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EXCLUSIVE

RISE

MONTHLY JOURNAL FROM JAPAN



*Anniversary
Edition*

RISE

MONTHLY JOURNAL FROM JAPAN



LETTER FROM EDITORS DESK

Dear Reader,

Ohayo Gozaimasu!!

The tourism fraternity of Japan is all excited to welcome foreign travellers to the land of the rising sun after a gap of two years. From 10th June, Japan started to accept small groups of guided tours from countries listed in the BLUE category. The first batch of tourists arrived from the United States and Australia, officially marking the start of inbound tourism.

Individual travellers will have to wait a little longer for their Japan sojourn. Based on current regulations, only small, fully escorted groups are allowed to travel. Indian travellers to Japan are still waiting, as India is in the

YELLOW category. With regards to business travel, Indians are free to travel if they meet the current requirements. The Indian restaurant association in Japan is fully prepared to welcome travellers once the authorities give the green signal.

SIC tours are also operating in limited numbers and a few days a week. Newer hotels are opening in Kyoto and Osaka as work progresses for the Osaka 2025 EXPO.

We at RISE would like to thank its readers and contributors for supporting us in the journey of creating a successful travel & lifestyle magazine focusing on Japan. Join us as we celebrate the 1st anniversary of RISE magazine.

Enjoy reading anniversary edition of RISE magazine.

Arigato Gozaimasu!



Riding through Japan on your favourite motorcycle, explore all the fascinating places in the country. It is like a dream come true!



MOTO TOUR

JAPAN





GEISHA & MAIKO, ICONS OF JAPAN

BY SHARAD SHARMA

Travelling in Japan is like a rollercoaster ride: neon lit buildings, peaceful shrines, buzzing gaming arena and then the cultural Japan, trapped in the Edo era. Visit to Kyoto is incomplete without getting a glimpse of a Geisha, highest chances of sighting one would be in Higashiyama (South) district of Kyoto. But most people are unaware of the difference between Maiko and Geisha, or how much time it takes for them to get this ethnic appearance.

A geisha is a combination of two words: GEI & SHA. In Japanese, GEI means art or entertainment and SHA means person. So the literal meaning is a

person who performs art or entertains people. The term "geisha" is used for a Japanese female artist, hired to perform traditionally during social events or tea ceremonies. She would sing, dance, perform music, serve food or tea, or even engage in light conversation.

The two buzz words are "Geisha" and "Maiko." If someone is looking for traditional Japanese entertainment and normally, people get confused, why are there two different terms for the same person? It is the age, appearance, and skills that differentiate between a geisha and a maiko. The journey to being a geisha starts as an intern,

who is called a maiko and it takes approximately five years for a maiko to fully learn the skills and be a geisha. During these five years, there would be different lessons on enhancing skills in the fields of singing, traditional dance, playing music, serving, and entertaining guests. When a maiko has completed her internship at around 20 years old, she will become a Geisha. This occasion is marked by a ceremony called "erikae," which means the "turning of the collar," during which she will finally wear the kimono and elaborate wig that denotes a geisha.

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The word geisha now widely used for female Japanese traditional entertainers, but in past this word was only used in Tokyo region and they were known as Geiko in Kyoto region. GEI has the same meaning but KO means younger female in Japanese. Despite the differences, now they are all geisha, whether in Tokyo or Osaka. In Niigata, geisha is known as Geigi.

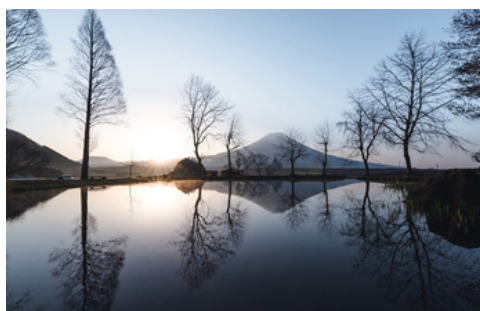
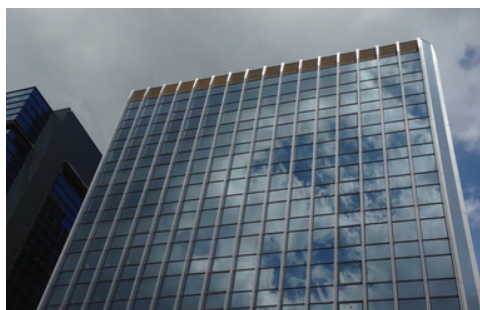
During the Edo period, also referred to the Golden Era, the number of Geisha were much higher and now just a few hundred of them are carrying on the legacy. In modern day Japan, if someone wishes to see the performing

art of a Geisha then, he or she will have to visit Kyoto, Tokyo, Niigata, or Hachioji. The districts in which Geisha resides are known as hanamachi which translates to flower towns. The most famous district or "flower district" is Gion in Kyoto. In Tokyo, one can visit Asakusa to get a glimpse of Geisha while walking from Sensoji temple to Tokyo Sky tree.

