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# the japan times

# WORLD COSPLAY SUMMIT 2025

Wednesday, July 30, 2025



# Welcome messages for the World Cosplay Summit 2025

Hideaki Ohmura GOVERNOR OF AICHI PREFECTURE

It is with great pleasure that I offer my heartfelt congratulations on the opening of the World Cosplay Summit 2025, once again taking place in Aichi and Nagoya.

Now celebrating its 23rd edition, this year's summit welcomes representative cosplayers from a record-breaking 41 countries and regions. Alongside them, fans of anime and manga — key elements of Japanese culture — gather from Japan and around the world, creating lively cultural and international

「世界コスプレサミット 2025」が、愛知・名古屋で盛大に開催されますことを、心よりお慶び申し上げます。

23 回目となる今年のサミットでは、過去最多となる41 か国・地域の代表コスプレイヤーの方々に加え、国内外から多くのコスプレファンが集い、日本のカルチャーでもあるアニメや漫画を通して、言葉の壁を超えた活気溢れる国際交流、文化交流が行われます。

exchange that transcends language barriers.

Aichi Prefecture offers a variety of attractions, from the enchanting world of Ghibli Park and his-

toric sites linked to samurai warlords, to beautiful natural scenery and delicious local cuisine. We encourage visitors to explore the many charms of Aichi during their stay.

Welcome to Aichi and Nagoya, and to the World Cosplay Summit 2025! Let's enjoy this exciting event together!

愛知県には、ジブリパークをはじめ、戦国武将ゆかりの歴史ある観光スポットや美しい自然、美味しいグルメなど、さまざまな楽しみ方があります。ご来場の際は、ぜひ、県内各地に足を運んでいただき、愛知の多彩な魅力を堪能してください。

ようこそ愛知・名古屋、世界コスプレサミットへ! 大いに盛り上げて楽しみましょう!





I am delighted that the World Cosplay Summit 2025, the 23rd time for the event, will be held here in Nagoya on a grand scale. I would like to welcome visitors to Nagoya from around the world.

As a "cosplay host town," Nagoya aims to be the best city in Japan for enjoying cosplay and anime and the best city in the

今回、23回目を迎える「世界コスプレサミット 2025」が、ここ名古屋において盛大に開催されますことを大変嬉しく思います。世界各国・地域から名古屋にお越しいただく皆様を歓迎いたします。

名古屋市は「コスプレホストタウン」としてコスプレ・ アニメを日本一楽しめるまち、世界一あたたかなおもて world at offering warm hospitality. We will continue to support people who enjoy cosplay and work to enhance the appeal of cosplay culture in Nagoya.

le who and nce re in

I hope cosplayers and visitors will have great fun in Nagoya, the birthplace of the World Cosplay Summit.

なしをするまちを目指しており、今後もコスプレを楽しむ皆様を応援し、名古屋のコスプレ文化の魅力がより高まるよう取り組んでまいります。

コスプレイヤー・来場者の皆様、ぜひ世界コスプレ サミット発祥の地である名古屋で、大いにお楽しみくだ さい。







3020-1099 Hokujo, Hakuba-mura, Kitaazumi-gun, Nagano-ken 399-9301 Japan Operated by: Tamakoshi Co. Ltd.



# 2024 GRAND CHAMPIONS

**JAPAN** 



### Naruto

# Mioshi, Mamemayo

(Left) Mioshi Character: Sasuke Uchiha (Right) Mamemayo Character: Naruto Uzumaki

### Maiko Muraoka

Contributing writer

re-creations of iconic anime scenes—these are not the only things that are evaluated in the World Cosplay Summit Championship. How much respect is shown for the original work and the culture behind it and how much effort was poured into expressing it greatly influence the results. That is why the world of cosplay competitions is so profound and captivating.

The World Cosplay Summit is one of the world's largest cosplay events, held annually in Nagoya since 2003. The WCS Championship has been held every year since 2005, with the exception of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2024 WCS Championship brought together teams from 36 countries that had won their national selections. The Japanese team of Mamemayo and Mioshi won, portraying characters from the ninja manga "Naruto," which has also been adapted into an anime. This was the third time for a Japanese team to win the championship.

Mamemayo played Naruto Uzumaki, the main character of "Naruto," known for his strength, never-quit spirit and sunny disposition. Mioshi played Naruto's rival Sasuke Uchiha, a cool strategist with a fiery spirit hidden within.

