

RISE

MONTHLY JOURNAL FROM JAPAN



LETTER FROM EDITORS DESK

Dear Reader,

Ohayo Gozaimasu!!

The autumn season brought a change in nature, with leaves changing their colours, turning the atmosphere into a painting of itself. The change was not just happening to nature but also to the destination, Japan. COVID-19 cases are on the decline, Japan has opened its borders to business person and students. Also, the vaccination drive is catching pace, and a little over 75% of the population got inoculated. From December, the Government is planning to start administering third doses to all people who have gone at least eight months since receiving their second dose.

For the automotive enthusiasts, Porsche opened its Tokyo Experience Centre near the capital, in Kisarazu City. It includes a handling track, a dynamics area, an off-road track, as well as other various track contents to allow you to the full range of Porsche sports car performance.

Soon, holiday season will ring in the festive bells with Christmas and New Year. It is one of the best times to be in Japan, with alleyways lit up, stores decorated in Christmas theme, and people in joy.

Team at RISE wishes its readers a Merry Christmas and Joyful New Year!!

Stay Safe. Arigato Gozaimasu.



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TOKYO ILLUMINATION

BY SONIA SINGH

Needless to say, cherry blossoms in the spring and autumn leaves in the fall in Japan are on everyone's bucket list. The winter season also offers special moments, but it's more than just ancient shrines and peaceful mountains covered with snow.

In a large and modernized city like Tokyo, you find something unique to modern city life adopted new trends and technologies. Around November to December, many different streets and open spaces in the city are illuminated by the latest ideas and techniques. Those winter illuminations light up the city more beautifully and

create warm and exciting atmosphere to celebrate the winter holiday season.

Omotesando avenue is one of the popular spots. It's originally constructed as the main approach to Meiji-jingu Shrine over a hundred years ago. You still see some traditional features, like symbolic huge stone lanterns at the entry. But now it's well-known as one of the trendiest areas filled with fashionable shops and restaurants. Along the avenue stretches over 1 km, about 150 of Zelkova trees wound around with over 900,000 light up the street in champagne gold.

By just walking along the street, you eventually blend in with locals and share the same winter wonderland feeling with them. Only 10 min away from Omotesando area by Tokyo's clean and safe taxi, you can hop to another popular winter illumination spots in Roppongi area. Find your favorite one and feel the winter holiday season atmosphere just like the locals.

For more details information, please visit the Official Tokyo Travel Guide.
<https://www.gotokyo.org/en/index.html>



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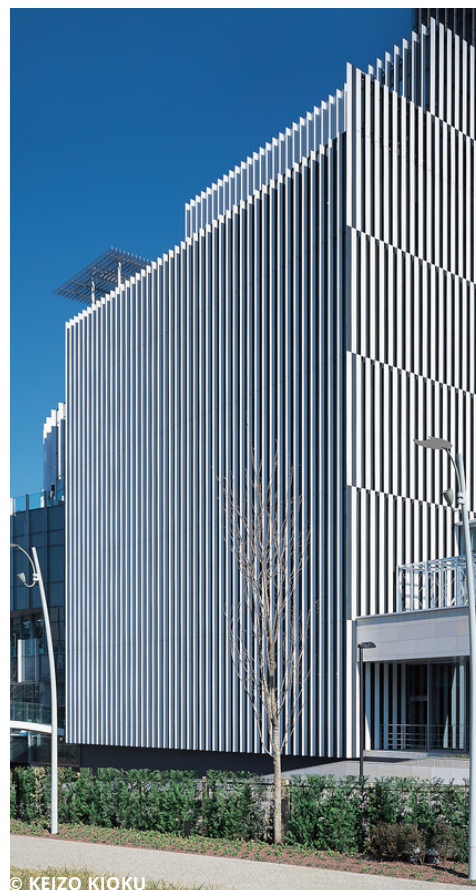
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SUNTORY MUSEUM OF ART, ROPPONGI, TOKYO

BY MARIKO YAMAGISHI

Suntory Museum of Art is in Roppongi, a historic area where daimyo residences lined the streets in the 17th century. Today, embassies from over 40 countries, international schools, hotels and global company headquarters make it a culturally diverse area where artists and other creatives drive the culture and economy, and annual events like Roppongi Art Night keep art and design at its forefront. The museum relocated to Roppongi with the opening of Tokyo Midtown, a major mixed-use complex, in 2007 and remains one of the foremost facilities in this hub of art and design.

