Mt. Fuji

World Heritage Site

A Guide Book to Areas Around Mt. Fuji

Japan's Treasure Becomes a Global Treasure
Mt. Fuji, the Pride of Japan and a Worldwide Treasure.

Passing along the spirituality and culture of Mt. Fuji; a mountain that has special meaning to Japanese people of all walks of life.

From ancient times, the Japanese people have revered and respected Mt. Fuji and have dedicated daily prayer and gratitude to the Goddess thought to preside over it. They have always been in awe of Mt. Fuji, the mountain that soars high above the natural world. This has transformed into a form of religious worship for the malevolent mountain God that is believed to have caused frequent eruptions. Thus, Mt. Fuji has taken on a major presence as a holy mountain.

Its violent eruptions combined with its divine and majestic beauty have always spurred the creativity of the Japanese people. During the Edo Period, Mt. Fuji inspired numerous works of art, including the famous ukiyo-e woodblock prints; making it a worldwide symbol of the Japanese culture.

Mt. Fuji serves as a source of culture and spirituality and has been a constant feature at the core of the Japanese heart since historic times. It has been an iconic figure and a central theme to Japanese aesthetics.

The Origin of Mt. Fuji

The current form of Mt. Fuji comes from a former volcano referred to as “Ko-Fuji” or “Old Mt. Fuji.” It was located on the mountainside of another volcano, known as Mt. Komitake, approximately 100,000 years ago. The current Mt. Fuji came into existence by lava flows that accumulated and covered these two mountains throughout a series of eruptions. It took on its current beautiful conical shape approximately 10,000 years ago.
Mt. Fuji, a holy mountain

Our ancestors feared while admiring

Mt. Fuji’s malevolence its spiritual beauty.

The Sacred Mt. Fuji – a Look at Japanese Faith

The people of Japan have long been in awe of the repeatedly erupting Mt. Fuji. Believing that gods resided within the mountain, the Senge Jinja Shrines were built at Mt. Fuji’s base in order to quell eruptions.

Around the 12th century, Fujisan’s volcanic activity subsided and it became a center for the “Shugen-do” religion, which was an amalgamation of ancient Japanese mountain worship, esoteric Buddhism, and other religions.

A priest named Matsudai who was active in the early 12th century built the Dainichiji Temple at the summit. In the 15th or 16th century, ordinary people accompanied by Shugen-do practitioners began to make worship-ascents of the mountain, and it is thought that Hasagawakakugo (1541-1646), who appeared from the 16th to the 17th centuries, shaped a new Fujisan worship into a doctrine.

Kakugo’s teachings were passed on to his disciples. His “Fuji-ko” sect of worship became extremely popular primarily in the Kanto region in the mid-18th century, and many people began to make worship-ascents of Fujisan or make pilgrimages to spiritual spots in areas such as Fujigoko (Fuji Five Lakes).

In the late 19th century the prohibition on women climbing to the summit was lifted, and trains and road networks developed, resulting in many people aiming to climb to the summit.

Shrine of Kai'unbassu (around the 19th century)

Kitaguchi Hongu Fuji Sengen Jinja Shrine

The Chinowa-kuguri (walking through a straw circle) ritual during the festival on the eve of the opening of the Mt. Fuji Climbing Season. (Kitaguchi Hongu Fuji Sengen Jinja Shrine)
Artists throughout history were inspired by the magic of Mt. Fuji as it kindled their imagination.

The Mountain that Gave Birth to Japanese Art that Transcended Oceans

Because of its beautiful form, Fujisan (Mt. Fuji) has been the subject matter for various creative activities. “Man-yoshu,” the oldest existing collection of Japanese poetry compiled in the 8th century, contains works that used Fujisan as a theme, and one of those works says that Fujisan is Japan’s serene goddess and treasure. The volcanic smoke that arose at that time was depicted in many literary works as a symbol of passionate love.

Fujisan also appeared in classic works such as “Taketori Monogatari (The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter),” “Kokinwakashu,” and “Ise Monogatari.”

As well as the haiku of Matsuo Basho (1644-1694) and Yosa Buson (1716-1784) and the works of Natsume Soseki (1867-1916) and Dazai Osamu (1909-1948), some of the most famous representations of Fujisan are the ukiyo-e printed from the 18th to the 19th centuries. Among those ukiyo-e, Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) depicted Fujisan as seen from various places in such works as “Thirty-Six Views of Mt. Fuji,” and Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858) did the same in his “Thirty-Six Views of Mt. Fuji,” and “Fifty-Three Stations of the Tokaido.” Ukiyo-e also influenced impressionist artists such as Van Gogh and Monet.

