

RISE

MONTHLY JOURNAL FROM JAPAN



ENGETSU ISLAND, WAKAYAMA

LETTER FROM EDITORS DESK

Dear Reader,

Ohayo Gozaimasu!!

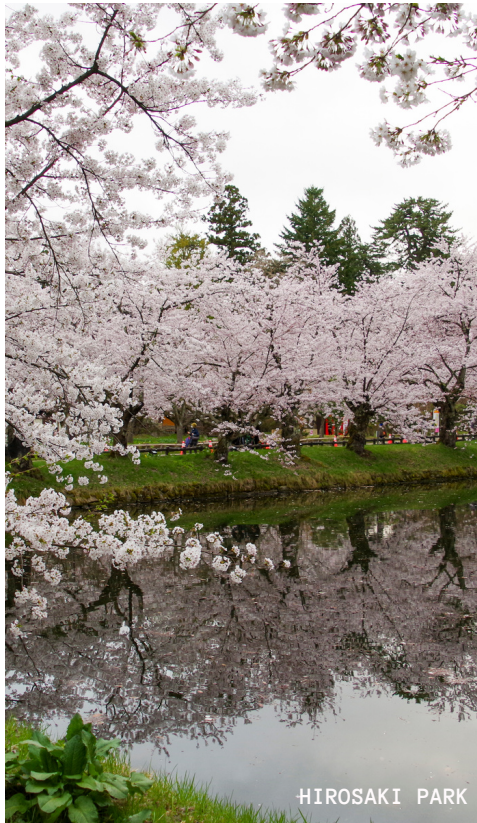
This lunar year is being marked as the year of the rabbit, symbolizing longevity, peace, and prosperity. While in Japan, things are coming back to normal with government easing COVID measures and easing border restrictions for travelers to enter Japan.

The upcoming spring season is already witnessing a surge in travel bookings, and it is expected that March and April may witness the maximum footfall of tourists. Popular cherry blossom viewing sites are carefully upgrading their facilities to welcome tourists. It is advisable to pre-book services to avoid any last-minute disappointments.

As Japan will welcome tourists after a three-year gap during cherry blossom season, do ensure that you are well versed in the latest bullet train luggage policies. Looking at the number of expected arrivals, do reserve seats on the bullet train. While entering Japan, Visit Japan Web is still applicable, and you should obtain a QR code before entering Japan.

For Indian travelers, most of the restaurants serving Indian cuisine are now fully functional, and they are now eagerly waiting to serve guests from their home country.

Arigato Gozaimasu!



HIROSAKI PARK



CHIDORIGAFUCHI PARK



OISHI PARK



HITACHI SEASIDE PARK

BEST OF SPRING DESTINATIONS

BY SHARAD SHARMA

Spring is a very important time of year for many people in Japan, as it marks the start of the season when beautiful flowers are growing everywhere. It's also a time to celebrate with friends and family. There are many ways you can spend spring in Japan, so here are our top spring spots! These divine spot offers many seasonal activities such as flower viewing, hiking and picnicking.

Hirosaki Park, Aomori Prefecture offers some of the best cherry blossom. Famous for its unique charming setting and holds top spot for hanami or cherry blossom viewing. Park has more than 50 varieties of sakura trees and around 2600 trees. Located in Hirosaki city in Aomori prefecture, conveniently connected to major cities like Tokyo, Niigata and Osaka

and can be reached easily by train or bus. The best time to visit park for awestruck moment is during evening when illumination creates magical ambiance. Don't miss walking along the Sakura Tunnel on the West Moat.

Hitachi Seaside Park, located in mito in Ibaraki prefecture with flowering field of 350 hectare along with an amusement park and several cycling and walking trails. The park's iconic flower is the blue nemophila, which covers Miharashi Hill in the spring and mimics the color of the sky. The flowers are usually at their peak from late April to mid-May. In fall, the hill is covered by green kokia bushes which slowly turn red as the weather turns cooler. These autumnal colors are usually best from early to mid-October.

Chidorigafuchi park & moat, Tokyo's top cherry blossom viewing spot, located along the moat of Imperial Palace. A 700 Meters walk way, becomes most visited spot during spring season. There are hundreds of cherry blossom trees of different variety to woo visitors. In evening trees are illuminated, giving a beautiful effect and visitors could enjoy a stroll or rowboat ride.

