

Getting to Hakuba

Firstly, **THANK-YOU** very much for choosing to stay with us. We hope you have a fantastic and memorable stay! If you have stayed with us previously - welcome back!

We compiled this guide to give you a few ideas and options travelling up to visit us. Everyone's holiday is different so we placed the most common methods our guests use in this document. If you are coming from somewhere not encompassed here or need any further advice or information please make contact with us, we are only too happy to help!

Our contact for your included personal concierge that can assist and make your stay more enjoyable;

- ✉️ Property Manager, Julian Wheatley
- ✉️ ☎️ **080 3414 0032 / +81 80 3414 0032**
- ✉️ info@valleychalets.com

Airport Immigration and Customs

May we suggest that you and your guests avail yourselves of the pre-arrival immigration / vaccine status and customs apps provided by the Japanese government and available for mobile devices. It will save you a good deal of time at the airport.

<https://vfw-lp.digital.go.jp/en/>

We endeavour to keep this guide as current as possible but some minor changes may occur as the pandemic recovery continues.

Check In

Check in time is 16:00. If you are expecting to arrive late in the evening (after 9pm), please make contact with us to ensure that your check in is seamless after hours. You will always need to contact us if you need picking up.

It is generally a good idea to make contact with us with your estimated arrival time and transport method. Occasionally we can accommodate earlier check in's, we will try our best, but it's subject to availability and not guaranteed.

Guest Services before Arriving

Please feel free to make contact with our Manager Julian, before you arrive to set up anything that will make your holiday smoother. Most things can be arranged once you arrive, however some tours, activities, restaurants and individual ski lessons book out in the peak holiday period. We can offer that extra peace of mind by booking ahead.

Luggage Delivery

Spending a few days elsewhere off the slopes before/after your stay with us? Japan has a super-efficient and secure luggage delivery service that can deliver to your destination usually by the following day. It is well priced and saves you lugging those cumbersome board bags all over the country. There are counters at both airports, most hotels and we also have the ability to send/receive them. Please show the agent the following address.

NOTE: This is **PROXY ADDRESS** only as your accommodation may be unattended for delivery - to receive items directly to your accommodation during your stay - see your address provided separately. Please put the lead guest name on the courier tag.

〒399-9422 長野県北安曇郡
小谷村千国乙 12856-63
もみじ ジュリアン・ウィートリー

ATTN: Julian Wheatley. Momiji. 12856-63 Chikuni-otsu, Otari-mura
Kitaazumi-gun, Nagano-ken, 399-9422
JAPAN

Portable Wi-Fi for International Customers

For those that don't wish to use their roaming when they arrive there are many Wi-Fi hire services at both airports that can be booked in advance or over the counter. Many will also deliver to us prior to your arrival (please use the address above). They offer reasonable rates so you can keep the family connected out and about or in the car. Most places you go will have free Wi-Fi too.

Power

Japan uses a 100V 2 pin plug system. It is similar to plugs from the USA but without the 3rd pin. If you purchase adaptors before you come make sure they are the 2 pin only variety. On arrival they are readily available in the convenience and travel stores at both airports, they also stock a 3 pin to 2 pin adaptor. Most devices will work with the reduced voltage if you come from a 240V country like Australia. However we have come across items without a built in transformer that won't work. Hair straighteners is a common device that struggles with the reduced voltage.



Cash

In Japan cash and coins are king! Shops and restaurants have been steadily accepting more credit cards especially in Hakuba but elsewhere it is common that cash is the only option, so it's a good idea to have some on hand before your journey up. Only a handful of ATM's accept foreign cards – 7-11, Lawson, Family Mart and Japan Post. There are plenty of ATMs at the airport if needed.

Transport Overview

Tokyo has 2 major international airports, Narita and Haneda.

Narita Airport is Japan's major International gateway. It sits just under an hour to the east of Tokyo and is very well connected by express train to central Tokyo where you transfer to the Shinkansen and also connected by expressways and a direct bus service to Hakuba. Generally flights from Europe and Eastern USA arrive at Narita Airport in the mornings and flights from Western USA arrive in the afternoon followed by flights from Australia in the evenings.

Haneda Airport is located just south of Tokyo and is connected to central Tokyo by the suburban trains and monorail. It also is well connected to the expressway network and also has several direct bus departures to Hakuba.

Please use the following links.

Guests commonly travel to Hakuba by;



[Hire Car \(4-5hrs\)](#)



[Shinkansen Bullet Train \(4.5-5.5hrs\)](#)



[Express Train \(4.5hrs from Tokyo\)](#)



[Bus \(5.5-6hrs\)](#)

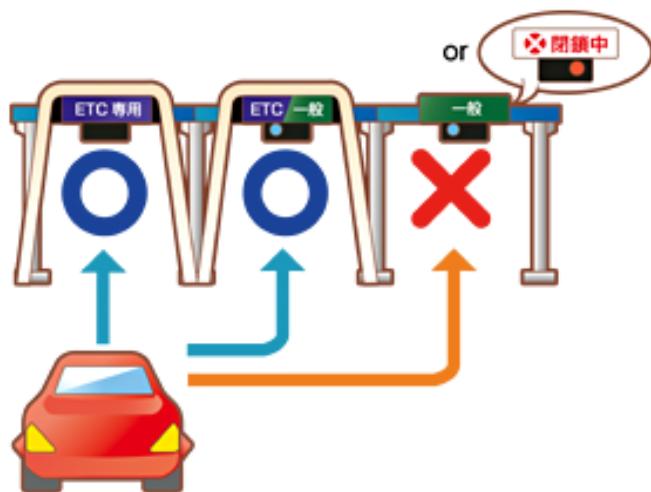


[Chuo Taxi \(5.5hrs\)](#)

By Car

Getting to Hakuba by car is very easy, a great road trip, plus you have the additional benefit and flexibility to explore the valley's resorts and to do some day trips. Some great day trips may include attractions like the Snow Monkeys or Matsumoto Castle on those days you are taking a rest from the slopes. If you choose not to drive from Tokyo we can arrange quality car rental for you in Hakuba.

Most rental car companies offer GPS navigation in English as standard and also for a dollar or two a day a rental 'ETC Card' that allows you to use the speedy electronic toll gates and allows access to significant off peak savings if you travel at specific times. No fumbling around for cash or coins! The rental company will provide you with an ETC bill at the conclusion of your rental.



With an ETC Card you can use the two Purple 'ETC Lanes'.

If paying by cash you must only use the 'Green Lanes'

Most companies also offer winter kits such as snow tyres and in Japan most minivans and SUV's can be equipped with a 4WD option which is a must.

An International Drivers Licence is a **requirement** in Japan. You can pick one up cheaply from your local automobile club such as the RAC, NRMA, AAA, etc. and is valid for 1 year. You cannot use your home country licence.

Just to point out any drink driving is strictly against the law in Japan and carries pretty heavy penalties compared to what you are used to back home.

Route Choice

From both Haneda and Narita airports there is usually only a 10-15 minute difference between Route 1 and Route 2. The major difference is that route 1 is easiest from Narita because it bypasses the maze of interchanges that makes up central Tokyo. The bypass ring road (C3) was completed in 2019 and has a 25km underground section which shaved off over 30mins to Hakuba! It makes for a very easy drive. As you start to climb towards the Alps the views are spectacular with a cool roadhouse at the summit! Route 2 is easiest from Haneda for the same reason that it bypasses central Tokyo. It is a very scenic drive with views of Mt Fuji and its neighbouring valley that you drive through.

