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# Kansai Culture & Nature

Vast swathes of countryside with a terrain particular to each region, a wealth of cultural artifacts created through tradition and history, and a diverse array of tourist locations that stimulate curiosity... Kansai is a unique, bustling place, with unending delights of which visitors will never tire, no matter how often they return.

## WORLD HERITAGE SITES

The Kansai area of Japan boasts a rich cultural heritage and contains a number of prominent UNESCO World Heritage Sites that should be on everyone's must-see list. From the stunning Himeji-jo Castle to the serene temples of Kyoto and Nara, there are countless historical treasures to explore.



©Sakai City



### Mozu-Furuichi Kofungun

OSAKA

Ancient Tumulus Clusters and Takenouchi Highway Area

Mozu-Furuichi Kofungun Ancient Tumulus Clusters, are ancient burial mounds constructed between the late 4th century and the early 6th century, and include the tombs of Emperor Nintoku and Emperor Ojin, as well as other ancient tombs of varying sizes. They are hoping to be awarded World Heritage Site status. Nearby is the Takenouchi Highway, the oldest in Japan, along which there are historical establishments, such as temples associated with Prince Shotoku. It was registered as a World Heritage Site in 2019.



©Nara city tourist association



### Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara

NARA

Nara was the ancient capital of Japan from 710 to 784 and is home to some of the most important UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Kansai, including Kofukuji Temple, Horyuji Temple, and Todaiji Temple, home to the magnificent 15m high seated bronze Buddha.



### Himeji-jo Castle

HYOGO

With a major restoration project completed in 2015, Himeji-jo Castle has been restored to its former, brilliant white glory. Also known as the "White Egret Castle" due to its passing resemblance to a bird taking flight, Himeji-jo Castle is one of the most beautiful castles in Japan.







©byodoin



## Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto

KYOTO

A total of 17 temples, shrines and gardens are included in Kyoto's World Heritage listing. From Byodoin Temple, home to national treasure Phoenix Hall, tells of the flourishing of the country in the Heian Ocho Period, to the exquisite golden pavilion at Kinkakuji Temple and the tranquility of the Zen garden at Ryoanji Temple, Kyoto is a treasure trove of ancient history.



## Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range

WAKAYAMA / NARA / MIE



The Kii Mountains have been a pilgrimage destination since the Heian-era and include the three sacred mountains of Yoshino-Okune in Nara Prefecture, and Koyasan and Kumano in Wakayama Prefecture.



## Buddhist Monuments in the Horyu-ji Temple Area

NARA

Horyu-ji Temple, founded in 607 by Prince Shotoku, is acknowledged as the oldest existing wooden structure in the world. The complex of buildings is registered as a World Heritage Site, including the 32m-high five-story pagoda, its central gate and the main hall supported by 28 massive wooden pillars.



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## SPECTACULAR VIEWS

Picture-perfect lakes, wind-swept dunes, seaside panoramas—away from the hustle and bustle of the cities are some areas of outstanding natural beauty that deserve to be included in any Kansai itinerary.

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### Hikone-jo Castle

SHIGA



A picturesque castle commanding views over Lake Biwa in Shiga. Designated a National Treasure, Hikone-jo Castle was constructed in the 1600s by the Ii clan.

2

Mikata Five Lakes

### Mikatagoko (Mikata Five Lakes)

FUKUI



A beautiful wetland area in Fukui prefecture consisting of five interconnected lakes, each with its own unique water qualities. The area is surrounded by some 80,000 plum trees that blossom magnificently in the early spring.

