

DISCOVA

Japan

























































Konnichiwa! I'm Michelle and I'd like to welcome you to beautiful Japan.

I'm part of the Discova team in Tokyo and what I love most about my job is introducing travellers to the many unique and captivating facets of this nation. From the bizarre and peculiar, to the intriguing, beautiful and mind-blowing, Japan is many things but boring is not one of them. It's a place where ancient traditions meet state-of-the-art technology, where serving tea is an art form and entire districts are dedicated to anime and manga. Whether it's travelling on the Shinkansen train, exploring the great outdoors or getting a taste of our excellent food, I hope you fall in love with 'The Land of the Rising Sun'.

D Climate & Weather Averages in Japan

	Destination	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
 Cold Temperatures can rise up to 15 °C during the day but at night can plummet to 0 °C or lower.	Tokyo												
 Warm Temperatures usually between 10 °C and 25 °C	Kyoto Osaka Hiroshima												
 Hot Temperatures rise above 30 °C	Hokkaido												
 Rain Regular rainfall	Okinawa												

* The actual climate in Japan's regions can vary a bit.

In general, the Japanese archipelago has four distinct seasons. Due to its widespread geography, the climate varies greatly between regions, ranging from sub-arctic in Hokkaido to sub-tropical in Okinawa, with temperate weather in central Japan. The most popular times to visit Japan is in spring (March to May) and autumn (September to November) when temperatures are mostly milder, and the trees are either with cherry blossom (early April) or painted in red and yellow (November). Winter – from December to February – brings plenty of snow and cold weather, especially in the north, whilst summers are hot and humid, with torrential rain and typhoons.



Things to Know

Japan



Population

127 million



Capital City

Tokyo



Time Zone

GMT/UTC + 9h JST Tokyo



Language

Japanese and regional Ryukyuan languages



Currency

Japan's official currency is the yen (¥). ATMS are widely available and the easiest way of obtaining cash. Beware not all ATMS accept non-Japanese cards; among the best ones to withdraw with foreign debit and credit cards are the machines in 7-Elevens, at post offices and Citibank ATMs. Banks and post offices exchange most major foreign currencies. Cash is still the preferred way to pay in Japan and whilst cards are increasingly accepted in cities and major establishments, bring enough cash when travelling to the countryside.



Visa

Travellers from 68 countries, including Australia, New Zealand, USA, UK and many European countries, can travel to Japan visa-free for a period of up to 90 days. Certain other nationalities need to apply for a tourist visa at a Japanese consulate or embassy before entering the country. Beware that all travellers may be asked for proof of onward travel. As travel requirements are subject to change, we recommend checking the official government website before visiting.

www.mofa.go.jp/

Festivals

Live some local traditions



With four national holidays, including constitution day and children's day, within a seven-day period, **Golden Week** is one of Japan's longest holiday seasons. Usually taking place from the end of April to the beginning of May, it's a popular time to travel for the Japanese and can get very crowded. The country's second major holiday season is **Obon** in mid-August, which commemorates deceased ancestors who are said to return to visit. During this annual Buddhist holiday, people hang lanterns outside their house, clean graves and make offerings to the spirits. Celebrated around the world, **New Year** is a different deal and the most important holiday season in Japan. From end of year parties and decorating the house to eating soba noodles and visiting shrines, there are numerous traditions celebrated over this period of time.





“One traditional Japanese philosophy is known as ‘wabi-sabi’. Meaning something like ‘embracing imperfection and transience’, it’s a combination of the two words ‘wabi’, expressing rustic simplicity, and ‘sabi’, describing the beauty of ageing. It can be observed everywhere in Japanese culture, from the fleeting beauty of the cherry blossoms to unevenly shaped ceramics.”

Responsible Travel Initiatives

Local Community

From experiencing a traditional tea ceremony to learning the art of origami, we work closely with WAK Japan (Women's Association of Kyoto) who offer a variety of hands-on experiences. Their programs are designed to allow travellers gain insight into Japanese culture, whilst offering employment opportunities for female instructors. By using the services of WAK, Discova helped generate 4,773 USD in revenue last year.



Protecting Children

ChildSafe Movement trains individuals and organisations, providing them with the tools to protect children. We are working on implementing ChildSafe throughout Discova to do our part in protecting children worldwide.



“If you have the chance, I recommend staying in a ‘ryokan’ – a traditional Japanese inn. Complete with tatami mats, futon beds and shoji paper sliding doors, this type of accommodation is especially popular in onsen resorts and guests are traditionally given an elaborate multi-course dinner. From family-run inns to high-end resorts, staying at a ryokan is a unique experience and a great way to immerse in Japanese culture.”



What to Eat

Taste some local food



Kaiseki ryori (会席料理)

The equivalent to ‘haute cuisine’, Kaiseki ryori is a traditional Japanese fine dining experience, consisting of multiple courses. With a focus on seasonal ingredients, each dish is elaborately prepared and beautifully presented on an individual small plate. Served in high-end restaurants, a great place to enjoy a Kaiseki ryori dining experience is in a traditional Japanese inn.



Okonomiyaki (お好み焼き)

With a name that translates to mean ‘cooked how you like’, it’s no wonder that Okonomiyaki is such a popular dish in Japan. Made with shredded cabbage, flour, egg and water, the batter is fried with a variety of toppings into a thick savoury pancake – sometimes referred to as a ‘Japanese Pizza’.



Daifukumochi (大福餅)

This popular Japanese sweet is made with ‘mochi’ – a chewy glutinous rice cake – stuffed with a creamy, sweet filling. Choose the traditional version with red bean paste and let the semi-sweet filling combine with the delicate outer layer for a melt-in-the-mouth delight!



