Explore Shizuoka

Explore the spectacular natural environment, authentic Japanese culture, unique history and renowned cuisine of the majestic home of Mount Fuji.
MOUNTAINS, FORESTS AND FALLS

At 3,776m high, the majestic “Fuji-san” is Japan’s best-known symbol with shrines paying homage to the mountain and paintings illustrating its beauty. Designated a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site in 2013, the climbing season runs from July to early September.

Shizuoka’s central area is dominated by deeply forested mountains that stand over 800 m in height, tea plantations and beautiful waterfalls, such as the Shiraito Falls which, along with the 25m Joren Falls on the Izu Peninsula, is ranked among the 100 most beautiful waterfalls in Japan. The Seven Waterfalls of Kawazu are surrounded by a thick forest of pines, cedars and bamboo with a walking path taking you to all seven in roughly one hour.

For a unique and unforgettable experience, visitors can take the historic Oigawa steam railway to visit the beautiful “Dream Suspension Bridge” across the Sumatakyo Gorge.

THE IZU PENINSULA

Surrounded by ocean on three sides, the Izu Peninsula was designated a UNESCO Global Geopark in 2018. Twenty million years of shifting undersea volcanoes created its dramatic landscapes and natural hot springs. You can take a cablecar up to the 580m Mt Omuro and walk around the rim for panoramic coastal views.

Often called Japan’s “Riviera”, Izu is also characterised by seaside resorts such as Ito and Atami on the eastern side and Shimoda, with glorious beaches interspersed with pine forests, at the southern tip. The rugged Jōgasaki coastline features 9km of coastal walking trails with spectacular ocean views as well as a 43m suspension bridge, while the dramatic west coast scenery around the Dogashima Coast features the Tensodo sea cave with a spectacular natural skylight.

With its mild climate, the Izu peninsula sees some of the earliest cherry blossoms in Japan. The deep pink Kawazu cherry blossoms bloom from early February to early March and the Kawazu Cherry Blossom Festival is visited by a million people each year.

GETTING ACTIVE

If you’re looking for adventure in an idyllic setting then Shizuoka has everything and more.

On land, adrenaline junkies can get their fix through a variety of sports, from hiking and biking, to paragliding and golf. The deeply forested mountains offer challenging and relaxing hikes that end up in astounding views, while the 9km Jōgasaki coast trail on the Izu Peninsula offers beautiful views of the jagged cliffs and stone formations that hug the coast.

Meanwhile, the abundant quiet roads, where cars are seldom seen make Shizuoka a paradise for cyclists.

Watersports enthusiasts will also find themselves spoiled for choice in Shizuoka. From snorkelling, diving and scuba to canoeing, kayaking and, surfing, it’s the perfect coastal playground, both in and on the water.

All in all, the number of ways to experience the natural beauty of Shizuoka are too many to count.
GREEN TEA
Green tea plantations adorn the region, so it is no surprise that Shizuoka is the biggest producer of green tea in Japan, with tea cultivation estimated to have begun as early as the 1200s. With centuries of experience, it is no wonder that Shizuoka’s tea is regarded as some of the world’s finest.

SAKE, BEER AND WHISKEY
Shizuoka’s award-winning sake, some of the purest and cleanest one can find, is also testament to the fresh, flowing mountain water and is lauded both in Japan and around the world. And the region also has a blooming local industry of craft beers and whiskeys to enjoy.

EXPERIENCES
Visitors to Shizuoka can not only enjoy tasting its local specialities, but can take part in a host of fascinating hands-on activities. These range from a “farm to table” experience staying with a local family, fishing for sea bream with a local fisherman, craft beer brewery and whiskey distillery visits, green tea cultivation and tasting, food tours and sushi making classes.

SAKURA SHRIMP
Sakura shrimp can only be caught in Suruga Bay, which is also home to the world’s largest crab, the Japanese Spider Crab. Shimizu port sees the biggest catches of bigeye and yellowfin tuna in Japan while Lake Hamana was the birthplace of eel farming 100 years ago, and it remains its most famous delicacy.

WASABI
Meanwhile, the temperate climate, awe-inspiring mountainous terrain and infinite supply of fresh, flowing water are the reason Shizuoka also produces the highest wasabi production in Japan, with the Izu peninsula and the Utogi mountains being the largest areas of wasabi production.

SEAFOOD
With its long Pacific coastline, seafood is another regional speciality. The distinctive Sakura shrimp can only be caught in Suruga Bay, which is also home to the world’s largest crab, the Japanese Spider Crab. Shimizu port sees the biggest catches of bigeye and yellowfin tuna in Japan while Lake Hamana was the birthplace of eel farming 100 years ago, and it remains its most famous delicacy.

HISTORY
The ancient Tokaido route, linking Tokyo with Kyoto, winds through Shizuoka’s mountains and along its shores. For a traditional Tokaido experience, visitors can walk the route staying at local inns en route, or take the high-speed bullet train. Either way, the route is alive with activities and attractions to explore as it follows Shizuoka’s winding Pacific coastline.

Shizuoka offers a host of activities and experiences giving visitors the chance to discover the rich local culture. These include a geisha experience, learning matcha calligraphy and taking part in the 88 temple pilgrimage around the Izu Peninsula. Meanwhile, a host of distinctive museums and galleries includes the MOA Museum of Art with its impressive collection of East Asian art and national treasures.

