



JAPAN



New ideas start here



Japan. Meetings & Events
New ideas start here



JAPAN

an enhanced environment for innovative thinking

Mt. Fuji

Everybody knows about Japan's unique culture, unbeatable hospitality and world-class infrastructure. It's this combination that makes it such a popular destination among international association planners and delegates. But let's not forget what makes Japan too: this unique mix of rich traditions and world-renowned scientific developments. Because in Japan, it seems, new ideas start on a daily basis.

Report Rémi Dévé

Japan may have it all: snow-capped mountains in the North, pine-clad islands in the South, world-class infrastructure all over, unique culture and innovative developments... In fact, coming to Japan brings visitors into contact with the imagination and intelligence of the country's outstanding people and culture, touching upon its high quality, technological expertise and creativity. This combination will undoubtedly lead to new ways of thinking and reflecting, inspiring new ideas and triggering insights you would have a hard time finding anywhere else.

Aiming to be the leading MICE destination in Asia by 2030 and already looking beyond the 2020 Olympics, Japan boasts one of the largest national memberships within many international associations, and has a world-class record of hosting successful international association events. With several industry clusters around the country (see map), it's easy to find links that will help associations grow their membership and congresses boost their attendance.

New ideas start in Japan because, *culturally*, it is simply very powerful. On one hand, 'kaizen', the commitment to continual improvement, ensures that the organiser's needs will be fully met, while, on the other, 'omotenashi', the formidable sensitivity to guest needs and sense of service, will guarantee the smooth running of any meeting.

EASY ACCESS TO AND IN JAPAN

Direct international flights

Nearly all major international airlines offer flights to Japan, serving one of Japan's three major international hub airports, with Tokyo's Narita Airport, Osaka's Kansai Airport and Nagoya's Chubu Centrair Airport. The country also boasts over 30 regional airports serving other Asian destinations.

Domestic Transportation

Domestic Flights: There are over ninety domestic airports throughout Japan, making it possible for visitors to reach all corners of Japan from within two hours of arriving in Tokyo.

Railways: There are 27,000 km of rails connecting every corner of Japan. This huge system is known for its efficiency and is almost always accurate to the minute. Who hasn't heard, indeed, of the Shinkansen ("bullet train"), linking large cities and making rail travel often even quicker than flying?

Urban Railways and Subways: In Japan's largest cities like Tokyo and Osaka, the rail and subway systems are circularly-arranged with lines radiating from the city centres. They make travel around cities very fast and convenient.



THREE QUESTIONS TO MAMORU KOBORI, JAPAN NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANIZATION

As a wrapup of my intense trip in Japan in December, I met with JNTO Executive Vice President, who shared his thoughts and insights about what makes Japan a great association destination.

“New ideas starts here”, according to the recent tagline: in what way(s) is Japan innovative?

Japan’s profile on the international scene has a bit weakened over the last decade, with the emergence of new MICE destinations and the fierce competition in Asia in particular and in the world in general. It was time for us to come up with something new, something that is immediately recognisable in the international market. “New Ideas start here” indicates that we can provide an enhanced environment for innovative thinking. If Japan has all the hardware you can expect, it’s the software that is important, not only the traditional elements you expect to find, but also the fresh, advanced technologies and industries. If you organise a meeting in Japan, it will be likely that more ideas will be created on that occasion.

How does the tagline translate into the meetings industry?