Suntory Museum of Art has a collection of about 3,000 items, including one national

treasure and 15 important cultural properties, ranging from Japanese antiques such as paintings, ceramics, lacquerware and textiles to glass from the East and West. It opened in Marunouchi, Tokyo, in 1961, moved to Akasakamitsuke in 1975 before Roppongi in 2007 but through its mainly Japanese art-centric exhibitions has always had "Art in Life" as its guiding philosophy.

The museum also offers a variety of art-related content for MICE visitors such as workshops on current exhibitions and lectures on Japanese art for visitors to learn and experience with beautiful 4K projection. Suntory Museum of Art's mission, "Art

revisited, beauty revealed," expresses the museum's wish to bring together ancient and contemporary art, Eastern and Western art, transcending differences in time, place and culture, and the hope is that as many people as possible will discover new beauty by experiencing and appreciating its exhibitions. Designed by architect Kengo Kuma, the museum offers a comfortable space where visitors can enjoy art at their leisure, away from the hustle and bustle of the city.

*Exhibitions and hall usage are currently limited to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Please inquire in advance about using the venue.

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FUGA FUNAYA, BOAT HOUSES OF INE

BY EMI ITO

Ine is one of Japan's most unique villages, with 230 funaya (boat houses) built right on Ine Bay. It is considered as one of Japan's Most Beautiful Villages, and visitors can even stay overnight in a renovated funaya. Fuga is a renovated funaya that is now an accommodation. The accommodation is for the entire two-floor boat house, and is great for couples or small families (can accommodate up to four guests). The first floor's private pier even has a hot spring bath set right on the water's edge.

Ine is an active fishing village, so the day starts early with fishing boats returning to port full of fish. And the day also ends early, giving visitors time for a quiet and relaxing time in the afternoon and evening. The cuisine in Ine is mainly seafood based, and the restaurants in the village get their fish from the harbor in the mornings. Guests who stay here enjoy renting bicycles or walking the quiet streets, taking a sea taxi around the bay, or touring one of the three boat houses that are open to the public.

There are other experiences as well, like a sashimi making experience, that can be found on the Ine Tourist Association's website.

Getting to Fuga. Guests coming from Kyoto City can take the JR limited express train to Amanohashidate Station. Right outside Amanohashidate Station is the local bus that takes visitors to Ine. The bus ride is exactly one hour and drops of visitors next to the Ine Tourist Association. From there, it's only a 7-minute walk to Fuga.



IMAGES © NAGOYA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

SHIOTORI GARDEN – JAPANESE GARDEN OF NAGOYA

BY RIE FURUHASHI, NAGOYA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

There are many autumn-leaf viewing spots in Japan. Since the Japanese archipelago is long and narrow, the autumn foliage season takes about three months to move from north to south, which allows us to enjoy the beauty of colored leaves longer.

It's a great idea to visit mountains and valleys if you have plenty of time to appreciate the beauty of nature. Surrounded by magnificent scenery, you will be overwhelmed by the amazing views created by nature.

But if you do not have much time to go into nature, visiting Japanese gardens is a wise choice.

Shirotori Garden is located in the center of Nagoya, which is between Tokyo and Osaka. It is a 3.7-hectare pond garden that imitates the topography of this region including Mount Ontake or Ontake-san, the Kiso River or Kiso-gawa, and Ise Bay or Isewan, etc. all of which show the river flowing from its source to the ocean.

The garden shows a variety of appearances

throughout all the seasons, especially in autumn, it is decorated with beautiful colored leaves and lit up at night to delight visitors. Along with the autumn leaves, you can see a traditional gardeners' technique called "Yuki Tsuru". Ropes are stretched from the snow. You can enjoy the unique atmosphere of this time of year.

In the middle of the garden are Japanese tea rooms and a café where you can enjoy maccha, dessert and light meals.



OMAKASE DINING—NEOLD PRIVATE HOUSE, NARA

BY ICHIRO HATTA

The term omakase has become synonymous with fine dining and Japanese food, but what does it truly mean? The word comes from the verb 'makaseru' which literally translates to 'I'll leave it to you'; by saying this phrase, one entrusts the other party to make the decisions.

