

"The Art of the Itinerary"

Asakusa Temple & Nakamise Dori

Senso-ji (Asakusa Temple): Completed in 645 AD, this is Tokyo's oldest and most significant Buddhist temple. It is entered through the massive **Kaminarimon (Thunder Gate)**, which features a world-famous 700kg red paper lantern. **Nakamise-dori:** This is the 250-meter approach between the outer gate and the temple. It is one of Japan's oldest shopping streets, lined with around 90 shops selling traditional fans, *kimonos*, and local snacks like *ningyo-yaki* (small cakes filled with red bean paste).



Akihabara

Akihabara: The Electric Town Akihabara is Tokyo's world-famous district dedicated to electronics, anime, and gaming culture. Key Highlights: - Electric Town: Famous for massive retailers like Yodobashi Camera and small stalls selling niche tech components. - Otaku Culture: The global hub for anime, manga, and collectibles, featuring iconic shops like Mandarake and Animate. - Gaming & Arcades: Home to multi-story game centers (GiGO) and retro gaming shops. -



Tokyo Skytree

The **Tokyo Skytree** is a prominent broadcasting and observation tower situated in Sumida, Tokyo. Since its opening in 2012, it has held the title of the **tallest tower in Japan**. The structure reached its full height of **634 meters** (2,080 feet) in early 2011. This milestone made it the tallest tower in the world, surpassing the Canton Tower. Currently, it stands as the **third tallest structure** globally, following Merdeka 118 and the Burj Khalifa.



Shibuya Crossing and the Hachiko Statue

The **Shibuya Scramble Crossing** is one of the most iconic landmarks in Tokyo, Japan. Located directly outside the Hachiko Exit of Shibuya Station, it is often called the "busiest intersection in the world." During peak times, as many as 3,000 pedestrians cross from all directions simultaneously when the lights turn green. Just a few steps away from this frantic energy sits a much quieter, more somber landmark: the **Hachiko Memorial Statue** (often referred to as the "Hachiko" or "Hachi" statue). Hachiko was a loyal Akita who met his owner at Shibuya Station every day, even continuing to wait there for nearly **ten years** after the owner's sudden death. Today, his bronze statue stands at that same spot as Japan's most famous symbol of **unwavering devotion** and loyalty.



Mount Fuji

Standing as Japan's highest peak at **3,776 meters**, Mount Fuji is an active volcano that holds profound cultural and spiritual significance. In June 2013, it was officially inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage site under the title "**Fujisan – Sacred Place and Source of Artistic Inspiration**". This designation recognizes the mountain's dual role: once feared for its powerful eruptions, it evolved into an "object of worship" that fostered the **Fuji-ko pilgrimage** and served as a timeless "source of artistic inspiration" for works like **Ukiyo-e woodblock prints**. Today, the site encompasses **25 specific locations** that demonstrate the unique coexistence of nature, religious belief, and art, marking it as a global treasure to be preserved for future generations.



Hakone and Owakudani: Volcanic Wonders

Hakone is a premier destination known for **Lake Ashinoko**, a stunning crater lake formed by volcanic activity over 3,000 years ago. Visitors can explore the area aboard **Hakone Sightseeing Cruise's** four pirate-themed ships, which travel between the ports of



Hakone-Machi, Moto-Hakone, and Togendai. These cruises offer views of rolling hills, the "floating" red torii gate of **Hakone-jinja Shrine**, and the majestic **Mount Fuji**. The ships themselves are designed for families, featuring pirate sculptures, treasure chests, and interactive trick art.

Owakudani is an active volcanic valley located nearby, also created by an eruption approximately 3,000 years ago. It remains a famous attraction due to its **active sulfur vents**, hot springs, and striking views of Mount Fuji on clear days. Because it is a site of ongoing volcanic activity, the area is subject to closures due to **volcanic gases**, so travelers are advised to check the status before visiting. Each of the surrounding ports provides amenities such as restaurants, cafes, and shops for souvenirs.



