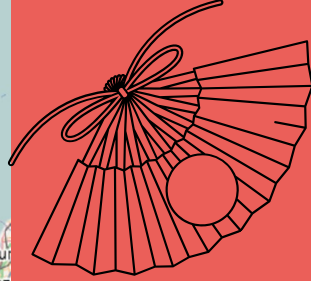
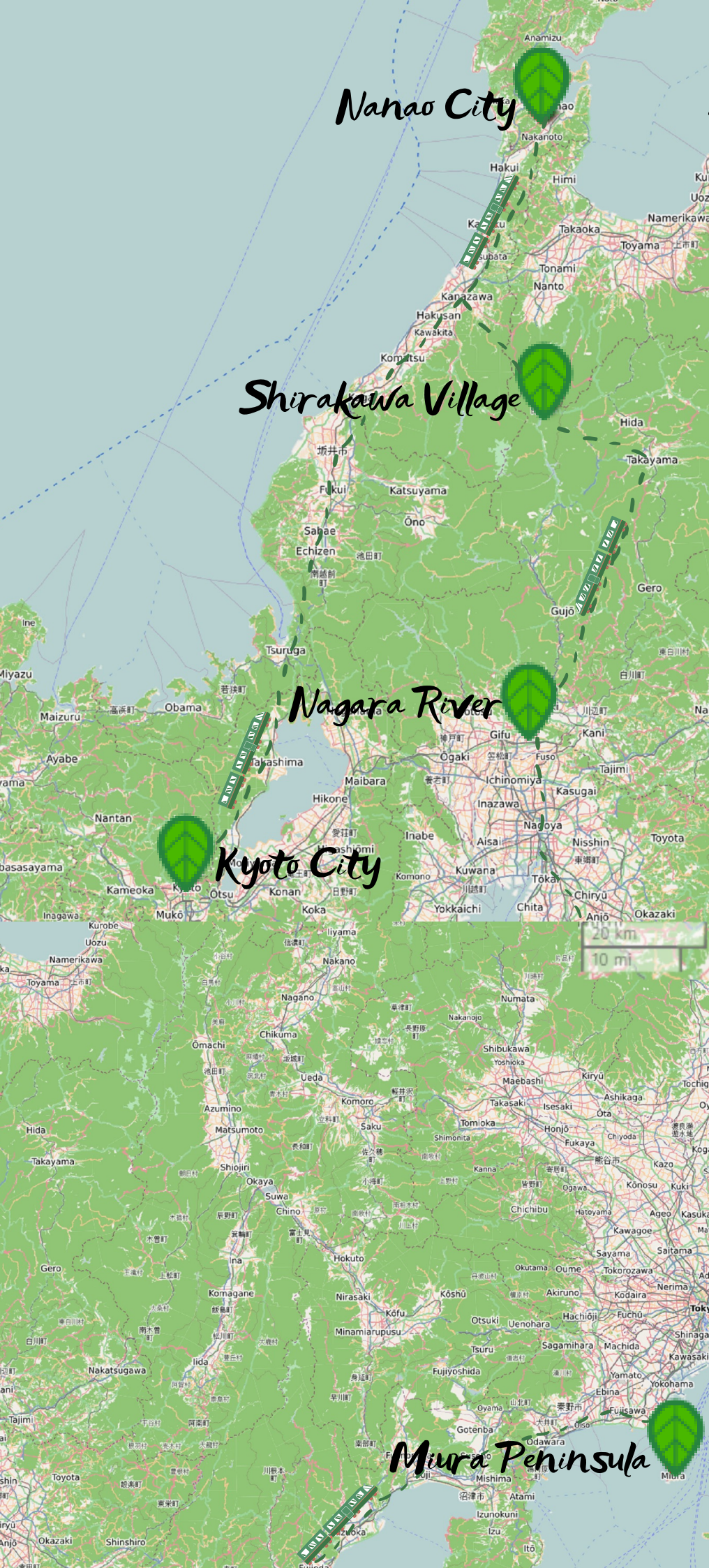




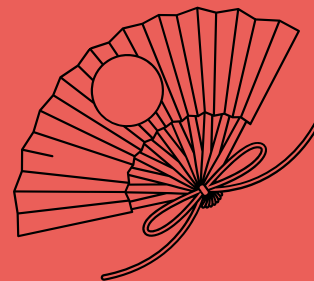
*7 days in
Honshu,
Japan
by train*



Where?



1. Kyoto City
2. Nanao City
3. Shirakawa Village
4. Nagara River
5. Miura Peninsula





Honshu

Honshu Island is the biggest island of the Japanese archipelago. Therefore, it has many **diverse landscapes**, from mountains to rolling countrysides, lakes, rivers, and the sea. **Cultural and intangible heritage** is also very dense there.

