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Japan's premium airline is your ticket to adventure. **ANA (All Nippon Airways)** will fly you to Tokyo in style, from where they offer more **domestic direct flights** than any other airline. Let this itinerary guide you to some of the best adventures in Japan.



Lake Ashi

1
HAKONE

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Where:

About 30 minutes west of Hakone proper

When:

9am – 5pm, varies by season

Cost:

Prices vary; expect around 1,000 yen for a 30-minute cruise.

Notes:

Views tend to be clearer – that is, you're more likely to see Mt. Fuji in the mornings and in the colder months.

Lake Ashi – at the foot of Mt. Hakone – has a touch of the spiritual to it, what with the torii (shrine gate) floating in the water with the backdrop of Mt. Fuji rising in the distance. For a more of-this-world adventure, hop aboard one of the massive pirate boats that ferry visitors across the lake, or procure your own sturdy rowboat or swan-shaped paddleboat.

On the east side of the lake, a centuries-old path enclosed by giant Japanese cedars leads to a reconstruction of the **Hakone Checkpoint**, where travelers on the old Tokaido Road stopped during the Edo Period. Hikers can continue to walk a portion of the old trail, stopping for tea at **Amazake Chaya**, a thatched-roof teahouse that's been serving weary travelers for hundreds of years.



2

HIROSHIMA

Miyajima

The island of **Miyajima** lies southwest of Hiroshima in Hiroshima Bay. Several hiking trails wind up the sacred **Mt. Misen**, where pilgrim and founder of Shingon Buddhism, Kobo Daishi, first practiced. Trails include a mix of steep and mellow, with dirt paths, stone stairs, and broad views, and local wildlife like deer and monkeys often pops into view.

The **Momiji Valley route** is lined with Japanese maples that blaze with red, orange, and yellow in the late fall. The **Omoto route** runs through the Komaga Forest with its towering fir trees, while the **Daisho-in route** passes Shiroito Falls and is studded with Buddhist statues and monuments.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Where:

A 20-minute walk from Miyajim ferry pier.

When:

Plan about two hours to complete the trek via any route; pack and dress appropriately according to season.

Cost:

Free

Notes:

The Miyajima Ropeway can knock off 75% of the (one-way) trek; 1,000 yen.



3

ISHIGAKI

Kabira Bay

Ishigaki Island, in the Yaeyama Island group of Okinawa, is a watery playground known for its excellent **snorkel and dive scene** – the “manta scramble” off **Kabira Bay** at the southern tip of the island is one of a kind. Giant manta rays congregate in the clear blue water at “cleaning stations” – as they hover over coral beds, feeder fish remove parasites from their bodies, like some marine carwash.

Giant mantas can have wingspans of some 15 feet and often congregate in groups, so this is a truly special dive. The coral attracts all kinds of other sea life too, like sea turtles and, occasionally, hammerhead sharks.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Where:

Kabira Bay is a 30-minute drive from Ishigaki city.

When:

High season (with warm weather and sunny skies) is June – October.

Cost:

Prices vary by activity and outfitter; snorkeling tours average around 8,000 yen.

Notes:

The beach technically opens in spring (March); rainy season hits in May.

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Higashi Chaya district

KANAZAWA

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Where:

Kaikaro Teahouse, 920-0831 Ishikawa,
Kanazawa

When:

9am – 5pm

Cost:

750 yen
(tea service included with admission)

Notes:

Nearby Shima Teahouse, also open to the public, has been preserved and turned into a museum.

The **Higashi Chaya district** of Kanazawa is an atmospheric neighborhood filled with traditional wooden buildings. It's also packed with **teahouses** that traditionally served as spots for drinking and geisha entertainment.

Several teahouses are still operating and open to the public, and for a bit of a cultural adventure you can have a cup of green tea and wagashi, a Japanese tea-sweet, while gazing out at pocket gardens, or visit a geisha house to see the cultural entertainers at work. A few shops provide rental yukata, or light kimonos, to complete the experience, and the shop staff will help you pick the perfect garment to match your personality and mood.

Surfing

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MIYAZAKI

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Where:

Kanegahama Beach,
Okuragahama Beach, and many more.

When:

August to October;
some areas are surfable year-round.

Cost:

Board rental around 3,000 yen
for up to half a day.

Notes:

If you're traveling by car during
summer, plan to spend around 500
yen for parking.

The city of Miyazaki lies on the east coast of Kyushu, one of Japan's southern islands. With its southern latitude and nearly 200 miles of Pacific coastline, Miyazaki is a prime **surfing** destination.

Several spots along the coast offer a variety of conditions for beginners through the more experienced, the location seeing swells from three sides. The frequent typhoons in the area make for some truly awesome waves, and water is especially warm come fall, which is high typhoon season. Some of the notable spots include **Hyuga**, **Kisakihama**, and **Hitotsuba** in the city, along with **Nichinan** farther south.

