

## Japan Tourism Topics

### 1. Unveiling Hokkaido's Newest Landmark: Hotel Sosei Sapporo MGallery, Opening its Doors in January 2024



©Hotel Sosei Sapporo MGallery

MGallery is one of the premium hotel brands of Accor, the world's leading hotel group. It is a distinctive collection of hotels where captivating stories unfold and are shared. Situated in the Sosei East area adjacent to the Sapporo Factory, a commercial complex located on the site of the former Sapporo Beer factory, Hotel Sapporo Sosei MGallery has undergone a rebranding from the 30-year legacy of Hotel Clubby Sapporo. The hotel aims to offer unique and unforgettable accommodation experiences to global visitors in an attractive area known for its array of cafes, restaurants housed in historical buildings, exciting art venues, and creative office spaces. With 118 guest rooms and suites, a restaurant, fitness gym, and bar lounge, the hotel aspires to become a landmark of Hokkaido providing memorable experiences and incorporating the region's natural beauty and frontier spirit. The all-day dining restaurant offers a diverse menu featuring the finest Hokkaido ingredients. Nestled on the east side of the Sosei River, close to Sapporo Odori Park, JR Tower, and Sapporo Clock Tower, the hotel is the perfect hub for both first-time and returning visitors to explore the city.

[Hotel Sosei Sapporo MGallery](#)

### 2. Luxury, Serenity, and Privacy at Hotel Sengokubara COCON in Hakone, open on February 2, Kanagawa



With only five luxurious suites, Hotel Sengokubara COCON focuses on giving guests the most relaxing, enriching, and exclusive experience among the lush nature of Hakone, famous for its hot springs and seasonal landscapes. Recently renovated, the tranquil hotel is set in a large Japanese garden, blending the natural environment with the modern accommodations, and allowing visitors to immerse themselves in the serene landscape of Hakone, less than two hours

from Tokyo. Rooms come with spectacular views of the forest and Mt. Fuji, which is especially glorious in winter as the air clears and reveals its snowcapped peak. Each of the unique suites includes a private sauna and a hot spring. The Sengokubara COCON restaurant embraces a “live” cooking style using wood-fired and charcoal grills. The hotel opens February 2nd, 2024.  
[Hotel Sengokubara COCON](#)

### 3. Live Like a Local in Ueno at the &Here TOKYO UENO Hotel, Opening on March 15 2024



Room type : Deluxe Family Bunk

Set to open its doors on March 15th, 2024, the &Here TOKYO UENO stands as a promising addition to Tokyo's hospitality landscape, near JR Ueno Station and offers long-term stays for visitors traveling in large groups. Ueno is renowned for its cultural marvels like the Tokyo National Museum, Ueno Zoo, and the lively Ameyoko Market. Split into two distinct areas, the hotel embraces Ueno's multifaceted charm. The 'Forest Site' presents serene natural vistas overlooking Ueno Park, while the 'Culture Site' captures the essence of tradition with established shops showcasing Edo period crafts. With a home-like atmosphere, large rooms featuring a mini-kitchen and other convenient lifestyle amenities can accommodate up to 6 people, making &Here TOKYO UENO the perfect choice for families and groups of friends.  
[&Here TOKYO UENO](#)

### 4. Wildlife Adventure on a Private Morning Safari Walk at Izu Animal Kingdom, Shizuoka



In Shizuoka, known for relaxing hot springs and magnificent views of Mt. Fuji, feel the wonder of nature's incredible diversity with a private early morning safari walk (available from 7:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.) where animals actively play and interact in an open environment. Before this specially designed tour, which is only available at the Izu Animal Kingdom, visitors can spend the night at the relaxing Animal Villa with accommodations next to a capybara enclosure. Guests can observe the adorable capybaras roaming and playing from large windows from their room and even interact with them. In the evening you can enjoy a barbecue dinner at the Animal Villa's barbecue space. The next day, following a beautiful sunrise breakfast alongside giraffes and zebras, embark on an exclusive tour filled with adventure that allows visitors to pet and hold a variety of friendly animals that can't be seen in daily life at a time when they are most active. Izu Animal Kingdom also offers the chance to feed giraffes and a white tiger!

[Izu Animal Kingdom](#)

## **5. Shining a Light on the Beauty of Winter at the Iiyama Restaurant Kamakura Village, Nagano**



Shinshu-Iiyama Tourism Bureau

The Iiyama Restaurant Kamakura Village is made of about 20 Kamakura (snow huts) and offers great family fun in winter. For a limited time from late January to late February, guests can feast on Japanese hot pot made with locally grown seasonal vegetables and mushrooms and Shinshu Miso from Nagano for a heartwarming meal. In the evening, the Kamakura huts are gently illuminated, creating a wonderful, dreamlike atmosphere that can only be experienced at that time of year. While people can visit the shrine nearby and village at any time for free, they need to make a reservation to dine in the Kamakura hut. You can also play with sled and anything more in snowfield!

[The Iiyama Restaurant Kamakura Village 2024](#)

## 6. Miracles of Winter: Witness Drift Ice from the Ryuhyo Monogatari Train, Hokkaido



©JR Hokkaido

During the harsh Hokkaido winter from January to March, the Sea of Okhotsk is blanketed with drift ice and JR Hokkaido's tourist train, the Ryuhyo Monogatari (“Drift Ice Story”), runs alongside this breathtaking natural phenomenon. Although witnessing the drift ice is subject to chance, passengers can enjoy the rare sight from the comfort of their seats. While it's possible to view the drift ice without taking a train, the specialized rail service slows down periodically or even stops briefly for photo opportunities, offering an exclusive, truly memorable experience. Connecting Abashiri Station in Hokkaido’s Abashiri City and Shiretoko-Shari Station in Hokkaido’s Shari District, the route spans 37.3 kilometers along the Senmo Main Line. The train stops for 10 minutes at Kitahama Station during the journey from Abashiri to Shiretoko-Shari, where passenger can appreciate the expansive views of the Sea of Okhotsk. Those on the charming, colorful train might be lucky enough to catch glimpses of majestic sea eagles, white-tailed eagles, red foxes, and other rare wildlife.

