

Welcome to SHORYUDO!

■ What's SHORYUDO?

SHORYUDO refers to the area of nine prefectures in Chubu and Hokuriku. The shape of the Chubu and Hokuriku regions at the center of Japan resembles a rising dragon, with the Noto Peninsula forming its head and Mie Prefecture its tail, and its rising body covering every part of the nine Chubu and Hokuriku prefectures, giving this sightseeing destination its nickname of SHORYUDO.

■ Feel the Heart of Japan

SHORYUDO is an area filled with attractions to see, enjoy, and taste, where you can feel the heart of Japan and savor all the true charm of a visit to Japan.

■ Expedition to the Real Japan

All the appeal of the real Japan waits you in this region. The region features much to delight visitors, including many hot-spring baths, locations of scenic natural beauty, and areas of history and culture relating to such personages as Tokugawa Ieyasu, Japan's first shogun, as well as architecture, legends, festivals, and more. The region is also the source of fresh seafood, beef, and other delicious fare.

■ Go! Central Japan

We invite you to come and enjoy all that central Japan SHORYUDO as to offer visitors. We look forward to welcoming you here!

SHORYUDO Project Promotion Association

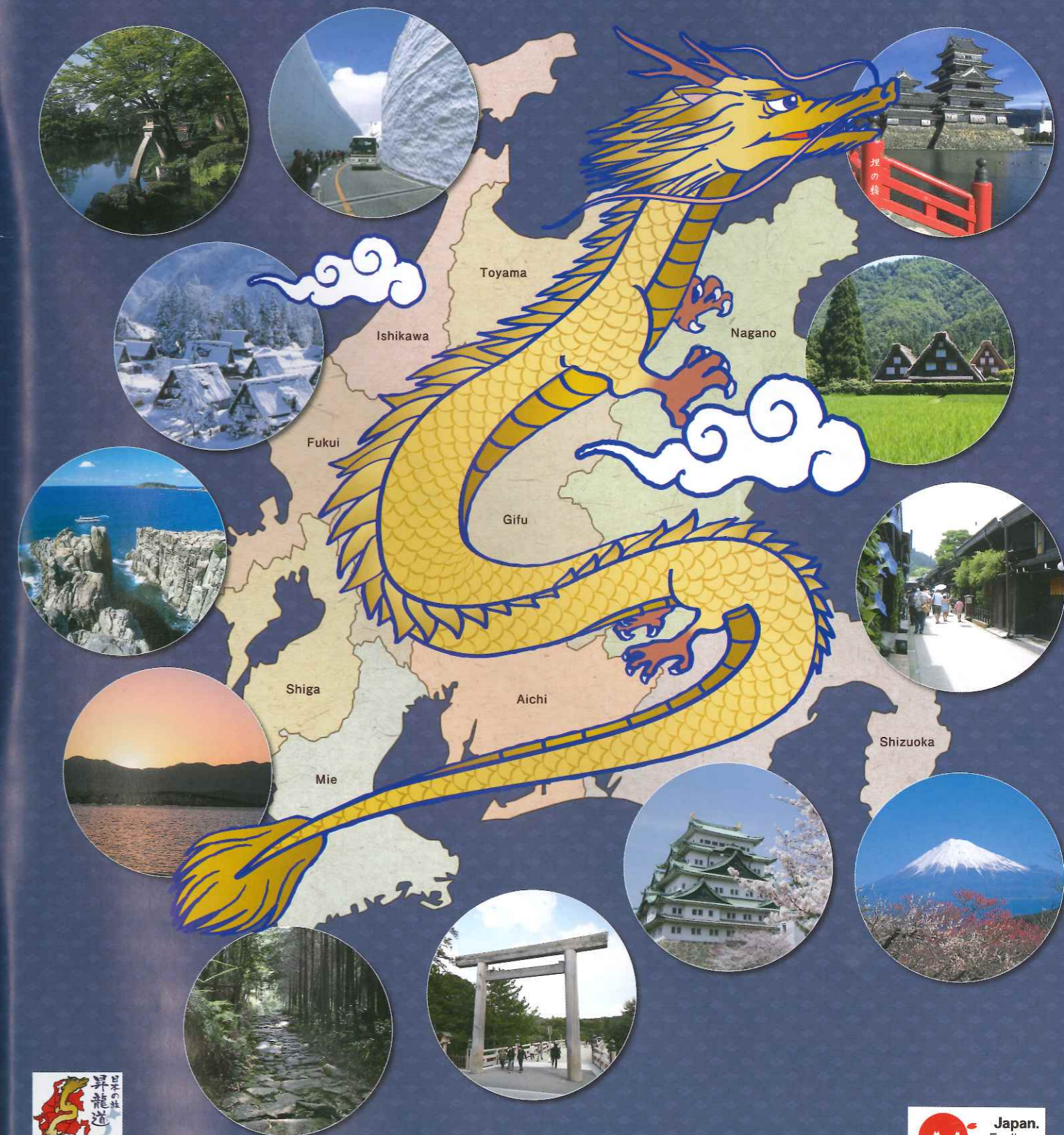
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JAPAN SHORYUDO

Central Japan

Most Outstanding: Top100 Year-Round Tourist Destinations



SHORYUDO Project Promotion Association



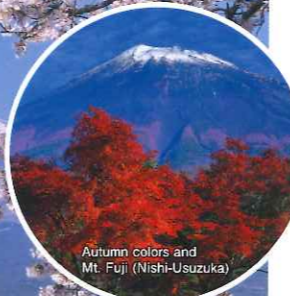
Japan's Natural Charm and Beautiful Seasonal Landscapes



Cherry blossoms and Mt. Fuji (Fuji city Kanagatsutsumi Park)



Tea plantations and Mt. Fuji (Fuji city)



Autumn colors and Mt. Fuji (Nishi-Usuzuka)



Mt. Fuji seen from Miho no Matsubara

1 World Cultural Heritage Mt. Fuji—sacred place and source of artistic inspiration

A symbol of Japan and Japanese culture

Japan's highest mountain (3,776 m) has long been a symbol of Japan itself. Called "Omote Fuji" (or front view of Fuji) when seen from Shizuoka Prefecture, its elegant form has often been depicted in paintings, songs, and stories. Mt. Fuji and the surrounding area are well known for their abundant natural beauty, great numbers of visitors are attracted by the outdoor activities, hot springs, and gorgeous scenery year-round. The summit is sacred to the Japanese people and widely revered as the location of the enshrined god Asama no Ohkami. In June, 2013 Mt. Fuji was designated by UNESCO on its World Heritage List as "Fujisan, a sacred place and a source of artistic inspiration."



Tateyama Ropeway



Lake Mikuriga



Kurobe Dam



Tateyama Kurobe Alpine Route (Yuki no Otani (Great Valley of Snow))

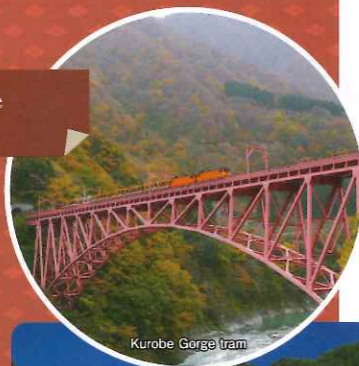
2 Tateyama/Tateyama Kurobe Alpine Route /Kurobe Gorge

World-class mountain tourism destination in the 3,000-meter Northern Alps

Mt. Tateyama, is one of the three most renowned and sacred mountains in Japan, along with Mt. Fuji and Mt. Hakusan.

The Tateyama Kurobe Alpine Route is a world-famous scenic mountain route known for its snow walls. Tourists travel by cable car, ropeway, bus and other modes of transport through approximately 90 km of mountains over 3,000 meters. The route is open between mid-April and the end of November. From April to mid June, the walk along the 20-m snow wall, known as "Yuki no Otani" (great valley of snow) is a particularly popular. Visitors are also drawn to Mt. Tateyama by the budding greenery of Spring and colorful foliage of Autumn.

