

# CITY GUIDE BOUIDE BOUID



J A P A N





Past, Present and Future

Sights & Sounds



# MARCH 2023



### **Explore More** *Quick Trips*





### CURATOR'S NOTE

andwiched between Tokyo to the east and Osaka to the west, Nagoya is Japan's fourth biggest city. But for most first-time visitors to Japan, Nagoya is no more than a station sign rolling past their shinkansen window.

But Nagoya is an exciting departure from the well-trodden tourist trail and a gateway to tucked-away gems within easy reach.

Talking to Nagoya residents and friends as I compiled this guide, the topic kept returning to food. For many locals, the region's cuisine sets it apart. Whether it is savoring the café culture of yesteryear or appreciating Nagoya's aged hatcho miso, the city's food tops the bill. No surprise then that this guide showcases so many of Nagoya's gastronomic delights. By

the time you finish reading, you'll be itching to try them all. - *Tom Miyagawa Coulton* 



Nagoya is a modern metropolis rich in heritage attractions

### Tom Miyagawa Coulton is the co-founder of The Setouchi Cookbook, a website dedicated to the culinary delights of Japan's Seto Inland Sea.



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### A quick tour of the city's highlights, from sights to bites. Plus, more to enjoy just a quick ride from Nagoya



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Two things to take home from Nagoya: sensu and hatcho miso



## **STARS AND SUSHI**

Where to savor the classics, from kaiseki to chicken wings

### Word of mouth

Locals know best and tell us what to eat from morning to night

### Eat this way

Tour guides Lena Yamaguchi and Elisabeth Llopis show us around



### **EXPLORE MORE**

Explore more with just a quick

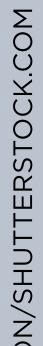


### train ride outside Nagoya

### The spirit of omotenashi

Experience the art of Japanese hospitality at a five-star ryokan





# PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE



## A tour of classic sights around Nagoya reveals a city rich in art and history – that's also at the steering wheel of Japanese industry



# NAGOYA CASTLE

A faithful reproduction of the 1615 original, Nagoya Castle is the city's preeminent landmark. It was the first castle in Japan to be designated a national treasure and its painstaking restoration work continues to this day. Shogun Tokugawa leyasu, the last of the three famous unifiers of Japan, built the castle at the beginning of his reign which ushered in 200 years of Japanese

**Curator's note** 

The lush gardens within the sprawling castle grounds are perfect sakura or cherry blossom viewing spots in late March to early April.

isolation from the world. Keep an eye out for statues of the mythical

shachihoko, now a symbol of Nagoya. These famous sea creatures adorn the roof to protect the castle from fire.



The cat bus from *My Neighbor Totoro* in a previous Nagoya Studio Ghibli pop-up

### Curator's note

Hayao Miyazaki's love for nature, evident in films like *Princess Mononoke*, is palpable in this theme park where there are no thrill rides and where visitors are encouraged to "take a stroll, feel the wind and discover the wonders."

# **GHIBLI PARK**

Nothing has captured the world's imagination quite like the animation films of Hayao Miyazaki's Studio Ghibli. In November 2022, the studio opened Ghibli Park and now fans can immerse themselves in the fantastic world of Ghibli. Unlike its smaller counterpart in Tokyo, Ghibli Park not only allows photography but encourages it. Currently, you can explore Ghibli's Grand Warehouse, the Hill of Youth with the antique shop from Whisper of the Heart,

and Dondoko Forest featuring the house from My Neighbor Totoro. Mononoke Village and Valley of Witches are under development with plans to open within the next two years. If you're a fan of the films, you'll be glad you know that you can be more than just a viewer and insert yourself into familiar scenes. For a few surreal but wonderful minutes you can be little Chihiro and pose for a selfie with No-Face in the carriage from Spirited Away.