In modern Japanese painting, artists such as Yokoyama Taikan (1868-1958), who is known for “Gunjo Fuji (Fujisan Dyed Ultramarine),” are creating many works that include Fujisan.

Because of such factors, it can be said that as a source of artistic inspiration Fujisan has a value appropriate for a World Cultural Heritage.
Take an environmentally friendly eco-bus and enjoy a comfortable trip around the designated sites.

Mt. Fuji & The Fuji Five Lakes Local Bus Route Map

Key to Map Symbols
- Tourist Information (railway)
- Express Bus
- Taxi
- Sightseeing Boat
- Lake Motosuko Ferry
- Landing Ent.
- Michi-no-eki
- Ent. of Nagahama
- Katsuyama
- Fujino "Hut Zone"
- Sunnide Resort / Nagasaki Park Ent.
- Fashioh (railway)
- Fushinoyado Ohashi
- Gekkoji Sta.
- Katsura
- Konohana Art Museum
- Kawaguchiko Herb Hall
- Kawaguchiko Shizen Seikatsu-kan
- Ashiwada Camping Site
- Ashiwada Branch of Town Office
- Otsuka Hill
- Otsuka Stat
- Fujisan Otorii
- This is the largest wooden torii gate in Japan, and was built to worship Mt. Fuji from the sea. The gate is reconstructed every 20 years and was most recently rebuilt in 2014.
- Sacred Trees
- There are three 1000 year old trees, designated as national monuments.

Suggested Route to visit important sites of Mt. Fuji Worship, History, and Culture

The shrine moved to its current location in 788AD, a result of eruptions that continued to cause fear and unease throughout the region, as a place to worship the then volatile Mt. Fuji from a distance. Owing to the expansive popularity of Fuji religious associations during the Edo Period (1603-1868), the shrine, alongside the Oshu religious guides at the northern base of Mt. Fuji, rose to prominence and continues its legacy as the center of Mt. Fuji worship to this day. The dense grove that surrounds the magnificent shrine continues to tell the tale of its significance in promoting Mt. Fuji worship.

Main Shrine
- The shrine's main deity, Kochusencho-hime-no-Mikoto, is the guardian of Mt. Fuji and children, conception, and fire prevention. The shrine was founded in 1652 and reflects the magnificent architectural aesthetic of the Momoyama Period (approx. 1573-1615).
Gozaishi Sengen Shrine
Religious training grounds of Fuji-ko
Oishichaya
Japanese azaleas scattered
Nyonin Tenjo
A religious monument built because women were forbidden above this area until the Edo Era.

Nakanochaya
Groves of Fuji Zakura (Fuji Cherry Blossoms) and Japanese azaleas scattered around the Osukokouen.

Umagaeshi
This is the boundary between Kusayama (grassy area of Mt. Fuji) and Konama (wooded area of Mt. Fuji). Horses ‘umage’ were sent back ‘goshiki’ at this point because the mountain above this area was considered holy sanctuary and because the terrain becomes too steep for horses.

The Main Mt. Fuji Climbing Route
This historic path is the only route leading from the foot of the mountain to the summit. Pilgrims and Fuji-ko practitioners donned white religious apparel and sedge hats and headed for the summit with kongozue walking staffs. Through the dense primeval forests at the mountain’s base, they walked along heavy foliage, wild birds, and historic markers as they made their way up to the 6th Sta.
The 8th Sta. is called “Tenchinosakai” or the boundary between heaven and earth. It is located at timberline, where the view suddenly opens up to look upon the vast world below. The further you climb, the more clouds begin to pass below you. The area above Ōkai (the original 8th Sta.), where the Yoshida and Subashiri Routes converge, is religious land overseen by the Ōkumiya Fuji Sengen Taisha Shrine.

From the time when Matnadai Shosin constructed the Daishichi-ji temple in the mid-12th century, the summit has been home to many religious activities. Other temples and Buddhist effigies have been built. Religious pilgrims climbed to praise gosai (the sunrise at Mt. Fuji), worshiped the deities and Buddhas enshrined in the Nain (crater), and went on Ōkami Motoi walks around the summit’s crater. Many climbers still carry on these traditions today.

It is common to walk around the summit crater one time in a clockwise direction. There are eight peaks seen from the summit, so the summit was often called “hakusei” (eight petals) to symbolize the lotus flower, or the seat upon which the Buddha sits.
Lakes containing hidden mysteries were created as well as a network of strange natural springs.

