



The Japan Alps & Central Honshū

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Why Go?

Japan's heartland in both geography and attitude, Central Honshū (本州中部, 'Honshū Chūbu' in Japanese) stretches between the two great megalopolises in Kantō (home to Greater Tokyo) and Kansai (Osaka, Kyoto and Kōbe). This region is filled with modern commercial centres and traditional towns, the majestic Japan Alps (日本アルプス) and the rugged northern coastline.

In the region's central prefectures, hiking takes you through alpine uplands and onsen (hot spring) villages that offer welcome recovery for skiers. The Sea of Japan region (Hokuriku) boasts cliff-top vistas, remarkable temples and incredible seafood.

Nagoya is the nation's industrial heart, with a can-do spirit and unique foods, while Hokuriku's hub is Kanazawa, a historic city that once housed samurai and geisha. Lovely Takayama is admired for its traditional riverside houses, wood crafts and verdant countryside. Matsumoto is popular for its striking 16th-century castle and many galleries.

Best Places to Eat

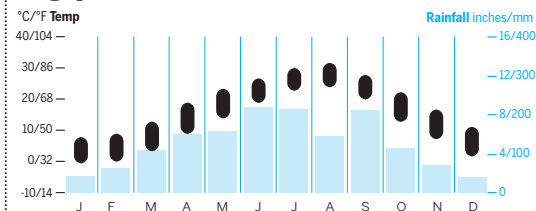
- » Atsuta Hōraiken (p178)
- » Yabaton (p178)
- » Kyōya (p192)
- » Hotaruya (p232)

Best Places to Stay

- » Yumoto Chōza (p203)
- » Kōemon (p197)
- » Beniya Mukayū (p238)
- » Nakabusa Onsen (p220)
- » Sumiyoshi Ryokan (p191)

When to Go

Nagoya



Jan–Mar If you're looking for serious skiing, this is the time to hit Nagoya's hills.

Oct–Dec For autumn colours, drive up to Shirahone Onsen, Nakabusa Onsen or Fukuchi Onsen.

Apr–Jun Visit for cherry blossoms and one of Japan's best festivals, Takayama Matsuri.



The Japan Alps & Central Honshū Highlights

- 1 Sleep in a thatch-roofed house in **Shirakawa-gō** (p197)
- 2 Soak in a mountain-ringed outdoor hot spring at **Fukuchi Onsen** (p203) and **Shirahone Onsen** (p202)
- 3 Ride trains, trolley buses and funiculars along the high-altitude **Tatemaya-Kurobe Alpine Route** (p224)
- 4 Hike amid the stunning Japan Alps scenery of **Kamikōchi** (p199)
- 5 Step back in time at the **Inuyama-jō** (p183) and **Matsumoto-jō** (p216) castles
- 6 Ski, ski, ski at the Olympic resorts of **Shiga Kōgen** (p211), **Nozawa Onsen** (p212) and **Hakuba** (p213)
- 7 Take in arts in Kanazawa, from the ancient garden of **Kenroku-en** (p228) to the daring **21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art** (p227)
- 8 Train with Zen Buddhist monks in the 13th-century **Eihei-ji** (p239) or be awed by Nagano's **Zenkō-ji** (p204)