# **AICHI ARTS CENTER**

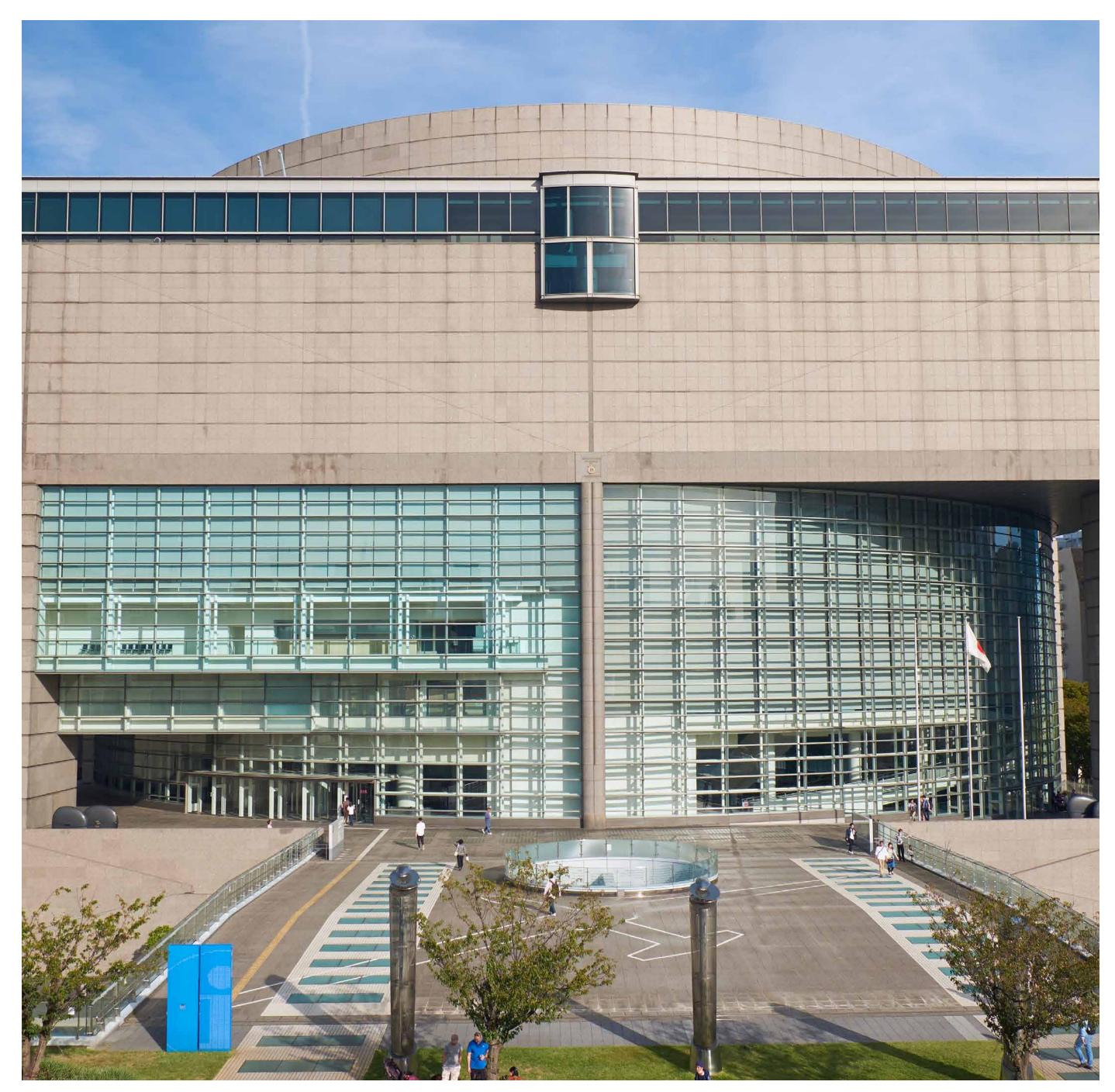
This is an important art and culture center for the prefecture. It is the main venue for the Aichi Triennale festival that has been running since 2010. It contains the Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art with its extensive permanent collection of 20th century art. The facility also boasts theaters,



#### Did you know?

The museum's permanent collection includes works by Pablo Picasso, Gustav Klimt and Max Ernst, as well as pieces by contemporary art world darling Yoshitomo Nara.

# a concert hall and a library.



# PHOTO BY SERG ZASTAVKIN/



### TOYOTA COMMEMORATIVE MUSEUM OF INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY

Not many people know that before Toyota became a global automotive brand, it was a textile manufacturing company in 1911. Toyota Commemorative Museum of Industry and Technology showcases several of these early textile machines (most in working order) along with exhibits of cars from across the ages. It's Did y

Did you know?

The city of Toyota next to Nagoya was named after the company and not the other way around. The city decided to change its name from Koromo to Toyota in 1959.

a tribute to the past and to Japan's contributions to technological

advancement – you can see a live demonstration of robots on a modern assembly line and even witness a Toyota robot playing the violin.

# **ATSUTA JINGU**

Atsuta Shrine is one of the most important Shinto shrines in Japan. According to the Kojiki, one of Japan's oldest documents, Atsuta Jingu was constructed 2,000 years ago to house the Kusanagi no Tsurugi ceremonial sword, one of the three sacred regalia of Japan (the other two being the mirror of valor and a jewel to represent benevolence). Although the shrine, with its wooded grounds, is usually a haven of peace and tranquility,

it becomes a hive of activity and revelry every year on the 5th of June during the Atsuta Festival. On that day, over 200,000 people converge on the shrine for the spectacular lantern display, fireworks and lines of delicious food stalls.



#### Did you know?

According to Shinto, Japan's ancient religion, great spiritual powers reside in nature. Shinto gods, called *kami*, can take the form of stately trees, mountains and entire landscapes.



# PHOTO BY AMMLERY/SHUTTE



# SCMAGLEV AND RAILWAY PARK

Japan has one of the world's most efficient and most technologically advanced high-speed rail networks. The SCMAGLEV and Railway Park, run by the Central Japan Railway Company, features 39 actual-size trains, train simulators and a vast indoor model railway diorama. The train exhibit includes the latest SCMAGLEV



The museum also houses the elusive Doctor Yellow, a yellow shinkansen that flies along the tracks with an arsenal of sensors to test for problems.

the next generation of high-speed trains – due to commence operation in 2027, covering the approximately 250-kilometer distance from Tokyo to Nagoya in

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### magnetic levitation train

# just 40 minutes.

### More travel inspiration at Sawasdee.thaiairways.com

# Made in Japan

Don't leave Nagoya without a souvenir of Japanese craftsmanship



The *sensu*, Nagoya's folding fans, are a perfect (and light) gift to take home for friends and family. Nagoya's fan industry began life in the mid-18th century and became popular in the 1920s as they began exporting fans to Korea and China. Today, although there is less practical need for folding fans, more people buy them as gifts, dance props and fashion items. Established in 1912, Suehirodo is Nagoya's main sensu shop.