“Besides devouring all the sushi, ramen and soba noodles, why not spend an evening at an izakaya? Our version of pubs, izakaya are a great place to meet locals in a laid-back atmosphere, enjoy a few cups of sake (or beer) and sample a smorgasbord of small dishes. Typical izakaya fare includes meat skewers, edamame, tofu, sashimi, gyozas and much more.”



Join us on an imaginary 12-day explorer of Japan

Experience different facets of Japan on this journey of 'The Land of the Rising Sun'. Explore Tokyo's eclectic districts – from historic to hipster – and summit iconic Mount Fuji. Take in the notable landmarks of Hiroshima and Miyajima Island, and travel to Kyoto for a glimpse of Edo-period Japan. Immerse in the local culture of the ancient capital before rounding off the trip in laid-back Osaka.

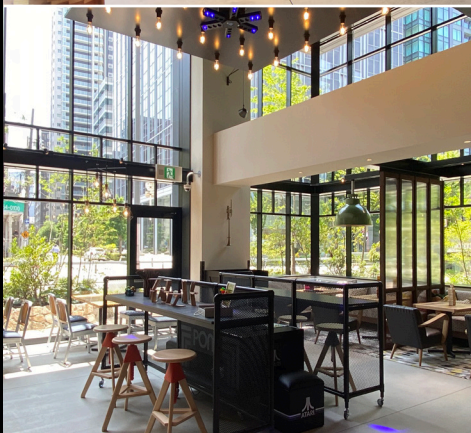
Enjoy the best of what Osaka has to offer with modern accommodation in a central hub of the cosmopolitan city.

Moxy Osaka Shin Umeda

★★★★

📍 7-22-1 Fukushima, Osaka, Japan.

Located at a prime location in Umeda, one of the main hubs of Osaka City. At Moxy, comfort and connectivity are the key – furiously fast free Wi-Fi, lovely services from our Crew Team and 24-hours access to the Moxy Gym.





