JAPAN GUIDE for
RUGBY WORLD CUP
2019™
DISCOVER JAPAN
Welcome to RUGBY WORLD CUP 2019™ Host Country

RWC 2019 HOST CITIES
A. Sapporo
B. Iwate, Kamaishi
C. Saitama, Kumagaya
D. Tokyo
E. Kanagawa, Yokohama
F. Shizuoka
G. Aichi, Toyota
H. Osaka, Higashiosaka
I. Kobe
J. Fukuoka
K. Kumamoto
L. Oita

Travel time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
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## Rugby World Cup 2019™
### Match Schedule

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<th>Date</th>
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<td>Ireland v Scotland</td>
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<td>Europe 1 v Play-off winner</td>
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<td>Shizuoka Stadium Ecopa</td>
<td>South Africa v Italy</td>
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<td>International Stadium Yokohama</td>
<td>England v France</td>
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<td>USA v Tonga</td>
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### POOL A
- Ireland
- Scotland
- Japan
- Europe 1
- Play-off winner

### POOL B
- New Zealand
- South Africa
- Italy
- Africa 1
- Repechage winner

### POOL C
- England
- France
- Argentina
- USA
- Tonga

### POOL D
- Australia
- Wales
- Georgia
- Fiji
- Americas 2

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**Quarters-Final 1**
- Sat 19 Oct - 16:15
- Oita Stadium
- Winner POOL C
- Runner Up POOL D

**Quarters-Final 2**
- Sat 19 Oct - 19:15
- Tokyo Stadium
- Winner POOL B
- Runner Up POOL A

**Quarters-Final 3**
- Sat 12 Oct - 13:45
- International Stadium Yokohama
- Winner POOL D
- Runner Up POOL C

**Quarters-Final 4**
- Sun 20 Oct - 16:15
- Oita Stadium
- Winner POOL D
- Runner Up POOL B

**Semi-Final 1**
- Sat 26 Oct - 17:00
- International Stadium Yokohama
- Winner QF1
- Runner Up QF2

**Bronze Final**
- Fri 01 Nov - 18:00
- Tokyo Stadium
- Runner Up SF1
- Runner Up SF2

**Final**
- Sat 02 Nov - 18:00
- International Stadium Yokohama
- Winner SF1
- Winner SF2
ENGLAND

POOL C
ENGLAND
FRANCE
ARGENTINA
USA
TONGA

Date  Kick-Off  Match  Venue
Sun 22 Sept  19:15  v Tonga  Sapporo Dome
Thurs 26 Sept  19:45  v USA  Kobe Misaki Stadium
Sat 05 Oct  17:00  v Argentina  Tokyo Stadium
Sat 12 Oct  17:15  v France  International Stadium Yokohama
WALES

**POOL D**

AUSTRALIA  
WALES  
GEORGIA  
FIJI  
AMERICAS 2

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<td>v Fiji</td>
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<td>v Americas 2</td>
<td>Kumamoto Stadium</td>
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SCOTLAND

POOL A
IRELAND
SCOTLAND
JAPAN
EUROPE 1
PLAY-OFF WINNER

Date | Kick-Off | Match | Venue
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Sun 22 Sept 16:45 | v Ireland | International Stadium Yokohama
Mon 30 Sept 19:15 | v Play-off winner | Kobe Misaki Stadium
Wed 09 Oct 16:15 | v Europe 1 | Shizuoka Stadium Ecopa
Sun 13 Oct 19:45 | v Japan | International Stadium Yokohama
IRELAND

POOL A
IRELAND
SCOTLAND
JAPAN
EUROPE 1
PLAY-OFF WINNER

Date | Kick-Off | Match | Venue
---|---|---|---
Sun 22 Sept | 16:45 | v **Scotland** | International Stadium Yokohama
Sat 28 Sept | 16:15 | v **Japan** | Shizuoka Stadium Ecopa
Thurs 03 Oct | 19:15 | v **Europe 1** | Kobe Misaki Stadium
Sat 12 Oct | 19:45 | v **Play-off winner** | Fukuoka Hakatanomori Stadium
Welcome to Tokyo, the city that dazzles with nostalgia and pop culture.

Not only the skyscrapers, Tokyo has preserved much of its traditional culture, as can be seen in the Shitamachi area. Shitamachi literally means “city centre” and has been the place to experience a taste of the old town Tokyo atmosphere since the Edo Period, long before the economic miracle of the seventies and eighties overtook Japan.

Asakusa and Tokyo Sky Tree
Asakusa in Taito Ward is a place where the historical culture is still very much alive. Its centre is Senso-ji Temple, an ancient Buddhist temple with about 1400 years history. And since the opening of Tokyo Sky Tree in 2012, this spot has received much attention for its harmony of traditional culture and hypermodern development.