世界コスプレサミット (WCS) チャンピオンシップでは、ビジュアルだけでなく、原作や文化への敬意や努力も評価対象となる。2024年大会では、日本代表のMamemayoさんとMioshiさんが『NARUTO -ナルト-』のうずまきナルトとうちはサスケを演じて優勝。日本の伝統的な素材や、祭りや歌舞伎、さらにはペンライトを使っ



The team's performance re-created the final battle scene between Naruto and Sasuke, their pivotal third clash in the series. It incorporated various elements unique to Japanese culture, including traditional materials, aesthetics from festivals and kabuki theater, and even modern "idol" culture, such as a call-and-response performance using penlights that they prearranged with the audience via social media. These efforts to showcase Japanese culture were highly praised by both judges and audience.

Both Mamemayo and Mioshi later said that when their victory was announced, they felt more relief than joy. This was partly because it was their second time competing in the WCS Championship, after representing Japan in 2018. The pressure to win this time, coupled with high expectations from those around them, weighed heavily on them.

Moved by their determination, many people offered support in various ways. For example, in order to incorporate Aomori Prefecture's Nebuta Festival lantern floats into their costumes, they sought advice from experts on traditional Nebuta crafting techniques and paints. "We wanted the Nebuta on our backs to inflate on stage during the performance, so we consulted experts on how to inflate them completely within a certain amount of time. It was like scientific research and experimentation," Mioshi said.

た演出など、現代の「アイドル文化」まで幅広く取り入れた日本文化の魅力を伝える工夫が高く評価された。

衣装には青森のねぶたの技術を取り入れ、舞台上で短時間で膨らませる技術の実験も行ったという。「まるで科学の研究や実験のようでした」と Mioshi さんは振り返った。また、江戸時代の刺し子入りの消防半纏も採用し、

They also incorporated an Edo Period firefighter's durable *hanten* jacket with traditional *sashiko* stitching into the costumes. "It is easy to move around in. But we also wanted to introduce people to Japan's history and culture while conveying the meaning of extinguishing the flames of the battle between Naruto and Sasuke," Mamemayo said

They faced immense time pressure from preparations that spanned planning, designing, costume creation, screenwriting, choreography, performance practice and liaising with supporters and public relations. On top of this, they were adamant about also practicing their five-minute presentation for the

costume judging, a segment separate from the stage performance judging.

According to the competition rules, presentations could be in either Japanese or English. "We are not very good at speaking English, but we wanted to convey the details of our costume designs and the meaning and passion we put into our performances in our own words to all the judges, including those from overseas," Mamemayo said.

Winning the championship significantly broadened Mamemayo and Mioshi's world and expanded their friendships with people from many nations. They were deeply touched when other participants flocked to them after their performance, holding smartphones with translation apps to convey their excitement and praise. At the request of an organizer from Mongolia, they flew to Mongolia and served as judges for its national contest this April.

They will also serve as judges at this year's WCS Championship, which will feature representatives from 42 countries. "We look forward to encountering new ideas and ... want to explore the reasons behind their choices in various elements of their performances, including stage direction and the selection of costume materials," Mamemayo said.

"For example, someone with experience in apparel manufacturing might excel in sewing or have specialized tools," Mioshi said. "But beyond judging the perfection of their strengths, we want to see how much they have faced their weaknesses. The beauty of the WCS Championship lies in the opportunity to gain new knowledge, learn and grow through new encounters with various people during the preparation process."



Last year's WCS
Championship
winners, from first to
third place, pose for
photos. © WCS

"ナルトとサスケの戦いの火を消す"というメッセージを

衣装のプレゼンテーションは英語で行った。「私たちは 英語を話すのが得意ではありませんが、海外の審査員も 含めたすべての審査員に、自分たちの言葉で伝えたかっ たんです」と Mamemayo さん。 今年のチャンピオンシップでは、2人も審査員として参加する。得意分野の完成度だけでなく、自分の弱みにどう向き合ったかにも注目したいという。「WCS チャンピオンシップの魅力は、準備の過程でいろんな人と出会い、新しい知識を得て、学び、成長できることにあると思います」と語った。

# Alpen: The largest sports retailer in Japan



【Nearest station】 1-minute walk from JR Shinjuku Station, east exit



[Nearest station]
Higashiyama Subway Line:
7-minute walk from Sakai Station, exit S7a/S7b or
5-minute walk west from Yabacho Station, exit 6



[Nearest station]
Nanakuma Subway Line:
3-minute walk from Kushida Shrine Station, exit 1



Brands: Nike, Adidas, New Balance, On, Hoka, Yonex, Tigora,
The North Face, Patagonia, Mammut, Majesty and more.



