the station but the other routes depart from the Castle (Oshiro) side. The 1-day pass also gives reduced-price entry to many of the city’s attractions.

Other local and long-distance buses depart from the Alpico bus terminal アルピコバスターミナル beneath Ario department store, across the street from the station. Pick up the English-language Town Sneaker Timetable and Bus Route Map from the tourist information counter at Matsumoto station.

Festivals An annual outdoor performance of Noh is held in the grounds of Matsumoto Castle on the evening of 8th August. The show is illuminated by bonfires, with the brooding presence of the castle as a backdrop. On 3rd November, Matsumoto Castle Festival features a samurai parade and puppet shows.

In October (usually over a long weekend), the annual Soba Noodle Festival is marked with over a hundred soba stalls setting up inside Matsumoto Castle Park.

The Taiko Drum Festival (last Sat & Sun in July) also takes place next to Matsumoto Castle and attracts some of the country’s best taiko drummers.

Where to stay Ace Inn Matsumoto エースイン松本 ☏️ 0263-35 1188, ☏️ www.ace-inn.net; from ¥6900/S, ¥11,500/D, ¥13,500/Tw inc breakfast) is a standard business hotel conveniently located right outside the station. Take the Castle Exit from the station and it’s on the corner on your right.

Toko City Hotel Matsumoto トーコーシティホテル松本 ☏️ 0263-38 0123, ☏️ www.tokocityhotel.co.jp/matsumoto; from ¥7500/S, ¥12,000/D, ¥14,000/Tw; breakfast ¥900) is across the street from the station. Reception (‘Front’) is on the 10th floor; this is also where guests have breakfast as there are wonderful views of the Alps. The rooms are on the 4th-9th floors.

A good alternative is Dormy Inn Matsumoto ドーミーイン松本 ☏️ 0263-33 5489, ☏️ www.hotespa.net/hotels/matsumoto; from ¥8590/S, ¥11,090/Tw or D); this chain offers an onsen and rotemburo on the roof, an excellent buffet breakfast and free noodles in the evening. It is conveniently located between the station and the main sights.

Toyoko Inn Matsumoto Ekimae Honmachi 東横イン松本駅前本町 ☏️ 0263-36 1045, ☏️ www.toyoko-inn.com; from ¥5724/S, ¥7884/D, ¥8964/Tw inc breakfast) is also conveniently located.
From the station go over the pedestrian crossing and along the bricked road till you reach a plaza. The hotel is on the far side of the plaza.

Richmond Hotel Matsumoto リッチモンドホテル松本 (☎ 0263-37 5000, richmondhotel.jp/matsumoto; from ¥10,500 /S, ¥13,000/D, ¥17,000/Tw) is also only a few minutes on foot from the station and is next to Parco department store. It’s a hyper-efficient place with automatic check-in, clean, compact rooms and a coin laundry. A more economical option is Hotel New Station ホテルニューステーション (☎ 0263-35 3850, www.hotel-ns.com; from ¥5800/S, ¥8300/D, ¥11,800/Tw, exc breakfast), two minutes on foot from the station. The rooms are basic but all have en suite facilities. Just across the street is Hotel Mor-Schein ホテルモルシエン (☎ 0263-32 0031, www.mor-schein.co.jp; ¥7560/S, ¥12,900/D, ¥15,120/Tw; breakfast ¥650), another standard business hotel.

Marumo Ryokan まるも旅館 (☎ 0263-32 0115, www.avis.ne.jp/~marumo; from ¥5000pp, breakfast ¥1000), a traditional inn in the Nakamachi district by Metoba-gawa, has tatami rooms (none en suite) with a fantastic wooden bath and great breakfast. It gets booked up fast. The entrance is on the narrow road between Nakamachi-dori and Nawate-dori.

An alternative is the small and friendly Nunoya Ryokan ぬのや旅館 (☎ 0263-32 0545, www.mcci.or.jp/www/nunoya; from ¥4500pp, no meals), one block back from the river. It’s a small, traditional Japanese inn with the usual creaking wooden floors and communal (lockable) bathrooms. The owner speaks a little English.