Tokyo’s Pop Culture
Computer gamers, comic-book geeks, and kawaii fashions are among the fantastic characters in Tokyo’s subcultural pantheon. Discover what inspired anime and manga masters, check out the city’s latest fashion at Harajuku and Shibuya or tech crazes, with this essential guide to Tokyo pop culture.

Shibuya
The pop culture trends are bubbling up from Shibuya. This dazzling commercial district has inspired many a fashion craze so keep your eyes peeled as you leave the station and hit pedestrianized Centre Gai, the entrance to which is marked by the 109 Building packed with boutiques selling the latest youth fashions.

Harajuku
For more outlandish and youth-orientated kawaii fashions, a trip to Harajuku is the best course of discovery. While navigating your way along the shopping alley Takeshita Street which is popular among teenagers, visitors can discover more spacious and elegant surrounds of nearby Omotesando to find Kiddy Land, a major toy store selling masses of character goods inspired by anime and manga, with all the latest hits as well as old favourites.

Electric Akihabara
Known as Akiha among Japanese, Akihabara created its reputation as Tokyo’s prime shopping area for electronic goods.

Underpass of Yurakucho Station on JR Yamanote Line
Yurakucho is home to antenna shops from across Japan, and is now famed as a new type of yokocho (eatery alleyway). The establishments lining this alley serve local dishes using ingredients rarely found in Tokyo.

Shopping & Restaurant Street
Kabukicho
Kabukicho, located just northeast of Shinjuku Station is Japan’s largest and wildest red light district, featuring numerous department stores, subterranean malls and electronic shops.

Roppongi
Roppongi is known for its nightlife among foreigners, offering a large number of foreigner-friendly bars, restaurants and night clubs. Also, there are two modern buildings called Roppongi Hills and Tokyo Midtown, which have allowed Roppongi to expand its appeal to a wider range of visitors and residents with their elegant atmospheres.

Golden Gai
Golden Gai is a time-warped tumble of bars in Kabukicho packed with over 200 small bars and eateries which is famous both as an area of architectural interest and for its nightlife.
Kanagawa, Yokohama

A modern marine city and only a hop, skip and a jump from Kamakura and Hakone.

Yokohama is the capital city in Kanagawa Prefecture which will host Rugby World Cup in 2019. The city is only about 20 minutes away from Tokyo by Shinkansen (bullet train), which happens to be the easiest way to get there. From Osaka in Kansai region, it takes about 2 hours by the bullet train. Regardless of direction, Yokohama is easily accessible.

The Historical City of Kamakura in Kanagawa Prefecture

The Historical City

About 1,000 years ago, Kamakura was governed by the first shogun, Minamoto no Yoritomo. Today, Kamakura is gaining popularity amongst those who seek out the footsteps of famous samurai. Kamakura is home to numerous temples, shrines and other historical monuments and national treasures.

The Mountainous Town

Famous for its Hot Spring Spas

Hakone

Hakone in Kanagawa Prefecture prides itself as one of the most famous hot spring resorts in Japan.

As it is quite close to Yokohama, a hosting city of Rugby World Cup 2019, it would make a great side trip from the matches. Hakone is both popular amongst Japanese and foreign sightseers alike, due to the majestic natural beauty and serenity of Hakone’s luscious Lake Ashi, and the surrounding Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park.

Lake Ashi is a water filled volcano crater on the top of Mt. Hakone. From the lake visitors can enjoy a gorgeous view of Mount Fuji. Near the top of Mt. Hakone visitors can witness the volcanic gasses being released by the volcano, and eat a tasty egg that has been cooked in the heat.

A Great Gateway to Japan

The metropolis of Yokohama has many urban skyscrapers alongside beautiful harbor scenes, especially at the area known as Minato Mirai. Also, due to the prosperity and growth of Japan’s foreign trade after the Meiji restoration (1867-1868), visitors can now visit many historical and cultural sites in Yokohama. This is because historically Yokohama was the port for foreign trade in Japan.

After the Match, Knock Back a Few Beers.

After viewing the matches, the best place to hang out for drink is around the Yoshidamachi, Noge, and Yokohama station area. Here you will find many sport bars and pubs, and friendly people to chat with. Inside the many sport bars in Yokohama, you will usually find a big screen tuned to the matches, so we can keep on watching the matches over a few craft beers.

The Local Cuisine in Yokohama

The Roots of Gyunabe, for The Wagyu Beef Lovers

The local gourmet foods of Yokohama have played an integral role in modern Japan. One of the representative cuisines is Gyunabe, a beef hotpot dish that is made with thinly sliced beef, simmered with tofu and vegetables in a soy sauce soup, then dipped in raw beaten egg before eating for a creamier flavour.

Yokohama le-kei Ramen

Yokohama Ramen is known locally as “le-kei ramen”. With its thick noodles in a soy flavoured pork broth, it includes several toppings such as roasted pork, boiled spinach, sheets of nori(seaweed) and green onions. Needless to say, it’s very popular!