The traditional Geisha look is the result of hours of serious makeup. They cover their faces and necks with a white foundation called "oshiroi," a mix of white powder and water. Before applying this, a layer of wax is applied

to make the skin smooth. The most distinctive feature is the red lipstick, called "beni", followed by defining the eyebrows and using black eye liner. It takes approximately an hour to complete the look. This technique is also used by Kabuki actors in Japan.

One of the best ways to see geisha performance in Kyoto during the five "Odori" festivals held in theatres in Kyoto at different times of the year. Or one can book a private audience by geisha for an event or tea ceremony in Kyoto or Tokyo.



JAPAN: A PHOTOGRAPHERS' PARADISE

BY SONIA SINGH - NIPPON TAIYO HOSPITALITY

When we wish to capture a moment, we think of memoirs created through photography; it means telling stories of dozens of places we have visited. Japan as a destination is endless and a photographer's paradise. With stunning landscapes enriched with nature, be it mountains, lakes, valleys, or even beaches, stretching from north to south or from east to west, each place in Japan definitely leaves a mark on a traveller's mind with its beauty. And a traveller would be happy to capture nature through photography.

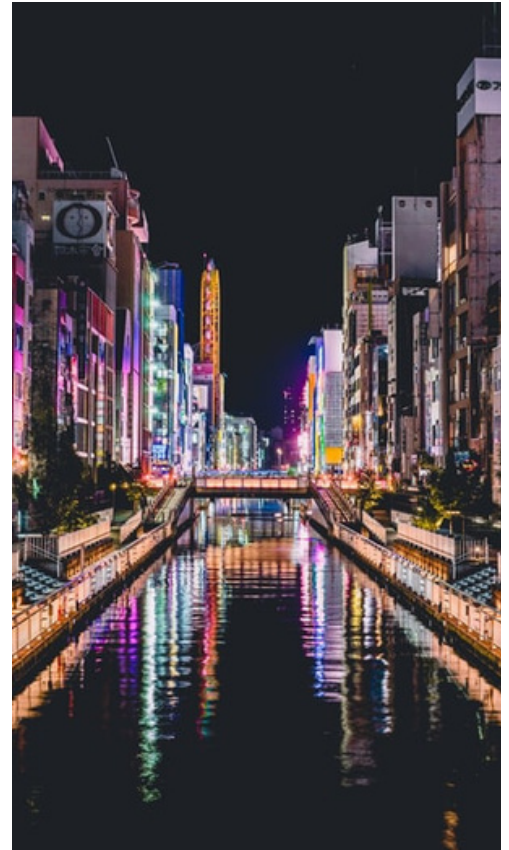
Using reflections in photography creates amazing images. One can use water, mirrors, or even windows on a building or skyscraper. Any sort of reflective surface

can change an image into a work of art. Reflection photography is the ability to look at an image in a unique or distinctive way. One needs to have perfect weather, lighting, and location to capture mirror images. Many of us would find the reflection in the water attractive.

In the past few years, I have been able to view and capture beautiful landscapes, especially through reflection photography or landscape photography. Some of the places that I found attractive are my personal favourites, and I would recommend travellers visit them during their Japan tour, especially if you love nature photography.

- Kinkakuji Temple is a gold-covered Zen Buddhist temple that is a gleaming sight in the heart of Kyoto and a must-see for any traveler. As you walk towards the path of the temple, you can clearly see the reflection of the temple in the water surrounding it.
- Kyoto is a treasure chest of picturesque places. Every temple and shrine, has a different landscape, be it during cherry blossoms or autumn or winter season, when there is illumination with light and sound show. Byoda-in Temple, Toji Temple, Daigoji Temple, Daikaku-ji Temple, and Rurikoin Temple are some of the places to capture the peaceful atmosphere.