On the few days with exceptionally heavy snowfall forecast it's best to use Route 1 as it has a greater distance on the well ploughed expressway system and is also less prone to heavy snow. Generally the road system can take an incredible amount of snow, they have it down to a fine art! If you have any concerns give us a call before you head off or ask the rental agent and they can check the live monitoring which has up to the minute information.

Traffic is rarely a problem outside of Tokyo, however just like any big city, Tokyo traffic can get busy between 6.30am-8.30am and again in the evenings 4.30pm-6.30pm. All hire cars have live traffic monitoring and will dynamically suggest new routes based on the live situation.

With the tollgates you must use the purple lanes if you have an ETC card, otherwise you must use the green lanes to pay by cash only.

Before you set off you can get the rental company to program the exact location in Japanese into the GPS using Japanese Characters.

See your accommodation address provided separately.

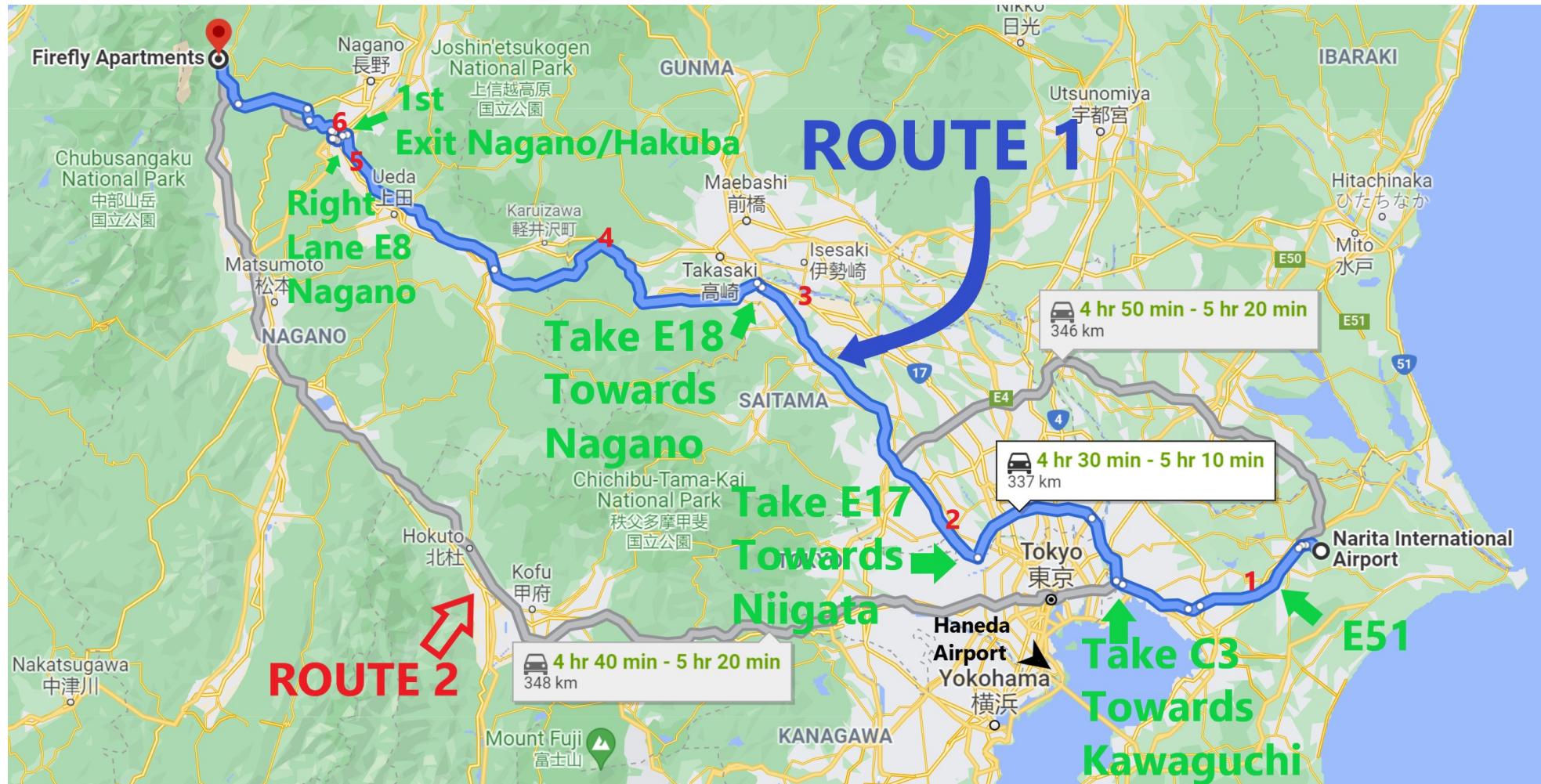
In Japan addresses are not laid out like other countries, to make things simple the GPS uses phone numbers to get to where you are going. It is the most common way to get from A to B

To program the GPS you can sometimes use a phone number of a nearby landmark. See: **The phone number provided separately.**

Google Maps Navigation also works really well in Japan with accurate traffic information too. Just make sure not to chew into your roaming!

If you use Google Navigation use the code **Provided separately.** It will take you to the front door.

Route 1



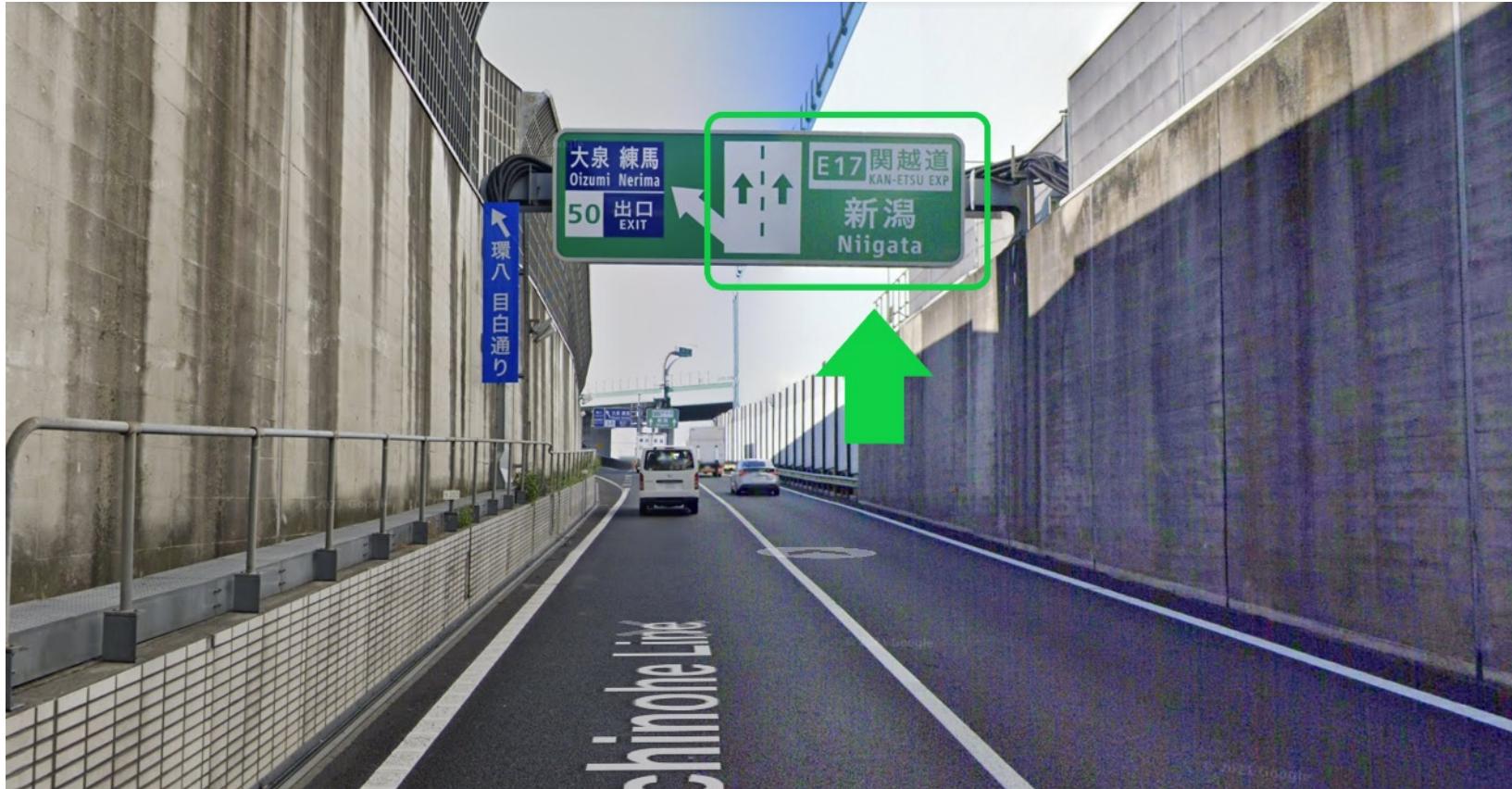
Directions (Green), Useful Rest Stops (Red Numbers)