WEIRD BUT WONDERFUL: NAGOYA'S ANNUAL NAKED FESTIVAL

For something out of the ordinary, nothing tops the Naked Festival at the Owariōkunitama Shrine held every February. Even in Japan with all its festivals (some more

They craft each fan in the same traditional way to preserve the skills handed down through the generations. You can design and create your own individual fan by joining one of the sensumaking workshops at their store.



Miso defines this region and none more so than the famous red hatcho miso. Using only soybeans, natural salt and

bizarre than others), it's rare to witness thousands of men in loincloths on one of the coldest days of the year jostling to touch one special naked man to rid themselves of bad luck.

pure water, hatcho miso has been prepared in the same time-honored way for over 800 years. The miso is still fermented for two years in large koike wooden barrels with over three tons of rocks pressing down on the lid. Maruya Hatcho Miso was established in 1337 and continues to create authentic handmade hatcho miso. You can book 30-minute tours of their facilities during opening hours and they also offer simple miso cooking workshops.



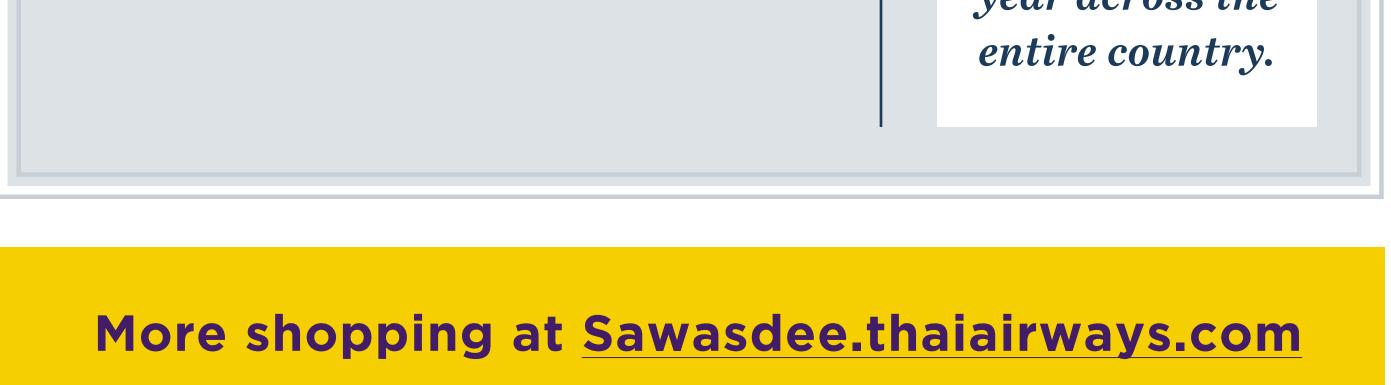
### MATSURI MANIA

There are an estimated 100,000 to 300,000 festivals or matsuri celebrated throughout the year across the

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PHOTOS BY SH STREETVJ/SHU





# STARS AND SUSH

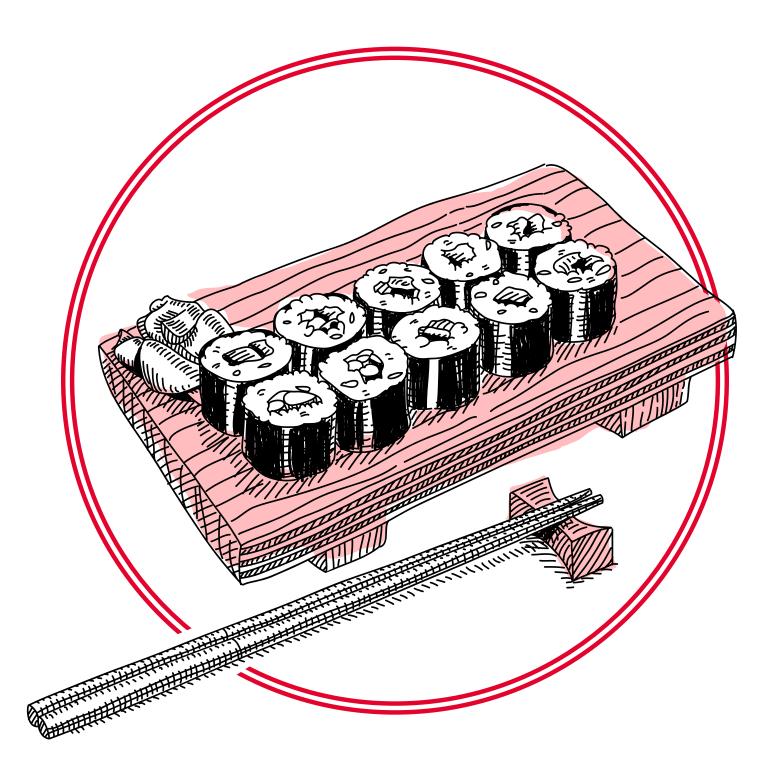
PHOTO BY SHUTTERSTO

If there's one thing that Nagoya locals rave about, it's the local food

scene. With so much good food available, it is hard to know where to start. Here is a taster of the city's gastronomic highlights

