



# LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

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Everywhere you look in Japan, things are happening. A country that has been on the receiving end of financial crises and natural disasters is emerging as a stronger nation thanks to a new economic growth strategy. Impressive and long-reaching developments in areas such as healthcare, food, tourism and culture are re-establishing Japan as a global power – and you can discover exactly what they entail over the following pages.

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# 01

## Introduction

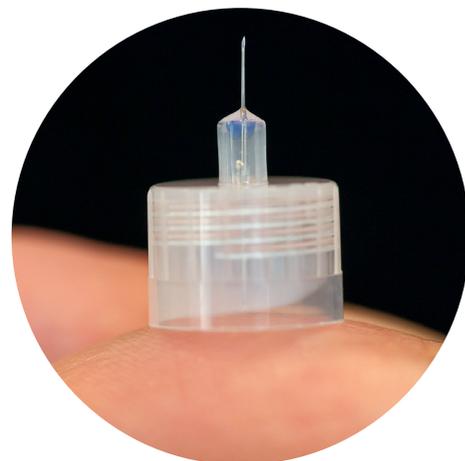
Progress and perfection

### Welcome

If you've been to Japan, there's a good chance this thought crossed your mind: *everything* works. It's not often you can say that about a country. In Japan the trains run on time, the service is unfailingly professional and courteous, the streets and parks are clean, safe and pedestrian-friendly and the food - both high-end fare and the everyday - is nuanced and flavourful. It's hard to fathom that cities so large and crowded can also be so liveable.

With its hi-tech advancements, innovations, elegant designs and sublime architecture, Japan is brimming with ideas that other countries would benefit from. Look at the Shinkansen bullet train's safety record, efforts to hook up renewable energy to the grid and the newly developed materials used for bridges, cars and robots. That's not to mention the utensils for chefs being made by artisans, the array of tailored technological solutions for farmers or the world-class art that's reinvigorating ageing remote communities. Never before has "Made in Japan" had such a ring to it.

It's not what you might expect from a country that's only now clawing its way back from more than two decades of economic stagnation and the devastating earthquake and tsunami in 2011. But it's there for all to see: Japan is constantly moving onwards and upwards.



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Japan's journey



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#### Introduction

A summary of the exciting changes taking place in Japan

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Japan's emphasis on medical progress can be seen in areas including ophthalmology, nutrition and the treatment of cancer

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Be it farming fish or making knives, the drive and expertise on show in Japan's food and agriculture industries is never less than inspiring

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Overseas visitors to Japan are on the rise - and with so many places to stay and things to do, it's easy to see why

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#### Culture

The traditions of Japanese culture are well known but a new generation is forging a strong reputation

Japan plans to push harder for solar, wind, biomass and other renewable-energy technologies - now accounting for 1.6 per cent of power - as a way of weaning itself off nuclear energy.

### BIOFUELS

#### How to make your own oil

Makoto Watanabe (pictured) says Japan could become an oil exporter some day. It sounds absurd: resource-poor Japan imports nearly all of the oil it needs to keep its economy going. But Watanabe, a biofuel expert, is referring to oil made in pools of microalgae.

At the University of Tsukuba, Watanabe's research team grows *Botryococcus* algae in dozens of large containers and tubes under special lamps, and in a sun-drenched greenhouse. The algae rely on sunlight, water and carbon dioxide to produce a type of fuel that could power cars, boats or aircraft. Watanabe has been working with city officials in Sendai and Tohoku University on a project at a sewage-treatment plant that uses microalgae to turn waste water into oil. The project is attracting attention because it could remove one of the biggest stumbling blocks in terms of commercialisation: the need for large plots of land for pools to produce algae in mass quantities, which is key to lowering the costs.

"Our biggest hurdles to commercialisation are production costs and the lack of a national programme that would give this momentum," says Watanabe. Concerned that Japan isn't moving fast enough, he is pushing Japanese researchers in the field to work with scientists overseas to find new ways of taking the idea to the business world. [algae-biomass-tsukuba.jp/en/index.html](http://algae-biomass-tsukuba.jp/en/index.html)



### SOLAR FARMS

#### Working the land

For Softbank, the earthquake and tsunami in 2011 were a call to action. The hi-tech incubator and mobile-phone operator wasted no time rounding up local governors and mayors to help promote renewable energy.