If you want to taste other regional ramen, the Shin-Yokohama Ramen Museum, near Shin-Yokohama station, offers samples of ramen dishes from many different regions. The museum is stylised to resemble old times, and includes a gift shop as well as restaurants.

How We Can Enjoy in Yokohama City

Nowadays, the harbor area is named Minato Mirai 21, which means “harbor of the future”. It offers many entertainment attractions including an amusement park and facilities, sightseeing helicopter rides, boat cruises and the amphibious bus.
Sapporo

A bustling city and the northernmost venue, nestled amongst beautiful nature.

http://visitjapan2019.com/venues/cities/sapporo

Sapporo, in Northern Japan, will host Rugby World Cup in 2019. The easiest way to get to Sapporo is to take a flight from Tokyo, as Tokyo-Sapporo is one of the busiest routes in Japan, with many airline options including LCCs.

Local Delicacies in Sapporo and Hokkaido

Hokkaido’s cities are renowned throughout Asia as some of the biggest and best gourmet cities in the region. Since Hokkaido is surrounded by cool, clean ocean, the fishery industries thrive with Japan’s freshest and most tasty catch. It is also one of Japan’s best breadbasket regions, thanks to the farming and livestock breeding in its vast and wide nature.

Needless to say, we should enjoy the fruits of the sea to the full and Hokkaido harvests while we visit, so let’s explore the markets of Sapporo, Hokkaido’s main city, to find something fresh to sink our teeth into!

Sapporo Central Wholesale Curb Market

Sapporo Central Wholesale Curb Market or the “Jyogai Ichiba”, is the biggest food market in Hokkaido. Here, the freshest produce and fish are put on sale every morning. The outer retail market called “Curb market” is open to public and is composed of approximately 80 stores. These stores sell a variety of items ranging from fruit to fresh and dried fish, to Hokkaido’s specialties, sushi and other prepared foods. The freshness makes it a major tourist attraction for both domestic and overseas visitors.

Sapporo Ramen – The Best Ramen in Japan

Ramen has become a world renowned noodle with many varieties, most typically popular outside Japan as a cheap food source for college students. But the real thing is much better! Ramen in Japan is both delicious and can be a full meal. How about trying a bowl of miso ramen at its birthplace in Japan?

Sapporo, the main city of Japan’s northern Hokkaido Prefecture, is the place to get that authentic ramen taste and is the birthplace of miso ramen. During your trip to Sapporo for Rugby World Cup 2019, make the great ramen journey to “Ganso Ramen Yokocho”!

Stunning Night Views in Sapporo

After the excitement of a game at Rugby World Cup 2019 and knocking back a few beers with local foods at the Sapporo Autumn Fest, the night is not yet over! There are many more things you cannot miss in Sapporo - but the night views really shine the brightest!

Mount Moiwa

Mount Moiwa is a forested mountain located to the southwest of central Sapporo. From the top, you get a breathtaking 360-degree panoramic view of the city. Not only popular for the night views, Mount Moiwa is also a popular destination for a day-trip climbing. Mount Moiwa can be reached by a ropeway cable car, so you can skip the hike if that’s not your thing.

Sapporo TV Tower

Sapporo TV Tower gives another 360-degree panorama view of the city and is located on the grounds of the Odori Park, which divides Sapporo into north and south. Odori park is home to not only the famous Sapporo Snow Festival, but also the Sapporo Autumn Festival, which runs at the same time as Rugby World Cup 2019.
Kobe
An attractive harbour town perched on a hillside sloping down to the sea.

Kobe is located on the north shore of Osaka bay in the Kansai region. You can get to Kobe City either by plane or train (the fastest of which is the bullet train, also known as the Shinkansen). As Kobe is the sixth largest city in Japan, the city is highly accessible. Getting to Kobe by bullet train will take about 2 hours 40 minutes from Tokyo.

Sake History and Culture

Visiting a Sake Brewery in Nada District

Nada-Gogou, literally the “five villages of Nada,” refers to the five sake-producing areas in the cities of Kobe and Nishinomiya. Collectively, they are nationally renowned as one of the largest, most historical sake-producing regions in Japan.

Kobe’s Culinary Speciality

Kobe Wagyu Beef, the Finest Beef in Kobe in Japan

Having reached international fame, you may already be familiar with Kobe’s culinary specialty, known by many as Japanese Wagyu or “Kobe beef”. Kobe Beef is distinguished by its tender, flavourful meat that is well-marbled with fat. The meat must pass a series of strict tests, as only the highest grades of meat with exceptionally high levels of fat marbling earn the Kobe Beef label.