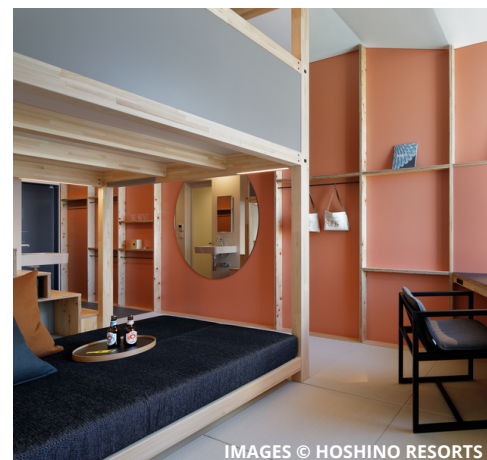
In Japanese cuisine, omakase shows faith in the chef to handpick and create dishes based on their skill and knowledge in seasonal ingredients. Japanese gourmet food is known for its ability to harness the natural flavor of the ingredients and bring

out the best taste of the seasons. This means that one can have an entirely different gourmet experience depending on the time of year they are in Japan.

At NEOLD Private House, meals are prepared with finesse in front of your eyes by head chef Kimihiro Ogino, who is highly trained in both Western and Japanese cuisines. With experience in catering to a variety of guests, one can customize meals to their taste with the assurance that the quality will remain sublime, no matter the dietary preferences.

In addition, one can enjoy a private performance of Kabuki or Noh - traditional Japanese theatre - on NEOLD's personal Noh stage. The staff are happy to provide the context and explanation behind the performances, for those worried about getting lost in translation.

Dine at NEOLD to feel the epitome of Omotenashi - the art of hospitality.



IMAGES © HOSHINO RESORTS

BEB5— BY HOSHINO RESORTS

BY EMI ITO

Hoshino Resorts BEB was established in 2019, which is the 5th branding following HOSHINOYA, RISONARE, KAI, and OMO, and the concept is "kicked-back stays with the crew." BEB was created keeping in mind the younger generation who wish to tailor their trips, create their own travel adventures, sit and relax with friends in the lounge and talk the night away over a few beers, then fall asleep before they know it—the next day, wake up and decide the day's plans as it goes.

Under this concept, they created 2 properties – BEB5 Karuizawa and BEB5 Tsuchiura.

A unique feature of BEB5 Karuizawa is that you can enjoy onsen when you enter the

Hoshino Resorts Tombo-no-yu onsen, walking distance from the hotel, for only 500 Japanese yen. It also has 16 unique shops and restaurants having casual Japanese-style dining featuring set meals and a-la-carte dishes, Picchio—a guided eco-tour through the forest and nature. KERA-IKE Ice Rink: on a lake frozen in the middle of the forest, open during autumn and winter.

A unique feature in BEB5 Tsuchiura is that guests can "cycle-in" and "cycle-out", that is, check-in and check-out on their bicycle. The spacious interior enables guests to go around with a bicycle freely! Guests are also welcome to bring their bicycles into the rooms and stay.

A common feature among both properties is TAMARIBA, a public space open for 24 hours a day with pleasant music playing from DJ Booths. Guests can bring in their own food as well. A customized "My Space" with rugs and cushions, and helps you relax. You can enjoy breakfast anytime, anywhere, and you also have flexible check-out timings. There are YAGURA Rooms, which are tatami-floored and built in the style of traditional Japanese wooden scaffolding, where one can kick off their shoes and stretch out without a care in the world, just like in a secret treehouse hideout.

IN CONVERSATION WITH MR MITRAJIT BHATTACHARYA

BY DEEPAK SINGH

As an author, columnist, publisher, and marketing maven, Mitrajit Bhattacharya likes to introduce himself as a world traveler. In the past three decades of his working life, he has been to many countries in the world and some countries many times. And he has a special space in his heart for Japan, a country he has been travelling to since 2006. He loves to soak in the culture and the natural beauty and enjoy the exotic food of Japan.

What is your main focus while travelling? like-luxury, experiential, food trail etc.

Each travel experience is different and depends on the place you are travelling to. While I like to see the cherry blossom season across the length and breadth of Japan, I also enjoy the setting of autumn in the northern part of the country. Japan is ethereally beautiful in the fall. And discovering new food trails is a must on every trip.