Now Softbank unit SB Energy is racing to put up solar panels around the country, with seven already generating energy for homes and businesses. The idea, says SB Energy deputy president Hiroaki Fujii, is to combat Japan's reliance on large-scale fossil-fuel power plants and nuclear energy. "We want to show the way for others to enter the field so this industry grows," he says. [mb.softbank.jp/en](http://mb.softbank.jp/en)



### CLEAN-ENERGY GRID

#### The new battery

The clean-energy grid of the future depends on something that's been around since the 19th century: batteries. On Japan's northernmost island of Hokkaido, the government is investing ¥20bn (€1.50m) in a giant battery developed by Sumitomo Electric Industries, which will help stabilise which will help stabilise the electricity from solar and wind farms.

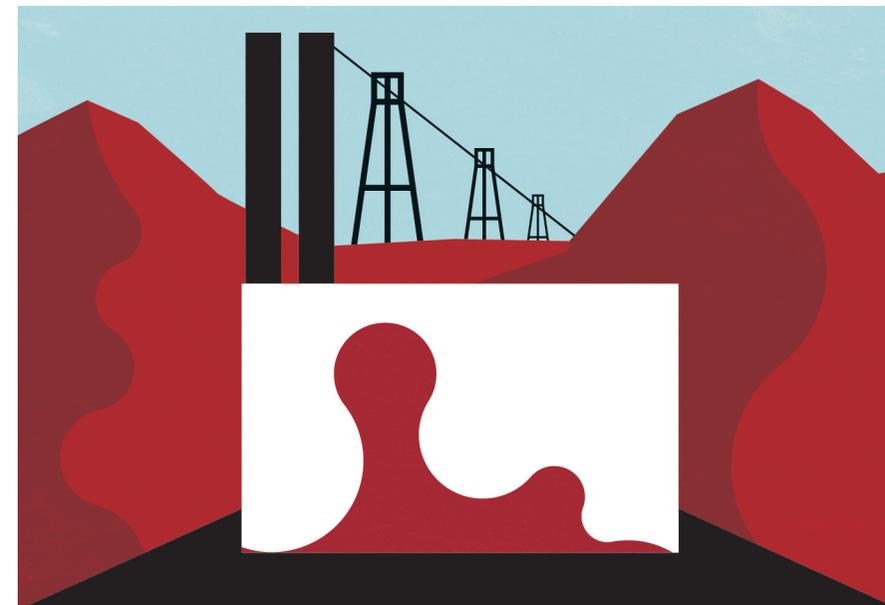
The battery uses a metal called vanadium to store energy and will be installed by 2015; it will help Hokkaido's power grids handle the unpredictable flows of power from solar and wind plants. It also gives Japanese firms a shot at breaking into energy markets in Europe and the US. [global-sei.com](http://global-sei.com)

### WIND POWER

#### Floating an idea

With typhoons pounding Japan every year, the country hasn't had much success with wind power. Now the government is investing ¥22bn (€165m) in a concept that could give the country's homegrown industry a boost: floating wind farms. Twenty kilometres off the coast of Fukushima, a consortium of manufacturers and research labs led by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry is testing the first of three floating wind turbines that could eventually be of huge benefit to a region that was hit hard by the 2011 disaster.

Officials say the project, which will run through 2015, will test everything from corrosion-resistant steel to hi-tech floats that can dampen waves and turn turbines to face the wind. [fukushima-forward.jp](http://fukushima-forward.jp)



### GEOHERMAL ENERGY

#### Warm glow

Japan ranks third in the world for geothermal potential after the US and Indonesia. Fuji Electric, Toshiba and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries have made improvements in turbines and corrosion-resistant pipes since the late 1950s; many global rivals have given up trying. That gives the trio a huge advantage as more countries look to tap this stable source of energy.

Fuji Electric, with a global share of 22 per cent, has been fulfilling orders from Turkey to Indonesia. "Geothermal is expensive but our equipment lasts decades," says Shigeto Yamada, the company's geothermal engineering chief. [fujielectric.com](http://fujielectric.com)

### COAL TECHNOLOGY

#### Cleaning up

Coal gets a bad rap for being a "dirty" energy source but Mitsubishi Heavy Industries has the technology to change that. The integrated coal gasification combined cycle (IGCC) cuts down on pollutants and beats conventional coal-fired turbines in terms of efficiency and operating costs. It also lets utilities burn low-grade coal and its power output can be cranked up quickly to make up for electricity shortfalls from renewable energy.