Depart Narita airport onto the expressway following signs for the **E51** for **Tokyo**. Once on the **E51** continue 43Km. It will take you through the rice fields on the outskirts of Tokyo then into the commercial and industrial city of Chiba and Funabashi. Continue on the **E51** until you see signs for the **C3 Gaikan Expressway**. Follow the signs for **Kawaguchi**. (Pont to note, there is another parallel expressway the E14 that forks off the E51 before you get to the C3 as mentioned above. Some GPS units will choose that expressway instead, it will also lead to an off-ramp for the C3 to Kawaguchi).



Junction of the E51 and C3. Follow signs for Kawaguchi.

Once on the **C3, Gaikan Expressway** it will ring around central Tokyo. Continue for 48Km. You should be able to see the Tokyo Skytree on your left when you eventually exit the never ending tunnel. Continue on the **C3** to the end junction. There you want to bear to the right. Follow signs for the **E17, Kan-Etsu Expressway** towards **Niigata**. There is some ongoing construction at this junction so the road layout may be slightly different.



Junction at the end of the C3 that leads into the E17 north.

The Kan-Etsu Expressway is the major artery connecting Tokyo with Northwest Japan. If you need a quick break there are many roadhouses along this expressway. Miyoshi (Map number 2) and Kamisato (number 3) Services have lots of restaurants and also a Starbucks.

Continue towards Niigata for 117Km, to Fujioka Junction which is where you will leave the E17 for the **E18 Joshin-Etsu Expressway** for Nagano.



At Fujioka Junction exit left onto the E18, Joshin-Etsu Expressway towards Nagano.

Shortly after the junction you will begin to start climbing up the first mountain range into the Alps. As with all mountain driving be careful of ice and snow. Continue on the **E18** for 125Km.

There is a roadhouse near the summit here called Yokokawa. It's roughly the half way point. On a clear day has it some nice views of the surrounding peaks, a few market stalls, souvenir shop and also a food court with a coffee shop. It's not a bad place to stretch your legs. Its number 4 on the route map.

Continue along the E18. As you descend down from Yokogawa it will take you across some pretty cool bridges and into some very long tunnels as you enter the Nagano Valley. The **E18** will terminate into a fork. Take the off ramp to the right, **E8 Horiku Expressway** towards Nagano.



Right Lane, Take the off-ramp to the right, E8, Nagano.

Pass the Matsusushiro Services then the **Nagano** off ramp will be next on your left. There will be a small Hakuba on the signpost too. Take the **Nagano** off ramp and proceed through the toll gate then **turn right** at the lights.



Exit expressway to the left



After toll gates turn right at the 1st lights, Right 2 lanes

Cross over the river bridge. Here is a good opportunity to refuel the car as valley petrol is a bit pricier than Nagano. The 1st Eneos station has a 7-11 attached to it for a pit stop. Red pump = regular unleaded. Yellow = premium.

Proceed past the 2nd Eneos station on your left. Shortly there will be a blue sign above the road for **Route 19**, turn left at the lights for **Hakuba**. There will be a Shell servo at that intersection. Continue on **Route 19** and get in the right lane and keep right to pass over the bridge.



Turn Left at lights with Shell service station, Route 19

Continue straight and you will leave Nagano and follow the river. After following the river there will be a well signposted off ramp to the left for **Hakuba** and **Route 31**.

Then keep right and proceed over the bridge



Sai River



Left Lane, Exit left Route 31 to Hakuba

There will be a cash only toll gate just after the underpass. If going through after hours and it is unattended it's ok to drive straight through. This road will climb into the mountains for the last 40mins to Hakuba. The snow will increase as you climb especially for the last bit. Just be careful of slippery conditions. The road is also a little narrow and windy in some sections. Each village has a convenience store along the road if you need a final pit stop.

You will pop out of one final 500m tunnel and you will enter the Hakuba valley pointing at the Goryu resort. Continue on the same road and follow the sign over the overpass to **Mt. Hoppoone** on the outskirts of town. You will then pass over a river. Turn left at the lights just after the river bridge. There will be a 7-11 on the corner.