Oishi Park, Lake Kawaguchiko, one of the most scenic spots of Mt. Fuji. From late April through early May, this park is covered with pink moss flower carpet. The best time to view lavender is from late June through early July. This park is a all season must visit destination but tops the list during spring season.

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ASHIKAGA FLOWER PARK



HIMEJI CASTLE



CHUREITO PAGODA



ALPINE ROUTE

Fuji Shibazakura, festival takes place around three kilometres south of Lake Motosuko (one of the five lake of Mt. Fuji). The festival takes place from mid-April to early June. With 800,000 plants packed into 2.4 hectares, the festival promises only the most spectacular views of a number of varieties of phlox subulata, set around a small lake, against the backdrop of Japan's most famous landmark - Mt. Fuji.

Chureito Pagoda, is a five storied pagoda on the mountainside overlooking Fujiyoshida City and Mount Fuji off in the distance. The pagoda is part of the Arakura Sengen Shrine and was built as a peace memorial in 1963 nearly 400 steps up the mountain from the shrine's main buildings. During cherry blossom season, hundreds of trees bloom and provide picture perfect scenery with Mt. Fuji in backdrop.

Tateyama Kurobe Alpine Route, it is opens from spring season and closes during the autumn season. Tourist from

across the globe decent to witness huge walls carved out of thick snow, also known as snow corridors. This route could be accessed from Takayama or Kanazawa region.

Himeji Castle, also known as White Heron Castle due to its elegant, white appearance, is widely considered Japan's most spectacular castle for its imposing size and beauty and its well preserved, complex castle grounds. Himeji Castle is also a highly popular cherry blossom spot during the short and crowded blooming season which usually falls in early April. Japanese gardens also have a tea room, that serves special flavours during cherry blossom season.

Ashikaga Flower Park, is the only location in Japan with a Kibana wisteria tunnel visitors can walk underneath. It's also home to more than 350 different wisteria trees that bloom in colors ranging from light violets and pinks to purples, whites, and bright yellows. The park also has a 150-year-old wisteria

tree and more than 5,000 azalea bushes that can be admired around the same time. Witness the wisteria between mid-April and mid-May.

Maruyama Park, Kyoto, is a public park next to Yasaka Shrine in the Higashiyama District. In the first half of April, when the cherry trees are in full bloom, the park becomes Kyoto's most popular and most crowded spot for cherry blossom viewing parties. The centrepiece of the park is a tall shidarezakura (weeping cherry tree), which gets lit up in the night.

Philosophers Path, Kyoto, is a pleasant stone path through the northern part of Kyoto's Higashiyama district. The path follows a canal which is lined by hundreds of cherry trees. During early April these trees explode with color, making this one of the city's most popular cherry blossom spots. Approximately two kilometres long, the path begins around Ginkakuji (Silver Pavilion) and ends in the neighborhood of Nanzenji.



RENT A ENTIRE CAR IN BULLET TRAIN

BY YOKO ITO

Visiting Japan with a large group and worried about transferring between two cities Well, JR Central recently announced an unforgettable experience: rent an entire car (or more!) on the bullet train for your group or event.

JR Central has launched an original travel package allowing event organisers to reserve an entire car on the Tokaido Shinkansen bullet train line between Shin-Osaka and Tokyo stations. Reservation packages include the option of renting monitors and AV equipment for internal broadcasting only to

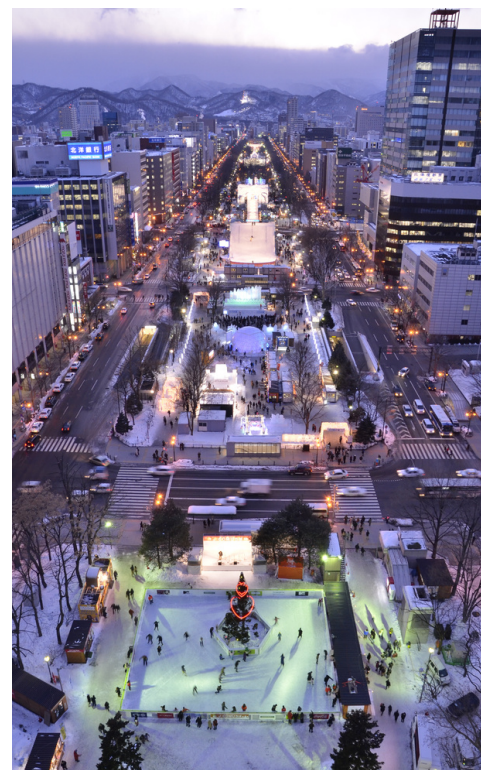
reserved cars, as well as seatback covers with custom designs and unique decorations and aisle carpet. Guests receive the utmost hospitality with specially assigned staff and pursers, custom welcome banners, send-offs and greetings from station staff, and more. Organizers can reserve multiple cars or even the entire train. Some guests are also welcome to experience being a shinkansen crew member for a day, where you can rent the crew's uniforms which is definitely a memorable experience for anyone attending a meeting here!