Hot Spring Culture

Arima Onsen – A Historical Hot Spring Resort

While you are visiting Kobe City for the Rugby World Cup in 2019, you can take a train for about 30 minutes from the city centre to extend your journey to Arima onsen.

Tradition in Arima Onsen

Remarkably, Arima onsen has preserved the traditional culture of ozashiki (or geisha gatherings) since ancient times. The traditional Japanese female entertainers act as hostesses, while donning kimono and makeup. Geisha usually operate in various hotels and ryokans – performing songs, dances, and playing shamisen (a Japanese folk instrument). Ozashiki at Arima onsen provides an opportunity to experience this aspect of Japanese hospitality, and of course have fun.

Stunning Nature

Things to Do in Mount Rokko

Within this panoramic view located 880 metres above the sea level on Mount Rokko, visitors can take delight in the shopping and gourmet cuisine at the Rokko Garden Terrace. The highlight of Mount Rokko is the breathtaking night views, canonized alongside Mt. Inasa and Mt. Hakodate as one of the Three Great Night Views of Japan. The view from the top of Mount Maya, a part of the Rokko mountains, has been dubbed a “Ten Million Dollar Night View”.

931-metre-high Mount Rokko provides one of the most renowned hiking experiences in the Kansai region. Hiking in the Rokko mountains is extensive, offering many trails from beginners to veterans.

Beautiful Waterfront City

The Nostalgic and Modern Atmosphere in Kobe

In the evening, Gaslight Street, one of the main streets that leads through the centre of Kobe Harbourland, is illuminated with the glimmer of old-fashioned gas street lamps. Visitors can then take a cruise together through the romantic evening atmosphere – making it a popular spot for local couples, and tourists alike.
Shizuoka

Check out Japan’s greatest symbol, “Mount Fuji” and the lush green of the Japanese tea fields.

Located in the Chubu region, Shizuoka Prefecture will host Rugby World Cup in 2019. Shizuoka City, the capital of Shizuoka Prefecture, is located about halfway between Tokyo and Nagoya. The Shinkansen (bullet train) ride to get there is an easy one, taking about an hour from Tokyo, or two hours from Osaka.

The Best Place for Japanese Tea

Visit the Green Tea Capital of Japan

Shizuoka is widely known as the green tea capital of Japan, and is responsible for over 40% of Japan’s tea production. The almost magical beverage boasts many benefits, and it is often touted as a contributor to the longevity and health of the people of Shizuoka. Among its healing properties, Japanese green tea contains Catechin and Theanine which help to prevent cancer and cavities, as well as lower cholesterol, and reduce bad breath.

Discover the Tea Plantation’s View with the Nostalgic Locomotive

There are many tea plantations in Shizuoka Prefecture, that offer varieties of tea that are not only for drinking, but that can also be eaten. One of the most famous of which is, Kawane. Located on the mountainside on the upper stream of Oi river, Kawane is famous for producing refined, deep-steamed Sencha (green tea).

Local Food and Drink

Sake, Shizuoka’s Finest Quality

Traditional Japanese cuisine has grown increasingly popular worldwide in recent years. Also referred to as a Japanese rice wine, sake is made by fermenting rice that has been polished to remove the bran.

Sakura Shrimp, A Delicious Taste and Great View with Mount Fuji

Sakura shrimp, refer to a tiny cherry coloured shrimp that are a specialty of Shizuoka Prefecture. Sized about 4 – 5 cm, they are said to possess the flavour of Mount Fuji. Shizuoka is the only place in Japan where sakura shrimp can be caught; the melt-water from Mount Fuji leads to the clear streams of Fuji River, Oi River, and Abe River that flow into Suruga Bay, making it the only suitable habitat for sakura shrimp.

Tradition and Culture

Have a Nice Ryokan Stay to Enjoy the Hot Springs

Shizuoka Prefecture boasts many hot spring resorts. It sports a collective 1,882 hotels and ryokans to be exact, making it the prefecture with the most accommodating facilities in Japan (according to the Ministry of Environment in 2014.) Whether in Izu Peninsula scattered with scenic hot springs full of health benefits, in Fuji area surrounded with stunning scenery, or in Western Shizuoka, amid relaxing destinations such as Enshu coast or Lake Hamana, there is no shortage of places to unwind with a healing bath after watching the rugby.

Historical Sites

Where to View Mount Fuji from

Along Suruga Bay, you may also find Miho no Matsubara beach. Here, there are over thirty-thousand pine trees growing across the 7km beach, offering a breathtaking view to compliment Mount Fuji all year around.
Aichi, Toyota

Home to battlefields from the age of the samurai and a unique food culture.

Toyota City is located close to Nagoya in Aichi Prefecture. It is conveniently located between Tokyo and Osaka, which makes it easily accessible by the Shinkansen (bullet train), taking either 1 hour 35 minutes from Tokyo, or 50 minutes from Osaka.