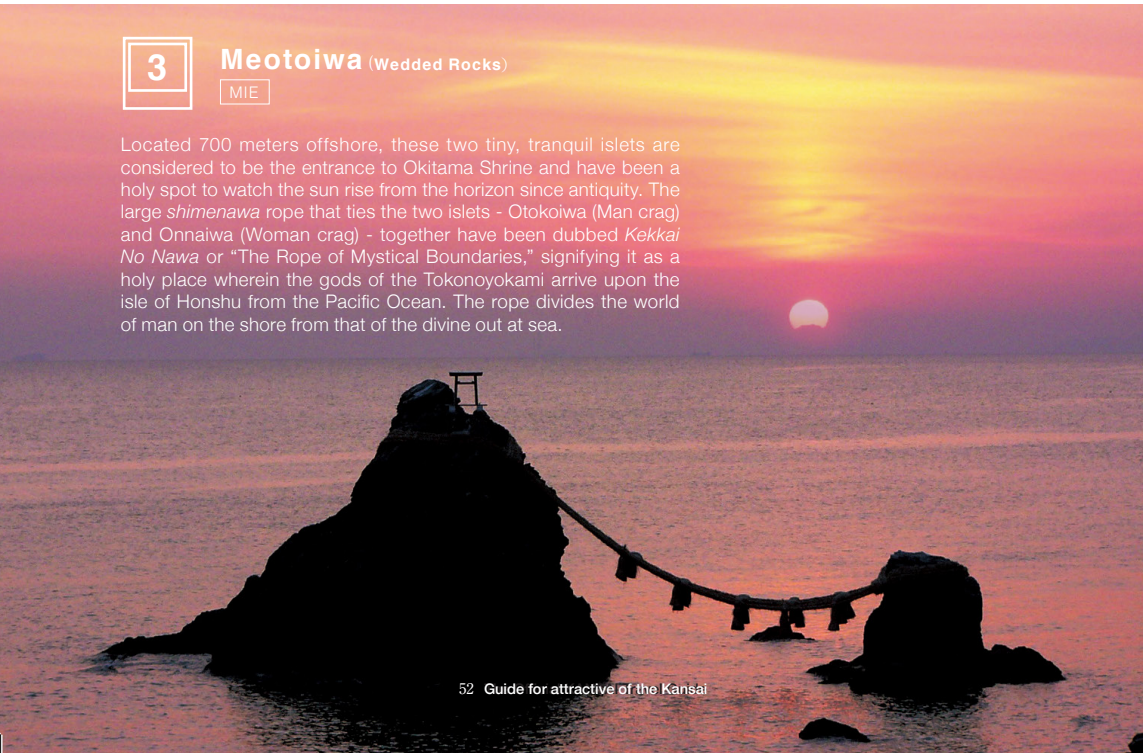
©ISESHIMA TOURISM & CONVENTION ORGANIZATION

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### Meotoiwa (Wedded Rocks)

MIE

Located 700 meters offshore, these two tiny, tranquil islets are considered to be the entrance to Okitama Shrine and have been a holy spot to watch the sun rise from the horizon since antiquity. The large *shimenawa* rope that ties the two islets - Otoko-iwa (Man crag) and Onna-iwa (Woman crag) - together have been dubbed *Kekkai No Nawa* or "The Rope of Mystical Boundaries," signifying it as a holy place wherein the gods of the Tokonoyokami arrive upon the isle of Honshu from the Pacific Ocean. The rope divides the world of man on the shore from that of the divine out at sea.





©Tottori Pref.

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## Tottori Sand Dunes

TOTTORI

These ancient dunes spread along the coast of the Sea of Japan are breathtaking for their sheer size alone. They are Japan's only large scale dune system accessible by tourists, and part of the San'in Kaigan UNESCO Global Geopark.



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## San'in Kaigan UNESCO Global Geopark

TOTTORI / HYOGO / KYOTO

Spanning the rugged Sea of Japan coast between Tottori and Northern Kyoto, this UNESCO Global Geopark is of significant geological importance since it holds the key to understanding the formation of the Sea of Japan, some 20 million years ago.

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## The Night views over Osaka and Kobe

HYOGO

Hike up, bike up, or take the cable car – the views from the top of Mt. Rokko across Osaka Bay are spectacular at any time of the day and are magical after dark. They are locally known as the “\$10 Million View.”

