

# RISE

MONTHLY JOURNAL FROM JAPAN



## LETTER FROM EDITORS DESK

Dear Reader,

Ohayo Gozaimasu!!

In these unprecedented times, we hope you all are keeping safe. While Japan celebrated New Year on January 01, the lunar year changes on February 01, marking the beginning of the Year of the Tiger. This symbolizes strength and courage, hoping the Year 2022, will have a positive effect and wade through the sorrows and despair.

In January, Tokyo successfully hosted MEMS2022 at the Tokyo International Forum in the Marunouchi area. Located close to the Imperial Palace, Marunouchi is a strategic location for M.I.C.E. events, with a good selection of hotels and activities.

For M.I.C.E. groups, another initiative has been taken by ASICS (a Japanese sportswear brand), which has setup a run station in Marunouchi with a 5 km track, under the guidance of a professional coach. Running is a great team-building activity,

boosting the enthusiasm and team spirit. All these activities take place against the backdrop of the Imperial Palace, rejuvenating mind and body. In February, we will also see many international conferences happening in Kagoshima, Kobe, Osaka, Nagoya, Tokyo and many more places.

While in Niigata prefecture, the sake breweries are busy at work, as the work of sake brewing is done during the winter season. It provides the ideal temperature for fermentation and taste to mature.

Due to COVID-19, many hotels had to reduce human and robot workforce. But starting this year, Japan will be experience steady growth with international hotel brands expanding in Japan. It is expected to get 28 launches, with 4733 keys already set down. From Hoshino resorts, KAI Poroto, Hokkaido, the first one to open in the luxury segment on January 14th. In the coming years, we will also see the opening of luxury brands such as Bvlgari Hotel, MGM Resort Osaka, Unbound Collection by Hyatt and many more.

We hope you get to travel this year to Japan!

Stay Safe. Arigato Gozaimasu.





## NEW YEAR HOLIDAY IN JAPAN

BY SHARAD SHARMA

It is that time of the year when we all want to holiday and travel to our dream destinations that would make welcoming the New Year fun. Japan is one such destination that offers a unique experience. It's the traditional way of welcoming New Year and it is really fun to be part of such ceremonies.

In Japan, the New Year is a major holiday when most people visit their families, clean houses, prepare traditional meals and spend the days together. Japanese customs have been laid in such a way that a year-end means one is required to finish all their tasks and have a fresh start when the New Year starts. So, in Japan, bonenkao parties are organized (year forgetting parties) with the purpose of leaving all old troubles and worries behind and starting afresh.

New Year's Eve is a family affair, most of the

Japanese households stay together to eat and watch musical shows on television. The evening meal would have a soba (buckwheat noodle), symbolizing longevity. While families are together, they enjoy playing cards, badminton, and kite flying.

On January 01, Hatsumode festivities take place at every shrine and temple across Japan, and they continue for the first few days of the year. Most of the popular shrines have a festival-like atmosphere with food stalls, souvenir & lucky charm stalls to bring in great fortunes. There are specific sites to discard last year's luck charm. These practices continue from December 31 to January 01. People line up to get blessings in the main hall, and when it is midnight and a calendar change, temple bells are rung repeatedly to welcome the change. City transport services work through the night to manage the crowds.

In major metropolitan cities like Tokyo and Osaka, New Year's Eve is a bit different, with lavish parties, music, dancing, and fireworks. On January 2nd, Royal family members of Japan address the crowd from the Imperial Palace balcony, and the inner gardens facing the balcony are open to the public.

While most of the city's museums, gardens, and attractions are closed between December 29 and January 04, it is advisable to plan travel accordingly to avoid any inconvenience.

The best way to enjoy the New Year holiday in Japan is not to be in the big cities like Tokyo, Osaka, or Kyoto, but to be in the countryside of Japan with local families to really enjoy the traditional feast and visit shrines.





IMAGES © WAKURA ONSEN TOURISM ASSOCIATION

## WAKURA ONSEN – HOT SPRING OCEAN OF ISHIKAWA PREFECTURE

BY SONIA SINGH

Founded over 1200 years ago, Wakura Onsen, located beside Nanao Bay on the Noto Peninsula in Ishikawa Prefecture, is one of the oldest hot spring resorts in the region. This resort town of Hokuriku has been patronised by Japanese people and is slowly becoming popular with foreign visitors as well.

In 1880, Wakura Onsen's water won third prize Global Mineral Springs Expo and became well-known for its high quality and medical effects.