Where to eat and drink One of Matsumoto’s specialities is basashi, raw horse-meat (which is also popular in Kumamoto, see box p451). A good place to try it is Shinmiyoshi 新三よし (Mon-Sat 11.50am-2pm & 5-11pm), a short walk from the station. The restaurant is known for its sakura nabe (horse-meat hotpot; ¥2580) as well as basashi, and the décor includes harnesses, saddles, whips and horse-themed calligraphy. Set menus start at ¥1500.

For yakitori go to Toritetsu とり鉄 (www.tori-tetsu.com; Mon-Sat 11.30am-2pm & 5.30pm to midnight); there is an English menu and even though they specialise in chicken there are vegetarian and other options. A ‘skewer’ costs from ¥130 and there are some interesting combinations.

Kobayashi こばやし (daily 11.30am-6pm) serves delicious hand-made soba noodles. It’s a quaint, traditional place on a quiet street just set back from the river. They serve a wide variety of soba dishes from ¥1100; tempura soba costs ¥1500. Look for the small display of plastic food in the window. There is another branch outside Matsumoto station with similar opening hours.

Gusto ガスト, a 24-hour family restaurant on the 1st/ground floor of Hotel Richmond Matsumoto, is open to anyone (not just hotel guests). 5 Horn ファイブホルン (5horn.jp; daily 10am-10pm, lunch 11.30am-2.30pm, teatime 3-6pm; evening meals from 6pm), an Italian café on the ground floor of Parco department store, specialises in cakes and desserts – look out for their ‘Sacher Torte of Blonde Chocolate’ (¥440) – but also does main meals: a lunch set menu costs from ¥1300, spaghetti dishes from ¥950. A branch in the basement of Ario (10am-9pm) sells their cakes. On Ario’s 7th floor there is a branch of Saizeriya サイゼリヤ (daily 10am-10pm; spaghetti from ¥399), the pasta chain, which has great views of the Alps. However, they may close the blinds in the afternoon as the sun can be very bright.

Side trip by rail to Oniwa 大庭
On the outskirts of Matsumoto, in Oniwa, is the Japan Ukiyo-e Museum 日本浮世絵博物館 (www.japan-ukiyo-e-museum.com; Tue-Sun 10am-5pm; ¥1200), a private museum built by the Sakai Family which houses over 100,000 Japanese woodblock prints, though only a fraction are on display at any one time. Take the private Alpico Kamikochi railway line from Matsumoto...
station to tiny Oniwa station (1-2/hr; 6 mins; ¥170). Ask at Oniwa ticket office for a map with directions to the museum, about 15 minutes’ walk away.

While here, stop by the Matsumoto City Open-air Architectural Museum (Rekishi-no-Sato; Tue-Sun 9am-5pm; ¥400), which is next door. The main building is an old wooden court house, the only one of its kind still standing in Japan today. Displays focus on the history of Japanese law and court proceedings, and on items used by the police, including shuriken, the small but lethal handheld weapon known as a ‘ninja star’. One of the other buildings is a reconstructed prison block.

TAKAYAMA

Deep in the mountains, in the region known traditionally as Hida, Takayama is deservedly one of the most popular destinations in central Honshu, combining as it does ancient traditions with a stunning natural setting. Often referred to as ‘Little Kyoto’, Takayama boasts temples, shrines, small museums, traditional shops and inns. As a result it gets very busy, particularly during the spring and autumn festivals, when 300,000 people come to watch the parade of floats. The greatest pleasure, however, comes from the chance to wander round the old, narrow streets of wooden houses and discover a side of Japan that has been largely airbrushed out of the big cities. Set aside enough time to simply enjoy the atmosphere; two or three days would be ideal. Takayama is also a good place to hunt for souvenirs, particularly lacquerware, woodcraft and pottery.

What to see and do

Takayama has many highlights, not least of which are its festivals (see p220). It is also a convenient base for a trip to Shirakawa-go and Gokayama (see pp224-6).

If you’re not here at festival time, you can see some of the large floats at Takayama Yatai Kaikan (Float Exhibition Hall; daily Mar-Nov 8.30am-5pm, Dec-Feb 9am-4.30pm; ¥820). In all there are 23 floats: 12 are used for the spring festival and 11 in the autumn. The 11 floats kept here are changed three times a year (Mar, July and Nov), and there are four on display in the Yatai Kaikan at any one time. The rest are stored in special buildings around town; as you walk around the preservation areas look out for signs about them. Most of the floats were built over 200 years ago though they have been repaired since then. The original mikoshi (portable shrines) used in the festivals weighed 2½ tons and needed 42 people to carry each one; since it is hard to get enough people the same height they now use smaller ones that can be carried by four people. The short film (every 10 mins) about the festival has some English subtitles but is not as evocative as the 3D film in Hida-Furukawa (see pp191-2).