# **Alpen**Group

The Alpen Group operates approximately 400 stores nationwide, including the all-purpose stores Sports Depo and Alpen, the golf equipment specialty store Golf 5 and the outdoor gear specialty store Alpen Outdoors.

We offer products that meet the needs of our customers.

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Shop information Check here!





**Redemption Props** 

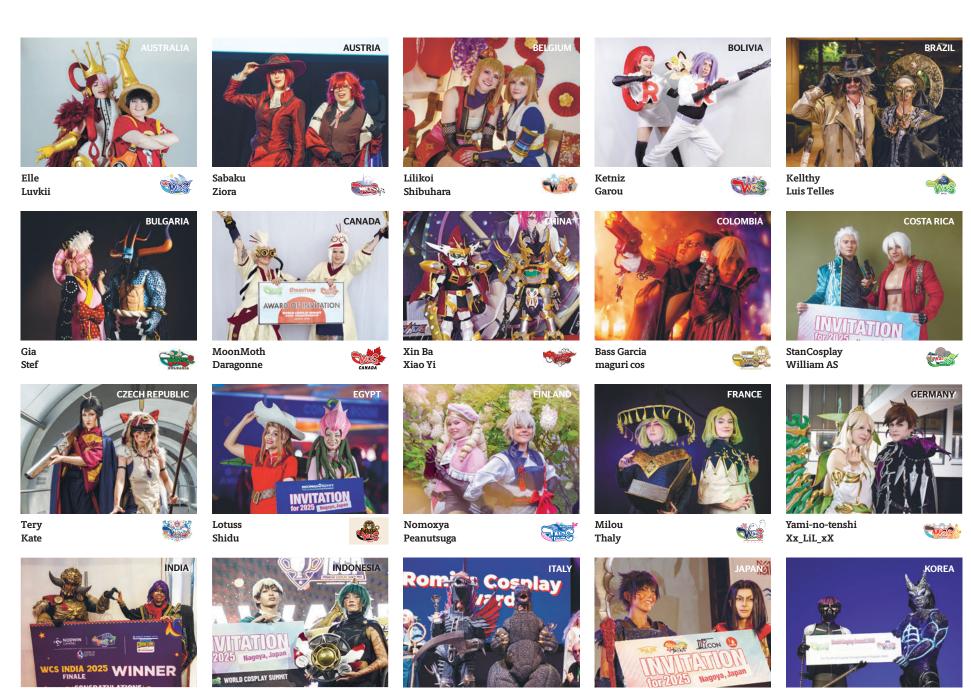
Kiku Art and Krafts

Kagami Yuuto

# Introducing regional representatives

Listed below are all 41 cosplayers representing their nations in this year's World Cosplay Championship, the globe's biggest cosplay competition. Only the chosen are here to take the stage and compete for the title of grand champion.

The stage promises to be a spectacle for all.





MATT OF THE MONSTERS

HONA

Yeong Wol

"Visit ISESHIMA" Bureau Official YouTube Channel



Katen



Dinarin NatsumiPon





KingRusydi Nekota



Roy Irma



Krul **ASAMI** 



Sirius Cosplayer



Iloon



Kerrang Hanakura



Pink Neko Yan Zhou



Bish



Talon



SWITZERLAND



Glin Miss Bakemono





Tomie



Yuko



Exion



Ignition.cos TripTrap cosplay



Tanysa **C-LConception** 





Michael Ink

Furano

Vinnie



Tucky Lucky





Kalypso



Vin



Aka





Red qi



The World Cosplay Championship is the premier global competition in cosplay performance, where top teams from around the world compete for the title of world champion. Participants qualify by winning official preliminary contests held by WCS partner organizations in their respective countries and regions.

The championship finals take place in Nagoya, and are widely recognized as a launchpad for aspiring cosplayers. Many past participants — known as WCS alumni — go on to appear at international pop culture events, gain media exposure and remain actively involved in WCS-related activities long after their stage debut.







Amira Kuster







LevyLike



LaRana





We Need Disguises Cosplay





### Organizers

World Cosplay Summit Executive Committee (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Aichi Prefecture, Nagova City, Nagova Convention & Visitors Bureau. Central Japan International Airport Co. Ltd., Osu Shopping District Federation, The Japan Times, TV Aichi, WCS Inc.)