This guide will lead you to **5 destinations** that have been awarded for their **excellent initiatives towards sustainable tourism development** by Green Destinations. Beside being inspiring with their Good Practice Stories, these destinations have scored at least 60% compliance with the Green Destinations Core Criteria. They are located in Central and South Honshu, taking you from coast to coast and backcountry. Mostly based on a temperate climate zone, it is the perfect location for experiencing the annual four seasons.

Walk in the oldest historical sites of Japan, **taste** exquisite traditional food, and **learn** from locals their valuable crafts that has been passed on from generation to generation for hundreds of years.





Good to know

You might consider booking your **Japan Rail Pass** before going to Japan! It will give you unlimited access to most of the Shinkansen (high speed) trains, to Japan Railway Lines. Regional passes are also available. The website [Hyperdia](#) (also available as mobile app) will be your best friend to organise your journey by train.

Check out [here](#) the **National Holidays** before planning your trip to Japan, since those are the most crowded and expensive periods of the year. The longest holidays in Japan are the Golden Week (from late April to early May) and Obon time (mid July/August).

Last but not least, take notice of the updated **measures** by the Government of Japan regarding COVID-19 and travel restrictions [here](#).

Day 1. Kyoto

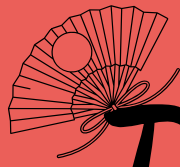
Best way to reach Kyoto City

Kyoto is easy to reach by train from major cities and the closest International Airport is Kansai (KIX) within 1h 20' distance (express ride 2,850 ¥ / ± 21.5 €).

Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan, is located in a basin surrounded by mountains on three sides. Through its long history of more than 1,200 years, Kyoto has blended diverse cultures and has been the spiritual home of Japanese people. It is known as a home to more than 2,000 shrines and temples, featuring 14 UNESCO world Heritage Sites.

Kyoto has a rich natural, cultural and intangible heritage, where **new and old combine**. The Kyoto station is both a gateway and a tourist site due to its futuristic architecture. The grid layout of the city center's streets will bring you to many attractions, like the modern **Kyoto Tower** or one of the most important Shingon Temple, the **Toji Temple** with the tallest pagoda in Japan.





Day 2. Kyoto

On your second day to Kyoto, you can enjoy some **hidden gems** close to the city with fewer tourists around.

Fushimi, renowned for its **1000 torii gates** from the XVII century or its **20 sake breweries** that offer tastings for visitors over-20.



Ohara, which means “big field”, has a **rolling slow-paced countryside** and Sanzen-in Temple’s unique mossy emerald ground in summer, which turns red due to maple leaves falling in autumn.

Yamashina, is **home to national treasures** like Diagogi Temple with its oldest wooden five-storied Pagoda and old traditional Kiyomizu pottery displayed at the Rakuchu-Rakagai Gallery.





Good to know

Kyoto is visitable all year round.

Fall is ideal for picturesque foliage tours.

Winter hosts some big events, like Toshiya Archery Festival and Hanatoro project: in December you can enjoy “flower and light roads” in the Arashiyama district of Kyoto.

Spring offers the second annual edition of this event in the Higashiyama district and spectacular cherry blossoms.

In *summer* the Japanese style gardens are at their peak beauty.



Day 3. Nanao

Best way to reach Nanao City

Take LTD. Express Thunderbird 1 train from Kyoto to Kanazawa, then change and get a local train to Wakuraonsen.

Total time: 3h 15'

Total price: 8,590 ¥ / ± 65 €

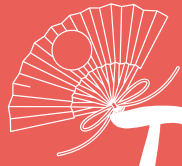
Nanao City is located in the Noto peninsula which is charming for its abundant nature and its seasonal changing sceneries.

Nanao City is famous for its wellness activities, like **Wakura Onsen Soyu**, a public bath that operates since 1641. Immerse yourself in Japanese tradition and relax in natural hot spring water.

On Nanao Bay, you can also taste some of **the most delicious sushi** in Japan. Notably, some local businesses have adopted innovative solutions to fight food waste in gastronomy, like food residue composting and fewer courses. Due to this, fresh and seasonal fish and vegetables from the sea and mountains are always available.



Photo by bobthemagicdragon



Day 4. Shirakawa

Best way to reach Shirakawa Village

Take direct train from Wakuraonsen (Nanao City) to Kanazawa station, then take an express bus to Shirakawa-go*.

Total time: 2h 25'

Total price: 4,800 ¥ / ± 36 €

In Shirakawa-go Gassho-zukuri Houses Village, a World Heritage Site, live 1,600 people that dedicate themselves to farming and landscape protection. Since ancient times residents have helped each other to make life easier in the mountainous area at the foot of Mount Hakusan.