Wakura Onsen can be reached from Kanazawa. You will need to take a train

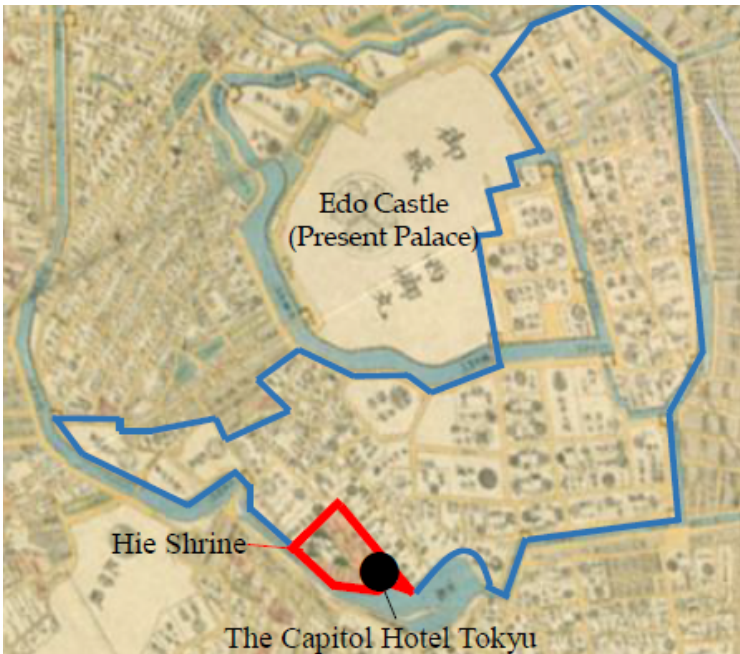
along the JR Nanao Line to Nanao Station, and then transfer to Noto Railway Line to Wakura Onsen Station. Wakura Onsen is located about two kilometers away from Wakura Onsen Station. It is possible to walk the distance in about 30 minutes, but some hotels offer free pick-up, and there are also local buses and taxis.

It is said that the hot spring temperature rises to 80 degrees Celsius and is filled with sodium and calcium chloride springs. The water source is said to have anti-bacterial effects, moisturize, and beautify skin. In addition, it is also believed to cure muscle and joint pain and be good for

gastrointestinal diseases. However, tourists are recommended to share information if they suffer from any diseases before entering onsen. There are about 20 ryokans in Wakura Onsen. The water's surface of the outdoor bath has a view of the sky blending with the sea, as if it were floating the calm Nanao Bay. There are also "foot bath" and "hand bath" inside Wakura Onsen area, where you can enjoy the hot springs casually.

If you plan a motorcycle tour, you can stop at Wakura Onsen for a quick night stay or even a day trip.





## AKASAKA, TOKYO – WHERE THE SAMURAI POST MEETS JAPANESE LUXURY

BY AIKO MIYAUCHI – THE CAPITOL HOTEL TOKYU

Today, Akasaka, located in the centre of Tokyo, is one of the most luxurious residential areas and is also the top commercial district. However, its past is steeped in history, with the area recognized as a residential area whose dwellers were top high-class Samurai that were called “Daimyo”.

Created in 1858 during the late Edo period (a part of Japan’s history dating from 1603-1867 which was ruled by the Tokugawa Shogunate), the map shows the Edo Castle, which was surrounded by two layers of moats. Edo, the former name of the city known during modern times as Tokyo, was

the biggest and most crowded city in the world, with a population twice the size of Paris at that time.

Inside of the second layer of the moat and indicated by the blue area on the map, it shows the residential area for the Daimyo lords, who were the most powerful samurai class after Shogun, the rulers of Japan at that time. In the red area on the map, the Hie Shrine, which was built in the most important location based on Japanese directionology, a system akin to astrology, to protect the castle as well as bless the Tokugawa’s long lasting prosperity. Even to this day, the Hie Shrine still stands in the

same place as a special guardian of Edo city (Tokyo).

These historical facts show Akasaka’s recognition as a precious and high-class area for a long time, and continues to be considered high-end and of significant importance to the city, and even wider country, well into modern times.

After the Edo period was succeeded by the Meiji period, the dawn of modern Japan, Akasaka became a big entertainment district due to the Japanese peerages, who were former Samurai working for the Tokugawa government, and high officials

IMAGES © THE CAPITOL HOTEL TOKYU





IMAGES © THE CAPITOL HOTEL TOKYU

living there. As a place of social gathering, there were many fine dining and fancy Ryotei restaurants, as well as nightclubs in the area, which made Akasaka a fusion city of paradise for gastronomy, corporate headquarters, and luxury hotels. The area is still the centre of politics in Japan, even in 2022.

Located next to the Hie Shrine, our hotel The Capitol Hotel Tokyu stands on Star Hill as one of the most iconic luxury hotels in Tokyo. Just like Akasaka's history, we have a long history of providing luxury accommodation, originally starting in 1963 under the name The Tokyo Hilton Hotel, which was the very first international luxury hotel in Japan to open after World War Two. Thanks to the hotel's location, standing between the Prime Minister's

official residence, the Imperial Palace, and Hie Shrine, guests can feel the beating heart of Japan's metropolis.