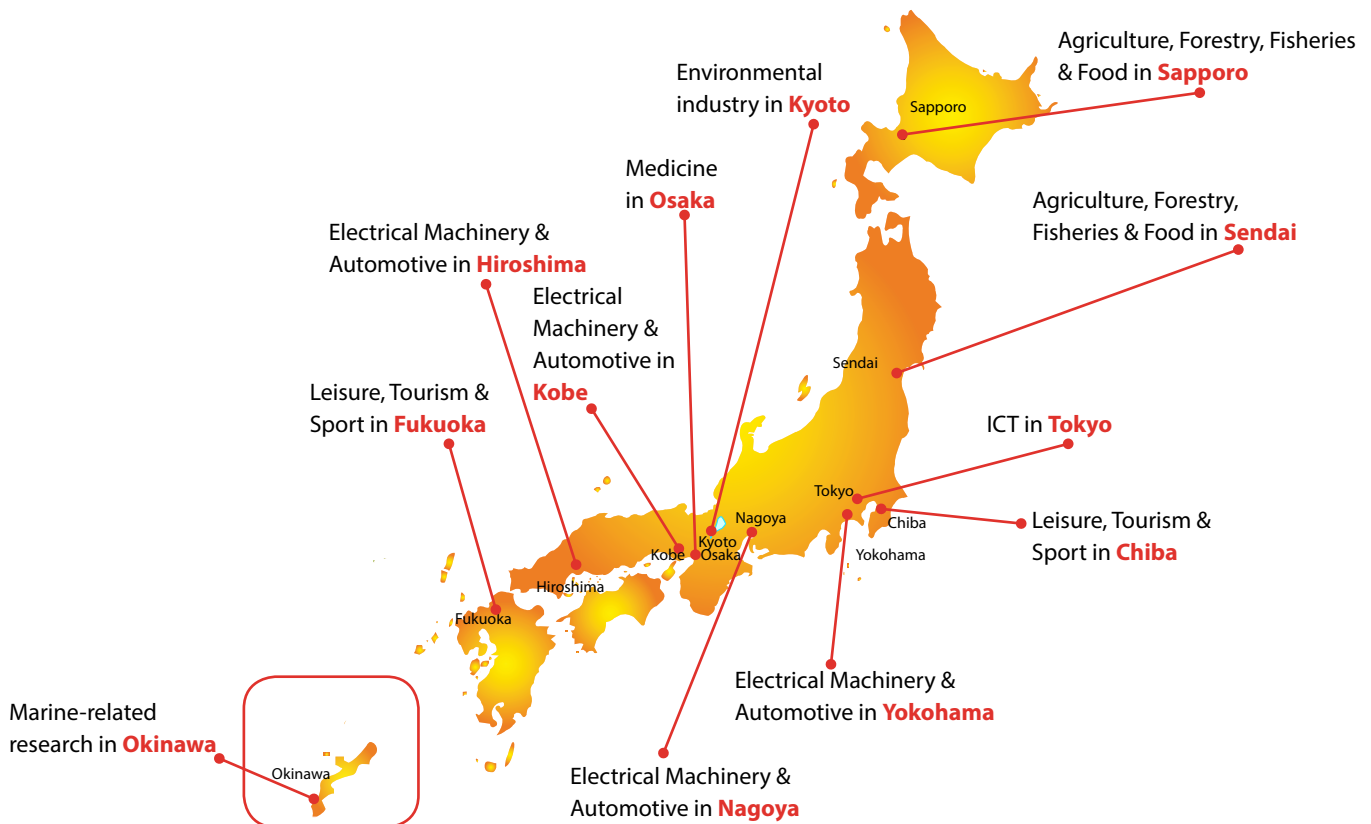
The Japanese government clearly understands the importance of MICE and the economic and financial impact it can have on a

destination – but also in terms of knowledge exchange and the creation of new ways of thinking. They set up not a quantitative but a qualitative goal for meetings in Japan and have urged all stakeholders to work hand in hand to make Japan the first meeting country in Asia by 2030. They have identified 12 highly distinctive cities, each with their own industry clusters, making them a destination of choice for planners.

What are Japan’s assets for international association planners?

If the organisation of the 2020 Olympics will definitely give the country a boost in terms of infrastructure development, Japan of course boasts many strengths already: it’s easy to access internationally, with a strong air network, it’s easy to get around whether by plane or by rail and it’s very stable socially and economically, creating an ideal environment for association meetings. If we already look beyond 2020, we are confident Japan is becoming a major player in the international market.

