

2025 March Vol.1

New Open

1. Stay at the Waldorf Astoria Osaka, the Epitome of Luxury Hotels, Opening April 3



Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts will open its first hotel in Japan on April 3, 2025. Founded in New York in 1893, Waldorf Astoria is part of the Hilton family of brands, with 34 hotels across the world. The Waldorf Astoria Osaka will be located on the upper floors of the Grand Green Osaka South Park Tower, a new commercial complex with an emphasis on green space located by JR Osaka Station, granting superb access to Osaka's public transport network. The hotel will have 252 spacious guestrooms mainly with a floor space of 50m² along with restaurants and other facilities overlooking the dazzling Osaka cityscape. Guests can choose from a number of different room types, including the Deluxe Room featuring warm Japanese elements like "kumiko" woodwork blended together with their iconic art deco aesthetic. It will open just in time for Expo 2025, which will commence April 13. Reservations are now open on the hotel's official website and app.

[Waldorf Astoria Osaka](#)

New Open

2. Outdoor Seating and Sweeping Vistas at THE GATE HOTEL FUKUOKA, Opening April 24



THE GATE HOTEL FUKUOKA by HULIC will open on April 24, 2025, on the upper floors of HULIC SQUARE FUKUOKA TENJIN, a new commercial hub directly connected to Fukuoka (Tenjin) Station. In the Lobby Lounge on the top floor, guests can kick back and relish the breeze on an outdoor terrace while marveling at the Fukuoka cityscape. On the same floor is the all-day dining restaurant Anchor Grill Fukuoka, which serves grilled dishes using local ingredients. Guestrooms run from the 10th to 18th floors, with 6 types meeting the needs of different travelers. The suite room THE GATE offers incredible panoramas facing Hakata Bay and Tenjin, while the main guestrooms, named Classy and Essential, are themed around Fukuoka's vibrant culture, drawing inspiration from its traditions along with its prosperity as an international trade hub and merchant city. Bookings have opened on the hotel's official website.

[THE GATE HOTEL FUKUOKA by HULIC](#)

New Open

3. Get Ready to Be Wowed by Japan's Toilet History at the Toilet Museum, Opening April 17, Aichi



©INAX MUSEUMS

Japanese toilets are renowned worldwide for their advanced features, from high-tech bidets to self-cleaning systems. To celebrate the 100th anniversary of LIXIL's Japan water and tile business, the Toilet Museum will join the INAX MUSEUMS on April 17, showcasing the evolution of Japanese toilet technology and culture. The INAX MUSEUMS is a collection of hands-on museums and facilities operated by LIXIL in the historic pottery town of Tokoname, Aichi Prefecture that showcase different elements of clay and ceramics. These include the Tile Museum which displays tiles from around the world that date from ancient to modern times, the Kiln Plaza where an over 100-year-old kiln, building, and stack of the stoneware pipe factory are preserved, the Tiling Workshop where visitors can participate in interactive tile activities, and more. The Toilet Museum will be the 7th museum facility. This facility will explore the development of modern toilets from rudimentary wooden bowls to the introduction of porcelain and plumbing alongside Japanese innovations in cleanliness and technology. While people around the world have been impressed by Japanese toilets, it's only through firsthand experience that you can truly appreciate their unique features. So come visit the Toilet Museum and discover the wonders of Japanese toilets for yourself!

[Toilet Museum](#)

News!

4. Green Destinations 2024 Top 100: Recognizing Five Rural Japanese Communities Dedicated to Sustainability



© Kamaishi DMC Ltd.

Green Destinations is a global certifying organization that is focused on sustainability. Every year since 2014, it has announced its list of Top 100 Stories, showcasing initiatives and projects from destinations around the world that are committed to moving towards SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). There are five Japanese locations that have made the 2024 list: Chikuma City in Nagano Prefecture, Kamaishi City and Tono City in Iwate Prefecture, Miyazu City in Kyoto Prefecture, and the Toge region in Yamagata Prefecture. While this is Miyazu City and Kamaishi City's 2nd and 7th consecutive years on the list respectively, there are three new additions that highlight Japan's rural communities' strong dedication to sustainability and improving daily life for their residents. This includes highlighting Chikuma City in the "Thriving Communities" category, and Tono City and the Toge region in the "Culture and Tradition" category. Each location's respective assets and drive are leading them into the future, holding many wonderful discoveries for residents and visitors alike.