Mt. Fuji’s eruptions brought many wonders

About fifteen thousand years ago, water seeped into the caved-in area created by an eruption of “Ko-Fuji” or “Old Mt. Fuji” volcano and created the four lakes: Lake Utsuko, Lake Senoumi, Old Lake Kawaguchiko, and Lake Asunoko. Each time an eruption occurred, the number and shapes of the lakes changed. Lava flow coming from the eruptions divided Lake Utsuko into Lake Yamanakako and Lake Oshinoko. It created Lake Kawaguchiko and cut Senoumi. It also created Lake Motosuko. After that, Lake Oshinoko mostly dried up which left the Oshino Hakai (eight ponds of Oshino). The major Jogan eruption of 864 split Senoumi into Lake Saiiko and Lake Shojiko. The three lakes: Saiiko, Shojiko, and Motosuko share a consistently fixed water level, so it’s assumed that they are all connected by an underground water vein. The expansive Aokigahara Jukai primeval forest has spread out over a long period of time over a lava field on the skirts of the mountain. Lava caves and tree molds created by eruptions are scattered throughout the area.

Motosuko is the deepest and clearest of the Fuji Five Lakes. The view from the northwest bank is illustrated on the 1000 yen bill. It’s known as Koba no Haru or Lakeside Spring (photo taken by Okada Kei). Nanashka Daisymaigun and several other historical spots still remain. Fresh water scuba diving, sockeye salmon fishing, and camping are popular here.

(Area: 4.70km², Depth: 121.6m, Circumference: 11.62km, Height: 300m)
This is the smallest of the Fuji Five Lakes. In 1895, a British man named Harry Stewart Whitworth established this location as having the best view of Mt. Fuji and built the first hotel in the Fuji Five Lakes Area here. From the nature observation route, you can trace the movement of the Aokigahara Lava flow. This is also considered a fishing mecca throughout the Kanto Region for its herabuna fishing.

Lake Shojiko

A mysterious lake surrounded in an ancient natural setting

This indigo-colored lake is the second deepest of the Fuji Five Lakes and serves as a habitat to Fuji Marimo moss balls. Kunimasu, a type of sockeye salmon, had not been seen for about 70 years, but they were discovered here in 2010. This amazing find garnered considerable attention. On the west bank are the primeval woods called the Aokigahara Jukai forest, where you can see lava caves like the: Ryouga Dokuten, Fagakura Fudou, and the Niersawa Hyouetsu.

Lake Saiko

A view over Lake Shojiko at "Kodaki Fuji" Mt. Fuji cradling a child! from above the Aokigahara Jukai forest.

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A view over Lake Shojiko at "Kodaki Fuji" Mt. Fuji cradling a child! from above the Aokigahara Jukai forest.
The northern shoreline is rugged, providing many great viewpoints of Mt. Fuji from the lakefront. With cherry blossoms in the spring, lavenders in the early summer, autumn leaves in the fall, and snowy landscapes in the winter, each of the four seasons has its own special must-see scenic view. Sightseeing areas line this lakeside leisure paradise that offers marine sports, cycling, and bass fishing.

Area: 5.70km², Depth: 14.6m, Circumferenza: 20.54km, Height: 830m

**Lavenders of Oishi Park**
Herb Festival (Late June - Mid July)
Perfect location to see lavender flowers stretched out along the lakeside and great views of Mt. Fuji in the summer.

**Lake Kawaguchiko north bank**
Autumn leaves viewing location
See the “Maple Corridor” lined by some 60 giant trees and the natural “Maple Tunnel!”

**Lake Kawaguchiko**
A scene of “Sakasa Fuji” (Mt. Fuji with its reflection on the lake) boasting Mt. Fuji’s beautiful symmetry

**Kawaguchiko Asama Jinja Shrine**
The Chinkasai (Fire Extinguishing Festival) is said to have once been held here to worship Asama Myojin in 865, the year after the Great Jogan Eruption. As the center of Mt. Fuji worship, the streets were lined with Kawaguchi Oshi pilgrim’s inns. ☎️(0555) 76-7188

**Nanahori Sugi**
Designated as a prefectural Natural Monument
Sacred trees over one thousand years old. The “two pillar cedar” is a believed to be a spiritual hot spot for attracting new relationships.

**Chigo no Mai (Children’s Dance)**
Designated as an Important Intangible Cultural Property
Little girls perform dances to honor the Magami Festival (April 25) and Daidai Ohagura Festival (July 29).

**The Oldest Mt. Fuji Shrine**
**Fuji Omuro Sengen Jinja Shrine**
The Hongu (main shrine) was built in 699 at Mt. Fuji’s 2nd Sta., and then moved to the Lake Kawaguchiko shoreline area and became the Satoyama (Village) Shrine in 588. Designated as an Important Cultural Asset by the Japanese government. Many historical documents still remain. ☎️(0555) 83-2399

**Takeda school horseback archery**
This tradition started in 940 as a religious ritual to offer prayers for battle victory. **Yahatsune Matsuri (Horseback Archery Festival)** (April 29, Place: Shikkogo Park)

**Lakeside literary monuments**
There are two literary monuments along the lakeside pathway that extend from Yakubayashi Park to Misaka Pass.

