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A long-term Kyoto resident is the lead author of this in-depth book--the only guide to fully cover Hokkaido, Okinawa, Amami-Oshima, and Yoron-to. of color. 154 maps.

Japan Details

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From Reader Review Japan for online ebook

Chris Craddock says

Snow Country

I have always wanted to visit Japan, and it doesn't look like I will make it there anytime soon. Nevertheless, with the help of the lonely planet guidebook to Japan, and Google Earth, I am on my way. Let's say you want to check out Hokusai, one of Japan's best known Artists. Bam! The lonely planet guidebook to Japan got your back. There is a Hokusai Museum in Obuse, a lovely little town northeast of Nagano. Hokusai did a lot of his work there, and over 30 of his works are on display. His most famous work, The Great Wave off Kanagawa, might not be there, as it was last seen in 2012 at The British Museum, but with the help of the guidebook, you can find the prefecture of Kanagawa, along with the other 35 views of Mt Fuji, the series from whence it came.

Maybe you are more concerned with more recent Art, such as Anime, or Japanese Animation. You might want to check out the Ghibli (pronounced "Jiburi") Museum, home to Ghibli Studios and designed by master animator Hayao Miyazaki himself. Even if you are unfamiliar with Spirited Away or their other films, you will love the fairy tale atmosphere and the climbable Cat Bus.

One of my favorite books from the Japanese is 1968 Noble Prize in Literature Winner Yasunari Kawabata's Snow Country. If I were to indulge my whim of visiting Northern Japan, and other sights important to Japanese Authors such as Yukio Mishima, Junichiro Tanizaki, Soseki Natsume, and Ryunosuke Atkutagawa, this guidebook would be indispensable. The same could be said of my long cherished dream of exploring sites from the films of Akira Kurosawa or Nagisa Oshima.

For those of a spiritual bent, there are ancient Buddhist and Shinto Temples, and the old capitol, Kyoto; or for the die hard live-for-the-momentsters, sake bars, discos, the sprawling metropolis Tokyo, and the Sapporo Beer Festival.

More than just a list of sights and locations to visit, there is also lots of helpful information for the traveler. There is a Survival Guide, and help navigating the complex waters of Japanese Etiquette. There is a primer of basic spoken Japanese, and even tips on what sorts of electric sockets you might encounter. There is a lot of invaluable information to the traveler packed into its 880 pages, as well as a pull out map and links to further online resources. Chris Rowthorn was the Coordinating Author, and his team of Andrew Bender, Laura Crawford, and Trent Holden do an excellent job of holding down the fort.

Arto Bendiken says

While promising in reputation and appearances, this guidebook did not actually end up being all that useful to me when traveling in Japan recently. I don't think I opened it more than once after arrival.

Regarding the general material--on geography, weather, culture, cuisine, etc.--I did not feel as though I learned much beyond what I'd glean from reading Wikipedia and Wikitravel. On the other hand, the material specific to the destination town (Nagasaki, in my case) was marginally useful, but really pretty short and shallow compared to what I had come to expect from Lonely Planet based on extensive travel with their USA guidebook back in the day. Perhaps my expectations were too high and the main utility of the book is indeed merely as an offline summary; given pervasive data connectivity, I ended up just reading Wikipedia

instead.

Further, the Kindle edition is tough to navigate when the TOC function only includes the top-level chapter headers. Perhaps Lonely Planet are still designing their guidebooks with paperback format as the primary product, but this really is inexcusable for a reference book that runs to 900+ pages. Get with the times, or get gone.

Mark says

Provides comprehensive overview of places to visit in Japan, both major and many side areas. There are numerous hints and tips scattered throughout. Extensive trip preparation tips are included. Latter portion includes overviews on background information such as history, food, arts, and environmental concerns that can help a visitor better understand the culture of Japan.

The sights, attractions, lodging, and dining suggestions provided are certainly fine, but I'd use what is provided I. His guide book as a starting point and do more research on the specific areas you are considering. If you can find a native Japanese friend, or at least someone who can read Japanese, researching via Japanese language resources can provide additional dimensions to aid in planning your visit.

Ninja Neko says

My edition of LP Japan (September 2015) was disappointing. LP is my go-to travel guide, I like their walks, background info, and especially their restaurant choices suit my taste. But the Japan guide was rather frustrating: going round in circles searching for places on the tiny maps had us giving up more than once. Trying to follow some of the recommended walks had me checking the tiny map on every junction because there was so little info. And more than a few of the "absolute must-see" things in Kyoto (according to the author) were complete letdowns (like the "must not be missed hidden waterfall" in Nanzen-ji for instance: don't bother). Not so much fun after dragging along my boyfriend on a big detour in the rain to check out these places... Granted, the maps are a problem in all the LPs, not just this Japan guide. But on top of the usual LP annoyances in this case I think my taste differed too much from the authors'.

For those trying to decide on which edition to purchase: I still had some of the LP city guides (Tokyo & Kyoto) from my previous visit to Japan in 2008, and many of the descriptions of the sights were still exactly the same in this 2015 edition. If you're only interested in sightseeing and don't need up-to-date practical info, you can get an older edition - or a different guide like DK's even. Personally if I had to do over my last Japan trip again, I'd just use the internet altogether, the japan-guide.com site surprised me with the amount of info they offered.

