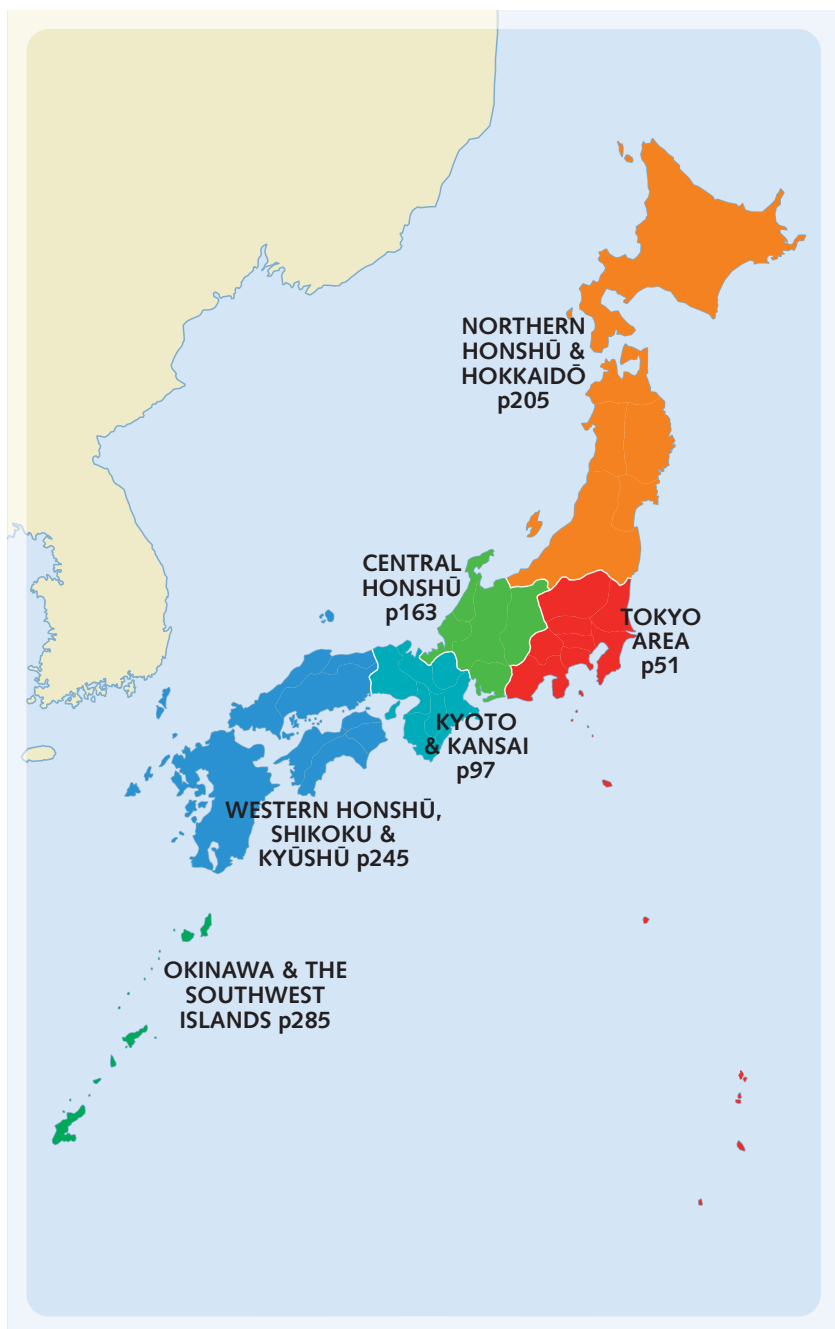




discover
JAPAN

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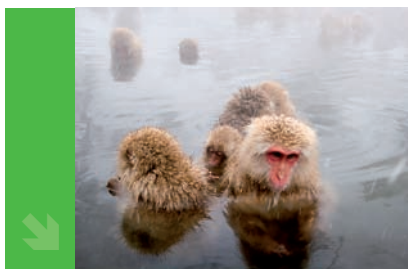
DISCOVER JAPAN



Tokyo Area (p51) Japan's frenetic capital is surrounded by attractions including Mt Fuji, Nikkō, Kamakura and the Ogasawara-shotō island group.



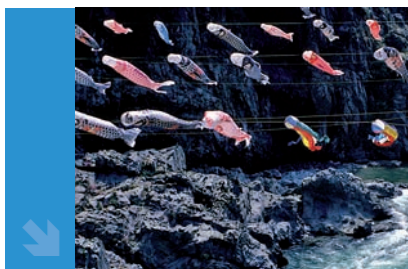
Kyoto & Kansai (p97) Japan's cultural capital, Kyoto, is a must-see attraction; the Kansai region contains many first-rate sights such as Nara and Kōya-san.



