

2025 March Vol.2

The Wait is Over! Get Ready for Exciting Expo 2025 Updates!

Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai

1. "Connecting Lives" - Discover Hyogo's Short Sword-Making Tradition Through NFT Art



JNTO introduces modern ink art NFTs*, showcasing tourism experiences inspired by Expo 2025's three subthemes: Saving Lives, Empowering Lives, and Connecting Lives. These NFT artworks are available for free through the "EXPO2025 Digital Wallet" app, provided by the Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition. Travelers can obtain these NFTs after embarking on a virtual journey through the ink paintings displayed on JNTO's special website. Once acquired, the NFTs can be collected and viewed within the app. *NFT stands for Non-Fungible Token, a unique digital asset created using blockchain technology.

One of the NFT artworks, inspired by the "Short Sword-Making Experience in Hyogo," is depicted in ink wash painting.

In the distant past, blacksmiths were found throughout Japan, with the sound of their hammers echoing in every village. Today, however, the need for this craft has diminished, and the art form is rapidly fading into history. In pockets of Hyogo Prefecture, experienced craftsmen continue the local tradition of swordsmithing and invite visitors to engage in the ancient techniques and materials associated with this age-old craft. During this hands-on experience, visitors will actively learn the art of short sword-making while exploring traditional blacksmithing techniques. This includes caring for and polishing a blade to extend its life and usability. Upon completion, participants can engrave their name on the blade, taking home a truly unique and memorable souvenir.

Connection to Expo 2025 Subthemes

Iron production has been integral to humanity's cultural development since ancient times. This one-of-a-kind experience offers participants the opportunity to connect with both the past and future, as swordsmiths preserve the legacy of their craft in the true spirit of "Connecting Lives."

For more details, visit the JNTO Expo 2025 website:

<https://expo2025nft.jnto.go.jp/en/nft/map/10/>

Expo 2025 Special Exhibition

2. Discover How Rich Multicultural Influences Shaped Japanese Art at the Special Exhibition “*Japan, an Artistic Melting Pot*”, April 19 –June 15, Kyoto



Important Cultural Property, Funerary Jar
Excavated from Nagoso Tomb, Hashimoto, Wakayama
Japan, Nara period, 8th century, Kyoto National Museum



Pair of Ewers with Landscapes
Japan, Edo period, 18th century
Kyoto National Museum

For over two millennia, Japan has engaged with various cultures around the world, and these encounters have been vividly reflected in the country’s art. The special exhibition “*Japan, an Artistic Melting Pot*” offers a fresh perspective on the history of Japanese art through the lens of international cultural exchange. Held at the Kyoto National Museum, just a 25-minute walk from Kyoto Station, the exhibition features approximately 200 works—including 18 National Treasures—encompassing paintings, sculptures, calligraphy, works of decorative and applied art from ancient times to the modern era. Highlights include iconic masterpieces such as the woodblock print “*Under the Wave off Kanagawa*,” also known as “*The Great Wave*,” from the series “*Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*” by Katsushika Hokusai, and Tawaraya Sōtatsu’s golden National Treasure screens “*Wind God and Thunder God*”. These artworks trace how Japanese culture has been shaped by encounters with different cultures across thousands of years of history. Timed to coincide with Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai—a global celebration of cultural exchange—this exhibition offers a unique opportunity to explore the rich relationship between Japanese art and the world.

[JAPAN, an Artistic Melting Pot](#)

3. Reopening of the Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts —National Treasures of JAPAN, April 26 – June 15



National Treasure: “Akome” (a layer of clothing worn by nobles between the “shitagasane” underkimono and “hitoe” robe), featuring a light green pattern of small hollyhock leaves and round crests, woven in double-layered twill (part of the ancient Shinto treasures). Nanbokucho Period, Meitoku 1 (1390) / Stored at Kumano Hayatama Taisha Shrine, Wakayama. Image provided by Wakayama Prefectural Museum / Display period: May 27 – June 15.



National Treasure: Red “yoroi” armor with “kawaodoshi” (plates bound together with leather laces). Heian Period, 12th century / Collection of the Okayama Prefectural Museum. Image provided by Okayama Prefectural Museum / Display period: May 20 – June 15.