COMPETITIVE INDUSTRIES IN JAPAN





Where Knowledge and Talent Meet

Japan's success in industry and academia is no secret. The country's expertise in various fields of endeavours is testament to a knowledge-based economy of world-renowned.

Japan has for a long time been a leading force for research and development in many industries - from engineering and pharmaceuticals to robotics, finance and ICT - and also has a strong academic community with a driven spirit as evidenced by its 24 Nobel Prize winners in areas such as physics, chemistry, and medicine. In 2014, Hiroshi Amano and Isamu Akasaki were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics for the invention of LED, or blue light-emitting diodes. In 2015, it was Satoshi Omura and Takaaki Kajita's turn, the

former for his discoveries concerning a novel therapy against infections; the latter for the discovery of neutrino oscillations.

If there is also a 'cool' Japan, with creative and original media content, fashion and design attracting international attention, the knowledge the country boasts is visible in the corporate headquarters of famous companies to be found all over, including Hitachi, Honda, Toyota, Mitsubishi, Sony, Sumitomo, Takeda Pharmaceutical and Nippon Steel & Sumitomo Metal and many others. Add to this the fact that many researchers are members of international societies and a growing association sector and you'll have a winning combination for a successful meeting in any corner of the country!

Japan's expertise is also to be found in the meetings industry itself, as Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), together with local convention bureaus, professional congress organisers and DMCs, have a lot of experience in hosting international conferences. One example speaks louder than others: In October 2012, the Annual Meeting of the IMF and World Bank Group, came to Tokyo with more than 10,000 delegates. The meeting destination had to be rescheduled a short 16 months in advance, and industry players coordinated the move to Japan with passion and dedication, ensuring a smooth transfer and a very successful meeting. This kind of professionalism of course will apply to any event to be held in Japan!

A few of Japan's distinctive universities and/or

RIKEN, INSTITUTE OF PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL RESEARCH (KOBE)

Founded in 1917 as a private research foundation in Tokyo, RIKEN is Japan's largest comprehensive research institution renowned for high-quality research in a diverse range of scientific disciplines. It has grown rapidly in size and scope, today encompassing a network of world-class research centres and institutes across the country. It conducts research in many areas of science, including physics, chemistry, biology, medical science, engineering, performance computing, ranging from basic research to practical applications.



NAGOYA UNIVERSITY

A globally renowned faculty boasting Nobel Laureates, among many other awards, Nagoya University (NU) was first founded in 1871 and has since grown to be one of the world's top research universities. Throughout its history, NU has maintained a free and vibrant academic culture. Numbers here speak for themselves: 9 undergraduate and 14 graduate schools cover a wide range of disciplines, such as medicine, natural or social sciences, liberal arts and engineering. NU houses 16,500 students in total, 13% of which are international and regularly hosts congresses in its meeting facilities.



CASE STUDY

World Engineering Conference and Convention 2015

With a record attendance of about 3,000 participants from 80 countries and regions, the World Engineering Conference and Convention 2015 successfully took place at ICC Kyoto 29 November-2 December 2015.

The World Engineering Conference and Convention (WECC2015) showcased Japan as a nation built on scientific and technological innovation to achieve sustainable development in the 21st century. WECC2015 also provided a forum for sharing information focused on innovations required to make sustainable development a reality and advances in fundamental technologies to achieve this vision.

When asked about Japan's added values as a meeting destination, Marwan Abdelhamid,

President of the World Federation of Engineering Organizations, was pretty clear: *"In addition to Japan providing an ideal platform for engineering innovations of all kinds - from robotics to nuclear technology and such - the country's environment makes it an ideal destination: people are kind and disciplined, always eager to help, with a unbeatable sense of service; places are clean and safe... and beautiful Kyoto is the cradle of the Japanese civilisation - delegates love it - and very easy to access. To me, Japan as a whole ticks all the boxes."*

In this regard, thanks for its organisation in Japan, WECC2015 has already made a productive contribution to worldwide peace and socioeconomic progress, adopting both local and global perspectives.