But researchers aren't finished: the New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organisation is working on a hi-tech successor. [mhi.co.jp/en/index.html](http://mhi.co.jp/en/index.html)



### FUEL CELLS

#### Gear change

Imagine using your car as a back-up generator in a blackout. Since 2012, Honda Motor has been testing the idea. On a full tank a fuel-cell car - which uses hydrogen to generate power - can supply seven hours of electricity to an average Japanese home for six days or several homes for a shorter period.

Honda is running an additional fuel-cell experiment: a refuelling pod for a fuel-cell car. The pod can draw power entirely from solar panels or tap the conventional electricity grid at night and on cloudy days to produce and store hydrogen for fuel-cell cars. [world.honda.com](http://world.honda.com)

# 04 Infrastructure

## Building a legacy

Infrastructure is a crucial element in any country's sustained development but in Japan's case it isn't only about building roads and bridges. Firms across the country are also working on major projects that include developing robots for disasters, adding smart safety technology to cars and using data to stay ahead of consumer trends.

### CAR TECHNOLOGY

#### An extra pair of eyes

Many car makers have rolled out crash-avoidance technology but it's often expensive; Subaru offers an affordable solution in both its luxury and compact models. On a test course in Tokyo, Fuji Heavy Industries electronic product design chief Mamoru Sekiguchi drives towards a barrier to demonstrate the EyeSight system, which uses two cameras inside the windscreen to alert the driver and automatically hits the brakes.

"If I don't react on time the technology is there to help," says Sekiguchi. EyeSight also adjusts the car's speed to keep a safe distance from cars ahead.

[subaru.jp/eyesight](http://subaru.jp/eyesight)



### LOGISTICS

#### Retail knowhow

Every day, nine million customers walk into Lawson convenience stores in Japan. With a network of 11,384 shops and an everchanging mix of products, the company relies on a sophisticated logistics system to ensure that deliveries are made and shelves well stocked – and it's a science that Tokyo-based Lawson is refining.

The company is linking the consumer-behaviour patterns it collects from loyalty cards to orders it places with producers; it's also working with more producers on the items it sells. "There's an element of trial and error now but eventually we could offer the knowhow to other companies," says Tomoyuki Kawanabe, Lawson's supply-chain management specialist.

[lawson.jp/en](http://lawson.jp/en)



### FUKUSHIMA POWER PLANT

#### A helping hand

After the 2011 earthquake and tsunami damaged the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, car maker Honda Motor offered to help. Since June 2013, a remote-controlled robot that Honda developed with Japan's National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology has been helping workers investigate areas where radiation levels are high.

Adapted from Honda's humanoid robot Asimo it bends, twists and extends, peeking into difficult-to-reach spaces. It shoots images, creates 3D maps and pinpoints radiation sources, all while minimising workers' exposure. [world.honda.com](http://world.honda.com)

### CARBON-FIBRE TECHNOLOGY

#### Crossing that bridge

Carbon-fibre-reinforced plastic has been used in planes, cars and body armour but Mitsui Sumitomo Construction plans to put it to another use. The Tokyo firm, which co-developed the technology with West Nippon Expressway, will build new bridges using a carbon fibre called aramid. This prevents rust, keeps the bridge standing for 100 years and cuts maintenance costs by up to 70 per cent. Another firm, Nippon Steel Sumikin Materials, is using carbon fibre to extend the lifespan of ageing bridges by 30 to 50 years.

[smcon.co.jp/english](http://smcon.co.jp/english); [nsmat.nssmc.com/nsmat/english](http://nsmat.nssmc.com/nsmat/english)

### DATA MINING

#### Science of selling

It's the most talked-about tech trend in the business world: mining "big data". The term refers to the act of sifting through huge databases for information to gain an edge over rivals. Car makers Honda and Toyota, hi-tech firms Fujitsu and Sony and wireless operators KDDI and DoCoMo are among a growing number of Japanese firms crunching the numbers. The data might reveal why consumers decide to buy or how to reduce traffic congestion. Plus, given how discerning their local consumers are, Japanese companies could use this data to help businesses elsewhere anticipate trends in their own markets.



### ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

#### Friendly robot

In August, a 34cm-tall robot called Kirobo (top) introduced itself at the International Space Station and became the first talking humanoid robot to blast into orbit. Developed by University of Tokyo researcher Tomotaka Takahashi (above) and Toyota Motor, Kirobo can recognise voices and hold a conversation. [kibo-robot.jp/en](http://kibo-robot.jp/en)



### SPACE POLICY

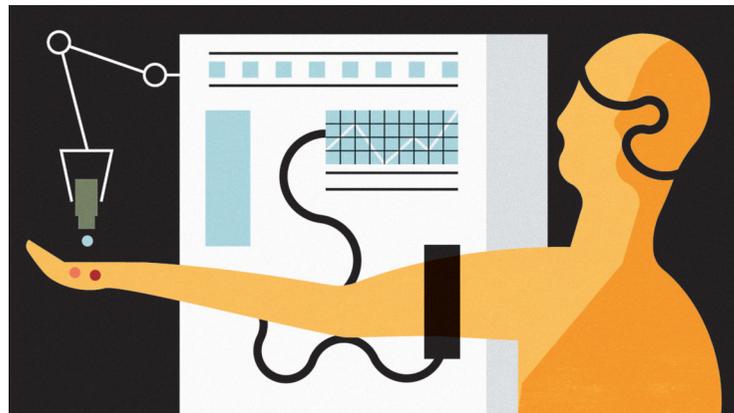
#### Lift-off for ideas

Japan's space policy has a new set of priorities. The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) is now focusing on projects that align with national security policies and offer benefits to the corporate sector. This includes a constellation of satellites that gives Japan its own GPS network and another set to help Southeast Asian nations with disaster preparedness.

Attention-grabbing missions are getting the nod, too. Hayabusa2, set to launch by 2015, will spend four years travelling from Earth to collect samples from an asteroid that could offer clues about the origin of our solar system. [jaxa.jp/index\\_e.html](http://jaxa.jp/index_e.html)

EPSILON LAUNCH VEHICLE (EPSILON-1), JAXA/JOE NISHIZAWA

Japan takes a holistic approach to medical advances. Robots are being created to assist overworked doctors, the operation of CT scanners is being improved and promising treatments for cancer and other diseases are being researched.



### NURSING-CARE ROBOTS

## Curative contraptions

Nursing-care robots are set to meet a shortage of staff in Japan's healthcare sector. Over the next five years, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry plans to extend financial support to businesses and universities with good ideas in this area; this year the ministry is spending ¥2.4bn on subsidies for best-in-industry technologies. Examples so far have included smart sensors for doctors to keep an eye on dementia patients at home, wearable robotic gear to help elderly patients get around and hi-tech slings for caregivers to move patients from their beds. [meti.go.jp/english/index.html](http://meti.go.jp/english/index.html)

### OPHTHALMOLOGY

## Sight saving

When Kyoto University scientist Shinya Yamanaka won the Nobel Prize for medicine in 2012, it brought worldwide attention to Japan's pioneering work in stem-cell research.

Stem cells from the body can be reprogrammed into different types, becoming the starter material for new body tissue in transplants and treatments. At the Riken Center for Developmental Biology in Kobe, ophthalmologist Masayo Takahashi has become the first in the world to begin tests to determine whether eye tissue grown from induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS) – taken from a patient's skin – can reverse the damage to sight caused by age-related macular degeneration.

Working with the Institute for Biomedical Research and Innovation and the Kobe City Medical Center General Hospital, Takahashi hopes to show that transplants with regenerated retinas are safe and effective enough to be used on humans. Once she's made that breakthrough, she intends to make the treatment widely available to patients within a decade. [riken.jp/en/research/labs/cdb/retin\\_regen](http://riken.jp/en/research/labs/cdb/retin_regen)



### NUTRITION

## Health at work

At electronic scale maker Tanita, the company motto is "Prevent obesity" – and the Tokyo firm practises what it preaches. Staff eat tasty, low-calorie meals in the canteen and carry pedometers that send information on body fat and other criteria from electronic scales around the office.