The Tateyama Kurobe Snow Wall: Alpine Wonder

The Tateyama Snow Corridor (known as *Yuki-no-Otani*) is one of the world's most spectacular spring sights, located along the Tateyama Kurobe Alpine Route in the Northern Japan Alps. Each winter, the area near Murodo Station (elevation 2,450 meters) receives some of the heaviest snowfall on earth, with depths reaching up to 20 meters (65 feet).



SCMAGLEV Railway Museum

Located in Nagoya, the SCMAGLEV and Railway Park is a premier museum operated by JR Central. It is dedicated to the history and future of high-speed rail in Japan, focusing on the development of the Shinkansen (bullet train) and the world-record-breaking Superconducting Maglev (SCMAGLEV) technology.



Toyota Automobile Museum

Its located in Nagakute on the outskirts of Nagoya, is a premier destination for car enthusiasts that traces the global evolution of the automobile from the late 19th century to the present day. Unlike the brand's industrial museums that focus on manufacturing processes, this facility functions as a massive gallery

featuring approximately 140 meticulously maintained vehicles from Japan, America, and Europe. The collection is not limited to Toyota models; it includes iconic milestones in automotive history such as the **Ford Model T**, early **Bugattis**, and the classic **Mercedes-Benz 300SL**. Visitors can explore the "Automobile Culture Showroom," which houses thousands of items of memorabilia, and the "Japanese Automotive History" section, which highlights the rapid rise of the domestic car industry. Spanning multiple floors, the museum offers a comprehensive look at how vehicle design and technology have shifted over the decades, making it one of the most significant transport museums in the world.



Nagoya Castle

Nagoya Castle, completed in 1612 by order of Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu, is a premier symbol of Nagoya and a designated National Historic Site. It is world-renowned for its iconic golden shachihoko (mythical tiger-headed carp) ornaments that adorn the roof of the main keep. While much of the original structure was destroyed in World War II, the Honmaru Goten Palace has been meticulously reconstructed with stunning gold-leaf sliding doors and traditional Shoin-style architecture. Today, the castle grounds serve as a vibrant cultural hub, hosting samurai performances and offering one of the city's best spots for cherry blossom viewing.



Tempozan Harbor Village

Tempozan Harbor Village is a vibrant waterfront entertainment complex in Osaka's Bay Area, centered around the world-renowned Osaka Aquarium Kaiyukan. The area is a major hub for leisure and tourism, featuring the Tempozan Giant Ferris Wheel, which stands 112.5 meters tall and offers panoramic views of the harbor and the city. Visitors can explore the Tempozan Marketplace, a large shopping and dining mall that includes Naniwa Kuishinbo Yokocho, a nostalgic food theme park recreating the atmosphere of 1960s Osaka with local delicacies like takoyaki and okonomiyaki. The village is also home to the



LEGOLAND Discovery Center and serves as the departure point for the Santa Maria sightseeing cruise, a scale replica of Columbus's flagship. Interestingly, the area sits next to Mount Tempozan, which at just 4.5 meters above sea level, is officially recognized as Japan's lowest mountain.

Dotonbori

Dotonbori is Osaka's premier entertainment and culinary district, famously embodying the city's *kuidaore* ("eat until you drop") culture along its namesake canal. The area is a sensory landmark defined by its vibrant nightlife, massive mechanical signs like the **Kani Doraku** crab, and the iconic **Glico Running Man** neon billboard at Ebisubashi Bridge. Historically a 17th-century theater hub for kabuki and bunraku, it has evolved into a global street food paradise where visitors flock to try local specialties like **takoyaki** (octopus balls), **okonomiyaki** (savory pancakes), and **kushikatsu** (deep-fried skewers). Whether exploring the neon-lit Tonbori River Walk by foot or viewing the dazzling displays from a river cruise, Dotonbori remains the high-energy heart of Osaka that truly never sleeps.



Osaka Castle

Originally built in 1583 by **Toyotomi Hideyoshi**, Osaka Castle is one of Japan's most iconic landmarks and a symbol of the unification of the country. The current main keep, a 1931 reconstruction, houses a modern museum filled with samurai armor, weapons, and detailed exhibits on the castle's turbulent history. Surrounding the tower is a massive park featuring impressive **moats**, steep granite walls, and over 3,000 cherry trees, making it a premier destination for *hanami* in the spring. Visitors can also explore the historic gates and storehouses that survived the castle's many sieges or enjoy panoramic views of the Osaka skyline from the top floor of the main keep.



