

2024 July Vol.1

New Open

1. Explore Hokkaido and Its Many Wonders at OMO5 Hakodate by Hoshino Resorts Opening on July 6



©Hoshino Resorts

The city of Hakodate in southern Hokkaido is famous for its delicious seafood, retro townscape, and glittering night views. Located only a 5-minute walk from JR Hakodate Station, the new OMO5 Hakodate by Hoshino Resorts is a prime hub for sightseeing around the city. The hotel offers a free shuttle bus around the city, making it all the easier to see the highlights. Hoping to showcase the best of what Hakodate has to offer, the designs of the guest rooms are based on the local scenery, while the generous breakfast presents a mouthwatering selection of Hakodate-caught seafood. Wash away the day's fatigue by soaking in the hot springs or relaxing at the shared lounge.

[OMO5 Hakodate by Hoshino Resorts](#)

New Open

2. The Mitsui Garden Hotels' PREMIER Series' First Kyoto Location Is Opening in the Heart of the City on July 31



©Mitsui Fudosan Co., Ltd.

The prime location of the new Mitsui Garden Hotel Kyoto Sanjo PREMIER will allow easy access to Kyoto's most famous sites, including the Geisha district of Gion and numerous shrines and temples. Though it will be right in the middle of one of the most bustling parts of Kyoto, the hotel's design, which is inspired by Kyoto-style "Machiya" townhouses, allows guests repose from the busyness as they head further into the building. The warm wooden accents throughout the entire interior create a calm atmosphere that is elegant and inviting, and the design reflects the amalgamation of Japanese and Western elements that the area is known for. It is sure to become more than just a place for sleep, instead becoming a destination to experience Kyoto.

[Mitsui Garden Hotel Kyoto Sanjo PREMIER](#)

Festival and Event

3. Watch Captivating Folk Dances to Rumbling Drumbeats at the Morioka Sansa Odori Festival, August 1 - 4, Iwate



The Morioka Sansa Odori Festival in Iwate Prefecture in the Tohoku region normally takes place over 4 days from August 1 to 4. During this time, dancers dressed in various outfits parade through central Morioka City along to the ensemble of taiko drums, flutes, and chants. Not only is this a striking Taiko drumming performance, with thousands of drummers gathering to create resounding beats, but festival-goers are also allowed to partake later in the festival and jump in to dance around the floats. In addition to the captivatingly spectacular parade, there are also other gorgeous Sansa Odori performances that are put on around the city. Morioka was featured on the New York Times' 2023 list of "52 Places to Go," and during this festival, the normally peaceful city overflows with energy.

[Morioka Sansa Odori Festival](#)

Festival and Event

4. Commanding Floats Set Aomori City Aglow at the Aomori Nebuta Festival, August 2 - 7



©Aomori Tourism and Convention Association

The Aomori Nebuta Festival is one of the most famous festivals in Japan, drawing some 1 million visitors annually. It is known for its massive, color paper floats that are handmade and illustrate dynamic scenes from Japanese mythology and folklore. The processions that take place in the middle of Aomori City not only feature these impressive floats, but also exuberant music and animated dancers called “Haneto.” Another unique feature of the festival is that anyone can jump in and join the dancing as long as they are wearing the official dance outfit! There are several viewing spots the parade can be watched from, but for the most relaxed experience with guaranteed good views, you can opt for paid seats.

[Aomori Nebuta Festival](#)

Festival and Event

5. See Giant Lanterns Lighting Up the Night Sky at the Akita Kanto Festival, August 3 - 6



©Akita City Kanto Festival Executive Committee

The approximately 270-year-old Akita Kanto Festival is considered one of the great festivals of the Tohoku region, and has been designated as a National Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property. It is known for the spectacle of giant lantern bamboo poles called "Kanto" soaring above Kanto Odori Street in Akita City. The 10 thousand glowing lanterns that make up these Kanto resemble swaying ears of rice, perfectly showcasing the festival's purpose of praying for bountiful harvests. The largest of the Kanto are 12 meters tall and can weigh up to 50 kilograms, and incredibly, all of the Kanto are supported manually by masterful performers. The

vivaciousness of the shining Kanto and the sounds of drums and flutes creates an unforgettable experience.

[Akita Kanto Festival](#)

Festival and Event

6. Calling All Cosplay Fans! Gather for the World Cosplay Summit 2024, August 2 - 4, Aichi



©WORLD COSPLAY SUMMIT 2024

At the World Cosplay Summit 2024, one of the world's largest cosplay festivals, popular characters from anime, manga, and video games can be seen walking around the streets of Nagoya in Aichi Prefecture from August 2 to 4. Every year, over 200,000 pop culture enthusiasts from around the world gather for the summit, ready to portray (prior registration required) or meet their favorite characters. The artistry that goes into the transformations is dazzling, and the cosplayers and their fantastic outfits can be admired at designated photo-op spots around the city or at the cosplay performances. To see the best of the best, be sure to attend the Championship, which will feature top-level cosplayers from different countries vying for the title of the world's best cosplayer.