Sarah says

Super helpful and great for planning!

Leigh says

Still reading parts of this book as I go along...so far I've read the Kobe and Kyoto sections, and I'm moving on to Tokyo and Nagano...I really want to see those snow monkeys! The only down side to this book I've seen is the restaurant listings in Kobe, I can't believe they list Yoshinoya as a good place eat, that's just wrong. There are so many amazing restaurants here, I think the person who wrote this section of the book hasn't ever set foot in Kobe...which makes me wonder about the other lonely planet recommendations...kind of scary.

Duong Huong says

Worth to read before you plan a trip to Japan

Yue says

To me, one of the best feelings I experience after reading a non-fiction book is to think I became an expert in the subject. Of course I deceive myself when I think that if I travel to Japan tomorrow, I will go fully qualified. Or if I talk to someone who visit this beautiful land, I would be a total show-off about everything I learned.

All the information this book has is huge: hotels, places to visit, tours, food, lots of maps... And in spite that it is quite old regarding prices and schedules, it gives you an idea of how much a traveler will spend in everything. And there are several personal information, like in a certain hotel, "to beware of the dog, because it bites". Or, the owner of X hotel likes to talk about X subject with the tourists. Can't wait to go!

Versión en español: Tiene varios errores gramaticales; la editorial no sabe distinguir entre **sólo** y **solo**. O entre **esta** y **ésta**.

Cardyn Brooks says

This 2015 edition of the Lonely Planet Japan guidebook offers an abundance of practical details about public transit, a range of accommodations, and potential itineraries. The print edition has a removable map of Tokyo that easy to carry.

H M Reynolds says

Planning a trip for later this year, so I am loving this book at the moment. I like the lonely planet series - it is part of my ritual for travel now to pick up a book and learn about the culture before I go. Learning what foods to look out for is another dimension of the experience.

As I am travelling independently this time, the book has been invaluable in planning the trip and suggesting places to stay. In Japan they don't like it when you turn up unannounced, so knowing what the best accommodation is so you can book in advance is vital.

Have also used the book to plan activities.

There is an associated learn Japanese book & CD, although in my opinion it isn't the best one for learning the language.

Shreya says

Good book but could do with more pictures. It ignores lot of sights in regions not on the popular tourist routes and focuses more on the already well known sights.

Kathy Nguyen says

Golden standard for travel guides. Used in conjunction with Insightful guides, TripAdvisor and Japan-guide.com.

Had a few 'off the beaten path' recommendations that were great (Zuigudo Hall, Kiyomizu-dera turned out to be one of my favourite experiences during the entire trip) that I would have never found without this book. The Love stones at the same temple were an unforgettable experience as well.

The detail in the guide was extensive and much appreciated. The travel guide (esp. Lonely Planet) is not going to die out anytime soon. The amount of research that goes into the creation of the guides is incredibly helpful for planning a trip.

Jennifer says

I bought the 2015 edition as an ebook (actually just a PDF - no interactive elements.) The book was useful for initial planning, but I didn't use it much whilst travelling. I found the format annoying/difficult to navigate on the iPad.

Some of the content was out-of-date. Why give year-specific dates for annual events that change date each year - given that there is a large interval between editions. e.g. Kishiwada Danjiri Matsuri @ Osaka. Why list exchange rates when the currency market is so volatile? So much more up-to-date info and better maps available on the web.

Also detail on some locations was sparse, e.g. Osaka.

Believe it or not I have been a #1 fan of LP books for decades, but I think the time has come for a revamp of content and format.

Kendal says

I have a love/hate relationship with this book. I like it *now*, but it took some time to get used to the layout and the book in general. When I first started reading it, I felt it was overwhelming. Too much information and not a clear view where the heck any of these crazy named cities were located. It could be I wasn't very familiar with Japan when I first started reading the book. Or it could be I wasn't very familiar with the layout of Lonely Planet books. Who knows? I've been reading this book now for a while and become accustomed to it and I've also slowly been getting acquainted with the country. So I'm beginning to find I like this book more than any of our other Japan travel guides. I find I grab this book and consult it the most. So far it's been helpful in finding hostels... we'll see how our trip goes and I'll give it a final rating. Book, you better not let us down! =)

I think somewhere in Tokyo I was ready to toss this book over a bridge or out of a moving train. We tried to use it to help us find restaurants to no avail. Often the restaurants weren't there, or the map was too tiny and useless. We finally got our noses out of this book and into the air to help us find restaurants and that worked much better. =) The book was helpful for planning, but not practical for getting around.

???? says

I used the 2011 edition - so it mentions the Fukushima disaster a hell of a lot and tries, through insistence, to assuage any fears a person might have to visit Japan due to that particular event.

Apart from that, it's probably the most comprehensive guide I've used so far. It divides Japan into different parts, which include Hokkaido and Okinawa. It gives a lot of suggestions of itineraries depending on how much time you might have in the country, it gives a lot of information about where to stay, where to eat, where to go, what to do and when, how to get places and even includes a section about the different peoples of Japan - Yamato and Ainu.

Definitely has to be one of the best guides out there.
