

welcome to Japan



Japan Is Open for Travel

Since 11 March 2011, one cannot talk about or consider visiting Japan without the devastating earthquake and tsunami that struck northeast Japan coming up. Yet, rather than focus on the immediate horrors and lingering fears of the tragedy, one should focus on the beauty and accessibility of Japan today. One should note how the Japanese people, resilient and steadfast, behaved after the waters receded: they gathered calmly in evacuation shelters, set off bravely on rescue missions, began the task of rebuilding.

Every image from those first weeks reflects some of the culture's highest virtues: the ability to *gambaru* (do their best) and to *gaman* (bear suffering without com-

plaint). They also capture the famous Japanese thoroughness and civility. This spirit will allow the Japanese people to rebuild northern Japan faster than anyone expects. And it is this very same spirit that makes travelling in Japan such a joy.

Do not avoid Japan because of fear. The March 2011 disaster was of once-in-a-lifetime proportions, and even at the height of the crisis most of Japan was perfectly safe for travel. At the time of writing, only a small area of Fukushima Prefecture was off limits.

Japan is wide open for travel. If you have been considering your first visit to Japan or returning to re-experience the unique magic of the country, the perfect time to go – and to celebrate Japan and its people – is now.