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

I always wanted to travel to Japan. The first opportunity came in 2006 when a Swiss company invited me to attend a store inauguration in Ginza. In 2008, the next opportunity came up when a Japanese company invited me to experience Japan. This time around, I travelled to different parts of the country. Thereafter, I have been there thrice, all on invitation. That also included the one by Japan Tourism. I particularly like the confluence of tradition and modernity that Japan has on offer.

Share your Japanese Omotenashi experience during your stay in Japan.

There are many. In particular, I would like to mention the seven-course sit-on-the-floor dinner we had in a small town in the Nagano Prefecture. The men attended the dinner in the traditional yukatas and the women in their kimonos. Also, the experience of onsen (natural hot springs) or staying in a ryokan (traditional Japanese inns featuring tatami matted rooms) are special. I try and find time for these typical Japanese experiences. Attending a Sumo bout at Ryogoku Kokugikan or a Kabuki performance at Kabukiza Theatre are special occasions.

Did you have any unusual experiences while travelling in Japan?

Everything is a pleasant surprise in Japan. Watching the Mahabharata enacted by the master Kabuki artists in a Kabuki show. Or experiencing Sumo, the most famous sport of Japan, steeped in culture and ritual. As a foodie, discovering new street food experiences (though I must admit, it's easier for a non-vegetarian and a seafood-

lover), sleeping on the mat in a ryokan or dipping into a hot water onsen.

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

A full article can be written on my food recommendations. Here are my top picks:

1. Street food at Omoide Yokocho (Memory Lane) near Shinjuku station.
2. If you go with the locals, they know the best dishes that are never in the menu...Try and dig those up.
2. The ramen shops on the 8th floor of Kyoto's train station.
3. Seafood outside the Tsukiji market (now closed, but the retail shops and restaurants are open) in Tokyo. If you are brave with your choices, you can experience delicacies like fresh sea urchins and grilled eels.
4. Shabu Shabu (the famous Japanese DIY hotpot dish of thinly sliced meat and vegetables simmered in water), available in small authentic restaurants outside of Tokyo.
5. Street food outside of temples and shrines... I particularly enjoyed the lively street food counters outside Fushimi Inari shrine (famous for its orange -color torii gates) in Kyoto.
6. And start loving matcha before you head to Japan. You will find it in ice cream, drinks, and even Tiramisu (had one in Osaka).
7. The Nishiki market in Kyoto and the Dotonbori area in Osaka have fantastic small restaurants. Try the Takoyaki (octopus) balls with bonito flakes.

Any tips or recommendations that you would like to give to our travellers planning to travel to Japan in the future?

1. If you are planning a trip during the cherry blossom season, please consult the bloom calendar by region... starts from the south and travels north. Last chance to catch it in Hokkaido.
2. Purchase a JR pass in India prior to your trip and have it stamped before your first train ride in Japan. It's cheaper to buy the pass here. When you travel from Tokyo to Kyoto or Osaka, reserve your seat on the right side of the train to see an uninterrupted view of the Fujisan from your bullet train. Check the luggage



restrictions on bullet trains. If you have extra time, book them separately. Travel beyond Tokyo. Travel to Kyoto, Osaka, Nara, Nagano, and if you have time, go further south to Okinawa (great for diving) and to the extreme north (if you like to ski).

What is your recommendation for the mode of transport when in Japan?

The Metro is a great way to move around inside Tokyo, though taxis are easily available too. For sheer speed and comfort, bullet trains are the most convenient way to travel intercity, and then the smaller JR (Japan Railway) trains for the last mile of connectivity. Also, unless you are being picked up at the airport, limousine buses from Tokyo Narita are the best way to get dropped off near your hotel.

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

You have many beautiful places in the world, but there is none like Japan. Plan your trip for 2022 now.



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TWILIGHT EXPRESS MIZUKAZE

BY SONIA SINGH

A hotel rolling through the beautiful Japanese landscape.

Breath-taking scenery, exquisite haute cuisine by top-class chefs, sophisticated cars, and charming sights along the route...TWILIGHT EXPRESS MIZUKAZE offers you an exceptional train journey like no other. The train blends into the Japanese landscape beautifully, and boasts the superior quality of a hotel, with a touch of nostalgia.