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- Mount Fuji: The stunning photos of the iconic mountain are always at the top of Japan's searches and looks captivating in all four seasons. Mt. Fuji is surrounded by five lakes, one of which is Lake Kawaguchi, a popular sightseeing spot where one can see Mt. Fuji reflecting in its surrounding lakes. Sakasa Fuji, or Inverse Fuji, is a sight where Mt. Fuji is sharply reflected upside down, reflected on the surface like a mirror at Yamanakako Lake. A "Double Diamond" view of Mt. Fuji can be witnessed outside Yamanashi prefecture. Especially famous are Tanuki Lake (Shizuoka Prefecture) and Ashinoko Lake (Kanagawa Prefecture) at the time of sunrise.
- Gardens and parks like Shunjuku Gyoen National Park in Tokyo, Kenrokuen Garden in Kanazawa, Rikugen in Tokyo, or Ashikaga Flower Park or Shirotori Garden in Nagoya, and many more, have

picturesque natural scenes at any time of year with great views.

- Castles in Japan are also impressive. At Matsumoto Castle, Osaka Castle, Nagoya Castle, and Takada Castle in Niigata Prefecture, one will not get bored of taking photographs throughout the day.
- Ponds like Blue Pond in Hokkaido, Yumi Ike Pond in Gunma, Siberian Iris at Hira Pond in Shiga, and Sarusawa Pond in Nara are not to be missed.
- Japan's Uyuni Salt Lake! Seto Inland Sea's "Mirror of the Sky," where both you and the sky will be reflected.
- Niigata's Tunnel of Light in Kiyotsu Gorge: This 750m-long tunnel provides access to one of Japan's three great valleys, the Kiyotsu Gorge. Within the tunnel, Kiyotsu Gorge can be seen from

3 different viewing stations. Also, in the panoramic station at the end of the tunnel, you can enjoy the spectacular scenery.

- Festivals like Saga International Balloon Fiesta, Lantern Festivals and New Year Celebrations are also a great way to capture reflections of scenery.
- Amusement parks like Universal Studios, Tokyo Disney Sea and Huis Ten Bosch are fun too.
- Even puddle reflections in Japan after rain are also a great way to capture the hustle and bustle of the cities.

Japan bids an unparalleled chance for incredible photography, as it offers rich landscape from urban to rural, high rise buildings to shrines, modern to traditional, stunning manmade to natural sites waiting for to be captured through the individuals creativity. Once in Japan, you are never short of photographic opportunity.



OMO7—FIRST CITY—TOURISM HOTEL IN OSAKA BY HOSHINO RESORTS

BY YUSUKE HARADA

Hoshino Resorts' brand OMO is a city tourism hotel in a convenient city-center location, perfect for exploring the deep, urban culture. With the cooperation of the local community, city-lovers can get an insight into culture through our original tours and maps, sharing locals' all-time favourites to hidden gems only with you!

Hoshino Resorts' city tourism hotel brand, OMO, opened its new hotel, OMO7, in Nainwa on April 22nd, 2022. OMO7 is located next to the Shinsekai

Area, which is home to the famous Tsutenkaku Tower. It is easily accessible via public transportation, with Osaka's metro Midosuji and Sakaisuji Lines running through the area. Dobutsuen-mae Station is about a 3-minute walk from this resort.

The concept of the hotel is "big-hearted and brassy, Osaka is yours," which is reflected in each part of the hotel. The entrance of the hotel has the famous symbol of Billiken, the famous symbol of Shinsekai. There is a

community space called "OMO Base" that houses the front desk, the lobby, a restaurant, a café, etc. This space also has a gigantic, floor-to-ceiling map of Osaka! At "Dodekai Osaka Board", you can see all of Osaka's sightseeing spots at one glance. It's quick and easy for you to decide which places you could travel to.

With a total of 436 rooms, there are 8 room types of varying sizes so that the perfect one can be chosen for the type

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IMAGES © HOSHINO RESORTS

of journey guests choose. A maximum of 6 people can stay in this room type for a stay with friends or family. There is also a room type with a kitchen and a walk-in closet for those who want to stay in Osaka as if they are living like a local.

Osaka is the city of popular foods such as Takoyaki and Kushikatsu, a city of canals with history and culture, and a city of merchants that lead the way to people of warmth and friendliness. Restaurants at OMO7 Osaka offer the best of Osaka. At OMO Dining, you can choose from two course menus at dinnertime. The first, Naniwa Neo Classic, takes the local foods and ingredients of Osaka and prepares them in French style. Colorful sushi organized in a perfectly square box that looks like a jewellery box. The second, Naniwa KUSHI Cuisine, is a unique menu that highlights Shinsekai's proud Kushikatsu, skewered meats and vegetables deep-fried. The assorted Kushikatsu includes lotus root, crab, shrimp, octopus, and salmon, each with

its own perfectly matching sauce. Both Japanese-style and Western-style breakfasts are offered at the breakfast buffet.