The yatai kaikan is part of Sakurayama Hachimangu Shrine 桜山八

Sukyo Mahikari – a new religious movement

From the higher floors of hotel rooms looking south, or on the bus to/from Hida Folk Village, it is hard not to see a structure with an elaborate gold roof and a red sphere perched on top. This is the Main World Shrine of Sukyo Mahikari 崇教真光 (www.sukyomahikari.or.jp), one of Japan’s ‘new religions’ that sprung up in the post-war years. Mahikari is described as ‘true light, a cleansing energy sent by the Creator God that both spiritually awakens and tunes the soul to its divine purpose’.

You are unlikely to find this place on any official maps of Takayama, but if you are anywhere in the surrounding area it is hard to miss, particularly if the sun is shining on it.
bus stop which is a 700-metre walk (approx 10 mins) from Usuki station. Pick up a map from the information centre (www.usuki-kanko.com; daily 9am-3pm; if closed ask at the JR ticket counter) in the station. Alternatively borrow a free bike from the station-master’s collection and cycle to the Buddhas or use it, or your own two feet, to explore the narrow historic lanes, temples and castle remnants of this charming coastal town. William Adams (see p419) first arrived here in April 1600; it was the start of his love affair with Japan. At that time the town was called Bongo, not Usuki.

The next stop is Tsukumi 津久見 (179km). As you approach Saiki 佐伯 (198km) there are good views out to sea on the left side.

The views become more spectacular as the train leaves the coast and begins to thread its way inland through the hills. However, the verdant landscape enjoyed so far on the journey abruptly disappears as the train pulls in to Nobeoka station.

**Nobeoka 延岡 (256km)** Many people stop here for the side trip to Takachiho (see p432), but a 15-minute walk from Nobeoka station takes you to Imayama 今山 where you can see the tallest statue (17m-high) of Kobo Daishi (see p156) in Japan; the statue is called **Imayama Daishi 今山大師**, meaning ‘great master of Imayama’. **Nobeoka Taishi Festival 延岡大師節** is held here over three days in April to celebrate the anniversary of Kobo Daishi’s death. To get to Imayama walk along the road straight opposite the station (passing the Route Inn hotel on your left) and then turn left at the first major road. Soon on your right you will see some steps leading up to Imayama.

Nobeoka (www.city.nobeoka.miyazaki.jp) was put on the literary map by Japanese author Natsume Soseki, who mentions the place in his most famous novel, *Botchan*, and its cultural history is also evident in its **Noh Theatre** which is in the ruins of the castle. Performances are held here in October.

There is an **udon restaurant** (9am-8pm) and a Mini Convi (6.20am-8pm) convenience store in the station. **Hotel Route Inn Nobeoka Ekimae ホテルルートイン延岡駅前** (0982-12-1300, www.route-inn.co.jp; ¥6600/S, ¥9550/D, ¥10,550/Tw) is opposite the station. The rate includes a buffet-style breakfast and access to an onsen bath.
Shimenawa are found at Shinto shrines

Shinkansen 新幹線 super express, or bullet train

Shohizei 消費税 consumption tax (see box 79)

Shoji 隙子 sliding paper screen

Shojin ryori 精進料理 vegetarian food served and eaten by monks in temples

Shokudo 食堂 canteen, dining hall

Taiko 太鼓 drum

-Taisha 大社 shrine

Tatami 庫 traditional Japanese mat made from rice straw and used as flooring

Teisshoku 定食 set meal

Tenshukaku 天守閣 donjon; the tower or keep of a castle

Tetsudo mania / otaku 鉄道 マニア / オタク railway enthusiast; some like to take photos of trains others prefer to ride on them

Tokkyu 特急 limited express train

Tokonoma 床の間 alcove in a room containing a Japanese fan, vase or scroll

Torii 鳥居 gate at entrance to Shinto shrine

Torokko トロッコ open-air carriage on a train

Ukai 鵜飼 cormorant fishing; traditional fishing method

Yakuza やくざ Japanese mafia

Yukata 浴衣 cotton garment worn as nightwear; also a summer kimono

Zazen 座禅 Zen (Buddhist) meditation

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**FOOD AND DRINK**

**Food**

Basashi 馬刺し Raw horsemeat (see box p451).