Follow the signs for Mt Hoppoone

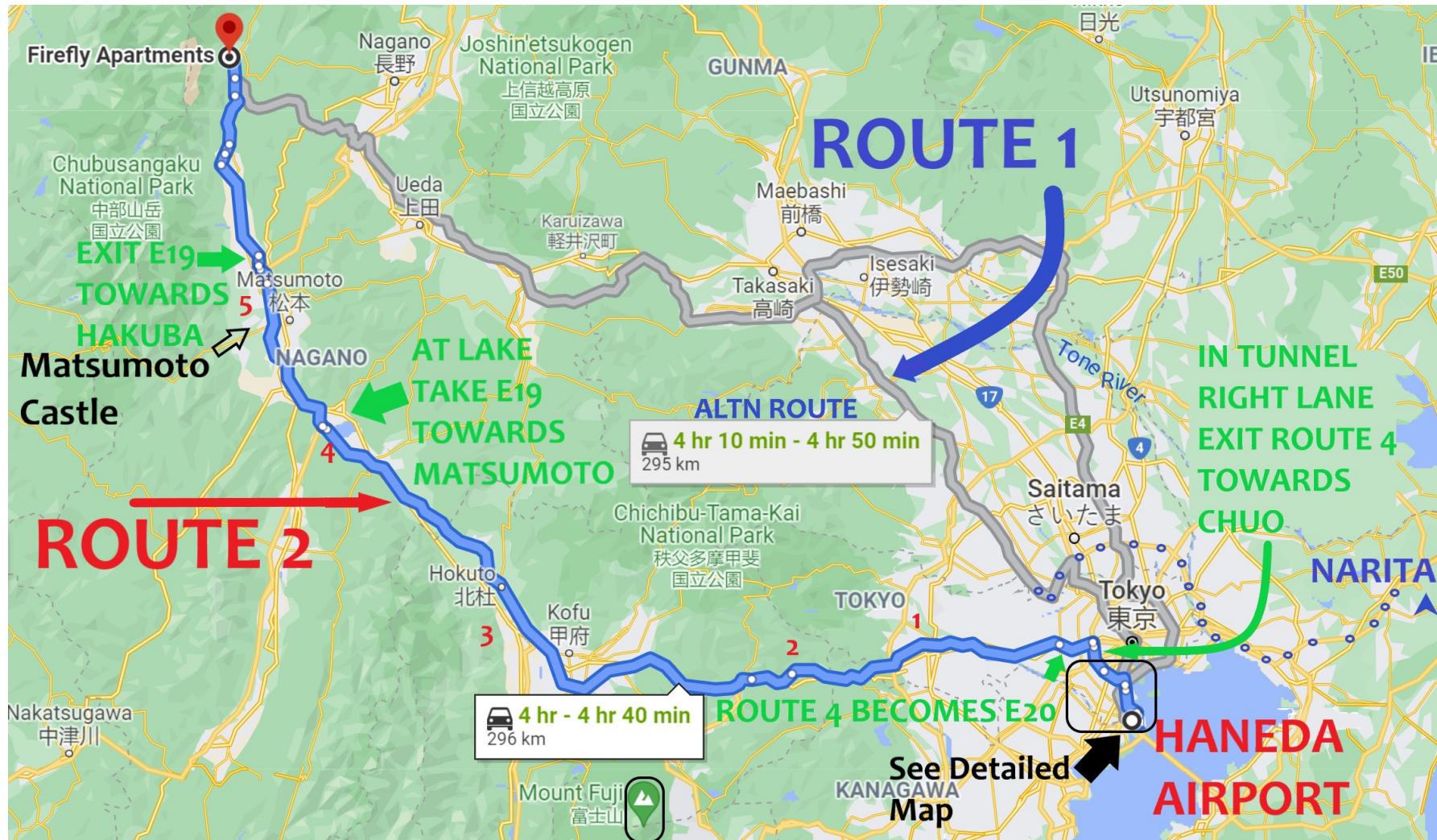
You are now in Hakuba!

1. **Shisui Services.** Just a small roadhouse with a Japanese coffee shop and ramen restaurant. The last major stop before exiting the other side of Tokyo. @ 0:15
2. **Miyoshi Services.** 1st major roadhouse the other side of Tokyo on the E17 just after the big toll gates. Has a Starbucks, food court and convenience store. @ 1:30
3. **Kamisato Services.** Major roadhouse on the E17. Has a Starbucks, large food court and the convenience store@ 2:20
4. Yokokawa Services. Quite a scenic stop. Near the summit of the first range you cross. Has a Tully's coffee, Modern food court, souvenir shop that doubles as a convenience store. Often a place to get your first taste of snow. @2:45
5. **Chikumagawa – Sakaki Services.** Big name, little place. Only a 7-11 and a toilet block. Nagano is only 20mins away. @3:25
6. **Nagano.** Multiple places to stop here. Fuel is cheaper here than in Hakuba and on the expressways. 1st Eneos station you pass has a 7-11 attached to it. After here there are many places to stop as you pass through the villages to Hakuba. @3:45

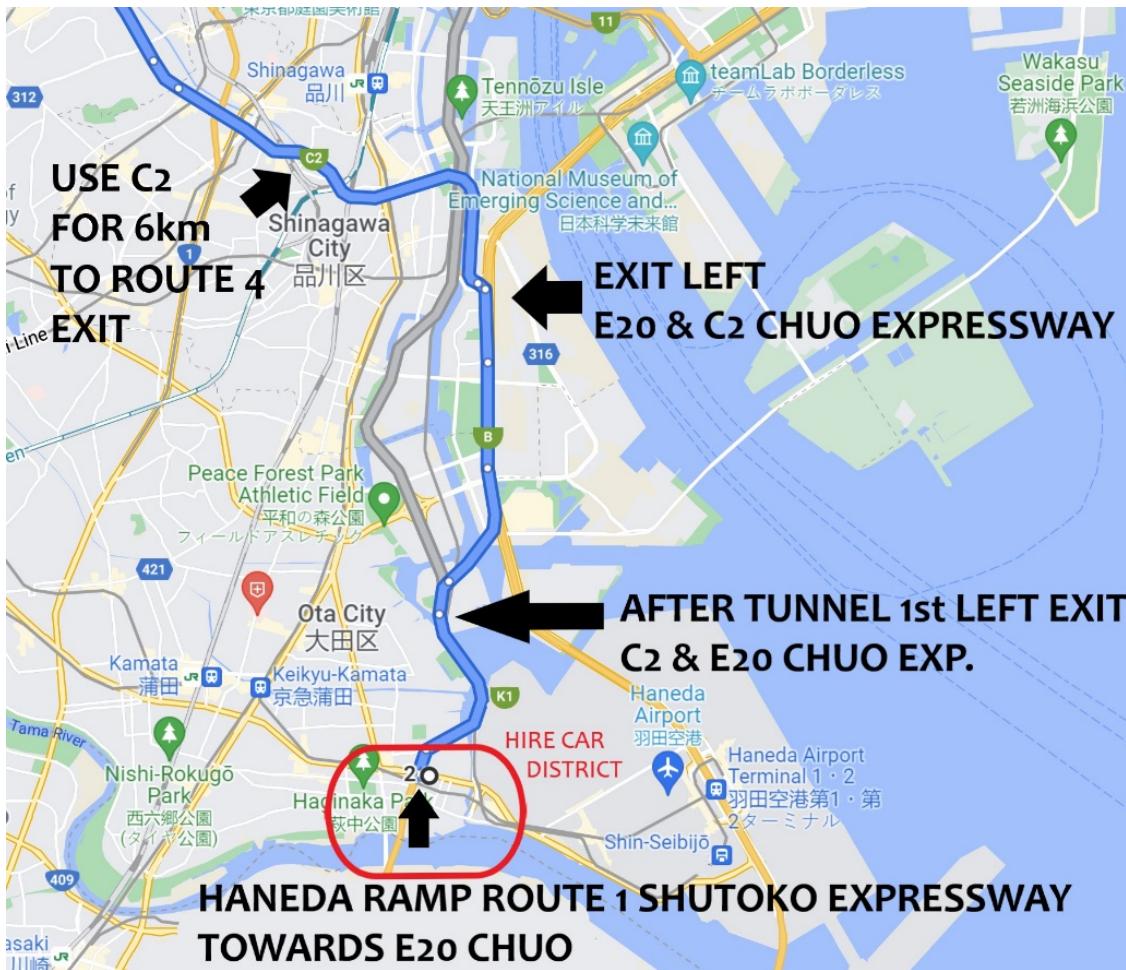


Roadhouse spicy ramen at Miyoshi services, 1am, It's pretty awesome!