Local Dishes to Try in Aichi

What to Eat in Nagoya

The local dishes of Nagoya, referred to in Japanese as “Nagoya Meshi”, have a long and interesting history within the region. Many of the Nagoya Meshi dishes date back to ancient times.

If you prefer something heavy then Hitsumabushi, grilled eel served over rice, is the best choice! This dish is famous all over Japan, and Nagoya is its capital.

What to Eat in Toyota

The most popular dish is Gohei-mochi, a grilled rice cake on a stick coated in a sweet sauce. The sauce is made with a soy or miso base, and aromatically cooked over a flame. Usually Mochi is made with sticky rice, however Toyota’s Gohei Mochi is made from normal white rice, which keeps the texture not too soft. Topped with nuts and spices like walnuts, sesame and Japanese peppers, please enjoy the flavour of this mountainous area in a natural setting.

Unique Culture and Traditions

Float Festivals

As a collection of the best Float Festival in Japan, 5 festivals of Aichi Prefecture are included in “Yama, Hoko, Yatai, float festivals in Japan”, a registered UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage program. These include the Owari Tsushima Tenno Matsuri (Festival) in July, which offers you the breathtaking sight of the floats travelling up the Tenno river at night. The boats are lit up by over 365 glowing lanterns.

Another magnificent float festival is Kamezaki Shiohi Matsuri in May, where five elaborately carved floats covered with gorgeous tapestries rush across the beach at low tide, and charge into the water. Besides floats, an autumn festival also takes place every year on the first Saturday and Sunday of October.

Obara Washi Paper

The Obara district of Toyota City is home to the traditional Japanese artwork of washi paper, dating back to the Muromachi Period (1336-1573). At Obara’s Art and Craft Centre “Washi no Furusato”, one can learn how to craft one’s own piece of washi paper, and thus deepen their knowledge and experience of Japan.

Nature Sites in Aichi

Korankei Valley

Located in the Asuke district of Toyota City, Korankei is a valley near Nagoya reputed to be one of the best spots for viewing the autumn colours. Visitors can enjoy lovely sights of maple tree tunnels and autumn colours in combination with views of the river. The reflection of the maple trees on a calm day are especially revered by nature lovers. There are also a few bridges such as the Tomoebashiri Bridge, which are illuminated in the evening.

Historical Sites

The Castles of Aichi Prefecture

Aichi Prefecture is the birthplace of the Samurai heroes known as “the three warlords” who fought to unify Japan into a single nation. Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu were all born in Aichi during the prolonged Sengoku, or “Warring States” period about 500 years ago.

At Nagoya Castle we can witness a glimpse into this history. One of the castles more interesting and unique aspects is the pair of golden dolphins that rest on its roof.
Fukuoka

Getting to Fukuoka City, the largest city in Kyushu, is simple either by flight or Shinkansen (bullet train) from Tokyo or Osaka. Many flights operate between the cities, taking only about 1 hour 35 minutes from Tokyo, or 1 hour 10 minutes from Osaka. By Shinkansen, it takes about 4 hours and 50 minutes from Tokyo, or 2 hours and 30 minutes from Osaka.

Culture and the Tradition in Fukuoka

Hojoya Festival
Hojoya holds a buddhist festival at Hakozaki shrine around the middle of September that packs in crowds who have come to enjoy the vendors and carnival atmosphere along a one-kilometre pathway to the shrine.

Beautiful Natural Spots in Fukuoka

Yanagawa
Yanagawa is known as “The City of Water” located in the southern area of Fukuoka Prefecture. Upon arrival, make sure to enjoy a peaceful and traditional river cruise to see plenty of green nature from season to season. After getting off the cruise, you might want to try Yanagawa’s traditional local cuisine, steamed eel.

Harazuru Onsen
Located in Asakura City along the Chikugo river, Harazuru Onsen is one of the biggest hot spring towns in Fukuoka. The source contains two kinds of spring quality, both alkalescent simple spring, and sulfur spring, which has the effect of removing old keratin and skin. Harazuru Onsen provides a great place to unwind while soaking in its rich springs after visiting the venue for Rugby World Cup 2019.

Historical Sites in Fukuoka

Munakata Taisha Shrine
Designated by UNESCO’s World Heritage list as “Sacred Island of Okinoshima and Associated Sites in the Munakata Region” in 2017, Fukuoka City’s Munakata Taisha Shrine represents the head of several thousands of Munakata Shrines in Japan. The shrine has attracted visitors since ancient times as the house of the god of paths, to whom visitors pray for nautical and traffic safety. At this historic sight, they showcase about 80,000 national treasures unearthed on Okinoshima Island.

Yusentei Park
Originally built as a second home for the sixth lord of Fukuoka, Kuroda Tsugutaka, Yusentei Park is a pure Japanese-style garden. Here you may see koi fish swimming in the pond surrounded by many kinds of trees including maples, the fragrant olives, and azaleas. The beauty of their changing leaves in fall is not to be missed!