OMO Cafe & Bar offers a full bar and a cafe menu. The daytime menu includes a sweet version of Takoyaki, Osaka's soul food. A la carte menu for lunch, and for dinner, guests can choose between a la carte or course menu according to how much they have had for that day and even enjoy a cocktail drink.

Miyagurin, or Miya Green, is a sprawling 7600m² of greenery that sprawls right in front of OMO7 Osaka. This garden area is a space for the hotel guests and the diners at the restaurant and cafe. This area has different elements of nature, from flat grasslands to hilly sides and terrace areas to lounge around in the open air. It is structured so that a gentle hill connects the entrance of the premise to the hotel tower (second floor). The exterior of public bath is reminiscent of

the history of public bathhouses, incorporating light and shadow in its design. The white colour symbolises the vibrant and bright merchant city of Osaka, and the silver colour reflects the smoke from factories that covered the sky during the development years of the city.

A unique service offered at OMO7 Osaka is called Go-KINJO, which literally means "the neighborhood." A knowledgeable staff member, called an "OMO Ranger," will take you around the neighbourhood and show you various spots based on a theme. This activity is called the Go-KINJO activity. One can take a stroll at Shinsekai or hop from one Kushikatsu restaurant to another. An interesting tour, which is suggested by the hotel staff, is "Dashi Broth Culture". The tour centres on the Osaka Kizu wholesale market.

Come stay at OMO7 Osaka and experience its unique services and programs, found only in Osaka!



DECODING THE TEA CEREMONY IN JAPAN

BY YOKO TORII

Tea travelled to Japan in the 8th century from China and left an unprecedented impact on the culture of Japan. At that time, tea was consumed by the upper class or as a medicinal drink by priests or monks. From the 13th to the 15th century, tea drinking gained popularity across all social sections of society and affluent people would host tea drinking parties to show off their exquisite tea bowls and knowledge of tea.

While these social tea parties were happening, another style of tea drinking was gaining popularity, and that was the Zen style. The emphasis

was on simplicity, spirituality, and connecting with the host. The father of the modern way of tea service was Sen no Rikyu (1522-1591), who encouraged an austere, rustic and simple way of tea serving.

To make matcha tea, one just requires a tea cup and a whisk, but for tea ceremonies, there are more specific requirements for equipment.

Equipment used in a tea ceremony

Fukusa, a cloth used for cleaning the chashaku (tea scoop) or other utensils. The colours for men and women are different.

Usuki, a container for holding matcha's thin tea powder. It's called a natsume, which is named after a berry from a lacquer tree called jujube.

Cha ire, a bowl for putting thick tea in. It's put inside a cloth bag.

Cha shaku, a tool used for scooping matcha out of the natsume or cha-ire. It's one of the most important tools in tea ceremonies.

Cha wan, a ceramic pot for drinking tea. Any kind of pot is fine for thin tea, but for rich tea, only a solid colour is used.

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Cha sen, a tool made out of bamboo used during the tea ceremony. Depending on the ceremony style, the shape and type of bamboo may vary.

Cha kin, a cloth used by the person who makes the tea to clean the Chawan and is moistened and put into the cha-wan folded up.

Apart from the equipment, a tea ceremony is a cultural experience and one must prepare well. It is expected that the guest in attendance must adhere to the protocols. Normally, tea ceremonies are held in small groups and the first guest, or the main guest that communicates with the tea master, is called the shokyaku, and the tea master is called the teishu.

Some of the etiquette to follow during or before the tea ceremony:

- Enter the tea room, only on invitation or when requested.

- Remove your shoes before entering and place them in the right direction.
- Bow to greet the tea master and others present in the room.
- Sit on your knees (Seiza position) when requested.
- Do not drink or eat before being requested.
- Eat and drink what is being offered.
- Smoking in the tea room is not allowed.

The process:

Tea is prepared in ceremonial steps and in silence. Firstly, the tea bowl or chawan is picked up and put down with the tea whisk inside the bowl. A ladle or hishaku is held while the lid of the iron pot of warm water is opened. The ladle is used to take a scoop of hot water and pour it into the tea bowl. After this the tea pot and whisk are cleaned with a cloth. The tea scoop and tea jar are then picked up. Usually, one and a half scoops of tea or matcha are placed into the tea bowl.