Entering the hotel through a bamboo grove into the beautiful entrance hall which was created by the world-renowned architect Kengo Kuma, this Japanese-owned hotel incorporates the calming aesthetics of a traditional Japanese inn, including sliding paper doors in the guest rooms within an ultra-modern skyscraper. The hotel offers exclusive experiences for guests - including geisha-hosted dinners and Shinto ceremony experiences - and is a favourite haunt of an array of international VIPs.

With its rich past and significance to Japanese history, choosing to stay at The Capitol Hotel Tokyu is the perfect choice

for visitors from India. Its location allows guests to walk to see the best of Tokyo, from the old to the new, and our position next to Hie Shrine allows visitors to truly experience the tranquility of a shrine. We are proud of our onsite restaurants that offer vegan and vegetarian menus to suit travellers from all over the world. Our team is proud to welcome guests into our hotel, which offers the very best in Japanese hospitality.





## VEGAN FOOD IN JIYUGAOKA— TOKYO'S LITTLE EUROPE

BY ICHIRO HATTA

Japan is one of the most popular destinations for gastronomy. If you are travelling from India to Tokyo, you may wish to eat vegan food with strict restrictions. From the time you start planning a Japan trip, you will only look for Indian restaurants and later have FOMO moments for Japanese food.

Jiyugaoka is situated at the southern end of Meguro and is known as Tokyo's Little Europe. This area is famous for cherry blossoms in Marie Claire Dori (street), the Kumano shrine, and amazing food too.

Plus Veganique, Jiyugaoka in Meguro City, Tokyo, serves completely vegan food, aiming to combine vegan, organics, and macrobiotics. Started by Mr. Yashio Kato and Ms. Shinobu Kato in 2016, the restaurant

serves only plant-based foods and no animal products, like the use of eggs, dairy products, or chemical seasoning. Promoting the farm to table concept, the vegetables are directly delivered by farmers to this restaurant. All the dishes are made with 100% vegetable ingredients.

Different menus are available for lunch and dinner servings. Depending on the dish, prices typically range between JPY 1500 and JPY 4000. You can order dishes like bruschetta, grilled vegetables, fruits, canapes, and more. Other lunch selections include their vegetarian lasagna with a soy milk béchamel sauce or the brown rice paella, both of which come served with the soup of the day.

If you love eating desserts, then you can also choose a sampler-style plate of three different desserts starting at a price of JPY 1500 onwards, which changes daily. Just ask the staff for the menu of the day. The restaurant has a seating capacity of 30 people and can be booked exclusively for parties as well. If you book in advance, you can also try the gluten-free menu.

Furthermore, Plus Veganique, Jiyugaoka restaurant is 15 minutes by car from the Meguro River and 12 minutes by foot from Joen-ji Temple. The Joen-ji Temple has a large ginkgo tree standing in the temple grounds that is said to be 300 years old. It is also known as the Large Ginkgo Tree Temple. Why not combine a Japanese culture visit with Japanese vegan food?





IMAGES © MIYAJIMA-MOMIJINOGA

## DRESS LIKE A NOBLE WOMAN

BY EMI ITO

Thinking of trying Japanese traditional wear, like Yukata or Kimono, is the first thing that comes to your mind. Are you aware that you can try on a "Tsubo-Syozoku" costume and dress like a noble woman or princess from the Heian Period, 1,000 years ago, during your sightseeing in the Miyajima Islands, which is an excursion from Hiroshima?

It is said that during the Heian period, ladies of noble birth were supposed to have their faces covered. They wore "ichime-gasa," a straw hat with a white veil. Their garments included "Kakemamori," a charm holder around the neck in which they carried medicine to

ensure their safe journey. The red cord tied at the shoulder was called "Kake-obi," and it was believed that the red colour had some protecting and purifying power in ancient times. For gentlemen, the noble costume "Kariginu" is available.

These costumes are limited in numbers and have specifications. For this experience, the maximum service capacity was nine people. While making a booking, please do check the availability. You may choose to roam around an indoor or outdoor location. Depending on the package type, pricing starts from JPY 4500 to JPY 8000. From June to September, "Tsubo-Syozoku" is available for summer

with thin and breathable material. You can enjoy a stroll in an authentic Tsubo-Syozoku costume for 1 hour and 30 minutes around Momjidani park, Daishoin temple, and Takinokoji street. Certain areas, like Itsukushima Shrine and Senjokaku are restricted.

If you have a MICE group that will be visiting the Miyajima Islands, then a special arrangement with a welcome banner and women dressed in tsubo-syozoku can welcome your guests. This activity needs to be booked in advance.