Celebrate Japanese heritage at the Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts with the Special Exhibition: National Treasures of JAPAN. From April 26 to June 15, this remarkable event marks the Osaka-Kansai Expo and the grand reopening of the museum following a two-and-a-half-year-long renovation. Featuring approximately 130 National Treasures, the exhibition provides a rare chance to explore the pinnacle of Japanese art and craftsmanship. Visitors will be captivated by the exhibit’s six major themes, including the “Masters of Japanese Art” section, featuring works by renowned Japanese artists of the past, and “The Splendor of Ancient Japan” section, which explores ancient Japanese culture through art pieces such as dogū clay figurines, dyed textiles, and more. Visitors with reservations get priority entrance on weekends and holidays, so it is recommended to make a prior reservation.

[Japanese National Treasures Exhibition](#)

4. Seafood Restaurant at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan Opened by KINDAI University



Kindai University is establishing the restaurant as part of a "University-Industry Collaboration and Ideological Cooperation Project" based on joint research with Suntory Holdings to promote sustainable fisheries and protect diverse ecosystems. The restaurant's concept is to provide an opportunity to "encounter the fish you eat for the first time" by offering unique, full-cycle cultured fish such as Kindai Tuna, which relies not on natural resources but advanced aquaculture techniques. It will also feature the original "thoroughbred fish" unique to Kindai University, presenting a sustainable vision for the "future of food." In 1970, during the Japan World Exposition, Osaka, Kindai University displayed farmed fish, which was rare at the time, at the "Kikkoman Underwater Restaurant." Since then, the university's aquaculture technology has significantly advanced. The new restaurant will include an aquarium where visitors can observe KUETAMA and its parent species, longtooth grouper and giant grouper, as well as Japanese eel. The venue will create an enchanting underwater atmosphere using multimedia elements such as visuals, lighting, and sound. By opening this specialty restaurant for farmed fish at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, Kindai University aims to reaffirm globally the significance of aquaculture technology developed in Osaka and showcase new culinary possibilities using fish species developed by the university. This initiative will communicate the future of food culture utilizing diverse biological resources to the world. You can start making your reservation now by email!

Restaurant Overview

Restaurant Name: Kindai University Aquaculture Research Institute Restaurant at the Water Plaza, Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan

Operating Period: Scheduled for April 13, 2025 to October 13, 2025

Location: 2nd Floor, Water Plaza West Building

Business Hours: 10:00 AM to 9:00 PM (tentative)

Reservation: E-mail amkosaka@a-marine.co.jp

[Kindai University to open a seafood restaurant](#) | [EurekaAlert!](#)

New Open

5. A Luxurious Spa Retreat with Stunning Views at SAPPORO HOTEL by GRANBELL, Opening March 1, Hokkaido



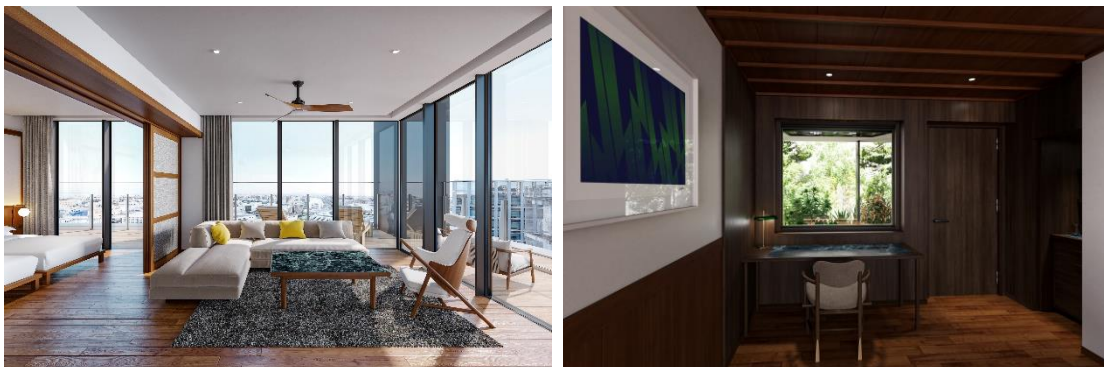
©SAPPORO HOTEL by GRANBELL

Discover the ultimate blend of modern design and Hokkaido charm at SAPPORO HOTEL by GRANBELL, opening March 2025. Situated just a 7-minute walk from JR Sapporo Station, the hotel offers unparalleled convenience for exploring all major landmarks. With the extension of the Hokkaido Shinkansen to Sapporo set to launch in 2038, the hotel is poised to become a central hub for all visitors exploring the region. The Sky Spa on the 25th floor features a sauna and open-air natural hot spring bath, offering panoramic views of Sapporo's ever-changing skyline. For dining, the rooftop restaurant lets visitors enjoy exquisite meals alongside stunning night views from 100 meters above ground. The hotel holds eight different types of guest rooms, from functional standard rooms to luxurious suites, for a total of 605 guest rooms. The guest rooms feature simple, calming colors with accents reflecting Hokkaido's spirit through artwork and lighting. The ceiling-high windows provide breathtaking views from the upper floors, soothing your travel fatigue. The interiors evoke Hokkaido's natural beauty, inspired by themes of stone, fire, snow, and birch forests, offering a warm and inviting ambiance.

