



# What's Up Aichi

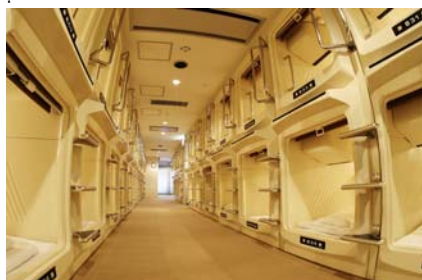


— Timely Tourist Information On Aichi Prefecture And The Surrounding Central Japan Region —

## Stretch Out and Relax in a Nagoya Capsule Hotel

Many foreigners looking for a uniquely Japanese experience are curious about capsule hotels. While the attention that these pod-like lodgings have gained in recent years may have taken away a bit their exoticism, you're still likely to be the first on your block to have tried one.

Capsules, which sprang from the need for inexpensive and convenient sleeping accommodations for the workaholics driving the Japanese economy and late-night revelers who missed their last train home, fascinate Americans who are used to airy hotel rooms and an overabundance of space. At six feet or so in length with ceilings just high enough to do your travel regimen of stomach crunches and push-ups, the "rooms" are modest to say the least.



Insert tasteless coffin joke here.

Most Japanese wouldn't choose to stay in a capsule hotel for fun, but for foreign tourists, a night in one is a truly only-in-Japan experience, and the economical price of a night's stay can free up funds in a limited travel budget for splurges elsewhere.

Competition among hotels has led to an ever-expanding range of luxuries, so although the bed itself might be minimal, you'll likely find the massages, saunas and communal baths to be among the highlights of your trip.

Capsule hotels are not for everyone; claustrophobics or those who wish to put off sleeping in a box until they're too cold and stiff to complain about it should look for accommodation elsewhere. And

although the Japanese workforce is becoming more and more gender-balanced, it is still rare to find capsule hotels that accommodate women as there is simply less demand among the native population.

Travelers to Nagoya who would like to try the capsule hotel experience have several options to choose from:

**Capsule Inn Nagoya**, located in the Kanayama district is the city's largest capsule hotel, and the English website ([http://www.nisshinkanko.co.jp/healthy/cp/cp\\_english\\_top.htm](http://www.nisshinkanko.co.jp/healthy/cp/cp_english_top.htm)) makes reservations a breeze. Just 25 minutes from Centrair, Capsule Inn Nagoya is the best option for travelers trying to catch a few Zs before an early morning flight. The basic room charge is ¥2800 (\$25) with an extra charge for the sauna, public bath and breakfast. Accommodations are for men only.

Just a five-minute walk from the Sakura Dori exit of Nagoya Station, **Capsule Hotel Yours** is convenient for travelers wishing to stay in the heart of the city or who will be catching a train to their destination the next day. The room charge of ¥3900 (\$37) includes the use of the sauna. Accommodations are for men only.

Modern design complements the sensation of space-age slumber brought about by the sleek capsules at **Fuji**, located five minutes from Sakae station in the city's entertainment district. The sprawling, 20-meter-long bath and the sauna are a perfect way to reinvigorate after a night of partying. The hotel's English website (<http://www.fto.co.jp/ep.html>) provides a detailed explanation of how to use the facilities. The nightly room charge is ¥3800 (\$35) and includes use of the bath and sauna. Accommodations are for men only.

Capsule chain **Wellbe's** four Nagoya hotels in Sakae, Tushin, Imaike and near Nagoya Station offer an array of soothing massages at an extra charge, including Thai massage at the Imaike and Sakae locations. The Imaike location is the city's only capsule hotel with an outdoor bath,

and some capsules even have aroma therapy. The ¥4100 (\$38) room charge for basic rooms includes use of the sauna and bath. All four Wellbe hotels offer accommodations for men only.

The key word is "healing" at **Apaiser**, Nagoya's only capsule hotel offering accommodations for both men and women. In addition to the bath and sauna facilities that are included in the capsule charge, the hotel offers a number of other luxuries aimed especially at clientele of the fairer sex. Manicures and beauty treatment are popular options, and a range of massages, including reflexology, alleviate the pains that many tourists accumulate over the course of a rigorous travel schedule. The hotel is located just outside of Imaike subway station's exit 8. The nightly capsule rate is ¥3800 (\$35).

## Artery Clogging Nagoya Style

Sushi and sashimi are all well and good, but a few days into your next trip to Japan you may find yourself hankering for the comfort of a greasy American meal. While they certainly enjoy their share of typically healthy Japanese cuisine, Nagoyans are also not afraid to clock up some calories once in a while, and domestic tourists are sure to seek out the local deep fried dishes when they make it to the city. For Americans, these dishes provide that brick-in-your-stomach sensation that we are so fond of while still being distinctive enough not to jeopardize our pledge to be adventurous eaters.



