

RISE

MONTHLY JOURNAL FROM JAPAN



LETTER FROM EDITORS DESK

Dear Reader,

Ohayo Gozaimasu!!

Tokyo Olympics concluded on 08th August 2021 with a team “World We Share”, and message that went out was phenomenal. World leaders have applauded Tokyo’s efforts in delivering safe and successful sporting event.

Summer season also marked its arrival with fields filled with Himawari – Sunflower, it is a sight that should not be missed if you happen to be in Japan during the month of August. Some of the best places to view are the area located in suburbs of Kyoto. Sunflower is also considered as the symbol of hope and recovery in Japan. During the Tokyo 2020 Olympic games, at the podium

finishing athletes were handed over Sunflower bouquets.

Obon festivals falls on 10th day of lunar month that might be mid of July or August. It is festival to honour spirits of one’s ancestors. During the summer month, some of the other festivals that take are Nebuta festival in Aomori prefecture, Kanto festival in Akita prefecture, Danjiri festival in Osaka prefecture and Awa Odori festival in Tokushima prefecture. These festivals feature dancing and night illumination in the form of bright floats, fireworks and lanterns.

Stay Safe. Arigato Gozaimasu.



FURUMACHI GEIGI— GEISHA'S OF NIIGATA

BY SHARAD SHARMA

When we talk about Geisha Culture, the first place that comes to our mind is Kyoto's Gion District. But did you know about the Furumachi Geigi (meaning Geisha of Niigata) from Niigata City!

Niigata City was a port city and important shipping trade for rice during Edo and Meiji Period. During this time, the culture of "Ryotei" and Geigi was developed here and still being carried on today. Furumachi Geigi, are women who entertained guests at banquets, performing traditional Nihon buyo dances (Ichiyama style) and playing

parlour games called o-zashiki-asobi with the guests. One can experience Geigi entertainment at "Ryotei". Ryotei are luxurious Japanese restaurant serve traditional Kaiseki menu with other local specialties and have live performances by Geigi depending upon duration decided at the time of reservations. Normally the event at the ryotei will have 3 Geigi performing, one playing shamisen and 2 others demonstrate some Geigi dances, and however there is no rule for the number of Geigi to perform.

The performance usually is for 1-1.5 hours. If one wishes to add party atmosphere, Geigi will play a game called "taruken" which is similar to rock-paper-scissors with rhythm beaten out on a barrel. At the end of the performance you are allowed to take photographs with Geigis. They are friendly and welcoming, and it is one of the important characteristics of Geigi.

The traditions called Furumachi-Kagai culture developed over the years now. This culture will continue to be preserved together with the Furumachi.



HAPPO-EN, TOKYO

BY ROSA ALDRIDGE, HAPPO-EN CO., LTD.

Located in the heart of Tokyo, Happo-en boasts a vast Japanese garden with over 400 years of history, 3 restaurants serving a variety of cuisine on site, as well as 15 unique banquet halls that vary in size, original décor, and sophisticated designs. The largest banquet hall can comfortably host 450 seated guests or up to 750 standing guests. (*These numbers are based on a time after Covid-19.)

With an in-house production team at Happo-En, the team is able to plan and execute creative business events, while

providing one-stop event production services. The health and safety of customers is at the core of the company, and to achieve this Happo-en's team has implemented 33 counter measures to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, making it one of the safest event spaces in Tokyo.

Happo-en also believes in promoting food diversity, hence one initiative they are undertaking is working with producers from all over Japan and using ingredients that have been certified by international

standards to better welcome guests from all over the world.

In order to deliver the very best in hospitality, the chefs have devised menus that can accommodate an array of dietary lifestyles from vegetarian to vegan, food allergies and even religion focused diets.

Happo-en has been emphasizing on the natural beauty of Japan and also masters in delivering innovative and one of a kind experiences for business meeting and events.



KAKIGORI, SUMMER DESSERT OF JAPAN

BY ICHIRO HATTA

Every year during summer in the month of August, you will see shops selling Kakigori – huge mounds of shaved ice, topped with fruit syrup. Kakigōri is a traditional Japanese shaved ice dessert, flavored with various sorts of fruit syrup such as strawberry, melon, lemon, cherry, blue raspberry, Japanese citrus, sweet plum, and grape. With less crunchy texture, kakigōri is very soft, light and fluffy, and melts in mouth like freshly fallen snow.

Kakigōri dates back to the Heian era, over 1000 years ago. It wasn't until the 1800's that kakigōri became a popular treat accessible to all. The first kakigōri shop opened in 1869, in Yokohama. Kakigōri was

originally made using a hand-cranked machine, which would spin huge ice blocks against a blade to shave off chips of ice. Today's kakigōri is made using electric ice shavers.

