



Japan Travel News

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APRIL - JUNE

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Spotlight on Kyoto and Osaka

Even in this modern day and age the ancient Japanese saying "Dress (in kimonos) til you drop in Kyoto and eat til you drop in Osaka" (Kyo no kidaore, Osaka no kuidaore) still accurately describes these two well known cities.

Kyoto, Japan's ancient capital, has a population of 1.5 million and is the cultural and traditional centre of Japan. The city which is home to more than 1600 Buddhist temples and 200 Shinto shrines, several of which are World Heritage listed sites, attracts more than 40 million domestic and international visitors each year.

See

- * Kiyomizudera (temple)
- * Kinkakuji (Golden Pavilion)
- * Ginkakuji (Silver Pavilion)
- * Ryoanji - famous for its rock garden
- * Gion and Pontocho geisha districts - perfect for an evening stroll. Here you might see maiko and geiko adorned in beautiful kimonos.

If you want to try out a kimono for yourself, Kyoto is the place to do it. There are several studios around town that offer 'maiko makeover' services. Click on the "Becoming a samurai or maiko" link at the Kyoto Tourism Council's website for listings.

www.kyoto.travel/what_to_do/

Shop

Kyoto has a number of department stores including Daimaru,

Takashimaya and Hankyu. The Teramachi and Shinkyogoku shopping arcades are also worth a visit.

Taste

Like every region in Japan, Kyoto has its own local specialty and it is called "yuba", a type of beancurd. Yuba can be eaten hot or cold and is often used in hot-pot cooking, salads, and tofu side dishes.

Nishiki Ichiba, Kyoto's kitchen, is a narrow street market selling fresh fruit, vegetables, fish and other seafood, Japanese pickles, senbei (rice crackers), tea, tofu, sake and more. Sample some of the fare on offer and enjoy the wonderful smells of the market.

For sweet things, try the Pastry Boutique at the Hyatt Regency Kyoto (located near Sanjusangendo). Facing Shijo Dori, the boutique is great to stop by for a sweet indulgence. It includes a variety of desserts and freshly baked house breads.

On the other side of town, just eight minutes walk from Saiin station, gelato bar Caffelatte offers twelve flavours of gelato (made fresh every three days) including seasonal treats such as sakura (cherry blossom) gelato.

With a population of 2.7 million, **Osaka** is Japan's third largest city after Tokyo and Yokohama, and is the economic and business centre of the Kansai region. The city is known as Japan's kitchen and offers a range of cuisine to suit all tastes.

See

- * Osaka Castle
- * Shin Umeda City Observatory
- * Dotonbori district
- * Hanshin department store food hall
- * Doguyasuji (a street devoted to cooking utensils and Japanese kitchenware)

Shop

Yodobashi Camera, a seven floor mega store houses 500,000 electronic and electrical goods. Tenjinbashi-suji shopping street is Japan's longest shopping street.

Taste

Okonomiyaki and Takoyaki are two of Osaka's signature dishes. Okonomiyaki is a savoury, grilled pancake made with the customer's favourite ingredients. It includes chopped cabbage and red ginger, and toppings such as sliced pork, seafood, corn, noodles and more. Takoyaki are octopus dumplings served with Japanese Worcestershire sauce and fish flakes. These are great as a snack and can be bought from vendors in street.

Jetstar flies to Japan

From March 25, 2007 Jetstar introduced a daily Sydney-Osaka-Brisbane service. Six weekly return services from Cairns to Nagoya are set to commence on August 2, 2007 and four weekly return services from Cairns to Osaka set to follow from September 2007, subject to regulatory approval.

www.jetstar.com

Osaka's famous
Dotonbori district and
Kyoto's acclaimed
Kiyomizu Temple.



Kyoto and Osaka tourist websites

Kyoto Tourism Council	www.kyoto.travel/
Kyoto Prefectural Government Tourism	www.pref.kyoto.jp/visitkyoto/en/
Kyoto Visitor's Guide	http://kyotoguide.com/
Kyoto access & orientation	www.japan-guide.com/e/e2363.html
Osaka Visitor's Guide	www.tourism.city.osaka.jp/en/
Osaka City	www.city.osaka.jp/english
Osaka access & orientation	www.japan-guide.com/e/e4006.html



Affordable Japan - budget tips for visitors

With the appreciation of the Australian dollar by more than 40% in the past 5 years, Japan is more affordable for Australian travelers. Here are a few suggestions to make your yen go even further.

Eat cheaply

Many coffee shops have breakfast specials called 'morning sets' which they serve between 6.30am and 11.30am (times may vary depending on the shop). A typical example of a morning set is toast, boiled egg, tea/coffee/milk or sandwich, tea/coffee/

milk for around 500 yen (\$5.26).

Beef bowl restaurant chains such as Yoshinoya and Matsuya have cheap, tasty Japanese style fast food.

Regular beef bowl 420 yen (\$4.42)

Lunch set (salmon, beef, soup, rice, pickles) 530 yen (\$5.58)

Noodle bars near stations serve cheap, tasty fare ideal for a quick snack.