Butadon 豚丼 See Donburi.

Curry rice (kare raisu) カレーライス A Japanese take on Indian curry. The sauce is more like gravy than curry but it’s a cheap, filling meal.

Dango 団子 Dumpling-shaped sweetmeat or confection.

Donburi 丼 A bowl of rice topped with chicken and egg (oyakodon 親子丼), strips of beef (gyudon 牛丼), or pork (butadon 豚丼) cooked in a slightly sweet sauce. These restaurants are easy to spot as the counter is usually full of businessmen and meal tickets are bought from vending machines at the entrance; a very cheap meal.

Ebi-fry エビフライ Deep-fried prawns.

Edamame 豆 Soy beans, often served as a snack in izakaya (see opposite).

Fugu 鰻 Fugu, also known as blow fish, or puffer fish, 河豚 is notorious as it can be fatal if eaten when not correctly prepared. Only chefs who have qualified after several years of training can serve fugu but still, very occasionally, there are reports of death-by-fugu. Fugu is generally served as sashimi, as a fish jelly or deep fried.

Gunkan-zushi 軍艦巻 Rice surrounded by dried seaweed and shaped into a container which is filled with fish such as salmon roe (ikura イクラ), sea urchin (uni うに、ウニ) and natto (see Natto).

Gyutan-yaki 牛タン焼き Grilled beef/ox tongue, a Sendai speciality (see p358).

Gyudon 牛丼 See Donburi.

Gyoza 餃子 Dumplings filled with meat and vegetables.

Inari-sushi 招荷寿司 The cheapest kind of sushi; rice is covered with abu-rage (deep-fried tofu; 油揚げ).

Kaiten sushi-ya 回転寿司 Conveyor-belt sushi restaurant. A tank containing live fish often signifies the restaurant is run by a fishmonger so the fish should be the best.

Kaki-fry カキフライ Deep-fried oysters

Kakigori かき氷 Crushed ice served with different fruit flavours.

Kani 蟹 Crab, which is usually served in dedicated crab restaurants, recognisable from the giant crab with moving pincers above the entrance.

Kare raisu カレーライス See Curry rice.

Katsudon カツ丼 A bowl of rice with tonkatsu (see p499) on top, covered with a slightly sweet sauce (see also Donburi).
# APPENDIX B: USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

## General words and phrases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good morning</td>
<td>ohaiyoo gozaimasu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good night</td>
<td>oyasumi nasai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please*</td>
<td>dozo, onegaishimasu or kudasai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you</td>
<td>domo arigato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(very much)</td>
<td>(gozaimashita)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No thanks</td>
<td>kekko desu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good evening</td>
<td>kombanwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hello</td>
<td>konnichiwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes (see p82)</td>
<td>hai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>iie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No thanks</td>
<td>I don’t understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodbye</td>
<td>sayonara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you</td>
<td>domo arigato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please*</td>
<td>dozo, onegaishimasu or kudasai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hello</td>
<td>konnichiwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes (see p82)</td>
<td>hai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>iie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No thanks</td>
<td>I don’t understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodbye</td>
<td>sayonara</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: onegaishimasu and kudasai are used with a noun or when requesting/receiving something; dozo can be used without a noun and when giving something away.