The "MIZUKAZE Green" exterior, inherited from the former Twilight Express, blends into the surrounding landscape, and is accented with a gold emblem and trim. The

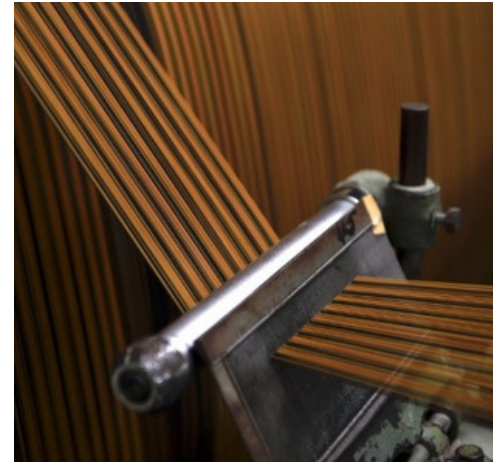
streamlined head car has an observation deck surrounded by five sweeping rails, and with round headlights, and a driver's compartment reminiscent of locomotives from a bygone era, it evokes a sense of nostalgia. The train is 10 carriages long, 6 of which house the guest rooms and suites, 1 dining car, 1 lounge car and two cars with observation decks at the front and end of the train.

The interior is inspired by Art Deco, a style popular in the 1920s and 30s. The cars contain decorative touches from regions along the routes. The large windows give sweeping views of the spectacular flowing scenery. With a menu assembled by the

internationally celebrated chef, Takeshi KADOKAMI, and overseen by top-class culinary artisans, enjoy the sumptuous lounge, dining, and observatory cars on one of Japan's most memorable train experiences.

There are 3 routes or "courses" around western Japan: the 2-day Sanyo course, 2-day San'in course and the 3-day San-in + Sanyo course.

These routes offer breath-taking views of not only the shoreline of Japan. It also gives you insight into the history and culture followed in Western Japan.



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SOUVENIR FROM NIIGATA

BY SONIA SINGH

Echigo is a traditional name for Niigata and is historically recognised as one of Japan's top rice-producing regions in Niigata Prefecture.

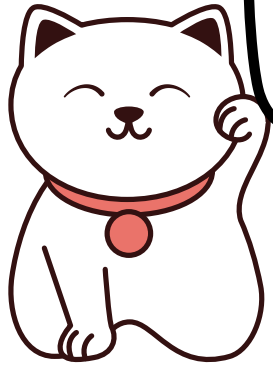
Furthermore, when you explore Echigo (Niigata), you can visit an area called Kameda, which is said to be the birthplace of the Kamedajima textile. Kameda is particularly known for its severe farming conditions, with rice fields in marshlands, where farmers have to labour in waist-deep water throughout the farming seasons. To handle such conditions, farmers needed strong outfits for working in rice fields. This led to the development of Kamedajima textiles by Kameda rice farmers.

Kamedajima textile began to decline after World War II and in the early 2000's, Kameda stripes were revived by two weavers who remained in the production area. It has now been registered with the Japan Patent Office as a regional brand of Niigata Prefecture (Regional Organization Trademark 2014).

Stripe patterns come in over 200 different variations due to their soft texture and durability. In addition to clothing, you can get a variety of souvenirs such as pouches, bags, fans, and reversible hats.

Another souvenir which you could pick from Niigata is the "Kiri-Geta" Japanese

foot ware from Kobayashi Shoes Store. These geta are made by hand by artisans using wood from the snow country, taking over 50 processes and more than a year to complete. There are also artistic geta, such as geta carved on paulownia wood and coated with lacquer. One can pick up this footwear from the central shopping street of Nishikan-ku in Niigata City, which has been in business since 1919.



Useful
Expressions in
Japanese

Let us
learn



NEVER GIVE UP – AKIRAMENAIDE
WAIT A MOMENT PLEASE– CHOTTO MATTE
KUDASAI
THANK GOODNESS – YOKATTA
CAN'T BE HELPED – SHIKATANAI
ROGER – RYOUKAI
NOT RIGHT –CHIGAU
ALL THE BEST – GANBATTE
NO WAY – IAYADA
AWESOME – SUGOI
I DON'T BELIEVE IT – SHINJIRARENAI

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