

RISE

MONTHLY JOURNAL FROM JAPAN



LETTER FROM EDITORS DESK

Dear Reader,

Ohayo Gozaimasu!!

Month of April, marked beginning of new season and with arrival of spring, there are lot of changes that happen all across Japan. New recruits join organization and begin their journey to fulfil personal and organisational goals. There was some relaxation that were offered from Japan government side to welcome business, student, family and dependents into Japan. Hope the trend continues and Japan soon welcomes tourist, as country had closed it borders now for little over two years.

For anime lovers, Gundam Park has opened at the Mitsui Shopping Park LalaPort Fukuoka on 25April. Outside the park there will be twenty-five-meter-tall statue of RX93v Gundam. If you wish to relive the nostalgia of Nintendo then Kyoto should be in your itinerary and plan a stay at Marufukuro Hotel, earlier it was the head quarter of Nintendo. It still restores lot of original elements. Disney Resort Toy Story Hotel has also opened its doors to welcome guest, read more about it inside RISE magazine.

Apart from new openings / additions in Japan, some of the older iconic buildings are being brought down, making way for newer better tomorrow. One such iconic building was The Nakagin Capsule Hotel, built in central Tokyo in 1972. It was the greatest legacy of the “Metabolism” architecture school. Despite its rarity, promoters decided it is time for the building to make way for modern skyscraper. Another such iconic street was Sakura Dori Street, it was famous for cherry blossom trees that lined the street, but to make way for a new building few of the trees were uprooted. Still one side of the street has Sakura trees and hope in coming days it would be all be beautiful.

Japan is ever changing and this is the beauty of the people, that they quickly adapt change and make way for neo modern cities to thrive. It will be a welcoming change for even people who have visited Japan in past, as most of the cities have undergone change / upgradation. Japan's National Stadium, that hosted Olympics is now open to visitors, we hope Japan as a country also opens up for tourist in days to come.

Stay Safe. Arigato Gozaimasu.



EXPLORING THE LOST WORLD OF SAMURAI

BY SHARAD SHARMA

As one paints a picture of Japan, it is incomplete without a Samurai warrior. Let's decode and understand the legacy of the Samurai and where we could experience the bygone era while enjoying modern Japan.

The Samurai were the warriors from the premodern era who later made up the ruling military class, the highest-ranking officials during the Edo period (1603 to 1867). They were highly trained to combat in any situation with weapons like bows and arrows, spears, and guns, but their main weapon and symbol was the sword.

A samurai would live life according to the ethic code of Bushido, "the way of the warrior," and some also followed Zen Buddhism. It was all about loyalty, self-discipline, respect, and moral behaviour.

During the early years of the Heina Period, the warriors were hired by wealthy landlords for protection, and slowly, they built their private armies. This trend continued for the next 700 years until Japan was unified during the Edo period. Ninja warriors have also emerged in all these years, bringing different warfare skills.

The Edo Period saw the coming together of Japan, and peace prevailed for approx. Two hundred fifty years, which saw a decline in war and also in martial skills. Most of the Samurai became bureaucrats, teachers, or artists. Japan's feudal era eventually ended in 1868, and the samurai class was abolished a few years later.

While the era of Samurai or Ninja may have ended, many Japanese corporations still follow the Bushido code of conduct for excellence in the workplace. Samurai-related attractions

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can well be experienced across Japan in the modern era, at castles, historic residences, museums, historically themed amusement parks, and dress-up tours.

Japan has a lot of castles built on mountains, hills, or high ground for the protection of cities, and Samurai guarded these. Today, only 12 of these castles remain; most of them are modern reconstructions. Most of the castles display samurai artefacts and lifestyle-related items.

To separate the Samurai from the rest of the city people, they were given residences in designated districts near the castle town. City councils have preserved houses that Samurais once inhabited, and now travellers can enjoy the exhibits. Some districts spread across Japan that offer the best Samurai house exhibits are located in Kitsuki, Kakunodate, Nagamachi in Kanazawa, Hagi Castle Town, Bitchu-Takahashi at the base of Matsuyama Castle, Matsue, Kumamoto, and Aizu-Wakamatsu.

