



YAMAMOTO TRAVEL

SELF
GUIDED
TOUR
**BLAALID &
ROWLESS
FAMILY**

MARCH
2026

Loop guide

HAKONE DAY 2

From volcanic steam to lake gleam—Hakone's mountain loop is nature, culture, and views in motion. Ropeways, pirate ships, forest trails, and open-air art.

A perfect one-day escape before Kyoto calls.

ESSENTIALS



Weather

[CLICK HERE](#)

Hakone's full loop in a day—**cable car, ropeway, volcanic valley, pirate cruise, and open-air art.** Start early for smooth transfers and to beat the crowds. Bring layers (weather shifts fast), and wear good shoes for crater walks and shrine paths. Stop for **black eggs at Ōwakudani**, soak in sculpture at the open-air museum, and finish with a relaxing onsen before catching the Shinkansen to Kyoto. Expect 7–9 hours depending on your pace.

START (GORA) 04

Walk 3 min to Gōra Station. Take the cable car to Sōunzan, then the ropeway to Ōwakudani. Buy a paper ticket (¥420). Bring snacks—food is limited early on.

OWAKUDANI 07

Ōwakudani is a volcanic valley with steam vents, sulfur smells, and epic views—especially if Mt. Fuji appears. It's wild, dramatic, and feels like another planet.

TOGENDAI STATION 09

Buy tickets at Tōgendai Station—no reservation needed. First-class is ¥500 extra. Ships run every 30–40 min, 9:30 AM–5:00 PM. Ride takes ~30 min.

HAKONE SHRINE 13

founded in 757 AD. Built to calm the mountain's spirits, it's protected travelers for over 1,200 years—and is still visited today by politicians and athletes seeking good fortune.

OPEN AIR MUSEUM 17

The Hakone Open-Air Museum, Japan's first outdoor sculpture park, opened in 1969. Set in nature with over 100 artworks, it's a favorite for families, art lovers, and casual visitors alike.

MORNING

GORA STATION



Start your morning with a short three-minute walk to Gōra Station. You can **buy a one-way ticket for 420 yen** at the counter or the ticket machine, but keep in mind they only take cash. The cable car runs every 10 to 15 minutes and takes about nine minutes to reach **Sōunzan Station**. From there, you can hop straight onto the Hakone Ropeway and ride up to Ōwakudani, one of Hakone's most famous spots.

Quick tip: Pick up a few snacks or drinks from a nearby convenience store before you leave. There aren't many food options around the ropeway until you reach the lake.

TRANSFER

SŌUNZAN STATION

You don't need to buy another ticket here.

Just follow the signs from the cable car platform to the ropeway boarding area inside the same station building. If you already paid at Gōra, that ticket covers this ride too. Staff might check or collect it before you board, so keep it ready.

Ropeway cabins come every minute, no reservation required. Simply line up and enjoy the ride to **Ōwakudani**, the volcanic heart of Hakone.

TRANSFER



SŌUNZAN STATION

Is where the cable car ends and the ropeway begins. Perched high in the Hakone mountains, it's named after the misty "**cloud mountain**" peaks nearby. The station is small but modern, with beautiful views on clear days. This is where the forested slopes give way to Hakone's volcanic scenery, a perfect spot to pause, take in the view, and get ready for the wilder side of your journey.

FIRST STOP



ŌWAKUDANI

Ōwakudani is easily the wildest stop in Hakone. The valley was created by a volcanic eruption about **3,000 years ago**, and you can feel that power the moment you step off the ropeway steam rising, sulfur in the air, and dark rocks all around. Its name means “**Great Boiling Valley**,” and it truly fits.

Just a short walk from the station, there are new viewing decks with incredible scenery, especially when Mt. Fuji shows up in the distance. Once known as “**Hell Valley**,” this place really feels like another world.

ŌWAKUDANI



Be sure to try the black eggs. They're boiled right here in the hot springs, and locals say **each one adds seven years to your life.** They taste like regular eggs, but it's part of the fun. You can grab some snacks, look through the souvenir shops, or just enjoy the view. If the walking trail is open, it's a nice 30-minute walk that brings you closer to the vents, so wear good shoes. Take your time, explore a bit, and when you're ready, hop back on the ropeway to Lake Ashi. You don't need a new ticket here.



Tōgendai is where the ropeway ends and the lake cruise begins. After you step off the gondola, just follow the signs, it's only a short walk to the pirate ship dock. You'll find a **small waiting area, restrooms, and a shop** if you want to take a quick break. Buy your ticket at the counter, and if the weather's nice, head for the upper deck for the best views.

This port was built in the **1960s** to connect the mountains with Lake Ashi. The pirate ships are styled like old European warships, complete with sails and cannons. It's definitely touristy, but still a lot of fun. And if Mt. Fuji shows up in the distance, the view from the lake makes it all worth it.



You can buy your pirate ship ticket at the counter inside **Tōgendai Station** before walking down to the dock. There's no need to book ahead. Just choose between regular seating or first-class, which gives you access to a quieter indoor lounge and the front deck.