Route 2



Directions (Green), Useful Rest Stops (Red Numbers)



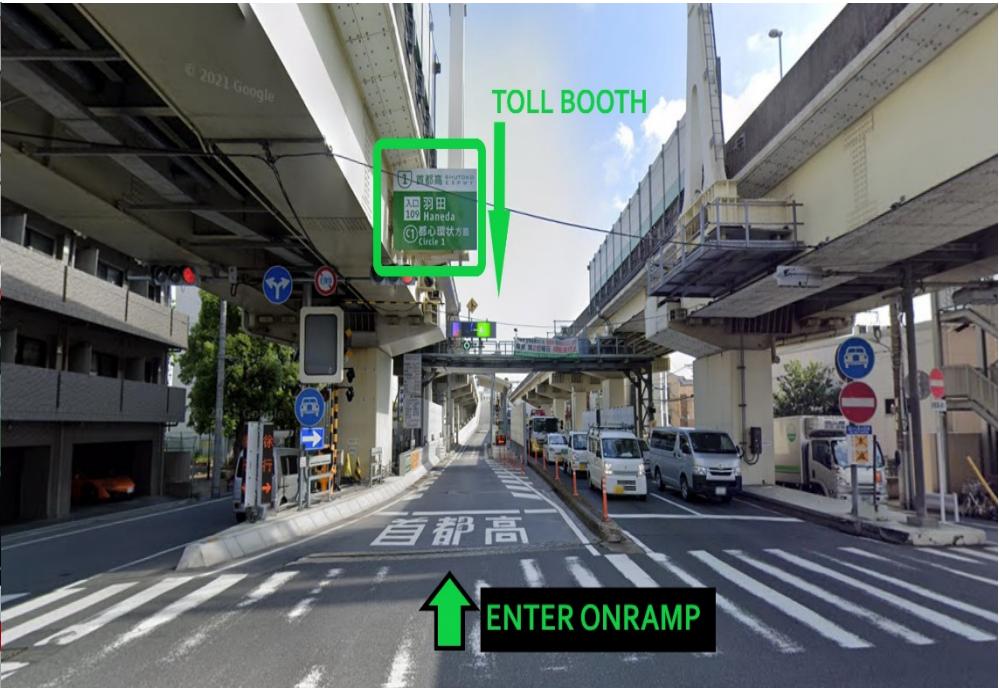
Most Car rental companies in Haneda are located just off airport in a district just to the west called Anamori or Otorii. They have a shuttle van that takes about 10 minutes to get from the airport. There is an onramp in the district to the expressway network called the **Haneda Ramp**. We will start the guidance from this point as it will be the most common onramp. For the first 20 minutes winding your way through Tokyo towards **Route 4/E20, Chuo Expressway** you need to pay more attention but once established on **Route4/E20** its 180km before you need to turn again which makes it a very pleasant and scenic drive.

Depart the rental agency towards the **Shutoko Expressway**. The onramp is underneath the expressway bridge in the centre of the intersection. Take the **northern onramp**. At the onramp entrance it will say **109 Haneda Circle 1**. You will pass the tollgate. If you have an ETC Card you drive through otherwise you must pay the attendant a fixed cash fee.

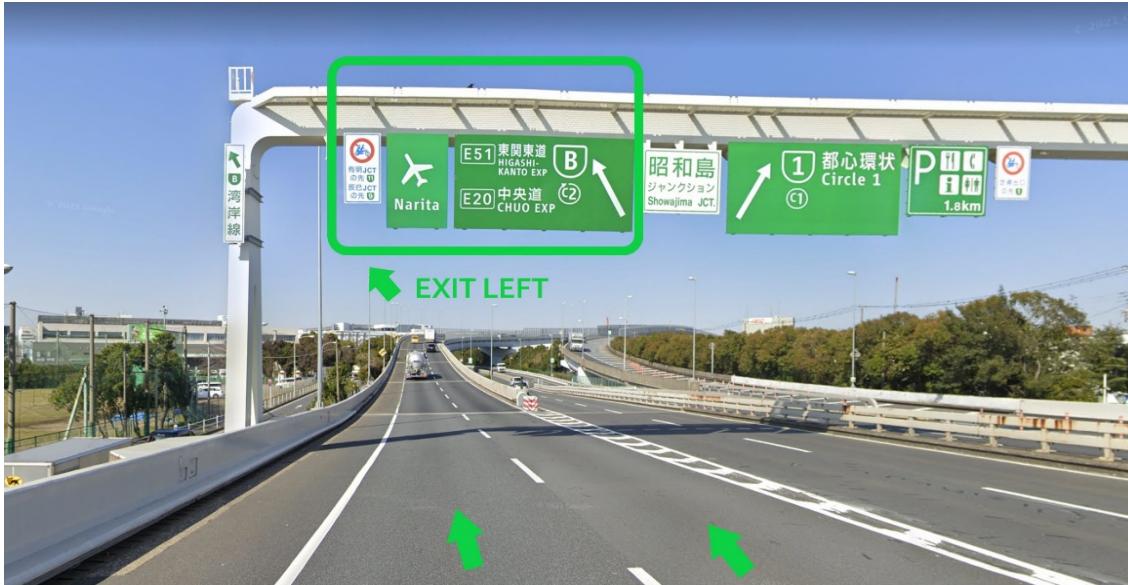


Turn north under the bridge. Shutoko Exp, 109, C1 Circle 1

Once established on the expressway, continue 2km. You will pass through a tunnel. Take the 1st exit to the left following the Signs for **C2 & E20 Chuo Expressway**.



Enter onramp, Shutoko Expressway, 109, Circle 1



Exit left 2 lanes. E20 Chuo Expressway

You will now merge with another expressway. Continue 1.3Km on the new expressway and then exit left



Exit left lane. E20 Chuo Expressway

You are now established on the **C2 Ring Road**. Continue 6Km. You will shortly enter a winding tunnel that circles around outskirts of central Tokyo. Pay close attention as the next exit will sneak up on you fast as you will exit from the right lane and there is little warning and signage of the exit. To help give

you warning the **prior exit** is Hatsudai-minami. You should be in the **right lane** about here. Then you will be looking for signs for **Route 4 Chuo**. Take this exit and you will also exit the tunnel then merge with **Route 4/E20**. Sorry the photo below is the best I could find.



Exit Right Route 4 Chuo

You are now established outbound of Tokyo. **Route 4** will become the **E20** just outside of Tokyo. Follow the expressway for the next 180km.

The outer industrial suburbs of Tokyo will give way to mountains very quickly. As you climb also please be a bit cautious of ice if the road is damp or wet. On a clear day there will be some great views of Mt Fuji on your left side. Once past the Fuji area you will pass through many picturesque valleys too. Enjoy the drive!



As you approach the next freeway it is next to quite a picturesque lake called Lake Suwa. There is a roadhouse there called Suwako. It is worth a pit stop here at about the halfway point. It has some great views of the lake and a large food court, bakery, cafe and even a hot spring onsen!

Just after passing the Suwako services you will exit left onto the **E19** towards **Matsumoto**.



EXIT LEFT E19 MATSUMOTO

LAKE SUWA

Exit left, E19 towards Matusmoto

Now continue on the E19 for 32Km. You will pass the city of Matsumoto, famous for its castle. It is one of the 'Big 4' castles in Japan and dates back to the 1500s. It has parking at the North West corner of the castle park if you wish to take a look.