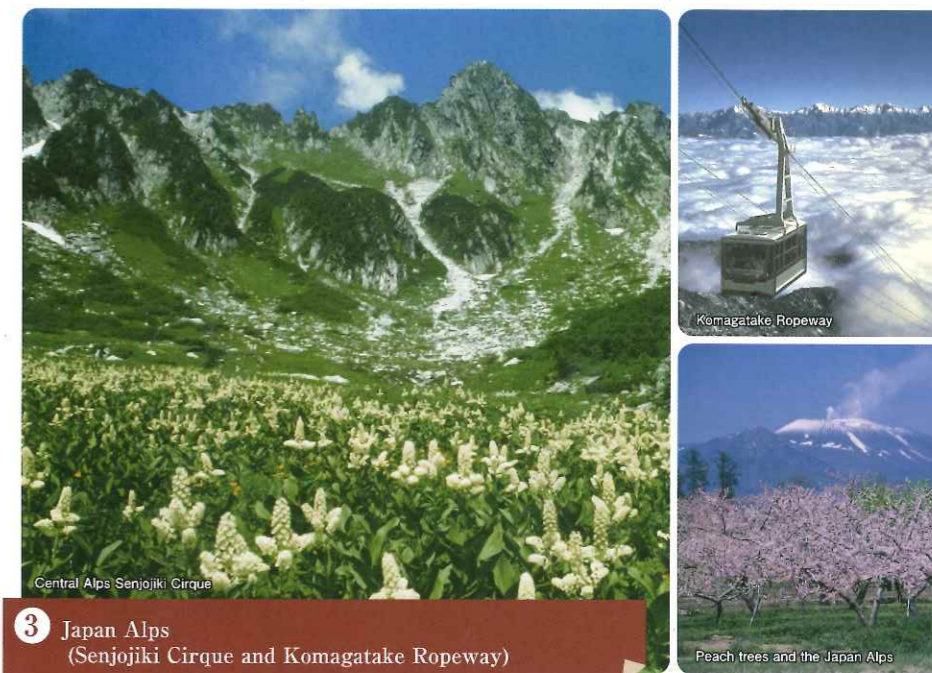
At Kurobe Gorge, Japan's No. 1 V-shaped valley, visitors can enjoy new foliage among the lingering snow in the spring, cool and pleasant weather in summer, and vibrant leaves in autumn while riding in trolley trains.



Kurobe Gorge tram



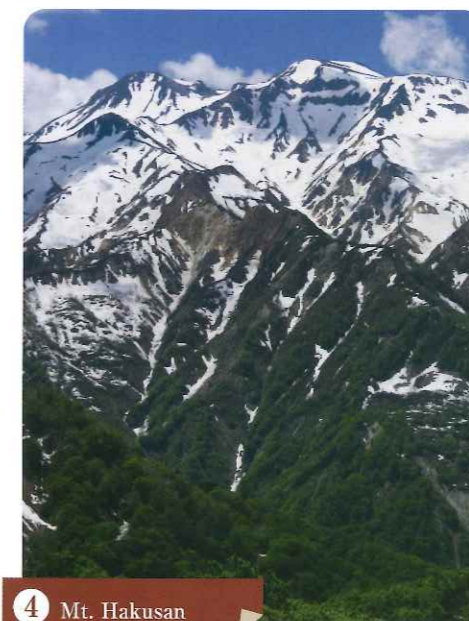
Shomyo Falls



3 Japan Alps (Senjojiki Cirque and Komagatake Ropeway)

Beautiful 3,000-meter mountain ranges with four distinct seasons

This is the only mountain range with 3,000–4,000-meter peaks in Japan. The Senjojiki Cirque is a bowl-shaped depression formed by glacial erosion about 20,000 years ago, and a sight that you don't want to miss. Just 7.5 minutes away by ropeway, the cirque is another world 2,600 m in the sky. The area is covered in blossoming alpine plants in summer, colored leaves in fall, and blanketed in snow in winter. Spring skiing is available in April and May. The mountain is also considered to be the starting point for climbing well-known mountains like Mt. Komagatake and Mt. Hokendake (both listed among Japan's top 100 mountains). The Komagatake Ropeway gives visitors access to breathtaking scenery all year long—scenery that changes completely depending on the season. Senjojiki also features that last cherry blossoms of the year in June and July.



4 Mt. Hakusan



Hakusan Super Rindo Forest Road

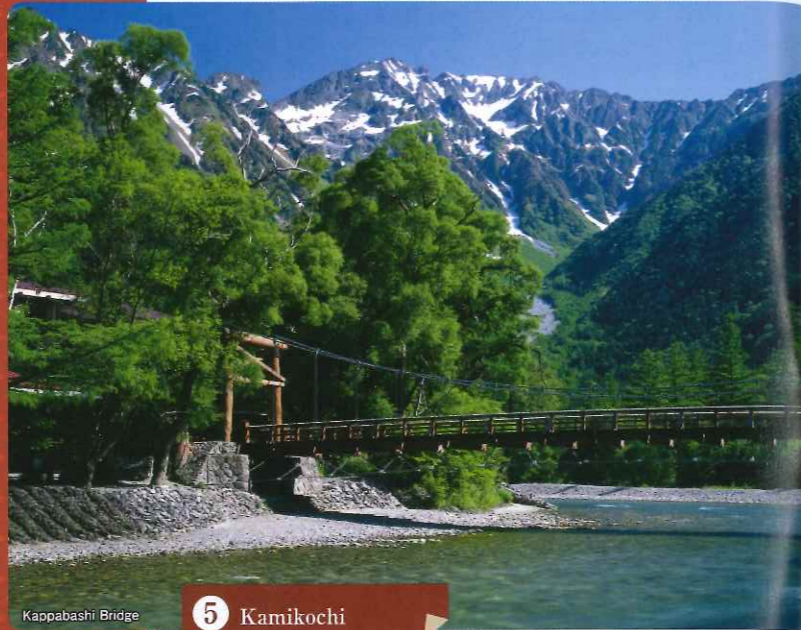
One of Japan's three most famous mountains

Mt. Hakusan, together with Mt. Fuji and Mt. Tateyama, is one of the three most famous mountains in Japan. The mountain is home to a wide variety of uncommon flora and fauna—including blossoming alpine plants and a vast beech wood forest. Mt. Hakusan is located at the westernmost tip of the highest mountain range in Japan. Visitors can enjoy alpine plants in summer and the colored leaves of the native beech in fall. Discover fascinating historical sites including grottos and shrines constructed in the mountains and influenced by the Hakusan Faith. Tours of the crater lakes' natural garden-like scenery near the summit and mountain climbing trips to view the rising sun from this sacred mountain attract vast numbers of visitors. Other attractions include the hot springs and distinctive cuisine at the base of the mountain. Tourists can appreciate the fresh greenery and beautiful gorge in summer and the colored leaves in fall when viewed from the Hakusan Super Rindo Forest Road.

Japan's Natural Charm and Beautiful Seasonal Landscapes



9 Multiple locations in the Shoryudo



Kappabashi Bridge

5 Kamikochi

Japan's first mountain resort with a relaxing environment of clear water and magnificent mountains

The first mountain resort in Japan will re-energize your mind, body, and soul. The picturesque scenery of the mountain landscape at nearly 1,500m tall, this precious Japanese "Scenic Asset" has been designated as a National Cultural Property (Special Place of Scenic Beauty and Special Natural Monument). Due to the clear running river and the view of the breathtakingly beautiful Japan Alps from the river, this area is also known as the "Land where Gods Alight." Popular photo spots where you can capture the aspects of each season include Taisho Pond and Kappa Bridge.



6 Japan's unspoiled natural landscape (Goshikigahara Highlands and Hida-Osaka Falls)

Forest trekking through unspoiled natural landscapes

The Goshikigahara Highlands' 3,000 hectares of magnificent natural beauty enchant visitors the moment they arrive. Babbling brooks, waterfalls, ponds, riverheads, and singing birds are woven together like a symphony of the static and dynamic faces of nature. To ensure the conservation of this delicate and precious ecosystem, all climbers in Goshikigahara must be accompanied by a guide during their trip. Take advantage of this unprecedented alpine experience in Japan. The town of Osaka is home to the Hida-Osaka Falls as well as the largest number of waterfalls in Japan (more than 200 have been identified). The town conveniently provides English-speaking guides to tour the falls and has unique tourist spots like the Osaka hot springs, which have the highest concentration of carbonic acid in Japan.



