

Japan Tourism Topics by JNTO

Japan National
Tourism Organization

November 20, 2025

New Open

1. FUFU Tokyo Ginza blends nature and heritage in a new urban retreat Nov 16



Japan's capital city has a new urban sanctuary with the opening of FUFU Tokyo Ginza on Nov 16. The hotel brings its concept to life through a distinct blend of Japanese tradition, hot springs, and the serenity of nature. Featuring 34 rooms ranging from 55 to 160 square meters, it offers guests a tranquil resort in Ginza — one of Tokyo's busiest shopping districts — redefining global urban luxury. All guest rooms include balconies decorated with seasonal plants. Every room also has a natural hot spring bath filled with mineral-rich water from Atami, a coastal city in eastern Shizuoka. Inside the guest rooms, washi (traditional Japanese paper) filters soft light into the wood-themed interiors, creating the feel of a peaceful retreat. During their stay, guests can also participate in hands-on traditional craft-making activities. A restaurant serving meals curated around Japan's four seasons allows guests to further immerse themselves in nature's changing beauty amid one of the world's most dynamic cities.

[FUFU Tokyo Ginza](#)

New Open

2. The Royal Park Hotel Iconic Naha to open in Okinawa Jan 30



©Mitsubishi Estate Hotels & Resorts Co., Ltd.

The Royal Park Hotel Iconic Naha is set to open on Jan 30. Occupying the 7th to 13th floors of the newly constructed Ryukyu Bank headquarters, the hotel offers 257 rooms designed to immerse guests in the tranquil luxury of a stay that connects them with the essence of the Ryukyu Islands (the former name of the islands including Okinawa). Its executive rooms are curated to evoke the atmosphere of the Ryukyu Dynasty. Its executive rooms are curated to evoke the atmosphere of the Ryukyu Dynasty. A select few feature raised platforms where guests can enjoy tea with traditional pottery. Within the hotel, guests will find a terrace and pool, a gym, and three restaurants, including a sushi restaurant designed as a coral cave-inspired hideaway. Every detail is crafted to help guests unwind in a serene setting where the richness of island nature meets the quiet luxury of their stay. The hotel is a two-minute walk from the Okinawa Urban Monorail (Yui Rail) Kencho-mae Station, offering easy access to Naha Airport (about 10 minutes) and the vibrant Kokusai Dori shopping street.

[The Royal Park Hotel ICONIC Naha](#)

Adventure Travel

3. Discover the quiet beauty of a sacred forest on a snowshoe trek in Nagano



©SHINANO DISCOVERY

Togakushi, located in the mountains northwest of Nagano City, is renowned as a spiritual heartland. During winter, this sacred setting within the Togakushi Forest Reserve offers an ideal backdrop for a one-day guided snowshoe hike conducted by Shinano Discovery from late December through the end of March. Before setting out, the guide teaches participants how to properly wear snowshoes and use poles, ensuring they are prepared to navigate the pristine terrain. Along the way,

participants can discover traces of wildlife, admire nature's snow art, and experience the forest's stillness broken only by the crunch of snow underfoot. The tour traverses Kagami (mirror) Pond, which freezes over in winter to form a vast snowfield. Depending on ice conditions, participants may even walk across the pond and enjoy panoramic views of the Togakushi mountain range. A midday soba lunch at a local restaurant offers a welcome break before the tour concludes with a walk down an avenue of ancient cedar trees leading to "Okusha," or the "Back Shrine," where visitors can feel the quiet majesty of nature. While the regular snowshoe tour is mainly held around Togakushi Shrine, participants can request tours of different places such as Madarao, Kurohime, and Myoko.

[Shinano Discovery](#)

Seasonal Topic

4. Go whale spotting off the coast of Amami Oshima in Kagoshima



In the waters of Japan's East China Sea, between Kyushu and Okinawa, lies Amami Oshima — a remote island recognized as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage site for its rich biodiversity and wildlife. Blessed with a mild winter climate, this island in Kagoshima Prefecture is an ideal destination for whale watching. The season begins around December and lasts through April. To help visitors see these majestic creatures, the Amami-Oshima Island/Winter Cruise is held from January to April. During this time, humpback whales measuring 10 to 15 meters migrate to Amami's warm waters to breed and raise their calves. Occasionally, sperm whales can also be spotted, making each excursion unique. Tours departing from the island's southern Koniya Port offer both half-day and full-day options, with guided commentary for beginners. Unlike whale watching in polar regions, Amami's subtropical climate lets travelers enjoy the spectacle amid stunning island scenery, offering a front-row seat to the unspoiled beauty of nature.