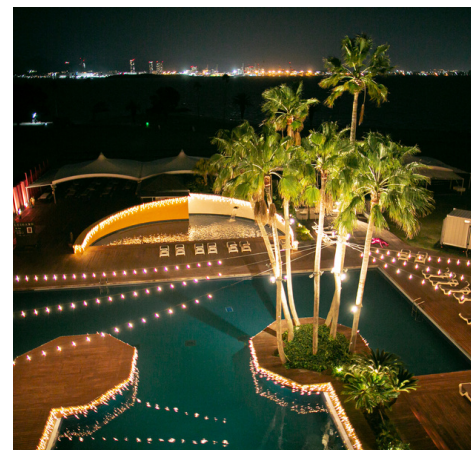
The most interesting way to discover Samurai culture is by following the Samurai trails. The Nakasendo was one of the five routes that connected Edo (today Tokyo) to Kyoto, passing through the mountainous terrain of the Kiso Valley along the way. One of the best-preserved towns in Nakasendo is Nari, connecting Yabuhara, which is still intact. It is a 6 km trek that takes approximately 03 hours to complete. The hike starts at Yabuhara station and ends at Narai station, connected by JR trains.

At the end of the hike, you overlook Narai, the longest town in the Nakasendo, with 50 historic buildings lining a one-kilometre stretch of road. These beautifully preserved buildings are home to shops, restaurants, cafes, small museums, and inns.

On the other side, museums are the best places to experience past culture and heritage. Most of the museums in Japan would display a few samurai swords or armors. But the specialised museums are the ones to visit if one is interested only in understanding

Samurai history and culture. One such place is The Japanese Sword Museum, Tokyo, and it houses the largest public collection of swords that were an essential part of Samurai culture; open from 0930 hrs to 1700 hrs and is closed every Monday and New Year Holidays. The Tokugawa Art Museum in Nagoya, which exhibits armour, swords, tea utensils, artwork, and household items once used by Samurais, is open from 1000 hrs to 1700 hrs and closed every Monday. The Maeda and Honda Museums in Kanazawa display relics of the two most prominent samurai families in the region.

Kyoto Samurai Experience is the destination to learn and experience the skills of a samurai. During the session at the centre, it offers a glimpse into the philosophy of Bushido, the way of the warrior, through wielding a real katana and Zen meditation used by the Samurai to calm their minds during battle. Prior reservation is mandatory, and it is open for sessions from 1000 hrs to 1200 hrs and 1300 hrs to 1700 hrs with holidays on Saturday and Sunday.



THE LUIGANS SPA AND RESORT, FUKUOKA

BY KARL BAHCECI - FUKUOKA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

As one of Japan's most populous cities Fukuoka is a highly convenient and accessible urban destination. However, one of the other sides to the city is its proximity to nature. For those who seek to get away from city life I recommend The Luigans Spa and Resort. Located on the relaxed and balmy national government park known as Umi no Nakamichi it is but 20 minutes away from the center of Fukuoka by bus. The Luigans resort is located on a narrow strip of land that separates Hakata from the open Genkai Sea, which means that you can actually see Fukuoka directly across the bay from the hotel.

The area of Umi no Nakamichi is also of particular interest as the historical island of Shikanoshima is quite close by. For those with an interest in Japanese culture and history this could be the perfect chance to learn more.

The resort is host to impeccable and relaxed facilities that call to mind a coastal bungalow like feeling whilst also providing a formal meeting space. The garden outside is capable of accommodating up to 500 people for outdoor parties all while you take in a panoramic view of Fukuoka across the bay. Yet for those wishing to hold their meeting indoors The Luigans also has terrific banquet meeting

spaces and banquet halls that can accommodate up to 300 people allowing you to plan meetings or gatherings for all occasions. As for food the resort can also accommodate vegetarian dietary needs as well, meaning that there will be something for everyone.

For those who wish to use the facilities to commemorate a job well-done or even to celebrate a long-awaited trip to Japan, the resort even allows you to hold a fireworks viewing party in the garden. The combined imagery of fireworks overhead and Fukuoka illuminated by light at night is truly a sight to behold.



