

Japan Tourism Topics

1. A Unique Adventure in a World of Ice at Hoshino Resorts TOMAMU's Ice Village, Hokkaido



©Hoshino Resorts TOMAMU

Among the stunning nature of Hokkaido, Hoshino Resorts TOMAMU offers a wide range of winter activities, like skiing, snowboarding, and much more to celebrate the season. Ice Village will continue until March 14th, 2024, depending on the weather. It provides a fantastical wonderland made of ice featuring 11 domes among the snow. Try frozen-ice cocktails at the Ice Bar, which itself is carved out of shimmering ice. For a romantic stroll, visit the Ice Church featuring an altar, a cross and benches made from pristine, gently illuminated ice. Visitors can even watch a movie projected on an ice screen. Offering a place where visitors can truly chill, there's the Ice Hotel. Although the space within the dome is carved from ice, sleeping bags are available, allowing for a cozy overnight stay. The dome's ceiling, walls and furniture are all made of ice, and it features an open-air bath for maximum refreshment. Visitors can enjoy Hokkaido's seafood chowder soup and Farm Hoshino's Tomamu milk during their stay, along with an ice mini bar. A special dish, "Ice Ramen," is also available, and is sure to leave a lasting impression that will have people talking.

[ICE VILLAGE](#)

2. Indulge in a Luxury Ryokan Surrounded by Nature at Atami Izusan KARAKU, Shizuoka



©Atami Izusan KARAKU

Perched on a hillside in Atami with breathtaking views of Sagami Bay, Atami Izusan KARAKU welcomes guests to appreciate the surrounding scenery in an open, luxurious environment. The hotel gives back to the environment by focusing on decarbonization, eco-friendliness, and coexistence with local communities, such as featuring charging stations for electric vehicles. The 8th floor is accessible via a private elevator and features expansive ocean views through glass walls. Guests can fully enjoy the hot springs alongside the magnificent ocean vistas from the open-air baths on the 7th floor, and also taste traditional Kaiseki style Japanese cuisine using seasonal ingredients that cater to all five senses at the restaurant. Each room is also equipped with its own open-air bath. With its convenient location, visitors can reach Atami by a quick, scenic, 45-minute train ride from Tokyo by Shinkansen (bullet train), which has long made it an easily accessible destination for both locals and tourists seeking a relaxing retreat by the sea in a comfortable and safe environment.

[Atami Izusan KARAKU](#)

3. Kansai International Airport Transforms Travel with Renovations, Osaka



©Kansai Airports

For the first time since opening in 1994, Kansai International Airport is undergoing a large-scale renovation to expand the international terminal capacity, enhance the airside area and improve the overall passenger experience. The revamped international area will feature a walk-through duty-free shopping area, a central plaza and four distinct mood areas — Peaceful, Curious, Active and Fun. In total, there will be 27 establishments, including restaurants, shops, and other facilities, all with unique atmospheres. Reservations for no-wait-shopping can be made by using KIX DUTY FREE Online store, so customers can pick up their items easily without worrying about time. By centralizing passport control, travelers will benefit from a smoother departure process that allows more time to enjoy shopping and relaxing before the journey ahead.

[Kansai International Airport](#)

4. Start the Year Off Right with the Ao-uma Purification Ritual at Sumiyoshi Taisha, Osaka, January 7



©Sumiyoshitaisha

The Ao-uma Shinji (White Horse Rite) is a unique Shinto ritual passed down through the generations at Sumiyoshi Taisha, where the sacred white horse Shirayuki is led to each of the four main shrines that house the deities of Sumiyoshi Taisha and performs a ritual gallop. Usually, Shirayuki is stabled off site, so the ritual offers a rare opportunity to see the traditionally sacred animal; some believe that witnessing the white horse at the beginning of the year purifies any negative energy. Sumiyoshi Taisha has kept white horses since its founding by the legendary third-century empress-regent Jingu. On the day of the Ao-uma Shinji, visitors can purchase limited-edition seal stamps (Goshuin) and protective talismans (Takekoma-mamori). This sacred ritual is scheduled to take place on January 7th.

[Sumiyoshi Taisha](#)

5. Bunjin Lifestyle Experience: Learn the Art of Bonsai and Tea Ceremonies, Nagoya



Enter the sophisticated world of Bunjin, the literati of the late-Edo period (1868-1912), in Nagoya. Their lifestyle cultivated elegant, traditional Japanese arts revolving around literature, calligraphy, Bonsai trees and tea ceremonies. Participants of this two or three-day journey of cultural enlightenment can follow in the footsteps of these masters through a series of experiences focused on the art of the literati Bonsai style (Bunjingi) and Sencha tea. Memorable workshops allow visitors to test their knowledge by working on their own Bonsai tree. The Sencha tea ceremony on the first day takes place at Jogenji, a pristine Buddhist temple, and visitors are guided by a master. The following day dives deep into the world of Bonsai with a walkthrough of an astonishing Bonsai garden followed by even more exclusive tours of prized Bonsai collections, led by their enthusiasts. The optional third day explores Tokoname, known for its superb pottery, Tokoname-yaki.