The ladle is then picked up again and a full cup of hot water from the kama is poured slowly into the tea bowl. The tea whisk and tea bowl are now picked up as the host quickly whisks the tea powder. A pale green foam is formed and should settle into the centre of the bowl. Now the tea is served to the guests.

After the tea is over, the host will kneel or bow and thank the guest for coming to the tea ceremony.

In today's time, the best places to enjoy tea ceremonies are in Tokyo and Kyoto. The tea room are set in a location with a traditional Japanese garden, and the tea room will have a tatami mat floor, offering a peaceful environment. The whole process leads to a deeper understanding of Japanese culture of the respect and precision.



JAPAN

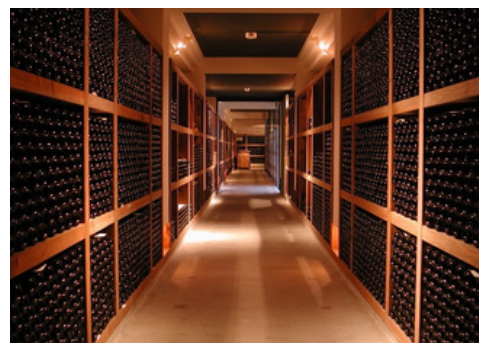
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WINE AND SPA AT CAVE D'OCCI, NIIGATA

BY SONIA SINGH

Niigata is known as the biggest sake producing region. But very few are aware that this beautiful destination is also a wine producing region with amazing sea sand and an environment suitable for winemaking. CAVE D'OCCI in Niigata is one such ultimate getaway.

The CAVE D'OCCI Winery is situated just 1.5 km inland from the Sea of Japan, facing directly the expanse of Mt. Kakuda. It was started in 1992 by Kiichiro Ochi, the proprietor of CAVE D'OCCI. CAVE D'OCCI means "Ochi's Wine Cave". The name comes from the name of the winery's owner, Kiichiro Ochi, who is also the creator of the wine.

One can visit and experience the winery tour here to understand the brewing process and

taste locally produced wine. The details of the complex will remind you of being in Europe. Everything appears to be French or Italian, from the wine barrels to the nameplates of each facility, many of which are directly imported from France.

CAVE D'OCCI also houses an Onsen bath house called CAVE D'OCCI Vinespa. CAVE D'OCCI Vinespa is a multipurpose facility that includes a restaurant specialising in dishes made from local ingredients, a spa offering Aveda natural cosmetics products, and a guest house to accommodate visitors who want to spend all day exploring the vineyards.

Another interesting part of CAVE D'OCCI is a unique restaurant and wedding venue with a backdrop of vineyards. CAVE D'OCCI's

10-year wedding gift is a catch. The wine signed by the couple on the day of the wedding is carefully kept for 10 years in the underground cellar of CAVE D'OCCI, and will be handed over on the wedding anniversary 10 years later.

The vineyard also houses a guest house, a boutique and various eateries. You can sample the best of French cuisine at Travigne, or try homemade sausages at Makigoya, or freshly baked bread at Cote a Cote Bakery and Café. Enjoy the exquisite combination of wonderful food and fine wines.

You can easily plan a day trip or a 2-night stay at CAVE D'OCCI by just exploring its courtyard and vineyards for a refreshing change of pace.



WAGASHI – JAPANESE TRADITIONAL SWEET

BY EMI ITO

Have you ever noticed, in person or in many travel photographs of Japan, beautiful pieces of sweets in a confectionery shop or departmental stores? They look like miniature pieces of art. These beautiful art pieces are called Wagashi. This is a Japanese confectionery with a rich history aligned with Japanese culture. These Japanese desserts go from tea ceremony to everyday desserts and have unique flavours that vary from region to region in Japan.

Wagashi are made from natural plant-based ingredients such as grains, sweet azuki beans (anko), rice cakes, rice

flour, agar, sesame paste, and chestnuts. It is also said that traditional Wagashi is said to be influenced by Buddhist beliefs which discourage the use of animal products in sweets. Wagashi are made in the shapes of nature, such as flowers, fruits, and leaves, and include seasonal ingredients to represent the balance of seasons and nature. They are made with short-grain glutinous rice, which is steamed, pounded into a paste and molded into an intricate shape. There are three categories of sweets: namagashi (fresh confectionery), han namagashi (half-dry confectionery), and higashi (dry confectionery).

