Blessed with stunning natural beauty and a time-honored spirit of hospitality, Japan offers myriad destinations to provide a respite from the stress of modern society. Leave the city behind to discover idyllic mountain and seaside locales. Stay the night at the rustic homes of farmers or fishermen, or luxurious inns that combine the best of Japanese tradition and modern design. Feast on local delicacies prepared from the finest ingredients. Soak in rejuvenating hot spring waters and wash your worries away. Japan is home to a remarkable variety of regional cultures—and how better to experience it than as a guest of the locals? When you return to everyday life, you’re sure to do so with your body and mind refreshed.

1364-6 Urasaki-cho, Onomichi-shi, Hiroshima
http://setouchitrip.com/relaxing-stay/7912
http://guntu.jp/

Passion : 07

Departing from Hiroshima’s Onomichi, come aboard guntû and enjoy the ultimate ryokan (Japanese inn) experience while at sea. Designed by architect Yasushi Horibe, the spacious timber-lined cabins envelop passengers in unrivaled comfort – with baths, sauna and spa treatments also on offer to help you further unwind. Enjoy fine dining and ocean views for an unforgettable voyage around the scenic islands of the Seto Inland Sea.

Luxury floating ryokan in Setouchi
Inspire yourself with an energizing cruise around the Seto Inland Sea

guntû
http://setouchitrip.com/relaxing-stay/7912
http://guntu.jp/
Stayover at this unique new Yamagata concept hotel

Discover a countryside landscape you never knew existed

SHONAI HOTEL SUIDEN TERRASSE opened in 2018 as a venue not just for guests to stay in but also experience and feel. Shigeru Ban, an award-winning architect, designed the building carefully and in tune with local surroundings as a two-story wooden construction; apparently floating on rice fields that reflect the sky both day and night. As well as comfortable rooms — many of which boast views of the mountains and fields beyond — the Shonai Hotel also has a restaurant serving locally sourced ingredients, a spa and fitness suite, a library and a conference room. And look no further than the Kids Dome Sorai for your younger family members — the facility has both a playground and an extensive area devoted to crafts and other activities.

SHONAI HOTEL SUIDEN TERRASSE
23-1 Shihotominou, Kitakyoden, Tsuruoka-shi, Yamagata
https://suiden-terrasse.yamagata-design.com/

A night to remember at a traditional boathouse

Classical architecture and stunning ocean views await you at Kura

The fishing village of Ine on Kyoto’s northern peninsula is a hidden gem untouched by time. Experience it to the fullest with a stayover at Kura, a traditional inn set in a renovated funaya boathouse right on the sea. Soak in a luxurious bath and feel the ocean breeze as you gaze out over the bay. Take in the charming and historic homes that line the gently curved shore. Bask in the warmth of your hosts’ hospitality and feast on the seasonal bounties of the ocean while sipping sublime locally brewed sake. With only one party admitted per night, you’ll have these idyllic surroundings all to yourself, and ample amenities ensure a comfortable stay for any traveler. Located just over 2 hours by train from central Kyoto, it is just a stone’s throw from Amanohashidate, one of Japan’s three most scenic vistas, and a great place for a dip in the ocean. Reservations can be booked online in English. A perfect overnight destination close to Kyoto.
Paradise awaits at a UNESCO world heritage site

Recharge and revitalize yourself at this luxury spa, in the primeval forests of Yakushima

Authentic Japanese hospitality, lavish comfort and matchless natural beauty await all guests who stay at sankara hotel & spa YAKUSHIMA. Attractions range from towering trees and stunning ocean views, reminiscent of ancient Japan, to lavish suite rooms, spa treatments and fine dining—all with locally-sourced cuisine and all the modern comforts you’d expect. Wake to birdsong, then let your mind, body and soul embrace this holistic healing experience.

sankara hotel & spa YAKUSHIMA
sankara hotel & spa 屋久島
533 Haginoue, Mugio, Yakushima-cho, Kumage-gun, Kagoshima

No luxury spa experience is complete without a visit to the natural hot springs of Yakushima. Enjoy the soothing waters of the Tsushima, a primeval forest of old-growth trees, and the warm, Healing waters of the Higashisima. Dive into the ancient woods and experience nature’s rejuvenating powers.

Starlit camping on the Goto Islands

Discover the timeless beauty of this East China Sea archipelago

Escape from the modern world to the cozy oasis that awaits those who visit the Goto Islands, with a glamping stay at the first Nordisk Village property in Asia. You’ll bed down for the evening in spacious canvas tents including all modern conveniences and feast on island-grown food in the village’s restaurant, housed in a tastefully converted schoolhouse. Take in the islands’ natural wonders from land, sea or air—try scuba diving in the crystal-clear waters, where the Tsushima current bring fish from north and south together, fishing, cruising, horse riding or even chartering a sightseeing flight over the archipelago for even more write-home-about experiences.

Nordisk Village Goto Islands
Nordisk Village Goto Islands
1233-1 Kise, Tomie-cho, Goto-shi, Nagasaki

Luxury lodging in Japan’s paradise

Escape to relax in the southern islands

For an island break you’ll always remember, book a room at the stylish Ritz Carlton Okinawa, set in the serene grounds of the Kise golf course in northern Okinawa. Foodies will enjoy sampling locally raised Kuroge wagyu beef and other island specialties in the hotel’s collection of restaurants, with cuisine options across the board. Alternatively, enjoy a spot of afternoon tea in the Lobby Lounge, which may feature locally made sweet treats or the uniquely Okinawan frothy tea known as bukubukucha. Still stressed? The Okinawan detoxing body treatment called Yambaru Umikaji, using tiger clam shells and local essential oils, is sure to leave both mind and body at peace.