As a symbol of mutual work (called "Yui"), there are 114 Gassho-zukuri wooden houses with a **thatched roof** and 59 of them are still inhabited. Some are open for visitors. You can also taste some locally produced **rice**.

On the other side, from the village, it is easy to access the **Hakusan National Park Forest Ohjirakawa**, home of centuries-old hardwood trees, like Mongolian oak. Here you can visit natural lakes and waterfalls, such as Shiramizu Falls.

*There are only 2 routes available: at 8.10 or 11.10 in the morning. Reservation is required (reserve your ticket from [here](#))



Photo by BONGURI

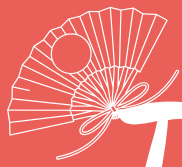


Good to know

There is a manga guide to **manners** provided by the local tourism association that is important to read before arrival.

If you want to reach Shirakawa Village by car you should know that public **parking lots** are located in the area adjacent to or within 1 km from the village and, during busy times, a **shuttle bus** service is provided here. There is a parking fee of 1,000 ¥ / ± 7.56 € per vehicle which includes a cooperative fund for the preservation of the World Heritage Site. For further information about driving in Japan, please visit this webpage.

If you want to participate to the next **"light up" event**, which is usually held in winter (on January and February's weekends), you must reserve your ticket through peatix.com. Note that due to COVID-19 the event has been put on hold.



Day 5. Nagara River

Best way to reach Mino City

Take an express bus to Takayama, then a LTD. Exp. (Wide view) train to Mino-Ota station and a local train to Minoshi station (same rides to Option 2. Gifu City).

Total time: 3h (3h 50' to opt. 2)

Total price: 5,140 ¥ / ± 39 € (5,240 ¥ / ± 39.50 € to opt. 2)

The Nagara River has a 166 km long mainstream originating in Mt. Dainichigatake in Gujo City, Gifu Prefecture. It is considered one of Japan's three clearest rivers and supports local economic development connecting forests, villages and the sea.

Discover the **"Hon-mino-shi" paper** which is a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage (at the Mino Washi Museum) and **"Wagasa" traditional parasol crafting** that has continued in Gifu since around the Edo period (1603-1867). The latter has incredibly complex structures with more than 100 steps in its production process.

Also visit the **Udatsu Wall Historical District** famous for its wealthy eaves decoration and "Udatsu" fire walls.

Option 1. Mino City





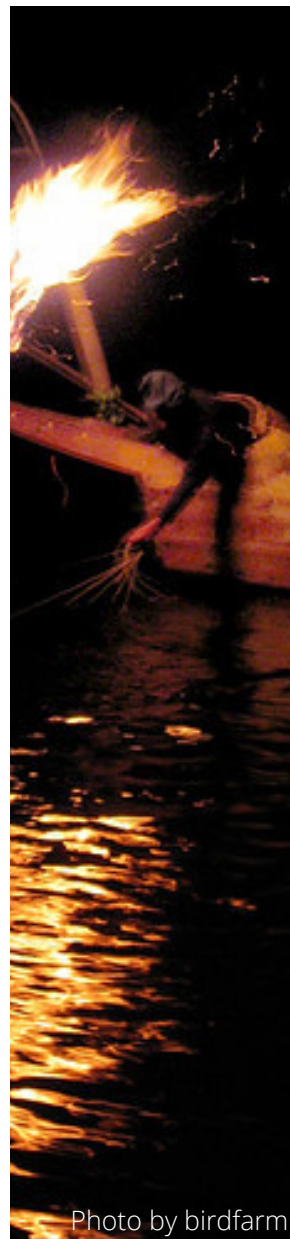
Day 5. Nagara River

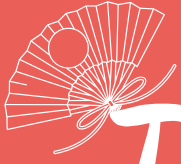
Here you can enjoy the Gifu's Hanamachi culture. It combines **cormorant fishing** (from May 11 to October 15), a traditional fishing method of ayu sweetfish, and **Gifu maiko** (apprentice Geisha) night dances that you can admire from viewing boats or dedicated trails with riverside "sajiki-seki" seating.

Visit the Nagaragawa Ukai Museum for representations of cormorant fishing or walk through the **Kawaramachi Historic Street** to glance at the typical architecture.

Fun fact: only two craftsmen can make the special cormorant fishing boats in the whole prefecture. For this reason, **hands-on courses** for both visitors and children were introduced at the "Ukai Museum" in 2012 and in the Nagara River Ayu Park in 2018. Now ayu of the Nagara River System is designated as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System by FAO.

Option 2. Gifu City





Day 6 - Miura Peninsula

Best way to reach Zushi City

Take train from Gifu to Nagoya, then change to Shin-Yokohama, change to Yokohama and as last change to Zushi-Hamaya.

