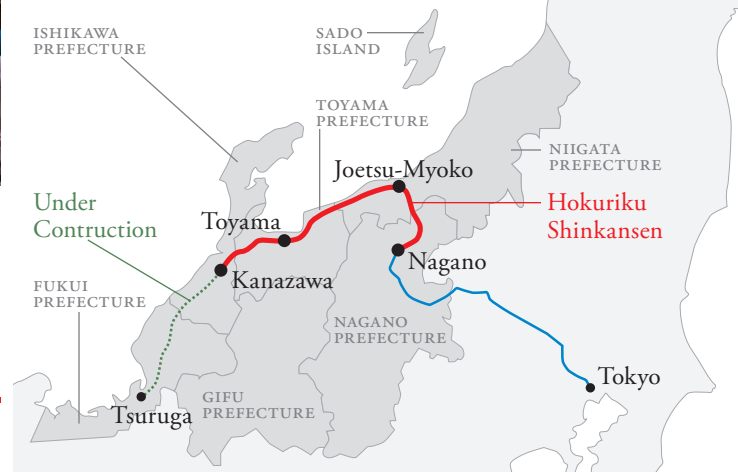




ABOVE PHOTO BY TOSHIRO HONMA



Discover the Undiscovered

Aboard Japan's **Hokuriku Shinkansen**

Travel at thrilling speed in total comfort and experience the beauty of Japan aboard one of the world's most advanced high-speed trains when the **Hokuriku Shinkansen** (bullet train) opens its doors to new passenger service in the spring of 2015. Connecting Tokyo and the historic capital of Ishikawa prefecture, Kanazawa, in approximately two and a half hours, the new route will provide quick access to the Hokuriku region and beyond.

Heading north and west from Tokyo on Japan's main island of Honshu, the new train route will provide ready access to the prefectures of Nagano, Niigata, Toyama, Gifu, Ishikawa, and Fukui. Framed by the majestic Japanese Alps to the south and the fishing villages found along the Sea of Japan's picturesque coastline, the region offers a treasure trove of cultural excursions far off the beaten path.

Sado Island in Niigata is home to **Kodo**, the world's most famous group of *taiko* drummers and the biggest draw of the Earth Celebration held every August. Steeped in rural custom, Sado is also known throughout the country for its Noh dramatic traditions. More than thirty Noh stages present performances from April to October, including the famed Takigi Noh (Bonfire Noh). Sado is easily reached from the bullet train's Joetsu-Myoko JR Station and via ferry from nearby port of Naoetsu.

The terrific profusion of sushi restaurants found throughout Hokuriku, coupled with regional sake offerings from the area's **Sakagura** (sake cellars), make the region a special draw for culinary enthusiasts. In Toyama, dominated by the magnificent

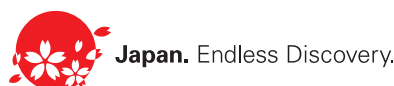
Clockwise from top: New bullet train service from Nagano to Kanazawa begins in the spring of 2015; shoppers at the Omi-cho Ichiba Market; a sampling of Toyama Bay Sushi; world-famous taiko drummers performing on Sado Island.

Tateyama Mountains and Toyama Bay, the **Toyama Bay Sushi** network supplies local restaurants with more than 100 varieties of freshly caught seafood, while the **Masuda Sake Company**, founded in 1893, offers an informative Sakagura tour. Cap the experience with a visit to Kanazawa's teeming and not-to-be-missed **Omi-cho Ichiba Market**, founded in 1721.

Hokuriku is also renowned for its traditional craftsmanship, with techniques passed down by generations of artisans creating everything from lacquerware and handmade *Washi* paper to forged steel swords. See Fukui masters at work demonstrating traditional Japanese papermaking techniques at the **Udatsu Paper and Craft Museum**, where visitors can also participate in a hands-on workshop.

The **Hokuriku Shinkansen** will open a new frontier for international tourism. Be among the first to explore this incredibly diverse and largely undiscovered region of Japan.

Visit JapanTravelInfo.com for more information.



PHOTOS COURTESY JAPAN TOURISM AGENCY AND JAPAN NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANIZATION © ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PHOTO OF TAIKO DRUMMERS: © SATORU MAEDA



Japan. Endless Discovery.



Food for thought: Visit Japan

Japan is known the world over for magnificent food, and one of our most celebrated creations is wagashi. A traditional confection, wagashi is prepared in a variety of shapes and colors which reflect our four magnificent seasons. Of course, fine eating isn't the only thing you'll enjoy here. But when considering a vacation, it is food for thought.



facebook.com/visitjapan



twitter.com/visit_japan



pinterest.com/visitjapanusa

www.japantravelinfo.com