As per ancient artefacts, Japanese people have been craving for sweetness since the Yayoi period (300 B.C.–300 A.C.), when people ate natural sweetness from fruits and nuts. It is believed that the trade between the Sui and Tang Dynasties during the Asuka Period brought back various types of Chinese confectionaries. It is said that "Kara-kudamono", a type of deep-fried mocha made from rice, wheat, and soya beans, is said to be the origin of Wagashi. It is also said that this morsel was served to the Japanese Imperial Court and religious deities and was not circulated to commoners.

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It was to be enjoyed with a cup of bitter matcha green tea. At that time, sugar was considered a luxury import and was primarily used in medicines only. The introduction of sugar helped in the further development of wagashi, and during the early Edo Period, the sweets developed into numerous varieties and started to be used at tea ceremonies, given as gifts, or consumed as afternoon snacks.

During your visit to Japan, you may come across varieties of Wagashi. Some of the popular ones are Namagashi (served at the tea ceremony), Daifuku, Dango, Dorayaki (snack popular with anime character Doremon),

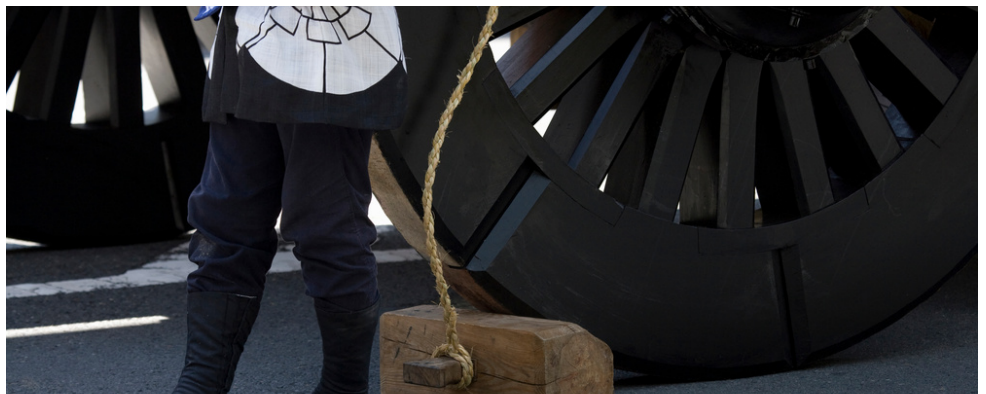
Taiyaki (fish shaped snacks), Manju, Anmitsu, Oshiruko/Zenzai, Yohan and Monaka.

Nakanishi Yosaburo is a Japanese traditional sweets shop operated from a machiya (150years old building) in Naramachi in Nara City. The shop has been running since the 1917 and the tradition of wagashi making has been passed on to the fourth generation owner- Mr. Katsuyuki Nakanishi. Wagashi sweets are handmade every day here and supplied to most of the restaurants and hotels in Nara. The store not only provides Wagashi sweets but also conducts sweet-making classes where the customers

can relax and make their wagashi in the background of a beautiful Japanese garden. The class needs to be booked in advance.

Wagashi can be enjoyed at selected cafes, restaurants, temples, and gardens where green tea is served in Japan. We hope that Indian travellers who are Vegans and vegetarians would be able to enjoy most wagashi without worry.

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GION MATSURI – THE BIGGEST FESTIVAL OF KYOTO, JAPAN

BY SHARAD SHARMA

The festival of festivals, that started some thousands year ago to please God during an epidemic back in 869. The event became an annual affair in 970. Since then its popularity has grown and people from across the globe visit Kyoto in July to witness this amazing cultural festival. UNESCO recognizes it as a World Intangible Cultural Heritage event.

Behind the scenes

It all starts months in advance with musicians practicing traditional tunes on flutes and drums. The wooden floats are assembled on the streets of Kyoto. The Hoko shrine is a full 25 meters tall and it takes days to get it assembled. The Gion Matsuri eventually became a way in which merchants and the

wealthy citizens of the Kamakura period could show off ostentatiously to their neighbours, and the level of luxury and elaborate details that went into the various floats rose dramatically. Best way to experience what goes into making the floats, one must arrive at least a few days prior to the start of the festival, so that one can experience the making and decorating of chariots.

The festival

It all starts with Lantern Reception on 10th July, at around 1630hrs, men carrying lanterns accompany women and young children in elaborate costumes from Yasaka Shrine along Shijō Street to Kawaramachi Street. A brief stop is made in front of Kyoto

city hall for a musical dance performance.