### Cooperators

Tribute, WCS Hospitality Student Committee, WCS Academic Committee, Oasis 21, Nagoya Chamber of Commerce & Industry

# **WORLD COSPLAY SUMMIT 2025**

# Where global fans gather to create cultural exchange

he World Cosplay Summit 2025 will be held from Aug. 1 to 3 in the Sakae area of Nagoya in Aichi Prefecture. Main venues include Oasis 21, Hisayaodori Park, the Aichi Arts Center and the Osu shopping district. Now in its 23rd year, the event brings together pop culture fans from around the world who share a passion for cosplay. It fosters new forms of international and cultural exchange through Japanese manga, anime and video games.

The highlight of the summit is the World Cosplay Championship, scheduled for Aug. 3 at the Aichi Arts Center. This year, a record 41 countries and regions — five more than last year — will send representative cosplayers who have won regional qualifiers. Competing in pairs, they will be judged on their costumes and stage performances, each team having two and a half minutes to showcase

their creativity and skill.

The excitement doesn't stop there. The event also features a vibrant array of programs across the city, including the Red Carpet Ceremony, the Osu Cosplay Parade, live stage shows, exhibitor booths, cosplay runways and photo spots. The theme, "COSPLAY EVERYWHERE!!," turns the entire city into a celebration of cosplay culture.

Come and experience this summer's celebration of creativity, friendship and cultural exchange in Nagoya!





World Cosplay Summit official characters © WCS / QP:FLAPPER / KISHIDA MFI

# YouTuber Akidearest: From otaku to cultural ambassador

Contributing writer

n the world of online Japan-related content, Akidearest stands out not just for her reach, but for her depth. With over 2 million subscribers on YouTube. Aki — an American-born creator based just outside Tokyo — has made a name for herself by blending fandom, personal experience and cultural exploration, making videos that fans globally adore. While she is not directly involved with the World Cosplay Summit, her YouTube channel and journey offer a glimpse into the community that

such events celebrate.

"I started my channel with anime, gaming and *otaku* culture," she explained. Now her content is centered around broader issues related to Japan and Japanese culture "it's focused on my life here, and what it's

like being a foreigner in Japan." Her journey from anime fan and video gamer to cultural ambassador mirrors the experiences of many foreigners in Japan. At first engrossed in the fictional worlds depicted in anime, they then find themselves yearning to experience the real Japan.

Aki credits anime as the catalyst for her interest in Japan. "Due to the language and

> culture barriers, the only thing we really have is games and anime." she said. Growing up in the U.S., she encountered Japanese culture through anime like "Sailor Moon," "Dragon Ball Z" and "Death Note."

Cosplay also played a role: "It's a form of fandom. And if you make it

vourself, it's also an expression of craftsmanship." Though her own cosplay has slowed down, she still lit up when talking about the creative and expressive energy within cosplay culture.

Aki noted that anime is only a starting point for understanding Japan. "It's definitely a window into Japanese culture, but it's not the whole picture," she said. "I wouldn't say I 'graduated' from anime. It's still a part of who I am, and it would definitely have been more unlikely I would be in Japan without anime and games."

But the cultural barrier works both ways — just as anime lovers outside Japan may lack the resources to appreciate subtle Japanese cultural values embedded in their favorite media, so too do many in rural Japan lack the know-how to attract tourists. That is where Aki's YouTube channel comes in.

Since moving to Japan seven years ago, she has been offering her audience a deeper perspective born of her experiences. "Japan is so much more than 'Tokyo Drift," she said. Companies regularly reach out to her and ask her to promote places far from urban, touristy hot spots like Tokyo and Osaka. "They want me to expose people to what Japan is really like," Aki explained. "I'm really happy that I've



