

INSPIRE:


Your Trip to Japan



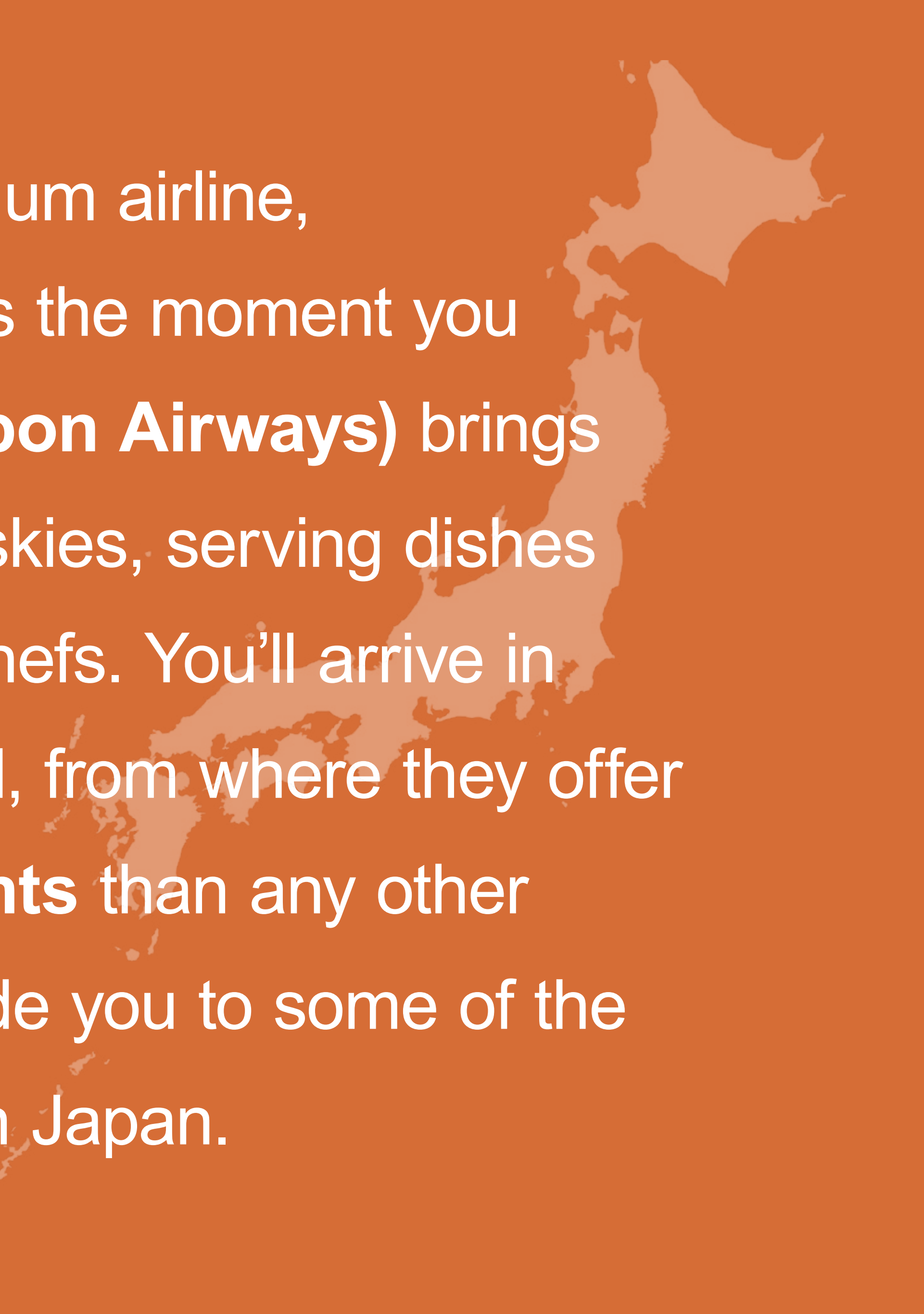
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JAPAN • FOOD

A faint, light-colored map of Japan is visible in the background, showing the four main islands: Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu.

When you fly Japan's premium airline, your culinary journey begins the moment you step aboard. **ANA (All Nippon Airways)** brings the flavors of Japan to the skies, serving dishes crafted by award-winning chefs. You'll arrive in Tokyo with appetite whetted, from where they offer more **domestic direct flights** than any other airline. Let this itinerary guide you to some of the best culinary experiences in Japan.