RUSSIA

CHINA

HOKKAIDO

Sapporo

North
Korea

*Japan
Sea*

JAPAN

South
Korea

Central
Honshu

HONSHU

Tokyo

Kyoto

Fuji

Osaka

Western Honshu

Hiroshima

SHIKOKU

KYUSHU

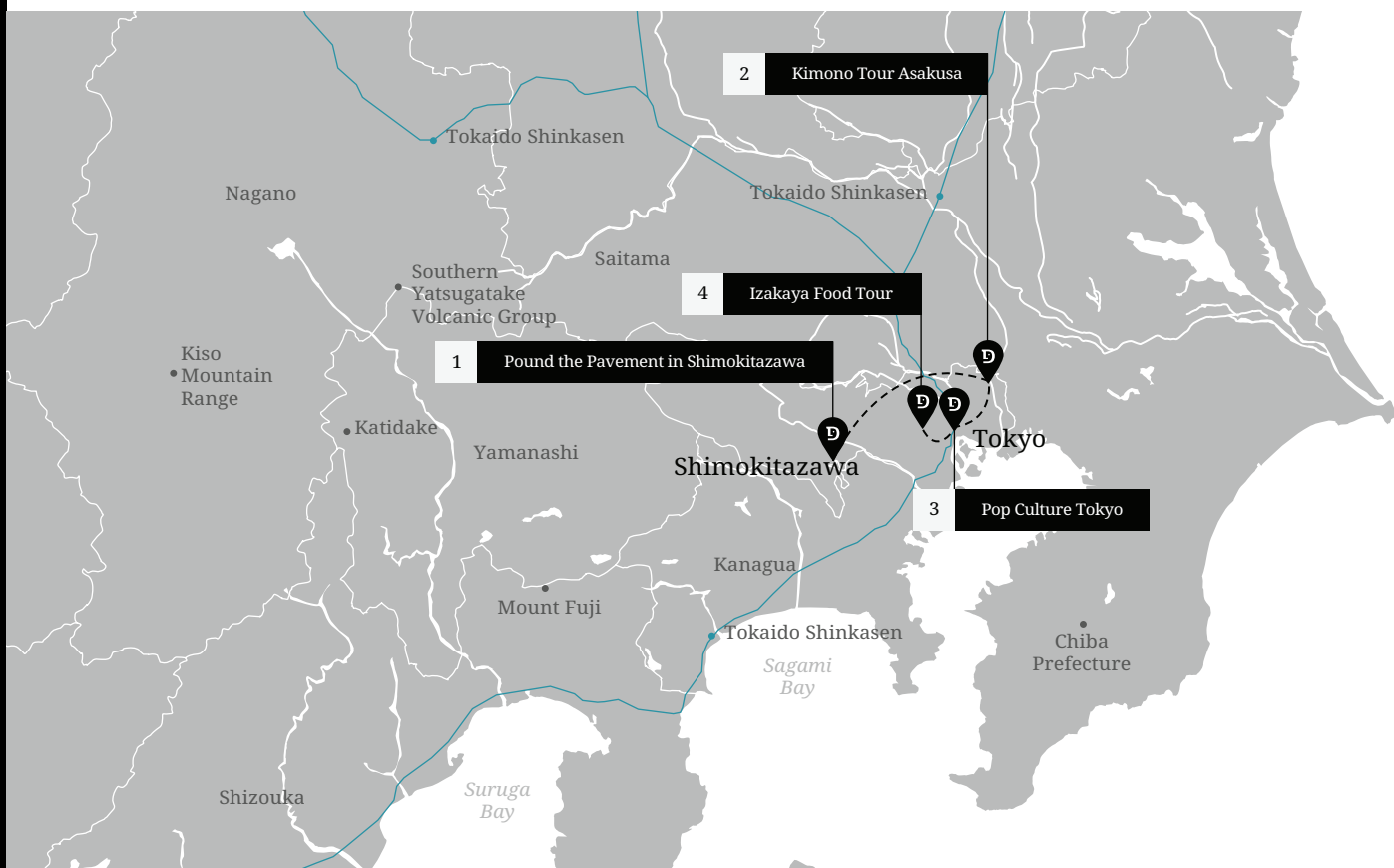
*Pacific
Ocean*

*Philippines
Sea*

Okinawa
Islands

Tokyo

The world's most populous city, Tokyo truly takes a lifetime to explore. From densely populated skyscrapers to historic shrines set amidst large parkland, from bustling streets screaming with colour and the latest fashion trends to tranquil neighbourhoods with small town charm, the Japanese capital manages to combine seemingly opposing worlds into one fascinating metropolis. Conveniently connected by its vast underground system, Tokyo will take you on a trip from the past into the future.





1. Pound the Pavement in Shimokitazawa

The suburb of Shimokitazawa has transformed from a farming community into one of the hippest, artsiest neighbourhoods of Tokyo. Spend half a day here walking alongside a local to get to know this bohemian underground. Dip into record shops and vintage thrift stores as well as cool cafes tucked away down blink-and-you-miss-them backstreets.



2. Kimono Tour Asakusa

Explore the Asakusa District of Tokyo in the most local way imaginable; in a traditional Kimono! Choose from a beautiful selection of over 200 Kimonos and Yukatas, before being styled and fitted by a special stylist. Wander the charming streets of Asakusa, dressed in full costume, to get in touch with the mysterious traditions of the Geisha world.



3. Pop Culture Tokyo

Witness the famous five-way Shibuya 'scramble' crossing and encounter every kind of fashion sub-culture imaginable in the Harajuku district.

Explore the game centres of Akihabara, otherwise known as 'Electric Town', and wander the neon streets lined with anime shops and maid cafes. There is no better place to explore the intriguing culture of modern Japan than in Tokyo.



4. Izakaya Food Tour

Japanese food certainly needs no introduction, from world famous sushi to the less-celebrated but equally delicious okonomiyaki, soba or tempura. Embark on a culinary adventure in the back streets of Ebisu or Golden Gai, crawling between Izakaya - Japanese pubs – to sample some of the most unique dishes Japan has to offer. Of course, wash it all down with some sake or local beer.

Our Recommended Hotels

Tokyo



Four Seasons Hotel Tokyo at Otemachi

★★★★★

📍 1 Chome-2-1 Ōtemachi, Chiyoda City, Tokyo 100-0004, Japan.

Reverberating with the energy of Japan's iconic capital, Four Seasons Hotel Tokyo at Otemachi delivers next-generation luxury experiences with inimitable style. Soaring high above the heart of the city and offering expansive Imperial Palace views, Four Seasons puts you at centre stage, from sky-high gourmet meals on our rooftop terrace to gala business and social events at Tokyo's best address.



Hotel Chinzanso Tokyo

★★★★★

📍 2 Chome-10-8 Sekiguchi, Bunkyo City, Tokyo 112-8680, Japan.

The majestic garden of Hotel Chinzanso Tokyo is truly one of a kind, promising a breathtaking experience to guests in every season. The history of Hotel Chinzanso Tokyo stretches back well over a century. No other hotel in Tokyo is surrounded by the idyllic beauty of nature with rich history while maintaining such convenience in access.



The Capitol Hotel Tokyu

★★★★★

📍 2 Chome-10-3 Nagatacho, Chiyoda City, Tokyo 100-0014, Japan.

The Capitol Hotel Tokyu in Akasaka relaunched in 2010 with a refined architectural style and interior design that creates an atmosphere perfect for relaxation, whether travelling for business or leisure in the heart of Tokyo.