From 1900hrs onward, the gods of Yasaka Shrine are carried from the main hall to a temporary shrine (otabishi) on the south side of Shijō Street. A team of men carry the three large and one small mikoshi across the Kamogawa River, where priests purify them in river water before they continue to their destination.

Between 10th and 14th July, Hoko-tate and Yama-tate that is, float construction activity takes place. Around 32 floats are built during these days, and the largest float is prepared on the 14th July.

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On 12th and 13th July, trail runs of the floats are carried out. During these days, certain sections of the city are closed to motorised traffic.

14th to 16th July and 21st to 23rd July are known as Yoiyoiyoyama, Yoiyoyama, and Yoiyama. Food stalls line the streets and offer everything from shaved ice to piping hot fried noodles as the sound of Gion festival music echoes from all directions. During this Yoiyama period, the floats are lit up and on display for the city to enjoy. Everyday citizens and tourists can enter the float headquarters where relics are displayed like miniature museum exhibitions, purchase lucky charms, and sometimes climb inside the floats to have a look around for themselves.

Iwami Kagura is a traditional dance performed by a group from Izumo. Several short classic performances are included with elaborate costuming and masks, including the story of Shoki the demon queller, a fight between heavenly gods, and the defeat of the serpent Orochi by the god Susano.

Recommended hotels at Kyoto

Good Nature Hotel, Kyoto is a great option for stay during festival, as they provide kimono or yukata to wear while visiting the festival.

Other great places to choose would be APA Hotel Kyoto Gion, Hyatt Regency Kyoto, Hotel Celestin Gion Kyoto, Kyoto Granbell Hotel, Kyoto Shijo Takakura Hotel Grandereverie and

Mitsui Garden Kyoto Shijo.

It is highly recommended that one must visit Japan during the month of July and make most of it by experience Gion Matsuri festival.



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MISONO UNIVERSE – OSAKA

BY OSAKA CONVENTION & TOURISM BUREAU

Osaka is Japan's second largest metropolis and has been involved with domestic and international hubs for trade, exchange, and innovation. Osaka was the site of Japan's first G20 summit, dubbed the 2019 G20 Osaka Summit. Osaka is filled with unique venues, from historical buildings to event halls and party venues, which define the vibrant side of Osaka, which is yet to be explored by Indian travellers. This beautiful city has lots to offer to corporates and event organisers who are looking for unique spaces to hold their private parties and meetings with amazing views of the city and an unforgettable event.

Universe is one such venue in Osaka that can cater to larger group movements and meet every requirement for meetings and events. The Misono Building was built in 1956 as an integrated leisure building and is considered

a retro landmark in Osaka and the Sennichimae area. This venue is a 6-minute walk from Namba Station on the Nankai Main Line and a 2-minute walk from Nippombashi Station on the Osaka Metro Sakaisuji Line.

Universe is a multi-purpose live event hall underground with 400square-metres of space and a 1000-person capacity, situated on the first basement floor of Misono Building. The hosts can play any kind of music without any restrictions till 2200 hrs. This venue also allows outside catering. Since Osaka as a destination is a food paradise in itself, the MICE organizers can choose from a variety of cuisines and fix the menu. Everything is possible at this venue, whether it's Japanese, Italian, French, or even Indian cuisine. If you are planning to do some exclusive cultural or dance

performances, the venue has ample space and also has a waiting room for the artists. The rest of the Misono Building has a banquet hall which can hold up to 800 people. There are over 40 unique bars and shops on the bar floor, and 120 parking spaces.

Due to COVID restrictions, Universe can now cater to a maximum of 450 people when standing and 317 in a seated arrangement. Even outside catering is currently restricted and they are only allowing drinks to be served during the events. These restrictions will be modified or removed depending on the COVID situation in the country. If you plan to organize in the coming months, do check with OSAKA MICE team on the arrangement.



NARA – JAPAN'S ANCIENT CAPITAL

BY ICHIRO TEZUKA – NIPPON TAIYO HOSPITALITY

Before Kyoto, Heijo (now Nara) was the capital city of Japan and it has abundance of shrines, temples, gardens, traditional houses and lots of deer to delight you. Located within an hour's distance from Osaka and Kyoto, makes it a perfect getaway for a day trip while staying at any of those locations.

Take a JR Train to Nara station, which should take around an hour and ten minutes approximately. Start your Nara sojourn with visit to one of the oldest and most famous Buddhist temples in Japan, Kofuku-Ji temple. It was established in 711AD and was one of the most important temples of its time, as it had an active role in politics and economic affairs of the state. The 50m

high five storey pagoda is the second-tallest wooden pagoda in Japan.