Goshikigahara Highlands



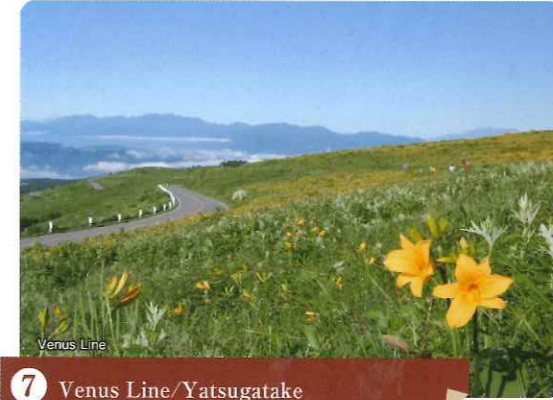
Hida-Osaka Falls



Myojinike Pond



Nature Trail



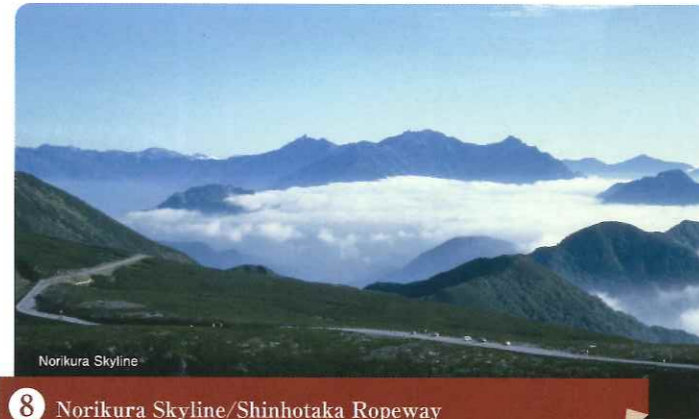
7 Venus Line/Yatsugatake

Pleasant highland drive

The Venus Line is a 76-km refreshing scenic route that stretches through Tateshina, Lake Shirakaba, Kurumayama plateau, and Utsukushigahara plateau. From Spring to Summer when flowers are blooming in profusion is the best season to visit. The panorama of green highlands with the Japan Alps seen far in the distance is one of the most beautiful vistas in Japan. Yatsugatake draws visitors with abundant views of steep mountains one after another. The changing natural aspects of each season will delight all-comers. Yatsugatake is one of Japan's most popular mountain resorts. Visitors can reach the peak via a variety of routes, including moderate hiking routes and full-fledged mountain climbing trails. From Kita Yatsugatake Ropeway, people can enjoy wide panoramic views of the roof of Japan.



Yatsugatake



8 Norikura Skyline/Shinhotaka Ropeway

Year round vistas in the highlands and mountain ranges

Going up to elevations of 2,700 m, the Norikura Skyline is the highest (elevation) highway in Japan. Visitors can easily take bus, taxi, and other modes transportation to see the snow wall that remains even in the beginning of summer, fields of flowers everywhere filled with pretty alpine plants in full bloom, sunrise viewed from the top of the mountain, and autumn foliage and fully enjoy the three seasons. Shinhotaka Ropeway runs from Chubu Sangaku National Park and Okuhida & Shinhotaka hot springs to Sengokudaira (2,160m), the observation point closest to Mt. Yari & Mt. Hotaka mountain range. Two types of gondolas, a see through gondola and the first double decker gondola in Japan run year round. Holding the largest elevation difference in Japan, the observation deck at the mountaintop station offers 360 degree panoramic views of the majestic Northern Alps.



Shinhotaka Ropeway



Shiga Kogen Ski Resort (Nagano Pref.)



Tateyama Sanroku Ski Resort (Toyama Pref.)



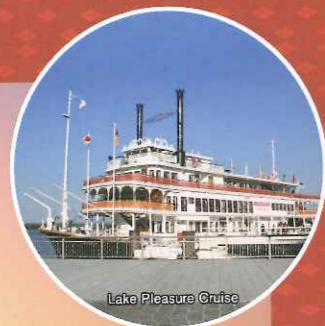
Gujo Kogen Ski Resort (Gifu Pref.)

9 Shoryudo ski area (snowy vista)

The Shoryudo area, enjoy skiing from late fall through early spring

The Shoryudo area has more ski resorts than almost anywhere else in Japan. Aside from enjoying the winter scenery in each of the Shoryudo areas, visitors can enjoy active snow sports like skiing, snowboarding, or just play in the snow. Snow covers the Shoryudo from as early as December to as late as May, so visitors can enjoy nearly six months of snow sports.

Japan's Natural Charm and Beautiful Seasonal Landscapes



11 Lake Biwa

Japan's largest and the world's third-oldest lake with four million years of history

The four million-years-old Lake Biwa is Japan's largest lake and the third oldest lake in the world. Aside from natural beauty available everywhere you look, you can also cruise the lake in tour boats. The lake is home to various fishes and shellfish, including some endemic species, a veritable treasury of biology. The taste of Biwa trout is particularly delicious—some say it is even better than toro, the prized fatty portion of tuna.



Five Lakes of Mikata

10 Five Lakes of Mikata/
Mikatagoko Rainbow Line

360-degree panorama of the garden in the sky

The five colors of the Five Lakes are due to the depth and quality of the water. The lakes were registered in the Ramsar Convention in 2005. While driving up to the mountain peak on the Mikatagoko Rainbow Line through the Five Lakes of Mikata, you will see beautiful panoramic views of the "Garden in the sky." The "love" themed facility in the mountain top park has been certified as a "Lover's Sanctuary." The mountain top park is also well-known for its rose garden.



Lake Hamana Cycling



Bentenjima



Hamamatsu Flower Park



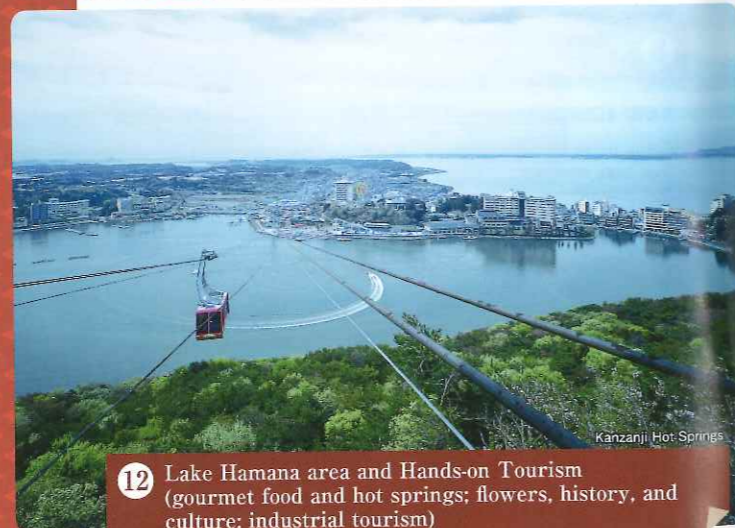
Eel dishes



Ryugashido Cavern



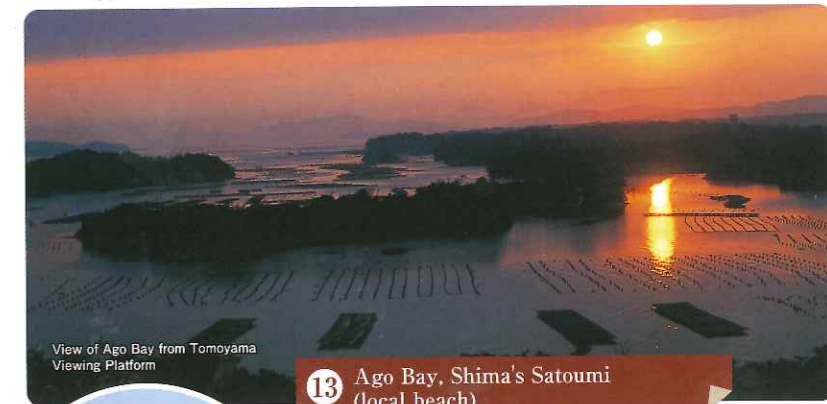
Ryota-ji Temple (Kohoku Gozan)



12 Lake Hamana area and Hands-on Tourism (gourmet food and hot springs; flowers, history, and culture; industrial tourism)

Japan's largest brackish lake, surrounded by gourmet food venues and quality hot springs

The water in Lake Hamana is a mixture of fresh and salt water which creates "brackish water." At one of the four hot springs including Kanzanji and Bentenjima in the vicinity of the lake, enjoy local cuisines including grilled eel and blowfish after a long soak. Five famous temples north of the lake called "Hamanako Kohoku Gozan" (five ancient temples at northern tip of Lake Hamana) have national important cultural properties, gardens, seasonal flowers, and autumn leaves. Other activities and attractions include: a traditional fishing technique which only can be seen in Lake Hamana called Takiya fishing, lake cruising, mandarin orange picking, amusement parks, a zoo, a flower park, caving (Ryugashido), a local train (Tenryu Hamanako Railroad), industry and sightseeing facilities (e.g. Unagi Pie Factory and Suzuki Plaza).