"You start making healthier choices about your own lifestyle," says spokeswoman Mie Fukuoka. Recently the canteen chief and nutritionist Nanako Ogino wrote a bestselling cookbook on low-calorie meals that led to a movie deal, and the company opened Tanita Shokudo, a restaurant that serves the canteen's meals. [tanita.co.jp](http://tanita.co.jp)

### CRAFTSMANSHIP

## Fine tuning

Several years ago, researchers at medical-equipment manufacturer Terumo set themselves an ambitious challenge: to develop a needle so small that injections would become painless. They're getting closer. Since 2005 the Tokyo-based firm has sold Nanopass (right), a short needle that tapers to a finer tip than conventional syringe needles. Making the needle required an innovative approach, with laser-welding technology usually used on cars, precision equipment favoured by watchmakers and hi-tech metal-sharpening knowhow all involved. [terumo.com](http://terumo.com)



### Q&A

## Yoshiyuki Sankai

PRESIDENT AND CEO,  
CYBERDYNE

**Question:** What's Hal and where are you marketing it?

**Yoshiyuki Sankai:** Hal (pictured) is a pair of robotic legs that's meant to assist walking and aid motor-neuron recovery. We're the first to crack the market: this year we have certification from the German healthcare system.

**Q:** Do you consider yourself a scientist or a businessman?

**YS:** I am a scientist who has had to learn the ways of business. There are many robotic systems being developed in Japan but only a few are for practical use and even fewer have medical applications. [cyberdyne.jp/english](http://cyberdyne.jp/english)



### CANCER TREATMENT

## Targeted therapy

At Japan's top cancer-treatment centres, researchers have spent two decades working on carbon ion radiotherapy, an innovative method that uses a beam of ions to zap cancers with little damage to healthy cells. The effort has been led by the National Institute of Radiological Sciences where physicians have treated 6,000 patients, some with tumors that couldn't be removed through surgery.

The treatment has a particular benefit: shorter hospital visits. "In some cases the treatment is just one day," says Tadashi Kamada, director of the institute's Research Centre for Charged Particle Therapy. [nirs.go.jp/ENG/index.shtml](http://nirs.go.jp/ENG/index.shtml)



### DIPLOMACY

## Global reach

Japan's leader has taken on a new role: pitching Japanese products during state visits. For a trip to Moscow in 2013, prime minister Shinzo Abe took along Sumitomo Heavy Industries executives to promote their state-of-the-art boron neutron capture therapy system, a device used to treat cancer.

Abe has also reached a pact with the United Arab Emirates to dispatch doctors, export medical equipment and open a medical centre offering particle radiotherapy for cancer patients, as well as agreeing to co-operate with Saudi Arabia in the medical-services sector.

Japan prides itself on the craftsmanship behind producing and preparing food – and its agricultural sector is benefitting from consumers paying more attention to where food is grown.



### FOOD EXPORT

#### On the world's menu

Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is now marketing farm produce, fish and timber in other countries with its "Made FROM Japan, Made BY Japan, Made IN Japan" strategy. It's also backing businesses that promote Japan's food with the aim of topping ¥1trn in exports by 2020 – up from ¥450bn now. [maff.go.jp/e](http://maff.go.jp/e)

### FRESH FISH

#### Off the scales

Hours before sunrise the staff at Kamewa Shoten in Tsukiji market fill orders of almasco jack, snow crabs and pike conger for the Hotel Okura, the Imperial Hotel and the city's speciality supermarkets. Owner Kazuhiko Wada, his father and grandfather have built their reputation over nearly eight decades. While upholding the family tradition, Kazuhiko, 51, is trying to usher in change. His company was the first in Japan to be certified by the London-based nonprofit organisation Marine Stewardship Council, which sets standards for sustainable fishing and seafood traceability. [kamewa.co.jp](http://kamewa.co.jp)



### CULINARY EDUCATION

#### Passing on the skills

Shizuo Tsuji's 1980 cookbook *Japanese Cooking: A Simple Art* demystified Japan's culinary traditions. The Tsuji Culinary Institute (TCI), which he founded in Osaka, trains chefs from around the world. Instructors sharpen their skills at Brushstroke, a New York restaurant opened by the TCI Group and chef David Bouley. [tsujicho.com/index.html](http://tsujicho.com/index.html)



### Q&A

#### Kaoru Izuha

##### SAKE SOMMELIER

Izuha manages the Sushi Sora restaurant at the Mandarin Oriental Tokyo and is the 2012 *kikizake-shi* (sake sommelier) champion.

**Question:** How do you become a sake sommelier?  
**Kaoru Izuha:** You study sake history, brewing methods, rice types and flavour profiles.

**Q:** Are there different sakes for different seasons?

**KI:** In summer I'd suggest an aromatic sake to accompany a fish such as mackerel with its light flavour. In winter a robust, full-bodied sake can stand up to fatty *chutoro* (bluefin tuna belly).