CULTURE
Instantly recognisable, Mount Fuji has been an important influence on Japanese culture for centuries, a place of pilgrimage and an inspiration for artists and poets.

On the southern slopes of the mountain, the city of Fujinomiya grew up around the most prominent and important shrine in the region, the Sengen Shrine, also the traditional starting point for climbing the mountain. The nearby Mt. Fuji World Heritage Centre, designed by world renowned architect Shigeru Ban, features a reflecting pool that mimics the shape of the mountain, while inside a 192m spiral slope gives visitors the experience of climbing the mountain themselves.

Another important element in Japanese culture is onsen (hot spring) bathing, and Shizuoka boasts the highest number of onsen accommodations in Japan, from coastal onsen from where you can gaze out to sea to mountain onsen surrounded by nature.

HISTORY AND CULTURE
Shizuoka is alive with history, from places of great historical importance to World Heritage sites, national treasures and unforgettable cultural experiences.
WHERE TO GO

In addition to its natural beauty, Shizuoka is home to a number of attractive cities, towns and resorts for visitors to discover. Here are some of the highlights.

SHIZUOKA CITY

The prefectural capital is located between the scenic Suruga Bay and the Japan Southern Alps. Highlights include the Kunozan Toshogu Shrine, the 7km pine-fringed Miho no Matsubara beach, the Shizuoka Sengen Jinja shrines, Sunpu Castle and Shimizu Port, renowned for its stunning views and fresh seafood.

HAMAMATSU CITY

Hamamatsu is Shizuoka’s second city. Its attractions include Hamamatsu Castle, built by Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1570, and Lake Hamana, a popular resort area offering water sports such as water skiing, kayaking, windsurfing and parasailing as well as fishing for the famous local speciality, eel. Its Museum of Musical Instruments reflects the city’s heritage in musical instrument manufacture.

FUJINOMIYA CITY

Nestled at the foot of Mt Fuji, Fujinomiya is home to the famous Mt Fuji Honmū Sengen Taisha Shrine – which is believed to date back more than 2,000 years to appease the gods so that the people and the mountain could live in harmony — and the Mount Fuji Heritage Centre. It is also famous for an award-winning local fried noodle dish called Fujinomiya Yakisoba.

KAKEGAWA CITY

Kakegawa Castle stands majestically on the hill protectively watching over the town of the same name, and is also known as Kumokirijō (“The Castle Shrouded in Mist”). Another local highlight is Honjin Dori, a hidden food alley of outdoor eateries and bars, beckoning you in for a bite.

IZU PENINSULA

- The seaside hot-spring town of Atami lies only a 45-minute bullet train ride from Tokyo and acts as the gateway to the rest of the peninsula. In February, the town is filled with the sweet scent of Ume (Japanese Plum) blossoms.
- The sleepy fishing town of Ito is famous primarily for its onsen but also offers cultural attractions including art galleries, literary walks and ocean-front sculpture gardens, while the Ikeda Museum of 20th Century Art features big names such as Dalí, Warhol and Miró.
- The peaceful and atmospheric hot-spring (onsen) town of Shuzenji was originally established by the famous Buddhist Monk Kobo Daishi in the 8th century and is one of the most famous hot spring towns on the Izu Peninsula.
- The area around Shimoda at the southern tip of the peninsula, has the beauty of a tropical resort with its blue waters and white sandy beaches and is a popular spot for marine sports. It was the landing place for Commodore Perry and his “black ships” in 1854, and has several commemorative monuments to the event.

WHERE TO STAY

Shizuoka has a wide range of accommodation options for a memorable visit, from city and resort hotels to traditional ryokan, minshukus and nohakus. Take your pick!

Ryokans are Japanese style inns found throughout the region, and especially in the hot spring resorts. They are the perfect way to experience traditional Japanese hospitality, from tatami mats on the floor and futons to sleep on to local cuisine. Visitors can choose between traditional ryokans, little changed for centuries, to those that add more contemporary touches.

Minshuku are family operated tourist homes where you are made to feel like one of the family. They offer visitors the opportunity to enjoy the warmth of local hospitality and traditional Japanese lifestyle.

Like minshuku, in Nohaku locals host visitors in their own homes but in an agricultural setting. As well as staying with the local family, with these farm stays guests work together with them and experience local life in farming, fishing or mountain villages.
TRAVEL INFORMATION

Perfectly located between Tokyo and Osaka, with bullet trains leaving each major city almost every 20 minutes, Shizuoka is very easy to get to.

Leaving Tokyo on the shinkansen bullet train (Tokaido Line), one of the first stops is Atami, the gateway to eastern Shizuoka, and only takes 45 minutes.

Coming from Osaka or Kyoto, to Shizuoka is equally convenient, with the bullet trains reaching Hamamatsu, in the heart of Western Shizuoka in about 2 hours

By car, the journey time from Tokyo is just over an hour, or from Osaka is less than 4 hours.

Many of the best areas of Shizuoka can be explored by train. From the beaches of Shimoda at the bottom of the Izu peninsula via Izukyu Shimoda Station, to Gotemba station for outlet shopping with Mt Fuji as the background.

CLIMATE

Excluding the northern mountain area, Shizuoka Prefecture has a warm oceanic climate with an average yearly temperature of 16.1°C and 2,326.9mm of annual rainfall. Although the four seasons are clearly distinguished, winters are dry and feature many days full of fine weather.

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