

2025 June Vol. 2

Welcome to Expo 2025! Discover the Must-See Highlights!

Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai

1. EXPO and Beyond! Explore Japan and Collect Unique NFT Artworks



Japan is filled with captivating experiences that embody the Expo's theme: Life. Our lives are interconnected, supported by nature, the universe, and the cultures we create. To celebrate this profound connection, the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) has transformed ten signature experiences from across Japan into stunning NFT artworks. These digital pieces are inspired by traditional Japanese ink painting, expressing the beauty and significance of Life.

You can collect these NFTs by visiting each region and using your mobile device's GPS function. As you explore and gather these digital treasures, you'll immerse yourself in an unforgettable journey through Japan.

One of the regions featured in the NFTs is the Seto Inland Sea, with a focus on Yamaguchi Prefecture. Experience Setouchi from multiple perspectives: visit Yamaguchi's Motonosumi Shrine, with its breathtaking view of 123 red torii gates facing the Sea of Japan; relax in Yuda Onsen, a hot spring town known for the legendary tale of the White Fox. Last but not least, immerse yourself in art and creativity at Hiroshima's Simose Art Museum.

Let the adventure begin!

<https://expo2025nft.jnto.go.jp/en/gps/>

2. People's Republic of China Pavilion "Building a Community of Life for Man and Nature — Future Society of Green Development"



© Courtesy of China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT)

The People's Republic of China's pavilion is one of the self-built pavilions with a marvelous appearance. The theme of the China Pavilion is "Building a Community of Life for Man and Nature — Future Society of Green Development". The exterior design of the pavilion is inspired by bamboo slips and shaped like an unfolded Chinese traditional calligraphy scroll. The pavilion emphasizes the Chinese philosophy that humans must respect nature, follow its way, and live in harmony with it.

Events of the People's Republic of China are planned every week, for example, GUANGDONG Week on June 27-29, and National Day of China on July 11 etc. The China Pavilion is inspired by traditional Chinese calligraphy 'scrolls' and 'letters', uses bamboo in abundance, and is located within a ring-shaped wooden structure - the Grand Ring. Each pavilion is divided into three sub-themes of the Expo: 'Saving Lives', 'Empowering Lives' and 'Connecting Lives'. The China Pavilion is located in the 'Empowering Lives' area and its logo features the two characters for 'CHINA' in a seal script stone drum font and is Chinese red in color. It stands out among the logos of 158 participating countries, regions, and international organizations and is instantly recognizable as CHINA.

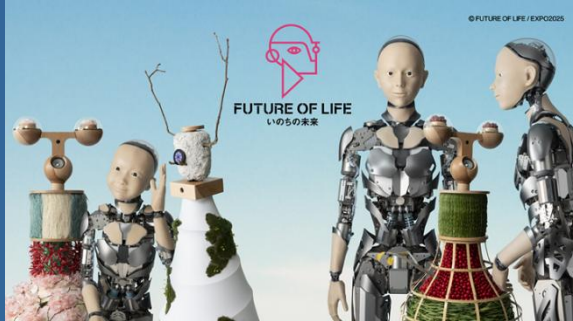
The mascot of the China Pavilion is a panda named 'Youyou'. The name is easy to pronounce and has a cute sound impression, making it easy to say for speakers of any language. The Chinese word 'Youyou' means 'long-lasting', in addition to 'leisurely', and the name expresses the wish for 'years to flow forever', 'leisurely like a bamboo', and 'always with sincerity'.

The pavilion features three sections to showcase China's traditional ecological wisdom, modern green development initiatives, and its vision of global cooperation in fostering a sustainable future. The exhibition will draw a vision for China to build a life community of people and nature together with other countries around the world!

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

For more details on China Pavilion events, please visit the below website.
<https://www.ccpit.org/expochina2025/a/20250211/202502118kxp.html>

3. Must See Signature Pavilions: Keywords are “Robot” and “Jellyfish”



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At EXPO 2025 Osaka, Kansai JAPAN, eight theme producers are running Signature Pavilions. One of them is "The Future of Life" by Ishiguro Hiroshi. His building is designed to utilize a water landscape that focuses on water as a symbol of "life," the theme of the Expo, connecting inorganic and organic matter. The exterior material is a membrane, and water flows in a cascade from the roof down the exterior walls, then circulates through the "water membrane" facade design.

Inside the pavilion you can see many androids. Please imagine if you had a handheld android, what would you ask it to do? What would you like to try if you were not limited by your physical body, place or time? How would you like to live? As technology advances and the gap between humans and robots or androids narrows, we should see more possibilities for human life. You will experience societies, products, and the future position of Japanese culture fifty years from now, expanding your own vision of "The Future of Life".

Another is "Playground of Life: Jellyfish Pavilion" by Nakajima Sachiko, a producer with special knowledge in the field of education, with titles of musician, mathematics researcher, and STEAM educator. It will engage the senses of children ages 0-120 through participatory, collaborative experiences of play, learning, art, and celebration involving the five senses and physicality. "Jellyfish" symbolizes the ever-changing nature of play - something beyond words - along with the primitiveness and creativity of life.