In summer, street stalls at Japanese festivals sell shaved ice. Seasonal shops also crop up around major cities and towns. There are also specialty kakigōri tea houses and cafes that serve the frozen treat year-round. Each cafe has its own unique take on the delicious frozen dessert. One cafe in Tokyo, Cafe Lumiere even sells kakigōri encased in a meringue shell and drizzled with alcohol, which is then lit on fire!

If you are lucky, you might still see street vendors shaving ice with the vintage hand-cranked machines in Japan during the summer. Kakigori can be found everywhere from convenience stores to restaurants to food vendors including dessert shops and tea houses.

Some of the most common type of Kakigori in Japan are Matcha Green Tea Syrup, Mochi and Azuki Beans.

One Kakigori is priced between 500-2000 Japanese Yen.



IN & AROUND TOKYO DURING SUMMER

BY YUKI IKEDA

Summers in Japan are marked with blossoming of Sunflowers and not just thousands of them but fields are filled with different variety of Sunflowers. It is amongst one of the best times to be in Japan, yes temperatures are on rise, but destination provides ample of opportunity to discover not so visited flower fields, farms and beaches.

If visiting Sunflower fields in and around Tokyo, consider it between late July to August. The sight of the bright yellow fields under the blue sky shall leave you thrilled. Some of the best places to

located sunflowers are the Tokyo residential area parks, near by farms and also Tokyo suburbs.

Himawari Garden Musashimurayama, located in the located in a residential area of Tokyo, is the largest sunflower field in the city. Located just an hour away from Shinjuku station, makes it more convenient to travel. We suggest that you must check the schedule before going to the park, as it opens from 09 Am to 05Pm with a small entry fee of 300 YEN.

Another start attraction is the Zama Sunflower Festival, it happens in Zama City every year in mid-August. The festival is split into two area, Zama Sunflower field and Yotsuka Sunflower field, they are filled with approximately 5Lakh flowers.

With all the fun with flowers and other activities, it is a must do activity.



GLAMPING AT MOUNT FUJI

BY EMI ITO

Glamping or Glamorous camping over the years has gained popularity amongst travellers. Enjoy open spaces, breathe mountain air and experience best of Japan's natural landscapes with stress free holiday in wilderness.

An eco-luxury camping at Mt. Fuji, which opened in March 2021, offering private glamping for people who appreciate eco-conscious lifestyle. This facility is next to Shira -Ito Falls in Fujinomiya City on western side of Shizuoka Prefecture

with panorama views of Mt Fuji and countryside. This glamping facility was opened by company "NGO Ecologic for supporting the development of community-based ecotourism around the world, focusing on local people, issues, and resources. They work with "shoku-nin," local craftsmen such as sake brewers, soba noodle makers, kimono shop owners, the makers of wagashi (Japanese sweets), and more to promote sustainable tourism.

With a rental of one group of four to eight

people per day. Sleeping accommodations and glamping tents are provided. Facilities such as the lounge outfitted in warm wood, two shower rooms and toilets that can be used all day, as well as other spaces for relaxing, such as a "Fujimi deck" to gaze upon Mt. Fuji, and a Japanese-style garden. One at the camping site, you may enjoy open grill overlooking Mt. Fuji or just enjoy some of the best available coffee or just take the e-bicycle and enjoy the scenic ride.

IN CONVERSATION WITH MS ANITA RAO KASHI

BY DEEPAK SINGH

Ms. Anita Rao Kashi is an independent journalist, travel and food writer based in Bangalore, India, with over 25 years of journalistic experience. She started her career with the The Times of India as a civic and political correspondent and worked there for 12 years after which she went on with freelance in 2006 to write about travel and food. Apart from writing for various national and international magazines, newspapers and websites, on diverse topics including travel and food, she has also worked on travel and food guides, and coffee table books. For Anita, travel is all about the novelty and unexpectedness that brings, the fascination of diverse cultures and people, and tasting of new food.



What is your main focus while travelling? Like - Luxury, experiential, food trail etc.

No visit can possibly give the traveler the full picture of the place. Having said that, it has been my experience that the best way to get a tiny glimpse of any place is through an immersive experience. This is many faceted. It involves local history, culture, heritage (including natural heritage) and of course food.

ushered me into the correct bus at the airport to the chef in downtown Tokyo who served up the perfect sushi.

Could you please share with us some of your secret photo spots and local foodie recommendations during your visit?