# SUSHI

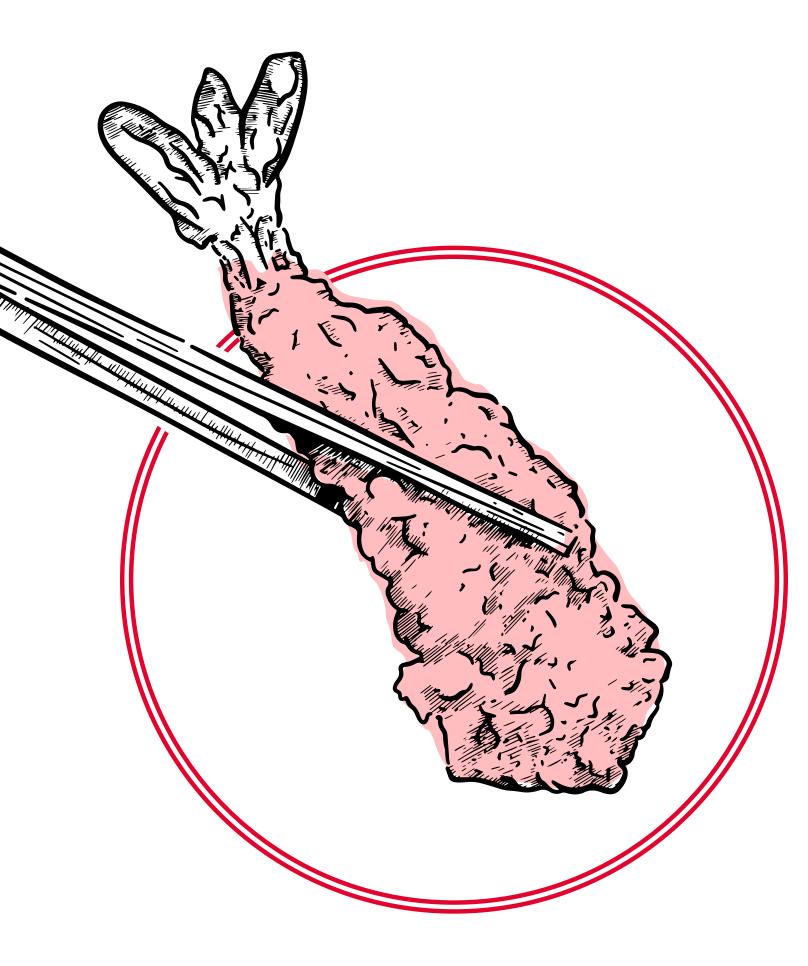
There has been a sushi boom in Nagoya over the past few years with several new sushi restaurants opening around Nagoya Station. The city also boasts a handful of Michelinstarred restaurants but getting a reservation can be akin to winning the lottery. A favorite alternative among the locals is Nagoya's Maruhachi chain of sushi restaurants. The Maruhachi Sushi Yagoto-



ten branch comes highly recommended. Although a little farther from the center than the other Maruhachi restaurants, it has a more relaxed atmosphere.

# TEMPURA

There's something very satisfying about eating great tempura. Tempura Niitome in Nagoya is a magnet for top professionals and food connoisseurs who come to experience the ways the chef pushes the boundaries of tempura. A trip here might make you rethink everything you thought you knew about this iconic Japanese dish.



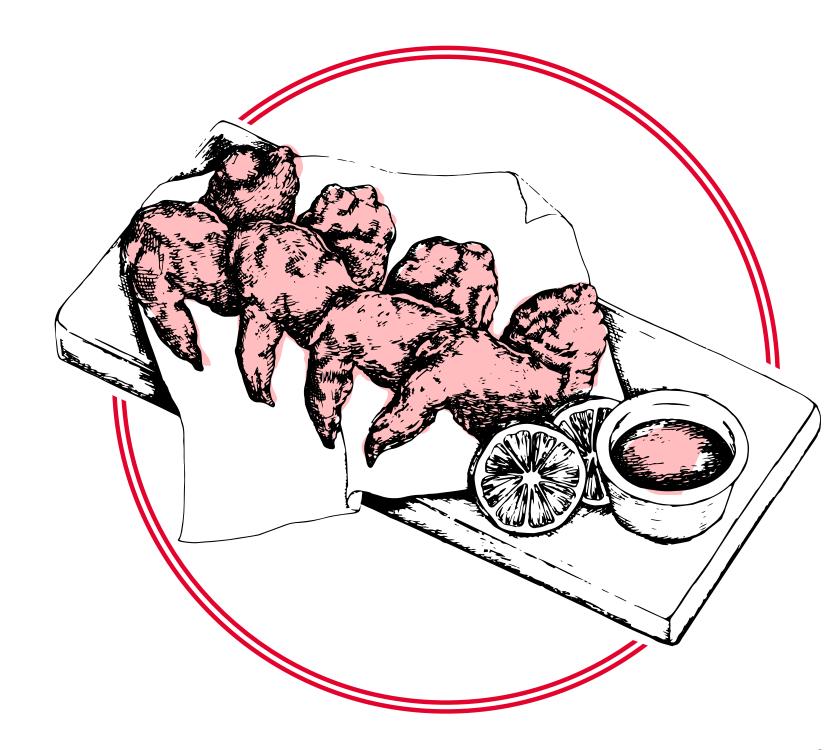
### TRADITIONAL KAISEKI

For the most refined gastronomic experience in Japan, nothing matches a kaiseki meal. Kaiseki is a table d'hôte menu of masterfully crafted dishes, each made with the very best seasonal ingredients available. The content, presentation and flavors of the kaiseki differ according to the chef and the restaurant, so no two kaiseki meals

are ever the same. For a top-end kaiseki, visit the two-Michelin star Hasshoukan, an exquisite dining experience in a traditional Japanese dwelling set in an immaculate garden.



In 1965, Furaibo founder Kenko Otsubo's supplier forgot his order of whole chickens. So instead, he cooked the wings reserved for the soup stock in his special sauce. They were an instant hit.