This project aims to create relationships with a variety of worlds and completely transform what it means to learn, play, create, and "live" not only during the Expo, but also after. This is a journey to bring out the multiple meanings of existence and the overflowing light of life (creativity) of all people and things, to connect the whole world through the joy of creativity, and to explore an inclusive "co-creation" (democratization of creativity) society for a future filled with playfulness and hope.

There are 8 signature pavilions in total. We hope you will visit the other 6 as well.

[Future of Life, the Signature Pavilion of ISHIGURO Hiroshi](#)

[Playground of Life: Jellyfish Pavilion - Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan Thematic Project: Invigorating Lives!](#)

Seasonal Topic

4. A Heart-Pounding Walk Above the Naruto Whirlpools, Tokushima



Experience unforgettable scenery along Tokushima's Uzu-no-Michi, a 450-meter-long promenade ingeniously built within the girders of the Onaruto Bridge. Suspended 45 meters above the sea, this walkway offers breathtaking views of the Pacific Ocean, Seto Inland Sea, and the world-famous Naruto Whirlpools combined with the architectural beauty of the steel bridge. At the promenade's observation room, marvel at the roaring whirlpools through a glass floor, bringing you face-to-face with nature's raw power. These whirlpools, formed by the ebb and flow of tidal currents in the Naruto Strait, can reach a staggering 20-meter diameter in spring and fall, ranking among the largest in the world. Visitors can also witness one of the world's fastest tidal currents, surging at speeds of over 20 km/h during the peak of spring tides, also known as "King Tides." Uzu-no-Michi is just a 30-minute bus ride from Naruto Station, making it a must-visit scenic spot you won't want to miss!

[Onaruto Bridge Uzu no Michi](#)

Special Experience

5. Craft Your Own Japanese Amulet in a Unique Omamori Workshop, Shiga



Roughly an hour from Kyoto sits Shiga, a prefecture that appears to surround the largest lake in Japan, Lake Biwa. Venture into Shiga's depths and you'll discover the 1,400-year-old Tarobogu Shrine, hidden on the forested slopes of Mt. Akagami, just a 20-minute walk from Tarobogu-

Mae Station. Here, you can experience the ancient tradition of crafting your very own "omamori"—a traditional Japanese amulet offering protection, blessings, and good fortune just by keeping it close to your body. Guided by priests and shrine maidens, you can choose from 200 types of amulet bags, each carrying its own meaning, and tie them with special strings. Write your personal wish on a "wishing paper," which is then placed inside the amulet, along with a "mitama"—a spiritual essence representing the gods of Tarobogu Shrine. This makes your amulet not just a keepsake, but a genuine, sacred prayer offering customized specifically to your wants and needs. Tarobogu Shrine is renowned for its mystical atmosphere and the famous "Meoto-iwa" or "couple rocks." These two massive rocks, with a small gap between them, allow visitors with pure intentions to pass through, symbolizing the fulfillment of their wishes. Don't miss the opportunity to explore this off-the-beaten-path destination and enrich your trip with a meaningful, spiritual experience.

[Make Your Own Japanese Amulet](#)

[Make a reservation here \(Japanese only\)](#)

Special Experience

6. Immerse Yourself in Rural Japan with a Farm Stay, Tochigi



Agriturismo in Ohtawara is a program that introduces farm stays in a rural city near the Nasu Highland of Tochigi Prefecture. On the website, available in English and Chinese, is a selection of cozy farm stays for travelers to browse and book. Each hosts a variety of experiences, such as farming and cooking. Ohtawara has long been a prosperous farming region, known for high-quality rice, livestock, black tea, chili peppers, and more. The Naka River also flows through the center of town, whose waters provide the highest catch of "ayu" sweetfish in Japan, which naturally swim upstream. You can pick fresh ingredients from the farmstay gardens and cook them into scrumptious dishes using earthen pots and woodfire stoves. You'll also get to mingle with the friendly farming families, and can try fishing, cycling, and other activities, making your trip all the more meaningful. There are plenty of attractions to explore in the area, including Uganji Temple, one of Japan's four major Zen dojos, and Basho's House, a museum dedicated to Japan's famous haiku poet, Matsuo Basho.

[New Farm Stays, Agriturismo](#)

Special Experience

7. Segway Tours on Japan's Largest Karst Plateau, Yamaguchi



Discover the stunning beauty of Akiyoshidai, Japan's largest karst plateau, from an exciting perspective—a Segway! Located in Mine City, Yamaguchi Prefecture, within the nationally designated Special Natural Monument of Akiyoshidai, this natural wonder features breathtaking landscapes, starry night skies, and fascinating geological history. It's not far from Yamaguchi City, which was selected as one of the 52 Places to Go in 2024 by The New York Times. The eco-friendly Segway tour starts with a one-hour lesson to help you get comfortable riding. Then, embark on a 1.5-hour guided journey across the plateau's rugged terrain on an off-road Segway. Along the way, your instructor shares captivating facts about the area's unique limestone formations, originating 350 million years ago as a coral reef. Glide effortlessly through this picturesque landscape, enjoying panoramic views and a peaceful atmosphere. With helmets and rain ponchos provided, this tour offers a safe and enjoyable experience in any weather.