[Whale Watching Tour](#)

[Explore Amami](#)

Special Experience

5. Harvest winter seaweed and join fishermen for lunch in Mie



With its low calories and other health benefits, seaweed has recently been gaining popularity across Europe and the U.S. But in Japan, wakame (Japanese kelp) has long been a beloved staple, commonly added to miso soup, salads, and other traditional dishes. Wakame is traditionally cultivated in Shima Peninsula in Mie Prefecture. Seedlings are placed in the sea in the fall and left to grow firm and flavorful in the cold winter waters. In Toba, a coastal city in the northeastern part of the peninsula, the Kaito Yumin Club offers the Seaweed Harvesting and Fisherman Lunch Tour. The harvest takes place in spring, from mid-January through the end of March. The tour takes guests by fishing boat to a wakame farm, where fishermen demonstrate how to cut the kelp with a small knife. Once back on shore, visitors can share their freshly harvested wakame with the fishermen. Tour proceeds go toward sustaining Toba's wakame farms, which benefit the planet by reducing carbon dioxide and enriching the ocean with oxygen.

[Seaweed Harvesting and Fisherman Lunch Tour](#)

Special Experience

6. Winter flavors await on an olive island in Kagawa



Shodoshima is known for introducing olive cultivation to Japan more than a century ago. Just an hour by ferry from Takamatsu in Kagawa — and less than two hours from the ports of Shin-Okayama and Uno — this olive island is also home to somen-makers and soy sauce breweries. A model 2D/1N winter itinerary offers visitors a taste of these signature products. At Shodoshima Olive Garden, home to about 2,000 olive trees, visitors can blend their own olive oil to create a personalized souvenir. After sampling different olive oils, visitors can stop by Nakabu-an. Somen, a type of very thin wheat noodle, has a 420-year history on the island. Winter marks the peak of production. Hardened noodles made during the cold season are known as kan (cold) somen. At Nakabu-an, guests can watch the noodle-making process up close and sample freshly made somen (reservations required). Hishio no Sato, or Soy Sauce Village, is the next stop. Once home to around

400 breweries during the Meiji era, just over 20 remain today. Visitors can stroll along scenic walking trails, tour historic breweries, and even try soy sauce-flavored soft serve ice cream.

[Experience the Flavors of Shodoshima Island](#)

[A Culinary Treasure Chest](#)

Special Experience

7. Experience a tranquil temple retreat in Wakayama



Koyasan's temple lodgings (shukubo) in Wakayama offer visitors a unique way to immerse in a spiritual retreat amid serene snowscapes. There are 51 temple lodgings in this UNESCO World Heritage site. For more than 1,200 years, Koyasan has been a center of Shingon Buddhism, one of Japan's major schools of Buddhism. Today, this mountainous area provides an ethereal setting for a mindfulness retreat. A typical shukubo features traditional rooms with tatami mats, futon bedding, and shared facilities. Guests can join morning ceremonies and experience Shojin Ryori, a form of Buddhist vegetarian cuisine crafted from seasonal ingredients and guided by the principle of causing no harm to living beings. Many temples also offer Ajikan, a meditation and breathing practice unique to Shingon Buddhism, which even beginners can try to calm their minds and find inner stillness. While a shukubo can be enjoyed year-round, snow-covered Koyasan is especially beautiful in winter, offering a peaceful and deeply moving retreat.

[A Guide to Koyasan](#)

[The Official Website of Koyasan](#)

Special Experience

8. Dig into the snowy secrets of winter vegetables in Hokkaido



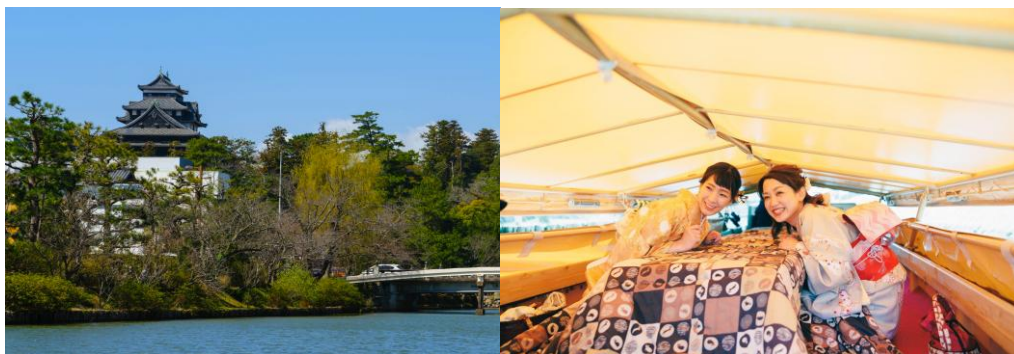
©urespa+furano

Furano in central Hokkaido is famous among visitors for its picturesque lavender fields in summer, but it also offers a hidden attraction during the snowy season — winter farming. Vegetables are an essential part of winter life, and for generations, local farmers have found ways to preserve their freshness in the cold. One method is burying crops beneath the snow, which acts as natural insulation, keeping vegetables fresh while concentrating their sweetness. Visitors can explore this practice and other aspects of winter life on a farm through a hands-on program from mid-December to February at Endo Farm in Nakafurano Town. The immersive experience — suitable for both adults and children — lets participants harvest snow-buried cabbages with shovels under the guidance of the farmer on-site. Freshly dug cabbages can be tasted on the spot to enjoy their natural sweetness. The tour concludes with a cozy lunch. Weather permitting, participants can picnic in the snowy field and savor a warm Pot-au-Feu made with Endo Farm's winter vegetables. If the weather turns unfavorable, lunch will be held indoors.

