

Japan Tourism Topics

1. Newly Opened-*Princess Mononoke*-themed Area in Ghibli Park, Aichi

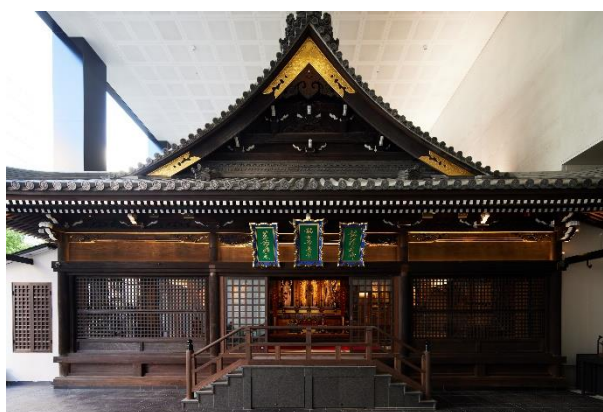


© Studio Ghibli

Located in Nagakute, Aichi, Ghibli Park offers a journey into the world of Studio Ghibli and has already attracted many customers. Recently it added a new area. Anime fans worldwide rejoice as about 25 years after the film's release, Mononoke Village is set on November 1st, 2023. This area features a hands-on learning center, "Tatara-ba", where you can grill local traditional Gohei-Mochi rice cakes for an additional fee. Visitors can also explore captivating attractions like the Demon Spirit structure and the Lord Okkoto slide, the latter of which is for children of 12 and under. By a short trip from Nagoya, the Mononoke Village and Ghibli Park promises a family adventure brimming with wholesome fun in a relaxing natural setting. Advanced reservations are required.

[Ghibli Park Mononoke Village](#)

2. The Hotel Integrated with Temple - Candeo Hotels Osaka Shinsaibashi opens on November 26



Candeo Hotels Osaka Shinsaibashi is a four-star hotel scheduled to open on November 26th. The hotel was built around the main hall of Shippozan Daifukuin Mitsutera Temple, which has a history of over 1,200 years. Its integration allows guests to fully immerse themselves in Osaka's history. Special accommodation packages that include activities focused on the temple create a unique experience while staying in Osaka. The "Mitsutera Main Hall Morning Service Experience

Plan” allows guests to participate in morning rituals like a real monk, and the “Sutra Writing Experience Plan” allows guests to learn even more about Buddhist teachings and Japanese culture through writing and meditation. Its convenient location near all the action in Namba, one of the busiest districts in Osaka, makes this hotel an excellent base for travelers coming to the city for business and/or adventure. The hotel aims to be an international community space that not only provides hospitality to visitors, but also welcomes local people and fosters an exchange of cultures and lasting impressions. Facing the main street Midosuji, the view of the sprawling city is also an attractive reason to choose Candeo Hotels Osaka Shinsaibashi.

[CANDEO HOTELS](#)

3. Capture the Onsen Essence at Kamenoi Hotel Kusatsu Yubatake, Gunma, November 15



Kusatsu Onsen is a natural Japanese hot spring in Gunma Prefecture that has soothed the aching bodies of famous historical figures in Japan for centuries, from the Kamakura period (1185-1333), according to historians. It boasts six distinct sources, three of which flow directly to Kamenoi Hotel’s baths. Providing nourishing health benefits, each free-flowing source offers unique spring water. About 2.5 hours by train and bus from Tokyo, Kusatsu Onsen beckons hot spring enthusiasts from around the country and the world. The grand opening of Kamenoi Hotel Kusatsu Yubatake, scheduled for November 15th, 2023, is bound to encourage visitors to experience the revitalizing springs that have enchanted and purified countless bathers. Visitors can also stroll by the famous Yubatake (hot spring fields) in the center of the town and explore the various surrounding bathhouses in the town while wearing a comfortable Japanese Yukata.

[Kamenoi Hotel Kusatsu Yubatake](#)

4. Ring in the holidays at Huis Ten Bosch: Christmas in the City of Lights, until January 8, 2024, Nagasaki



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Huis Ten Bosch is one of Japan's largest theme parks and meticulously recreates Dutch Golden Age architecture with its buildings and cobblestone streets. Nicknamed "Flower City" for gardens with a million tulips and roses, it transforms into the "City of Lights" at night, becoming far and the way one of the world's largest illuminated attractions. Until January 8th, 2024, Huis Ten Bosch will hold "Christmas in the City of Lights," featuring "The Melody of Christmas" by the echoing voices of the authentic New York gospel, "Canal Ice Skating" in the European-style cityscape beginning from December 1st, 2023, and authentic European gourmet delights and goods at "Christmas Town" where a 12-meter-high tree at Japan's first three-story carousel, Sky Carousel, can be found. During that time, the entire city dazzles, then conclude with a spectacular Christmas firework display which colors the sky on December 16th and 23rd through 25th to solidify the memories in your mind and heart. Christmas Town Huis Ten Bosch offers luxurious hotel accommodations that make for a dazzling overnight stay at a resort surrounded by the glowing European-style cityscape.

[Huis Ten Bosch Christmas in the City of Lights](#)

5. Exploring Kyoto's Cultural Heritage with These Exclusive Tours by Nishijin TABI



©ongakumura

Nishijin TABI offers a chance to embark on an exclusive cultural journey in Kyoto, opening doors that are typically closed to first-time customers. Two courses are offered, and both include tea house activities such as etiquette lessons at establishments in the historic Geisha district

(Hanamachi) of Kamishichiken. Visitors participating in Course A can enjoy easy-to-follow dance instructions led by the prestigious master who is teaching skilled actors of Kabuki. These places within Kyoto's oldest Geisha district are typically out-of-reach to the usual traveler, revealing a world of authentic Kyoto culture that is rarely experienced by the public. Course B focuses on arts like Japanese calligraphy using gold leaf with world-renowned artist Rakusho Hiroto. At the end of the courses, participants can find the sophisticated Kyoto culture deeply etched in their heart.