View of Ago Bay from Tomoyama Viewing Platform

13 Ago Bay, Shima's Satomi (local beach)



View of Ago Bay from Yokoyama Viewing Platform

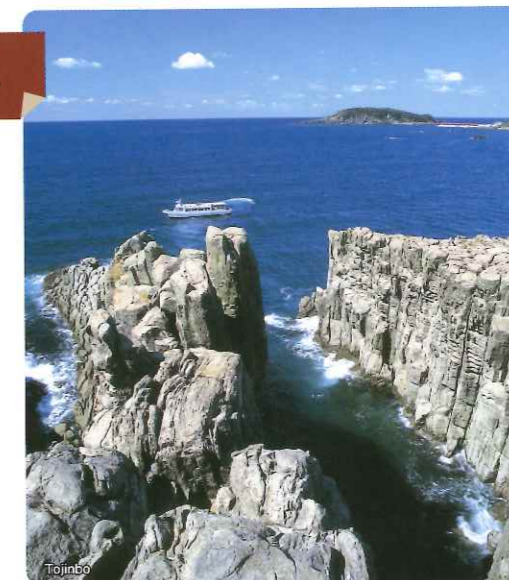
The distinctive beauty of Japan's rugged coastlines

Ago bay is one of the most famous drowned river shorelines in Japan. Viewing the scenery from Yokoyama observation deck (203 m) is totally amazing—there are about 60 small islands in the bay and saw tooth coastlines. Around Ago bay, you can see beautiful sunsets everywhere. Cherry blossoms in spring and fall color in autumn, in addition to the beautiful scenery of each season, marine sports such as sea kayaking can be enjoyed.

14 Fukui's scenic beauty, famous temples, and famous historical spots (Tojinbo, Daihonzan Eihei-ji Temple, Ichijodani Asakura Clan Ruins)

The famed scenic spots, temples, and historical locations that define Japan

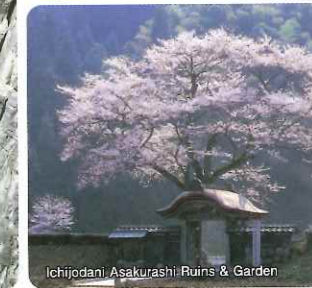
The Tojinbo, said to be one of only 3 in the whole world, is a series of oddly-shaped rock outcroppings that stretches for about 1 km. The Tojinbo are natural columns of stone made from columnar joints. The area is designated as a natural monument and is famous for its sunsets. Tojinbo and the Japan Sea's natural aspect can be enjoyed any time, any season, in any weather. The view of the 23 m cliffs from an excursion boat is absolutely stunning. The Daihonzan Eihei-ji temple, the main temple of the Soto school of Zen was constructed by the master of Zen Buddhism Dogen. The temple's seven halls called "shichido-garan" (seven monasteries) are essential to the two hundred monks and nuns in residence for day and night training. The Ichijodani Asakura Clan Ruins is the single biggest castle town site of the Middle Ages. This precious cultural heritage has three national certifications; special historic site, special place of scenic beauty, and important cultural property. The site and surrounding area have been excavated and faithfully restored, so you really feel like you are in the Warring States Period.



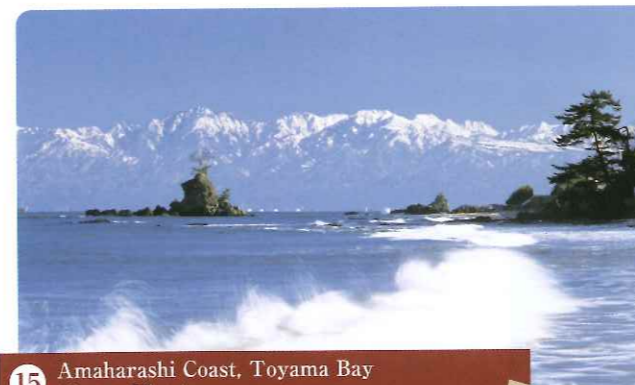
Tojinbo



Daihonzan Eihei-ji Temple



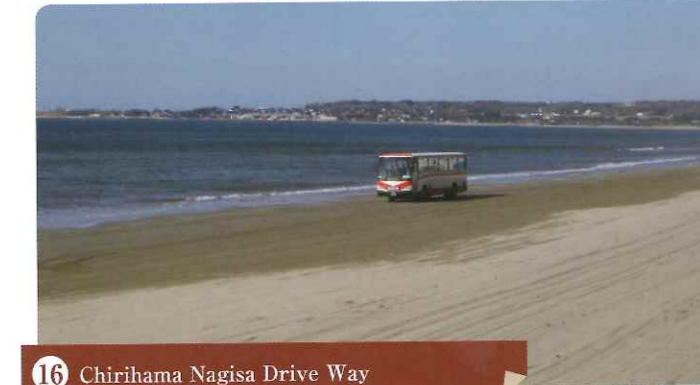
Ichijodani Asakura Ruins & Garden



15 Amaharashi Coast, Toyama Bay (Ocean Vista)

The peaks of the Tateyama range viewed from the ocean and the firefly squid magically glittering in the night sea

From the magnificent Amaharashi Coast, you can enjoy the view of the Tateyama mountain range and the mystic mirages of Toyama Bay. In Namerikawa City visitors can also participate in boat tours to see the mysterious lights emitted by the firefly squid at night.