**Q:** Does temperature matter?

**KI:** Sake can be chilled, served at room temperature or warmed to 60C.

**Q:** What non-Japanese food does sake complement?

**KI:** Sake and goat's cheese go well together and a sake with a lively bouquet is nice with Italian or French cuisine.

[mandarinoriental.com/tokyo](http://mandarinoriental.com/tokyo)



### ORGANIC FOOD

#### Market force

As Japan's appetite for organic food grows, so too does its interest in food provenance. Osaka design firm Graf expanded its activities in 2010 with Fantastic Market, which connects producers from areas such as Shiga and Awaji Island with consumers and restaurateurs. It even helps farmers with design and packaging. [graf-d3.com/market](http://graf-d3.com/market)

### CROP OBSERVATION

#### Farming's future

Yuriko Kato (*right*) is a former agriculture researcher who has worked on everything from growing plants in space to electronic chips. She now heads M2 Labo, a firm based in Shizuoka that is helping farmers to modernise their trade. On a nearby tea plantation she shows off a white cylinder packed with a camera and sensors that keeps tabs on temperature, humidity and sunlight and allows tea producers to analyse how weather influences productivity. Such information is crucial as farmers look to teach the next generation. [m2-labo.jp](http://m2-labo.jp)



### KITCHEN UTENSILS

#### Sharp operator

Yoshikazu Tanaka (*above*), a 63-year-old master knife craftsman, has been hammering blades by hand for more than 40 years. His workshop is in Sakai, a city in Osaka prefecture where knife-making has been a tradition for centuries; the area's artisans are now renowned globally for their super-sharp knives for the kitchen.

Tanaka's blades are highly prized by top chefs all around the world and he's making sure that it's a reputation and tradition that remains intact: as a matter of priority he's now passing on the secrets of the trade to his son, Yoshihisa.

### FARMING RECRUITMENT

#### New generation

Farmers in Japan are an ageing breed but Pasona Group, a staff-recruitment firm specialising in clerical, technical and IT services, is helping to persuade younger Japanese people to shed their suits and go back to the land.

Since 2010, the company has used its Tokyo headquarters as a showcase for urban farming. In the lobby, pumpkins dangle from trellises and mist machines spray a patch of aubergines, while lettuce grows in a room full of hydroponic (soilless) trays. "Young city dwellers don't feel close to what farmers do," says Sayaka Itami, who heads the company's urban-farm division. "We hope to raise awareness in the city about farming and the goal is to create farm-sector jobs." [pasonagroup.co.jp/english](http://pasonagroup.co.jp/english)



# Tourism

## Redefining travel

Be it island hopping for an art festival, food shopping in the same shops as professional chefs or eating a bento on a bullet train, nowhere but Japan will you find such a single-minded determination to offer the highest-quality experiences. Factor in the exquisite restaurants and luxurious accommodation and you need to prepare to be spoiled by top-notch service wherever you go.

### Q&A

## Fram Kitagawa

SETOUCHI ART TRIENNALE, DIRECTOR

**Question:** *The first Triennale was in 2010. What's new in 2013?*  
**Fram Kitagawa:** It's now 12 islands in the Seto Inner Sea - we added five to the programme. There are around 200 works of art by artists representing 24 countries and territories. It takes about a week to see everything.  
**Q:** *How has art transformed these islands?*  
**FK:** The islands' population had fallen and communities had gone into decline. Contemporary art has given locals something to be proud of. It has also offered people a chance to rediscover the islands' natural beauty and given locals a chance to interact with the outside world. On Ogishima, the schools were shut because there were too few children. But the art festival has brought families back and next spring the schools will reopen.  
[setouchi-artfest.jp/en](http://setouchi-artfest.jp/en)



### TOKYU HANDS

## Shop till you drop

As every Tokyo citizen knows, there's only one shop to go to when all others fail: Tokyu Hands. It's hard to do justice to the contents of this extraordinary emporium. From tools and kitchen equipment to travel goods and stationery, the depth and breadth of the goods on offer is stunning.  
The Shibuya branch is an institution. Opened in 1978, it boasts a stock of 150,000 items and more than 260 knowledgeable staff who go out of their way to find just what customers are looking for. All this and a cheerily upbeat soundtrack to shop by.  
[tokyu-hands.co.jp/foreign.html](http://tokyu-hands.co.jp/foreign.html)



