

2024 August Vol.1

News!

1. The Sado Island Gold Mines Have Been Designated as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site



On July 27, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee designated the Sado Island Gold Mines as a World Cultural Heritage Site, bringing the total number of World Cultural and Natural Heritage Sites in Japan to 26. The Sado Island Gold Mines are a collection of gold and silver mines, including Nishimikawa Placer Gold Mine and Aikawa Gold and Silver Mine, located on Sado Island in Niigata Prefecture. While other countries were incorporating more and more machines into their mining processes, the Sado Island Gold Mines continued to protect and utilize its advanced handiwork, and during the 17th century the island was one of the world's leading gold producers. The interiors of the mines appear as though they are unchanged from when the mines were still in use, and visitors can marvel at dolls and other exhibits that illustrate what the mines' working conditions were like. In addition to the mines, you can experience the unique Tarai-Bune boat ride, walk around the Shukunegi Village, see and learn about the endangered crested ibis (Toki), and more. There are many things to do and places to explore on Sado Island, so take your time to truly enjoy all that Sado Island has to offer.

[Sado Island Gold Mines](#)

Festival and Event

2. Appreciate Art and Nature at the Forest Festival of the Arts Okayama, September 28 – November 24, Okayama



©Courtesy of Rirkrit Tiravanija

The Forest Festival of the Arts Okayama: Clear-skies Country is an international art festival that will be held in 12 municipalities across northern Okayama Prefecture. As its name suggests, the festival highlights the bountiful forests of Okayama as well as other abundant natural resources, allowing visitors to enjoy an extraordinary experience while exploring the serene prefecture. The region is home to scenic natural views, traditional architecture and customs, and charming historic townscapes that invoke feelings of nostalgia. The festival will feature pieces by artists from across the world as well as events that intertwine with the environment, promoting engagement with the local community, raising questions about sustainability, and provoking thoughts and discussions regarding "what kind of capital do we truly need?"

[Forest Festival of the Arts Okayama: Clear-skies Country](#)

Festival and Event

3. Revel in the Energetic World of Hatsune Miku at Magical Mirai, August 30 – September 1 (Tokyo), October 12 – 14 (Osaka)



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Hatsune Miku is a singing voice synthesizer software that lets users create their own songs on a computer. The adorable blue-green haired virtual singer born from this software, Hatsune Miku, has become an iconic pop culture symbol in Japan and has gained many fans worldwide.

"Magical Mirai" is an event with a live 3DCG concert and exhibitions featuring Hatsune Miku and her fellow singing synthesizer software. Event visitors can learn about and relish the fun of creation through special exhibits and support creators, see artwork and collaborations, and meet other fans who share the same interests. The 2024 "Magical Mirai" event started in Fukuoka (Fukuoka Sun Palace Hall / Fukuoka International Congress Center), and it will also be held in Tokyo (Makuhari Messe) and Osaka (INTEX Osaka Hall), allowing fans from across the country to enjoy the world of Hatsune Miku along with other fans.

[Magical Mirai 2024](#)

Festival and Event

4. World-Class Dance Music at ULTRA JAPAN, September 14 – 15, Tokyo



ULTRA JAPAN is one of the largest urban dance music festivals in Japan, boasting a lineup of leading DJs from both Japan and abroad that attract dance music lovers from around the world. The impressive stage hosts spellbinding performances and releases clean, resounding beats, and the accompanying light effects will surely make you want to dance along to the music. Being surrounded by people engrossed by the music helps you lose yourself in the moment! This year, it will be held at Odaiba Ultra Park from September 14 to 15 (ages 18 and up only, prior ticket purchase required).

[ULTRA JAPAN](#)

Festival and Event

5. Get a Unique Insider's View of the Turrets of Osaka Castle, July - November, Osaka



©osaka castle park management

The majestic Osaka Castle is a symbol of Osaka and one of the most famous castles in Japan, and its "Yagura" (turrets) have been nationally designated as an Important Cultural Property. The Tamon-Yagura and Sengan-Yagura turrets will be open to the public for a limited time during weekends and holidays from September 14 to November 24, allowing a special look inside the striking towers that were imperative for the castle's defense. You can feel the history emanating from the walls as you walk through the structures' solemn hallways, and the imposing wooden beams and columns draw attention to the formidable architecture that was utilized to build these grand structures.

[Yagura Special Opening 2024](#)

Adventure Travel

6. Enjoy The Rich Nature, History, and Culture Exclusively in Aizu, Fukushima



©ADD AizuExtremeTours

The Aizu region in Fukushima Prefecture is a treasure trove of nature, history, and culture. During the autumn, the area's trees become vibrant shades of red, orange, and yellow with the colorful changing foliage, beautifully framing the numerous long-standing traditional buildings that illustrate the prefecture's deep Samurai history. With so many places to explore and things to do in Aizu, there is certainly something for everyone to enjoy, such as a tea ceremony at Oyakuen (a historical garden), forest bathing at Nakatsugawa Keikoku Valley, seasonal fruit picking, local cooking classes, and more. The link below leads to a selection of activities that showcases the wonders of Aizu in the fall, including visiting historical sites, traversing diverse terrain, savoring local cuisine, and soaking in rejuvenating hot springs. You can reach Aizu from Tokyo in approximately 3 hours. Aizu's unique experiences will make you feel as though you have traveled back in time and have a lot to explore.