It is requested that organisers make their reservations at least two months before the event date.

See more information on this package on our website: <https://lnkd.in/gMRs-QSz>

Images Credit -Osaka Convention & Visitors Bureau.

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SAPPORO SNOW FESTIVAL (FEBRUARY 4TH -11TH 2023)

BY LARA HORIN

Sapporo Snow Festival is one of the most famous snow sculpture festivals in the world, attracting around two million visitors each year. What started from humble beginnings, when a group of high school students made six sculptures in Odori Park in 1950, has blossomed into the biggest event in the Sapporo calendar, taking place in the center of the city, with over hundred snow and ice sculptures!

After a break of three years, the 73th festival is finally back with 166 sculptures set to be built across Hokkaido's capital. The process of building the snow sculptures will begin almost a month before the festival, with 1600 trucks worth of snow being brought in to help create the snow creations. They are constructed predominately by the Japan Defense Force, local volunteers, and in a nod the origins of the event, there is

even a snow sculpture competition among local high school students.

In keeping with the roots of the festival, Odori Park, a 1 km long park that runs through the center of the city, is the main location for many of the snow displays. Each of the 10 sections of the park host a selection of snow sculptures, including some that are up to 12 meters tall!

Every year, it has become a tradition for an iconic building from around the world to be transformed realistic snow sculpture rendition. Past examples have included the Arc de Triomphe, the ruins of St Paul's, and even the Taj Mahal! This year, in recognition of the medical staff around the world who have worked tirelessly in the face of coronavirus these past few years, the famous nurse Florence Nightingale's House, Embley

Manor (UK) has been chosen. Other major sculptures will depict images from Hokkaido's prehistoric and recent history, as well as sporting scenes, and of course anime characters. It is a must to visit after sundown, where many of these sculptures will come to life in a special animated light show.

Alongside the main Odori Park stage, Susukino, the famous downtown nightlife district of Sapporo, will also be transformed into magical snow paradise, with sixty ice sculptures being lit up in a beautiful illumination every evening until 11pm. After such a long break, the City of Sapporo is look forward to welcoming new and returning visitors from all around the world in a celebration of the magic of snowy Sapporo!

To know more details about Sapporo, visit website Sapporo Travel - <https://visit.sapporo.travel/>

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MOTO TOUR



JAPAN



Nagoya Departure
 23APR -29APR 2023
 21MAY -27MAY 2023
 7 Days/ 6 Nights

This course includes riding through the world heritage Shirakawa-go and its steep thatched roofs, resembling the hands of a Buddhist monk in pray. The gorgeous Noto Peninsula, stage of the legendary Genpei War, with its gorgeous coastal scenery and the luxurious Wakura Onsen. And then, the dream road no one can ever imagine: Chirihama! The only one riding beach in all Japan! Going on the motorcycle of your dreams, enjoying the energizing sensation of the bright blue see at less than one foot from your tire. A unique riding experience you will never forget!





PONSHUKAN, THE SAKE THEME PARK OF NIIGATA

BY SONIA SINGH

Niigata Prefecture is renowned in Japan as the best area for growing rice and fermenting sake due to its deep snow and abundance of soft, clear water. Compared to sake from other prefectures, sake brewing in Niigata is very luxurious. Niigata Sake focuses on taste and quality rather than quantity.

When visiting Niigata, you cannot miss sipping the Japanese sake in Niigata. When travelling in Niigata, you cannot miss crossing Ponshukan. Ponshukan is a sake theme park located inside three major JR stations in Niigata— Niigata Station, Echigo-Yuzawa Station and Nagaoka Station Hall—offering more than 100 different brands of sake

produced by renowned breweries throughout Niigata. Ponshukan works directly with local producers, brewers, and manufacturers to bring you the best of Niigata food and sake.