@ EDO

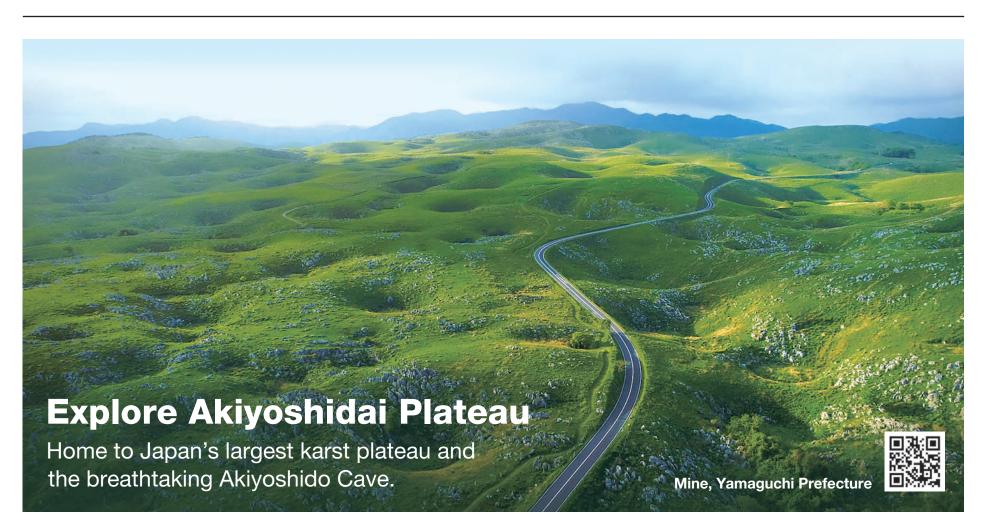
become a bridge for them. It gives me a job that I love to do."

For those discovering her for the first time, Aki keeps it simple: "I really like anime and cosplay. And if you're reading this at the Cosplay Summit, I think you do too, so check out my channel!" It is easy to find a video you are interested in because she makes the titles clear: "If my mom can understand the title, then that's what I go with," she said with a laugh.



A screenshot from Akidearest's YouTube channel, where she shares content with

fans worldwide. AKIDEAREST



# Nagoya symbols are at the heart of WCS experience the excitement!

### Oasis 21: Main venue and live stage

Oasis 21, a landmark in Nagoya, will serve as the main venue for the World Cosplay Summit 2025. Its multilevel structure — featuring the Spaceship-Aqua rooftop, Green Earth ground level and Galaxy Plaza underground — offers ample photo opportunities and convenient access via bus and subway. Visitors can enjoy daytime photo shoots and magical nighttime views. A special stage will also host key WCS events.



### Hisaya-odori Park

Located in the heart of Sakae, Hisaya-odori Park is a spacious urban oasis ideal for cosplay photography. The expansive lawn, with natural light and greenery, is perfect for solo or group shoots.

Mirai Tower (formerly Nagoya TV Tower) serves as a striking backdrop for urbanthemed cosplay. Surrounding streets with trendy cafes and stylish shops attract many cosplayers during the event.



# Osu shopping district

A fusion of history and subculture, the Osu shopping district is one of Nagoya's most cosplay-friendly areas. Lined with retro shops, trendy boutiques and anime-themed stores, it offers a unique blend of old and new. During the World Cosplay Summit, the lively streets fill with cosplayers from Japan and abroad, turning the neighborhood into a vibrant, anime-like scene that captures the spirit of the event.



### The Aichi Arts Center

Located in the heart of Nagoya's Sakae area, the Aichi Arts Center will proudly host the final stage of the World Cosplay Championship at the World Cosplay Summit 2025.

Top cosplayers from around the world will present their best performances, combining elaborate costumes, dramatic acting and striking stage effects in a well-attended event watched by audiences worldwide, both in person and via livestreaming.



### Hisaya-odori Garden Flarie

Flarie, a tranquil garden retreat in Hisayaodori Park, features seasonal flowers, fountains and European-style architecture — an ideal setting for cosplay photography. Open as part of the World Cosplay Summit 2025 event area only on Saturday, Aug. 2, and Sunday, Aug. 3, this popular spot offers a rare chance to enjoy a picturesque backdrop. Don't miss the opportunity to capture something special.