Bowl of noodles from 350 yen (\$3.68)

Rice ball (onigiri) 150 yen (\$1.58)

In the evening just before closing

time, many of the food items at department store food halls and supermarkets are heavily discounted and you can pick up some delicious gourmet dishes for dinner.

Shop at 100 yen stores

Items are 105 yen (includes 5% GST) (\$1.11). You can find a range of snacks, drinks, toiletries, souvenirs and more. A great place to buy small gifts for people at home.

(1AUD= 95 JPY)

Visit Japan Information Network

On April 1, Japan's "i" tourist information office system was given a new name and is now known as the "Visit Japan Information Network". Tourist information centres in the Visit Japan Information Network cater especially for international visitors and offer a range of tourist services and resources in English and several other languages. There have been two recent additions (details below) to the network bringing the total number of Visit Japan Information Network offices in Japan to 155. For a full list of tourist information centres in the Visit Japan Information Network please visit www.jnto.go.jp/eng/arrange/essential/tic.html

1. Tourist Information Centre, Narita Airport Terminal 1
Located in the arrival lobby on the ground floor
Open: 8:00-20:00, 365 days
Tel: 0476-30-3383

2. Tourist Information Centre, Narita Airport Terminal 2
Located in the arrival lobby on the ground floor
Open: 8:00-20:00, 365 days
Tel: 0476-34-5877



JNTO hosts school excursion seminar in Sydney

On February 28 the JNTO hosted a school excursion seminar for Sydney based teachers of Japanese and Japan Travel Specialists at the Shangri-La Hotel. The seminar was designed to give a general overview of Japan as a school excursion destination and included information on recommended sightseeing spots, educational activities and cultural experiences for students. Presentations were given by representatives from Kyoto Prefecture, Biwako Visitors Bureau, Nagano and Niigata Prefectures, and the Japan National Tourist Organization. Thirty six teachers and 31 Japan travel specialists attended the seminar which was followed by a reception and networking session.

The JNTO Sydney office has school excursion resource packs for teachers of Japanese. The pack includes the booklet "Experience Japan beyond the classroom" which includes example itineraries and suggestions for teachers planning a school trip to Japan, and a promotional CD or video. Please send an email to jnto@tokyonet.com.au if you would like to receive a complimentary resource pack.



Antique & flea markets in & around Tokyo

At shrines and temples

Togo Shrine

Address: 1-5-3, Jingumae, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo

Access: Three minute walk from JR Harajuku Station or Meiji-jingu-mae Station on the Subway Chiyoda Line.

Date: First Sunday of each month, 5:00am - 3:00pm.

Arai Yakushi Temple

Address: 5-3-5, Arai, Nakano-ku, Tokyo

Access: Five minute walk from Araiyakushi-mae Station on the Seibu-Shinjuku Line or 15 minute walk from JR Nakano Station.

Date: Antique Markets: First Sunday of the month (February – December); and second Sunday of January from dawn to dusk
Temple festival or En-nichi: 8th, 18th, and 28th day of each month from around 10:00am to dusk.

Nogi Shrine

Address: 8-11-27, Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo

Access: One minute walk from Nogizaka Station on the Subway Chiyoda Line.

Date: Second Sunday of each month except November from dawn to dusk.

Yasukuni Shrine

Address: 3-1-1, Kudankita, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo

Access: Three minute walk from Kudanshita Station on the Subway Tozai Line or Toei Shinjuku Line.

Date: Every Sunday from dawn to dusk.

Hanazono Shrine

Address: 5-17-3, Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo

Access: Five minute walk from Shinjuku 3-chome Station on the Subway Marunouchi or Toei Shinjuku Line.

Date: Every Sunday from dawn to dusk, except in May when the annual "Reitai-sai" festival is held (May 26-28), and in November when the "Tori-no-ichi" fair is held (November 4, 16, 28).

Tomioka Hachimangu Shrine

Address: 1-20-3, Tomioka, Koto-ku, Tokyo

Access: Three minute walk from Monzen-Nakacho Station or Kiba Station both on the Subway Tozai Line.

Date: First Sunday of each month (except January), second and fourth Sunday (except 28th) of each month, 5:00am - 4:00 pm.

Myohoji Temple (about 100 dealers)

Address: 3-48-8, Horinouchi, Suginami-ku, Tokyo

Access: Ten minute walk from Koenji Station on the JR or Subway Marunouchi Line.

Date: Second and third Sunday of each month, 7:00am - 4:00pm.

Gokokuji Temple

Address: 5-40-1, Otsuka, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo

Access: One minute walk from Gokokuji Station on the Subway Yurakucho Line.

Date: Second Saturday of each month, 7:00am - 4:00pm.

Other sites

Oedo Antique Market

One of the largest open-air markets in Japan with about 250 dealers.

Address: Tokyo International Forum, 3-5-1, Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo

Access: One minute walk from D5 Exit of Yurakucho Station on the JR Yamanote Line or Subway Yurakucho Line.

Tel: 03-5805-1093

Date: First and third Sunday of each month, 9:00am - 4:00pm # Please note the fair will not be open on the first Sunday of May.