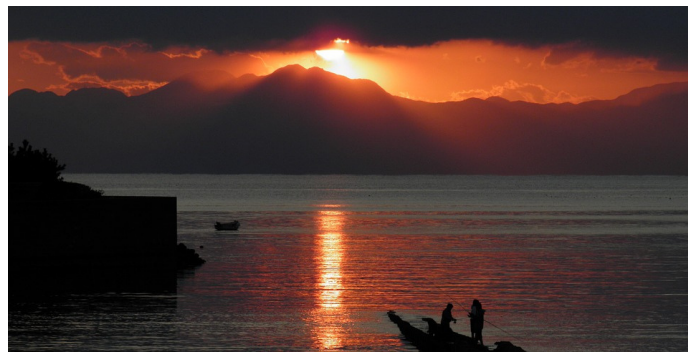
Total time: 2h 50'

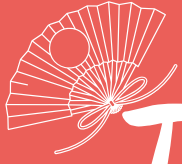
Total price: 6,700 ¥ / ± 51 €

Miura Peninsula is known for its ancient Japanese capital, Kamakura, as well as for its atmospheric architecture and ancient culture. Surrounded by the sea on three sides, the Miura Peninsula is valuable for its fishing industry and mild-climate agriculture. Moreover, warmer temperatures will welcome you there.

In Zushi you can visit historical sites and go hiking around **Jimmuji Temple**, which is a sacred place of Takatoriyama mountain worship built in the Nara period (AD 710-794). Similarly, you can enjoy daily walks around **Ikego Forest**, where wild birds and flora live in harmony.

If you prefer to slow down and enjoy the breeze you can go to one of Zushi's **beaches**. On sunsets, you can glimpse at a Shinto shrine that stands above the sea on a tiny rocky island of Morito Coast. Or, you can always change your mind and try some **water sports**, like surfing and sailing.





Day 7 - Miura Peninsula

Best way to reach Yokosuka City

Take train from Zushi Hayama to Kanazawa-Hakkeistation, then change to Yokosuka-Chuo.

Total time: 25'

Total price: 250 ¥ / ± 2 €

Yokosuka City displays a more modern side of Japan. It is a port basin where many sailors from around the world arrived at the Archipelago. That inspired James Clavel to write his novel "Shogun". Today, you can visit the **Memorial 19th-Century Warship** at Mikasa Park. Nearby 15-min ferry rides will bring you to **Sarushima Island**, a former Japanese military fortress where you can visit its ruins and tunnels or explore its Northern rocky shoreline

You can also have a walk around **Dubuita Street**, a shopping area where the famous Sukajan jacket was first designed. It is said that this street brings some American flavour to the city. Its name comes indeed from the thick iron plates provided by the pre-war Navy arsenal, which were laid on the Dobu River.

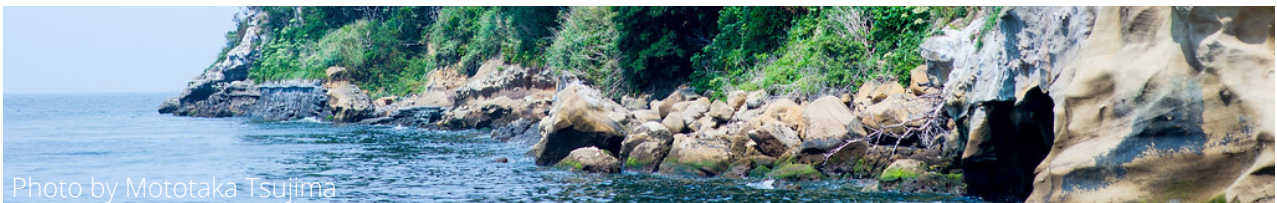


Photo by Mototaka Tsujima





WAY BACK HOME

If you are an international traveller you can reach **Tokyo Haneda International Airport** within 1h distance by train from the last destination. As an alternative international airport, there is the **Tokyo Narita International Aiport** within 2h express train ride or 6h by local trains. Another option is to go back to **Kansai International Aiport** within 9h 30' distance by train.

BEFORE YOU GO

Japan has a lot to offer. Happily, there are many other "Good Practice" destinations to share on our next guides. Thank you for reading this guide! We hope that your desire to travel to Japan in a responsible way has risen inside you.



Please note that this itinerary is a suggestion, but it is very flexible. Japan offers good railway systems that connect each major city to smaller towns and villages. You can therefore also easily extend or shorten this trip according to your wishes. **Travelling by train** in Japan is already an experience (discover the history of the Japanese railway at the Kyoto Railway Museum).

Visit this page to know more about **green destinations** in Japan: <https://goodtravel.guide/japan/>.

Keep following us at goodtravel.guide, we will try to provide a new guide every month.

