

SAGE Advice

Thoughtful travel wisdom, one destination at a time

MONTHLY TRAVEL INSPIRATION

by Emily Brushwood

SAGE

A note from Emily:

Year 2, ***brand*** new...

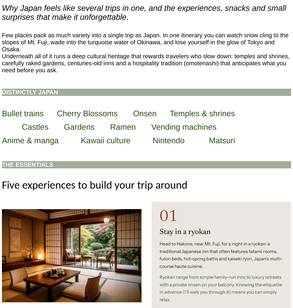
SAGE Travel Solutions just turned one! As I step into my second year, it felt like the perfect time for a little change. If you've been reading The Latest Waves, thank you for riding along with me! My monthly newsletter is getting a fresh look and a new name: SAGE Advice

Each month you'll find monthly travel inspiration, planning tips, and the little details my clients come home raving about.

Thank you for trusting me with your travels this first year. Here's to many more adventures together!

DESTINATION SPOTLIGHT

Japan: ancient calm, neon energy, and everything in between



Why Japan feels like several trips in one, and the experiences, snacks and small surprises that make it unforgettable.

Few places pack as much variety into a single trip as Japan. In one itinerary you can watch snow cling to the slopes of Mt. Fuji, wade into the turquoise water of Okinawa, and lose yourself in the glow of Tokyo and Osaka.

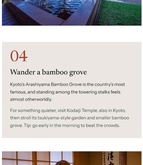
Underneath all of it runs a deep cultural heritage that rewards travelers who slow down: temples and shrines, carefully raked gardens, centuries-old inns and a hospitality tradition (omotenashi) that anticipates what you need before you ask.

DISTINCTLY JAPAN

Bullet trains · Cherry Blossoms · Onsen · Temples & shrines · Castles · Gardens · Ramen · Vending machines · Anime & manga · Kawaii culture · Nintendo · Matsuri

THE ESSENTIALS

Five experiences to build your trip around



01

Stay in a ryokan

Head to Hakone, near Mt. Fuji, for a night in a ryokan: a traditional Japanese inn that often features tatami rooms, futon beds, hot-spring baths and kaiseki ryori, Japan's multi-course haute cuisine.

Ryokan range from simple family-run inns to luxury retreats with a private onsen on your balcony. Knowing the etiquette in advance (I'll walk you through it) means you can simply relax.



02

Ride the bullet train

The Shinkansen is the most efficient way to move between regions, and it's a bucket-list experience in its own right.

Before boarding, pick up an ekiben (a bento box made for train travel) at the station, then settle in and watch the countryside slip past.



03

Soak in the hot springs

Japan's natural hot springs are as soothing as they are restorative. Choose from public bathhouses with large pools, private balcony tubs at luxury resorts, or outdoor rotenburo set against mountains and forest.

Onsen have their own customs, so a little preparation goes a long way. I'll make sure you know exactly what to expect.

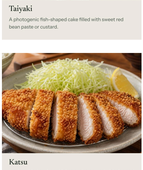
04

Wander a bamboo grove

Kyoto's Arashiyama Bamboo Grove is the country's most famous, and standing among the towering stalks feels almost otherworldly.

For something quieter, visit Kodaiji Temple, also in Kyoto, then stroll its tsukiyama-style garden and smaller bamboo grove. Tip: go early in the morning to beat the crowds.





05

Book a tour with a local

Even if you love exploring on your own, time with a local guide adds insight you won't get from a guidebook.

Think a leisurely bike ride through Kyoto's temples and architecture, a sushi or ramen class, a market food tour, or taking part in a traditional tea ceremony.

JAPAN FUN FACTS

Did you know?

~3,000	people can cross Tokyo's Shibuya Crossing in a single light cycle, making it one of the busiest intersections on earth and a favorite backdrop for films.
200 mph	is the top speed of the fastest bullet trains, and they're famously punctual, with average delays measured in seconds rather than minutes.
~4M	vending machines dot the country, selling everything from hot meals and drinks to umbrellas, toiletries and toys.
No. 1	Tokyo has long held the title of the world's most Michelin-starred city, ahead of Paris. A true food lover's destination.
Millions	of Japanese families are estimated to order KFC for Christmas, a tradition dating to a 1970s "Kentucky for Christmas" campaign. Orders go in weeks ahead.
Konbini culture	Forget slushie machines and spinning hot dogs. Japan's convenience stores stock fresh meals, household goods and treats. Try the egg sandwich, Mitsuya Cider, melon soda, curry bread or packaged pancakes with butter and syrup.

EAT YOUR WAY THROUGH

Six foods to try



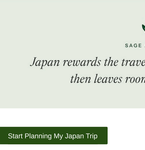
Taiyaki

A photogenic fish-shaped cake filled with sweet red bean paste or custard.



Konbini egg sandwich

Soft bread, creamy egg salad, and proof that convenience-store food can be delicious.



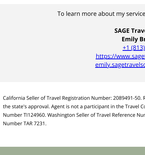
Katsu

A crispy fried pork or chicken cutlet, served with rice and vegetables.



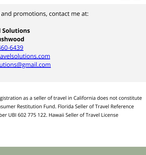
Gyoza

Dumplings of pork or seafood with aromatics. Order them pan-fried and boiled.



Soufflé pancakes

Impossibly fluffy stacks with sweet or savory toppings. Popular spots can mean an hour's wait.



Nabe (hot pot)

From sukiyaki to cook-it-yourself shabu shabu to oden on the go, a cozy shared meal.

PLANNING NOTES

When to go

Spring
Cherry blossom season, typically late March to early April. Beautiful and busy, so book early.

Autumn
Crisp weather and fiery maple leaves, especially in Kyoto in November.

Summer
Festival and fireworks season, the window to climb Mt. Fuji, and lavender fields in cooler Hokkaido.

Winter
Clear views of Mt. Fuji, snowy onsen towns and world-class skiing in Nagano.

SAGE ADVICE

Japan rewards the traveler who plans ahead, and then leaves room to be surprised.

Start Planning My Japan Trip

To learn more about my services and promotions, contact me at:

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