Marwan Abdelhamid



WECC2015



Fushimi Inari

research organisations

IRIDES, INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF DISASTER SCIENCE @ TOHOKU UNIVERSITY (SENDAI)

In response to the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, Tohoku University established the International Research Institute of Disaster Science (IRIDeS) as a new multidisciplinary centre, conducting practical disaster risk reduction research. Learning from the region's experiences with a great deal of scientific data, IRIDeS aims to provide solutions to better deal with rare but possible mega-disasters within Japan and abroad. IRIDeS is Tohoku University's first new research institute in 70 years, and offers input to policy making processes at local, national, and international levels. On the occasion of the United Nations Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai in March 2015, IRIDeS made a significant contribution to shape the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.



UPCOMING CONFERENCES IN JAPAN

- ICC2016 (19th International Congress of Cytology), 28 May-1 June 2016, Pacifico Yokohama, 5,000 delegates
- ICP 2016 (31st International Congress of Psychology) 24 July-29 July 2016, Pacifico Yokohama, 7,000 delegates
- 13th International Conference on Flow Dynamics, 10-12 October 2016, Sendai International Center, 500 delegates
- 40th World Congress of the International College of Surgeons, 23-26 October 2016, Kyoto International Conference Center, 3,000 delegates



Keiko Nishimoto, CMP
Japan Convention Services, Inc.



Ikuko Nishimura, Congrès

MEET TWO OF JAPAN'S PCOS

JCS, champion of sustainability

On my last day in Japan, I met with Keiko Nishimoto, CMP, Senior Consultant at Japan Convention Services (JCS), one of the leading professional congress organisers Japan. Since its establishment in 1967, the company has supported more than 8,000 international conferences and events held in Japan and has now 265 professionals in 10 offices across the country. JCS for instance managed COP10 as well as the APEC Leaders Week in 2010, and recently supported the bidding process for the 2020 Olympics, while already working on its legacy.

As the only ISO20121-certified PCO in Japan, a special standard for event management systems, JCS, Nishimoto stressed, already heads into the future, and is committed to fulfilling its corporate social responsibility, while conducting environmentally conscious management.

"We are constantly focusing on continuous education, with CMP certified staff, and make sure we deliver events of international standards. Japan is a great place to organise meetings: we are highly hospitable and dedicated and for associations looking to expand their membership, it's an ideal place to start", Nishimoto said.

Recently, Nishimoto was elected as a Deputy Chair/Treasurer of ICCA Asia Pacific Chapter (2015-2019).

www.jcs-pco.com

Congrès, straight-forward efficiency

A major player both in the organisation of congresses and the management of venues (they manage 12 convention facilities across Japan), Congrès, also known by its corporate name Congress Corporation, provides a comprehensive range of convention-related services.

The PCO for the IMF/World Bank Group Annual Meetings in Tokyo back in 2012, as well as the 2008 G8 Summit and related ministerial meetings and COP10, it has years of experience operating large-scale international conventions. A leader in meeting technology, they design IT systems and provide consulting services, from concept-making to onsite operation.

Ikuko Nishimura, Chief Project Coordinator, put it like this: *"Our credentials say it all: since our creation in 1990, we have built trust on some solid achievements of ours. Of course, it helps that Japan is such a great association destination, known for its hospitality, personality, cleanliness, safety... and punctuality. The country provides also a wide range of options for pre- or post-conference tours and, as a company, we assist our clients every step of the way."*

www.congre.com



Sendai

SENDAI, A GREEN KNOWLEDGABLE CITY

Located just 90 minutes away from Tokyo by Shinkansen, Sendai, with its 1.08 million inhabitants, is an emerging association destination, mostly thanks to its universities which are instrumental in getting conventions to the city.

Nicknamed “the City of Trees” because of its beautiful natural surroundings, Sendai was founded 400 years ago and is now a metropolis boasting all the meeting infrastructure you can expect in such a destination - but at prices significantly lower than in Yokohama or Tokyo for example.