Kuro tamago

1

HAKONE

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Where:

Sengokuhara 1251, Hakone

When:

9am – 4pm, or until sold out

Cost:

500 yen (five eggs per bag)

Notes:

The Hakone Ropeway may be closed due to volcanic activity; if so, check local bus routes to reach the iconic Kurotama shop, or consider one of the many shops in Hakone proper.

The most notable delicacy of Hakone, **kuro tamago**, has an odd appearance. Translating literally to “black eggs,” they’re chicken eggs that are slow-boiled in the geothermal pools of the **Owakudani valley**, a process that blackens the eggshell.

Local legend says that eating one of these eggs promotes longevity, adding seven years to your life. You’ll need a little luck to find them, though, as frequent volcanic activity in Owakudani can make the area impassable.



2

HIROSHIMA

Okonomiyaki

Hiroshima is known for its unique take on **okonomiyaki**, a savory cross between an omelette and a pancake cooked on an open griddle and made with egg-and-flour batter, cabbage, and a kitchen sink's worth of toppings and mix-ins (okonomiyaki literally means “cook what you like”).

Unlike the Osaka version, Hiroshima's okonomiyaki also includes a helping of yakisoba noodles cooked right into the batter. The city has hundreds of okonomiyaki restaurants, but visitors who want a range of choices all in one place can head to Okonomimura, a building with some 25 okonomiyaki joints under one roof.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Where:

5-13 Shintenchi,
Naka Ward, Hiroshima

When:

Hours vary by restaurant

Cost:

Expect to spend minimum 600 yen.

Notes:

Okonomiyaki is traditionally covered with brown okonomiyaki sauce, seaweed flakes, and mayonnaise, and eaten with a metal spatula.



3

ISHIGAKI

Ishigaki beef

Ishigaki beef is one variety of Japan's famous wagyu and comes from Japanese black cattle raised on the island. The beef cuts, known for their delicate marbling and melting texture, are sold in restaurants and markets all over Ishigaki.

Beef enthusiasts can go for a full course sampling various cuts, but the meat is also popularly served as yakiniku (grilled strips), shabu-shabu (thin slices cooked in hotpot), gyū-don (rice topped with thinly sliced, marinated beef), or even as sushi. Whatever you choose, you can wash it all down with a beer from Ishigakijima, a local craft brewery.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Where:

Ishinagi-Ya, 48 Okawa, Ishigaki

When:

11:30am – 3:30pm, 5pm – 10:30pm

Cost:

The five-cut assortment – the most popular option – costs 3,350 yen.

Notes:

Ishinagi-Ya, one of many possible recommendations, is a 10-minute walk from the ferry terminal.

4

KANAZAWA

Kaisen-don

In the Sea of Japan off the coast of Ishikawa Prefecture, currents of different temperatures converge, amassing an abundance of both cold- and warm-water fish. The varieties brought into port every day are so plentiful it can be hard to choose just one: the **kaisen-don**, or seafood bowl, takes a selection of the best on offer and serves the catch over fluffy white rice.

Depending on the season, you could get nodoguro (black throat sea perch), snow crab, or sweet hokkoku shrimp. Try the dish at one of the many seafood restaurants in town, or hunker down at **Omicho Market** for a fresh, informal lunch.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Where:

5-0 Kamiomicho, Kanazawa

When:

9am – 6pm

(individual shop hours vary)

Cost:

The nearly 200-stall market is free to enter; kaisen-don costs upwards of 2,500 yen.

Notes:

The best kaisen-don restaurants can be found on the first floor.

Shochu

Sake (known as nihonshu locally) may be the first alcoholic beverage that comes to mind when you think of Japan, but in Kyushu, **shochu** rules. There are some 38 producers of the distilled beverage in Miyazaki Prefecture. Shochu can be made from a variety of ingredients, but sweet potato, rice, and barley are common, and typically it's around 25% alcohol by volume.

In Miyazaki, be sure to try the strong and aromatic **imojochu**, made from sweet potatoes, and the milder **sobajochu**, distilled from locally grown buckwheat and mountain spring water. Shochu can be drunk straight or in a cocktail, with food or without.

5

MIYAZAKI

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Where:

Nomoya, a bar right in Miyazaki Station, offers 100+ varieties of shochu from every distillery in town.

When:

5pm – 11pm, sometimes 12am

Cost:

Expect to spend minimum 500 yen.

Notes:

If you're looking for a brewery experience, check out Shusen no Mori brewery, in the neighboring town of Aya.