mesm Tokyo, Autograph Collection

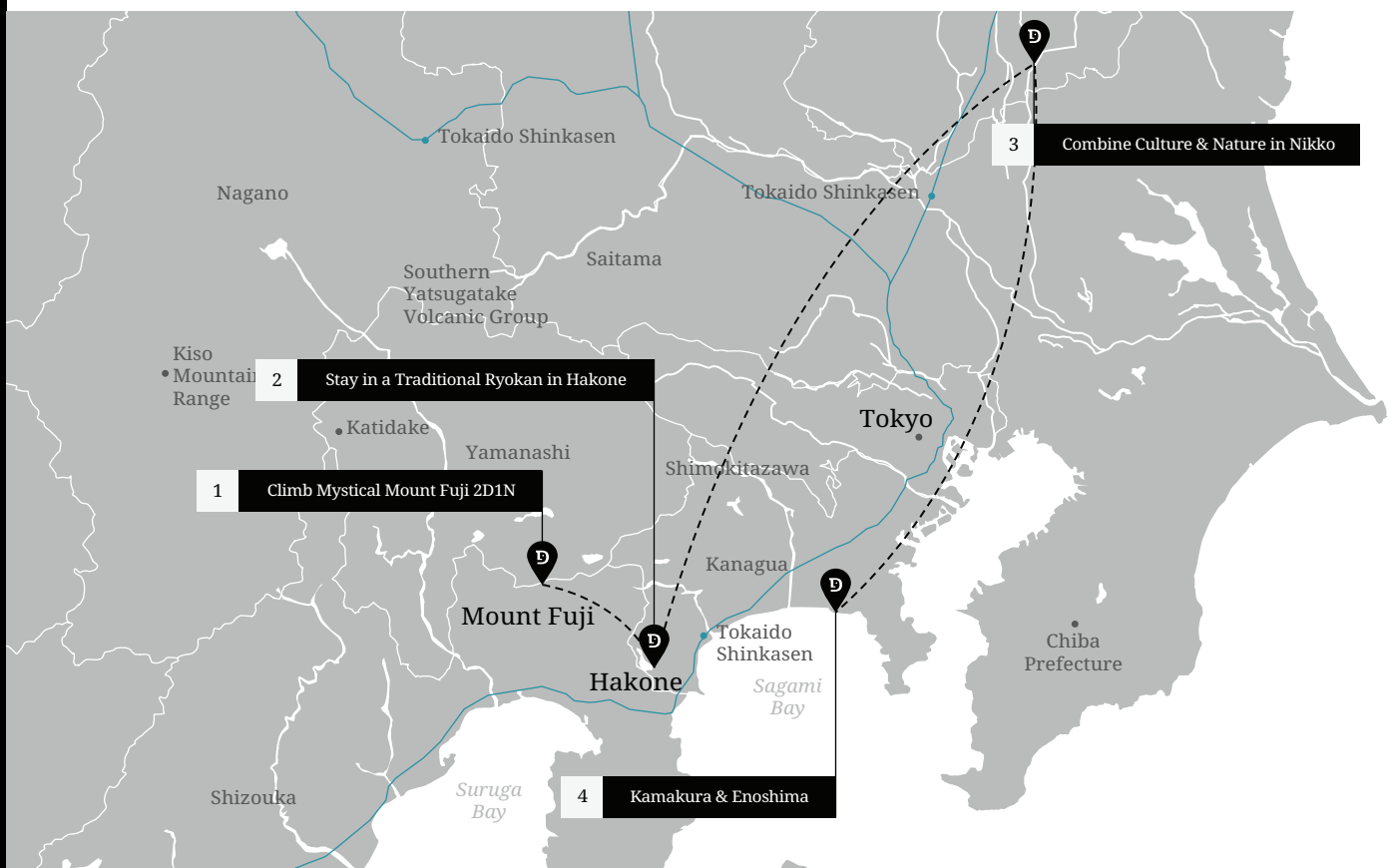
★★★★★

📍 1 Chome-10-30 Kaigan, Minato City, Tokyo 105-0022, Japan.

From the moment you enter, everywhere throughout this hotel is of interest with its innovation. In each area, you'll find something to captivate your attention, With each time you visit, there is something new to discover and delight your senses in this fascinating hotel

Tokyo: Escapes Outside the City

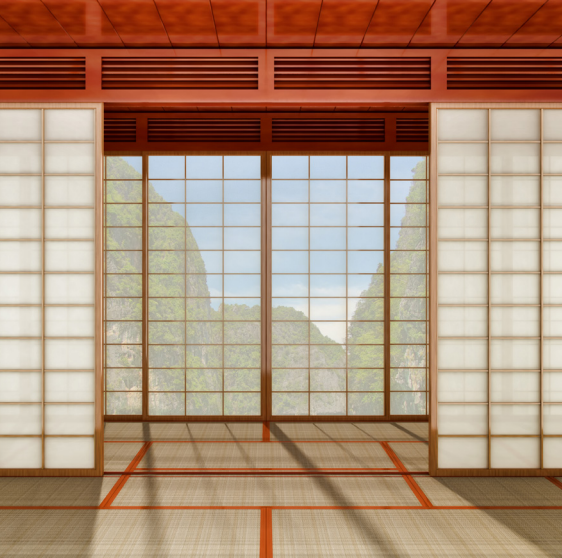
Flee the city boundaries of the vibrant capital to encounter nature's elements intertwined with long lasting traditions and beliefs. Head to the mountain town of Hakone to enjoy majestic views of Mount Fuji rising behind Lake Ashi – avid hikers can summit the peak of the iconic volcano too. Venture deeper into Tokyo's surrounding mountains to find examples of centuries-old Buddhist and Shinto worship, or jaunt to the seaside to uncover historic towns, island hot springs and jagged coastal cliffs.





1. Climb Mystical Mount Fuji 2D1N

Conquering the iconic, cone-shaped Mount Fuji is a bucket list goal for many travellers to Japan. Make this dream come true and climb the nation's highest peak on an unforgettable two-day trekking adventure. Hike along the less-crowded Subashiri Trail, witness the colourful volcanic rocks and stay at a traditional Japanese mountain hut before ascending the summit in time for a spectacular sunrise.



2. Stay in a Traditional Ryokan in Hakone

After a few days in Tokyo you might feel the need to escape the craziness of the city. Hidden in the mountains and covered with lush forest, Hakone takes you back to nature. It's the perfect place to experience the true sense of the word 'omotenashi', or Japanese hospitality. Get pampered in a Japanese traditional inn, known as 'ryokan', and soak your body and soul with an onsen experience. Absolute bliss!



3. Combine Culture & Nature in Nikko

Deep in the mountains, yet only two hours from Tokyo, Nikko has been a centre of Buddhist and Shinto mountain worship for centuries. Listed by UNESCO as a cultural heritage site, it offers a combination of sumptuous temples and nature hiking trails, a good excuse for an unforgettable full-day excursion from the capital city. Travellers with a bit of extra time can enjoy a one-night stay on the shores of Lake Chuzenji, an unforgettable weekend getaway!



4. Kamakura & Enoshima

Mostly known for its bronze Great Buddha statue, Kamakura is a historic town on the shores of the Sagami Bay. It offers a refreshing day out of Tokyo, and another opportunity to sample some of the traditional dishes of the region in the streets of this small town. This is a destination you can easily combine with Enoshima, a small island facing Kamakura offering unique views on the coast.

