Japan Tourism Topics by JNTO

Japan National Tourism Organization

October 22, 2026

Festival and Event

1. Experience Okinawa at Adventure Museum in Kanucha, Nov. 1, 2026–Feb. 14, 2027

© Kanucha Resort

Kanucha Resort, a resort hotel in the northern part of Okinawa's main island, will launch a new winter event, "Adventure Museum in Kanucha," in November 2026. This year's theme, "The Dawn of the Ryukyu Kingdom," centers on the restoration of Shuri Castle, the former royal palace and cultural center of the Ryukyu Kingdom. The castle was destroyed in a fire in 2019 and is currently being rebuilt, with completion scheduled for this year. Billed as an interactive museum event that lets visitors experience Okinawa, the event allows guests to deepen their understanding of the region as they explore its themed areas. The narrative-driven experience highlights Okinawa's history, nature and culture through illuminations and exhibits. Set within Kanucha Resort's grounds of approximately 264 hectares, the event is divided into several areas decorated with illuminations. Guests and visitors who complete the nighttime mystery-solving adventure can also take on an additional daytime adventure afterward. The Adventure Museum in Kanucha will run from Nov. 1, 2026, through Feb. 14, 2027.
Adventure Museum in Kanucha

Festival and Event

2. Burning Sacred Logs Light Up the Night Sky in Nozawa Onsen, Nagano, Jan. 15

© Nozawaonsen Mountain Resort Tourism Bureau

The Nozawa Onsen Fire Festival, also known as Nozawa Dosojin Matsuri, in Nagano Prefecture, is a traditional rite designated as an Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property. Dosojin are folk deities traditionally worshipped as guardians of travelers, communities and families. Rooted in village life, the annual festival is a sacred rite offering prayers for a plentiful harvest, health and good fortune in the new year. It begins on Jan. 13 with the “goshinboku satobiki” (hauling of the sacred tree logs into the village). It culminates on the night of Jan. 15 in a fierce “fire-setting battle,” in which flames engulf a large wooden shrine pavilion built for the festival and soar into the night sky. Those wishing to view the festival must be staying in Nozawa Onsen Village on Jan. 15 and obtain admission tickets through their accommodations. The village is also known for its many hot springs, making it an ideal destination for a winter getaway alongside its renowned skiing.
Nozawa Onsen Fire Festival

Festival and Event

3. Japan Sea Takaoka Nabe (Hotpot) Festival Features Toyama’s Winter Cuisine, Jan. 16–17

The Japan Sea Takaoka Nabe (Hotpot) Festival is a winter food event held every January in Takaoka, Toyama Prefecture. A variety of “nabe” (hot pot) dishes featuring local ingredients, such as seafood from the Sea of Japan, are brought together for visitors to enjoy. The festival, which is full of local specialties, showcases such delicacies as “Shin Takaoka Gottsuo Nabe” (miso-based broth with chicken meatballs and vegetables), crab miso soup and seafood stew nabe. Visitors can also enjoy nabe cooked in jumbo aluminum and copper pots crafted using Takaoka’s renowned metalworking techniques. These hot pot dishes offer visitors a chance to experience Toyama’s rich winter food culture. The festival venues are centered around Takaoka Station and nearby shopping arcades. The 2027 festival takes place on Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 16–17.
Japan Sea Takaoka Nabe (Hotpot) Festival
Japan Sea Takaoka Nabe (Hotpot) Festival (in Japanese)

New Open

4. JAL Auberge Furano: New Boutique Resort to Open in Hokkaido, Dec. 4

JAL Auberge Furano is a new boutique resort scheduled to open on Dec. 4 in Nakafurano, located in central Hokkaido. The area is famous for its rolling lavender fields in summer and renowned powder snow in winter. It will be the first property under the JAL Auberge brand, which was created by Japan Airlines (JAL), one of Japan's leading airlines. At the heart of the resort is a restaurant featuring Hokkaido ingredients, including produce grown in Furano and local wagyu. The restaurant is led by a chef who was born and raised in Furano and trained at a Michelin-starred restaurant. Guests then spend the night in one of the resort's 10 spacious guest rooms. The resort aims to help revitalize the local community while highlighting the natural bounty of Furano through its culinary and lodging experiences, working closely with local producers.
JAL Auberge Furano (in Japanese)

New Open

5. HOTEL THE MITSUI HAKONE Set to Open in Kowakudani, Kanagawa, Dec. 15

HOTEL THE MITSUI HAKONE is set to open on Dec. 15 in the Hakone hot-spring area, one of the most famous hot-spring resort areas near Tokyo. It will be the second luxury hotel under the HOTEL THE MITSUI brand, following HOTEL THE MITSUI KYOTO, which has earned high acclaim in Japan and abroad. The hotel is nestled in the rich forest of Kowakudani, within Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park, on an expansive 14-hectare site. All 126 guest rooms feature natural hot-spring baths and magnificent views of Mount Sengen from the balcony or terrace. At the Thermal Spring Spa, guests can relax in the natural hot spring while enjoying views of the forest, sky and river, with the mountain in the background. The Japanese restaurant

SANKEI offers seasonal cuisine rooted in Japanese culinary traditions and a philosophy that emphasizes harmony between people and nature. It is led by a chef who earned a Michelin star for three consecutive years. The all-day dining venue RIVERINE focuses on locally sourced ingredients and regional culinary traditions, while The Bar LAMBENT features a mural depicting scenes from Hakone's history as a post town on the Tokaido Road linking Kyoto and Edo (present-day Tokyo). The hotel also features a Function Room and SHIKI-AN, a private space designed in the style of traditional Japanese architecture, both of which can be used for a wide range of occasions, including dinners, meetings and private events.
HOTEL THE MITSUI HAKONE