Web: www.medissue.co.jp/oedo-antique/index.html

Open-air antique and flea markets are usually cancelled if it rains. Dates and hours are subject to change without notice.

New aviation security measures for cabin baggage

On March 1, 2007 restrictions on liquids, aerosols and gels in carry-on baggage for international flights departing Japan came into effect. From March 31, 2007 these restrictions were also applied to flights into and out of Australia. For further important information about these new measures please visit the following sites.

Department of Transport and Regional Services (Australian Government)

www.dotars.gov.au/transport/security/aviation/LAG/index.aspx

Narita International Airport

www.narita-airport.jp/en/whats_new/070209.html

Kansai International Airport

www.kansai-airport.or.jp/en/news/070228/index.html



JAPAN NATIONAL TOURIST ORGANIZATION

Level 18 Australia Square Tower
264 George St, Sydney NSW 2000 Australia
Tel: 02-9251-3024 Fax: 02-9251-3031
E-mail: jnto@tokyonet.com.au Web: www.jnto.go.jp/syd
For general information, maps and brochures for travel to Japan contact JNTO. Visit the new look, easy to navigate JNTO Sydney website.

The Visit Japan Campaign

An initiative of the Japanese government, the Visit Japan Campaign (VJC) aims to attract 10 million visitors per year to Japan by the year 2010. At present Japan receives more than 6 million visitors. In 2005, Australia became a target market for the VJC. JNTO supports this campaign and encourages you to visit the VJC's Japan Welcomes You website which has been incorporated into the JapanTravelInfo.com website.

www.japantravelinfo.com

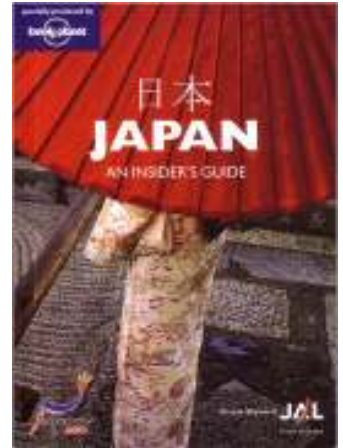


JNTO Sydney website questionnaire

We have recently upgraded our website (www.jnto.go.jp/syd/) and would like to know what you think of it, by asking you to complete the attached questionnaire (see attached Word file). Your feedback will be valuable in assisting us evaluate and improve the site, and will remain confidential. As a token of our appreciation, we will be giving each respondent who returns a completed questionnaire by the date below, a copy of the new 52 page mini-guide *Japan: an insider's guide* published by Lonely Planet, pictured on right.

Please return completed questionnaires by email to jnto@tokyonet.com.au or by fax to 02-9251-3031 by 5:00pm (AEST) on **Friday April 27, 2007**.

If you wish to remain anonymous please include your postal address only, so we can send you the mini-guidebook. If you do not wish to receive the mini-guidebook please indicate this at the end of the questionnaire. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.



- WHAT'S ON IN JAPAN -

TOKYO

May 18 - 20 Sanja Matsuri of Asakusa Shrine, Tokyo

One of Tokyo's three largest festivals, this event is famous for its spectacular procession of portable shrines. The ancient Shinto ritual consisting of music and dance which is performed at the beginning of the festival, has been designated an intangible cultural property.

June 7-16 Sanno Matsuri, Hie Shrine, Tokyo

Features a procession of portable shrines through the streets of Tokyo's Akasaka district.

KANSAI AREA

April 1 - May 25 Kyoto Spring Maiko Dances, Kyoto City

Each spring song and dance performances are staged by Kyoto's maiko quarters. The dates and venue for each area are: **Miyako Odori** April 1 - 30, held at Gion Kaburenjo Theatre; **Kyo Odori** April 7 - 22, held at Miyagawa-cho Kaburenjo Theatre; **Kitano Odori** April 15 - 25, held at Kamishichiken Kaburenjo Theatre; **Kamogawa Odori** May 1 - 24, held at Pontocho Kaburenjo Theatre.

May 15 Aoi Matsuri, Kyoto City

One of Kyoto's three biggest festivals, the Aoi Matsuri features a procession of floats from the Kyoto Imperial Palace to Kamigamo Shrine via Shimogamo Shrine.

Until June 10 Miho Museum Spring 2007 Special Exhibition: Buddhist sculpture from Shandong Province

Celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Miho Museum. To commemorate the return of the Standing Bodhisattva to China later this year, the Museum is holding a special exhibition to promote friendship and develop mutual cultural exchange and learning between Japan and China. <http://miho.jp>

NATIONWIDE

April 30 Showa Day (national holiday)

May 3 Constitution Memorial Day (national holiday)

May 4 Greenery Day (national holiday)

May 5 Children's Day (national holiday)

May 13 - 27 Grand Sumo Tournament, Kokugikan Sumo Hall, Tokyo

June 6 - 10 Yosakoi Soran Matsuri, Sapporo City

One of Japan's biggest and most vibrant summer festivals. At last year's festival, more than 40,000 dancers from Japan and overseas performed the Yosakoi Soran in front of two million spectators.

www.yosanet.com/yosakoi/foreign/en/