Hiroshima & Miyajima

Hiroshima is a city defined by its profound transformation from the site of the world's first atomic bombing in 1945 to a global symbol of peace and resilience. The heart of the city is the **Peace Memorial Park**, where the skeletal **A-Bomb Dome** stands as a haunting UNESCO World Heritage site amidst beautifully manicured gardens. Beyond its somber history, modern Hiroshima is a vibrant, green metropolis known for its wide boulevards, the reconstructed **Hiroshima Castle**, and its unique culinary soul—specifically **Hiroshima-style Okonomiyaki**, a savory, multi-layered pancake that is a must-try for any visitor.

Just a short ferry ride away, **Miyajima** (Itsukushima) offers a more spiritual and scenic escape, famously ranked as one of Japan's top three views. The island is iconic for the "floating" vermilion **Torii gate** of **Itsukushima Shrine**, which appears to drift on the tide at high water. While wild Sika deer wander the streets, visitors can explore the ancient **Daisho-in Temple** or take a ropeway up **Mount Misen** for sweeping views of the Seto Inland Sea. The island's atmosphere is a perfect blend of natural beauty and sacred tradition, rounded out by the scent of freshly baked **Momiji Manju** (maple-shaped cakes) sold along the bustling waterfront.

Arashiyama Bamboo Forest

The Arashiyama Bamboo Forest, also known as the Sagano Bamboo Grove, is a breathtaking natural cathedral located on the western outskirts of Kyoto. As you walk the winding 0.3-mile path, you are flanked by towering stalks of green timber bamboo that filter the sunlight into a soft, emerald glow. Beyond its visual beauty, the grove is famous for its unique "soundscape"—the rhythmic creaking and clacking of the stalks as they sway in the wind—which is officially recognized as one of Japan's most cherished sounds. Nestled in the foothills of Mount Arashiyama near the Katsura River, the grove serves as a peaceful gateway to historic treasures like the Tenryu-ji Temple and the



hidden gardens of Okochi Sanso Villa, offering a sensory experience that feels deeply disconnected from the modern world.

Kinkaku-ji: The Golden Pavilion

Kinkaku-ji, formally known as **Rokuon-ji**, is a Zen Buddhist temple in northern Kyoto and one of Japan's most iconic landmarks. Originally built in 1397 as a retirement villa for Shogun **Ashikaga Yoshimitsu**, it was converted into a temple following his death. The pavilion is world-renowned for its top two stories, which are entirely covered in **pure gold leaf**, shimmering brilliantly above the **Kyoko-chi (Mirror Pond)**. It's a **UNESCO World Heritage site**, symbolizing the extravagant Kitayama culture of its era.



Itsukushima Shrine

Located in the southwestern corner of the **Kyoto Gyoen National Garden**, this small but historic Shinto shrine is a tranquil escape from the city's busier tourist tracks. It was originally established by the powerful warlord **Taira no Kiyomori** during the Heian period to honor his mother, Gion no Nyogo. The shrine is most famous for its unique **Stone Karahafu Torii**, which features a rare curved gable design—one of only three "unusual torii" in all of Kyoto. Visitors can enjoy the serene atmosphere of the surrounding pond, often filled with wild ducks, and see the historic Chisuitei Pavilion nearby. It's a perfect, quiet stop for those already exploring the Imperial Palace grounds.



The Unicorn Gundam (Tokyo)

Located at **Diver City Tokyo Plaza** in Odaiba, the **RX-0 Unicorn Gundam** stands at a staggering 19.7 meters. It is famous for its mechanical "transformation" shows, where it switches between **Unicorn Mode** and **Destroy Mode**, accompanied by glowing LED panels and moving armor plates. During the day, the statue performs short transformations at scheduled intervals, while the evening shows feature dramatic light displays and video projections from the *Mobile Suit Gundam UC* series onto the mall's exterior wall.