©KOBE TOURISM BUREAU



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## The Whirlpools of Naruto

TOKUSHIMA

The tidal whirlpools in the Naruto Strait between Naruto and Awaji Island are some of the most famous in the world. During the spring tides, some of the whirlpools can reach 20m across.







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## Yoshino Cherry Blossoms NARA

Mount Yoshino is one of the most famous cherry blossom locations in Japan. Its cherry blossoms are at their most glorious from early- to mid-April, when approximately 30,000 shirayama-zakura trees cover the mountainside with a pink blush.

There are four areas : Shimo-Senbon, Naka-Senbon, Kami-Senbon, and Oku-Senbon. The cherry blossoms bloom in sequence upwards from the base of the mountain towards the summit. The scenery of the Naka-Senbon area is especially famous, and the expression "hitome (glance) senbon (a thousand)" is associated with the cherry blossoms in this location because it is said that there you can see a thousand trees in one glance !



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## Amanohashidate Area KYOTO

Along with *Matsushima* (Miyagi Prefecture) and *Miyajima* (Hiroshima Prefecture), *Amanohashidate* is known as one of the three most beautiful sights in Japan, the focus being the distant vista towards the natural 3.6km sandbar, with its white sandy beaches and stands of pine trees.

The annual events of "Aoi Matsuri" – the oldest festival in the Tango region – "Defune Matsuri" and the Miyazu Toro Nagashi Fireworks, draw large crowds, but the area is generally bustling all year round.



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## Naruto and Tokushima Area TOKUSHIMA

The Whirlpools of Naruto that form naturally in the Naruto Strait are said to be some of the fastest in Japan and also comprise one of the three largest tidal currents in the world. Observing the whirlpools from the Onaruto Bridge or from a special sightseeing boat is popular among tourists. Tokushima's greatest attraction, however, is the Awa Odori (Awa Dance) Festival, held every August for the past 400 years. Awa Dance is famous worldwide and can be placed alongside the Rio Carnival as one of the largest dance events in the world. The streets of Tokushima City, the focal point of the festival, turn into a giant dance floor.

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OSAKA

## Chihaya-Akasaka Village: Terraced Rice Fields of Shimoakasaka

Chihaya-Akasaka Village is the only municipality with a "village" designation in Osaka Prefecture. It is famous as one of "The 100 Best Terraced Rice Fields of Japan," a list that includes terraced rice fields in 117 municipalities and 134 regions in the country.

Terraced rice fields are paddy fields where rice is grown but built on sloping land. These terraced rice fields are maintained through the hard physical labour of local farmers, who engage in aze-zukuri (traditional paddy boundary building), rice-planting and cultivation in order to preserve the beautiful scenery created by the fields, and to pass on the techniques used in this type of farming to future generations. In autumn, during the rice harvest season, the golden rice ears sway in the wind and events take place where the fields are illuminated. The Shimo Akasaka Castle Ruins, celebrated as the site of the battle by the samurai Kusunoki Masashige, is a great place from which to enjoy the superb view over the terraced rice fields.



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## Fushimi Inari Taisha

KYOTO

The Fushimi Inari Taisha is the most important of the 30,000 Inari shrines located throughout Japan. It enshrines the god of business prosperity and plentiful harvest, and, as such, worshippers are often just ordinary people. In addition to the Honden (Main Shrine Building), which is registered as an Important Cultural Property, there are also smaller-scale, affiliate shrines located in the grounds of the shrine. In recent years it has been ranked one of the most popular tourist spots for foreign tourists in Japan. Particularly famous is the Senbon Torii, with its series of vermilion-lacquered torii gateways, which has been gaining popularity for its grand, photogenic scenery. Unlike most ema (votive tablets) at other shrines, that at the Inari Taisha is in the shape of a fox.