Koishiwara Ware
Toho Village, located in the east of Fukuoka Prefecture is known for its warm and homey atmosphere, and its renowned pottery. This village boasts about 50 kilns, most of which feature ceramic galleries. If you are lucky, you may have a chance to learn about it from the craftsman working in their studios!

Fukuoka City Guide

One of the Most Liveable Cities in the World
Fukuoka is the largest city in Kyushu, and one of Japan’s ten most populated cities. Its friendly yet urban atmosphere, accessible public transportation, and scale of the metropolis make have earned it the rank of fourteenth most liveable city in the world according to a survey by Monocle.

Savour the Food of Fukuoka
Fukuoka is well known for its regional cuisine, popular among local people as well as visitors to the city. A great place to try ramen as well as many other local specialities is at “yatai” – or food stalls. The Nakasu area in particular, is a great place to try yatai, as the area is packed with these bustling food stalls by night. They have a friendly atmosphere, and are a great way to experience Fukuoka’s local culture. Enjoyed by people of all ages, yatai provide a great venue to socialize, and maybe make new friends while chatting about Rugby World Cup in 2019!
Kumamoto

Visit one of Japan’s top castles “Kumamoto Castle,” and take in the splendid nature of Mount Aso and Amakusa

Getting to Kumamoto city, situated a central part on Kyushu island, involves taking either a flight, or the bullet train from either Tokyo or Osaka. Many flights operate between the cities, taking only 1 hour 40 minutes from Tokyo, and just 1 hour 10 minutes from Osaka. By Shinkansen (bullet train), the journey takes about 3 hours from Osaka.

Culture and Tradition

Kumamoto Prefecture in Kyushu is famous for the natural beauty of Mount Aso – an active volcano and recognised UNESCO World Geo Park – but also for its mystifying cultures and traditions that attract people from around the world.

Kurokawa Onsen

Kurokawa is a small hot spring town, located to the north of Mount Aso in Kumamoto Prefecture. Filled with lush nature, luxurious hot springs, traditional inns, and an overall Ghibli-esque atmosphere, Kurokawa earns its reputation as one of the best hot spring destinations in Japan.

Aso-Uchinomaki Onsen

Uchinomaki consists of about 100 hot spring sources which is surrounded by the volcanic crater at the foot of Mount Aso. This onsen has earned fame for being one of the places beloved by the famous Japanese novelist, Natsume Soseki. While reveling in the seasonal scenery of Aso Gogaku, you can enjoy various kinds of onsen spas.

Breathtaking Nature

Aso-Kuju National Park

Aso-Kuju National Park, which spans across the prefectures of Kumamoto and Oita, is a mountainous park with many volcanoes and the world’s largest caldera basin – the circumference of which measures approximately 90 kilometers.

Amakusa

Amakusa is a series of islands off the west coast of Kyushu, which are abundant with lush greenery and natural geological formations that have earned the islands a designation as national Geopark. Wild dolphins live amongst the islands, and can be seen on boat tours. Amakusa is the perfect island gateway to enjoy beaches, camping, marine sports, or any of the nearby hot spring villages that will await you there.

Historical Sites

Kumamoto Castle

Built by the daimyo Kato Kiyomasa, who governed this region at the beginning of the 17th century, Kumamoto Castle has been designated as an Important Cultural Property for its stone walls featuring ‘musha-gaeshi,’ a special defense designed to prevent enemy attacks.

Local Cuisine

Kumamoto Ramen

Compared to the Hakata Ramen found in Fukuoka, Kumamoto Ramen uses thicker noodles. The broth blends chicken stock with a tonkotsu pork-bone broth, creating a flavour that is mild, yet robust.

Kuma Shochu

Kumamoto is particularly well known for its production of rice shochu, Japanese rice-based alcoholic beverage. It is home of twenty-eight rice shochu distillers that collectively make “Kuma Shochu”. Kuma Shochu has reached global popularity – The World Trade Organization’s Appellation of Origin are given exclusively to rice shochu that are made with local spring water and that are fermented, distilled, and bottled in Kumamoto’s Hitoyoshi area.
Oita

Renowned for being one of the most famous onsen destinations in Japan

Oita city (Oita prefecture) is located on the North-Eastern section of the island of Kyushu. Oita Airport is the main commercial airport in Oita Prefecture, and has daily flights to and from Tokyo for about 1 hour 30 minutes. Oita is accessible from Osaka, either taking a flight for about 55 minutes or by rapid train and a Shinkansen (bullet train) for about 3 hours 30 minutes.

Local Specialities

Surrounded by the sea and magnificent mountains, Oita Prefecture, a hosting prefecture of Rugby World Cup 2019, is home to a rich food culture of locally grown meat, fish, and vegetables. Here are some examples of local special cuisines you can try when you visit Oita.