[Aizu Extreme Tours](#)

Japan Heritage

7. View Intricate Traditional Wooden Carvings in Inami, Toyama



The Inami area in Toyama Prefecture is known for its stunning wood carving crafts, which have gotten it designated as a Japan Heritage Site. The craft dates back centuries, with roots in the reconstruction of Zuisenji Temple in the 18th century. Even now, the detailed carvings can be seen throughout the townscape, decorating temples, shrines, traditional residences, and more, and the area maintains a traditional Japanese air. As you walk through the streets, you may hear the rhythmical sounds of the artisans whittling away and smell the fragrances of camphor, Japanese zelkova, and Hinoki cypress trees floating through the air. The area takes great pride in its traditional craft, and artisans can still be seen creating new wood carvings and hosting workshops. Many breathtaking wood carving pieces can be seen on display in one place at the Inami Sculpture General Hall, where their sophisticated and complex details can be observed more closely.

[INAMI JAPAN HERITAGE](#)

Special Experience

8. Take in the Picturesque Countryside Scenery of Kyushu on the Kanpachi/Ichiroku Sightseeing Train



© KYUSHU RAILWAY COMPANY

In contrast to the vibrant city life of Hakata in Fukuoka Prefecture, Kyushu is also home to blissful natural sceneries. These countryside views can be enjoyed while riding the Kanpachi/Ichiroku sightseeing train, which runs between the lively Hakata and the famous hot spring towns of Yufuin and Beppu in Oita prefectures, with one approximately 5-hour-long one-way train departing once a day (excluding Thursdays). The train has a dignified exterior and holds an elegant interior with plush seats and even a lounge and private room. The warm wooden accents throughout the train add a refined touch, and the large windows that offer prime views of the

lush Kyushu countryside. Luxurious Bento boxed lunches made with ingredients from Fukuoka and Oita prefectures can be enjoyed onboard while gazing upon the scenery rushing by.

[The sightseeing train Kanpachi • Ichiroku](#)

Special Experience

9. Relish a Luxurious Camping Experience Along the Northern Coast, Aomori



© VISIT HACHINOHE

Located in Japan's northern Tohoku region, the Sanriku Fukko National Park is a prime place to enjoy glamping, with a campsite located along the Michinoku Coastal Trail running through the park. The Tanesashi Camp Grounds are set upon lush green lawns that overlook the Pacific Ocean, offering awe-inspiring views. Here, visitors can enjoy either a luxurious daytrip or overnight camping experience, spending time in the comfortable tents or appreciating the nature while walking along the trail. As there are camping programs available that include tents and other tools, you can come empty-handed and also walk the trail with a knowledgeable guide who will provide invaluable insight into the area. The experience's highlight is arguably the mouthwatering dinner made with first-rate locally produced ingredients. Savoring the premium dishes among the beautiful Tohoku nature makes the food taste even better.

[Retreat Camping](#)

Special Experience

10. Get Up Close and Personal with Happy Retired Horses, Kagoshima



©HorseTrust

Horse Trust is an organization that looks after retired racehorses and broodmares, and its Well-being Experience lets you spend time with the horses happily spending their days in a stress-free environment. You can find the horses grazing throughout the day in a pasture similar to their natural habitat, letting them enjoy a blissful retirement. There are several plans available with this experience, which allow you to observe and interact with the friendly horses, and you can even enter the farm grounds that are usually closed to the public. Located in the idyllic countryside of Kagoshima Prefecture, you can also bask in the scenic nature that includes grassy meadows and distant mountains, creating a picture-perfect day among majestic horses.

[Horse Trust Well-being Experience](#)

Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai

The Stunning Ocean-Themed Spanish Pavilion at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan



© Provided by Acción Cultural Española

As of March 14, 2024, 161 countries and regions and 9 international organizations have confirmed their participation in the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. The organizers are currently making their best efforts to prepare for the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan while cooperating with participating countries, regions, and international organizations and working closely with the Government of Japan.

Regarding the pavilions of participating organizations, this time, we would like to introduce you to the Spanish Pavilion. The theme of the Spanish Pavilion is based on the Kuroshio Current, which Spain used on its routes to Asia and other regions during the Age of Discovery more than 400 years ago.

The front of the pavilion has a staircase representing the sea, and the entrance is an orange circle, representing the “sea and sun” that characterize Spain.

There are many unique and fascinating pavilions in the EXPO site, so why not purchase a super early bird ticket and make a reservation for the EXPO right away!

[Official Participants' Pavilion | Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan Official Website](#)

Notes:

- The above details are correct as of the time of publication, and are subject to change.
- Item 9 is based on information from JNTO Partners.

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