

The Golden Gateway: Aboard Japan's Magnificent and Diverse Trains

[Railway travel](#) is increasingly being rediscovered as a sustainable way to sightsee in style and comfort. Worldwide, rail journeys emit up to 70% less greenhouse gasses per passenger per kilometer compared to travel by airplane, cruise ship or car.

Japan's famously punctual, high-tech, bullet-fast trains are a national source of pride and fascination, beginning with the very first Shimbashi-Yokohama line launched in 1872. Japanese railways have since developed into an extensive and efficient network covering the archipelago. Beyond a mere means of transport, luxury trains and sightseeing trains offer many other original ways to enjoy the journey. Here are some noteworthy lines to give you a taste of riding the rails through lesser-known regions of Japan.

TRAIN SUITE SHIKI-SHIMA - Natural wonders and gourmet luxury



©JR-EAST

Embark on the ultimate Japanese adventure aboard the [TRAIN SUITE SHIKI-SHIMA](#), a luxury train that travels through the natural landscapes of Eastern Japan. Dedicated and ever-evolving sightseeing journeys from two to four days in duration depart from Tokyo's bustling Ueno station and reach out to the Pacific coastlines, home to ancient shrines, historical buildings, contemporary art galleries and regional handicrafts.

Although the journeys highlight some of Japan's most breathtaking natural sceneries in their seasonal glory, riding the SHIKI-SHIMA is an experience in itself. Making full use of the region's traditional wood, metal, and textiles handicrafts, the interiors of the train cradle the riders in luxury. Dine using cutlery made by artisans from Niigata or feel the soft comfort of moss-colored Yamagata Dantsu rugs beneath your feet, to name just a couple of the luxurious details you'll find aboard the train.

Most of your gourmet meals are served on board the train, where local chefs create seasonal dishes using seasonal ingredients from the various regions along the route. Even the tableware is tailored by region; venture up to [Iwate](#) prefecture, and awake to a traditional breakfast served in dishware made with local Johoji lacquer and Kokuji-yaki ceramics. The SHIKI-SHIMA is a perfect experience for those seeking views of the best seasonal scenery while experiencing Japan uniquely with every journey.



©JR-EAST

SHIKOKU MANNAKA SENNEN MONOGATARI - Original outings to extraordinary sites



Photo by Shikoku Railway Company

Discover the hidden charms and rich history of Shikoku's [Tokushima](#) and [Kagawa](#) prefectures aboard the [SHIKOKU MANNAKA SENNEN MONOGATARI](#). This friendly sightseeing train guides you through adventures to some of Japan's most naturally secluded and historically relevant destinations, conjuring the excitement of a childhood trip, yet tailored for adults.

The train's interior design is based on an old Japanese-style house, with color motifs

representing the four seasons, which you can enjoy in real life outside the train's huge windows as the train passes through rice paddies, over clear rivers, and through steep valleys. Onboard meals are specially prepared using ingredients from Tokushima and Kagawa prefecture as both Western and local Shikoku styles of cuisines.

The train stops at five of the island's unique attractions where riders can disembark to explore the area. Among them is [Oboke Gorge](#), where the emerald colored Yoshino River cuts through the rugged mountains of Tokushima Prefecture. The area is famous for outdoor adventurers who brave the world-class whitewater rapids as well as those who prefer a more idyllic journey on a sightseeing boat cruise. Although breathtaking year round, Oboke Gorge is particularly gorgeous during autumn when the vivid fall foliage creates a perfect contrast with the green-blue water of the river.

Meet Pikachu on the POKÉMON with YOU Train

The [POKÉMON with YOU Train](#) is for you if you love anime or are traveling with children! Originally conceived as a project to aid in the regional recovery efforts from the Great East Japan Earthquake, the train runs from Ichinoseki ([Iwate](#)) through to Kesenuma ([Miyagi](#)) and is designed to showcase the various natural locations that are scattered along the train line. But the Pokémon-themed journey is much like an amusement park ride on rails in the great outdoors, where nature lovers will also find their thrills.



©2023 Pokémon. ©1995-2023 Nintendo/Creatures Inc. /GAME FREAK inc.



©2023 Pokémon. ©1995-2023 Nintendo/Creatures Inc.
/GAME FREAK inc.

The train itself is unlike anything you've ever seen before, with Pokachus waiting around every corner. Reserve your place to sit with Pikachu in the car up front, or take a step back to the Playroom Car where kids can try their hand at being the conductor in the driver's cab or engine room. The Playroom Car features a reclining Pikachu and loads of other gadgets to keep the little ones entertained on the journey.

Passengers receive a Souvenir Notebook, as well as a Commemorative Boarding pass, where you can collect stamps from stations along the journey and create the ultimate memento of your trip. Collect enough stamps and you'll even receive a paper model of the new POKÉMON with YOU Train!

