



# Japan Travel News

SPRING 2008

SEPT-NOV

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Nara museums fee waiver	2
Tottori Sand Museum	2
JTB hands-on programs	3
JR East Special	3
Useful websites	4
What's on in Japan	4

## JNTO holds seminars in New Zealand

The Japan National Tourist Organization (JNTO) Sydney office recently expanded its promotional activities to include seminars for the New Zealand market.

The JNTO hosted two Japan seminars - one for travel agents and one for teachers of Japanese - on Wednesday August 27, 2008 at the Rendezvous Hotel, Auckland to promote Japan as a holiday and school trip destination.

More than 20 agents and 15 teachers attended the seminars which were designed to provide participants with an overview of Japan as holiday destination and reasons to travel there, as well the latest information and offerings from Japan Airlines. A networking session and reception followed the seminars.

JNTO and Japan Airlines gave presentations.

The JNTO presentation for travel agents, detailed the JNTO's Top Five Picks. These included experiential travel, skiing, the second golden route, Japan's affordability, and summer activities.

The teachers seminar presentation provided information on Japan's rich and wide variety of cultural experiences for students.

Japan Airlines provided information about their Japan product and service offerings for both agents and teachers. Japan Airlines is the largest airline in Asia and offers daily direct flights



Claire Sheehy from Japan Airlines, Auckland speaking at the seminar

to Tokyo and Osaka, on a codeshare with Air New Zealand.

Representatives from JTB, HIS and Japac also attended the function and were on hand to provide information about their Japan products and services.

JNTO Sydney office Executive Director, Jotaro Horiuchi, gave the opening address at the seminars.

"According to JNTO figures, the number of New Zealand travellers who visited Japan in 2007 was 35,000. This figure was 10.9 percent greater than in the year 2000," Horiuchi said.

"We, at JNTO, have a strong feeling that Japan is growing to be a holiday destination for travellers from Oceania as a whole. And I am sure that if this seminar enables you to increase your knowledge of Japan or teaches you

something new about the country, then we can explore the new market together, as I believe Japan is still an unexplored and potential market for New Zealand travellers."

Horiuchi also went on speak at the teachers seminar about the number of students of Japanese in New Zealand.

"According to the Japan Foundation, the number of Japanese language learners in New Zealand is currently 30,000 - a 6 percent increase on 2003 figures."

"New Zealand has the tenth largest number of Japanese language learners in the world. Considering New Zealand's small population, this is a remarkable result," Horiuchi said.

Rebecca Honda

## Nara museum fees waived

From August 1, 2008 entrance fees to four museums managed by Nara Prefectural Government will be waived for international visitors. To take advantage of the fee-waiver, visitors are asked to present their passports at the museums.

Following are the four museums the fee-waiver applies to and the usual entry fee.

1. Nara Prefectural Museum of Art (Nara City) (Permanent exhibition is ¥400 for adults.)

[www.pref.nara.jp/nara\\_e/area01/04.html](http://www.pref.nara.jp/nara_e/area01/04.html)

2. Nara Prefectural Complex

of Man'yo Culture (Asuka village) (Permanent exhibition is ¥600 for adults.)  
[www.pref.nara.jp/nara\\_e/area04/index.html](http://www.pref.nara.jp/nara_e/area04/index.html)

3. Nara Prefectural Museum of Folklore (Yamato Koriyama City) (Entry is ¥400 for adults)

[www.pref.nara.jp/bunkak/minpaku/](http://www.pref.nara.jp/bunkak/minpaku/) (Japanese website only)

4. The Museum, Nara Prefectural Archaeological Institute of Kashihara

(Permanent exhibition is ¥400 for adults.)

[www.pref.nara.jp/nara\\_e/](http://www.pref.nara.jp/nara_e/)

[area04/03.html](http://www.pref.nara.jp/nara_e/area04/03.html)

The fee-waiver was prompted by feedback received by Nara Prefectural Government from tourists stating that the entrance fees were too high and requesting they be lowered. Taking into the consideration that in many other countries international visitors are not charged entrance fees and also to show appreciation to visitors who travel many miles to see the sights of Nara, the prefectural government decided to waive the fee.

Nara Prefecture web  
[www.pref.nara.jp/english/](http://www.pref.nara.jp/english/)

**The art pieces appear even more spectacular during the evening illumination.**

## Tottori Sand Museum

Did you know that Tottori Prefecture, on Japan's western coast, is home to the country's only large sand dune system? Covering an area of 32 square kilometres, the Tottori dune has beautiful sand craters as deep as 40 metres, hills as high as 50 metres and breathtaking wave lines.

Until January 3, 2009 the sand dune will be the site of the Sand Museum, a unique outdoor museum showcasing sand art sculptures of UNESCO World Heritage sites in Asia. The exhibition is the second installment of sand sculptures at the dunes, following the huge success of an experimental sand sculpture exhibition of Italian Renaissance icons in 2006.