After the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and the following tsunami that left a good part of Sendai’s urban spaces damaged, the city took the opportunity to develop a new model for disaster risk reduction and green city planning. Willing to share this expertise with the world, Sendai hosted the 2015 UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, attracting 6,500 delegates from 187 countries, the largest conference the city ever saw, showing its capacities to organise large-scale events.

Promoting the knowledge to be found in its 16 universities - including Nobel-prize winner producer Tohoku - is what Sendai now aims to do. Akira Watanabe, Chairperson at Sendai Tourism Convention and International Association, explains: *“The future of meetings in Sendai lies in its ‘internationalisation’. We have to use our knowledge-base economy to attract conferences related to the city’s many fields of expertise and we closely work with our universities and research institutions in this direction.”*

As to meeting facilities of interest to association planners, let’s mention Sendai International Centre, whose main hall seats 1,000, and which just opened a 3,000 sqm Exhibition Building. Tohoku University Centennial Hall also seats up to 1,235 people. In terms of accommodation, there will be 1,000 new hotel rooms in the upcoming years, in addition to the already existing 15,000 ones. There are also 9 direct international flights to Sendai, mostly to and from Asia, making accessibility very easy.

ONLY IN SENDAI

Shokeikaku: A beautiful two-storey wooden bungalow, the former residence of the Date family who ruled Sendai throughout 13 generations can host private functions.

Tasty specialty: Sendai is the birthplace of the beef tongue dish, which is usually served nice and juicy.

Akiu Onsen: Sendai’s hot springs area is located about 30 minutes away from the city centre and offers a unique opportunity to relax after a hard day’s work at a conference. Try either Akiu Onsen, one of the three royal hot springs, or Sakunami Onsen, complete with an outstanding temple.

Tohoku University (Sendai): Located within Tohoku University, TOKYO ELECTRON House of Creativity includes the Tohoku Forum for Creativity (TFC), an international visitor programme that brings together Nobel laureates and other world-leading professors with young researchers and students. The aim is to identify important problems across all sciences and humanities, and to develop innovative ideas through focused discussions. As Director Sadayoshi Ito says: *“We believe that such interaction will lead to intellectual break-through that will contribute to solving the common problems of human society.”* The House of Creativity also includes a number of meeting rooms, which can accommodate from 8 to 96 people.



Shokeikaku



UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, March 2015

NAGOYA & AICHI PREFECTURE

Where modernity meets tradition



Nagoya Noh Theater

Located in the heart of Japan, Aichi, with its capital Nagoya, has seen over the years several industries flourishing, as well as art and culture. It is also blessed with some beautiful nature. Aichi and Nagoya are where new ideas are born everyday, thanks to its strengths both in academia and industry.

Acting as a corridor between the east, west, north and south of Japan, Aichi has been a pivotal point for traffic and trade, and has developed a base for many different industries for centuries. The major fields of expertise of the prefecture include ceramics in Seto and Tokoname, automobile manufacturing in Toyota – the headquarters of Toyota Motor

Corporation, along many Toyota group companies, employs a lot of people in the region, which is also becoming a centre for the aerospace industry.

With over two million inhabitants, the centre of politics, economics and culture of Aichi Prefecture, Nagoya, or “the city of robots” as it is sometimes referred to, is Japan’s fourth most populated city. It developed as the castle town of the Owari, one of the three branches of the ruling Tokugawa family during the Edo Period. Much of the city, including most of its historic buildings, were unfortunately destroyed during the air raids of 1945.



Aichi Nagoya Hitsumabushi



Toyota factory

But Nagoya still boasts a beautiful Castle, known for its golden pair of “shachis”, or the guardians of the castle, standing proud on top of its roof, and the formidable Atsuta Jingu Shrine, rich in a history of 1,900 years.