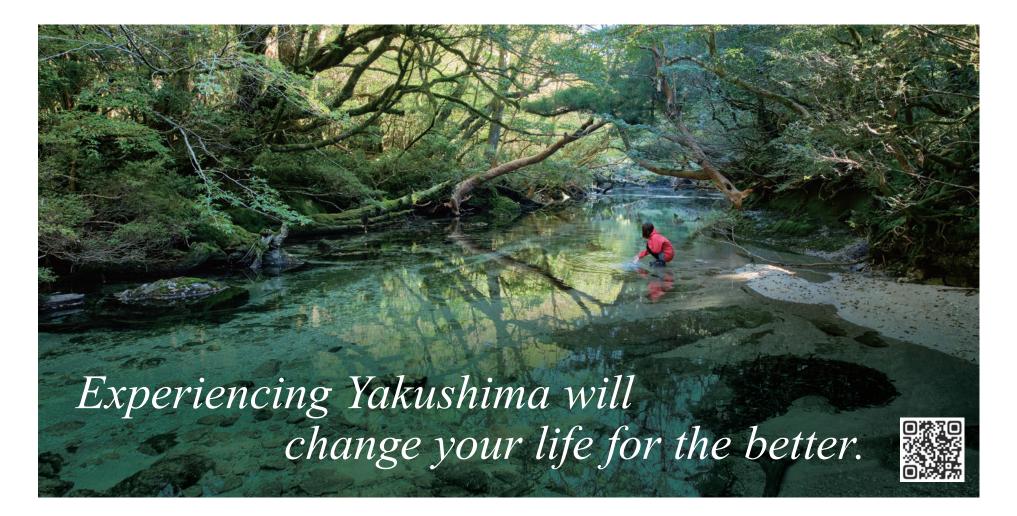


# **WORLD COSPLAY SUMMIT 2025 EVENT SCHEDULE**

	Friday, August 1	Saturday, August 2	Sunday, August 3
	WCS 2025 eve festival 6:00 pm- 9:00 pm	<b>DAY 1</b> 11:00 am- 9:00 pm	<b>DAY 2</b> 11:00 am- 9:00 pm
:00 AM			
:30 AM			
:00 AM			

10: 11:0 11:30 AM **Opening** (11:55 am - 12:20 pm) Opening 12:00 PM WCS Selection- Block 1 12:30 PM WCS Selection- Block 1 (12:20 pm - 13:20 pm) WCS Selection- Block 2 1:00 PM 1:30 PM WCS Selection- Block 2 2:00 PM WCS Selection- Block 3 2:30 PM 3:00 PM 3:30 PM 4:00 PM **WORLD COSPLAY CHAMPIONSHIP 2025** 4:30 PM Live Viewing & **Special Talk Show** WCS Selection- Block 4 5:00 PM 5:30 PM SPECIAL STAGE 6:00 PM **Red Carpet Cosplay** Meetup & Photoshoot 6:30 PM WCS Selection- Block 5 7:00 PM Nagoya University of WCS Selection with FINAL FANTASY XIV (19:15 pm - 20:15 pm) the Arts presents 7:30 PM **Red Carpet Ceremony** (7:00 pm - 8:30 pm) 8:00 PM **Ending** (20:15 pm - 20:30 pm) 8:30 PM 9:00 PM

9:30 PM 10:00 PM 10:30 PM 11:00 PM 11:30 PM



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# Destination Restaurants

- Chimikepp Hotel
- Yoichi Sagra
- Elezo Esprit

Casa del Cibo

5 Japanese Tonoya-Yo

### Akita Pref.

Nihonryori Takamura

# Yamagata Pref.

- Dewaya
- Restaurant Pas Mal

- Hagi
- Tochigi Pref.
- Otowa Restaurant

# Gunma Pref.

- <u>Ventinove</u>

### Niigata Pref.

- Restaurant Uozen
- Satoyama Jujo
- 14 Sushi
- Tokiwasushi

# 15 Japanese Shintaku

### 19 Japanese Ipponsugi Kawashima

Toyama Pref.

Mekumi

16 Japanese Kataori

18 French

<sup>20</sup> Innovative Cuisine régionale L'évo

L'Atelier de Noto

- Oryouri Fujii
- <sup>22</sup> Japanese Ebitei-Bekkan

- Don Bravo

# Kanagawa Pref.

Kamakura Kitajima

- <sup>25</sup> Chakaiseki Onjyaku
- 26 French Chisou Nishi Kenichi

Terroir Ai to Ibukuro

- Nihonryori Yukimoto
- Restaurant Naz 30 Italian Ca'enne

# Mie Pref.

Shibousai Kitagawa

32 Italian

Villa Aida

- 33 Japanese
- Tsukumo

34 French Akai

### Nagasaki Pref.

- Pesceco
- Villa del Nido

### Oita Pref.

- 37 Innovative
- Enowa

- État d'espr<u>it</u>
- 6 Six
- Mauvaise herbe

# A list of the best restaurants in Japan, selected by Japanese experts with international diners in mind.

In 2021, The Japan Times created the Destination Restaurants list around the idea of Japanese experts uncovering top local restaurants for people around the world — hidden gems that not only offer unique culinary experiences but also contribute to community revitalization, sustainable food and the promotion of natural resources.

We aim to differentiate ourselves from other selections by bringing countryside talent proper recogni-

This book, marking the fourth anniversary of the Destination Restaurants project, is a compilation of the finest restaurants we have selected so far.

# the japan times Publishing



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**AUTHENTIC JAPAN SELECTION 2021-2024**