## ISLAND MIRRORGE MR – NIIGATA

BY EMI ITO

The Island Mirrorge is a Mixed Reality (MR) attraction that allows visitors to actually work around the Sado Kinzan tunnel in the historic Sado Gold Mine.

Sado Kinzon was located on Sado Island, a remote island in Niigata Prefecture. This island was once supported by the finances of the Edo Shogunate by manufacturing oval coins under direct control of the Tokugawa Shogunate since its opening in 1601. This place was nationalized in 1869. It became an imperial property under the jurisdiction of the Imperial Household Ministry and contributed to the modernization of Japan. Due to its high historical value, it was added

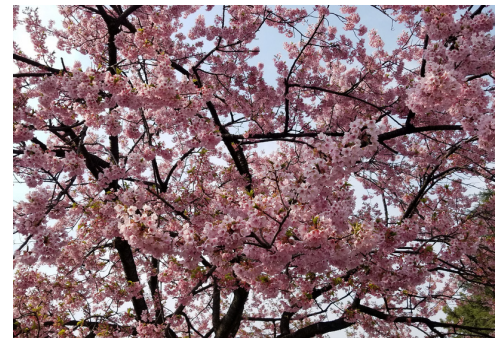
to the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List in 2010, and since then, they are aiming for full registration. The story takes place in a gold mine towering in the middle of a mysterious island floating in the indigo sea. A towering gold mine in the middle of the island has been the site of legends about "Golden Light Stone" and otherworldly monsters since ancient times. While wearing the MR Glasses, which integrate cutting-edge technology and projection mapping, you will create a space that takes you to a world of fantasy.

This work of Island Mirrorge was developed in collaboration with Broadcasting System of

Niigata Inc., Tyffon Inc., Golden Sado Inc., and NIIGATA-SADO Tourism Authority Co., Ltd., with the support of the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry's Subsidy Project of the Japan Content Localization and Distribution Live Entertainment, and the development, production, and dissemination of highly advanced content. In addition, the company also donates a portion of ticket sales to fund activities for Sado Island to be registered as a World Heritage Site, thereby encouraging its registration as a World Heritage Site.

Come experience the new experience like never before.





## MY JAPAN – A WORK IN PROGRESS

BY GINA RIVERA, CHIBA JAPAN

My story in Japan has started in Chiba. I've learned my first Japanese expression here, met new friends, get involved in the local community and discover the 'real' Japanese culture. I am thankful enough that I live here where the great access to the bounty of the country, people, culture and history.

Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter are my favorite in Japan without bias because each season give me something to look forward to each year. For example, I look forward to Spring because it's the season I feel that things are getting back into life where trees start to leaves and flowers to bloom. In Summer, I cannot be excited enough to put on summer kimono or 'yukata' and join bon dance, see spectacular fireworks display and of course the food kiosks or 'yatai' that cannot be without in every festival. Driving

in the country side for the Autumn foliage is a must experience in Japan during Fall where the colors of the leaves change into vibrant shades of orange, red, yellow, and brown. Playing in the snow, hot spring experiences and hot pot dishes or 'nabe' are just some of the things I look forward to during the Winter time. In Japan, because of its distinct climate, there are plenty of seasonal foods that can only be savored for a very short time.

Japan is a very beautiful country, showcasing many amazing landscapes, rich history and cultural heritage. But what set Japan more unique? The country is known for the flower viewing or hanami. But cherry blossom trees are found not only in Japan but in many other places in the world. So why it is popular in Japan and not in other places? Maybe

because here in Japan, this is the only country in the world where people care to spend a moment to celebrate the beauty of nature by gathering underneath a cherry blossom tree singing, drinking, and eating? And this habit doesn't end within family or friends but it is widely practice by companies, by communities and the society as a whole making it a nationwide event.

Like myself, I know that people who have been here can tell many amazing stories about the country. For me, to understand the country is to experience the culture firsthand. Visiting places, associating with people, and learning from them plays a vital part in the exploration. The journey has started, and 'My Japan' is a work in progress.





Useful  
Expressions for  
Shopping in  
Japanese

Let us  
learn



HOW MUCH IS THIS ?-KORE WA IKURA DESU KA  
 WHERE IS .....?-.....DOKO NI ARIMASU KA  
 YOU HAVE .....?- .....(GA) ARIMASU KA  
 CAN I LOOK AT IT? - MITE MO II DESU KA  
 I'LL TAKE IT. - KORE NI SHIMASU  
 CAN I RETURN IT?- HENPIN SURU KOTO GA  
 DEKIMASU KA  
 WHICH ONE IS THE BEST AMONG THESE?- KONO  
 NAKA DE DORE GA ICHIBAN II KANA

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FOR FEEDBACK WRITE AT SHARAD@NTH-INDIA.COM OR SONIA@NTH-INDIA.COM