### FOREIGN VISITORS

## Welcome return

Japan's tourism sector suffered for several months after the devastating Tohoku earthquake and tsunami in 2011. However, now visitors are returning in droves: this year, the number of tourists from overseas is expected to top 10 million - a record. This is raising hopes that Japan's long-term goal of 20 million tourists a year is attainable. Since July, relaxed visa requirements for citizens from Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, the Philippines and Indonesia have lowered barriers and given extra momentum to the tourism boom.  
[mlit.go.jp/kankochu/en](http://mlit.go.jp/kankochu/en)



### KITCHEN ESSENTIALS

## Happy choppers

Kama-Asa Shoten, in Tokyo's Kappabashi district, is a chefs' favourite. Founded in 1908, it sells more than 1,000 knives along with cast-iron pans, wasabi graters and other essentials.  
[kama-asa.co.jp/en](http://kama-asa.co.jp/en)

### TRAIN MEALS

## Bento on wheels

What makes a long-distance train ride in Japan pleasurable is the perfect meal: a bento box made from the season's freshest ingredients. These *ekiben* (from the words for station and bento) aren't your average takeaway meals: they're as beautiful as they are tasty, offering a sample of regional recipes.  
Ekibenya Matsuri at Tokyo Station sells more than 170 types of bento box meals. *Takomeshi* with octopus from Takamatsu, grilled *Yonezawa* beef from Yamagata and *Shake-ikura* with salmon and roe from Sendai are all shipped in daily.  
[nre.co.jp](http://nre.co.jp)



### TRAIN TRAVEL

## Right track

With every new generation, Japan's Shinkansen run more quickly, quietly and safely. The latest addition is East Japan Railway's E6 Super Komachi (*right*), which travels between Tokyo and Akita at top speeds of 300km/h.  
Meanwhile, Central Japan Railway has resumed testing on the Maglev, the world's fastest magnetic-levitation train that can reach 500km/h. Offering travel at a different pace is JR Kyushu's Seven Stars in Kyushu, a sleeper train with 14 wood-panelled suites, a dining car and bar.  
[english.jr-central.co.jp/index.html](http://english.jr-central.co.jp/index.html)  
[jrkyushu.co.jp/english/index.html](http://jrkyushu.co.jp/english/index.html)



### HOSPITALITY

## Staying power

The Tokyo Station Hotel (*bottom*) reopened last year after a lengthy refurbishment. Set in the iconic redbrick portion of the station dating back to 1914, the 150-room property combines impeccable service and modern luxury with an interior that recalls old-world travel.  
For a more traditional experience, Fujiya Inn (*top*) in the scenic hot-spring town of Ginzan is a family-run ryokan that took the bold step of hiring architect Kengo Kuma for a complete makeover of its old wooden building.  
[thetokystationhotel.jp/](http://thetokystationhotel.jp/)  
[fujiya-ginzan.com/english](http://fujiya-ginzan.com/english)



### COFFEE

## Best brews

So passionate are Tokyo's baristas about coffee making that they elevate it to an art form. From the sourcing, roasting and blending of beans to the brewing techniques (drip, steep, boil, pressure and siphon) and the final pour, their meticulous approach to the whole process borders on the fanatical.  
Grab an espresso at standing bars Omotesando Koffee or Café Kitsuné, or a drip-brew at Little Nap Coffee Stand, the Be a Good Neighbor kiosk or tiny café Onibus Coffee. If a more leisurely experience appeals, settle in an armchair with a cup of Maruyama Coffee's latest roast at Tsutaya's Anjin Lounge.

Japan's creative industries are reinventing retail, proving that design can freshen up travel and improve lifestyles. Forward-thinkers are also stretching the boundaries of anime and showing how culture is more than just the traditional arts.