[Ryuhyo Monogatari Train](#)

## 7. Appreciate Traditional Crafts and Rejuvenating Hot Springs at Hyakkahyakusai, February, Kumamoto



The Yamaga Garden Lantern Roman Hyakkahyakusai is an annual festival held in Yamaga City, Kumamoto Prefecture, on Fridays and Saturdays in February. This festival is a tribute to the historic scenery of Yamaga Onsen, once a major producer of traditional Wagasa (Japanese umbrellas). Locals craft thousands of candle illuminated Wagasa and bamboo sculptures by hand to decorate the scenic streets around the city, including Buzen Kaido, an historical highway stretching from Kumamoto to Ueki and Yamaga. Visitors can enjoy the mesmerizing display while

indulging in the rejuvenating hot springs of Yamaga Onsen, renowned for its skin-nourishing waters. With landmarks like the restored Sakurayu in the hot-spring town, the festival offers a unique blend of cultural appreciation and relaxation in a picturesque winter setting.  
[Yamaga garden lantern roman, HYAKKAHYAKUSA!](#)

#### **8. Witness an Illuminated Thatched-Roof Village Blanketed by Snow at the Ouchijuku Snow Festival, February 10-11, Fukushima**



Copyright Shimogo Town

Ouchijuku's well-preserved thatched-roof buildings and streets offer visitors a glimpse into Japan's traditional architecture and lifestyle from centuries past. The Ouchijuku Snow Festival takes place annually on February 10th to 11th when the rustic town's landscape is blanketed in pristine snow. Residents adorn the streets with handcrafted lanterns lit one-by-one. As night falls, fireworks color the clear winter sky, creating a mesmerizing atmosphere among the snow-covered lanterns. Painting the town with a captivating charm, this colorful winter festival showcases the beauty of winter in Tohoku. Visitors can expect a spectacular experience in the Japanese countryside far from the commotion of the nation's bustling cities.

[Ouchijuku Snow Festival](#)  
[Schedule of the event](#)

#### **9. Enjoy a Tranquil Retreat at the Foot of Mt. Fuji at NIHON IRO, Shizuoka**



NIHON IRO in Shizuoka offers a taste of Japan against the backdrop of Mt. Fuji and a serene port town. Transformed from traditional Kominka houses and Koya huts where fishermen lived and stored their boats into cozy, private accommodations, these rustic rental houses invite guests to unwind in a spacious, tranquil setting fit for a modern-day lifestyle. The serenity of the

countryside provides a retreat from metropolitan bustle and a chance to savor peaceful moments, offering visitors the chance to see a side of Japan that travelers rarely take the time to explore. With access to the whole house, a variety of spaces are available, each one featuring a unique atmosphere while maintaining the feel of the original house's Japanese architecture. The kitchen is perfect for preparing meals and grilling locally caught fish. In the morning, a home-cooked breakfast is served. With its spacious rooms, the Kohaku house is perfect for families while Geppaku caters to couples looking for a relaxing, luxurious time together.

[NIHON IRO](#)

## **10. Blending Cultures to Ring in the New Year at the Nagasaki Lantern Festival, February 9-25, Nagasaki**



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The Nagasaki Lantern Festival, February 9th to 25th, a celebration initially derived from Chinatown's Lunar New Year (Shunsetsu) festivities, has expanded into a magnificent event since first illuminating Nagasaki in the winter of 1994. Embracing the tradition of decorating with Chinese lanterns, Nagasaki's Shinchin Chinatown, Hamamachi and arcade/shopping streets dazzle with vivid, multi-colored lantern displays. Visitors can enjoy over 15,000 lanterns and other large-scale decorations throughout Nagasaki, while exciting performances like traditional dances, the Emperor Parade and more add to the festive atmosphere. The festival's lantern colors vary depending on the area, painting the city in vibrant hues and showcasing a blend of Chinese and Japanese cultural elements.

[Nagasaki Lantern Festival](#)

## 11. Harmony of Tradition and Melody: Special Programs at Historical Tsukiji Hongwanji Temple, January, Tokyo



Tsukiji Hongwanji

Tsukiji Hongwanji Temple is a Buddhist temple situated near the famous Ginza district in central Tokyo. The temple offers two tour programs that provide captivating experiences, perfect for those interested in religious experiences. The Early Morning Buddhist Temple Experience allows travelers to wear traditional monk's working clothes and participate in a Buddhist ceremony. Visitors can also access the typically restricted Naijin-no-Yoma (inner temple), attend a traditional concert, and indulge in an 18-item breakfast from the renowned Tsumugi restaurant. The Premium Night Concert program showcases distinctive musical performances that include Sutra chanting and Gagaku (the music of the Japanese Imperial Court) by more than ten monks. Guests can also see their magnificent pipe organ, an amazing instrument located at the entrance of the main hall as a symbol of the temple. Reservations are required for both activities. Early Morning Buddhist Temple Experiences will be available only on January 22 and 30, and the Premium Night Concert will be held on January 31.

[Tsukiji Hongwanji](#)

### Notes:

- Item 9 is 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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