TOKYO DISNEY RESORT TOY STORY® HOTEL

BY MILIAL RESORT HOTELS CO., LTD

Milial Resort Hotels Co., Ltd. announced that the new Tokyo Disney Resort Toy Story Hotel will open on April 5, 2022. This new Disney hotel, full of playful designs that immerse guests in the creative imagination of Disney and Pixar's Toy Story films, brings to life the world of toys featured in the popular, award-winning animated features. From the moment guests arrive, they will feel like they've been shrunk to the size of a toy. Outside of the hotel, guests will find oversized toy action play figures, each around four meters tall, of their favorite pals.

Buzz Lightyear and Jessie are part of Slinky Dog Park in front of the entrance, while Woody and Bo Peep can be found in Toy Friends Square, a courtyard off the lobby. The lobby itself is a colorful, toy-filled space with a jigsaw puzzle-inspired floor and a ceiling designed to look like a board game. The guest rooms recall Andy's bedroom from the first Toy Story film, featuring his iconic blue-sky-and-and-puffy-white-cloud wallpaper, along with Woody's Roundup inspired headboards and an oversized Mickey Mouse wristwatch hanging on one of the walls, among other toy-like fixtures and furnishings.

The Tokyo Disney Resort Toy Story Hotel offers 595 rooms, with 575 standard rooms and 20 superior rooms, with room sizes varying from 27m² to 55m². The hotel's facilities and services have been streamlined to provide guests with a new option between the existing deluxe and value-type Disney hotels.

Each guest staying at the hotel can purchase one 1-day passport per day for one of the parks during their stay. The tickets can be purchased at the hotel. Changes are possible at any time and without notice.

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SADO TOURISM ASSOCIATION



SADO ISLAND—TRIP TO THE GOLD MINE OF JAPAN

BY NIIGATA VISITORS & CONVENTION BUREAU

Sado Island, or Sadogashima, is one of Japan's largest islands, located off the coast of Niigata. Sado Island is shaped like an "S" or like a butterfly. Sado Island covers an area of approximately 855 square kilometres, and its coastline stretches for approximately 280 kilometres. Sado Island's climate is oceanic, with distinct changes across the four seasons. It is hot and humid in the summer and very cold in the winter.

The easiest and most common way to

reach Sado Island is by ferry service. You can either arrive at Niigata Station or Niigata Airport, take a local taxi or bus, arrive at Niigata Port. Take a hydrofoil from Niigata Port to Sado Island Ryotsu Port, which is about a one-hour journey. You can also arrive at Sado Island Ogi Port, which connects with Naoetsu Port. There are no trains on Sado Island, so the easiest way to move around the city is by local taxis or buses.

A rich gold mine was found during the

Edo period (1603–1867), and the island experienced a gold rush. One can make a visit to one of these gold mines here. Sado Kinzan was the most productive mine in Japan. During the 388 years it produced 78 tons of gold and 2,330 tons of silver.

The Sado Kinzan Gold Mine has been opened to the public. The "Sōdayū Kō," or "Sōdayū Tunnel Course," lets you walk through the remains of the tunnels dug in the early days of the

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SADO TOURISM ASSOCIATION

Edo period. There are signboards and speaking dolls explaining the work being enacted, giving visitors a feel of how work was done by hand in Edo times. You can also visit Meiji Era tunnels: the "Dōyū Kō," or "Dohyu Tunnel Course," where you can explore the ruined tunnels made with advanced technology and used for 100 years, as well as go all the way to Warito's base; and the "Adventurer's Tour," in which you can equip boots and a cap light and explore authentic tunnels with a guide. There is a museum and a souvenir section as well.

Another interesting visit to Sado Island is the Sado Nishimikawa Gold Park. Visitors can experience the actual preparation of gold dust on Sado Island. You can try gold panning for gold on three levels: beginner, intermediate, and advanced. It works by using a green plate with lines on its side, to shake and remove gravel in water. The relatively heavier gold dust will appear at the bottom. The gold that you panned can be made into a souvenir like a pendant or a phone strap. The gold dust harvested here is called "natural gold" and has a higher

market value than pure gold. You can learn about the history of gold in the exhibition room on-site, and there is a souvenir shop featuring their original goods, including sweets and jewelry. The facility can be visited anytime of the year. Sado Island offers unique stay options along with adventure, food, Noh theatre, taiko drumming, and traditional handicraft experiences as well. You can either plan a quick one-day visit or even plan to stay multiple days at Sado Island depending upon your interest. Take a detour from Tokyo and plan your visit to Sado Island.