[SAPPORO HOTEL by GRANBELL](#)

New Open

6. Enjoy Modern Japanese Luxury Overlooking Hakata Bay at ONE FUKUOKA HOTEL, Opening April 24



Located in Tenjin, Kyushu's largest commercial district, ONE FUKUOKA HOTEL will soon open in one of Tenjin's newest landmark buildings. Opening April 24 on the top two floors of ONE FUKUOKA BLDG., ONE FUKUOKA HOTEL offers spectacular views of Hakata Bay and enjoys a prime location, directly connected to Tenjin Station and an 11-minute subway ride away from Fukuoka Airport. The hotel is surrounded by a diverse array of shops, restaurants, bars, and entertainment options, ensuring guests have easy access to everything from cultural experiences to lively nightlife. ONE FUKUOKA HOTEL blends sophistication, comfort, and the energetic essence of Fukuoka, offering 41 rooms in eight unique styles, including options with private terraces or studies space overlooking the hotel's lush garden terrace, making it perfect for not just trips, but also working while traveling. Showcasing a modern Japanese design, the hotel boasts spacious interiors with large windows and a calming ambiance. Artistic details are laid throughout the hotel, including modern artworks, intricately latticed interiors, and even a water basin inspired by the Heian-period scholar Sugawara no Michizane. Guests can enjoy luxurious facilities such as an open-air bath, sauna, tranquil library lounge featuring books about Fukuoka, and a garden terrace, making for a serene retreat within the city. Culinary offerings include four distinctive dining venues, such as a rooftop café and sunset bar, a lively all-day dining restaurant, and a teppanyaki restaurant serving fresh Kyushu ingredients.

[ONE FUKUOKA HOTEL](#)

Festival and Event

7. 2025 Tonami Tulip Fair - A Colorful Spring Wonderland of 3 Million Tulips, April 22 – May 5, Toyama



©TONAMI TULIP FAIR

The 2025 Tonami Tulip Fair invites visitors to marvel at the beauty of three million tulips in full bloom across 300 varieties. It takes place in Toyama Prefecture, whose relationship with tulips dates back to 1918 when farmers began planting them as a second crop in rice paddies. Thanks to the compatibility between the tulips and the Toyama weather, their production has since flourished, and “Toyama tulips” have even gained popularity overseas. Set against the picturesque backdrop of Tonami Tulip Park, the fair features a large flower bed with an intricate design, best admired from the Tulip Tower and Tulip

Skywalk. Also, at the 4-meter-high "Valley of Flowers," inspired by Toyama's iconic Tateyama Kurobe Alpine Route, white tulips evoke the image of a majestic snow wall in the first half of the event, while the second half bursts to life with colorful tulips, celebrating the full bloom of spring. Guests can also explore the "Floating Tulip," showcasing a hydroponic flowerbed that was invented in Tonami, or unwind in the serene "Komorebi Garden," a peaceful café surrounded by flowers. Thoughtfully designed walkways allow guests to enjoy the colors and unique shapes up close. There is a free shuttle bus that runs between the park and JR Tonami Station.

[2025 TONAMI TULIP FAIR](#)