Our Recommended Hotels

Tokyo



Ascott Marunouchi Tokyo

★★★★★

📍 1 Chome-1-1 Ōtemachi, Chiyoda City, Tokyo 100-0004, Japan.

Ascott Marunouchi Tokyo is built as part of an integrated development, which plays host to a plethora of shopping, dining and entertainment outlets, including specialty restaurants, cafés and bars with both indoor and alfresco dining options.



Hotel Gracery Shinjuku

★★★★★

📍 1 Chome-2-1 Ōtemachi, Chiyoda City, Tokyo 100-0004, Japan.

In 2015, a new, next-generation hotel focused on providing convenience, efficiency, and comfort opened on the side of the old Shinjuku Koma Theater, the heart of the area around Shinjuku Station's East Exit. With its height of 130 m (30 stories), it will stand head and shoulders above the surrounding buildings and will become the new landmark on Shinjuku Station's east side.



Hotel Oriental Express Tokyo Ginza

★ ★ ★

📍 2 Chome-9-3 Tsukiji, Chuo City, Tokyo 104-0045, Japan.

Opened in July 2019, Hotel Oriental Express Tokyo Ginza is a boutique hotel based on the “Art gallery” concept while giving homage to Ginza’s famous art district. The hotel is perfectly located only minutes walking-distance to the nearest metro station.



Shinjuku Washington Hotel

★ ★ ★

📍 3 Chome-2-9 Nishishinjuku, Shinjuku City, Tokyo 160-8336, Japan.

Shinjuku Washington Hotel is conveniently located in the center of Shinjuku, one of Tokyo’s most popular and active locales next to the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building and close to shopping and entertainment venues. Looking up to the skyscrapers, the hotel is the ideal location to explore the delights of the city.



Citadines Shinjuku Tokyo

★ ★ ★

📍 1 Chome-28-13 Shinjuku, Shinjuku City, Tokyo 160-0022, Japan.

The rambunctious Shinjuku Station is merely 20 minutes away from the hotel on foot. Citadines Shinjuku Tokyo sits in the midst of the action, making it an ideal location for first-time visitors to get their bearings.



Citadines Central Shinjuku Tokyo

★ ★ ★

📍 1 Chome-2-9 Kabukicho, Shinjuku City, Tokyo 160-0021, Japan.

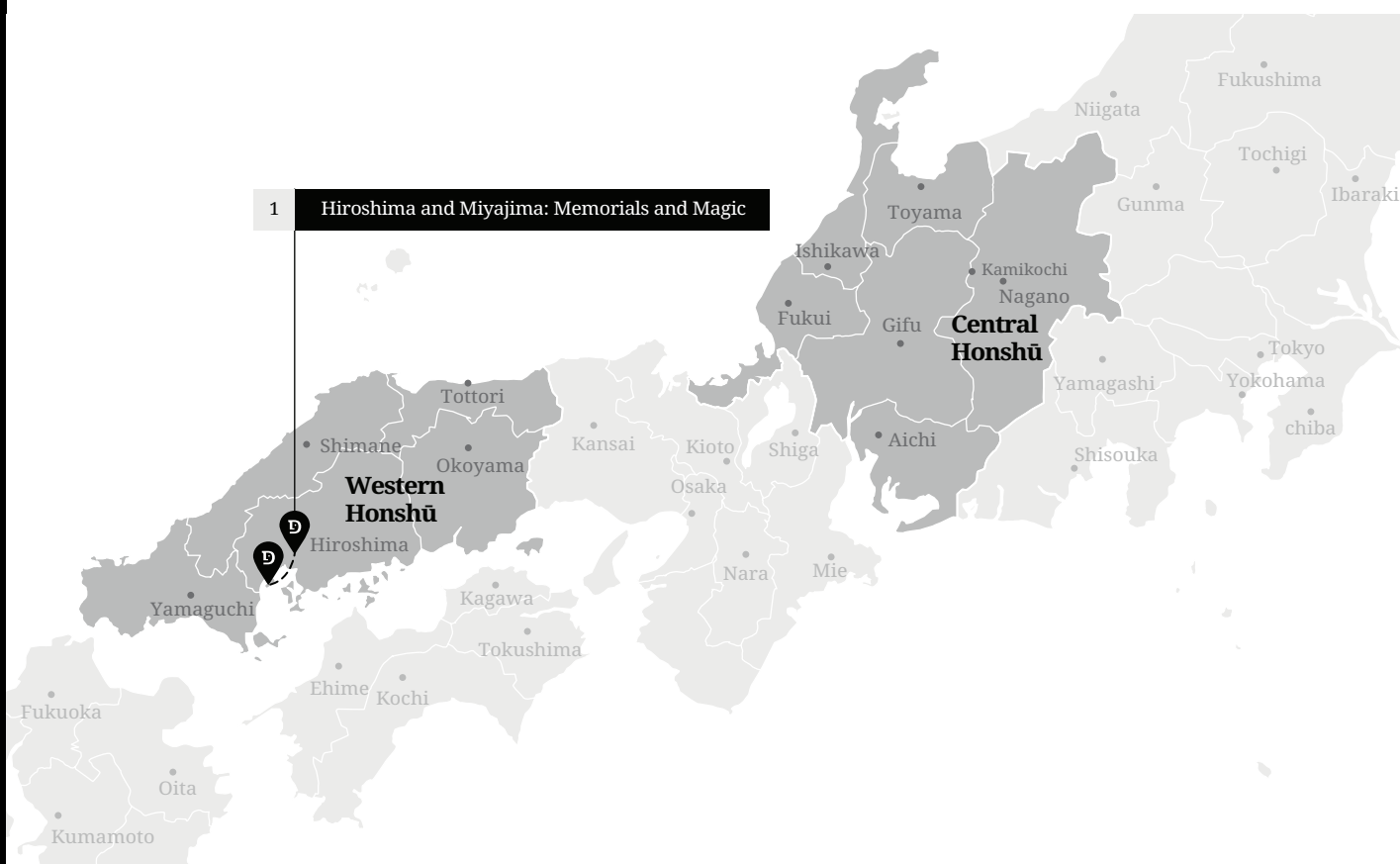
Situated right in the heart of bustling Shinjuku Kabukicho, Citadines Central Shinjuku Tokyo enjoys a prime location with the area surrounding the hotel brimming with a myriad of entertainment outlets, restaurants, fashionable boutiques and mega-shopping complexes, all within walking distance.