6

NAGASAKI

Champon

A popular port city and trading post, Nagasaki has seen a lot of cultural exchange over the centuries. One result is **champon**, an originally Fujian Chinese noodle dish introduced in the Meiji Period by a Chinese restaurateur in Nagasaki. The dish took on Japanese elements, and the unique melange (champon means “mixed”) is now inextricably associated with the city.

Combining pork, chicken, shrimp, squid, vegetables, noodles, and more, champon is a hearty dish with a complex broth cradling noodles boiled right in the soup. The original restaurant, **Shikairou**, is still serving champon, but it can now be found all over Nagasaki.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Where:

4-5 Matsugaemachi, Nagasaki

When:

11:30 – 3pm, 5pm – 8pm

Cost:

Budget for 1,000 – 2,000 yen.

Notes:

Shikairou can get crowded; opt for a late lunch or early dinner if you can.



Kushikatsu

7

OSAKA

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Where:

Shinsekai neighborhood of Osaka

When:

The later you go, the more you'll experience.

Cost:

50 – 200 yen per skewer

Notes:

Most restaurants offer full sampler courses, getting you the whole kushikatsu experience for around 2,000 yen.

Osaka is famous for its food scene, and Osakans love to laugh and drink in the thousands of eateries here. A favorite item to look out for is **kushikatsu**, one of the most sublime street foods.

Kushikatsu consists of chunks of meat (chicken, pork, or seafood) and vegetables (onion, bamboo shoots, and tubers are common) on a bamboo skewer, breaded with panko, deep-fried until golden brown and crispy, and topped with a glossy sweet-and-sour tonkatsu sauce. It's perfectly accompanied by a domestic draft beer, preferably after a full night of karaoke.

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Uni-don

RISHIRI ISLAND

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Where:

Minatomachi-235 Oshidomari,
Rishirifuji
(Oshidomari Ferry Terminal)

When:

Hours vary by restaurant and season.

Cost:

A set meal costs around 1,700 yen.

Notes:

Rishiri Island is serviced by Rishiri
Airport, five minutes from the town
center.

Rishiri's specialty is an extremely fresh version of **uni-don**, or **uni-meshi**, steamed sea urchin on a bed of rice. White rice is combined with soup stock made from uni and Rishiri konbu (kelp, another Hokkaido specialty). The rice is then topped with buttery, silky uni and salty, savory salmon roe.

There are two varieties of uni found around Rishiri: bafun and murasaki. In the case of both, their exceptional flavor is attributed to the animal's diet of Rishiri konbu. The dish can be found in and around the Oshidomari Ferry Terminal, such as at **Shokudo Maruzen** or **Sato Shokudo**, only in summer and depending on the catch.

Soup curry

Characterized by long, cold winters and bountiful produce, it's no surprise that Hokkaido's take on curry rice, the ubiquitous Japanese comfort food, is **soup curry**, a hot, hearty meal that acts as fuel for the frigid winter.

There are as many varieties as there are restaurants in Sapporo, but the basic format is a rich, spicy curry soup with large chunks of tender Hokkaido vegetables. Rice is served on the side and is dipped into the soup with each spoonful. Soup curry can come with chicken, beef, seafood, cheese, or even vegetarian and halal versions, and spice level is adjustable to each diner's taste.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Where:

Samurai (Chuo Ward, Minami 3 Jonishi, 6 Chome-1-3) is king of soup curry.

When:

11:00am – 3pm, 6pm – 10pm

Cost:

A standard dish comes in at around 1,200 – 1,500 yen.

Notes:

The vegetable-packed stew is a local staple for good reason. Be prepared for a short wait, and ask for an English menu should you need it.



Shoyu ramen

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TOKYO

Ramen is synonymous with Japan, and there's no better place to enjoy it than Tokyo, with its thousands of restaurants (one count puts the number over 10,000), each bowl more slurpingly satisfying than the last.

Though there are myriad varieties and new ones being invented all the time, the one most associated with Tokyo is the standard **shoyu ramen**, a bowl made with chicken broth and flavored with soy sauce. Toppings also run the gamut, but common ones include thin slices of seasoned pork, scallions, boiled eggs, and bamboo shoots. Don't forget to slurp the noodles before they get too soft and lose their chew.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Where:

There are 10,000 ways you can't go wrong, but Ichijoryu Ganko Ramen (16 Maison de Yotsuya, Shinjuku) is as fresh as it gets.

When:

10am – 2pm
Sunday through Thursday

Cost:

Minimum 900 yen

Notes:

Ichijoryu Ganko Ramen is run by an ex-weightlifter—expect a healthy, hearty bowl that warms you up.

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