Later continue to Nara park, which is part of an extension to Kofuku-Ji temple and some of the nearby attractions are Toda-Ji temple, Kasuga Taisha, Nara National Museum and hundreds of free roaming deer. It is also a great place to be during the Cherry Blossom season. One of the fun activities while visiting Nara Park, is buying deer crackers and feeding them. Some deer have learned to bow to visitors to ask to be fed.

A short walk from the park, Todai-ji Temple or the Great Eastern Temple is located. First built in the 8th century, Todaiji Daibutsuden is one of the largest wooden structures in the world and it

houses one of Japan's largest bronze statues, 15m tall Buddha. While visiting the temple, one can encounter deer, as they roam freely in the temple complex.

The tour ends with visit to Naramachi which was the former merchant district of Nara. It has several well-preserved traditional houses and warehouses, some of which are open to the public. Traditional houses are called machiya (long and narrow town houses). Koshi-no-Ie Residence is a former merchant home open to the public. This area is also famous for souvenir shopping and savouring authentic Japanese food.

After the Naramachi and deer feeding experience, take a JR Train to Osaka or Kyoto.



RYOKAN—LIVING THE HUMBLE JAPANESE WAY

BY SHARAD SHARMA

From a global perspective, Japan is an ultra-modern, high-tech, and ever progressive society, but held back by its traditions. They are deeply-rooted in each Japanese, and that is what makes their lifestyle a fine balance of modernity and old-style. This culture is well reflected in the world of Japanese hospitality, with ryokans— the traditional Japanese inns, being the best places to stay and experience the old-school Japanese hospitality with a touch of neo-modern features.

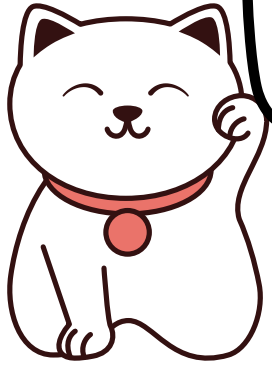
The Asakusa district in Tokyo upholds the atmosphere of older Tokyo with its famous Senso-Ji temple. It is one of the must-visit places in Tokyo and also the best place to enjoy a traditional stay in a ryokan. While walking the streets of Asakusa, we stumbled upon a legacy ryokan that has been in operation for the last eighty years, providing

authentic services that would leave visitors relaxed. Ryokan Shigetsu is the place to stay while in Asakusa, Tokyo for the perfect Edo period Japanese hospitality with a blend of modern world.

Initially, Ryokan Asakusa Shigetsu was a two-story wooden structure, but over a period of time it was developed into a six-story facility, retaining Japanese style rooms. Today it offers, 2 single western style rooms, 13 Japanese style standard rooms, 01 Suite Japanese style and 01 Deluxe suite Japanese style. All rooms offer tatami-matted floors and a traditional low-seating dining hall. The best room to stay in at this ryokan is the Deluxe suite, located on the top floor, next to Japanese cypress bath with a view of the Senso-ji temple and Tokyo Skytree. All rooms get standard

amenities like toothbrushes, hand towels, bath towels, razors, 2-in-1 shampoo, hair dryer, yukata (cotton robe,) and hot water pot. The Japanese style bath is located on the sixth floor and is the highlight of the ryokan. It is open from 0700hrs to 0900hrs and 1600hrs to 2300hrs, offering impeccable view of Asakusa town.

Catering to Japanese nationals and others visiting the country, Ryokan offers authentic Japanese dining options along with western-style food options. While staying at a ryokan, it is recommended that one must opt for traditional Japanese breakfast option, so that it gives a deeper understanding of Japanese food culture. Staying in ryokan is all about simplicity, experiencing local traditions and culture.



Useful
Expressions in
Japanese

Let us
learn



IS THIS THE CORRECT PLATFORM FOR ...? – KOKO NO EKI WA
ATTE IMASUKA?

IS THIS THE TRAIN FROM TOKYO TO KYOTO? –

KONO DENSHA WA TOKYO KARA KYOTO MADE DESUKA ?

WHICH BUS GOES TO ODAWARA? – DONNA BASU WA ODAWARA E
IKIMASUKA?

NEXT STOP – TSUGI NO TEISHA

LAST STOP – SAISHU TEISHA

THIS IS MY STOP – KOKO WA WATASHI NO ORIRU TOKORO DESU

I NEED TAXI RIGHTAWAY – IMA SUGI TAXI HOSHI

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