

Inspirational Views: Present and Past

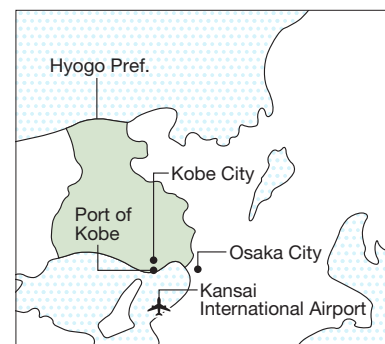


Port of Kobe: Hyogo Prefecture

January 2017 marked the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Port of Kobe to international trade. Thanks to the calm waters of its naturally protected harbor, Kobe had long developed as a maritime trading hub, and since the opening of the port it has come to play a major part in Japan's international commerce. Also, the many tourist attractions in and around Kobe, along with the beauty of the port itself, have in recent years been drawing a growing number of cruise ships to make stops here.

In the Rokko Mountains, which rise up behind the port, are springs of water with a high mineral content, thanks to which the Kobe area has become famous as one of Japan's leading sake-brewing regions.

The Port of Kobe is just 30 minutes by train from Osaka, and the nearby Kobe Airport offers frequent flights on various routes.





Echizen Ono Castle: Fukui Prefecture

Echizen Ono Castle is in Fukui Prefecture, which faces the Sea of Japan; it is located in the city of Ono, approximately three hours from Osaka by train.

The castle, designed to be both a residence and a fortress for the lord who ruled the area, features a four-story keep and an adjoining small two-story tower, and is reinforced with moats, stone walls, and thick gates. Originally constructed in the late sixteenth century, it stands on a hilltop with an elevation of 249 meters (817 feet).

During the period from October through April, when temperature and humidity conditions are right, a sea of clouds covers the surrounding area, completely hiding the modern city below and presenting an ethereal scene of a castle out of time. This fantastic scene of what is called the “castle in the sky” transports viewers several centuries into the past.