[2024 Green Destinations Top 100 Stories](#)

Seasonal Topic

5. Admire the Kintaikyo Bridge Colored by Cherry Blossoms from a River Boat, Yamaguchi



© Tourism Promotion Section in Iwakuni City

Kintaikyo Bridge, built in 1673, is a beautiful wooden bridge over the Nishikigawa River in Iwakuni City, located on the eastern coast of Yamaguchi Prefecture. It's a prime example of Japan's wooden arch bridges, crafted using traditional timber frame techniques. Its intricate design showcases incredible craftsmanship, and even modern engineers consider it a masterpiece of construction. In spring, pale pink blossoms of 1,500 cherry trees along the Nishikigawa River are in full bloom and surround the 200-meter-long bridge. Late March to early April is the best time to see them and the tour boat "Sakurabune," which provides a spectacular view of the blossoms, is highly recommended. These traditional wooden boats move slowly with a boatman maneuvering a long pole, and you can enjoy the peaceful spring scenery while relishing the tranquil sounds of the river. You can also have a meal on the boat with advance reservation. The Sakurabune runs from late March to late May. Enjoy the graceful spring scenery of Kintaikyo Bridge from the water.

[Spring Tour Boat "Sakurabune"](#)

Special Experience

6. Experience Nature and Art with All Five Senses on the Sakushima Art Tour, Aichi



Sakushima is a small island situated in the middle of Mikawa Bay, near Nagoya, in the Chubu region of Japan. It can be reached by ferry in around 20 minutes from Isshiki Port. Together with its rich nature and laid-back vibe, Sakushima draws in visitors with a collection of artworks scattered throughout the island. On this tour, you'll be shown around Sakushima by an English-speaking local guide. You'll travel the island by bicycle, viewing and interacting with the artworks. Highlights include climbing up into tiered black boxes to take photos by the sea at Ohirune House, and Seagull Parking, where rows of seagull wind vanes on a pier rotate with the direction of the wind. You'll also pass through the island's traditional settlements lined with black walls and narrow winding streets, a reminder of its heyday as a flourishing fishing hub. Cute cats and local residents will greet you, and fresh local seafood awaits for lunch.

[Sakushima Art Tour](#)

Special Experience

7. Immerse Yourself in Ainu Culture Through Spellbinding Theater at Lake Akan, Hokkaido



©The Akan Ainu Industrial Arts Association

Discover Ainu culture at Ainu Village (Ainu Kotan) on Lake Akan in eastern Hokkaido. Akanko Ainu Theater Ikor, located within the village, hosts mesmerizing performances of UNESCO-registered traditional Ainu dances alongside contemporary programs and films from Japan's indigenous Ainu people. One of its most spectacular shows is the 30-minute Dancing Under a Full Moon, which explores the Ainu philosophy of “urespa mosir,” meaning “a place of mutual nurturing.” It celebrates the diversity of the Ainu identity and their closeness with “kamuy” divine spirits through enthralling music, dance, costume, and video. It's centered around the Ezo red fox kamuy, who, together with the other dances, whisks visitors into the mystical and gentle world of the Ainu. As the story progresses, the dance, music, and video grow into one, culminating in a soul-stirring climax. Dancing Under a Full Moon can be enjoyed together with the many other cultural experiences offered at the Ainu Village, which is approximately 1 hour by bus from Kushiro Airport and 1 hour 45 minutes by bus from JR Kushiro Station.

[Dancing Under a Full Moon](#)

Special Experience

8. Tour a Factory Making Natural Cedar Incense Sticks in Nikko, Tochigi



©Nikko City Tourism Association

Nikko City is known for its abundance of cedar wood, with the Cedar Avenue of Nikko certified by the Guinness World Records as the world's longest tree-lined road. Utilizing this natural

abundance, cedar incense sticks have been produced in Nikko since around the mid-1800s. Founded in 1940, Hattando is one of the main local producers, employing time-honored techniques to create stylish cedar incense stick sets that make for great gifts and souvenirs. Along with the ever-popular and naturally soothing cedar, they have branched out into other pleasing aromas like sandalwood, lavender, and more, packaged in elegant containers made from local cedarwood. Take an up-close look at the incense-making process, from mixing the incense powder into dough to the satisfying cutting and packaging, by joining a guided tour of the factory. While touring the attractions of Nikko, such as the World Heritage Site of Toshogu Shrine, be sure to experience this fascinating local craft too!