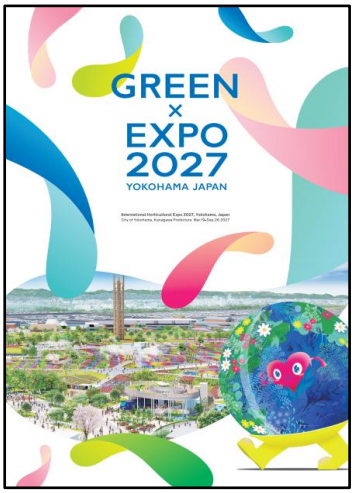
Special Experience

6. A Winter-Only Tour of a Sake Brewery in Izumo, Shimane Begins in November

From November to March, during the sake brewing season, Sakemochida Honten, a nearly 150-year-old sake brewery in Izumo, Shimane Prefecture, offers a special tour of its main building and brewery, two of the five facilities on the premises that are nationally registered tangible cultural properties. The special tour, in which visitors can step inside and see the sake-making process firsthand, is only available during the winter brewing season. Since its founding in 1877, Sakemochida Honten has passed down the long-standing traditional skills of "Izumo toji" (sake brewmaster) to the present day, and it is known for producing its signature sake, Yamasan Masamune. On the tour, visitors may see "koji" (malted rice), "shubo" (mother culture), "moromi" (main mash) and other sake in the making, depending on the day's brewing work. Koji is made by cultivating "koji-kin" (koji mold) on steamed rice, breaking down the starch in rice into sugars, an essential step in sake brewing. The tour lasts about 30–60 minutes, depending on the number of participants, and ends with a tasting of three types of sake, so visitors can compare differences in flavor and aroma. All of the brewery's sake is made with rice grown in Shimane Prefecture.
Sakemochida Honten

Green x Expo 2027

7. GREEN×EXPO 2027 to Take Place March–September in Yokohama, Kanagawa



Opening on March 19 and running until Sept. 26, GREEN×EXPO 2027 is not merely a flower or international horticultural exposition, but rather a forum for dialogue and exchange from a "green" perspective to address global challenges. This will be Japan's first A1-class international horticultural exposition in 37 years, since the 1990 International Garden and Greenery Exposition in Osaka. The event is commonly referred to as GREEN×EXPO 2027 YOKOHAMA JAPAN. It will bring together exhibits from over 70 countries and regions, private companies and numerous facilities, alongside flowers and greenery. Videos, brochures and flyers are available at the URL given below. Further updates will be shared as more information becomes available.
GREEN×EXPO 2027—Flyers, Brochures & Movies

To close, and building on our previous newsletter dedicated to the theme of powder snow, we feature three notable destinations for special winter experiences.

Special Feature: Snow

8. Shinhotaka Ropeway Presents Sweeping Views of Mountains in Snowscape, Gifu

Shinhotaka Ropeway, Japan's only double-decker gondola, takes visitors to Nishi-Hotakaguchi Station at an elevation of 2,156 meters for sweeping views of the snow-clad Northern Alps. The winter highlight is the "snow corridor," a roughly 3-meter-high passage of snow walls that forms near the summit from around late December through March. From December, the peaks turn silver-white, with chances of seeing a sea of clouds on clear days from December to February. The AlpScape observation deck at the summit (renovated in 2025), a summit cafe and a mid-mountain footbath round out the visit. A half-day snowshoe tour of the nearby Nabedaira Kogen highlands is also available with rental gear on hand for beginners. The area is not just a winter destination—its scenery changes with each season, offering its own beauty year-round.
Shinhotaka Ropeway

Special Feature: Snow

9. Snowshoe Trekking for Hikers of All Levels on Powder Snow in Oku-Nikko, Tochigi

© Nikko Natural Science Museum

Every winter, Oku-Nikko, Tochigi Prefecture—easily accessible from Tokyo—is blanketed by powder snow. During the season, a variety of snowshoe trekking courses are available for both beginners and experienced hikers. In the snow-dressed forest, hikers can observe tracks left by deer, rabbits and other wildlife, as well as winter transformations of nature along the trekking routes. Highlights include serene walks through the Senjogahara and Yumoto Onsen hot-spring areas, as well as more advanced routes to the frozen Ioridaki Waterfall and the snow- and ice-covered Lake Karikomi. Most courses are available from around late January to early March.
Snowshoe Trekking

Special Feature: Snow

10. Snowy Tsugaru in Aomori Offers a Rare Ground Blizzard Experience

Tsugaru, the traditional name of western Aomori Prefecture, is known for deep snow. In the harsh winter, it is common to experience “jifubuki” (drifting snow or ground blizzard) there, in which accumulated snow is lifted and blown by strong winds. The city of Goshogawara offers visitors a chance to experience walking through the wind-driven snow that creates whiteout conditions. On this guided tour, participants walk through a snow-covered field, wearing traditional winter gear, such as “kakumaki” (shawl), “monpe” (work trousers) and “kanjiki” (traditional snowshoes). The tour is available on weekends from late January to late February. Reservations only.
Ground Blizzard Experience

Notes:
・The above details are correct as of the time of publication, and are subject to change.

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