

# Japan

## BY RAIL

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RAMSEY ZARIFEH  
& ANNA UDAGAWA

4th  
edition

**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.





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# INTRODUCTION

## 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

**The real secret to touring the country is the Japan Rail Pass, deservedly recognised as the 'bargain of the century'.**



**Above:** Futons laid out for the night in Hoshi Ryokan in Tsuwano. (© AU)

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 world-wide 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.

**... there are few places in the world where it really can be as much fun to travel as it is to arrive.**

**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

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

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

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

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

**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

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

**WESTERN HONSHU**  
Tottori  
Hiroshima  
Miyajima  
Himeji  
Takamatsu

**Kanazawa**  
Takayama

**KYUSHU**  
Nagasaki  
Kagoshima

**SHIKOKU**  
Takamatsu  
Ritsurin garden; access to art island, Naoshima

**KANSAI**  
OSAKA  
Koya-san  
Nara

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

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

**Himeji**  
The picture-postcard-perfect Himeji Castle

**Nara**  
Todai-ji housing Japan's largest Buddha statue; deer park



## 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



Mt Fuji; this photo was taken from a shinkansen as it was speeding past this iconic mountain. (© RU)

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 mini-

mum 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

**Contrary to popular belief, a visit to Japan doesn't have to be expensive but it is important to plan your budget**

### ☐ Sample daily budgets

**Note:** 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.

#### 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
<b>Total</b>	<b>¥7100+ (£44/US\$63+)</b>

#### 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
<b>Total</b>	<b>¥11,400+ (£71/US\$100+)</b>

#### 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
<b>Total</b>	<b>¥33,500+ (£209/US\$295+)</b>

\* 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 ...**

April and May are often considered the best months 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](http://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.

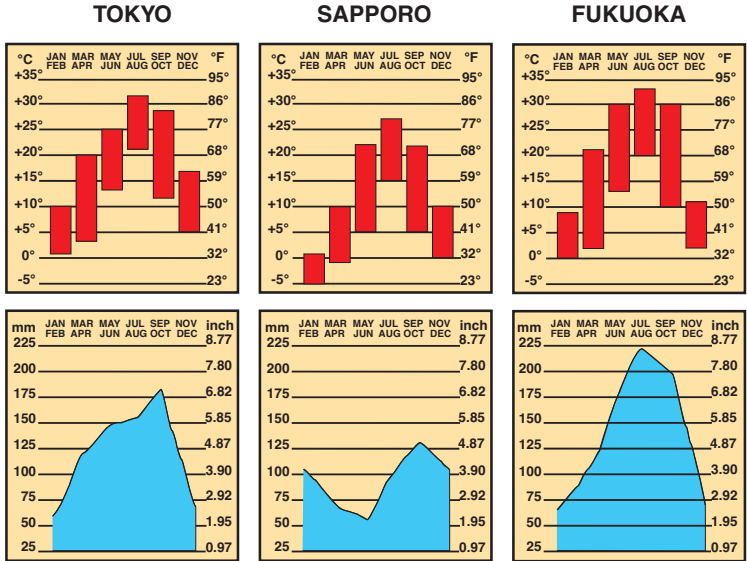


Families, friends and colleagues gather to celebrate the fleeting appearance of the cherry blossom with *hanami* (blossom-viewing) parties, picnicking under the trees. (© LR)

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.



MAX/MIN TEMPERATURE CHARTS (°F/°C) AND AVERAGE RAINFALL (MM/INCH)

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.



Skiing at Gala Yuzawa (see p352) in Honshu. This is the only ski resort directly connected to a shinkansen station. The main ski areas are in north-eastern Honshu and Hokkaido; the season usually lasts from November/December to April/May. (© AU)



A rice planting festival takes place in May at Shirakawa-go village (see pp224-5), famous for its steep-roofed thatched houses. (© AU)

**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



Koinobori (carp streamers) and kites are flown on Children's Day, 5th May. (© KU)

- **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** Taiiku 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](http://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



Yabusame Festival (horseback archery) takes place in April in Tsuwano (see p285). (© KU)





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)

(fire-walking ceremony), Daishoin Temple, **Miyajima**.

- **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

- **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 Nakatsugawa, 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.