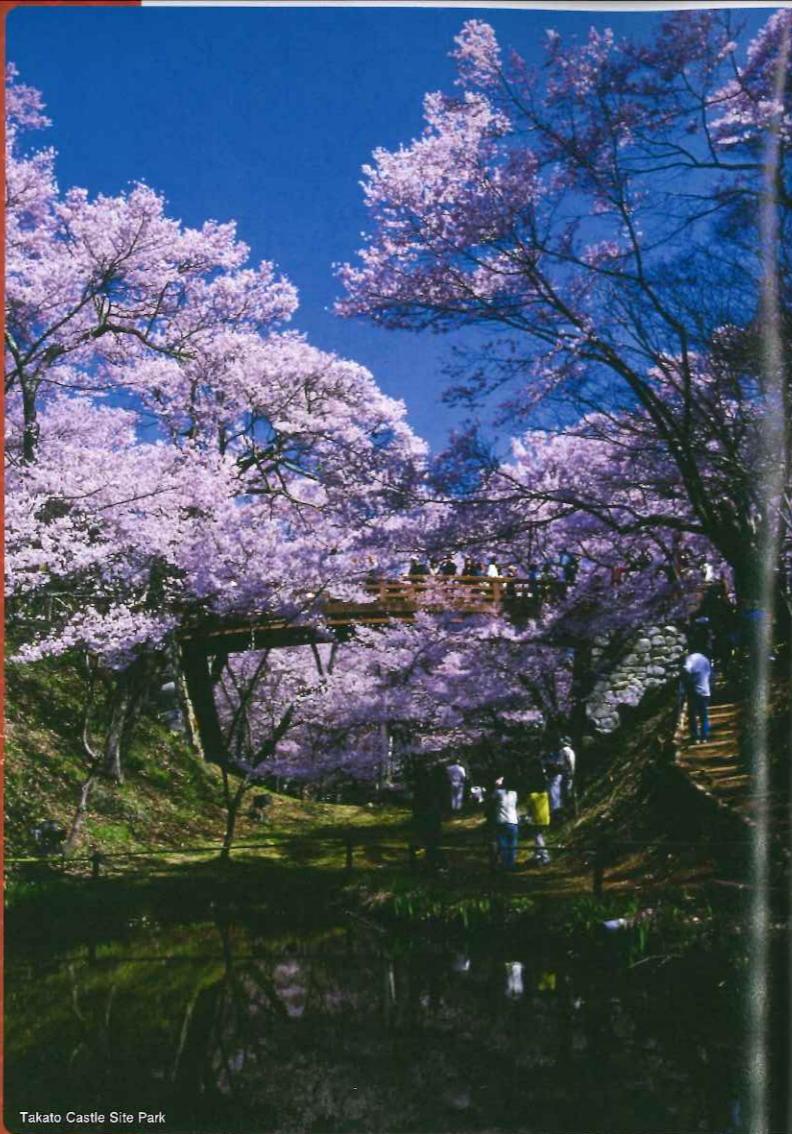


16 Chirihama Nagisa Drive Way

Japan's longest and only sandy beach road

The only beach in Japan that you can drive your car or ride a bus to the edge of the surf. The special 8-km coast made of fine sand grains containing sea water feels just like a paved road and is known as an extremely rare driving course. The beach also attracts hundreds and thousands of beachgoers each summer. The sun setting into the Japan Sea is something that you don't want to miss.

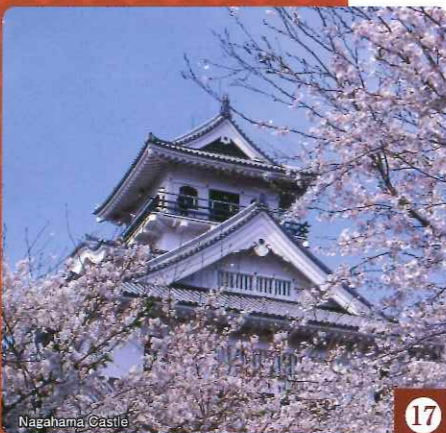
The Colors of the Seasons- Cherry Blossoms and Autumn Leaves



Takato Castle Site Park



Okazaki Castle

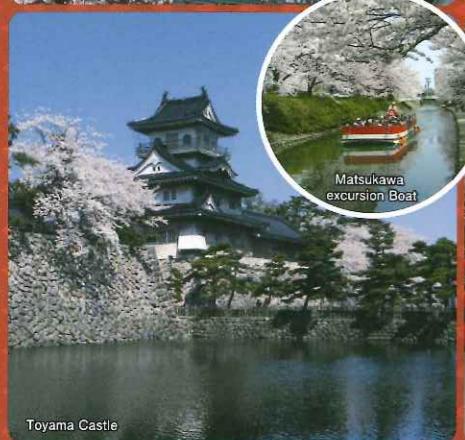


Nagahama Castle



Maruoka Castle

17 Landscape of cherry blossoms with castle (Okazaki, Toyama, Takaoka, Takato, Hikone, Nagahama, and Maruoka)



Toyama Castle



Takaoka Kojo Park (Takaoka Castle Ruins)



Matsukawa excursion Boat

Landscape of cherry blossoms selected among Japan's top 100 and castles

The quintessentially Japanese images of cherry blossoms and castles are sights that every tourist wants to see. Many castles in the Shoryudo area have cherry blossoms counted among the top 100. Okazaki Castle is where Ieyasu Tokugawa was born. At Toyama Castle, you can enjoy the cherry blossoms floating in a Matsukawa excursion boat. The cherry blossoms at Takato Castle Ruins are one of the top three in Japan and considered the best place to see cherry blossoms in Japan. Enjoy the cherry blossoms along the moats of Takaoka Kojo Park (Takaoka Castle Ruins). The Okazaki, Takato, Takaoka and Maruoka castles are also listed together with Hikone Castle (a national treasure) among Japan's top 100 castles.

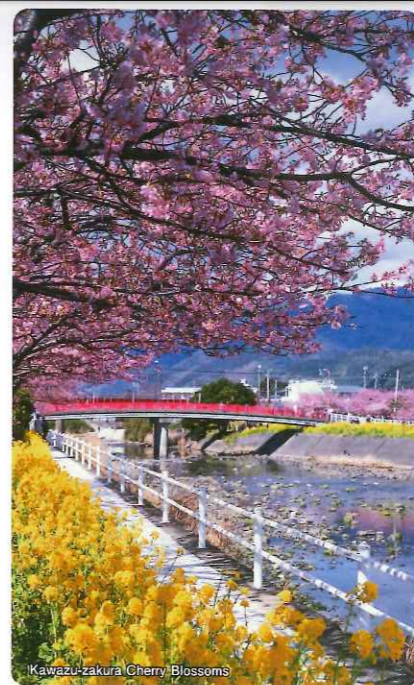


Hina no Tsurushi Kazari Festival (Hanging Decoration Festival)

18 Kawazu-zakura Cherry Blossoms

The largest group of Japan's earliest blossoming cherry trees

Known for having the earliest fully flowering cherry blossoms in Japan, this location is also believed to be the birthplace of early flowering cherry trees. Rows of cherry blossoms can be enjoyed from early February through early March, ahead of the usual season. The contrasting picture of cherry blossoms and oilseed rape blossoms is absolutely beautiful. Visitors can also enjoy Hina no Tsurushi Kazari (hanging decoration festival) in Izu Inatori during in the same period.



Kawazu-zakura Cherry Blossoms



19 Usuzumi-zakura: One of Japan's three most famous cherry trees

One of Japan's three most famous cherry trees

One of the three most famous cherries in Japan, this tree was designated as a national natural monument in 1922. Due to the fact that the buds are light pink, the opened flowers are white, and after falling they are pinkish grey (usu-zumi) these cherries are called "Usu-zumi Zakura." The tree is said to be 1,500 years old. Though it has repeatedly been on the verge of dying due to its advanced age, it has survived these crises thanks to the efforts of local communities and still blooms beautifully to this day.



Korankei



Old town of Asuke

20 Walking in the autumn leaves in Korankei and old row houses in Asuke

A famous place for autumn color where 4,000 trees are reflected in the river

This famous spot for autumn leaves boasts some 4,000 trees planted along the river. The leading autumn foliage spot in the Shoryudo can also be enjoyed together with Sanshu Asuke Yashiki, which offers guests additional opportunities to experience Japanese culture, including old-style handiworks (e.g. weaving). These include the production of traditional goods and soba as well as strolling through the old town of Asuke, which retains its traditional lifestyle. Nearby, there is a cherry that blossoms in autumns called the Obara-shiki zakura. This rare sight allows visitors to appreciate both the autumn leaves in Korankei and cherry blossoms in Obara during the same season.



Shakazan Hyakusaiji Temple



Shohozan Kongorinji Temple

21 Autumn leaves in Koto-sanzan (three Tendai sect temples)

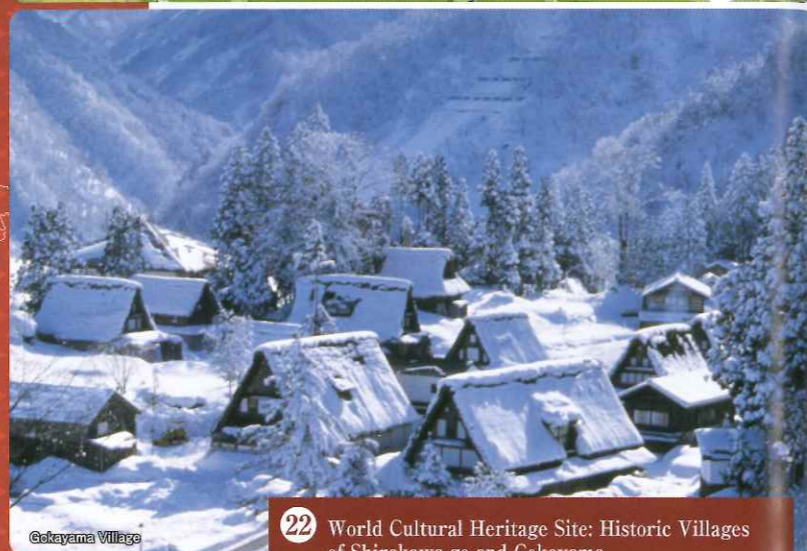
Autumn leaves provide a gorgeous contrast with historical temples

Located on the east side of the Lake Biwa, three temples (Ryuzan Saimyoji, Shohozan Kongorinji, and Shakazan Hyakusaiji) known as the Koto-sanzan (three temples on the eastern side of the lake) are the most famous spot for autumn leaves in Shoryudo. A vast number of tourists and worshippers visit the three temples not only in autumn, but also in other seasons to see the many national treasures and important cultural properties preserved there.