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NAGASAKI

Gunkanjima

If you're into ghost towns, try a visit to **Gunkanjima**, or “ Battleship Island,” an abandoned coal mining town nine miles southwest of Nagasaki. The island (officially named Hashima) is only 16 acres but once housed 5,000 residents – it was built up from coast to coast to accommodate them.

In 1974, the mine went bust and the island was deserted, leaving its buildings to the elements. Today the structures lie in ruins, and it's a favorite spot for wandering tourists to soak up the creepy atmosphere. Get there via an hour's ferry ride from Nagasaki Port.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Where:

Tours depart from various locations in Nagasaki Port, including the Nagasaki Port ferry terminal and the Tokiwa terminal.

When:

Tours take around three hours, with an hour spent exploring the island.

Cost:

Around 4,000 yen

Notes:

Reservations are a good idea for weekends and holidays.

Juso

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OSAKA

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Where:

Juso is 15 minutes south (by car) of the Osaka Airport.

When:

Osaka is temperate, but the best times to visit are spring and fall.

Cost:

A cheap evening meal costs around 1,000 yen.

Notes:

Nightlife in Osaka runs late. If you want to stay out till 5am, you're in the right place.

Get off the well-trodden track and explore your adventure options in one of the lesser touristed neighborhoods of Osaka. **Juso**, in the city's north-central district, is a working-class area with a busy and raucous nightlife. Movie buffs may recognize it as a location from the film *Black Rain*. Lit by neon signs and red paper lanterns, Juso is filled with izakaya, restaurants, hostess bars, and pubs, all stacked on top of each other like densely layered building blocks.

Osaka is known as Japan's kitchen, and food culture is an essential part of the city's character. Follow your stomach from shop to shop, sampling local specialties like okonomiyaki, kushikatsu, and takoyaki.

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RISHIRI ISLAND

Mt. Rishiri

Rishiri Island is part of Rishiri-Rebun-Sarobetsu National Park, Japan's northernmost national park, and spans 70 square miles at the tiptop of Hokkaido. The island's claim to fame is Mt. Rishiri, an extinct volcano with a height of 5,646 feet.

Hiking Mt. Rishiri is a tough full-day excursion. Unlike some popular mountains on mainland Japan, there are almost no services here, so it's necessary to wear proper gear and bring plenty of food and water. The views from the peak are spectacular, offering a 360-degree look at the ocean and north to Russia's island of Sakhalin. Alpine flowers line the trail, and trees thin out near the top to enhance the panoramas.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Where:

The base of Mt. Rishiri is 20 minutes south of the airport by car.

When:

High season June – October.

Cost:

Free

Notes:

Mt. Rishiri is challenging, especially after rainfall. Expect rope-assists, loose shale, steep drop-offs, and mud.

Mt. Moiwa

Mt. Moiwa, at 1,742 feet, may not be the tallest mountain around, but the bird's-eye view of Sapporo from the top is the finest for miles. Hikers have five trails to choose from and far more wildlife to catch sight of – like red foxes, Hokkaido squirrels, and Ezo owls, depending on the season.

Those who want to skip the hike can take the **Mt. Moiwa Ropeway** most of the way up, then switch to a cable railway for the final ascent. It's recommended to go after dark for a panorama of twinkly lights, especially in winter, when the warm lights play off the brilliant snow, making the city look snug and tucked in for the night.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Where:

Mt. Moiwa rises southwest of central Sapporo.

When:

The ropeway operates from 10:30am (11am December – March) – 10pm. Last admission 30 minutes prior to closing.

Cost:

1,700 yen for ropeway and cable car round-trip;
1,100 yen for ropeway round-trip;
600 yen for cable car round-trip

Notes:

Take the Sapporo shiden (streetcar) to Ropeway Iriguchi Station. Cross the street and hop on the free shuttle to Moiwa Sanroku Station, or make the five-minute walk to the ropeway.

Mt. Takao

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TOKYO

When the neon and buzz gets to be too much, Tokyoites escape to **Mt. Takao**, on the western edge of the city. The sacred mountain is a popular hiking destination for pilgrims headed to Yakuoin, a temple dedicated to a healing Buddha. Hikers pray at the temple to address their ailments.

It's possible to walk all the way up the 1,965-foot mountain, or to take a chairlift or cable car up halfway and then hike the last few hundred feet to the summit via the temple. Vendors selling snacks like grilled mochi dango and ice cream cones pepper the trailside, and Mt. Fuji is visible from the summit on a fine day.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Where:

Takaosanguchi Station rests at the foot of the mountain, a 50-minute ride from Tokyo's Shinjuku Station.

When:

Cable car and chairlift run from around 8am – 5pm, depending on season. Admission ends 30 minutes prior to closing.

Cost:

480 yen one-way,
930 yen round-trip

Notes:

If you choose to walk, Trail 1 is by far the most popular (and the least rugged). It can be crowded on weekends.

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