Central Honshu

With the magnificent peaks of the Japanese Alps dominating the landscape, Central Honshu is dotted with great ski resorts, wonderful hiking trails, quaint mountain towns and soothing hot springs. Be surrounded by spectacular summits in Kamikochi or follow the ancient Nakasendo trail into the Kiso Valley. Explore the historic coastal town Kanazawa, stroll along the picturesque wooden houses lining the streets of Takayama, or travel back into the age of the Samurai at Matsumoto Castle.

Hiroshima & Western Honshu

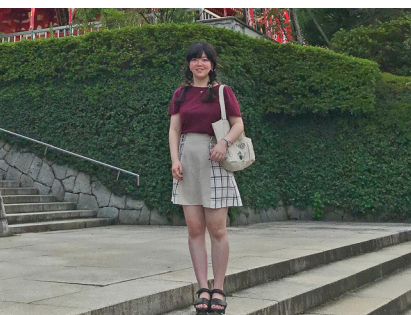
Forever etched into people's minds, the name Hiroshima will always be a reminder of the disastrous effects of the world's first atomic bomb. Rebuilt into a modern metropolis, visitors come from around the world to pay their respects at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial. Other destinations of note in Western Honshu include the Great Torii Gate on Miyajima, Island, the numerous exhibits on Naoshima Art Island as well as the black Matsue Castle on the northern coast.





Hiroshima and Miyajima: Memorials and Magic

Spend a full day at Japan's most poignant World Heritage Site. Visit the "Island of the Gods" to see its treasured shrines and landmarks that float on the water like a miracle, then head to Hiroshima to learn about the harrowing history of one of humanity's greatest tragedies. One thing's for sure, this will be a day not easily forgotten.



"One of my favourite places in this region is Tsuwano. An easy day trip from Hiroshima, the 700-year-old town it's surrounded by peaceful mountains and boasts a charming atmosphere. In its centre, you'll find traditional samurai mansions as well as small streams filled with colourful carps running along its main street. One of Tsuwano's main highlights, however, is the Takodani Inari Shrine – one of the five most important Inari Shrines in the country."

Our Recommended Hotels

Honshu & Okinawa



Hotel Nikko Alivila

★★★★★

📍 600 Gima, Yomitan, Nakagami District, Okinawa 904-0327, Japan.

Hotel Nikko Alivila is located in the middle of Okinawa main island surrounded by the beautiful beaches and nature. The hotel name is derived from the Spanish words, alivio (relaxation) and villa, and has a unique Spanish colonial style displayed by its exterior red tiled roof and white walls.



Hilton Okinawa Chatan Resort

★★★★★

📍 40-1 Mihama, Chatan, Nakagami District, Okinawa 904-0115, Japan.

The Hilton Okinawa Chatan Resort provides an upscale experience in an ideal Chatan location, adjacent to Mihama American Village, an extensive retail, dining and entertainment precinct. Integrated resort facilities allow you access to more dining options and swimming pools in DoubleTree Okinawa Chatan Resort, just next door.



Red Planet Hiroshima

★ ★ ★

📍 7-10, 7 Nagarekawacho, Naka Ward, Hiroshima, 730-0028, Japan.

Red Planet Hiroshima is a brand-new hotel featuring clean, modern decor with a casual atmosphere. Whether you are visiting for business, leisure, or a bit of both, you will love the central location steps from the best Hiroshima has to offer. Stay with us and visit Miyajima Island, Hiroshima Castle, Peace Memorial Park, and Mazda Museum.



ANA Holiday Inn Resort Shinano-Omachi Kuroyon

★ ★ ★ ★

📍 2020, Taira, Omachi, Nagano 398-0001, Japan.

ANA Holiday Inn Resort Shinano-Omachi Kuroyon is perfectly positioned for rest and recreation by the Northern Alps of Japan. There are 73 newly refurbished rooms and suites designed for maximum style and comfort. Enjoy hot spring baths, hiking, skiing, swimming, golf and more.

Osaka & Kyoto (Kansai)

As cultural treasures abound, the ancient capital of Kyoto truly deserves its title as Japan's spiritual heart. From enigmatic temples and Zen gardens to traditional wooden architecture, outstanding cuisine and excellent crafts – this is the place to get fully immersed into Japanese culture. Slowly emerging from its vaunted neighbour's shadow, Osaka, once an old merchant town, has established itself as a vibrant and welcoming city with an easy-going vibe and some of the country's best food.





1. Maiko Performance with Green Tea

Get the special opportunity to meet a Geisha apprentice, known as a 'Maiko', and watch her perform an elegant dance in a Japanese tea house. Whilst being enchanted by the musical performance, enjoy a cup of green tea with traditional sweets. Take the chance to have a chat with the Maiko and snap a photo to keep as a memory.