**CREATIVE INDUSTRIES**  
**Spreading the word**

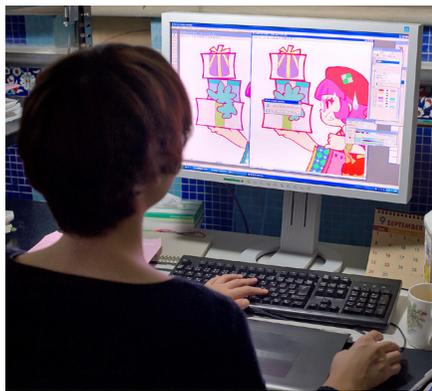
During New York's Fashion Week, Japan plans to put on a show of its own. Funded by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and organised by department-store chain Mitsukoshi-Isetan, the event, Japan Senses, will feature gallerists, a sake brewer, restaurateurs and a fashion designer. The programme is one of 13 events showcasing everything from ramen and anime to *gyaru* ("gal") fashion in cities from Jakarta to Paris over the coming months. The ¥460m (€3.5m) Cool Japan Strategy Promotion Project aims to raise the profile of the country's creative industries. [meti.go.jp/english/index.html](http://meti.go.jp/english/index.html)



**Q&A**  
**Kenya Hara**  
FOUNDER, HARA DESIGN INSTITUTE

In 2013, Hara organised House Vision Tokyo, an architecture exhibition staged on a plot facing Tokyo Bay. An all-star cast of Japanese architects - including Kengo Kuma, Toyo Ito, Shigeru Ban and Sou Fujimoto - worked with Tsutaya Books, Lixil, Honda, Ryohin Keikaku (Muji) and others on seven homes.

**Question:** What is House Vision?  
**Kenya Hara:** It's an exhibition that offers ideas about the future home. The seven we showed might not be built right away - some are futuristic, some practical. We were mainly interested in trying to change conventional thinking. We want consumers to realise that a home shouldn't be designed by construction firms; consumers should create their own. A home should reflect the inhabitant's lifestyle.  
**Q:** How can this help Japan?  
**KH:** By rethinking what a home is, Japan can spread its influence to other Asian countries. [house-vision.jp/en.html](http://house-vision.jp/en.html)



**ANIME**  
**Screen dreams**

Eiko Tanaka, president of anime firm Studio 4°C, is on a mission to help Japan's talented anime directors reach a global audience. Her Tokyo production company has worked with studios in Russia, France and the US and boasts an impressive body of work that is expanding the possibilities of the genre. [studio4c.co.jp](http://studio4c.co.jp)



**Q&A**  
**Kenmei Nagaoka**  
FOUNDER,  
D&DEPARTMENT

**Question:** Why does D&Department focus on long-lasting Japan-made products?  
**Kenmei Nagaoka:** We've been through an economic downturn and natural disasters. We need to think about everyday items that can be used for a long time. This country has lost its sense of the value of things.

**Q:** So far you have released 10 of 47 design-centric travel-guide books from Japan's prefectures. What is behind your decision to focus on individual districts?  
**KN:** For decades tourism in Japan has been a case of visiting places in a big tour bus but if that were to continue it wouldn't inspire the digital generation to travel. I want younger Japanese to see that each prefecture is unique. [d-department.com](http://d-department.com)



**FASHION**  
**Dress to impress**

Japan's reputation for style is manifested in the home-grown labels that make a virtue of its craftsmanship. "Made in Japan" is a selling point for brands such as 45rpm (below, middle and right), which is known for denims and indigo fabrics dyed the traditional way. The company works closely with factories in Japan to create the best textiles and has its flagship store in a picturesque wooden house. Cult label Visvim (right and below, left) has fans around the world but stays close to its roots. Founder and creative director Hiroki Nakamura started the company back in 2001 and offers a mix of hi-tech fabrics and old-school techniques, which include garments dyed in mud and persimmon juice. Moonstar's Shoes Like Pottery project takes the rubber-soled shoe to a new level: a flexible and hardwearing trainer with a simple silhouette made with an attention to detail that's worthy of a footwear company founded in 1873. [45rpm.jp](http://45rpm.jp); [visvim.tv](http://visvim.tv); [shoeslikepottery.com](http://shoeslikepottery.com)



**DESIGN**  
**Well schooled**

Musashino Art University (otherwise known as Musabi) is one of Japan's best-known art and design schools, with an array of courses on offer and an illustrious list of alumni in fields ranging from manga to sculpture. Located in Tokyo, the university was founded in 1929. International exchange is strongly encouraged and visiting professors put in regular appearances. [musabi.ac.jp/english](http://musabi.ac.jp/english)



**MOUNT FUJI**  
**Natural wonder**

Mount Fuji has inspired haikus, painters and pilgrims for centuries and is now a Unesco World Heritage site, attracting more than 300,000 climbers a year. [whc.unesco.org/en/list/1418](http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1418)





**Japan.** Sharing tomorrow.