An industrial hub, Nagoya is also renowned for its knowledge, with Nagoya University spearheading the region in many fields of endeavours and conducting world-leading research supported by R&D investment from local enterprises. The University has so far produced 6 Nobel Prize Winners and is regularly hosting conferences highlighting its strengths, like the 16th International Conference on the Science & Application of Nanotubes (NT15, July 2015, 700 participants) or the 15th International Superconductive Electronics Conference (ISEC 2015, July 2015, 250 participants). Many other science and technology universities and research centres are dotted throughout Aichi Prefecture, creating a highly-developed research and industrial cluster.

Fumio Hasegawa, President of the Nagoya Convention & Visitors Bureau, says: “Nagoya and Aichi have many assets when it comes to hosting association meetings. Good

accessibility, world-class infrastructure, good quality accommodation, hospitable people... But it's our knowledge that is our added value and we have to promote it in an even stronger way, building, for instance, a network of professors in every research field, harnessing our education capabilities and such. This way we'll be able to attract more meetings and make Nagoya and Aichi a top MICE destination in Japan and Asia.”

Among many other venues, groups can meet at **Nagoya Congress Centre**, aptly proclaimed a “forum for Information Exchange and Communication”. Its Century Hall seats up to 3,012 people, and altogether, the Centre boasts 29 meeting spaces, at very competitive rates, with dedicated and very experienced staff. Events for a few hundreds pax can also be organised at the **Toyota Commemorative Museum of Industry and Technology**, housed in the historically important red-brick building of the former Toyota Spinning & Weaving Co. Ltd. where it all began. **Toyota Automobile Museum** is also an option worth considering, should you want to dig deeper into the history of famous car brands from all over the world!

Unique in Nagoya and Aichi

Venues: **Nagoya Noh Theater** is among Japan’s largest, seating 630, and is available to groups for conferences or events. **Mizkan Museum**, in Handa, explores the history of vinegar production. Don’t miss, there, the 20-meter long wooden ship modelled from the Edo period delivery ship! Next door, there is also the **Sake no Bunkakan Museum** where you can learn all about Japan’s most famous beverage.

Food: Known as ‘Nagoya-meshi, the food include specialties such as **hitsumabushi** (grilled eel on rice) or **miso katsu** (pork cutlet with a thick miso sauce).

Garden: **Tokugawaen** is a beautiful Japanese landscape garden with a large pond at its center. A large network of walking trails lead around the grounds to a tea house, rest houses, and across several bridges.

CASE STUDY World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development

The 2014 Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) World Conference took place, with some participants 1,091 from 153 countries and regions, at Nagoya Congress Centre, 10-12 November 2014, and left a lasting legacy.

The 2014 UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) marked the end of the UN Decade of ESD (2005-2014) and launched the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD. On that occasion, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon declared: “*Environmental, economic and social indicators tell us that our current model of progress is unsustainable. Ours is a world of looming challenges and increasingly limited resources. Sustainable development offers the best chance to adjust our course.*”

Under the banner of “Learning Today for a Sustainable Future”, the Conference celebrated the achievements of the Decade, identified lessons learnt while setting the stage for the future of ESD. It also highlighted the role of ESD for the transition to green economies and societies and as a catalyst for cross-sector planning and implementation of programmes in areas such as climate change, biodiversity and disaster risk reduction.



World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development



KOBE OPEN TO THE WORLD



Arima Grand Hotel



The famous Kobe beef



Kobe Tetsujin



Kobe Biomedical Innovation Cluster

Japan's first convention city, back in 1981 when the first purpose-built convention centre saw the light of day, Kobe - home to the world-famous Kobe beef - has become over the years a leader in the hosting of MICE events, providing an ideal environment for associations, especially in the medical field.

Kobe was one of the first Japanese cities to open to the world, with the opening of its port in 1868. Since then, the lifestyles and cultures of various countries have been thoroughly integrated into the neighbourhoods, creating a very unique environment, both very Japanese and very international. As a MICE destination, in 2013 chosen by Japan Tourism Agency to be a 'Global MICE Strategic City', it boasts all the knowledge and infrastructure you can expect in a metropolis.