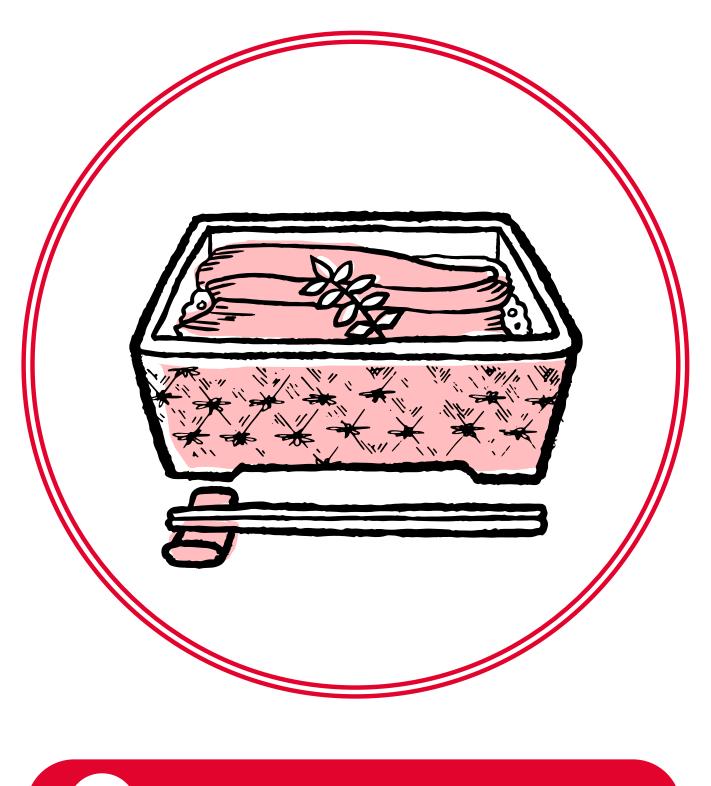


## TEBASAKI CHICKEN WINGS

You might be familiar with the Sekai no Yamachan chain with its eight restaurants in Thailand. In Nagoya, there are plenty of restaurants offering their take on this local favorite with different spices and flavors. This includes Furaibo, the first restaurant in the city to have tebasaki chicken wings on their menu.

# HITSUMABUSHI

This delicacy of grilled and glazed unagi eel on rice is arguably the most popular of all Nagoya cuisine. To experience the original hitsumabushi – served in a wooden bowl or tub called *hitsu* - go to Atsuta Horaiken near Atsuta Shrine. Founded in 1873, Atsuta Horaiken have kept their special family recipe for the unagi eel glaze a secret for over 140 years.



Did you know?

How to eat hitsumabushi: First, you divide the dish into quarters. Then try the first quarter on its own, the second with condiments, and the second with condiments, and the third as an *ochazuke* broth. Then it is up to you how you enjoy the final quarter.



### FRENCH CUISINE, ONEGAISHIMASU

Probably not the first thing to come to mind on a trip to Japan, but Japanese chefs do French cuisine very, very well. The two-star Michelin restaurant Reminiscence is making

ENCE

waves in Nagoya and comes highly recommended by a host of other chefs working in the city.

# Word of mouth

A day of eating with the locals

"If I only had one day, I would have trouble eating all the food I would want to eat. Three meals in a day are not enough! Nagoya has too many delicious dishes." – Sayaka, 45





"You need to try the

### Breakfast

"In the morning you have to have 'the morning'. Nagoya has always had a rich café culture and today you can find plenty of retro cafés to enjoy around the city. If you buy a coffee in the morning for 300 yen or so, they will often serve it with complimentary toast or a boiled egg. This is called 'the morning' and everyone in Nagoya loves it." – Yuka, 39

miso-nikomi udon noodles or miso katsu. Basically, the taste of red miso in Nagoya is such a big part of our cuisine and culture. Our food is cooked in it, served with it or drizzled with it." – Ryoko, 39



### **Afternoon snack**

"For an afternoon treat, I always go for an oni-manju cake. These are steamed buns with square pieces of sweet potato poking out of it like the horns of an oni daemon giving it its name." – Maiko, 28



### Dinner

"Nagoya has plenty of tourist attractions like the castle, but for me the real attraction



is the food. For dinner, try the misoni. Misoni is the Nagoya version of Japanese oden stew. Usually in Japan, people prepare oden in a clear soy sauce dashi soup, but in Nagoya we use miso." – Yuuya, 33

### Kaiseki, with a course on history: NAGOYA'S 400-YEAR-OLD RESTAURANT

The Ryotei Kawabun first opened its doors over 400 years ago and it is still going strong. Known as one of the oldest restaurants in Japan, the Kawabun has branched out to create the stylish and slightly more accessible Kawabun Nagoya, just around the corner from the ryotei restaurant. They offer fine dining in their Italian restaurant and drinks in their atmospheric bar and chic café.

### FOOD TOURS

# Eat this way

Through their website Nagoyaisnotboring.com, long-term Nagoya residents Lena Yamaguchi and Elisabeth Llopis offer visitors insightful guided tours around their beloved city. Here, they pick out some of their favorite spots from three of their popular food and drink tours as





### a taster of what Nagoya has to offer.



### **DAIJIN HONTEN**

### **from the Nagoya Sake Tasting Night Tour** Nagoya's oldest izakaya restaurant opened its doors in 1907. Spread over two floors in central Nagoya, Daijin Honten is a throw-back

to the izakayas of the past. With its great sake, delicious side dishes and a warm and friendly atmosphere, this restaurant is a hit among the locals who drop in for a hot cup of sake on their way home from work.



