



Places Where We Want to Stay Again

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Dear Readers: when you came to Japan, where did you stay? Or, if you are planning to come to Japan, are there any specific places where you would like to stay?

Business hotels, guest houses, local inns, traditional ryokan: the list goes on. There are countless types of places to stay in Japan and if you are, like me, the type of person who struggles when it comes to choosing where, keep reading and this article may inspire you!

We will introduce two places to stay in Yamanashi. Each offers a completely different experience, but both are highly rated and beloved by Japanese and foreigners alike.

Hotorinite Inn : Experience Culture, Experience Heart

The Place

There are five lakes around Mt. Fuji, and Hotorinite Inn is located just in front of one of them, Lake Yamanaka. A unique inn, chosen as the number one place to stay in Japan by the reservation website Booking.com, it has also been highly rated by the site's users for many years.

Hotorinite Inn was a budget resort owned by the same family for more than sixty years, but in 2011 it was renovated by its third generation and the current owner, Mr. Takamura Naoki, along with his wife and son. They made the place more convenient and comfortable for customers, improving and adding to the facilities and services year by year.

The Facilities

From the outside, the inn looks as if it was a typical three-story house, but inside you can find three western style rooms and ten Japanese style rooms as well as relaxation spaces (a book corner, a massage corner, and a bonsai room) and common areas

(bathing rooms, toilets, a refrigerator, and a beverage corner). On the first floor also is a soy sauce stall, at which you can buy soy sauce from all over the country. Outside, bicycles are available for use by any guest, including child seats for those with kids.

The bonsai room on the second floor captivated us the most. The space used to be one of the guest rooms, but Mr. Takamura turned it into a bonsai themed room in order to create a pleasant area that guests can enjoy. We felt relaxed just by walking through and exploring this room and it was also a good opportunity to learn about the art of cultivating miniature sized trees.

The Guests

Extremely popular among foreigners, around eighty percent of the guests come from other countries. Most guests are from Asian countries, the majority being Taiwanese, Chinese, and Thai guests, but many tourists also come from Europe and America, and during our visit we happened to bump into a couple of visitors from Germany. Some years ago, it was typical for reservations to have been made by groups of ten or more, but nowadays as the style of traveling has changed, the number of solo travelers has increased.

The Heart

The thoughtful service provided by the owner himself is beyond comparison. A former musician, Mr. Takamura had no experience with hotel management but he knew that he wanted to work somewhere that he could interact and communicate with people. He used the facilities that were once run by his family and started Hotorinite Inn, creating services and thinking up strategies to assist and serve his guests.

For starters, for each group of incoming guests he spends thirty minutes giving an overview of the facilities and its surrounding areas including what to see and where to eat, utilizing a map he made himself to illustrate each location and give directions. Of course, there is plenty of other material that he provides, but one item in particular caught our eyes. Given the increasing number of visitors with diet restrictions due to health, culture, or religious reasons, and because many of them face problems when they are not able to communicate these restrictions in Japanese, Mr. Takamura provides a simple chart, also made by himself, that can be used at any store to explain what kinds of foods cannot be consumed by the guest.

Mr. Takamura kindly helps his guests not only before they check in by providing them with directions on how to get to Hotorinite Inn, but also when they check out by explaining what is the best way for them to reach their next destination – a service that I have never seen before. From these apparently small actions, he shows his thoughtfulness to all guests, making them feel at home.



HOSHINOYA Fuji :

Reconnect with Nature, Reconnect with Yourself



The Place

Located on top of a hill from where you have a beautiful view of Lake Kawaguchi, HOSHINOYA Fuji is the first glamping resort in Japan, where you can fully enjoy the best of what nature has to offer .

But what does “glamping” mean? A mix of glamorous and camping, the word glamping might not be well known worldwide but it is attracting a lot of attention lately. Usually, when camping, it is necessary to prepare food, drinks, a tent, and other miscellaneous supplies, but glamping provides you with everything, ready to be used, including comfortable accommodations. It is a hassle-free way to enjoy camp activities and thus is gaining in popularity.

HOSHINOYA Fuji is a place where you can escape from your daily routine while enjoying a variety of outdoor activities. Moreover, it is a place to get in touch with nature and heal the body and soul.

The Facilities

After leaving your car in the parking lot and checking in at the reception area, guests choose a special backpack full of camping tools. A glamping guide escorts you uphill in HOSHINOYA Fuji’s customized Jeep, taking you through a secluded road. This road takes you from one world and into another: a world full of nature.

About one hundred meters higher than the check-in area, you arrive to an area with the cabins, a front desk, a restaurant, and outdoor facilities. There are forty cabins

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in total, all private, and coming in four different arrangements to cater to different group sizes. Unlike normal camping accommodations, each is equipped with a bath and other amenities, providing a comfortable and relaxing ambience.

The front desk is open 24/7, able to provide support in both Japanese and English for guests during their stay, and depending on staff availability, support is also provided in Chinese and Korean.

Guests can enjoy preparing their own meals outdoors at the “Forest Kitchen,” having it prepared by a chef at the dining hall, or eating on the cabin’s terrace while appreciating the majestic scenery of Mt. Fuji. The menu is diverse and anyone regardless of religion or culture can find something to appreciate.

There are also plenty of outdoor activities and spots to enjoy, bringing you closer to nature. Immersed in a sea of giant trees there is a wooden deck with comfortable chairs, a library café, and hammocks where guests can relax while having a drink next to the bonfire. After the sunset, the pathways are illuminated by gentle lighting that perfectly suits the nature around them and the stars that shine brightly in the night sky.

The Experience

It is captivating to gaze upon Mt. Fuji from within the cabin, to see the changes in the natural environment as each of Japan’s four seasons pass by, and to reconnect with nature. But guests staying at HOSHINOYA Fuji can also participate in several activities that are only available in Yamanashi, such as the hunting tour, which impressed us the most.

With the guidance of a professional hunter, those willing to take part in this tour can step into the forests located at the foot of Mt. Fuji and watch a hunt from up close. Through this experience, it is possible to learn about the entire process of hunting, from shooting an animal to preparing it to be an ingredient. Besides this tour, guests are also offered seasonal activities such as a luxurious Mt. Fuji climbing tour in the summer and horse riding in the autumn, the latter being a prime season to admire autumn foliage.



Final thoughts
Home of Mt. Fuji, Yamanashi Prefecture has a wide diversity of tourist spots that can be appreciated throughout all seasons. But beyond these beautiful places are also amazing accommodations that will help turn your trip to Japan into an unforgettable one. From the cozy and warm-hearted Hotorinite Inn to the glamorous camping experience at HOSHINOYA Fuji, why not stay in Yamanashi next time you come to Japan?