## Day/time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>getsuyobi (月曜日)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>kyoubi (火曜日)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>suiyoubi (水曜日)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>mokuyobi (木曜日)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>kinyobi (金曜日)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>doyobi (土曜日)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>nichiyobi (日曜日)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Today</td>
<td>kyo (今日)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomorrow</td>
<td>ashita (明日)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yesterday</td>
<td>kine (昨日)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>is (朝)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>gogo (午後)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>yoru (夜)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>hi / nichi (日)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td>gatsu / tsuki (月)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>nen / toshi (年)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hour</td>
<td>ji (時)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minute</td>
<td>fun / pun (分)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Hiragana chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hiragana</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>ka (ga)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>ki (gi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>ku (gu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>ke (ge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>ko (go)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sa</td>
<td>sa (za)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shi</td>
<td>shi (ji)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>su</td>
<td>su (zu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>se</td>
<td>se (ze)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to</td>
<td>to (do)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>na</td>
<td>ta (da)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ni</td>
<td>chi (ji)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsu</td>
<td>tsu (zu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>te</td>
<td>te (de)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nu</td>
<td>nu (bi / pi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hu</td>
<td>hu (bu / pu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>na</td>
<td>ha (ba / pa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hi</td>
<td>hi (bi / pi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to</td>
<td>to (do)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi</td>
<td>mi (ri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ru</td>
<td>ru (w)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ya</td>
<td>ya (ra)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yu</td>
<td>yu (ru)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>re</td>
<td>re (te)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ho</td>
<td>ho (hp / po)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mo</td>
<td>mo (yo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>no (ho / pa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ho</td>
<td>ho (hp / po)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yo</td>
<td>yo (ro)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ro</td>
<td>ro (n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa</td>
<td>wa (ra)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ri</td>
<td>ri (te)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>re</td>
<td>re (te)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to</td>
<td>to (do)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de</td>
<td>de (te)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Note: The chart above provides a visual representation of Hiragana, a syllabic script used in Japanese. Each Hiragana character corresponds to vowel sounds and is commonly used in everyday conversation.

---

Note: The chart above provides a visual representation of Hiragana, a syllabic script used in Japanese. Each Hiragana character corresponds to vowel sounds and is commonly used in everyday conversation.
Accommodation (cont’d)
Does the rate include breakfast / supper?
Where is the reception desk?
Where is the (Japanese-style) bath?
Can I check-in? / I’d like to check out
Do you accept Amex / Visa card?
Can I leave my luggage here?
Can I borrow a LAN cable?
What time is breakfast / supper?

Restaurant
I’d like to make a reservation
Do you have a menu in English?
Can I have the English menu please
What is this?
I’d like this, please
What time does the restaurant open?
What time does the restaurant close?
Can I have some more water / tea?
Can I have some more cabbage / rice please? (for a tonkatsu meal, see p499)
Can I have more noodles (see p498).
I don’t eat meat / I don’t eat fish
I am a vegetarian. I only eat vegetables / I only eat vegetables and fish

Restaurant
Yoyaku onegai shimasu.
Eigo no menyu wa arimasu ka
Eigo no menyu o kudasai.
Kore wa nan desu ka
Kore o kudasai
Resutoran wa nan ji kara desu ka
Resutoran wa nan ji made desu ka
Omizu / ocha o kudasai.
Kyabetsu / gohan, okawari kudasai
Kaedama onegai shimasu.
Niku wa tabemasen / Sakana wa tabemasen
Bejitarian desu. Yasai dake tabemasu / Yasai to sakana dake tabemasu

JAPAN RAIL SEAT RESERVATION TICKET

From
(Shizuoka)
Ticket name
(Shinkansen seat reservation ticket)
To
(Mishima)

Departure time
Date
(Month/day)
Train type
(Hikari)
Train number
Seat reservation charge
(no charge for Japan Rail pass-holders)
Non-smoking car
Arrival time

Date reservation made
Year (Japanese system)/month/day
Car number
Seat number:
Row 10, Seat D
(A = window seat)
Table 2: Kansai Airport to/from Shin-Osaka/Kyoto via Haruka LEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Frequency (hrs)</th>
<th>Journey Time (mins)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tennoji 天王寺</td>
<td>1-2/hr</td>
<td>35 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shin-Osaka 新大阪</td>
<td>1-2/hr</td>
<td>52 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyoto 京都</td>
<td>1-2/hr</td>
<td>1¼hrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Services operate between 6.30am and 10pm from Kansai Airport and 5.45am and 8.15pm to the airport. In the early morning services from Kansai also call at Hineno; in the evening services to Kansai call at Hineno.