### MUKASHI-NO-YABATON from the Street Food Walking Tour of Osu

A core element in so much of Nagoya's cuisine is the region's famous red miso paste. Miso katsu, a deep-fried pork cutlet covered in red miso sauce, is a local favorite and the Misokatsu Yabaton restaurant chain is the place to try it. The restaurants are easy to spot – just look for a pig dressed as a sumo wrestler! The chain's Mukashi no Yabaton restaurant is an homage to the original yabaton store that opened in 1949. Located next to Osu Kannon Temple, the Mukashi no Yabaton is a great place to kick off a day of exploring the street food stands along the Osu Shopping Arcade.



### YAMAMOTOYA OKUTE from the Specialties of Nagoya Food Tour Another of Nagoya's miso-based comfort foods is the miso-nikomi-udon – udon noodles cooked in a thick miso broth. The Yamamotoya Okute near Fukiage Station is the only one offering both vegan and halal versions, using umami-rich shiitake mushrooms as a dashi soup instead of the standard fish-based stock. They also provide halal and vegan options of other Nagoya favorites such as the *tenmusu*

# (shrimp rice ball).

### More global eats at Sawasdee.thaiairways.com



# EXPLORE MORE

Nagoya is a strategically-located launch pad to an endless array of adventures in neighboring

PHOTO BY MTAIRA/SHL

prefectures. First stop: Mie Prefecture to the south, a quick and direct train journey from Nagoya Station

### ISE JINGU GRAND Shrine

Considered the most important shrine in Japan, Ise Jingu Grand Shrine is an essential part of Japan's cultural and spiritual identity. Over 1,500 Shinto rituals are performed in the shrine every year. The famous Shikinen Sengu ritual happens every twenty years when the main shrine that houses the Goddess Amaterasu Omikami is replaced by

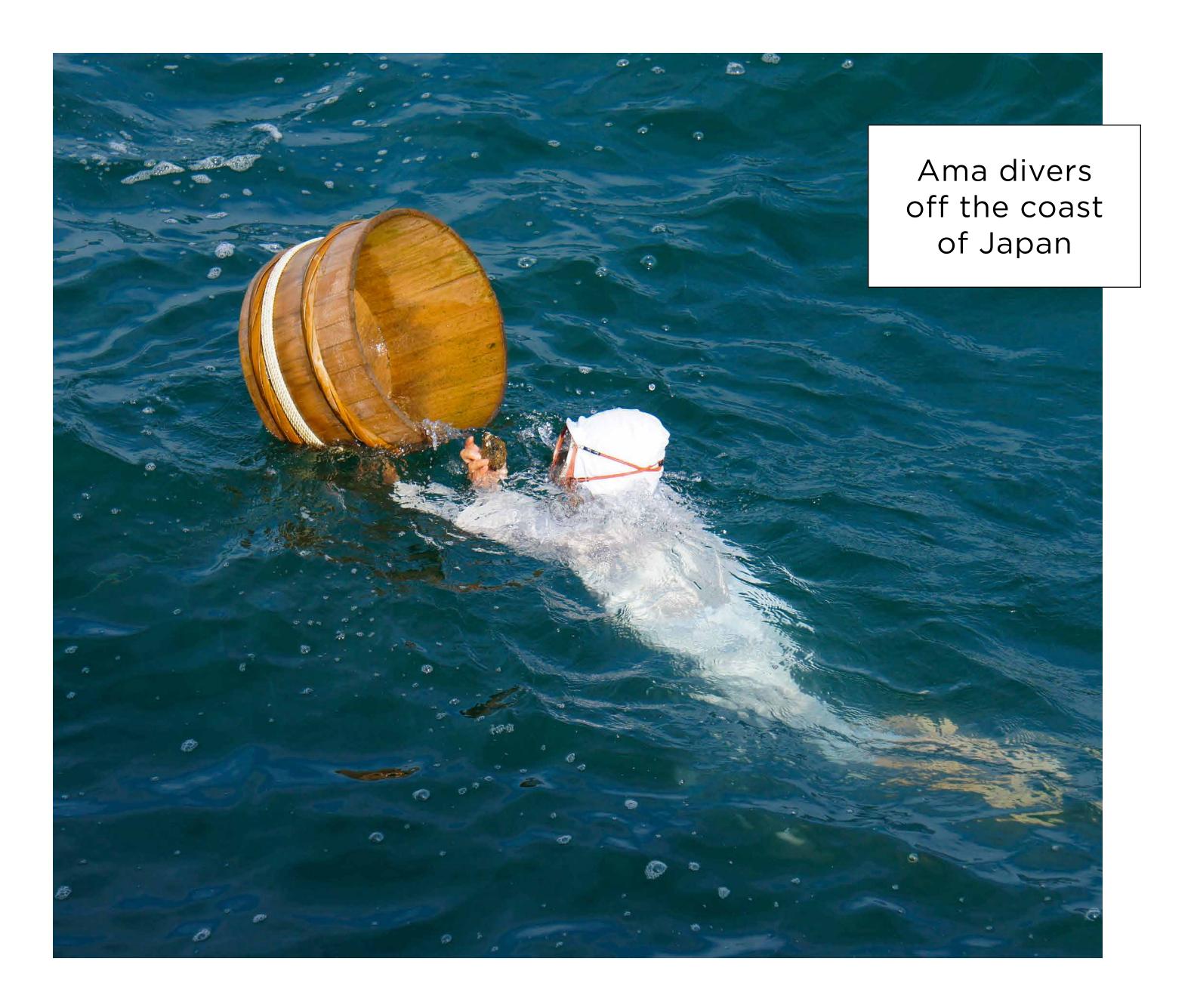


an identical shrine in the next plot. The Meoto Iwa - two rocks in the sea connected by sacred rope – is also close by.