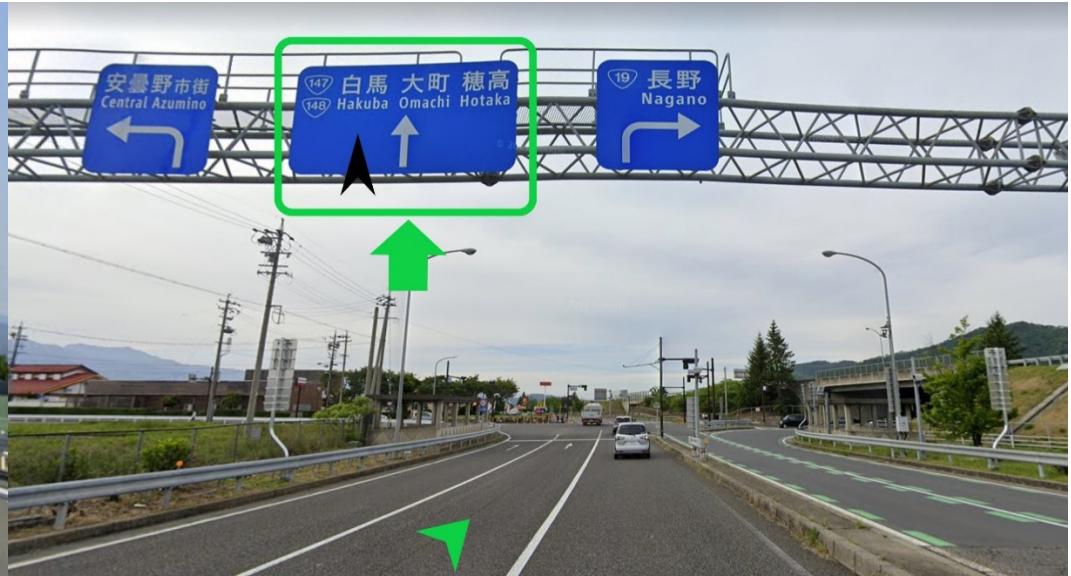


Getting Closer, 'Hakuba Straight Ahead'!
(November photo after first snowfalls)

As you continue past Matsumoto on the **E19** you will be looking to take the exit for **Omachi** and **Hakuba**. The toll gate will be shortly after exiting the expressway. Then in the middle lane continue straight at the traffic lights following the sign for **Hakuba**.



Exit left to Hakuba



After toll gate, middle lane and straight at the lights



Turn right at the lights

Continue on this road for **22km** until the end. The road will follow the river on your right and also give you some great views of the Japanese Alps on your left. Just use a bit of caution from now as the local roads are not ploughed to the same standards as the expressway and the snow will increase as you get closer to Hakuba. At the end of the road turn right towards **Kurobe Dam**.



Right turn, towards Kurobe Dam

Continue on this road for 12.5Km. It will take you through some rice fields and then into a farming town. Follow the signs for **Route 148**. As you approach the traffic lights to turn there will be a white ski area sign for Yanaba and Sun Alpina Kashimayari. At the lights you will have a massive Lawson convenience store on your left and a Honda bike dealership on your right. There will also be a blue sign for **Hakuba**. Turn left at these lights onto **Route 148**.



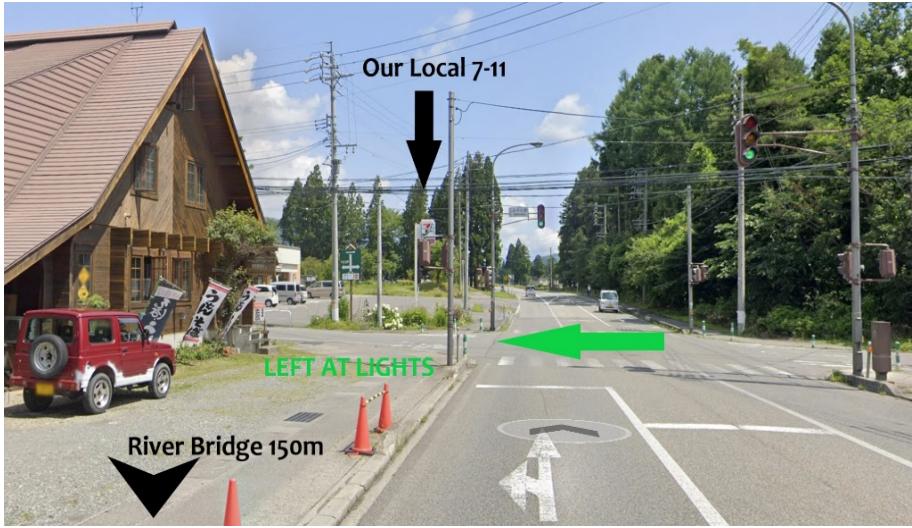
Turn Left onto Route 148 towards Hakuba

Continue 17Km on **Route 148**. It will take you past two very scenic lakes and also the Hakuba Valley ski resorts of Kashimayari, Sanosaka and Goryu before entering the outskirts of Hakuba. There will be a small off-ramp to the left and a blue sign for **Mt Happone**. Take this exit and follow the road over the river bridge.

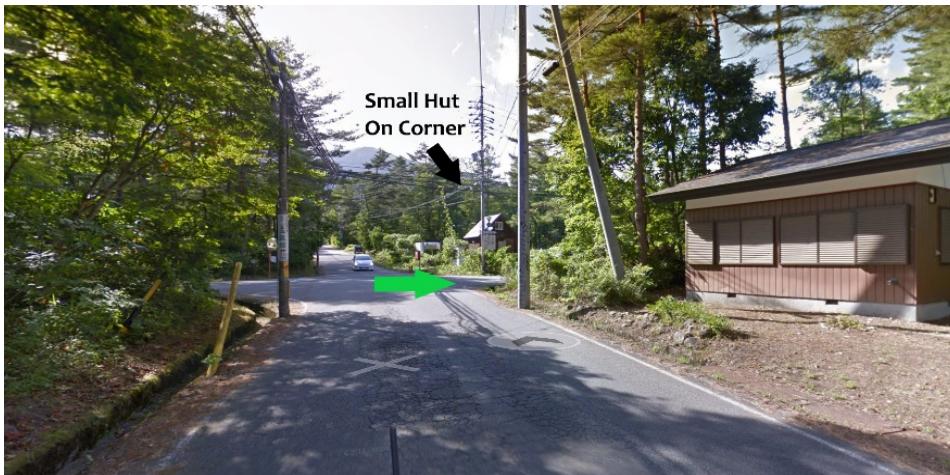


Exit Left towards Mt Happoone

Continue 1Km over the river then use the 1st set of traffic lights to turn left adjacent to the 7-11



Continue up the hill 500m. There will be a 4 way intersection with a little hut on the right. Turn Right here. Continue 750m to the Main Street of Echoland. There will be the main bus station on the corner. Turn left here.



Turn right at the small hut



Turn just before the bus terminal



Apologies I don't have a winter photo on file! Usually there are snowbanks each side of the road!

Continue up the Main Street. We will be at the end of 3rd street on the left. **Welcome to the Firefly Apartments!**

Useful Rest Stops (Red Numbers on the Route Map)

1. **Ishikawa Services.** Smaller sized roadhouse. Just a coffee shop, ramen restaurant and restrooms. @0:45
2. **Dangozaka Expasa Services.** 1st major roadhouse the other side of Tokyo. Large roadhouse. Starbucks, food court, bakery, souvenir shop and on a clear day some great valley views. @ 1:20
3. **Futaba Services.** Medium sized roadhouse. Small food court, bakery and a lookout tower of the surrounding valley. @2:10
4. **Suwako Services.** Probably the most scenic roadhouse along the route. Large food court with panoramic windows of the lake, bakery, café, souvenir shop and even a hot spring onsen! It has it all! @2:50
5. **Azusagawa Services.** Last stop before exiting the expressway system. Beyond here there are many convenience stores in the villages you will pass through. Azusagawa has just a small food court and coffee shop. Just after the next off-ramp there are a few restaurants and shops too. @3:10

