

2025 February Vol. 2

New Open

1. A Luxurious Nature Retreat in Narita's Scenic Outdoors, Opening March 1, Chiba

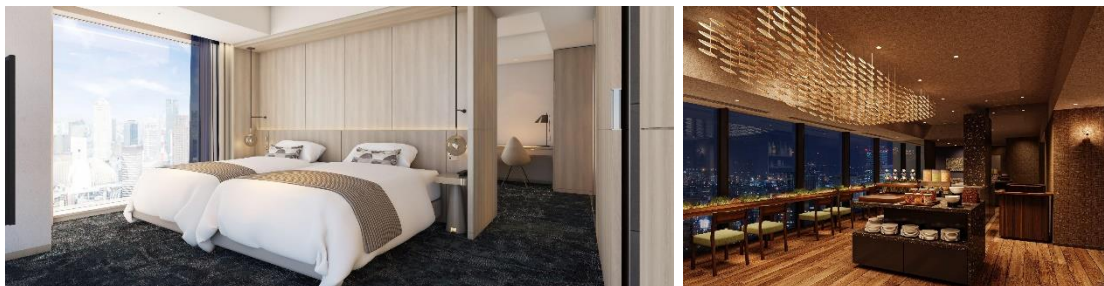


Opening March 1, THE FARM SLOW MOUNTAIN NARITA is an outdoor hotel located in Narita City, Chiba Prefecture, offering a unique blend of nature and luxury. Set across a sprawling 50,000 m² site, this nature-filled retreat provides a high-quality accommodation with glamping tents and cottages that boast all the comforts of an all-inclusive hotel. Guests can indulge in outdoor dining with a “World’s Garden Party” BBQ menu featuring a selection of BBQ dishes from around the world using fresh, local ingredients, all enjoyed in an atmosphere designed for a garden party, complete with carefully selected music and table arrangements. For breakfast, savor freshly made rice balls or sandwiches filled with locally sourced, seasonal vegetables. The hotel also offers a range of exciting activities, including a thrilling aerial adventure course (one of the largest in the Kanto region) with a zip line, seasonal vegetable harvesting, and AR experiences in the forest. End your day relaxing under a starry sky by a cozy bonfire.

[THE FARM SLOW MOUNTAIN NARITA](#)

New Open

2. Unwind and Relax at a New Hotel in the Heart of Osaka, Opening March 21



©Hotel Hankyu GRAN RESPIRE OSAKA

The goal of the new Hotel Hankyu GRAN RESPIRE OSAKA is to bring next-level relaxation and comfort to its guests. It is opening in the GRAND GREEN OSAKA urban space directly connected to JR Osaka Station, making it not only easy to reach but also offering easy access to sightseeing spots around the region. The hotel's concept is "natural state," aiming to create a space where guests can lay back and let go. There are 482 clean-cut guest rooms with floor-to-ceiling windows that make the spaces feel open and airy, perfect for relaxing the mind and body. Guests staying on the Club Floors also get special access to the mature, stylish Club Lounge on the 27th floor with sweeping views of the Osaka cityscape. You can also use the guest-only elevator to get to the wellness-focused UMEKITA ONSEN REN Wellbeing Park located in the same building, which even has a natural hot spring bath, a gym, an infinity pool, and more, once a day for free during your stay. Located in the vibrant Umeda area of Osaka, guests can enjoy a serene and luxurious atmosphere upon entering, offering a peaceful escape that makes them forget they are in the heart of the city.

[Hotel Hankyu GRAN RESPIRE OSAKA](#)

New Open

3. Visit the New Takanawa Gateway City - A Complex Showcasing Japan's Innovation, Opening March 27, Tokyo



©East Japan Railway Company

Takanawa played a key role in Japan's modernization, becoming the first place where railway tracks crossed the sea when the country's first railway was built in 1872. Today, Takanawa is building on this legacy, leading the charge for the innovations that will shape the next century. Takanawa Gateway City is a new complex that will be directly connected to Takanawa Gateway Station near central Tokyo, located only 15 minutes away from Haneda Airport. Measuring 1.6 kilometers long, it will be one of the largest blocks in the city and will hold a shopping center, public garden, offices, a cultural facility designed by the world-renowned architect Kuma Kengo, and more. One of the highlights is 53 Playable Park, which will act as a space for entertainment and relaxation for both residents and visitors. Those who want to make the most of this convenient location can choose to stay at the JW Marriott Hotel Tokyo within the complex, which is equipped with 200 guest rooms, a spa, restaurant and bar, lounge, and more. Aiming to "connect people, nature, and technology," Takanawa Gateway City will utilize cutting-edge technology, such as mobility vehicles to offer convenience and comfort, as well as greenery planted around the premises to create a relaxing atmosphere. The site is also set to become a premier destination for international conferences and exhibitions, featuring the TAKANAWA GATEWAY Convention Center. This large-scale facility will offer 15 rooms, including a 1,640 m² hall capable of hosting up to 2,000 attendees, providing a highly convenient and dynamic space for visitors from Japan and abroad.