[Nishijin TABI](#)

6. Celebrate Japan's Unique Landscapes with Climbing Events at the Setouchi Gala, Okayama



©Teppei Kobayashi

The Setonaikai National Park was among one of the first in the country to be designated as an official national park and celebrates the 90th anniversary of its opening next year. Until January 28th, 2024, the Setouchi Gala, held at Shibukawa Coast and Mt. Ojigatake which is the origin of bouldering in Japan, showcases the region's best offerings, including incredible views, local food, and fun activities that integrate the mountains and the sea. It excitedly presents climbing events in this scenic region. Even beginners can safely try bouldering on the uniquely shaped rocks over mats with the help of expert guides. Climbing shoes are available to rent at the climbing events. They also hold a one-off two-day tour "Special Experience in Setonaikai National Park" which includes a climbing experience at Mt. Ojigatake, live music, lunch, dinner and an overnight stay at luxurious accommodations.

[SETOUCHI GALA](#)

7. Enjoy the Refined Taste of Fugu Cuisine at Shimonoseki, Yamaguchi



©The Inland Sea, SETOUCHI Tourism Authority

Fugu (pufferfish) requires great skill to prepare and is a rare dish around the world. It was not allowed to be served until 1888 when the first ban was lifted in Yamaguchi Prefecture. Since then, Shimonoseki's exceptional reputation for delicious Fugu and Fugu-derived products has grown exponentially. Adorable pufferfish iconography can be found all over the city, including on decorative manhole covers, as a symbol of Shimonoseki's pride in this legacy. Chefs in Shimonoseki undergo rigorous training and follow strict guidelines to safely handle these fish, removing their poisons while preserving the delicious meat. Dishes are prepared in various ways, such as flower-arranged Sashimi (raw fish), Fuguchiri (hot pot), deep-fried, and even in pasta. With access to the calm, nutrient-rich Seto Inland Sea, Shimonoseki is blessed with plenty of pufferfish, winter being the best season for pufferfish and offering a wide selection of Fugu dishes.

[Pufferfish: Shimonoseki's Artistic Culinary Highlight](#)

8. Discover Hida's Timeless Sake Heritage with Sake Brewery Tour in Takayama, Gifu



Takayama's longstanding reputation as the home of exceptional Sake breweries in the Hida region continues to this day, and a rich culture surrounding Sake in this old mountain town can still be felt. Visitors can see the Sugidama (a ball made of cedar leaves) under the eaves of Sake breweries, which announces new Sake has been produced when it's newly hung and in fresh green color. Around 330 years ago, the city hosted as many as 56 breweries that capitalized on the region's abundance of fresh water and cold climate. Currently, seven breweries remain in this area famous for its old, traditional streets densely packed within 200 meters of each other and continue the region's 300-plus-year Sake legacy. Of the seven, Hirase Sake Brewery is the

oldest and Happy Plus Corporation offers tours of the premises. On the tours which includes Sake tasting, of course you can learn about the complex brewing process and feel the historic atmosphere from the traditional architecture. Private tours are available upon request.

[Sake Brewery Tour in Takayama](#)

9. Tailor-made Tours to Enhance Your Japan Adventure, Ehime



Ozu, a picturesque castle town on Shikoku Island, is teeming with natural scenery surrounding the ever-breezy Seto Inland Sea. The city's serene countryside with the Hiji River winding through lush landscapes provides a tranquil escape where visitors can choose their own adventure according to their interests and needs. Steeped in tradition, Ozu's well-preserved streets, merchant residences, and historic landmarks — like Garyu-Sanso Villa — offer visitors a glimpse into the area's past, while the enchanting natural landscape appeals to outdoor enthusiasts seeking adventure. The tailor-made tours with private guides offered in Ozu utilize environmentally friendly means of transportation to preserve the quiet, natural paradise and cover a variety of scenic landscapes, architecture, and cultural experiences, including meditation sessions, traditional craft workshops, and private early-morning tea ceremonies at Garyu-Sanso Villa, a National Important Cultural Property. Ozu Castle has also been designated as a National Important Cultural Property, and visitors wanting a particularly unique experience can reserve an overnight stay at the historic castle and enjoy local cuisine. Comfortable accommodation within the NIPPONIA Hotel Ozu Castle Town (occupying renovated centennial houses) is also available, fitting a variety of budgets.

[VISIT OZU](#)

10. Weaving Tradition and Taste with the Matsusaka Beef Sukiyaki Workshop, Mie



Matsusaka, is a charming castle town known for its mouthwateringly delicious beef and trademark indigo cotton fabric. It is close to Ise Jingu, one of the most prestigious Shinto Shrine. Matsusaka beef has earned its place as one of Japan's most famous beef brands for its superb texture and marbling. At this workshop organized by a long-established Kimono shop "Utsukushiya Higashimura Kimono shop" that has been in operation since 1924, visitors can enjoy shopping for Matsusaka beef and learn the method for cooking "Matsusaka-style" Sukiyaki, a popular sweet and salty Japanese hot pot dish with thinly sliced beef. For further immersion in the local culture, participants can wear traditional Japanese clothes made of Matsusaka-Momen cotton featuring characteristic striped patterns made from Matsusaka's iconic indigo-dyed cotton during the workshop and while walking around the town. The distinctive color comes from natural indigo dye that can create a variety of subtle shades.

[Sukiyaki workshop](#)

Notes:

- *Items 7, 8, 9, 10 are based on information from JNTO Partners.*
- *The above details are correct as of the time of publication, and are subject to change.*

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