**Monument for Dazai Osamu**
The passage, “Evening primroses complement Mt. Fuji very well,” is engraved from the novel “One Hundred Views of Mt. Fuji” when he visited in 1943.

**Misaka Pass**
Designated as a prefectural Natural Monument
The passage, “Opening procession complement Mt. Fuji very well,” is engraved from the novel “Fugaku Hyakkei” (One Hundred Views of Fuji) by Dazai Osamu. It documented a three-month stay in the “Two Pikes” teahouse from Sept. 1942. The teahouse’s second floor has a collection of his works.

**Literary monument of Tanaka Fuyuji**
This monument was designed based on a poem written by Tanaka Fuyuji when he visited in 1953.
Okada Koyo Photo Museum

Fuji Yusui-no-sato Aquarium

Educational Museum of the Forest

Visit the clear freshwater aquarium that uses spring water and an educational museum with a crafts workshop.

3

ʢAquariumʣ

ʢEducational museumʣ

Koike Kunio Etegami Museum

With the motto, “Bad technique is not only okay, it is ideal” Koike combined poetry, calligraphy, and drawings on one postcard. Visitors can make illustrated letters here.

ʢReservations requiredʣ

Mt. Fuji seen from Nijumagari Pass

A favorite Mt. Fuji viewing location of Okada Koyo. Trailheads for climbing Mt. Shakushiyama and Mt. Ishiwariyama are also located here.

Visiting the springs of Oshino Hakkai

These eight spring ponds, which have been revered since historic times as the “Springs of God,” have been the source of many legends. The “Oshino Hakkai Festival” is held on August 8.

The eight ponds of Mt. Fuji underground water are included in the “Top 100 Spring Waters of Japan.” It travels many years to reach the surface and was considered a holy spot for Mt. Fuji worshippers. Beautiful village scenery also covers the area. A local photographer, Okada Koyo, made scenes from this village, known as “Oshino Fuji,” famous worldwide.

Area Map of the Oshino Hakkai

28 29
Located on a 1000 meter high plain, this is the closest lake to Mt. Fuji.

Lake Yamanakako

The largest of the Fuji Five Lakes, Lake Yamanakako, is a high plain lake that ranks as the third highest lake in Japan. As a summer resort, the east bank is alive with young people enjoying tennis. Numerous literature and art museums dot the area around the south bank near Asahigaoka. This is the southern limit of moss balls, which were first discovered in the Fuji Five Lakes in 1956. It is known as “Swan Lake” where Whooper Swans reside throughout the winter.

Beni Fuji / Aka Fuji

“Beni Fuji” (Crimson Mt. Fuji) refers to the view of a snow-covered Mt. Fuji on a winter morning. “Aka Fuji” (Red Mt. Fuji) refers to the view of Mt. Fuji on a mid-summer and early autumn morning.

Yamanakako Hanamomiyako Park

Flower Fields

This park has expansive seasonal flowers that are viewed against a Mt. Fuji backdrop. It also has greenhouses with flowers that bloom throughout the year. Nature observing and crafting workshops are also available.

Yamanakako Forest Park of Literature

Monuments for notable poets and literature come with connections to the Lake Yamanakako Area on land owned and run by the Ministry of the Environment. This park is devoted to Mishima Yukio who is recognized as one of the world’s greatest writers. It is the Takahori Site (a famous journalist) Memorial Museum.

Mishima Yukio Literary Museum

This museum explores the themes of Mishima’s literature and exhibits special artifacts such as the author’s notebooks for the posthumously published “Ingo and Oto” (Two of Tragedy).

Jutoku-ji Temple

A unique festival where newlyweds and pregnant women carry a portable shrine and pray for conception and safe childbirth.

Michishina Yukio

A pristine tiger-tail spruce forest with 250 year old trees.

Jutoku-ji Temple

Praying for conception and safe childbirth

Yamanaka Myojin Anzan Festival

A unique multi-purpose park with an amphitheater and expansive view of Mt. Fuji and Lake Yamanakako.

Yamanakako Community Plaza Kirara

A unique viewing location where people can see the “Diamond Fuji” phenomenon, when the sun sets behind the real Mt. Fuji. It is also a famous location for watching fireworks.

Nagaike Shinsui Park

An expansive multi-purpose park with an amphitheater and great views of Mt. Fuji. It also has a hydrangea flower garden for visitors to learn about the environment.

Yamanakako Onsen

A high-alkaline hot spring that beautifies the skin.

Nakama Tampu Gravestone

Yamanakako Hirano Onsen

Praying for conception and safe childbirth

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