[World Cosplay Summit 2024](#)

Festival and Event

7. Enjoy Artwork Interwoven with Bountiful Nature at the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale 2024, July 13 - November 10, Niigata



©"For Lots of Lost Windows"
Utsumi Akiko

©"Palimpsest: pond of sky" Leandro Erlich

The Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale 2024 will take place for 87 days across 6 areas around Niigata Prefecture. This acclaimed open-air art festival, held once every three years, is one of the largest in the world, and this year, it will feature works from 72 artists and groups from 17 countries and regions across the globe. Most of the artworks featured at the festival are on a grand scale that incorporates the open space and surrounding scenery, creating views that are attention-grabbing yet meld into the landscapes. To truly get the most out of this unique art experience, look into staying in the area for a few days to visit the famous installations. You can also enjoy the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale through the official tours, so check more details on the official website.

[Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale 2024](#)

Special Experience

8. Gaze at the Colorful Hokkaido Countryside from Special Sightseeing Trains



Furano Lavender Express



Furano Biei Norokko Train

©Hokkaido Railway Company

The Furano Lavender Express is a special train that directly connects the cities of Sapporo and Furano during the flower season, which is usually from mid-June to August or September. Painted the color of one of the flowers Furano is known for, the lavender train runs through the idyllic Hokkaido countryside, offering superb views of the vast fields and infinite sky from the windows. During the same period, the Furano Biei Norokko Train takes passengers from Furano further north into the region's famous flower fields, which can be seen from the large windows. These trains are fun yet convenient ways to explore the massive prefecture of Hokkaido, which boasts vibrant summer scenery that is a completely different turn from the pure-white snowy winter landscapes.

[JR Hokkaido](#)

National Park

9. Awe-Inspiring Harmonies with Mt. Fuji and the Rising Sun



©Kanto Regional Environment Office

For prime views of the iconic Mt. Fuji, look no further than Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park, which straddles Tokyo, Kanagawa, Shizuoka, and Yamanashi Prefectures. As Mt. Fuji is located within the park, it can easily be viewed from all angles. One fantastic place to get great views is “Tanukiko Fugaku Terrace,” the recently renewed observation deck near Lake Tanuki, which sits at the western base of Mt. Fuji. Seeing the majestic mountain reflected on the calm waters while surrounded by the gorgeous nature of the park increases the grandeur twofold, but this is only trumped by the “Diamond Fuji” phenomenon that occurs in late April and late August. For an ephemeral moment, the rising sun perfectly aligns with the peak of the mountain, appearing to be born from Mt. Fuji itself. Also located near Lake Tanuki is the Lake Tanuki Nature School, where visitors of all ages can learn about nature through fun yet educational activities and games.

[Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park](#) | [National Parks of Japan](#)

Luxury Travel

10. Explore Japanese Traditional Handicrafts and Natural Beauty in Nasu with Guided Bike Tour, Tochigi



©Ride Experience inc.

With Gravel & Craft Bike Tour Nasu-Mashiko, you can venture into the Japanese wilderness on a 6-day-long guided cycling tour that introduces untouched rural scenery and traditional Japanese craftsmanship. The tour route winds through the countryside of Tochigi Prefecture, exhibiting views of towering trees, open rice fields, babbling brooks, and more. Stops along the way include visits to local craft masters, who passionately introduce their skills and techniques.

Not only will you learn about handicrafts, such as the traditional Japanese paper “Washi” and Mashiko pottery, but you can even visit acclaimed Sake breweries and sample some of their famous brews. After each long day of cycling, look forward to relaxing in a local Japanese-style inn and soaking in rejuvenating hot springs to get you ready for the next day of adventure.

[Gravel & Craft Bike Tour Nasu-Mashiko](#)

Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai

"Connecting Lives" by Taking Part in the Gujo Odori Festival with Locals



Experience the soul of Japan at the Gujo Odori Festival! This historic dance celebration, held from July 13th to September 7th in Gujo Hachiman, Gifu, embodies the spirit of Osaka Expo 2025's theme: "Connecting Lives." Join thousands clad in yukata, dancing under the summer sky. Witness the vibrant fusion of traditional music and dance, where Taiko drums and Shamisen flutes fill the air. Gujo Odori transcends social barriers, uniting people through the joy of dance. Don't miss this chance to experience the transformative power of Japanese culture!

[Gujo Odori](#)

Notes:

- The above details are correct as of the time of publication, and are subject to change.

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