- *A Geek in Japan: Discovering the Land of Manga, Anime, Zen and the Tea Ceremony* Hector Garcia (Tuttle Shokai, 2011) An insight into life in contemporary Japan, with plenty of photos and illustrations.
- *Kokoro: Hints and Echoes of Japanese Inner Life* Lafcadio Hearn (Tuttle, 2009) The best introduction to Irish writer Lafcadio Hearn's experiences of life in Meiji-era Japan (see p56).
- *Xenophobe's Guide to the Japanese* S Kaji, N Hama and J Rice (Oval Books, 2010) A pocket-sized humorous guide to what makes the Japanese tick.
- *The Blue-Eyed Salaryman: From World Traveller to Lifer at Mitsubishi* Niall Murtagh (Profile Books, 2006) Amusing insight into what office life is like for a foreigner working in Japan.
- *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

- *Early Japanese Railways 1853-1914: Engineering Triumphs That Transformed Meiji Japan* Dan Free (Tuttle, 2014) A well-illustrated and detailed account of the railway's early days.
- *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](http://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,

### □ Geisha in the 21st century

*Maiko*, apprentice geisha, train for up to six years for the right to be called a geisha (*geiko* in Kyoto). During this time the maiko-san will learn how to play traditional instruments, such as the shamisen and koto (see below), how to dance and how to dress in a kimono. Above all the trainee is required to become skilled in the manners and comportment associated with the geisha world, since every one of them will be judged by the customers whom they are sent to entertain in the evenings. Up until WW2 a maiko's virginity was auctioned and they had little control over their sexual relationships but nowadays any relationships they have are up to them.

In the 1920s there were about 80,000 geisha and a steady flow of new trainees. Today, fewer than 5000 brave the long hours and difficult working conditions. However, more and more young professional women, dressed in platform heels and forever chatting on their mobile phones by day, are now moonlighting as a new breed of geisha after only the briefest crash course in technique. Customers unwilling or unable to pay for an evening with a traditional geisha can opt instead for one of this new breed who charge a fraction of the price. They are different from hostesses in a bar in the sense that they dress in a kimono and go to their client's premises rather than the client going to a bar.

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](http://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

### ❑ The JR Hotel group

Anyone with a Japan Rail Pass will receive a list of JR-run hotels – the main brand names vary with each JR company, but the hotels are all Western style and range from standard business to top-class luxury. Rooms always have a good range of amenities and free wi-fi is generally available. JR-pass holders get a small discount (usually around 10% off the rack rate).

JR hotels are particularly convenient since they're nearly always right outside the station (or in some cases, above it). See the city guides for individual hotel details, or check the website [www.jrhotelgroup.com](http://www.jrhotelgroup.com).

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](http://www.accessible-japan.com)) has useful information on hotels which offer specially adapted rooms for the disabled and also on sight-seeing 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.



# 3

# THE RAIL NETWORK

## Railway history

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

*The steaming locomotive passing across the field full of marigold at night*

(KAZUKO KONAGAI)

## 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.



**Midori-no-madoguchi**  
(Green window reservations office)

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 AND OSAKA

# 4

## 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)

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## NAGANO TO NAGOYA VIA MATSUMOTO

[Table 5, p506]

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

### Nagano to Nagoya [Map 5]

**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).

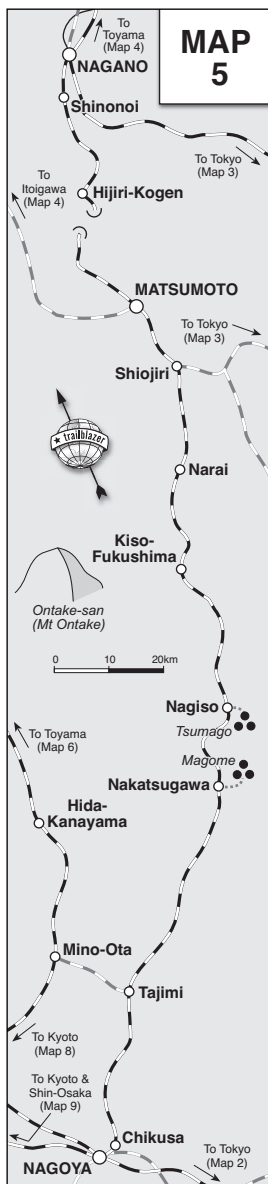
Should you wish to return to Tokyo pick up the Azusa/Super Azusa LEX (1/hr), which takes just under three hours to Shinjuku (see p111).