The Ritz-Carlton Okinawa
ザ・リッツ・カールトン 沖縄
1343-1 Kise, Nago-shi, Okinawa

©sankara hotel&spa Yakushima ©The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company L.L.C.
©Nordisk Village Goto Islands
©The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company L.L.C.
Heartwarming farm stays in rural Japan

Akita’s Odate region offers the perfect respite from hectic urban life.

Get in touch with a different side of Japan in Odate, home to the world-famous Akita dog. Stay over, bond with your farming hosts and experience a day in their life. Tending to rice fields, pickling vegetables or harvesting apples—even clearing snow off roofs in winter—there’s always something to be done. Then, after sundown and when it gets chillier, huddle around a piping hot pot and learn how to make kiritanpo-nabe stew, a local specialty. Revel in the opportunity to mingle with locals and make lasting memories. Odate is just a 70-minute flight from Tokyo’s Haneda Airport.

Embrace rural charm in one of Japan’s most scenic villages

Stay at Shirakawa-go: experience life in a traditional thatched farmhouse

Tucked away in the mountains of Gifu Prefecture in central Japan lie a cluster of 114 or so historic farmhouses in an alpine valley. Each sits cozy under its gigantic thatched roof; sheltered from winter’s deep snows and summer’s heat. This fairytale-like setting is Shirakawa-go, an authentic rural landscape from a bygone era and those who call it home still keep the old customs alive. Its beauty and well-preserved traditions earned Shirakawa-go UNESCO World Heritage Site status in 1995. Book a stay at one of these farmhouses, whether a home or guesthouse and get a true feel for Japan’s rustic roots. The remote and unspoiled setting simply add to the charm, well worth the journey from Tokyo by bus and train—just 3.5 hours via Toyama station.

Lose yourself at an inn truly at one with its surroundings

A night of transcendent seaside luxury awaits at Ryotei Kuki

If you venture off the beaten path to the fishing town of Esashi in southwestern Hokkaido, you are rewarded with Kuki, a stand-out hotel combining striking modern Japanese design with a commitment to ecologically sound hospitality. The seven oversize rooms include the services of an on-call butler, ready to meet guests’ every whim. Feast on sumptuous local cuisine, including fresh-caught seafood from the port and meat and vegetables from the inn’s privately-operated organic farm, which is also open to guests. Heal body and mind with a soak in the natural hot springs, then tour Esashi town for historic architecture and the oldest shrine in Hokkaido. For a heartwarming and magically memorable stay, Kuki ticks the box.
Experience the rich tradition of an old castle town at Hotel NIPPONIA

Journey back in time to the Edo period at this unique Hyogo hotel.

Just one hour by train from Osaka lies Sasayama, a picturesque castle town dating back over four centuries in northern Hyogo Prefecture. Certified as one of Japan’s 100 beautiful historic towns, this enviable collection of traditional architecture and culture offers all visitors a wealth of living history. And why not delve even deeper into its charming nostalgia by staying at one of Hotel NIPPONIA’s five residential villas?

Each has its own unique story: one was a former geisha house, another the private home of a bank magnate. The houses retain a traditional atmosphere alongside seamless modern amenities to make your stay as comfortable as possible. To make the most of the experience, book a meal here — you’ll dine on local delicacies like succulent Tajima beef, Matsutake mushrooms and more.

Stayover in a garden paradise

Find peace and serenity at this Michelin-starred mountain oasis.

Adjoining the sacred Mt. Mifune in Saga in Kyushu is Onyado Chikurintei, a striking Japanese inn set within a 49.5-hectare garden of towering trees and beautiful flowers. There are eleven guest rooms to choose from, in both Japanese and Western styles, each uniquely designed with year-round panoramic views of the surrounding natural splendor. Soak in the healing waters of Takeo Onsen beside a bamboo grove—or reserve a room with a private bath for true tranquility. In the evening, you’ll dine on a full kaiseki course exquisitely crafted for the season and your surroundings—no two meals are alike. Whenever you like, step outside to freely explore the vast garden in all its glory. You’ll never be more at one with nature.

Refresh by the river at hot-spring hide away

Wash away all worries at a traditional ryokan resort fit for foreign dignitaries.

Arrive at Bettei Otozure — a luxurious venue that hosted a summit between Japan’s Prime Minister Abe and President Putin of Russia in 2016 — and what strikes you first is how the tasteful Japanese architecture blends seamlessly into the verdant Yamaguchi peaks. Then step inside to a virtual museum, where stunning ceramic artwork and lush gardens await. Each guest room comes complete with its own private open-air bathing area, allowing you to take in the soothing waters and stunning natural vistas in peaceful bliss. Gourmets will be just as delighted with full-course Kaiseki meals, prepared using fresh-caught ingredients from the nearby Sea of Japan. Further dining, shopping, and entertainment options await at the sister Otani Sanso Inn next door, while historic sites like Tainei Temple and Akasaki Shrine are just minutes away by car.

Relaxation

Experience the rich tradition of an old castle town at Hotel NIPPONIA

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