Ryuzan Saimyoji Temple

Native Villages and Unspoiled Landscapes



22 World Cultural Heritage Site: Historic Villages of Shirakawa-go and Gokayama

Japan's untouched landscape is still home to every day people

This location was registered as a World Cultural Heritage site in 1995. The village has houses with steep thatched roofs one to two hundred years old—some as old as four hundred years old. Gokayama Village consists of the two settlements of Aikura and Suganuma, which still have 29 traditional thatched-roof homes. Shirakawa-go has about 60 thatched-roofed structures. Visitors enjoy the changing effect of each season on these thatched buildings, they are illuminated in winter which creates an ethereal snowscape.

23 Three-star roadway in Hokuriku and Hida regions

Touring Kenroku-en, the World Cultural Heritage sites (Gokayama and Shirakawa-go), and Hida Takayama

The tie-up involves three cities: (1) Kanazawa, which boasts Kenroku-en, one of Japan's top three gardens; (2) Nanto and Shirakawa villages, designated as World Cultural Heritage sites for their thatched-roof houses; and (3) Takayama, a popular historical town which has its preserved old roughhouses and its popular morning market. These collaborating cities showcase the magnificence of Japan's history and culture.



24 Noto's Satoyama and Satoumi (local forests and beaches); including Shiroyone Senmaida (thousand paddies), Shuran no Sato, and more

Japan's Satoyama and Satoumi scenery, the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System

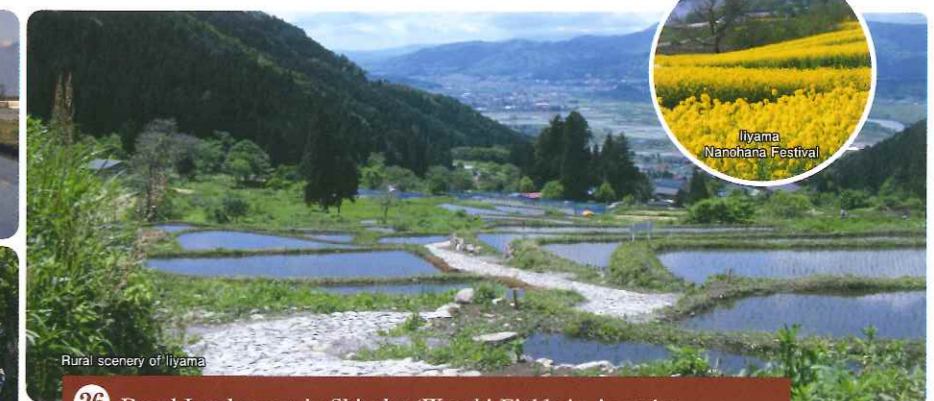
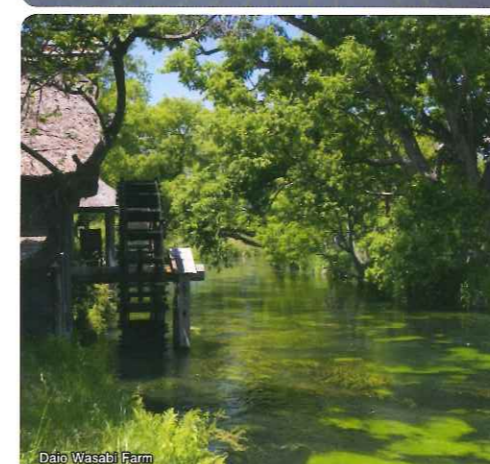
The wisdom of our ancestors living 400 years ago is unchanged in this village, where the people cultivate about a thousand small rice fields without using any agricultural machinery. The group of rice paddies is called Shiroyone Senmaida, or "thousand paddies" and the view from the mountains to the sea is marvelous. The Senmaida area also makes for great photographs of the surrounding nature that changes with each season—flooded fields in spring, fresh green in summer, harvests in fall, and illuminated fields in winter, and the sun setting into the Japan Sea. Senmaida is truly a place of harmonious coexistence between people and living things. Designated as a World Agriculture Heritage site in 2011 and listed in the Guinness Book of Records for its Azenokirameki (sparkling furrows) illuminated winter rice fields, this location is now a world-class tourist destination. The Shuran no Sato is a farming village that could be called "untouched," it is located in a pastoral village tucked away in a mountain valley that is part of Noto Town. The village also offers tours to visit farmers' inns and see agriculture taking place. Experiences include seeing the white walls of the farmhouses, black roofing tiles, traditional lifestyles, and satoyama forests. Visitors can also join in a seasonal agriculture program.



25 World Cultural Heritage Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range (Kumano Kodo Iseji)

A road of prayer, approaching sacred sites from Ise to Kumano

This old highway was listed as a World Cultural Heritage site in 2004 under name of the "Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range." It is a pilgrimage route connecting the two holy grounds of Ise and Kumano over countless peaks. Even today, the old expressway remains as a moss-covered stone path with stone images of Jizo and signposts that evoke ages long past. Routes are divided into mountain and coastal routes, and include scenic sites such as the Magose Pass Trail with beautifully paved stones, Japan's first shrine, Hana-no-Iwaya, Jofukunomiya (which enshrines Xú Fú, a popular sightseeing spot for Chinese tourists), and beautiful coastal views of Shishiwa (Lion Crag) and Shichirimihama Beach. In the vicinity, there is Maruyama Senmaida (thousand paddies), which is the largest group of rice paddies in Japan.

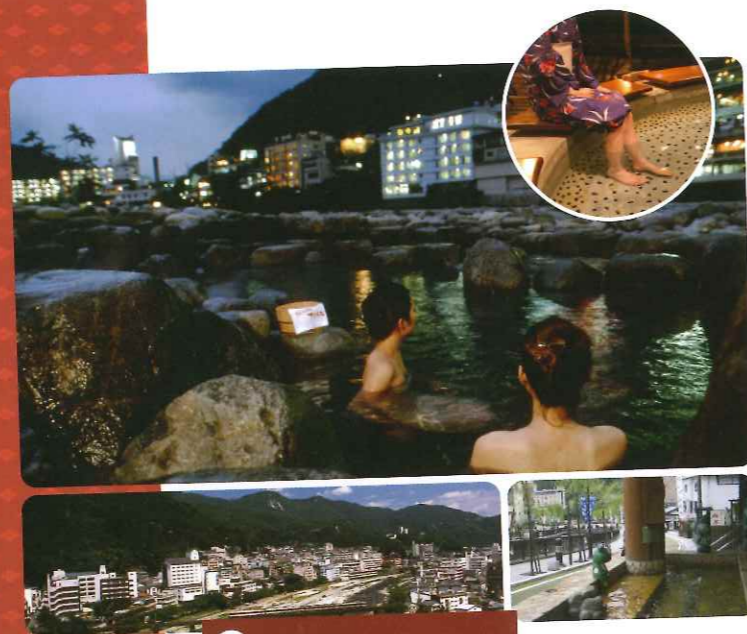


26 Rural Landscapes in Shinshu (Wasabi Fields in Azumino, Rapeseed Fields and the Chikuma River in Iiyama)

Peaceful Country views of Shinshu

Azumino is a tranquil rural zone located in the foothills of the Northern Alps. Its beautiful scenery is often captured in drawings, and the setting of stories and dramas. The vast wasabi fields with pure spring-fed rivers running between the furrows is the quintessential scene of Azumino. The Nanohana Festival in spring celebrates the gorgeous yellow oilseed rape blossoms that spread along the Chikuma River in Iiyama City. In winter, people enjoy the snowscapes in idyllic towns, including the many snow huts that dot the vast snowfields. The Mayumi Takahashi Museum of Doll Art attracts local people and also takes visitors back to traditional Japanese lifestyles.

