



The Japan Alps & Central Honshū

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Why Go?

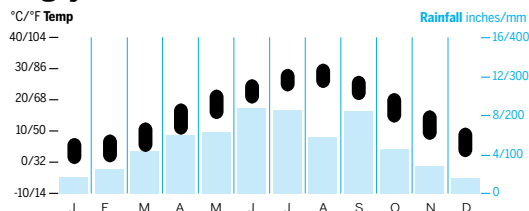
Japan's heartland in both geography and outlook, Central Honshū (本州中部, 'Honshū Chūbu') stretches out between the sprawling leviathans of Greater Tokyo and Kansai. The awesome Japan Alps (日本アルプス) rise sharply near the border of Gifu and Nagano prefectures before rolling north to the dramatic Sea of Japan coast.

World-class skiing, hiking and onsen can be found in the region's photogenic alpine uplands. All but one of Japan's 30 highest peaks (Mt Fuji) are here. Kanazawa oozes culture: temples and tearooms that served lords and housed geisha are beautifully preserved. Takayama's riverside streetscapes satisfy admirers from Japan and abroad. Matsumoto's magnificent castle and alpine backdrop ensure its popularity.

Nagoya, a gateway city famed for technical know-how, is Japan's fourth largest city. Combining urban delights with transport connections to just about everywhere, Nagoya secures the region's worthy place as a priority on any itinerary.

When to Go

Nagoya



Jan–Mar Nagoya's slopes satiate snow-starved skiers.

Sep–Nov Kamikōchi and Hida's many mountain onsen offer great spots for autumn's brilliant show.

Apr & May Come for cherry blossoms and the great Takayama Matsuri (festival).



The Japan Alps & Central Honshū Highlights

- 1 Walk the **Nakasendō** (p225) between Tsumago and Magome.
- 2 Sleep in a thatch-roofed house at World Heritage-listed **Ainokura** (p239).
- 3 Dissolve your troubles in the remote *rotemburo* of **Nakabusa Onsen** (p269).
- 4 Travel the spectacular high-altitude **Tateyama-Kurobe Alpine Route** (p260).
- 5 Hike against the picture-perfect alpine backdrop of **Kamikōchi** (p267).
- 6 Re-imagine a shogun's reign at Fukui's **Ichijōdani Asakura Clan Ruins** (p240).
- 7 Ski till you drop at Hakuba's **Olympic resorts** (p269).
- 8 Explore Zen at Kanazawa's **D.T. Suzuki Museum** (p242).
- 9 Seek the key to salvation in Nagano's **Zenkō-ji** (p272).
- 10 Go train-spotting in Nagoya's **JR SCMaglev & Railway Park** (p218).