DARUMA— A SYMBOL OF TENACITY AND TRUE GRIT

BY NIMISHA UPADHYAY



There is an English Proverb that goes something like “If you fall down seven times, get up eight times.” We’ve heard, read and used this several times, but do you know that this proverb actually originated in Japan?

Nanakorobi yaoki.

“Fall down seven times, stand up eight.”

A phrase found commonly attached with a very special talisman in Japanese culture, a good-luck charm, the Daruma Doll.

The Daruma doll stands for Perseverance, what the Japanese call the *ganbaru* spirit. The road of life is filled with pitfalls. Only the person who gets up and continues each time he stumbles is the one who reaches the pinnacle of glory.

Made in Japan’s Takasaki city, the red, round, bodiless dolls are created from a special type of traditional hand-made paper, Washi, which is only made in winter. They are hollow in the middle, with a heavy bottom, which helps them bounce back up when pushed down. This, of course, represents the Daruma’s indomitable spirit and determination. The eyes of the doll are left intentionally blank. When the owner of the doll decides his goal, he paints one eye of the doll black. When he has achieved his goal, he paints in the second eye, symbolizing success and wish-fulfillment. The Daruma doll now stands as a testimony of the hard work of the person who has accomplished his dream.

The Daruma dolls are based on the Bodhidharma (Daruma-Daishi in Japanese), a monk who lived in the 5th

and 6th centuries. He was the one who introduced Zen Buddhism to China, and was the one who brought Shaolin Kung Fu, Green Tea and Zazen meditation to the Japanese people. Legend has it that his perseverance for enlightenment was so great that his limbs and body withered away during his nine-year long penance, yet his spirit continued on undaunted, a spirit which is now immortalized in the Daruma dolls.

Ultimately, the Daruma doll is simply a symbol of your drive to achieve what you want in life. Your goal and your plans to accomplish it are your own, the Daruma is only a token to remind you to be proactive each day, soldier on to attain what you’re destined for and the most important of all, to never ever give up, in spite of whatever obstacles you may have to face.



AUTHENTIC GOAN FOOD IN HARAJUKU

BY SONIA SINGH

Harajuku in Tokyo is known for its offbeat culture in both clothing and music. Located a few minute's walking distance from Meiji Shrine, Harajuku cannot be missed, especially the Takeshita Dori an extremely crowded street, which is known as the temple of Japanese Kawaii Fashion. You can find everything here: clothes, accessories, makeup, and even trendy foods. From vintage stores to high-end brands like Louis Vuitton and big shopping malls like Tokyu Plaza, the shopping experience is like no other.

During my last trip to Tokyo, which was in 2019, along with a group of

friends, we were exploring Harajuku and stumbled upon a surprise. A smile was on everyone's faces while looking at the board that read "Viva Goa Indian Café," and we knew that we were going to have a great time eating our very own Goan cuisine in Japan. There is no greater joy than finding food you love in a distant land.

This restaurant was started by a couple, Gregory Azavedo (candidly called Greg) and his wife, Brenda Fernandes. Greg migrated to Japan in 1997 to join the information and technology industry and Brenda arrived in 2002 after their marriage.

The 90's was a time when most people wanted to stay and work in Canada or the USA. But it was the atmosphere, culture, food, and traditions of Japan that drew Greg to settle there. During that time, it was very rare for anyone to opt to stay and work in Japan given the language barrier. Whilst he was living in Japan in the early days as a bachelor he severely missed Goan food, and that was the starting point of Viva Goa Café well supported by his wife Brenda established in September 2014, with a 34-seat capacity. Brenda is also a Certified Deco Clay Art Instructor" having completed all her certifications at Tokyo.

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BIRYANI BENTO



SPECIAL GOAN THALI

This restaurant is the first Goan restaurant in Japan serving sea food and other flavourful curries that are made of coconut and traditional spices and herbs from Goa, a coastal state in India's southwestern Konkan region.

The restaurant is about 3 minute's walk from Harajuku JR and Meiji Jingumae subway station and is in the heart of Harajuku. Before the pandemic the regular visitors were tourists from India and other countries. Viva Goa is also frequented for lunch by Japanese Office workers and Shop owners in the neighbourhood. The restaurant's speciality is Goan food however North Indian cuisine is also available. The signature Goan Thali for lunch and dinner includes basmati rice, 3 curries and Fish Tava Fry (seared Surmai/King Fish). Non-vegetarians can also try Butter Chicken and Chicken Xacuti.