# VISON

This newly opened commercial complex in the center of Mie has a wide variety of high-quality Japanese products all in one place. The 70 shops inside the beautifully designed area include some of the best traditional food makers and craft shops from across the region. If you need gifts for friends back home, this is the place to visit.





### AMA HUT Satoumian

The iconic female ama divers dressed in white have been freediving for shellfish in the waters around Mie for thousands of years. Although their numbers are dwindling, the ama who continue to dive do so adhering to age-old customs, traditions and superstitions. A number restaurants have opened in recent years where guests can dine on the ama's freshly caught seafood and chat with

### Did you know?

Ama divers dive for seafood into the depths of the cold sea without oxygen for an average of 100 times day. They can hold their breath underwater for up to two minutes.

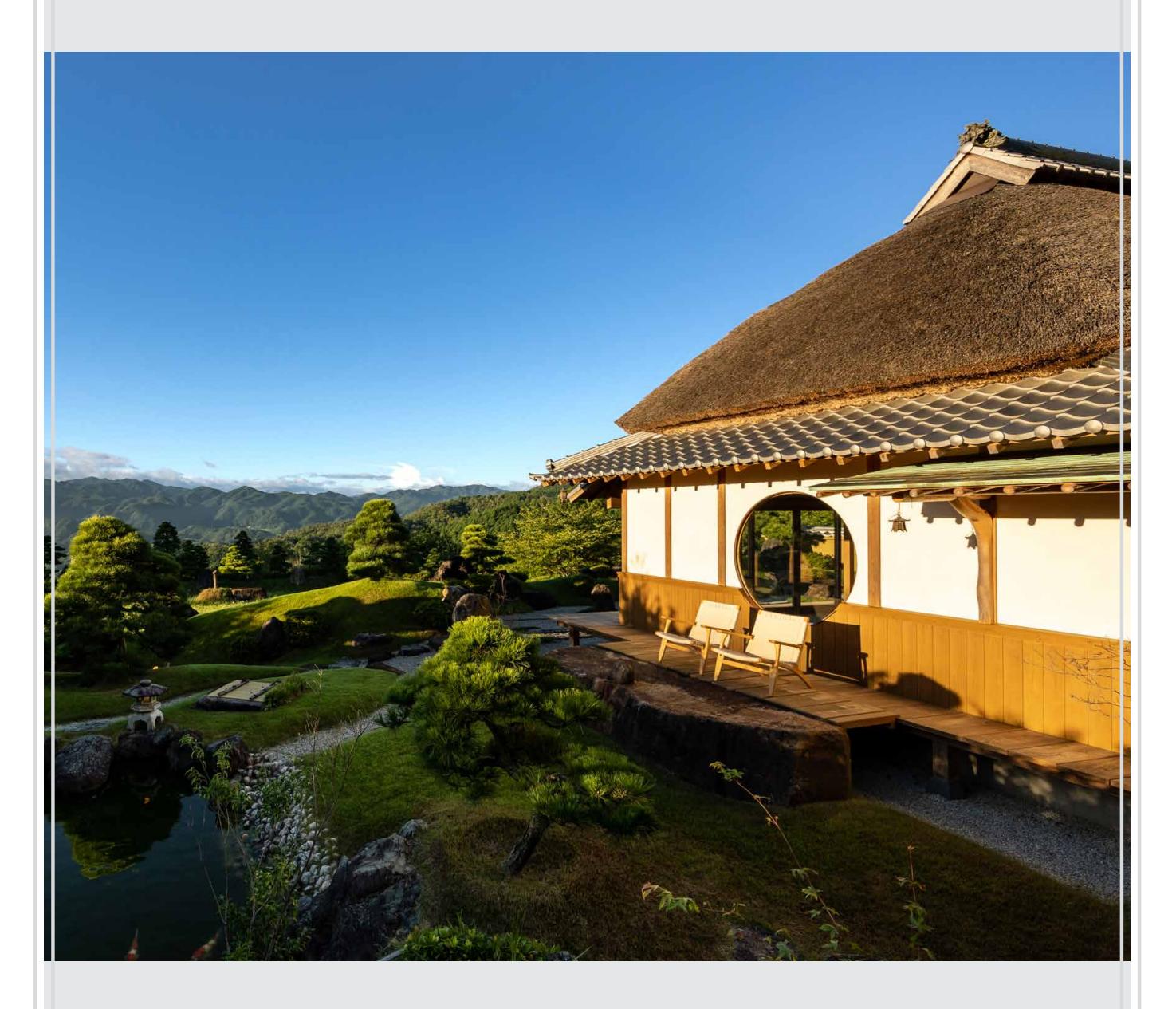
some of the divers. The Satoumian offers a mouthwatering array

of fish and shellfish (including the highly prized abalone) cooked to perfection in front of you by a genuine ama diver.