Festival and Event

8. Immerse Yourself in the Rich Tradition of the Hakata Dontaku 2025, May 3 – 4, Fukuoka



©Festival promotion association of Fukuoka-shi people

The Hakata Dontaku harbor festival, a rich celebration with roots dating back over 840 years to the Matsubayashi Festival (a parade to celebrate the Lunar New Year and honor the area's feudal lord), has become one of Japan's most beloved festivals. Originally documented in 1179, the festival has endured through centuries, adapting and growing through challenges, bringing hope and resilience to the people of Fukuoka. Its name "Dontaku" comes from the Dutch word "zondag," which means "Sunday" or "day off." Held annually on May 3 and 4, the festival draws over two million visitors who come to witness the colorful parade of dancers and performers. With everyone clapping their "shamoji" rice ladles and wearing extravagant costumes, the city pulses with energy. The iconic "hana densha" floats, which were originally adorned with fresh flowers, have now evolved into decorated vehicles featuring dazzling electronic displays, showcasing the festival's blend of tradition and modernity. In honor of the original festival, the Matsubayashi Parade takes place on May 3, featuring three gods of fortune—Fukujin, Ebisu, and Daikoku—riding on horseback with their entourages, accompanied by a lively group of dancing children. Each party belongs to a different "nagare" (district), totaling four districts. The Dontaku parades follow afterward, further elevating the excitement of the celebration. During the festival's finale on May 4, onlookers are encouraged to jump in and join the "so odori" dance to revel in the excitement of the festival.

[The 64th Hakata Dontaku harbor festival](#)

Special Experience

9. Pick Strawberries and Make Delicious Japanese Sweets, Tokushima



©hidden_tokushima

Experience Higashimiyoshi Town's specialty, fresh strawberries! At this strawberry greenhouse, you can pick and eat your fill of plump, juicy strawberries for 45 minutes. The strawberries are sweet and succulent, making you want to continuously reach for more. In Higashimiyoshi town, strawberries are grown throughout the year – on the flatlands in winter and spring and in the mountains in summer. After indulging, make strawberry "daifuku" – a Japanese confection of soft mochi rice cake with sweet bean paste and a fresh strawberry. You can also enjoy some homemade rice crackers after the picking. The farm is in the northwestern part of Tokushima Prefecture. (Advance reservation required).

[Enjoy Strawberry Picking & Daifuku Mochi Making!](#)

National Park

10. Explore a National Park Featuring an Eruption-Made Peninsula and Archipelago Landscape, Kyushu



©Ministry of the Environment

Unzen-Amakusa National Park is a stunning destination spanning Nagasaki, Kumamoto, and Kagoshima Prefectures. Established in 1934, it takes its name from Mount Unzen, an active volcano on the Shimabara Peninsula, and the picturesque Amakusa Islands in the Yatsushiro Sea. This remarkable park combines natural beauty with rich history, featuring volcanic landscapes, lush forests, and marine ecosystems

thriving with coral reefs and dolphins. Seasonal highlights make Unzen-Amakusa unforgettable. From mid to late May, pink "miyamakirishima" azaleas blanket Nita Pass and Mount Myoken, creating a magnificent scene. Mogushi Beach in the southern part of Shimoshima, one of the Amakusa Islands, has some of the clearest waters in Kyushu, beckoning many visitors during the summer. Near the coast you can find natural coral reefs and colorful tropical fish swimming around.

[Unzen-Amakusa National Park](#)

Luxury Travel

11. A Serene Journey of Spirituality and Healing Meals at One of Japan's Most Revered Buddhist Temples, Nara



Nara Hasedera Temple, founded in 686, is one of Japan's most revered Buddhist temples. For over a thousand years, worshippers have come here to pray to Kannon, the bodhisattva of compassion, for peace and happiness. Nestled in a tranquil valley, Hasedera features over 30 historic buildings cascading up the hillside. A covered corridor with 399 steps leads to the main hall at the summit, offering sweeping views. Known as the "Temple of Flowers," Hasedera dazzles year-round with cherry blossoms, peonies, hydrangeas, and autumn foliage. Begin your day with a profound spiritual experience by joining the morning service in the Main Hall (a National Treasure, built in 1650), where you can participate in sutra chanting. Afterward, a monk will guide you to the 10-meter Juichimen (eleven-faced) Kannon statue—one of the largest wooden statues in the country and designated an Important Cultural Property—that normally remains off-limits to the public. Following your visit, enjoy a unique breakfast at Yamato Yakuzen, where an expert introduces you to "yakuzen"—a style of cooking that utilizes the medicinal properties of ingredients to promote health and prevent illness. Using natural, locally sourced ingredients, the expert crafts meals to enhance vitality and restore balance. A short walk leads you to the expert's traditional Japanese-style house, where you'll savor a variety of nourishing dishes crafted with care. Getting to participate in these sacred experiences along with monks in a famous historical temple makes this a luxurious experience unlike any other. It is easily accessible, located just a 20-minute walk from Hasedera Station on the Kintetsu Osaka Line.

[Reset your mind and body in the hidden gems of Nara](#)

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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