[Takanawa Gateway City](#)

New Open

4. Explore Art Like Never Before at Tottori's New Museum, Opening March 30



ITO Jakuchu, Elephant and Whale, left screen,
1795 (Kansei 7) ink on paper;
pair of six-fold screens, MIHO MUSUEM



Terrace (3F)

Opening on March 30, the Tottori Prefectural Museum of Art embraces the concept of an "art museum that creates the future." The museum spans three floors with multiple showrooms featuring extensive exhibits on a wide range of themes, including art and artists from Tottori. The museum will not just be a place to observe art – one facility within the museum is the Art Learning Lab (A.L.L.) which aims to teach people of all ages through art with interactive activities and creative workshops. The Tottori Prefectural Museum of Art celebrates its grand opening with "ART OF THE REAL", an exhibition exploring the concept of "real" in art through approximately 180 works, running from March 30 to June 15. Spanning Edo-period paintings to contemporary masterpieces by Ito Jakuchu, Andy Warhol, Gerhard Richter, and more, the exhibition examines how artists across cultures and eras have redefined reality in their creations. When you want to enjoy natural views, head to the museum's terrace that overlooks the surrounding townscape and the Ruins of Omidou Haiji Temple. The museum stands about a ten-minute drive away from Kurayoshi Station, adjacent to the architecturally astounding Kurayoshi Park Square, giving plenty to explore around the premises as well.

[TOTTORI PREFECTURAL MUSEUM OF ART](#)

Festival and Event

5. See Thousands of Cherry Trees Covering the Landscape with Ephemeral Blossoms, April 18 – May 5, Aomori



Hirosaki City in Aomori Prefecture is known as one of the country's leading cherry blossom spots. The Hirosaki Cherry Blossom Festival is held during the blooming peak of the flowers, with visitors gathering from near and far to bask in the beauty of the lovely, pink blossoms. The event is held at Hirosaki Park, which can be easily accessed from Hirosaki Station with a 15-minute ride on a loop bus. The park's 2,600 trees of 52 different varieties bloom in profusion, creating fluffy clouds of faint pink that surround the solemn structure of Hirosaki Castle. There are even 300 trees of the Somei-Yoshino variety that are over 100 years old yet still produce cherry blossom clusters thick enough that they almost seem to cover the sky. The festival will feature unique cherry blossom sceneries such as a heart silhouette in one part of the park made by the canopy of the trees, a tunnel of cherry blossoms, a serene river covered with fallen petals, and more. Other activities visitors can enjoy at the Hirosaki Cherry Blossom Festival include a cruise along the Nakabori Central Moat on a traditional Japanese boat for a unique view of the blossoms, or renting a boat at the Nishibori West Moat for a relaxing ride with family and friends. As night falls, the festival's light-up creates a magical atmosphere, perfect for evening strolls. With approximately 200 stalls open from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm, visitors can enjoy a wide variety of food and traditional treats.

[Hirosaki Cherry Blossom Festival 2025](#)

Festival and Event

6. Setouchi Triennale 2025 - Marvel at World-Class Contemporary Art Set Amongst Serene Islands, April 18 – May 25



"Red Pumpkin" Yayoi Kusama, 2006 Naoshima
Miyanoura Port Square, Photo/Daisuke Aochi
©YAYOI KUSAMA

(Reproduction of this image is strictly prohibited.)



Shiko Miyake "The Time of the Beginning"
Photo: Keizo Kioku

The Setouchi Triennale is one of Japan's most famous international contemporary art festivals, attracting approximately a million visitors from Japan and overseas. It takes place once every three years across 17 areas on small islands that dot the Seto Inland Sea, which are known for their idyllic sceneries and tranquil atmospheres. During the approximately 100-day event, divided into three seasons—spring, summer and fall—visitors can experience captivating exhibits and thought-provoking installations that stand out against the calm surrounding nature, while seamlessly blending in with the townscapes. The summer event is held in August, and the fall event runs from October to early November, allowing visitors to experience the charms of Setouchi in each season. This marks the sixth iteration of the art festival, and the artist lineup will include 63 new participants from 21 different countries and regions. In addition to the breathtaking limited-time festival pieces, visitors can also enjoy famous permanent installations

such as the iconic Pumpkin by Kusama Yayoi on Naoshima, by utilizing the official app to search for routes to artworks. This year, the festival will feature exciting collaborations with New Zealand, Sweden and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, making it a truly unique event. To enhance your experience, the Setouchi Triennale "passport" ticket offers great convenience and savings, allowing you to avoid paying admission for each individual artwork. It also grants smoother access without the need for on-site payment.