Take your pick from among the seasonal specials, staff recommendations, or whichever labels happen to catch your eye. Each sake tasting machine is accompanied by a brief description of the taste and texture of the brand. There is a list of rankings to help you make your choice. Visitors need to pay JPY 500 to receive a sake cup, and they can go ahead and sample 5 cups of sake or use multiple tasting coins to sample from the selection of premium sake.

There is also a popular sake bar, an original onigiri shop called Bakudan Onigiri made from Uonuma Koshihikari rice, and restaurant for tourists and locals passing through Niigata Station.

If you happen to be at the Echigo-Yuzawa Ponshukan branch, you can even bathe in a hot, sake-infused onsen (hot spring). The sake has been specially blended and added to the slightly alkaline bath. The ever-so-slightly alcoholic contents of this bath encourage better blood circulation and smoother skin.



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SAWARA HINABUNE SPRING FESTIVAL

BY EMI ITO

Hina Matsuri, also known as Girl's Day, is celebrated every year on the 3rd of March. Daughters are prayed for in health and safety during this festival. This is done by displaying hina dolls during the "Momo no Sekku," or "Peach Festival."

It is said that in Chinese custom, people cleanse themselves in the river in early March. In Japan, dolls are thrown into the river or sea to ward off evil. The two traditions have merged, and the doll display tradition began on March 3rd, which is celebrated as Hina Matsuri every year.

Every year from early February to mid-March in Sawara, Chiba Prefecture, merchants take their prized Hina dolls out of their warehouses and display them in their stores during the "Hina Meguri" (doll festival), making the charming town even more colorful. Hina dolls have been handed down for many generations in

Sawara. Some of the displays even include old hina dolls from the Edo (1603–1868) and Meiji (1868–1912) periods and Imperial Palace-like mansion models filled with hina dolls. The Inoh Tadataka Museum, Sawara Visitor's Center, and other nearby facilities also display hina dolls. Hina exhibits can be found in shops that have a peach-colored banner flag in front.

The major highlight of Sawara is watching the "Sawara Hinabune," in which actual people dressed in Heian period costumes as Hina and Dairi dolls float down the Onogawa River on a boat. Japanese boats (sappa bune) are decorated to resemble the five tiers the dolls rest on. The girls, recruited from the public and dressed elegantly in beautiful hina outfits, parade down the Ono River on boats to the beautiful melodies of court music known as "Gagaku" at Katori Jingu Shrine.

The Sawara Hinabune Spring Festival will be held on March 12, 2023. Hinabune boats are scheduled to operate twice, beginning in front of Inoh Tadataka's former residence at 1100 hrs. and 1400 hrs.

Katori City's Sawara District, is an old merchant town which prospered by water transportation during the Edo period. It has been designated as an important traditional buildings preservation district of the country and is known as a town that retains the remnants of Edo. This city is about two hours from Tokyo and can be a quick getaway from Narita. The town is also popular because of Inoh Tadataka, a former merchant, village leader, and historical figure who created Japan's first accurate modern map himself in 1827 using his foot.

February in Japan



SETSUBUN FESTIVAL AT YASAKA JINJA, KYOTO



OTARU SNOWLIGHT PATH FESTIVAL



ICE SKATING



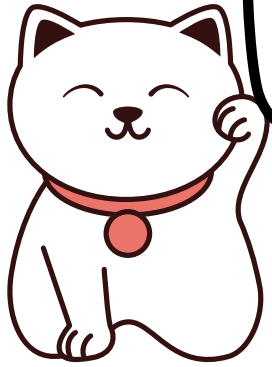
VALENTINE'S IN JAPAN



KAWAZU-ZAKURA CHERRY BLOSSOM



NAGASAKI LANTERN FESTIVAL



Useful
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Japanese

Let us
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SPORT – UNDOU
GOLF – GORUFU
SOCCER – SAKKAA
WRESTLING – RESURINGU
BASKETBALL – BASUKETTO BOORU
VOLLEY BALL – BAREE BOORU
TENNIS – TENISU
BADMINTON – BADOMINTON
RUGBY – RUGUBII
SKIING – SUKII
HORSE RIDING – JOUBA

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