2. Taiko Experience in Kyoto

Experience the powerful and captivating rhythm of Taiko – traditional Japanese drums – in a hands-on session with a professional. In this one-hour workshop, learn about the heritage and cultural significance of Taiko and embark on a personal rhythmic journey. With the basics mastered, sit back to enjoy a live performance by a group of professionals – one that will get the heart pumping.



3. Kyoto Farm Immersion and Mochi

Escape the city buzz to experience a slower pace of life in the countryside of Ogi Village. Wander through picturesque rice terraces to a local farmer's house – learn about the cultivation of rice and try making Mochi rice cakes using the traditional process. Devour a freshly prepared Sukiyaki lunch with the local family and enjoy a therapeutic soak at Ogoto Hot Springs.



4. Discover Kyoto by Bicycle

On two wheels, experience the rich heritage and stunning beauty of Japan's cultural capital. Explore Kyoto's hidden gems on a cycling tour through hidden backstreets and atmospheric geisha districts to the city's prominent landmarks. Learn all about the captivating history and cultural heritage of the former Japanese capital from a local professional guide on this active half-day tour.



5. Osaka Past and Present

Delve into the past with visits to some of Osaka's most interactive museums, stroll through replica streets of 17th century Osaka and discover the history of Japan's first capital. Visit one of the oldest temples in Japan before racing into the future in downtown Osaka and head up to the Floating Garden Observatory.

Our Recommended Hotels

Osaka & Kyoto



Hotel Keihan Kyoto Grande

★★★

📍 601-8003 Kyoto, Kyoto, Minami-ku Higashikujo Nishi-Sanno 31 , Japan.

Hotel Keihan Kyoto is directly connected to Kyoto Station and located in the heart of the city centre. Minutes access by foot or metro for major shopping, dining, and sightseeing areas.



Oriental Hotel Kyoto Gallery

★★★

📍 423-1, Sujakucho, Higashiyama Ward, Kyoto, 605-0901, Japan.

Opened in September 2019, Hotel Oriental Kyoto Gallery is a boutique hotel surrounded by the Kamogawa River, the Gion area, and Kiyomizu Temple. This is the very centre of Japan's ancient capital of Kyoto. The design of the boutique hotel stylishly blends various traditional Kyoto motifs, while allowing visitors to enjoy a cosy and tranquil resting place.



Oriental Hotel Kyoto Rokujo

★ ★ ★

📍 600-8333 Kyoto, Kyoto, Shimogyo-ku Bokumikanabutsucho 118, Japan.

Hotel Oriental Kyoto Rokujo was opened in November 2019 with the concept of “Exploring the Essential Value of Japan” in mind. The essence of which centers on the hospitality of the tea ceremony, to create a relaxing and healing space to welcome guests along the path and into an amazing tea garden.



Citadines Karasuma-Gojo Kyoto

★ ★ ★

📍 432 Matsuyacho, Shimogyo Ward, Kyoto, 600-8105, Japan.

Citadines Karasuma-Gojo Kyoto is a one minute walk from Gojo subway station, which is one stop from Kyoto station for Shinkansen. It is easily accessible to the vast number of world heritage sites, shrines, temples, palaces and cultural facilities that makes Kyoto the cultural center of Japan.



Citadines Namba Osaka

★ ★ ★ ★

📍 3 Chome-5-25 Nipponbashi, Naniwa Ward, Osaka, 556-0005, Japan.

Citadines Namba Osaka is located ten minutes walking distance from Namba Station, one of the major terminal stations in Osaka. The building, built in 1928, is registered as a national tangible cultural property, with a luxurious Art Deco style that retains the flavor of the Showa era.

Other Regions



Northern Honshu

Rural Tohoku – Northern Honshu – might be where Japan’s culture is at its most traditional. Often overlooked, the region is blessed with scenic mountains and vibrant landscapes.

From the dazzling spring cherry blossoms in Kakunodate to the bright blue colour of Lake Towado in summer. From the warm orange and red hues that envelope the forest of Naruko Gorge in autumn to the white icy ‘snow monsters’ dotting the skiing slopes of Zao onsen - Toboku is enchanting in every season.



Shikoku

The smallest of Japan’s main islands, Shikoku rarely makes it to the top of most travellers’ lists. However, those who make it to the little-visited island are rewarded with rich spiritual heritage and unspoilt nature. Ancient Shinto shrines, historic castles, and one of the oldest onsens in the country are equally as impressive as the dramatic scenery of the Iya Valley’s forest-covered mountains and extraordinary vine bridges, deep at the heart of the island.



Kyushu & Okinawa Islands

From the world's largest caldera to ancient cedar forests and a myriad of hot springs, natural beauty reaches extreme levels on Japan's southwest island, Kyushu. Topping off this wealth of natural treasures are a series of picturesque towns, including charming Nagasaki, rustic Kurokawa and lovely Yufuin. Further southwest lies Okinawa and a cluster of subtropical isles. Home to some of Asia's best beaches, the Okinawan archipelago is characterised by its unique, laid-back 'Ryukyuan' culture.



Hokkaido

Skiing on the snow-covered slopes of active volcanoes, bathing in steaming wild hot springs and hiking through national parks covered with pristine forest and blankets of flowers, Hokkaido is an outdoor lover's dream. With only one fifth of Japan's population, the archipelago's second largest island attracts adventurers with its vast landscapes and abundant wildlife. However, Hokkaido is much more than its great outdoors with amazing food, cool, dynamic cities and a distinct culture and history.



Unique Educational Opportunities

We ensure our innovative range of themed programs and educational tours for adults and students make a positive impact and provide opportunities for inspiration, exploration and learning.



