

Japan, a Hidden Cycling Paradise!

The Cycling Road event will be a little different during Tokyo 2020. Rather than being held in and around the host city, like in previous Summer Olympics, the event will start in Fuchu, Tokyo, and trace a 150-kilometer path to Fuji Speedway in Shizuoka Prefecture, approximately a two-hour drive away from the capital city. Along the way, the cyclists taking part in the event will race across picturesque road and paths, giving viewers at home a preview of what they could experience if they come to Japan on a cycling holiday.



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Cycling Road in Shiga Prefecture

Cycling, in various forms, has been a staple of the Summer Olympic Games since they were first held in 1896. Great Britain has been one of the most-dominant nations in Olympic cycling, with the GB Cycling Team collecting 87 Olympic medals over the years, including 32 golds.

Team GB's impressive performance in the sport of cycling should not be too much of a surprise. After all, cycling is a highly popular in Great Britain, where around three million people cycle regularly, 42 percent of the country has ready access to a bicycle and household spending on cycling exceeds £1.4 billion annually.

Setting Off on the National Cycle Route

When Olympic cyclists set off from [Musashinomori Park](#) at the start of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Cycling Road races, British cycling enthusiasts watching on television will get to see a challenging, yet visually stunning course they may wish to experience for themselves on a future cycling tour of Japan.

Cycling tourism is a fantastic way to explore, with tours ranging from quick jaunts around popular hotspots to long-distance, multi-day journeys cycling from location to location while avoiding crowds and traffic congestion. As a form of travel, cycling provides tourists with up-close experiences of the destinations

they are visiting, allowing them to stop and admire sights that catch their eyes, meet with locals, and enjoy breaks not possible on more traditional coach tours.

In Japan, steps are being taken to make it easier to take cycling tours around the country, including the establishment of a National Cycle Route that designates cycling paths of international standard. So far, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism has designated [three courses as part of this route: Tsukuba-Kasumigaura ring-ring road](#) (a 176-kilometer course in Ibaraki Prefecture), [Biwaichi](#) (a 193-kilometer course in Shiga Prefecture) and [Shimanami Kaido Cycling Road](#) (a 70-kilometer course that crosses over from Hiroshima Prefecture to Ehime Prefecture).



Shimanami Kaido Cycling Road ©JNTO

Branching Out

The routes and locations along the men's and women's Cycling Road courses for Tokyo 2020 expect to see an influx in cycling tourists after the Olympics, especially from countries with strong cycling cultures, like Great Britain.

Both the men's and women's Cycling Road events include sections that take cyclists around the waters of [Lake Yamanaka](#), the largest of the Fuji Five Lakes and part of the Fujisan Cultural Site, before they pass through Kagosaka Pass, all within clear view of the snowy peak of Mount Fuji.



Lake Yamanaka

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While passing through the area, cycling tourists will get to see these sights for themselves if they choose to retrace the route taken by Olympic cyclists. They may even wish to stop to take a break while circling Lake Yamanaka, a two-hour drive from Tokyo, as it is a prime location to enjoy recreational activities like boating, fishing, swimming, and waterskiing.

Many cycling tourists might wish to take a detour while retracing the Olympic route. One good jumping-off location comes around the midpoint, where cycling tourists can turn south to explore the [Izu Peninsula](#), two hours away from Tokyo by car or rail. While there, they can hop off their bikes to walk along craggy coastal paths, explore Japanese and East-Asian art at the [MOA Museum of Art](#) in Atami, visit one of the many hot springs in Ito, or venture into the [Toi Gold Mine](#) in Toi Kinzan to learn a bit of local history.

The Olympic Cycling Road route also provides cycling tourists the chance to cycle around Suruga Bay and take in the region's lush greenery on both flat paths and mountain routes. Along the way, they can stop by one of the many tea plantations near the coast to sample green tea while enjoying views of the bay and Mount Fuji. Cycling tourists can also stop to visit [Kunozan Toshogu Shrine](#), a National Treasure of Japan and the oldest Toshogu shrine in the country.

For those who wish to venture beyond the Olympic Cycling Road course, there is the option to cycle a route that runs alongside train tracks that lead from Shizuoka toward Amagasaki in Osaka through Hamamatsu, Nagoya, and Kyoto. There is no need to try and race the Shinkansen while following the track. Instead, cycling tourists can set a leisurely pace and turn off at [Lake Hamana](#) to the west of Hamamatsu, an hour-and-a-half away from Tokyo by rail, to enjoy cool breezes coming off the water and stop by [Hamamatsu Flower Park](#) to view some beautiful blooms.



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Coastline of Shizuoka Prefecture

Mixing and Matching to Find the Experience That Works Best

For those looking for a new type of travel experience cycling tourism is an excellent choice. Cycling tours can also be tailored to best fit the needs of their participants. Some may choose to go on physically strenuous journeys that focus on long distances and varied terrain. Others may prefer more leisurely rides that take them to must-visit locations and local eateries.

Whatever the option they choose, cycling tourists will be able to take in plenty of fresh air and exercise, as their trips are powered by their own legs. Additionally, cycling tourism is a more sustainable method of travel, as pedal power doesn't emit any exhaust fumes while offsetting the carbon emissions from other activities.

All in all, cycling tourism offers holiday goers the chance to explore their destinations more thoroughly than they could on a coach trip. Whichever way they wish to conduct their cycling holidays, tourists will find that they will let them all-new experiences and take in more participative travelling encounters. Rather than catching a glimpse of something interesting outside a coach or plane window, cycling tourists can stop and walk over to take a closer look.