Buffalo wing addicts, meet Nagoya *tebasaki*

The only side dish that your **Nagoya tebasaki** need is an ice cold draft beer. *Tebasaki* (deep fried chicken wings) are common throughout Japan, but the famed

Nagoya version, invented at Furaibo restaurant, has an especially loyal fan base. The dish begins with supple chicken wings. A quick bath in hot oil ensures a delicate crunchiness, and after a brushing of spicily sweet sauce, the wings are topped off with a generous sprinkling of white sesame, making for an unforgettable nutty, tangy flavor. A typical order of four or five dollars will get you five wings or so, but don't hesitate to order two or three more dishes. You won't be the only one.

Nagoyans made a groundbreaking discovery many years ago and haven't looked back: miso + sauce + fried food = yummy. This formula for culinary success shows up in *miso katsu*, the region's take on deep fried pork cutlet. Thick locally produced *hatcho miso* is integral to the closely guarded recipe for the sauce, which is more robust than what you might find in the rest of the country, and a dab of spicy mustard opens up your taste buds and nostrils to ensure that you fully appreciate the subtle sweetness of the breaded cutlet. If you are dieting, opt for the leaner fillet rather than the sirloin. On second thought, if you are dieting, maybe you should just stick to the all-you-can-eat shredded cabbage that accompanies every order.



When Japanese are on the run, rice balls are a go-to snack. But Nagoyan chefs, not content with a typical rice ball, combine the classic fast food with shrimp *tempura* to create *tenmusu*. While a seemingly simple snack, all of the ingredients in *tenmusu* are carefully chosen for their texture and flavor. Pick up a pack of *tenmusu* in a department store or train station before setting off on a day trip; they are the perfect travel snack.

#### Tile Town Takahama

For many foreign travelers who have had a chance to venture into rural Japan, one of the most enduring images of their journey is that of traditional decorative roof tiles adorning countryside homes, temples and

shops. In a country that is always eager to modernize, traditional tiles are a charming reminder of thousands of years of history that have served as the building blocks of today's society. As the first line of defense for dwellings that, despite their seeming fragility with their thin wooden walls and paper doors, stand up to typhoons, snowstorms and rainy seasons year after year, traditional roof tiles' aesthetic beauty is deeply linked to their functionality.



A goblin tile comes to life in Takahama City

Tourists with an interest in decorative roof tiles should take the 40-minute trip south of Nagoya to Takahama City, where they will find the **Kawara (roof tile) Museum** (*Kawara Bijutsukan*). The museum boasts an impressive collection of pieces from each of Japan's regions and representing every era of the country's long history. Tiles from China and the Korean Peninsula also provide perspective on the influence of Japan's Asian neighbors.

Visitors to the Kawara Museum get an up-close look at the best of the region's roof tiles, including *sanshugawara*, which occupy over 50 percent of the country's total roof tile production, and *onigawara* (goblin tiles), finely detailed works depicting menacing devils that have ornamented homes and temples for nearly 1300 years.

A stroll around Takahama reveals just how proud the little town is of its ceramic and tile tradition. Just outside of the Kawara Museum stands the country's largest ceramic sculpture, **Kinuura Kannon**. The scowling faces of ogres on the one-and-a-half-mile **goblin trail** are strangely welcoming, and you'll also encounter a giant **ceramic raccoon dog**. If you're lucky, you may even come across an *onigawara* master bringing his prized clay to life, altering a goblin's features ever-so-slightly with a deft turn of his pallet.

Should you feel inspired to try a little sculpting of your own, spend a relaxing half-day in the Kawara Museum's pottery facility where ¥1000 (\$9) gets you a kilogram of Takahama clay and hands-on instruction for turning the latent lump into a one-of-a-kind creation.



Decorative tiles adorn a Takahama temple

The Kawara Museum is an eight-minute walk from Takahama Minato Station, which is best reached from Meitetsu Nagoya station via Chiryu. Museum admission is ¥200 for adults and free for kids of junior high school age and younger. Museum hours are 9:00 to 5:00 Tuesday through Sunday.

#### United Airlines to Bring Back Daily SFO-Centrair Flights in February

United Airlines has announced that it will resume daily nonstop flights from San Francisco International Airport to Central Japan International Airport (Centrair) on February 11<sup>th</sup>. The carrier had cut its flights to Nagoya back to five weekly as part of schedule adjustments in October 2007.

SFO-NGO, the only route connecting Central Japan to North America's west coast, is ideal for travelers to Central Japan, and with quick rail access from downtown Nagoya to Kyoto (37 minutes) and Tokyo (one hour 40 minutes) is also an excellent gateway to other top destinations.

UA831 will depart San Francisco at 10:52 am, arriving in Nagoya at 3:30 pm the next day from February 11<sup>th</sup> to March 29<sup>th</sup>.

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