Musical Journeys

Music is a unique form of communication, connecting people across the world, across cultures and across languages. Our variety of workshops and programs are designed for educational groups to learn about Japan's musical culture, opening new opportunities of expression and technique. We offer a platform to exchange with local musicians and perform in venues across the country.



Cultural Immersion

From gaining a different perspective to finding new inspiration and adapting to other environments – experiencing a different culture can lead to all kinds of learning opportunities. In Japan, Discova offers numerous activities for travellers to immerse in the local culture, whether that be a mochi rice cake workshop in the Japanese countryside; a guided meditation at a Buddhist temple; or a traditional silk dying experience with a local artisan.

Adventure Seeker

There are mountains to conquer, coastlines to drive, and mystical forests awaiting the courageous.



Most of Japan is made up of mountains, and many of its peaks are active or inactive volcanoes. **Mountain climbing** is a favourite adventure activity for travellers and locals alike, with iconic Mount Fuji topping the bucket list of many avid climbers and easier alternatives scattered abundantly throughout the archipelago.



Being a collection of over 6,000 islands, the coasts of Japan are perfect for **snorkelling and diving**. The brave and hardy can try ice diving in the chilly north, but everyone else heads to the temperate Okinawa and Ogasawara Islands, populated by brightly coloured coral reefs and marine animals.



Japan is unfairly characterised by urban density when so much of the country is dense with nature, and **trekking** is the best way to explore it. Options range in accessibility from the 1000-year-old Kumano Kodo pilgrimage trail through the shrines and ancient nature of the misty Kii mountains to hiking routes reachable by Tokyo trains.

Culture Enthusiast

After thousands of years of evolution in isolation, Japanese culture is an entirely unique world of its own.



Geisha culture is mysterious and idealised, these iconic artists and entertainers are famous for talent, makeup and kimonos. **Witness the world of a Geisha** in real life by attending a dance performance, sipping tea with a Maiko (a geisha apprentice) in Kyoto, or getting fitted and styled for a kimono in Tokyo.



Kyoto is the cultural capital of Japan, where many of the country's ancient and still-practiced traditions once originated. Tatami mats and zen gardens, tea ceremonies and temple chants, geishas and gastronomic perfection, bath houses and the country's best artisans – “old Japan” still lives here, exuberantly.



Tiny **Miyajima Island** carries great responsibility: this is the “Island of God”, the land itself believed to be God embodied on earth. Miyajima is home to several unusual temples and landmarks built in harmony with the sanctified land, including a torii gate that “floats” on the water in high tide.

Nature and Wildlife Lover

Japan is a 6,852-island archipelago, more than 70% of which is covered by mountains and untouched wilderness begging for exploration.



A veritable paradise for nature lovers, **Hokkaido** offers it all — snow-covered volcanoes tumble down into geothermal hot springs, wildlife capers through healthy forest parks, and perfumed wild lavender flowers blanket the park surrounding the Shirogane Blue Pond, aptly named for its vibrant cerulean hue.



Being a mountainous country, **tumbling waterfalls** cascade bountifully down from its many peaks. Nachi Falls are the most famous of these, the highest single drop stream in the country at 133 metres. A Shinto deity shrine sits near the deluge, both powerful and peaceful in its proximity to natural magnificence.



There are few things that typify Japan like **cherry blossom trees**. There's even a word for the practice of enjoying their blooms — “hanami”. Enjoy hanami at Lake Kawaguchiko for a view of majestic Mount Fuji towering over the resplendent pink blossoms, or in the city at Kyoto Botanical Gardens or Tokyo's Yoyogi Park.

Curious Learner

Samurais and geishas, castles and temples and tragedies – every fascinating facet of Japan opens a new window to its history and culture.



There's more tranquillity than tragedy in Hiroshima today, and the site of the world's first nuclear attack is an important visit. **Peace Memorial Park** is a place of reverence, commemoration, and education, with monuments, memorials, and museums to teach visitors about the bombing and the history of the city before and after war.



Study the secrets of immortality – or longevity – in **Okinawa**, one of the world's five “blue zones” where people live longer than anyone else in the world. Learn about the Okinawan lifestyle to understand how a strong sense of life purpose, or *ikigai*, may do more for health than diet and exercise alone.



Osaka was the country's first capital, built as a castle town for feudal lords and their samurai attendants. The legacy of **feudal Japan** can be found here, written into the rings of walls and moats surrounding Osaka Castle, preserved in interactive museums, and rebuilt into streets that replicate 17th century Osaka.

Socialiser

Socialising in Japan is one-part traditional ritual and custom, and one-part eclectic counterculture.



Explore Tokyo's underground culture in **Shibuya**. At the very center of the megalopolis, Shibuya may attract tourists during day time.

But once the sun has set, Tokyo's youth and its mosaic of subcultures that gathers in this huge entertainment districts filled with sake bars, clubs, karaokes of all sorts.



Photo by (Hidamari no Yu)

Get naked with strangers at an **Onsen**!

There's no need to be shy – it is a quintessential Japanese custom to come to a communal hotspring bath to unwind in hot water.

Traditional inns (Ryokan) are a perfect place to enjoy this centuries old practice, and entire towns are built around hot springs, offering dozens of Onsen options.



The best way to experience authentic Japanese nightlife is at an **izakaya**, a pub-cum-restaurant where people come to casually converse over sake, beer, and an assortment of appetiser-sized dishes. Izakaya are bountiful in Tokyo and each establishment comes with its own culinary specialties, rules, and atmosphere.

Offices

Tokyo

7th Floor Daiwa Kanda Mikura-cho Building
7-1 Kanda Mikura-cho, Chiyoda-Ku, Tokyo
Japan 101-0038
TEL: +81 3 5357 7146
FAX: +81 3 5357 7147

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www.discova.com