The Trains

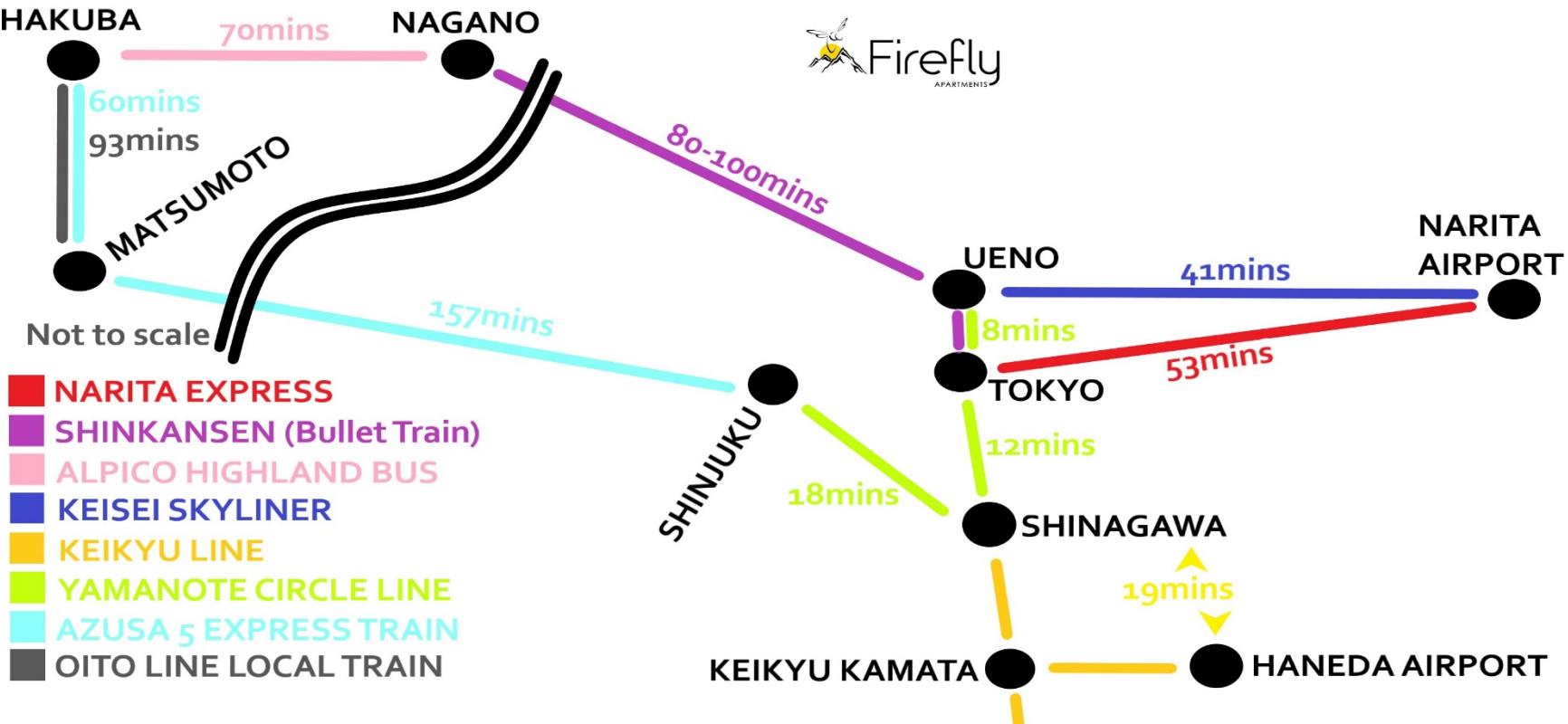
You can reach Hakuba 2 main ways by train. The Bullet Train (Shinkansen) departs from Tokyo station for Nagano roughly every 20 minutes and takes between 80 and 110 minutes to reach Nagano. From Nagano it's a 1 hour bus ride to Hakuba Happo and a little more to Tsugaike and Norikura. The alternative is an express train that departs Shinjuku about 8am and takes about three and a half hours to reach Hakuba. The drawcard of this train is it's a tourist train and takes a very scenic route from Tokyo and is very convenient if you have already spent a few days in Tokyo prior to your journey. If 8am is just a little too early for you the Express train has other departures from Shinjuku later in the morning and terminates at Matsumoto. From there you connect with a local train. That journey takes just over 4 hours. It's a great journey if you wish to stop in Matsumoto and explore the castle before continuing the last leg to Hakuba.

If you arrive into Japan mid evening or later your best option would be by car or bus or stay overnight in Tokyo.

Both airports, major stations and Shinjuku have JR ticket offices where you can buy tickets for your journey with English speaking staff. Just let them know your destination and they will arrange the most efficient method from A to B.

The best website for intercity train schedules is <https://www.hyperdia.com/>. It is not the most user friendly software and you need to be very precise with your search criteria but it's the Japanese standard. If you show the train you want to catch from the search results at any ticket office in Japan they will know exactly where and how you want to get there. In urban areas Google Maps does a great job.

Prior to Covid there JR had the 'Japan East Pass'. It allowed foreign tourists to use an unlimited number of journeys on any 5 days you selected in a 14 day period. You could train up, ski for a week, have a day trip to explore Matsumoto, train back and still have 2 days left over to explore Tokyo or Nagano on the pass. At the moment, JR is only offering 5 consecutive days on this pass to locals and foreigners alike, which would only be slightly beneficial on a return trip from Narita/Tokyo and you wanted a day trip to Matsumoto from Hakuba. https://www.jreast.co.jp/multi/en/pass/eastpass_n.html



By Bullet Train (Shinkansen)

The Shinkansen is the most Japanese way of getting to the Firefly Apartments! The trains are super comfortable, punctual to the second and a great experience! What is better than whizzing though the countryside at 275Kph with a beer in hand watching the world go by! Just as much as us big kids, the little ones totally love the experience too!

The Shinkansen departs from Tokyo Station and makes a brief stop at Ueno station before continuing on to Nagano. We will outline the easiest ways to get to Tokyo or Ueno Station from both airports.

Classes of Travel

The Shinkansen has three classes of travel, Ordinary, Green Car and Gran Class.

Ordinary Class is laid out in a 2+3 layout with assigned seating. Each seat has a power plug (Japanese/US 2 prong), tray table, drink holder and a generous amount of legroom compared to an aircraft (40in). The middle seat is also 2cm wider so you don't feel so sandwiched in, Japanese think of everything! For the luggage there is an overhead shelf for carry on sized items and at the end of each car a rack for larger items. Free Wi-Fi is available when the train is not in a tunnel – about 30% of the journey!

Green Car is similar to a business class style service. The car is laid out in a 2+2 configuration with each seat being an electric recliner with footrest and 47in of legroom. You will be greeted by an attendant once the train gets moving with a warm towel to welcome you on board. The Green Car is also available on the Narita Express and the Azusa train too.

Gran Class is a first class service. In Tokyo station you get access to the sumptuous 'View Gold Lounge' for some pre-departure drinks and nibbles up to 90mins prior to departure. On the platform you are shown to your seat by your personal attendant and from then it's full service all the way. The layout is in a 1+2 configuration with each seat being an automated leather recliner with massage functions. It was designed by Ken Okuyama the famous Japanese designer for Ferrari. All included is a Japanese style light meal, beer, wine, sake, amenity kit and even slippers! The train car even has an active magnetic suspension so you get a smoother ride than the other carriages! Really is full service all the way!