They can also customise food for strict vegetarian meals like Jain on special request. For vegetarians, Dal Makhani, Saag Paneer, Paneer Xacuti comes with Naan or Chapati as an option.

It is always advisable to inform the restaurant on food restrictions prior so that they can prepare in advance. Another interesting advise from Greg was that the restaurants could also assist with packed food like Biryani Bento Boxes or a traditional Indian thali bento box.

During our lunch, Greg and Brenda were candid about there journeys and adventures in Japan, having explored different destinations with their children and friends. They love going back to Nikko, including Tobu World Square, followed by Kegon Falls, and

enjoying the apple-fruit plucking activity. They also advice tourists to visit and explore "Koyo" (Autumn Leaves in Japan). The transformation of autumn leaves in Japan is considered to be one of the most beautiful sight in the world. Many Indian tourists only visit Japan during the cherry blossom season and miss out on autumn. They would also recommend winter time, wherein skiing is very popular in Japan. Myoko ski resort is recommended for beginners. With family and friends, they like camping around Tokyo. Some of these places are located just an hour drive from Tokyo and near Chiba or Mt. Fuji area or even Narita.

All these conversations made the amazing food even more delicious. The servings were a true reflection of the love and passion that Greg and Brenda have for Goan cuisine.



THE FUJI SHIBAZAKURA FESTIVAL

BY EMI ITO

Japan has been popularized for its cherry blossom season, or Sakura Season, and millions of tourists arrive from around the world to get a glimpse of this season, including travellers from India. But there would be very few travellers who have heard about Fuji Shibazakura Matsuri, another popular flowering season in Japan.

Fuji Shibazakura Matsuri (Festival) was started in the year 2008 at Fuji Motosuko Resort, near the base of Mt. Fuji, and is just about 3 kms away from Lake Motosuko, one of the five Fuji Lakes in Yamanashi Prefecture. 800000 Shiba zakura flowers, also known as pink moss or moss phlox, cover over 2.4 hectares of park. The vibrant pink colour of the flowers is an incredible

contrast to the surrounding lake and the towering, snow-capped Mt Fuji in the background. Shibazakura blooming starts in mid-April to late May, coinciding with the Golden Week Celebrations. It is considered the second hanami season. Admission 800-1000 yen depending on the state of the season with parking: 500 yen per car and entry timing are from 07Am onward depending on the season, do check with local authorities before planning a visit.

The location is also popular amongst photographers. The park's maps are even marked with the shooting spots to capture the scenic views of flowers with Mt. Fuji in the backdrop.

During this festival, one could also visit

the Mt. Fuji Delicious Foods Festival, held at the same place. The festival offers outdoor entertainment and a large food court with food and drinks from all over Japan. Fujinomiya Yakisoba, Fuji-yoshida udon, Fujiyama Sweet Bean Buns, mochi, and many other dishes were available.

Being a tourist attraction, it also has path accessible to visitors with reduced mobility. Besides this one can also combine their tour to nearby places like Fuji-Q Highland amusement park and Chureito Pagoda.

Fuji Shibazakura Matsuri is really worth the visit when traveling in the Five Lakes area in spring.



Useful
Expressions in
Japanese

Let us
learn



WHERE IS THIS? – KOKO WA DOKO DESU KA?

THIS IS NIIGATA – KOKO WA NIIGATA DESU

NIIGATA IS VERY BEAUTIFUL – NIIGATA WA TOTEMO KIREI DESU

I THINK SO TOO – WATASHI MO SO OMOIMASU

WHICH IS NEAREST AIRPORT TO NIIGATA? – NIIGATA NI

ICHIBAN CHIKAI KUKOU WA DOKO DESUKA?

HOW MUCH TIME IT TAKES TO REACH NIIGATA FROM TOKYO? –

TOKYOU KARA NIIGATA MADE DONO GURAI KAKARIMASUKA?

FROM TOKYO STATION TO NIIGATA STATION, IT TAKES 2 HOURS

BY SHINKANSEN – TOKYO EKI KARA NIIGATA EKI MADE

SHINKANSEN DE 2 JIKAN KAKARI MASU.

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