Relaxing hot springs and hot spring towns hidden in idyllic natural settings



28 Wakura hot springs

Hot spring resorts on the Noto Peninsula dot the calm sea

Hokuriku's largest hot springs resort area has been actively working to attract foreign tourists, especially those from Taiwan. With 1,200 years of history, large Japanese-style inns, or ryokan, stand side-by-side along the coastline. The sunset is particularly beautiful here. Nanao Bay lies just before the inns, and is considered a natural preserve teeming with marine species. The natural mineral water here is believed to promote smooth skin and even help treat gastrointestinal diseases and anemia when taken orally.



29 Kaga hot spring village

Large hot spring resorts with 1300 years of history

The Kaga Hot Spring Village features a collection of unique hot springs dating back 1,300 years. Kaga is famous for its many sophisticated and luxury ryokan, including some that have several hundred years of history. The area also showcases some of the finest craftsmanship in Japan, including Kutani pottery and Yamanaka lacquerware. Together with these distinguished products, the local people's cordial hospitality is also highly appreciated by discriminating foreign visitors. The surrounding area includes golf courses, bathing beaches, and cycling tracks and the Kaga Hashidate fishery harbor, which serves fresh crab and other seafood.



Yamanaka Hot Springs Koorogi Bridge

27 Gero hot springs

Japan's three most famous hot springs boast one thousand years of history

Gero Hot Springs is one of the three most famous hot springs areas in Japan. With a history dating back over 1000 years, Gero has been loved throughout the ages as a delightful water retreat. It is said that the alkaline hot springs cure neurological problems and motor disturbances while giving the skin a smooth glow. Young women have traditionally flocked here to take advantage of this "water of beauty." Visitors can also enjoy local cuisine like Hida beef. This traditional hot spring village also features geisha who represent Japan's longtime hot spring culture.



30 Okuhida hot springs village

Northern Alps (the roof of Japan) and villages with open-air baths

This hot spring resort is located in the Okuhida mountain valley. These natural hot springs are known for their impressive water flow rate of nearly 30,000 liters per minute. Most of the hotels and inns in the area have constructed outdoor baths with views of the beautiful Northern Alps to take advantage of the abundant hot water here. There are actually more than 100 outdoor baths in the area, and the town is often referred to as the "outdoor bath highway." Since the temperature of the water is around 60°C, the hot springs can be used throughout the year.



Shirahone Hot Springs

Jigokudani Hot Springs Snow Monkeys



31 Hot springs in Nagano: Yudanaka-Shibu (Jigokudani Snow Monkeys), Nozawa, Shirahone, Bessho, and more

Japan's largest concentration of hot springs

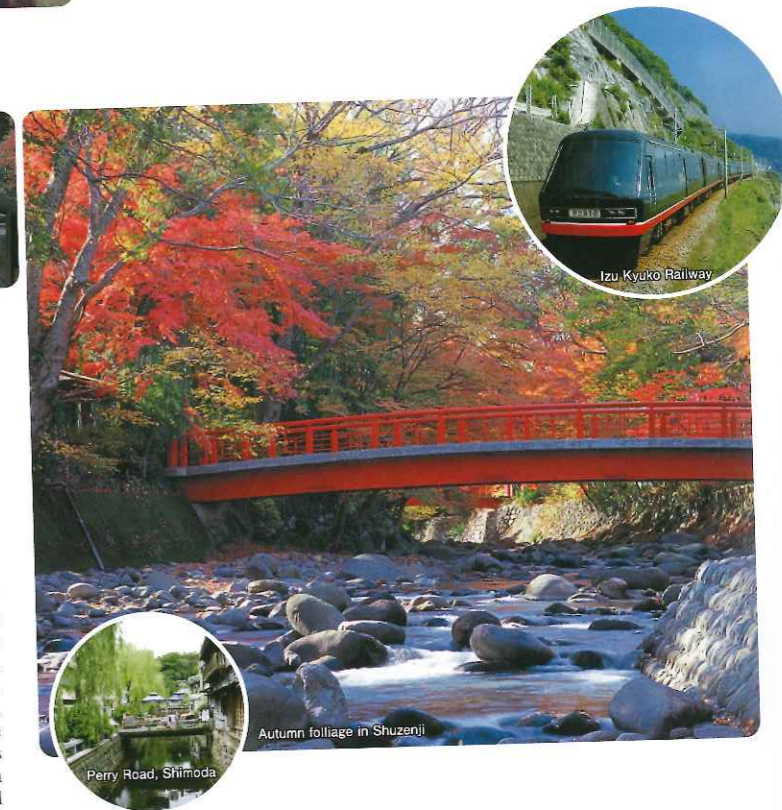
As one of the leading hot spring resort areas in Japan, after Hokkaido, Nagano has the second largest number of hot springs with accommodations in Japan. The Yudanaka-Shibu Hot Springs Resort consists of nine highly beneficial hot springs with about 1,300 years of history. There is a world-famous outdoor bath exclusively for wild monkeys (known as snow monkeys) in the Jigokudani Yaen-koen. The hot spring town of Nozawa is extremely famous for its more than 30 freshwater hot spring wells. Shirahone Hot Springs is also famous for its opaque water, while the Bessho traditional hot spring bathing town has a three-story octagonal pagoda at Anrakuji Temple. The structure has been designated a national treasure.



32 Izu Peninsula

Japan's leading tourist destination boasts a rich concentration of hot springs, nature, and culture

With its luxurious hot springs, abundant nature, and varied landscape, the Izu Peninsula boasts one of the largest concentrations of tourist spots in Japan. Its cuisine is also delicious, as it showcases the freshest local mountain and ocean ingredients. Nobel Prize-winner Yasunari Kawabata's "The Izu Dancer" took place in this area. In 2012, the Izu Peninsula was designated as one of Japan's Geoparks. The study of plate tectonics tells us that the Japan archipelago is located on the border of three sea plates. The Izu Peninsula, however, is the only place in Japan located on the Philippine Sea Plate. The most popular activities on the peninsula include sea kayaking, trekking, and marine diving. It has a number of attractive hot springs, including Ito, Shuzenji, Amagi-yugashima, Izunagaoka, Nishi-Izu, Inatori, Atagawa, Shimoda, Dogashima, Toi, and Heda. Besides the hot springs, there are a group of historical traditions, historic sites, cultural facilities that have been preserved in the Izu area. The Izu Kyuko Line offers a new tourist route called the Izu Historic Highway, which passes through multiple cities and towns to allow tourists to visit and experience a combination of existing travel spots as well as the area's historic sites and cultural facilities.



Izu Kyuko Railway

Autumn foliage in Shuzenji

Perry Road, Shimoda



Nishiura Hot Springs

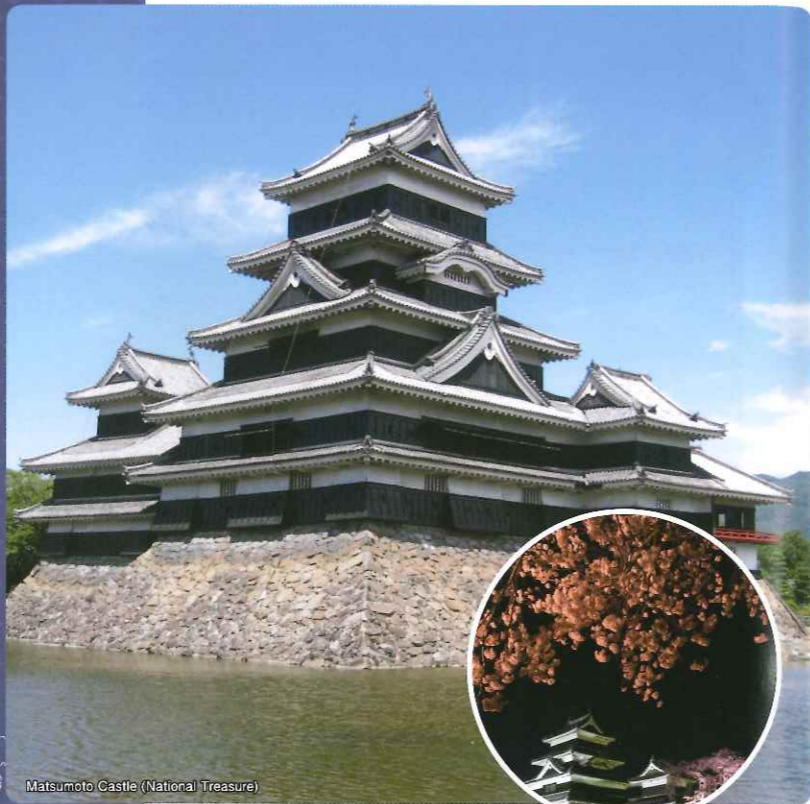


33 Gamagori hot springs village (Nishiura and Miya hot springs, LAGUNA TEN BOSCH, Gamagori Orange Park, and more)

Scenic sites combined with seaside scenery, hot springs, gourmet food, and amusement