Bungo Beef

This iconic, high-end gourmet item of Oita, is treated with a prestige similar to that of Kobe Beef. With Teppanyaki or Steak, you can enjoy its sensational, melt-in-your-mouth texture, and admire the marbling of the fat through the meat.

Onsen Culture in Oita

Yufuin Onsen

At the foot of gorgeous Mt. Yufu, the Yufuin onsen resort offers a fantastic selection of hot spring baths, serene Japanese inns, and cozy boutique cafes in a picturesque natural setting.

Tanayu, An Open-air Bath

At the heart of Beppu onsen town, Sugioi hotel holds an attractive bath named ‘Tanayu,’ an open-air bath with a superb view. It consists of a complex series of tubs, spread out over five tiers like terraced rice paddies. Here you can overlook Beppu Bay and the night view of the town.

Scenic Nature Spots

Harajiri Falls

Nicknamed as “Asia’s Niagara Falls,” Harajiri Falls represents a horseshoe shaped waterfall rated one of Japan’s “top 100 waterfalls,” which stands boldly among a scattering of rice fields, and mountains – a quintessential Japanese landscape.

Historical Sites

Mameda Town

Nicknamed “Little Kyoto,” Mameda Town in Hita was built in a prosperous area at the beginning of the Edo Period. Its historic buildings remain well-preserved to this day. Gas lamps and its notable lack of visible electricity cables provide an authentic atmosphere as you stroll around.

Hita Onsen

In the Mikuma-gawa flowing through Hita onsen area, you can ride the unique Japanese-style wooden tour boat “Yakatabune” on which you can enjoy a dinner cruise including drinks and Japanese set meal, while sailing down the river.

What to See and Do in Oita

Sand Bath

On the beach of Shoningahama in Beppu City, you can find a chance to get your body buried in the sands and ease your muscles by sinking into their warmth by the blue ocean. It is beneficial for healing various ailments, from cuts, to stiff joints, sensitivity to colds, and more.

Mud Bath

Myoban onsen is part of “Beppu Hatto,” and is known for the large and spacious open-air-mud bath. The white, smooth mud is said to be great for your skin and face.

Osaka, Higashiosaka

Higashiosaka City is located in Eastern Osaka (the literal translation of its name). The easiest way to get there is by train or flight. As Osaka is the biggest metropolitan hub in the Kansai area, getting there is extremely convenient – taking only about 2 hours 30 minutes by Shinkansen (bullet train) or about a 1 hour and 10 minute flight from Tokyo.

Historically, Osaka’s nickname “tenka no daidokoro” (the nation’s kitchen) comes from its time as Japan’s rice hub during the Edo Period.

Varieties of Osaka Food

When you think of Osakan fast-food, the first thing that comes to mind is Takoyaki – balls of wheat-based batter that are cooked in special takoyaki pans, and generally filled with diced octopus. However, Osaka is known for its seasonal cuisine as well, one example of which is the gorgeous winter delicacy, Tecchiri – a fugu (blowfish) hot pot.

Saitama, Kumagaya

Discover the rural landscapes of Saitama, close-by to Tokyo.

Kumagaya City is located North from Tokyo, and is easily accessible by either JR train local lines, or the bullet train. Omiya, the centre of Saitama City is about 30 minutes from Tokyo by train, and from Osaka, about 3 hours by train via Tokyo.

Historical Spots in Saitama

Koedo Kawagoe is a historically preserved and nostalgic townscape from the Edo period. In the Edo period Tokyo was known as “Edo”, and the main area that is now Tokyo, “Big Edo” (Oedo), Kawagoe is dubbed “Small Edo” (Koedo) in contrast to the bigger city, and is one of the most famous castle towns in Japan. Once you step in you will experience kurazukuri buildings, which are strong, fire-resistant type of buildings. These old warehouses and houses still stand strong along the street today. Visitors also have the opportunities to enjoy a rickshaw ride, try tasty authentic traditional sweets, and see several shrines in Kawagoe, which are all unique to Japan.

Iwate, Kamaishi

World heritage sites in Iwate and Kamaishi.

Kamaishi City (Iwate Prefecture) is a city in Northern Tohoku region. It is accessible by plane or by train. It boasts a convenient location, located about 2 hours 10 minutes from Tokyo by the Shinkansen (bullet train), or about 1 hour 20 minutes from Osaka by plane.