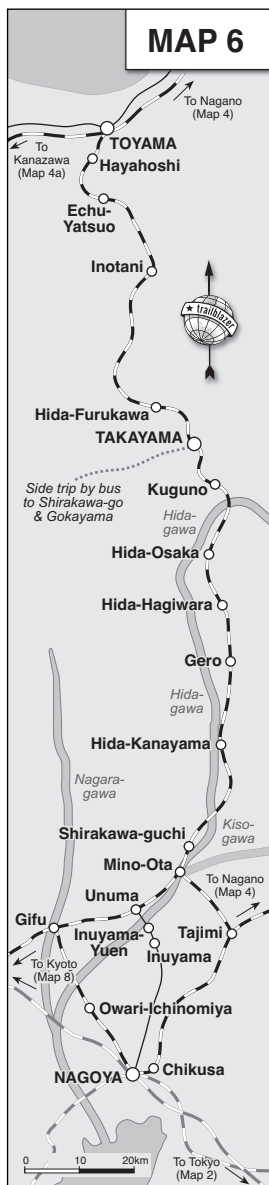
**Shiojiri 塩尻 (76km)** If planning to visit Narai (see below), you'll need to change from a limited express to a local train here.

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](http://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](http://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.

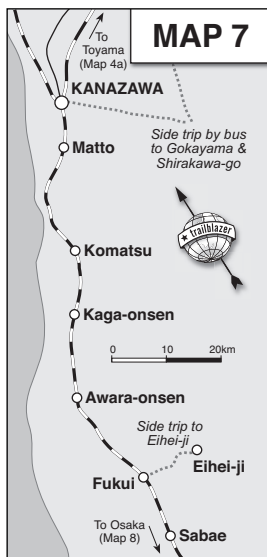
The main reason for stopping here is to take a side trip to Eihei-ji (see below). The **tourist information booth** (daily 8.30am-7pm) is by the East Gate Exit; here you can pick up information about getting to Eihei-ji and maps of Fukui city. For online information visit [www.fuku-e.com](http://www.fuku-e.com).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

**Hotel Rivege Akebono** ホテルリバーージュアケボノ (☎ 0776-22 1000, [www.rivege.com](http://www.rivege.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](http://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 rotomburo 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](http://www.yudanaka-shibuonsen.com)), which is a one-stop-shop for local hotel/ryokan reservations and sight-seeing 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](http://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 passages, 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 (🌐 [matsuhaku.com](http://matsuhaku.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 四柱神社, 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 (📍 naka machi-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 **Kyu-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

## MATSUMOTO – MAP KEY

### Where to stay

- 1 Hotel New Station
- 3 Hotel Mor-Schein
- 4 Ace Inn Matsumoto
- 6 Toko City Hotel  
Matsumoto
- 8 Richmond Hotel  
Matsumoto

### Where to stay (cont'd)

- 10 Toyoko Inn Matsumoto  
Ekimae Honmachi
- 12 Dormy Inn Matsumoto
- 14 Marumo Ryokan
- 15 Nunoya Ryokan

### Where to eat and drink

- 2 Kobayashi
- 5 Ario department store
- 7 Toritetsu
- 8 Gusto
- 9 5 Horn
- 11 Shinmiyoshi
- 13 Kobayashi



(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** ホテルモルシヤン (☎ 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; 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 大庭 (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** 歴史の里 (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 高山

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 Shirakawago 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** 高山屋台会館 (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](http://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](http://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.

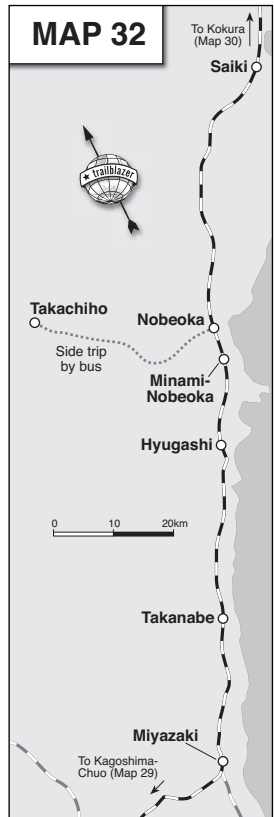
The next stop is **Tsukumi** 津久見 (179km). As you approach **Saiki** 佐伯 (198km) there are good views out to sea on the left side.