Kobe has some extraordinary feats of engineering including artificial islands. One of these, Port Island (about 10 minutes from the city center and Kobe Airport) is home to the **Kobe International Conference Center, Kobe International Exhibition Hall** and a convention hotel. Such a side-by-side grouping of MICE facilities is rare in Japan. Planners are spoilt for choice.

As one of Japan's greatest sake producing areas, Kobe includes sake breweries as unique venues. Another related to ancient crafts is the **Takenaka Carpentry Tools Museum** where Japan's architectural traditions are all exhibited under one roof. Kobe is also home to one of Japan's three ancient hot springs retreats - Arima. Convention-goers can soak away weary feet in the healing waters.

Arima Grand Hotel offers an authentic 'ryokan' inn experience as well as function areas for meetings- I was lucky enough to stay there.

Last but not least, Kobe is a major player in the biomedical field and aims to enhance the links between the industry and convention promotion, leveraging its strengths. Currently state-of-the-art research institutions, highly specialized hospitals, and more than 300 biomedical companies shape up the **Kobe Biomedical Innovation Cluster**, the largest in Japan. In 2014, the world's first transplant using induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS) took place here. Such breakthrough science has led Kobe City to focus particular attention on hosting medical conventions.

UPCOMING MAJOR CONVENTIONS IN KOBE

(1,000 participants or more)

2016: 32nd World Congress of the International Federation of Biomedical Laboratory Science (IFBLS) - 1,000 pax

2017: 39th General Assembly of the International Association of Seismology and Physics of the Earth's Interior - 1,000 pax

2018: OCEANS'18 MTS/IEEE Kobe/ Techno-Ocean2018 - 10,000 pax

2019: International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (ISPRM2019) - 5,000 pax

2019: International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO2019) - 5,000 pax



IN JAPAN ONLY

GAINING INSIGHT INTO JAPAN'S CULTURE

Japan's culture is unique. Whether its food, its customs or its extreme sense of hospitality, the country will enthrall the most blasé visitors.

Japan has a fascinating and multifaceted culture; on the one hand it is steeped in the deepest of traditions dating back thousands of years; on the other it is a society in a constant state of rapid flux, with continually shifting fads and fashions and technological development that is always trying to push back the boundaries of the possible.

When it comes to food, many towns and cities in Japan are known first and foremost for their local speciality, whether for a type of sweet, fish, noodle, seaweed or tofu, etc. The emphasis is on freshness, quality and presentation, from the most refined sushi to steaming ramen noddles served in a bowl. Japan is very proud of its four very distinctive seasons and each of them marks the beginning of delicious offerings. This is very evident in supermarkets, hotels and inns and restaurants where menus are frequently changed.

As to the cleanliness and safety of Japan, it is definitely not a myth, quite the contrary. Japan's safety record (it boasts one of the lowest crime rates in the world) and well-maintained urban infrastructure give planners and delegates complete peace of mind when organising an event there. Add to this, the renowned Japanese spirit of hospitality and you'll have a winning combination.

Japan is definitely yours to discover, with so much to offer.



UNIQUE VENUES A CASTLE, A MUSEUM AND A GARDEN

Nijo-jo Castle (Kyoto): One of Kyoto's most popular sights shows the power that the Shoguns wielded over the emperors throughout the Edo Period. Known for its squeaky floors that would alert occupants to the presence of intruders, it is now available as a venue for up to 1,000 people.

Sendai City Museum: Sendai City Museum was opened at the ruin of Sendai Castle San-no-maru to preserve, exhibit and study the materials donated by the Date family, once the lord of the castle. It has a total floor area of 10,800 square meters and houses about 90,000 materials of history, culture, and arts and crafts related to the Sendai Domain centering on the Edo period including the donated materials.

Happo-en (Tokyo): Meaning 'Garden of Eight Views' or 'beautiful from all views', this beautiful garden is a haven not far from the centre of the Japanese capital that can be used for wedding receptions and formal dinners. Take a stroll among the many bonsais and you'll immediately feel like a real Japanese!

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