Hiraizumi

The Cultural Heritage of Hiraizumi was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2011. This historic city of Iwate is home to ruins that once served as the government of the northern realm of Japan during the Heian period (8th-12th centuries.) For a vibrant but short 100 years, Hiraizumi existed as a small kingdom in present-day Iwate Prefecture and its prosperity and grandeur rivalled that of even Kyoto. Its founder, Lord Kiyohira of the Oshu-Fujiwara clan, grew up in a land ravaged by war, thus strived to make Hiraizumi a place of peace for all. He did this according to the tenets of Pure Land Buddhism, and indeed Hiraizumi’s temples and gardens were built as a representation of the Buddhist “Heaven on earth”.
Fukuoka Hakatanomori Stadium
Address: 1-1 Higashihiroa Koen, Hakata-ku, Fukuoka, 816-0052
Capacity: 22,563
Access: From Fukuoka Airport, take the Nishitetsu Bus to ‘Higashi-Hirao Koen-Iriguchi’ (15 minutes) bound for AEON mall Fukuoka or No3. Umm Eigyocho, then walk 5 minutes to the stadium.

Kumamoto Stadium
Address: 2776 Hirayamamachi, Higashi Ward, Kumamoto, Kumamoto Prefecture 861-8012
Capacity: 32,000
Access: From Kumamoto Station on either JR Kyushu Shinkansen, JR Kagoshima Line, or JR Hohi Line, take the Kyushu Sanko Bus to ‘Park Dorm Kumamoto mae’ (50 minutes) bound for Shika No8. Menkyo Center, then walk 3 minutes to the stadium.

Kobe Misaki Stadium
Address: 1-2-2 Misaki-cho, Hyogo-ku, Kobe 652-0855
Capacity: 30,132
Access: About 10 minutes from Kobe Sannomiya Station to Misaki Koen Station on the Kobe City Subway Kaigan Line and then approx. 5 minutes on foot from there to the stadium. Or 6 minutes on foot from JR Wadamisaki Station on the JR Wadamisaki Line.

Oita Stadium
Address: 1351 Yoko, Oita, Oita Prefecture 870-0126
Capacity: 40,000
Access: At platform no.3 (Oita Station) on either JR Kyudai Line, JR Nippo Line, or JR Hohi Line, take the Oita Bus to ‘Oita Sport Park Higashi’ (45 minutes) bound for ‘Park Place via Mera BP’, then walk 5 minutes to the stadium.

Hanazono Rugby Stadium
Address: 1-1-1 Matsubaraminami, Higashiosaka, Osaka Prefecture 578-0923
Capacity: 30,000
Access: About 20 minutes from Osaka Namba Station to Higashi Hanazono Station on the Kintetsu Nara Line and then approx. 10 minutes on foot from there to the stadium.

City of Toyota Stadium
Address: 7-2 Sengokuchō, Toyota, Aichi Prefecture 471-0016
Capacity: 45,000
Access: About 50 – 60 minutes from Nagoya Station to Toyotashi Station and then approx. 15 minutes on foot from there to the stadium. Or 17 minutes on foot from Shintoyota Station on the Aichi Loop Railway.
Kumagaya Rugby Stadium
Address: 300 Kamigawakami, Kumagaya, Saitama Prefecture 360-0004
Capacity: 24,000
Access: Take the train to Kumagaya Station on the JR Joetsu Shinkansen (bullet train), Takasaki Line or Syounan-Shinjuku Line. Out from the North Exit of the Kumagaya Station, take a bus at the No.3 bus stop to the ‘Kumagaya Dome’ or to the ‘Kumagaya Sports and Culture Park’ (10 minutes).

Sapporo Dome
Address: 1 Hitsujigaoka, Toyohira Ward, Sapporo, Hokkaido Prefecture 062-0045
Capacity: 41,410
Access: 13 minutes from Sapporo Subway Station to Fukuzumi Subway Station on the Toho Line and then approx. 10 minutes on foot from there to the Dome (500m).

Kamaishi Recovery Memorial Stadium
Address: Unosumai Kamaishi, Iwate
Capacity: 16,187
Access: Will be announced as soon as the stadium is open.

Shizuoka Stadium Ecopa
Address: 2300-1 Aino Fukuroi City, Shizuoka 437-0031
Capacity: 50,889
Access: About 50 minutes from Shizuoka Station or about 20 minutes from Hamamatsu Station to Aino Station on the JR Tokaido Line and then approx. 15 minutes on foot from there to the stadium.

International Stadium Yokohama
Address: 3300 Kozukuecho, Kohoku Ward, Yokohama, Kanagawa Prefecture 222-0036
Capacity: 72,327
Access: About 10 minutes from Yokohama Station to Shinyokohama Station on the JR Yokohama Line, or Yokohama Municipal Subway and then approx. 14 minutes on foot from there to the stadium.

Tokyo Stadium
Address: 376-3 Nishimachi, Chofu, Tokyo 182-0032
Capacity: 49,970
Access: About 13 minutes from Shinjuku Station or about 30 minutes from Shibuya Station to Tobitakyu Station on the Keio Line and then approx. 5 minutes on foot from there to the stadium.