[Winter Cabbage Tour](#)

Special Experience

9. Cruise along Matsue Castle's moat on a cozy kotatsu boat ride



©Horikawa Sightseeing Boat Office

Matsue Castle in Shimane, completed in 1611, is one of only 12 original castles remaining in Japan. The surrounding moat, known as Horikawa, has remained unchanged for more than 400 years. The Horikawa Sightseeing Boat operates year-round, taking visitors on a cruise through the canals originally built to protect the castle. From early December to March, a kotatsu (traditional heated low table with blankets) is set up on board, creating a warm and cozy atmosphere. The 50-minute journey passes beneath low bridges, gliding past the castle's stone walls and quiet forested areas. One distinctive feature of the boat is its roof, which can be lowered to pass under some of the 17 bridges along the route. Other highlights include Shiomi Nawate, a well-preserved street that was once a samurai neighborhood. As the boat circles the moat, the experience is made even more

memorable by boatmen who occasionally sing local folk songs. Reservations are not required for groups of fewer than 10 people. The cruise schedule is subject to change.

[Horikawa Pleasure Boat](#)

Special Experience

10. Get a slice of history through a knife-making workshop in Fukui



©Fukui Prefectural Tourism Federation

In Japanese cooking, knives are not one-size-fits-all — specialized blades are designed for different tasks, reflecting the artistry of both the cuisine and knife-making. In Echizen City, Fukui, the blade-making industry has a history spanning nearly 700 years. From long “yanagiba” knives for sashimi to sturdy “menkiri” for noodles, Echizen blades are renowned for their sharpness and precision. In 1979, Echizen blades were designated a “Traditional Craft” by the national government. Today, visitors can not only shop for these finely crafted tools but also learn the techniques that have made them prized across Japan. Takefu Knife Village, a cooperative run by 14 knife-making companies, serves as the center of the Echizen blade industry. At its Knife Workshop, visitors can experience nearly every step of the knife-making process — from heating and forging materials to attaching handles and finishing the blades. Under the careful guidance of craftsmen, participants can create paper knives, outdoor knives, or various types of kitchen knives, which they can take home the same day. A free tour of the communal workshop is also available, offering the chance to watch artisans at work.

[Takefu Knife Village](#)

Notice

11. Tour Tokyo’s underground flood-diversion facility amid a fusion of light and sound



©Edogawa River Office, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure,Transport and Tourism

One of the world’s largest underground flood-diversion facilities can now be explored through a new light-and-sound show launched under a government initiative. The 50-meter-deep Metropolitan Outer Area Underground Discharge Channel, a showcase of Japan’s cutting-edge civil engineering in disaster prevention, is transformed into a surreal, multidimensional space through the Disaster Prevention Underground Temple Illumination Tour, which began on Nov 11. During the tour, the Pressure Adjusting Tank — known as the Underground Temple for its imposing pillars — is illuminated in a dynamic visual-and-audio performance that follows the flow of a storm. The show unfolds in four parts: the first signs of heavy rain, flooding, flood control operations, and the return of clear skies. This initiative marks the final stage of eight enhancement plans to the facility. It adds a new program to the regular Underground Temple Tour, allowing visitors to experience firsthand the power of nature, the facility’s flood control functions, and the importance of disaster preparedness. The tour, priced at 1,500 yen per person, is open for reservations and will be held in November and December. Dates for 2026 have yet to be announced. [Metropolitan Outer Area Underground Discharge Channel](#)

Notice

12. JNTO unveils GREENxEXPO 2027 website to highlight Japan’s regional attractions



GREENxEXPO 2027 | Travel Japan - Japan National Tourism Organization (Official Site)
Photo location: Fuji Shibazakura Festival

The Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) has launched a special website for GREENxEXPO 2027, also known as the International Horticultural Expo 2027, in four languages (English, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, and Korean). Targeting foreign visitors and attendees, the website highlights the event to be held from 19 March to 26 September 2027. The expo aims to promote a sustainable society that coexists with nature through engagement with flowers and greenery. It will showcase horticulture, landscaping, and agriculture while fostering innovation, tourism, and regional revitalization across Japan. In addition to details about GREENxEXPO 2027, JNTO's website features travel content from across Japan, spotlighting parks and gardens, cuisine, agriculture, and culture. These are organized around the exhibition's four subthemes: Harmony with Nature, Coexistence through Greenery and Agriculture, Creation of New Industries, and Resolution through Cooperation. To encourage visitors to explore regional destinations, the website also includes model itineraries and detailed travel information about featured attractions.

[GREENxEXPO 2027 | Travel Japan - Japan National Tourism Organization \(Official Site\)](#)

Notes:

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

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

For media inquiries, including requests to use photographs, please contact JNTO at media_inquiry@jnto.go.jp



Copyright ©2025 Japan National Tourism Organization. All Rights Reserved.

※If you no longer wish to receive our email newsletter, please [click here to unsubscribe](#).