#### WHERE TO STAY

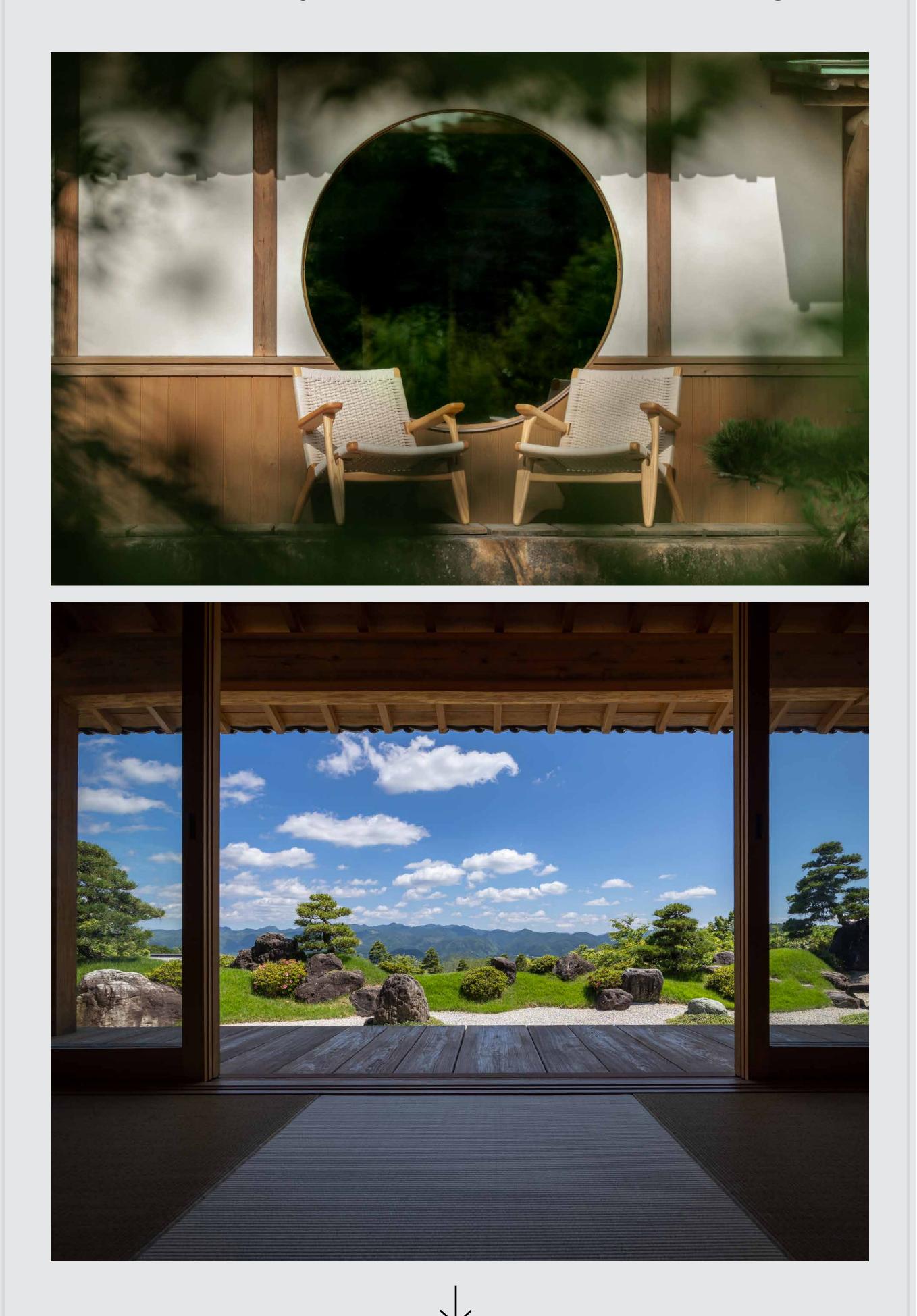
# The spirit of omotenashi

There's no shortage of modern hotels and luxury ryokans all across the country. But for a truly unforgettable experience, escape to storied inns in impossibly gorgeous settings and soak up mindful Japanese hospitality, also known as omotenashi



### SASAYURI-ANN

Two hours from Nagoya, up in the quaint mountain village of Fukano Muro in the Kii Peninsula, birthplace of the ninja, is Sasayuri-ann, a farmhouse conversion featuring repurposed timber and modern amenities. It has two villas – a 200-year-old traditional thatched-roof house and a newer structure – both fine examples of Japanese craftsmanship and minimalist aesthetics. The surrounding views are breathtaking: Kyoto to the north, Nara and Osaka to the West, Ise to the east. The whole hermitage, as the property likes to refer to itself, is in the same region as two of Japan's most sacred mountains, Mt Yoshino and Mt Koyasan. But the true charm of Sasayuri-ann is its reason for being – owner Tetsuji Matsubayashi is a man on a mission to restore a sense of balance to all who visit by celebrating the rhythms of unhurried village life, the bounty of the land and the beauty of the natural surroundings.





### HATAGO WAKATSU

This chic, two-room luxury ryokan opened in November 2020, in a former tatami shop originally built in 1830, just outside Omihachiman in Shiga Prefecture, on the shores of Japan's largest freshwater lake, Biwa. It's about two hours from Nagoya, but you might as well be traveling back in time, to the glory days of Omi merchants, credited with fueling an Edo-era economic boom. The town is so beautiful, its historic buildings so carefully preserved, that it's often used as a filming location for historical dramas. And the ryokan, which offers the full traditional Japanese inn experience, complete with thin straw mattresses on tatami floors, keeps the spirit of old Japan alive.

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