Table 3: Tokyo to/from Hakata (Fukuoka) by Tokaido/Sanyo shinkansen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Nozomi¹</th>
<th>Hikari²</th>
<th>Kodama³</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tokyo 東京</td>
<td>2-6/hr</td>
<td>2/hr;</td>
<td>1/hr;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shinagawa 品川</td>
<td>7 mins</td>
<td>7 mins</td>
<td>7 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shin-Yokohama 新横浜</td>
<td>2-6/hr</td>
<td>18 mins</td>
<td>1/hr;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odawara 小田原</td>
<td>7/day; 35 mins</td>
<td>1/hr; 40 mins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atami 熱海</td>
<td>3/day; 40 mins</td>
<td>1/hr; 50 mins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mishima 三島</td>
<td>5/day; 45 mins</td>
<td>1/hr; 1hr 2 mins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shin-Fuji 新富士</td>
<td></td>
<td>1/hr; 2hrs 11 mins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shizuoka 静岡</td>
<td>1/hr; 60 mins</td>
<td>1/hr; 1hr 28 mins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kakegawa 掛川</td>
<td></td>
<td>1/hr; 1hr 47 mins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamamatsu 浜松</td>
<td>1/hr; 1½hrs</td>
<td>1/hr; 2hrs 3 mins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toyohashi 豊橋</td>
<td>9/day; 2hrs 23 mins</td>
<td>1/hr; 2hrs 20 mins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagoya 名古屋</td>
<td>2-6/hr; 1hr 40 mins</td>
<td>2/hr; 1hr 44 mins</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifu-Hashima 岐阜羽島</td>
<td>1/hr; 2hrs 2 mins</td>
<td>1/hr; 3hrs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maibara 松原</td>
<td>1-2/hr; 2hrs 10 mins</td>
<td>1/hr; 3hrs 20 mins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyoto 京都</td>
<td>2-6/hr; 2hrs 9 mins</td>
<td>2/hr; 2hrs 40 mins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shin-Osaka 新大阪</td>
<td>2-6/hr; 2hrs 24 mins</td>
<td>2/hr; 2hrs 58 mins</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Journey times to/from Shin-Osaka**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Hikari²</th>
<th>Kodama³</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shin-Kobe 新神戸</td>
<td>2-4/hr; 2hrs 52 mins</td>
<td>1-2/hr; 13 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nishi-Akashi 西明石</td>
<td>1/hr; 23 mins</td>
<td>8/day; 23 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Himeji 姫路</td>
<td>2/day; 3hrs 9 mins</td>
<td>1-2/hr; 29 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aioi 相生</td>
<td>1/hr; 48 mins</td>
<td>8/day; 48 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okayama 岡山</td>
<td>2-4/hr; 3½hrs</td>
<td>1-2/hr; 55 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shin-Kurashiki 新倉敷</td>
<td>1/hr; 1hr 25 mins</td>
<td>8/day; 1hr 25 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fukuyama 福山</td>
<td>11/day; 3½hrs</td>
<td>1-2/hr; 1¼hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shin-Onomichi 新尾道</td>
<td>8/day; 1½hrs</td>
<td>8/day; 1½hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mihara 三原</td>
<td>8/day; 2hrs 10 mins</td>
<td>8/day; 2hrs 17 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higashi-Hiroshima 東広島</td>
<td>8/day; 2hrs 17 mins</td>
<td>8/day; 2hrs 17 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiroshima 広島</td>
<td>2-4/hr; 4hrs</td>
<td>1-2/hr; 1hr 26 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shin-Iwakuni 新岩国</td>
<td>8/day; 2½hrs</td>
<td>8/day; 2½hrs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tokuyama 徳山</td>
<td>7/day; 4hrs 23 mins</td>
<td>8/day; 3hrs 10 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shin-Yamaguchi 新山口</td>
<td>11/day; 4½hrs</td>
<td>10/day; 2hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asa 厚狭</td>
<td>8/day; 3hrs 52 mins</td>
<td>8/day; 4hrs 5 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shin-Shimonoseki 新下関</td>
<td>5/day; 2hrs 10 mins</td>
<td>8/day; 4hrs 5 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kokura 小倉</td>
<td>2-4/hr; 4½hrs</td>
<td>1-2/hr; 2hrs 20 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hakata (Fukuoka) 博多</td>
<td>2-4/hr; 5hrs</td>
<td>1-2/hr; 2hrs 38 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Nozomi services operate from Tokyo to Shin-Osaka/Hakata but the Japan Rail Pass is not valid and it is not possible to pay a supplement to use them. If travelling without a rail pass,
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