Covering an area of 1500 square metres and including more than ten sand

sculptures, the current exhibition is larger in scale than the first and features the works of eight sculptors from five countries – Japan, China, Singapore, India and Italy. The largest sculpture is around 4.8 metres high and 14 metres wide. The art pieces appear even more spectacular during the evening illumination.

Featured sand sculptures:

Taj Mahal, (India), Khajuraho Group of Monuments (India), Ellora Caves (India),

Angkor (Cambodia), Historic City of Ayutthaya (Thailand), Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor (China), The Great Wall (China), Himeji Castle (Japan), Persepolis (Iran), Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat) (Iraq), Buddha Statues of the Bamiyan Valley (Afghanistan)

Featured Artists:

Katsuhiko Chaen (Japan), Wei Kang Zhang (China), Yong Kong Zhang (China),

Yan Zhang (China), Li Dong Yong (China), Tan Joo Heng

(Singapore), Sudarsan Pattnaik (India), Leonardo Ugolini (Italy).

### Museum Information

#### Location

2083-1 Yuhama, Fukubecho Tottori City

The Sand Museum is located in the area adjacent to the Tottori Sand Dune Information Centre 'Sandpal Tottori' (Tottori Sakyu Johokan Sandoparu Tottori/鳥取砂丘情報館サンドパルとっとり).

#### Museum hours

9:00am - 9:00pm

(last entry at 8:30pm)

Exhibition hours may vary due to weather conditions.

#### Admission

Adults ¥300, Students (6 to 18 years old) ¥200.

Group admissions (group of 20+): adults ¥200/person, students ¥150/person.

<http://sakyu.city.tottori.jp/museum>

(Japanese only)



## JTB launches hands-on Sunrise tours

JTB group company, JTB Global Marketing & Travel Inc., has launched a new hands-on tour program under its Sunrise Tours product – a line of tours specifically designed for overseas visitors to Japan. Called “SUNRISE TOURS HANDS-ON JAPAN!”, the new tours commenced on July 18 and are based on the concept of being able to “experience and feel Japan from many different aspects”, and as the name suggests include elements that allow guests to experience Japan hands-on.

The tours give visitors the opportunity to take part in elements of traditional Japanese culture such as kimono dressing, the tea ceremony, and dressing in Japanese-

style wedding attire at a Kyoto shrine; to experience “Cool Japan” through facets of modern Japanese subculture like anime, maid cafés, character figures, and cosplay; to enjoy entertainment exclusive to Japan, like Cirque du Soleil’s new show “ZED™” (starts October 2008); and to sample delicious Japanese cuisine, including vegetarian Buddhist cuisine and sushi made under the instruction of a sushi chef. A range of martial arts oriented tours as well as outdoor activities tours are also included on JTB’s impressive line up of programs.

Following are just a few of the tours on offer: Tea Ceremony and Harajuku

Walking in Kimono, Akihabara Walking Tour, Sushi Making Experience and Tsukiji Fish Market Tour; Mukoujima Geisha Tour; Ninja and Samurai Tour; Challenge! Climb Mt. Fuji and Canyoning/Rafting Tour.

While most of the tours are currently held in the Tokyo area, new products for areas other than Tokyo are planned for launch after April 2009.

Bookings can be made by telephone or online (not all tours can be booked online).

Sunrise Centre: +81-3-5796-5454 (Mon-Sat 9:30 - 20:00)

JTB group’s multilingual inbound website, [JAPANiCAN.com](http://JAPANiCAN.com) [www.japanican.com](http://www.japanican.com)

**The special JR**

**East Pass**

**allows**

**unlimited rail**

**travel in the**

**JR East area**

**on any three**

**days within a**

**one month**

**period.**

## JR East Flexible 3 Day Pass special

Last (northern) summer, JR East’s first ‘JR East Pass Special’ proved to be very popular with travellers from overseas. This (northern) autumn JR East is again offering the same great savings with its Flexible 3 Day Pass between September 1 and December 31, to support the autumn travel campaign co-hosted by the JR Group, Miyagi Prefecture and Sendai City.

The special JR East Pass allows unlimited rail travel in the JR East area on any three days within a one month period for the remarkably low cost of ¥10,000 for adults or ¥5,000 for children.

Like all JR East passes, the special pass will cover not only the Tohoku (north east) region where Miyagi is located, but also the whole Tokyo metropolitan area, trains to and from Narita Airport, and JR East services throughout central Japan, including Nagano, Niigata, and Izu Peninsula. With this special deal, travellers get three full days travel for half the price, compared with the JR East 4-day flexible or 5-day consecutive passes that cost ¥20,000.

This special offer is a great opportunity for those traveling in autumn and early winter to enjoy

the autumn foliage and flavours of Miyagi Prefecture and all of JR East’s enticing attractions.