[Bonsai & Sencha Tea Experience](#)

6. Meet Adorable Cat Statues Along Manekineko-dori in Tokoname, Aichi



©Tokoname Tourism Association

Tokoname Manekineko-dori in Aichi Prefecture is a popular sightseeing spot that has captured the hearts of locals and tourists alike. The Maneki-neko, often referred to as “the beckoning cat” or “the lucky cat,” appears at many storefronts across Japan – inviting guests and portending good fortune with its paw in the air – and Tokoname is one of the most prominent producers of the iconic figure. Along the street, 39 Maneki-neko figures and the massive Tokonyan guardian Maneki-neko charm visitors as they walk from Meitetsu Tokoname Station. Since the Heian period (794-1185), this charming old town has been known for its excellent pottery production, leading many people to visit the famous Tokoname-yaki on display. Visitors can enjoy finding their favorite souvenir at the ceramics museum and take it home with them. Tokoname is about 45 minutes away from Nagoya.

[Tokoname Manekineko-dori](#)

7. The Ultimate Winter Getaway for Outdoor Enthusiasts in Geto Kogen, Iwate



Iwate Prefecture’s Geto Kogen is known for having some of the best snow in winter as the slopes of Mt. Washigamori and Mt. Usagimori open up to eager snowboarders and skiers with some of the high-quality snow in Japan. The area offers a wide range of activities for experts, beginners, and families to enjoy the snow, including a tree run, snowshoe expeditions, snow rafting and snowmobile tours that explore the backcountry. Overlooking the scenic winter landscape, the

accommodation facility “Premium Stay Gou”, which first opened for the 2019/2020 season, connects directly to the slopes, and features a shared kitchen and laundry area for long-term stays. Large windows in the elegant rooms allow breathtaking views of the mountains while relaxing cozily inside. Geto Kogen’s nearest station, JR Kitakami, is accessible by Shinkansen (bullet train).

[Geto Kogen](#)

8. Enjoy Spectacular Views of the Pacific Ocean and the Seasonal Landscape at TheMana Village, Kochi



©TheMana Village

Near Cape Ashizuri in the Ashizuri-Uwakai National Park, guests can enjoy a luxurious stay while being completely immersed in the stunning nature of Japan. TheMana Village is one of the largest resort areas in Shikoku, provides easy access to some of the region’s most gorgeous natural scenery and features rooms with kitchens and private open-air baths for mid to long-term stays. The newly opened TheMana Room comes with a panoramic view overlooking the Pacific Ocean for an unforgettable experience on the dramatic coast. In winter, the open-air baths provide warmth and relaxation by the sea as the sound of crashing waves against the cliffs fills sets the mood. At night, guests can gaze up at the dazzling night sky while soaking in the soothing waters. TheMana Village features a restaurant area that serves seasonal cuisine, and next spring, it is scheduled to open areas for an organic farm, marine leisure, a hotel, and residences for long-term stays.

[TheMana Village](#)

9. Discover the Rich History and Flavor of Yamamo Miso with a Factory Tour, Akita



Miso has been an important part of Japanese food for thousands of years, mainly used to flavor soup and even ramen noodles. Thanks to the clean, crystal-clear water provided by the legendary Minase River near Yamamo, this long-standing brewery has been producing delicious Miso with its iconic sweet and salty flavor since its founding in Akita Prefecture in 1867. Weathering the harsh winters and continuing production throughout WWII, its unique, powerful history is infused within the walls of this establishment while Yamamo continues to evolve by fusing the world's food culture with Japanese seasoning. Visitors will be surprised by Yamamo's miraculous yeast, Viamver[®], which is a rarity that can be applied to a variety of products and can even be used to brew wine. Using less salt, their light soy sauce is healthier than others and strikes a superior balance of flavors. The Yamamo factory tour showcases the building's dazzling architecture, factory store, an astonishing art gallery, traditional Miso and soy sauce factory, original Kura (warehouse), the restaurant and Senshitsu-en Garden. The tour also features a tasting event at the restaurant ASTRONOMICA[®], so visitors can touch their innovative mindset for seeking their own taste of Miso. The Dinner Course serves fresh dishes created with Viamver[®] – its original yeast discovered by the 7th owner.

[Yamamo Factory Tour](#)

10. Traditional Kagoshima Silk Weaving Experience: Authentic Oshima Tsumugi Factory Tour, Kagoshima



Renowned among Kimono connoisseurs for its outstanding quality and intricate weaving methods, Oshima Tsumugi stands as one of Japan's most opulent textiles. Oose Shoten in Kagoshima City allows visitors to feel authentic Oshima Tsumugi during the workshop tour. This experience provides a unique chance to interact with skilled artisans and learn about their craft. Experts explain the proper etiquette of wearing Kimono and the significance of motifs and patterns while dressing the guests. Wrapped in traditional wear, guests can visit exclusive local restaurants and indulge in Kagoshima cuisine reimagined with a contemporary flair before tasting tea in Kagoshima style in the serene ambience of a historic garden. This combination of cultural experiences creates unforgettable memories filled with elegance and respect for Japanese traditions.

[Oshima Tsumugi](#)

Notes:

- Items 6, 7, 8, 9 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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