Ordinary Class



Green Car



Gran Class

From Narita Airport

On the basement level you need to proceed to the red JR ticket office. It's adjacent to the ticket gates. The English speaking agent there can help you arrange the most efficient means to get to the Nagano Shinkansen Station. Your first train will be the NEX (Narita Express) which takes about 53mins direct to Tokyo Station. It has reserved seating with luggage storage, free Wi-Fi, in seat power and makes for a simple and comfortable direct journey to Tokyo Station. (If using a JR Railpass use the larger 'Travel Services' counter).



Narita Ticket Office



NEX train exterior...



...And interior

In Tokyo Station you can transfer in under 10mins to the Shinkansen but it's a good idea leaving yourself a bit of extra time as a buffer and to buy a few supplies for the journey. There is no shortage of stores to stock up on supplies! There is a small coffee shop inside the Shinkansen gates too. Tokyo station although well signed is a bit of a rabbit warren being the world's 8th busiest railway station. Follow the signs for the **Green Shinkansen** (not Blue) on **platforms 20-23**.



Follow the Green Shinkansen Signage

If you catch the Keisei Skyliner to Ueno it arrives at **Keisei Ueno Station**, which is separate to **Ueno Station** where the Shinkansen departs. It is just a little over 200m between the two stations. You should give yourself a minimum of 15mins to transfer here. Ueno Station is a major interchange so has plenty of stores to stock up for the next leg of the journey. Just follow the signs for the **Green Shinkansen**.

Please continue and click the '[At Nagano](#)' for further transfer information.



Nagano Shinkansen

From Haneda Airport

As you exit into the arrival hall if you walk past the bus counters towards the monorail station there is a JR ticket office that can create a booking for you from start to finish. They will advise the best way to connect through to Tokyo. Usually allow about 30mins to get to Tokyo taking into account connection time. We will describe the **Keikyu Line to Shinagawa**, then the **Yamanote Line to Tokyo Station** because it is generally the fastest, with more frequent departures and also less walking to connect in Shinagawa. The monorail is also an option. You will need to change to the **Yamanote Line** at **Hamamatsucho** if you take the monorail.

Using the **Keikyu Line** you will be catching a suburban train to **Shinagawa** then changing trains. The trains depart every 5-15 minutes but half the trains departing the airport are bound for destinations south of Tokyo like Yokohama, you should always check which direction it will be going before jumping on. There is a TV screen on the platform with a map indicating which direction the train will destined for beyond the fork at the station Keikyu Kamata. Common destinations that will be on the signage that you want to take, **Shinagawa, Aoto, Takasago, Imba-Nihon-Idai**.



Avoid Trains for Yokohama. Get on northbound trains to Shinagawa (The sign will alternate between Japanese and English)

When you arrive at **Shinagawa** you need to exit the train and proceed towards the front of the train. There will be an elevator next to the stairs to take you down under the tracks and back up to platform level on the other side of the station. Don't exit through the ticket gates on the street/basement level. Follow the signs for '**JR Line Transfer**'. Back at platform level on the other side of the tracks there is a large set of ticket gates, these you can pass through and you are now in the **JR Station**. The **Yamanote Line** (green) is the first platform you come to. It is well signposted and you want to take it towards **Tokyo**. The trains run every 2mins so you will never be waiting long if you miss one!



Follow Signage for 'Transfer to JR Line'



Don't exit. Follow 'Transfer to JR Line'



Then Use the Gates Transfer to JR Line at platform level

Yamanote Line for Tokyo Station

It will take you about 12mins on the Yamanote line to reach Tokyo Station.

When you arrive at Tokyo Station follow the signs for the **Green Shinkansen Transfer**. The Shinkansen departs on **platforms 20-23** for Nagano.



At Nagano

You will arrive at the Nagano Shinkansen Station after 80-100mins depending on the speed of your train and how many stops it makes.

Proceed up the escalators and exit through the exit ticket gates almost straight ahead. After you pass through the gates there will be a large lighted information sign in front of you. Turn left here. Proceed straight and on your left side there will be an elevator. Take it to street level. Pass the taxi rank and look for **bus bay 26, Alpico Highland Bus - Hakuba**.



Close to departure time a ticket agent will appear and ask your destination. Catch the coach to 'Happo Terminal' or 'Tsugaike' or 'Hakuba Norikura' depending on your accommodation location. The coach tickets are bought onboard. Starting season 2022/3 they accept cash and VISA credit cards ONLY via a tap. Always a good idea to have the cash just in case. Foreign cards can be hit and miss.

Most departures line up with Shinkansen arrivals and run every 30 to 90mins depending on time of day. If you have a layover, there are plenty of coffee shops and restaurants inside the station complex.

If you have a long wait you can buy your tickets in advance from the Alpico ticket office across the road from the Zenkoji Station exit (north) Blue shop next to the post office. Google Map link; <https://goo.gl/maps/Zw76bqkxdie4HNme8>

The Alpico Bus timetable; <https://www.alpico.co.jp/en/timetable/hakuba/r-nagano-hakuba/>

Azusa Express Train

The **Azusa No. 5** express train departs Shinjuku, in central Tokyo every morning at 8am and arrives in Hakuba at 11:40 and Minami-Otari at 11:56. No transfers. This train is super handy if you are spending a few days in Tokyo prior to your stay with us. We can store your gear and have you skiing just after lunchtime! Sometimes the early mornings are worth it! Please contact us to arrange a complimentary pickup.

The train is a well-known train made famous for the views you experience along the way. On a clear day you can expect have some great views of Mt Fuji. The train is even specifically designed for the views with extra-large windows.

If 8am is too early for you the Azusa has several departures later in the day but the train terminates in Matsumoto. From there you transfer to the waiting Oito Local Line train for the last hour and a half of your journey. A lot of guests break up the journey with a quick stop in Matsumoto to check out the castle have lunch then continue on. Makes a relaxing day trip.

The castle is a brief 15min walk through some medieval streets and also has some interesting temples along the way too. During the winter on many days the castle also has full battle dressed Samurai's, drummers and market stalls. Sometimes even a Samurai battle takes place! Makes a really fun bonus on battle days! There are luggage storage lockers in the station of varying sizes. Coin only and they do tend to fill up by late morning in peak periods.



Bus

The Nagano Snow Shuttle and Alpico Highland Bus operates daily coach services to Hakuba. The Snow Shuttle is purely focused on the two airports and Alpico runs to Shinjuku, other areas around Tokyo including the airports and also other places in Japan such as Kyoto and Osaka.

The Nagano snow shuttle operates two services from each airport throughout the day, a morning and a late evening. The bus takes approximately 6 hours to reach Hakuba. It will stop twice along the way at highway roadhouses for a toilet stop and driver change. Prior to Covid they would transfer you to a smaller bus to take you to the doorstep. It is a simple and convenient way of reaching Hakuba. However, with just 2 services a day scheduled this winter, if you have a long wait for a bus your best public transport option will be the Shinkansen.

Nagano Snow Shuttle <https://naganosnowshuttle.com/home/timetable/>

Alpico Highland Bus <https://www.alpico.co.jp/en/timetable/hakuba/>

Chuo Taxi

The Chuo Taxi can be booked in advance and is a minivan that operates a rideshare style service. They operate on demand. If they have space they may put someone else in your van that is going to a village enroute to Hakuba which may take extra time. You also have the ability to private hire the entire vehicle that can be more economical for larger groups.

Thank you for reading through this guide. We sincerely hope it helped give you a few ideas to find the best way to come and join us in Hakuba. If there is anything we can do before or during your stay please contact us. We have a genuine love for Hakuba and all it has to offer and we are enthusiastic to share it with you so you have the best holiday possible!

Regards, Julian & Tomoko.