[Setouchi Triennale 2025](#)

Festival and Event

7. Watch Spirited Tigers Dancing in the Streets and on Rooftops, April 29, Miyagi



The Fire Protection Tiger Dance Festival is an ancient festival with a history that dates back 650 years and is now an Intangible Folk Cultural Property. It began as a ritual to protect what is now the town of Kami from fires, as strong winds blowing down from the mountains in early spring to early summer often caused large fires. Following the Chinese belief that "The clouds obey the dragon, and the wind obeys the tiger," people tried to calm the wind by using the power of the tiger. It is now a beloved tradition that attracts visitors from all over who want to witness the dynamic performances of the tiger dancers. The festival includes a parade that trails behind the tigers, with musical performers and vibrant parade floats adding to the spectacle. The tigers can even be seen dancing on rooftops, blessing the locals' homes and buildings, and praying for safety from disaster. The venue is located about a 30-minute bus ride from Furukawa Station and boasts a retro townscape that bursts with color and vibrancy with the arrival of the tigers during the festival, creating a scene that will become a cherished memory.

[Fire Protection Tiger Dance Festival](#)

Special Experience

8. Experience a Trekking Adventure Like No Other, Gifu



©HappyPlusCorp.

The Hida Takayama region in Gifu Prefecture is covered with vast areas of pristine nature, from lush forests to towering mountains, rushing rivers, spacious plateaus, and more. This guided tour, lasting around 2-3 hours, takes you to the foot of Chubusangaku National Park for an intense, off-the-beaten-path experience. As you explore the untouched valley, you'll have the rare opportunity to encounter local flora and fauna, and potentially spot wild animals along the way. Participants get to fully immerse themselves in the experience, walking through clear, waist-deep water and floating on the gentle currents of the river. Along with canyoning and trekking, the tour includes a unique activity called "shower climbing," during which the valley is almost used as a playground, where you can explore every nook and cranny. The tour also allows you to get right up to small waterfalls, even offering the opportunity to climb up the rocky facades. You will be provided with rental items, including a wetsuit, helmet, and shoes, and your guide will show you how to safely enjoy the valley.

[Shower Climbing in Takayama](#)

National Park

9. A Vast National Park with Scenery and Activities to Enjoy in Spring and Beyond



©Ministry of the Environment

Myoko-Togakushi Renzan National Park is home to a wide range of breathtaking natural features, including rugged mountain ranges, tranquil lakes, sprawling plateaus, and more. One of the

park's unique characteristics is the diverse origins of its mountains: Mt. Myoko is a steep-sided double volcano, while the Togakushi Mountain Range was formed through the protrusion and erosion of ancient submarine volcanoes. Fossils of shellfish and other marine life have even been discovered around the summit of Mt. Togakushi, providing a fascinating glimpse into the area's geological history. This wealth of wonders makes Myoko-Togakushi Renzan National Park a joy to visit year-round, but spring truly stands out with its many highlights. Orchards set against the backdrop of the park's mountains are filled with apple and peach blossoms from mid-April to mid-May, while the Yumemidaira Hiking Trail showcases delicate blooms like Asian skunk cabbage and marsh marigolds. Take a leisurely 20-30-minute stroll along the boardwalk to enjoy these seasonal sights. The park also offers year-round activities such as hiking in summer and skiing in winter, with diverse flora and fauna like pine trees and the blue-and-white flycatcher visible through late spring to early autumn. There are several temples and shrines that stand within the park, introducing the region's mystical spirituality and its connection to nature. Visitors can walk along the ancient Togakushi Kodo road that connects five Shinto shrines that are around 1,000 years old. The numerous hiking trails also offer several difficulty levels, from beginner to experienced hiker, making it fun for anyone to explore.

[Myoko-Togakushi Renzan National Park](#)

Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai

From Fox Shrines to Farm Stays—the Many Faces of Southwest Japan



Discover the vibrant tapestry of culture and community in Japan's Chugoku and Shikoku regions where the essence of one of Osaka Expo 2025's themes, "Connecting Lives," comes to life. From the awe-inspiring torii gates of Motonosumi Shrine to the artistic allure of Naoshima Island, this journey weaves through sacred sites, culinary traditions, and hillside farms. Marvel at Yayoi Kusama's iconic art, learn the secrets of crafting Sanuki udon, and embrace the resourcefulness of farmers at Uribo Inn. Each destination highlights the harmonious blend of ancient traditions and modern creativity, inviting travelers to connect with the land, its stories, and its people.

Also, don't miss the Setouchi Triennale, a celebrated international art festival held every three years across the Seto Inland Sea islands. Since its inception in 2010, the festival has drawn nearly one million visitors each time to experience innovative art installations that highlight themes of community, nature, and regional revitalization. It spans 100 days across spring, summer, and autumn featuring works by renowned artists on 17 islands and coastal areas.

For more details, visit the JNTO Expo 2025 website.

URL: <https://www.japan.travel/en/expo2025/article/chugoku-shikoku/>

Notes:

- The above details are correct as of the time of publication, and are subject to change.
- Item 8 is based on information from JNTO Partners.

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