Local food is such an integral part of the experience of visiting a new city or new country. Japan pleasantly surprised me with its smorgasbord of food options that went beyond sushi and ramen. My must-try recommendations: okonomiyaki experience (savory pancakes served on a griddle at the table) in Osaka, yakitori in Ginza district, ramen and tempura near Asakusa temple, street food such as takoyaki (octopus in wheat balls topped with katsuboshi or bonito flakes) and the indulgent kushikatsu (everything is deep fried and pleasantly spicy). Also try other street food dishes such as mung bean cakes, puff pastries stuffed with meat, rice cakes, barbecued seafood and teppanyaki dispensing fried ramen to piquant chicken.

utterly comfortable. On the other hand, a little train from within Kamakura city to Hase-dera temple slowly traverses a part of the way through rows of tightly packed pretty houses with beautiful gardens and yards, making it a lovely journey.

Any tips or recommendations which you would like to give to our travellers planning to travel to Japan in future..

Japan is the kind of place where you can pack your days with activities and sights or just leisurely amble around. There's so much to see in Japan that you have to be clear about what experiences work best for you. Do thorough research and make sure you are not hindered by the language barrier.



We would like to know what inspired you to travel to Japan and when did you travel?

I travelled to Japan in late 2017. To say that I have always wanted to go to Japan is both an understatement and trite. Japanese minimalism and aesthetics have always fascinated me and I discovered how much of it is rooted in its culture, tradition and history on my short visit.

Share your Japanese Omotenashi experience during your stay in Japan.

Throughout my stay, I was struck by the warm hospitality and responsiveness and it followed me wherever I went. At times, it went over and beyond what I expected. What surprised me was that it was something that I found everywhere -from the youngsters who

Your recommendation for mode of transport when in Japan?

Public transport, whether within a city or connecting cities, is the best mode of transport to get around in Japan. It is fast, clean, easy and convenient. What's more, punctuality is legendary. Throughout my stay, I never used anything else. If you cannot follow the language, things are well signposted or ask for help. Personally, I had a couple of memorable experiences. Travelling on the bullet train, Shinkansen, was fascinating. It was incredibly fast and yet



What would be your recommendation(s) for a traveler planning holiday in Japan?

While the fast-paced rhythm of Tokyo is fascinating, it is the leisurely visits to such places as Kamakura and wandering around the streets of Kyoto that enthralled even more. Make sure to mix your itinerary with the glitz and glamor of cities along with places beyond them. Visit at least one garden or nature park each day for the sheer beauty and tranquility. For culture vultures, try to fit in a traditional performance such as Kabuki, a robust and engaging theatre performance.



CRAFT EXPERIENCE, JAPAN

BY SONIA SINGH

HAKONE YOSEGI

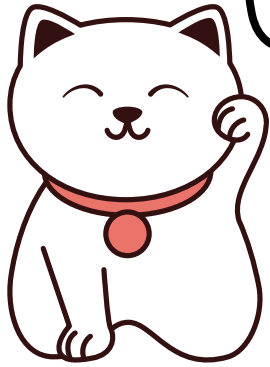
Hakone Yosegi is a traditional Japanese parquetry developed during Edo period from Hakone, Kanagawa prefecture. Various types of wooden pieces with different colors to are used to produce traditional Japanese-style patterns like "ichimatsu" and flax leaves. A variety of Yosegi products includes puzzle box, jewelry box, coaster and cups which are good option for souvenirs too.

NAMBU TEKKI

Nambu Tekki ironware is historically traced back to the cities of Morioka and Mizusawa in Iwate prefecture. The iron ware is said to being rust-resistant, long-lasting, and heat-retaining. Nambu Tekki ironware was officially certified as the first Traditional Craftwork of Japan and widely recognized and cherished all over the world.

KOKESHI DOLLS

Kokeshi Dolls are traditional wooden dolls from Tohoku region, which started to be made during Edo period. There are two main types of kokeshi dolls: traditional "dento kokeshi" that were developed in the Tohoku region and the "sosaku kokeshi" featuring more modern designs. Traditional kokeshi dolls are further divided into 11 unique types, each one with a different shape and design depending on the region.



Useful
numbers in
Japanese

Let us
learn



- ① ZERO – REI
- ② ONE – ICHI
- ③ TWO – NI
- ④ THREE – SAN
- ⑤ FOUR – YON / SHI
- ⑥ FIVE – GO
- ⑦ SIX – ROKU
- ⑧ SEVEN – NANA
- ⑨ EIGHT – HACHI
- ⑩ NINE – KYŪ

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