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** 延岡大師祭 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](http://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](http://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** 障子 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** 畳 traditional Japanese mat made from rice straw and used as flooring

**-teien** 庭園 garden

**Teishoku** 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

**Waraji** 草鞋 giant straw 'sandals' at temples which are meant to act as a charm to ward off evil spirits

**Yabusame** 流鏑馬 horseback archery

**Yakuza** やくざ Japanese mafia

**-yama** 山 mountain

**Yokozuna** 横綱 the highest rank in sumo

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

**Zazen** 座禅 Zen (Buddhist) meditation

## 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 (**oyako-don** 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** 枝豆 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** 稲荷寿司 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

Good morning	<i>ohaiyoo gozaimasu</i>	Good evening	<i>kombanwa</i>
Good night	<i>oyasumi nasai</i>	Hello	<i>konnichiwa</i>
Please*	<i>dozo, onegaishimasu</i> or <i>kudasai</i>	Goodbye	<i>sayonara</i>
Thank you	<i>domo arigato</i>	Yes (see p82)	<i>hai</i>
(very much)	<i>(gozaimashita)</i>	No	<i>iee</i>
No thanks	<i>kekko desu</i>	I don't understand	<i>wakarimasen</i>
Excuse me / I'm sorry <i>shitsureishimasu / sumimasen</i> or <i>gomen nasai</i>			

What's your name?	<i>O-namae wa nan desu-ka</i>
My name is .....	<i>Watashi wa ..... desu</i>
Where do you live?	<i>Doko ni sunde imasu ka</i>
I'm from Britain / America / Canada /	<i>Igirisujin / Amerikajin / Kanadajin /</i>
Australia / New Zealand	<i>Australiajin / New Zealandjin desu</i>
Do you speak English?	<i>Anata wa eigo ga hanasemasu ka</i>
Please write it down for me	<i>Sore o kaite kudasai</i>
Could you repeat that please?	<i>Mo ichido itte kudasai</i>
How much does it cost?	<i>Ikura desu ka</i>
Where is an ATM?	<i>ATM (genkin jodo azukebaraiki) wa doko desu-ka</i>

\***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

Monday	<i>getsuyobi</i>	月曜日	yesterday	<i>kino</i>	昨日
Tuesday	<i>kayobi</i>	火曜日	morning	<i>asa</i>	朝
Wednesday	<i>suiyobi</i>	水曜日	afternoon	<i>gogo</i>	午後
Thursday	<i>mokuyobi</i>	木曜日	evening	<i>yoru</i>	夜
Friday	<i>kinyobi</i>	金曜日	day	<i>hi / nichii</i>	日
Saturday	<i>doyobi</i>	土曜日	month	<i>gatsu / tsuki</i>	月
Sunday	<i>nichiyobi</i>	日曜日	year	<i>nen/toshi</i>	年
today	<i>kyo</i>	今日	hour	<i>ji</i>	時
tomorrow	<i>ashita</i>	明日	minute	<i>fun / pun</i>	分

### Hiragana chart

a	ka (ga)	sa (za)	ta (da)	na	ha (ba/pa)	ma	ya	ra	wa
あ	か (が)	さ (ざ)	た (だ)	な	は (ば/ぱ)	ま	や	ら	わ
i	ki (gi)	shi (ji)	chi (ji)	ni	hi (bi/pi)	mi		ri	
い	き (ぎ)	し (じ)	ち (ぢ)	に	ひ (び/ぴ)	み		り	
u	ku (gu)	su (zu)	tsu (zu)	nu	hu (bu/pu)	mu	yu	ru	(w)o
う	く (ぐ)	す (ず)	つ (づ)	ぬ	ふ (ぶ/ふ)	む	ゆ	る	を
e	ke (ge)	se (ze)	te (de)	ne	he (be/pe)	me		re	
え	け (げ)	せ (ぜ)	て (で)	ね	へ (べ/ぺ)	め		れ	
o	ko (go)	so (zo)	to (do)	no	ho (bp/po)	mo	yo	ro	n
お	こ (ご)	そ (ぞ)	と (ど)	の	ほ (ぼ/ぽ)	も	よ	ろ	ん



**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

*Choshoku / yushoku tsuki desu ka*  
*Front wa doko desu ka*  
*O-furo wa doko desu ka*  
*Check-in dekimasu ka / Check-out shimasu*  
*Amekkusu / Viza kaado de ii desu ka*  
*Nimotsu o azuketemo ii desu ka*  
*Lan cable o kashite kudasai.*  
*Asa-gohan / Ban-gohan wa nan-ji desu ka*