[A tour to the cedar incense factory](#)

Adventure Travel

9. Adventure Through One of the Largest Primeval Beech Forests in East Asia, Tohoku



©Shirakami-Sanchi Visitor Center

Shirakami Sanchi is a UNESCO World Heritage Site that stretches across Akita and Aomori Prefectures. This verdant mountainous region is home to many rare and unique species of flora and fauna, making it an exciting place to explore while trekking. Spring in Shirakami Sanchi is a breathtaking blend of lingering winter snow, vibrant blooming flowers, and fresh yellow-green beech leaves bursting to life. Tanashiro Marshland, for example, becomes a floral wonderland, carpeted with Asian skunk cabbage and marsh-marigolds, which bloom alongside the remaining snow in May. During the summer, the leaves are verdant green, which change to vibrant yellow in the autumn. Shirakami Sanchi is also home to Japan's last primeval beech forest, which are resistant to the heavy amounts of snowfall. There are several hiking routes in the area that accommodate different experience levels, allowing anyone to enjoy the mesmerizing nature. A favorite among hikers, the trail to Anmon Falls on the northeastern side of Shirakami Sanchi takes you deep into the valley, where three breathtaking waterfalls await at different distances from the trailhead (closed from late November to late April). To learn more about the rare wildlife that can be found here, stop by the Shirakami Sanchi Visitor Center, located a 60-minute bus ride from JR Hirosaki Station. The center showcases the local ecosystem through informative panels, models, and a short film. Before you begin your trek, make sure to grab a map that introduces what flora and fauna you may find on your journey.

[Shirakami Sanchi Mountain Range](#)

[Shirakami-Sanchi Visitor's Center](#)

Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai

First Unveiling of a Life-Sized GUNDAM Statue at the “GUNDAM NEXT FUTURE PAVILION”



©SOTSU SUNRISE

GUNDAM is a well-known robot-centric franchise from Japan and loved by many people around the world. Broadcasted in 1979, “Mobile Suit Gundam” depicted a world where GUNDAM exists, set in the Universal Century, a fictional era in which humans live in space. Bandai Namco Holdings Inc. will exhibit a life-sized scale model of a GUNDAM robot at the “GUNDAM NEXT FUTURE PAVILION,” one of the Pavilions for Private Sectors in the EXPO site. The concepts of “life in space” and technology not yet realized” that are depicted in the GUNDAM series are interpreted as new possibilities for the future in the pavilion.

Such possibilities will be demonstrated with realistic new footage and expressed from phases 0 to 7 in the pavilion space, with the GUNDAM NEXT FUTURE PAVILION depicting a world where life in space has become commonplace. The 17-meter-tall life-sized GUNDAM statue will make its appearance as “RX-78F00/E GUNDAM” in the footage screened at the pavilion. Its arm is raised up high towards outer space to symbolize carving out the new space age with human civilization in the future. The future of humanity living in space is coming closer, albeit gradually but with certainty. Under Bandai Namco Group’s Purpose “Fun for All into the Future,” the “GUNDAM NEXT FUTURE PAVILION” will connect people across the globe through GUNDAM and aims to provide the opportunity to think about the future.

[EXPO2025 Osaka,Kansai,Japan "GUNDAM NEXT FUTURE PAVILION" | Bandai Namco Holdings Inc](#)

Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai

The “Expo2025 Official Experiential Travel Guides” Website is Now Open



The Osaka-Kansai Expo's sub-themes, “Saving Lives,” “Empowering Lives,” and “Connecting Lives,” can be experienced not only at the expo but throughout Japan. JNTO’s special Expo website features story videos showcasing these experiences. One of the videos highlights Okinawa. Okinawa is a “Blue Zone” recognized for its exceptional longevity, making it an excellent place to experience the essence of “lives.” The video introduces its charms:

- World Heritage Sites: Nakagusuku Castle, a World Heritage Site, allows visitors to feel history while experiencing yoga for relaxation.
- Cuisine: Ryukyu cuisine, passed down through generations, is a source of life. Hotels practice “Farm to Hotel” concepts using compost and avoiding pesticides. Visitors can enjoy local ingredients like “goya” and learn to cook traditional dishes.
- Nature: The beautiful beaches, a World Natural Heritage site, and the subtropical Yanbaru forest offer unique ecosystems. Beach activities promote relaxation.
- Culture: The warm, joyful Okinawan lifestyle inspires many. Visitors can experience the “sanshin” and traditional dances.
- Sustainable Living: Okinawa exemplifies sustainable living, with practices like using bamboo toothbrushes and local ingredients.

This video aims to encourage visitors to the Osaka Expo to extend their journey to Okinawa, and to feel the source of “lives” by experiencing its nature and culture. A trip to Okinawa is sure to be an unforgettable experience.

For more details, visit the JNTO Expo 2025 website.

<https://expo2025movie.jnto.go.jp/en/okinawa/>

Notes:

- The above details are correct as of the time of publication, and are subject to change.
- Items 6,7 and 8 are based on information from JNTO Partners.

If you’d like to download photos and videos of Japan's tourist attractions, please visit the [Japan Photo & Video Library Links](#)

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