- One-way fare (Tōgendai → Moto-Hakone)
- Regular: ¥1000
- First-class: ¥1500

Ships leave every 30 to 40 minutes from 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM and the ride takes about 30 minutes. Just get a one-way ticket, hand it to the staff, and hop on when it's time to board.

FUN FACTS



LAKE ASHI

YAMAMOTO TRAVEL

Lake Ashi was formed about **3,000 years ago** when a major eruption of the Hakone volcano caused part of the caldera to collapse and blocked a river, creating the lake we see today.

During the Edo period, the Hakone area, including Lake Ashi, was an **important checkpoint along the Tokaido Road**—the main route between Edo (Tokyo) and Kyoto. Everyone from samurai to common travelers passed through here under strict travel rules.

Locals say that on “misty mornings, you might still sense the presence of old travelers and pilgrims along the forest trails by the lake.”



HAKONE MACHI PORT

Pilgrimage Rest Stop: Pilgrims visiting Hakone Shrine would first stop at Hakone-machi Port to wash, reflect, and prepare their spirits before entering the sacred mountain forest.

From here, we'll follow the lakeside path toward the forest, where you'll see a **red torii gate** standing gracefully in the water. This is the Peace Torii, the iconic gateway to Hakone Shrine.

3RD STOP

HAKONE SHRINE

Welcome to Hakone Shrine: A sacred site that has protected travelers, warriors, and pilgrims for over 1,200 years.

- Founded in **757 AD** during the Nara period, the shrine was established by a monk named **Mangan Shonin**, who came here to calm the chaos of the volcanic mountains and tame the spirits that haunted this land.

Even today, Japanese politicians and athletes come here before big moments, asking the gods of Hakone to clear their path ahead.

3RD STOP

HAKONE SHRINE

This isn't just a beautiful forest shrine — it's said to be the resting place of a dragon.

Long ago, Lake Ashi was feared for its storms and mysterious drownings. Locals believed the lake was cursed by a rampaging **nine-headed dragon that demanded sacrifices.**

The monk Mangan, through prayer and ritual, finally subdued the dragon, binding it with sacred energy and transforming it into a guardian spirit.

To this day, **the dragon is honored, not feared.** You'll see its presence in the shrine's water spouts, talismans, and festivals.

BUS RIDE

BUS STATION

MOTO HAKONE BUS

After Hakone Shrine: Route to the Open-Air Museum

After exploring Hakone Shrine, walk back along the lakeside path toward Moto-Hakone Bus Stop, it's about a 10-minute walk.

You'll be catching a **Hakone Tozan Bus (H or R line)** heading toward **Gora Station** or **Hakone-Yumoto**. Your goal is to reach the Hakone Open-Air Museum, one of Japan's most unique and beloved art spaces.

Route Guide: Motohakone-ko to Hakone Open-Air Museum

2:58 PM – Motohakone-ko Bus Stop
Board the Hakone Tozan Bus (H Line) bound for **Hakone-Yumoto Station** via Hakone-guchi.

Bus Company: Hakone Tozan Bus
Fare: **¥740** (pay by IC card or cash)

Tip: Sit on the left side for scenic mountain views and winding forest roads.

3:13 PM – Arrive at Ninotaira Iriguchi Bus Stop
Get off at **Ninotaira Iriguchi** (二の平入口). It's just before Gora Station. Bus announcements are made in both Japanese and English.

3:20 PM – Walk to The Hakone Open-Air Museum

Walk about 600 meters (7 minutes) downhill. Follow signs for “彫刻の森美術館 (Chōkoku no Mori Bijutsukan)” — the Japanese name for the Hakone Open-Air Museum.

Tip: Some paths are slightly sloped, wear comfortable shoes.

LAST STOP



OPEN AIR MUSEUM

The Hakone Open-Air Museum is Japan's first outdoor sculpture park, opened in **1969**. Spread across 70,000 square meters, it blends modern art with Hakone's natural beauty, making it a favorite for families, art lovers, and even people who "don't usually like museums."

1. Picasso Pavilion

- A rare permanent exhibition featuring over 300 works by Pablo Picasso, including ceramics, sketches, and paintings.
- Housed indoors in a modern minimalist space.
- Rotated throughout the year, so there's always something new.

LAST STOP

OPEN AIR MUSEUM

2. Symphonic Sculpture

- A giant rainbow-colored stained glass tower you can walk up from the inside.
- The staircase spirals up through light and color, like climbing inside a kaleidoscope.

3. The Woods of Net

- A dreamy wooden dome filled with massive crochet nets that kids can climb and swing on.
- Created by artist Toshiko Horiuchi MacAdam.



HAKONE DAY 2 HIGH LIGHTS

Day 2 Highlights – Essential Hakone Circuit

- Rode the Hakone Tozan Cable Car and Ropeway through forests and volcanic landscapes
- Explored the crater trail and steam vents at Ōwakudani, and tried the legendary black eggs
- Took a pirate ship cruise across Lake Ashi with views of Mt. Fuji and Hakone Shrine's floating torii
- Visited the sacred Hakone Shrine and strolled through Onshi Park
- Wandered the Hakone Open-Air Museum: outdoor sculptures, Picasso Pavilion, and hot spring foot bath
- Ended with a quick onsen soak and snack before heading to Kyoto by Shinkansen