Central Honshū (p163) Central Honshū is home to the Japan Alps and several historic cities including Kanazawa, Takayama and Matsumoto.



Northern Honshū & Hokkaidō (p205) Honshū's seldom-visited north offers good hiking and historic towns; Hokkaidō features incredible skiing, driving and outdoor adventures.



Western Honshū, Shikoku & Kyūshū (p245) Western Honshū and the adjoining islands of Shikoku and Kyūshū boast history, coastal scenery and outdoor attractions.



Okinawa & the Southwest Islands (p285) Japan's Southwest Islands offer excellent beaches, hiking, snorkelling, diving and a unique culture that's not quite Japanese.

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CHINA

RUSSIA

Inset

123°E

30°N

KAGOSHIMA
KYUSHŪ

See Main Map

YAKUSHIMA p297

Head into moss-covered forests to find the 3000-year-old tree, Jōmon-sugi

Tanegashima

Yakushima

Tokara-shotō

Amami-shotō

Naze

EAST CHINA SEA

IRIOMOTE-JIMA p316

Dive with mantas, snorkel on pristine reefs and kayak up jungle rivers

Nansei-shotō

Nago

Okinawa-hontō

Okinawa City

NAHA

26°N

129°E

0 200 km
0 120 miles

Miyako-shotō

Hirara

Iriomote-jima

Ishigaki

Yaeyama-shotō

TAKAYAMA p176

This town is both a gateway to the Japan Alps and a fascinating historical destination

Pyongyang

NORTH KOREA

SEOUL

SOUTH KOREA

HIROSHIMA p256

Learn the tragic history of this city and marvel at its recovery

KYOTO p110

Find the Japan of your imagination in the nation's culture capital

Noto-hantō

TOYAMA

KANAZAWA

FUKUI

Takayama

GIFU

KANSAI

Biwa-ko

OSAKA

WAKAYAMA

Shingū

TSU

NAGOYA

NARA

KOBE

OSAKA

KOCHI

TOKUSHIMA

HIROSHIMA

MATSUYAMA

OKAYAMA

TAKAMATSU

SHIKOKU

USUKI

OITA

BEPPU

SHIMONOSEKI

HAGI

IZUMO

HAMADA

TSUJIMA

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NISEKO p236

Ski or snowboard some of the world's most reliable lift-served powder

DAISETSUZAN NATIONAL PARK p239

Hike across the roof of Hokkaidō in one of Japan's most stunning national parks

JAPAN ALPS p183

Hike from hut to hut amid towering mountain peaks

TOKYO p62

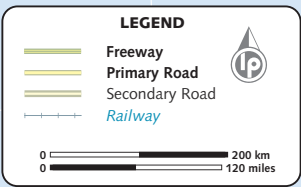
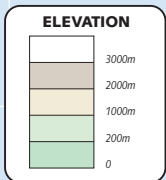
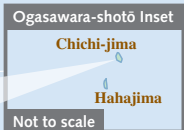
Visit Japan's thriving cosmopolitan capital – it's Asia's city of the future

MT FUJI p88

Climb the perfect cone of Fuji and watch a new day dawn over Japan

CHICHI-JIMA p95

Take the 25-hour ferry to Japan's dolphin- and whale-watching mecca



138°E To Ogasawara-shotō (500km) 141°E 144°E 147°E

↘ THIS IS JAPAN



Japan is a world apart – a wonderful little planet floating off the coast of China. It is a kind of cultural Galapagos, a place where a unique civilisation was allowed to grow and unfold on its own, unmolested by invading powers.

Even today, the world struggles to categorise Japan: is it the world's most advanced technological civilisation, or a bastion of traditional Asian culture? Has the country become just another outpost of the West, or is there something decidedly Eastern lurking under the veneer of its familiar modernity? There are no easy answers, but there is plenty of pleasure to be had in looking for them.

First and foremost, Japan is a place of delicious contrasts: ancient temples and futuristic cities; mist-shrouded hills and lightning-fast bullet trains; kimono-clad geisha and suit-clad businesspeople; quaint thatch-roofed villages and pulsating neon urban



jungles. This peculiar synthesis of the modern and the traditional is one of the things that makes travel in Japan such a fascinating experience.

Japan is arguably the easiest country in Asia in which to travel; while English may not be as widely spoken as in places such as Singapore, the country's brilliant infrastructure, first-class public transport system and friendly people make travelling here a breeze. Despite having all the developed-world conveniences (and then some), Japan offers regular doses of exoticism and wonder. Best of all, Japan is one of the cheapest countries in the developed world and no country on earth offers as much bang for the buck. All told, Japan is an eminently rewarding travel destination.

‘ancient temples and futuristic cities; mist-shrouded hills and lightning-fast bullet trains’