Please note:

Overseas sales of the Exchange Voucher for the ‘JR East Pass Special’ will be held from July 23 through November 20, 2008.

Vouchers can be exchanged for the pass at stations between September 1 and December 1, 2008. Within Japan the pass will be sold from September 1 through December 1, 2008.

Further information at

[www.jreast.co.jp/e/pdfpamph\\_sendai\\_dc.pdf](http://www.jreast.co.jp/e/pdfpamph_sendai_dc.pdf)

## Fujiya Hotel 130 year anniversary special

July 15, 2008 marked 130 years since Hakone’s Fujiya Hotel welcomed its first international guest. To commemorate this anniversary the hotel is offering a special room rate of US\$130 per night until April 30, 2009.

Fujiya Hotel has been renowned globally as one of the most classical resort hotels in Japan for more

than a century. It is located in the Hakone National Park making it convenient for guests to explore the hiking trails, and other local attractions including art museums and antique shops.

With a reputation for its incomparable hospitality and service, the Fujiya Hotel has attracted many dignitaries and

celebrities from all over the world throughout the century.

The hotel has an indoor hot spring swimming pool, Japanese-style public hot spring baths and “Mermaid” Hot Spring Bath which is available for private family use. All guest rooms in Fujiya Hotel are supplied with natural hot spring water.

Further information at

[www.fujiyahotel.jp](http://www.fujiyahotel.jp)

(Click on English)

Travel and

accommodation in Hakone

[www.hakone-hotels.com](http://www.hakone-hotels.com)



**JAPAN NATIONAL TOURIST  
ORGANIZATION,  
SYDNEY OFFICE**

Level 7, 36-38 Clarence St, Sydney NSW 2000 Australia

Tel: 02-9279-2177 (2:00-5:00pm Tuesday & Thursday)

Fax: 02-9279-3166

E-mail: [travelinfo@jnto.org.au](mailto:travelinfo@jnto.org.au)

Web: [www.jnto.org.au](http://www.jnto.org.au)

**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. Japan received a record number of 8.4 million international visitors in 2007; 222,500 of these were Australians. 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 JapanTravel Info.com website.

[www.japantravelinfo.com](http://www.japantravelinfo.com)



**Useful websites**

**Kanazawa Tourist Information Guide**

Kanazawa City Tourism Association has recently renewed its tourism website. The site includes a photo library with 80 high resolution images available for download. The site is well designed, easy to navigate, and is an excellent resource for those planning to visit Kanazawa.

[www.kanazawa-tourism.com](http://www.kanazawa-tourism.com)

**Okhotsk Area information**

Available at this link is a 12 page downloadable PDF giving an overview of Hokkaido's Okhotsk region. Located on the island's north eastern coast, the Okhotsk region includes World Heritage listed Shiretoko National Park, and the Ramsar sites of Lake Tofutsu and Abashiri quasi national park.

[www.abashiri.pref.hokkaido.lg.jp/ss/srk/kanko/index](http://www.abashiri.pref.hokkaido.lg.jp/ss/srk/kanko/index)

**- WHAT'S ON IN JAPAN -**

**TOKYO and vicinity**

**Sept 13-Nov 30 Yokohama Triennale 2008 "Time Crevasse", Central and waterfront sites in Yokohama**

YOKOHAMA 2008, Yokohama's third international triennale of contemporary art will be held in the cosmopolitan port city this (northern) autumn. The event will bring together the contemporary art works, including video art, installations, photography, painting and sculpture, of 80 artists from 35 countries.

<http://yokohamatriennale.jp>

**Sept 14-28 September Grand Sumo Tournament, Kokugikan Sumo Hall, Tokyo**

[www.sumo.or.jp/eng/](http://www.sumo.or.jp/eng/)

**KANSAI AREA**

**Oct 22 Kurama Fire Festival, Kyoto**

This festival is one of Kyoto's three most eccentric festivals.

**Oct 22 Jidai Matsuri (Festival of the Ages), Kyoto City**

One of Kyoto's three largest festivals, Jidai Matsuri is held at Heian Shrine.

Kyoto tourist information [www.kyoto.travel/](http://www.kyoto.travel/)

**NATIONWIDE**

**Sept 15 Respect for Seniors Day (national holiday)**

**Sept 23 Autumnal Equinox Day (national holiday)**

**Oct 9-10 Takayama Autumn Festival**

The Takayama festival is one of Japan's three most beautiful festivals.

Takayama tourist information [www.hida.jp/english/](http://www.hida.jp/english/)

**Oct 13 Health and Sports Day (national holiday)**

**Nov 3 Culture Day (national holiday)**

**Nov 23 Labour Thanksgiving Day (national holiday)**

**Nov 9-23 November Grand Sumo Tournament, Fukuoka Kokusai Centre**



Kurama Fire Festival ©Kyoto Tourism Council