Located in the middle of Mikawa-wan Quasi-National Park, Aichi Prefecture's largest seaside hot springs resort consists of four hot spring sites, each with a different feel: Nishiura, Katahara, Gamagori, and Miya. Fresh seafood such as Gamagori's native Akaza shrimp is a must for all visitors to the area. An integrated seaside resort features the picturesque scenery of Take Island, a marine resort complex, the LAGUNA TEN BOSCH, a fish market, Gamagori Orange Park (which offers a fruit-picking workshop), Boat Race Gamagori where you can enjoy around-the-clock motorboat racing, "fighting on water," an aquarium, and cruising. Gamagori is a favorite tourist destination for those seeking both hot springs and a beach resort.

Famous Castles, Including Three National Treasures



34 Three castles designated as National Treasures (Matsumoto, Hikone, and Inuyama) and famous castles in Shoryudo (Nagoya, Maruoka, and Gifu)

Japan's three most famous castles (national treasures) and other distinguished castles

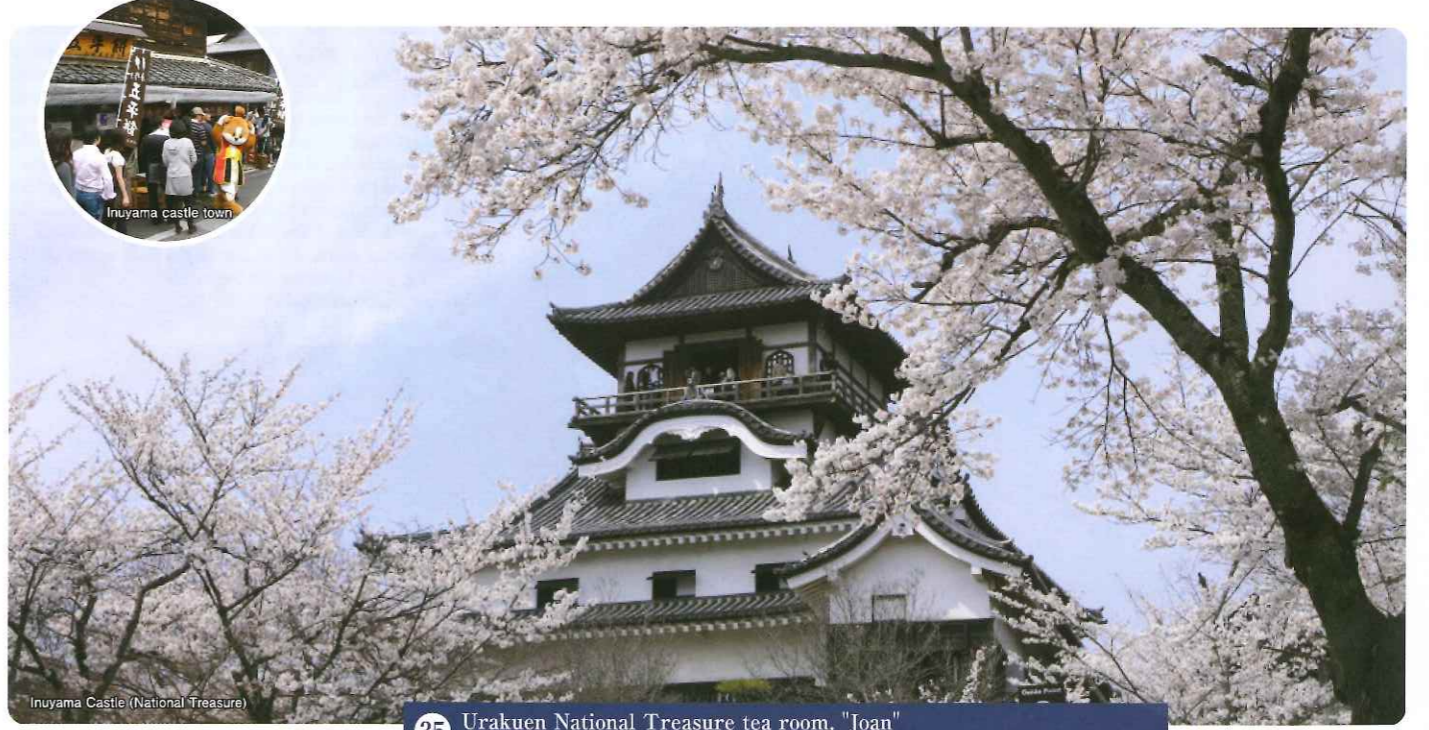
Three out of Japan's four national treasure castles (Matsumoto, Hikone, and Inuyama castles) are found in the Shoryudo area. Matsumoto's superb harmony of black and white plaster coatings is truly beautiful, and it is the oldest castle with a six-level wooden castle tower. Hikone Castle is famous for its three-story castle tower, complete with the graceful curves of multiple roof styles. The fact that its wooden castle tower still exists today is truly exceptional and it is listed as a tentative World Heritage site. Inuyama Castle is one of only twelve original castle towers in existence today. Its elegant figure reflecting in the Kiso River has earned it the nickname Hakutei (White Emperor) Castle. The original Hakutei Castle was constructed in China during the Three Kingdoms period, and is famous as the castle where Emperor Liu Bei died. Inuyama Castle was named after a castle originally constructed along the Yangtze River in China. All of them are famous sightseeing spots for cherry blossoms in spring and colored leaves in fall. In the vicinity of the Inuyama Castle, there is the Urakuen teahouse (national treasure).

Besides the national treasure castles, Shoryudo has several more fine castles in a variety of locations.

Constructed in 1576, Maruoka Castle is situated on a hill in the plains and has the oldest architectural style of any castle existing today. In the spring, the view of the castle is magical as it appears to float among cherry blossoms in full bloom.

Gifu Castle is constructed on top of Mt. Kinka (elevation: 329 m). The location is one of the highest of any castle in Japan. Dosan Saito and Nobunaga Oda, the masters of the castle were famous military commanders of the Sengoku (Warring States) Period. During the spring holiday season in Japan (late April through early May), summer vacation (late July through end August), and fall holidays (September through mid October), visitors to Gifu Castle can enjoy fantastic panoramic night views on the weekends and public holidays. The autumn leaves are also beautiful.

Nagoya Castle is the city's landmark, and the Golden Grampus (Orca) on the main ridge of castle roof are famous throughout Japan. The reconstruction of the entrance of Hommaru Palace, previously designated as a national treasure, will be finished in May 2013. The Nagoya Omotenashi Busho-tai (samurai team) has inspired a boom in samurai team activities and is playing an active role at the castle.



35 Urakuen National Treasure tea room, "Joan" (National Treasure tour together with Inuyama Castle)

See one of three tea ceremony houses designated as national treasures in Japan, national treasure tour with Inuyama Castle

The Urakuen tea garden has a teahouse called Joan, and it is one of only three tea houses designated as a national treasure. The garden also features the old house, Shodenin Shoin (important cultural asset), and another teahouse called Genan (literally, "original tea house"), which was reconstructed based on old drawings. The many facilities of this 9,900-m² Japanese garden offer visitors a quiet and calm atmosphere with seasonal joys, including cherry blossoms in spring, fresh greenery in early summer, and colored leaves in autumn. Visitors are welcome to have tea at the national treasure tea house. Joint admission tickets for Urakuen and Inuyama Castle (two national treasures) are available.