**Resutoran**

*Yoyaku onegai shimasu.*  
*Eigo no menyuu wa arimasu ka*  
*Eigo no menyuu 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**      **Arrival time**

**Date** (Month/day)      **Non-smoking car**

**Train type** (Hikari)      **Train number**      **Seat reservation charge** (no charge for Japan Rail pass-holders)

**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**

Kansai Airport 関西空港 (Journey times quoted are to/from Kansai Airport)

Tennoji 天王寺	1-2/hr; 35 mins
Shin-Osaka 新大阪	1-2/hr; 52 mins
Kyoto 京都	1-2/hr; 1¼hrs

● 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.

**Local/rapid services**

- JR Kansai Airport Rapid Service (1-3/hr) calls at Rinku Town, Hineno, Tennoji and Osaka but not Shin-Osaka.
- From both Osaka and Shin-Osaka there are frequent local/rapid trains to Kyoto.

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

Tokyo 東京 (Journey times quoted are to/from Tokyo)

	Nozomi <sup>1</sup>	Hikari <sup>2</sup>	Kodama <sup>3</sup>
Shinagawa 品川	2-6/hr; 7 mins	2/hr; 7 mins	1/hr; 7 mins
Shin-Yokohama 新横浜	2-6/hr; 18 mins	2/hr; 18-20 mins	1/hr; 20 mins
Odawara 小田原		7/day; 35 mins	1/hr; 40 mins
Atami 熱海		3/day; 40 mins	1/hr; 50 mins
Mishima 三島		5/day; 45 mins	1/hr; 1hr 2 mins
Shin-Fuji 新富士			1/hr; 1hr 11 mins
Shizuoka 静岡		1/hr; 60 mins	1/hr; 1hr 28 mins
Takegawa 掛川			1/hr; 1hr 47 mins
Hamamatsu 浜松		1/hr; 1½hrs	1/hr; 2hrs 3 mins
Toyohashi 豊橋		9/day; 1hr 23 mins	1/hr; 2hrs 20 mins
Nagoya 名古屋	2-6/hr; 1hr 40 mins	2/hr; 1hr 44 mins	1/hr; 2hrs 49 mins
Gifu-Hashima 岐阜羽島		1/hr; 2hrs 2 mins	1/hr; 3hrs
Maibara 米原		1-2/hr; 2hrs 10 mins	1/hr; 3hrs 20 mins
Kyoto 京都	2-6/hr; 2hrs 9 mins	2/hr; 2hrs 40 mins	1/hr; 3hrs 48 mins
Shin-Osaka 新大阪	2-6/hr; 2hrs 24 mins	2/hr; 2hrs 58 mins	1/hr; 4hrs 4 mins

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

	Hikari <sup>2</sup>	Kodama <sup>3</sup>
Shin-Kobe 新神戸	1-2/hr; 13 mins	8/day; 13 mins
Nishi-Akashi 西明石	1/hr; 23 mins	8/day; 23 mins
Himeji 姫路	1-2/hr; 29 mins	8/day; 35 mins
Aioi 相生	1/hr; 48 mins	8/day; 48 mins
Okayama 岡山	1-2/hr; 55 mins	8/day; 1hr 10 mins
Shin-Kurashiki 新倉敷		8/day; 1hr 25 mins
Fukuyama 福山	1-2/hr; 1¼hrs	8/day; 1hr 40 mins
Shin-Onomichi 新尾道	8/day; 1¼hrs	
Mihara 三原	8/day; 2hrs 10 mins	
Higashi-Hiroshima 東広島	8/day; 2hrs 17 mins	
Hiroshima 広島	1-2/hr; 1hr 26 mins	8/day; 2½hrs
Shin-Iwakuni 新岩国	8/day; 2¾hrs	
Tokuyama 徳山	8/day; 3hrs 10 mins	
Shin-Yamaguchi 新山口	10/day; 2hrs	8/day; 3½hrs
Asa 厚狭	8/day; 3hrs 52 mins	
Shin-Shimonoseki 新下関	5/day; 2hrs 10 mins	8/day; 4hrs 5 mins
Kokura 小倉	1-2/hr; 2hrs 20 mins	8/day; 4¼hrs
Hakata (Fukuoka) 博多	1-2/hr; 2hrs 38 mins	8/day; 4hrs 35 mins

<sup>1</sup> 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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