Japan Tourism Topics

1. "TIAD, Autograph Collection" Hotel to Open in Sakae, Nagoya

Nagoya is the latest addition to the TIAD Autograph Collection, bringing a new and unique 150-room property to Japan on July 1st. Nestled in the lush green of Hisaya-odori Park, it blends traditional Japanese aesthetics with modern sophistication, including 13 suites and 2 unique Japanese-style rooms complete with tatami mats. Also, you can enjoy variety of dining. For those looking to stay active during their stay, the hotel also features an 18.5-meter indoor swimming pool and a 99-square-meter fitness center.



[TIAD, Autograph Collection](#)

2. Hakone Kowakien Hotel Reopening, in Kanagawa



On July 12th, the Hakone Kowakien Hotel, established in 1959, will reopen its doors for the first time since January 2018 after an extensive renovation. As one of Hakone's favorite destinations for a ryokan getaway, many guests have waited patiently for this day to arrive. Boasting 150 guest rooms in both Western and Japanese stylings, there are rooms catered for everyone's tastes, no matter who you're traveling with.

It wouldn't be a trip to Hakone without many visits to the onsen hot springs, and Hakone Kowakien Hotel has some of the best options in-house.

[Hakone Kowakien Hotel](#)

3. Centara Grand Hotel Osaka to Open

On July 1st, Thailand's premier luxury hotel chain, Centara Hotels & Resorts, marks its maiden foray into Japan. This exciting new venture is located in Namba Parks South, a recently expanded section of the iconic Namba Parks area in Osaka.

The hotel offers 515 guest rooms for a truly luxurious stay. Guests can unwind at the rooftop bar located on the topmost floor, offering a breathtaking night view of Osaka city that promises to be an unforgettable experience. Also, the hotel features an exclusive club lounge for guests staying on club floors to enjoy light meals and snacks, and a Thai treatment spa, providing an oasis of tranquility amid the city's buzz.



This new Centara establishment symbolizes the fusion of Thai hospitality and Japanese culture, offering a unique and luxurious experience for its guests in the heart of Osaka.

[Centara Grand Hotel Osaka](#)

4. OMO3 Asakusa by Hoshino Resorts to Open

Exciting times are ahead for travelers to Asakusa, as a brand new city hotel perfectly located for convenience and exploration opens on July 31st. Nestled just a four-minute walk from Asakusa Station and a mere stone's throw - a one-minute walk from the Sensoji Temple, the hotel has great accessibility.

From numerous vantage points within the hotel, guests can revel in the stunning views of the renowned Sensoji Temple and the towering Tokyo Skytree, adding an element of iconic Tokyo scenery to their stay.

Adding to the appeal, the hotel offers an authentic Japanese experience with its concept rooms, such as the Yagura Rooms and Yose Twin Rooms. These specially-themed rooms showcase a fascinating blend of traditional aesthetics and modern comfort, inviting guests to immerse themselves in a unique cultural experience during their visit to Asakusa.

[OMO3 Asakusa by Hoshino Resorts](#)



Photo credits to Hoshino Resorts

5. Bulgari Hotel Tokyo, Attracting Luxury Travelers

Bulgari Hotel Tokyo is the eighth gem in the coveted Bulgari Hotels & Resorts collection, bringing Bulgari's contemporary Italian style and glamor to Japan's capital. The hotel, which opened a few months ago to great popularity, is situated in the heart of Tokyo and spans floors 40 through 45 of the Tokyo Midtown Yaesu, the centerpiece of the Yaesu Central Tower.

Guests can choose from 98 luxurious rooms and suites, furnished with luxury Italian brands like Maxalto, Flexform and B&B Italia. The hotel has an Italian dining room, Il Ristorante Nico Romito, supervised by a Michelin three-star chef, and SUSHI HŌSEKI, supervised by another Michelin three-star sushi chef, Kenji Gyoten.

In addition to the best view in town, the hotel's central location allows easy walking access to some of the city's top attractions including the Imperial Palace and the lively shopping districts of Nihombashi and Ginza. The hotel is also across the street from the iconic red brick Tokyo Station, meaning the rest of Japan including Haneda and Narita airports are just a short train ride away.

[Bulgari Hotel Tokyo](#)

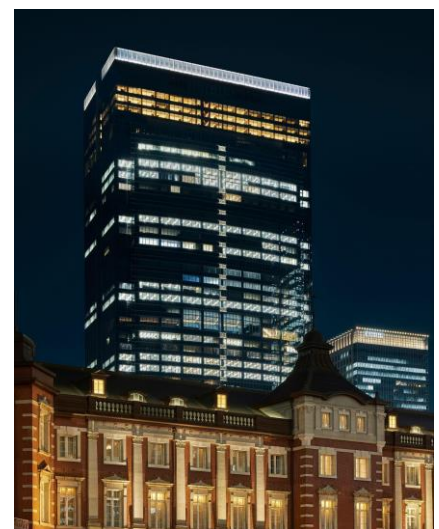


Photo by Bulgari Hotels & Resorts

Newsletter
June 2023



Notes:

- *The above details are correct as of the time of publication, and are subject to change.*

If you'd like to download photos and videos of Japan's tourist attractions, please visit the [Japan Online Media Center \(JOMC\)](#)

For media inquiries, including requests to use photographs, please contact the JNTO Press office at media_inquiry@jnto.go.jp