[Segway Tour in Akiyoshidai](#) (Available for reservation until October 13, 2025)

Special Experience

8. A Thrilling Voyage by Sheer Cliffs on a Small Boat, Iwate



As an island nation, Japan has a long, deep connection with the surrounding sea. With this activity, you can experience the majesty and beauty by accompanying a local fisherman in Iwate Prefecture out into the waters of the Sanriku Coast. You will be riding on a "sappa-bune," a small boat used to fish for sea urchins, abalone, and more, whose name comes from a type of amulet

that grants protection while out at sea. In this region, experienced fishermen often take direct routes through tight gaps in capes and reefs instead of lengthy detours, and this tour recreates their incredible navigation skills for a close-up view of the jagged coastline and fascinating natural rock formations. Interacting with the friendly fishermen and seeing the wonders from the water is sure to make this an unforgettable experience.

[Sappa Boat Adventures](#)

Special Experience

9. Unique Taiko Drumming by Fierce Namahage Only at Oga Onsen, Akita



©Oga Navi Co., Ltd.

Namahage-Taiko Drumming is a new kind of folk art unique to the Oga Peninsula in Akita Prefecture. It combines the terrific costumes and dynamic movements of “namahage” – a UNESCO-registered local ritual in which men dressed as masked deities visit homes on New Year’s Eve to admonish the laziness of the household members and offer blessings -- with “taiko,” a traditional form of Japanese drumming that is popular worldwide. For the people of Oga, namahage are deities that visit at the turning point of the year to warn against idleness and bring blessings in good health and bountiful food. Visitors to Oga can watch nighttime Namahage-Taiko shows at Gofu, a performing arts theatre in Oga Onsen at the northern edge of the peninsula. Originally held mostly for guests at hotels and ryokan inns, Gofu was opened in 2007 as a Namahage-Taiko venue for the general public following the artform’s rise in popularity. Along with the powerful rhythmic beat of the taiko, you’ll get an up close look at the namahage as they walk through the audience. Oga Onsen can be reached from Akita Airport in around 1.5 hours on the Airport Liner, and it is about an hour from Akita Station.

[Namahage-Taiko Drumming](#)

Special Experience

10. Enjoy an Exhilarating Run Through Astounding Nature in Nikko, Tochigi



©Ametsuchi

Trail running offers a different sensation for enjoying nature, enhancing the breeze on your face and the crisp air in your lungs. Plus, you can cover more distance in less time. Along with famous sites like Nikko Toshogu Shrine and Kegon Falls, the open vistas and lush forests of the Nikko area in Tochigi Prefecture are perfect for this sport. This tour will take you through the dense greenery, with an experienced guide leading you along the trail to different scenic spots. As it is private, this tour accommodates one group per day, and it is perfect for people of all skill levels, from beginner to advanced. The beginner course goes for three hours, while the regular course lasts for five. You can ask for a break whenever needed or if you want an extra moment to take in the scenery and even make special requests to run by certain areas. The standard tour follows essentially a big loop, so you will end basically where you began. This makes it convenient and easy to then further enjoy Nikko for the rest of the day by indulging in scrumptious local fare or soaking in relaxing hot springs.

[Trail running](#)

National Park

11. The Hidaka Mountains: A Newly Designated National Park, Hokkaido



©Ministry of the Environment

The Hidaka Mountains in south-central Hokkaido run north to south from the sea for approximately 140 kilometers, with towering peaks that can reach over 1,900 meters and steep inclines. It was designated as the 35th national park of Japan in June last year, with the official name of Hidakasanmyaku-Erimo-Tokachi National Park. Along with being Japan's largest

national park by land area, it is considered to be one of the country's most pristine natural environments. Mt. Apoi hosts a wealth of alpine plants between April and October, including endemic flowers such as Hidakaso in May and Apoi-kuwagata in June. The tallest peak, Mt. Poroshiri, is considered to be sacred by the local indigenous Ainu people. These particular peaks and others attest to the mountains' both natural and cultural significance. In addition to large mammals such as brown bears (*Ursus arctos yesoensis*) and Ezo sika deer (*Cervus nippon yesoensis*), mainly in the foothills, the park is also home to the Ezo pika (*Ochotona hyperborea*), which is said to be a species remnant of the Ice Age. Kuril harbor seals can also be found at the nearby Cape Erimo, which is also culturally important to the Ainu.

[Hidakasanmyaku-Erimo-Tokachi National Park.](#)

Notes:

- The above details are correct as of the time of publication, and are subject to change.
- Items 5,6,9 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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