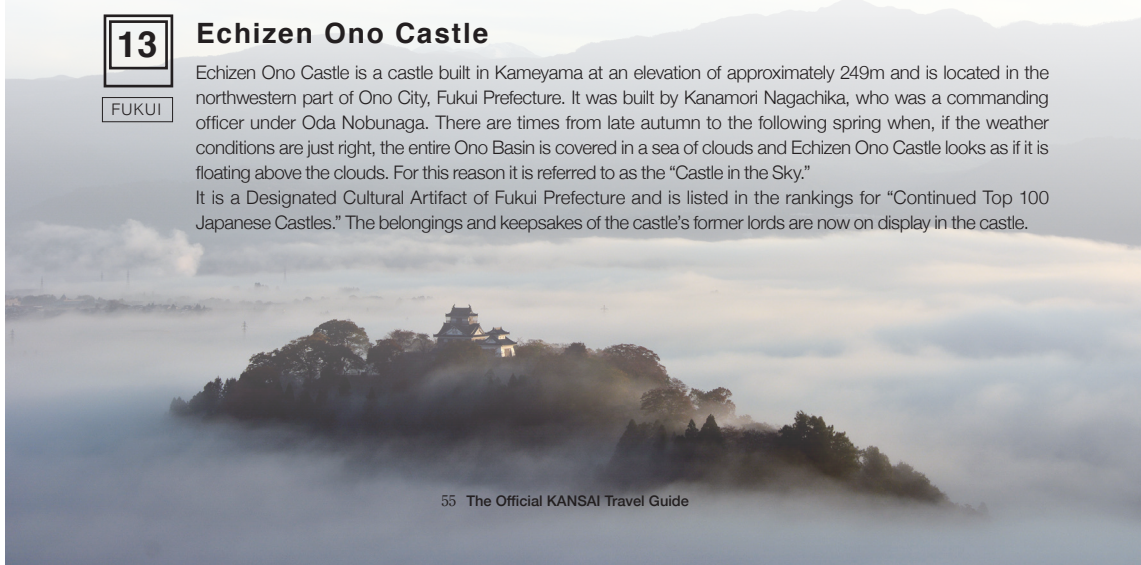
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FUKUI

## Echizen Ono Castle

Echizen Ono Castle is a castle built in Kameyama at an elevation of approximately 249m and is located in the northwestern part of Ono City, Fukui Prefecture. It was built by Kanamori Nagachika, who was a commanding officer under Oda Nobunaga. There are times from late autumn to the following spring when, if the weather conditions are just right, the entire Ono Basin is covered in a sea of clouds and Echizen Ono Castle looks as if it is floating above the clouds. For this reason it is referred to as the "Castle in the Sky."

It is a Designated Cultural Artifact of Fukui Prefecture and is listed in the rankings for "Continued Top 100 Japanese Castles." The belongings and keepsakes of the castle's former lords are now on display in the castle.







©Tottori Sand Dunes The Sand Museum

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## The Sand Museum

TOTTORI

The Sand Museum at the Tottori Sand Dunes utilizes the beautiful natural resources found at the Tottori Sand Dunes and displays it as sand statues, which are incredibly elaborate sculptures made entirely from sand and water. Based on the exhibit concept of "Travel Around the World in Sand", the theme and exhibition change every year. At the end of each exhibition period, the statues are returned to a statues of formless sand, and thus imbues the sculptures with a transient beauty.



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## Ninja Museum of Igaryu

MIE

At this museum you can learn about the history, lifestyle, and wisdom of the Iga School of ninjas. They specialized in gathering information from the Sengoku Period to the Edo Period. Ninjas and kunoichi (female ninjas) will take you around the thatched-roof Ninja House, showing you its secret traps and hidden mechanisms and will complete your tour with live performances. The exhibition features the very creatively-made tools and weapons of the ninja, texts on ninjutsu (the Art of the Ninja) providing glimpses into the wisdom of the ninja. Make sure to catch the live ninja show with its powerful, high-speed performances involving shuriken, Japanese katana, and kusarigama!

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## Awaji Puppet Theater

HYOGO

In Awaji Island, with its beautiful landscape and a variety of performing arts—originating as prayers for plentiful harvests and abundant fishing hauls—have been passed down through successive generations, each suited to the island's lifestyles. The Awaji ningyo-joruri, a type of traditional Japanese puppet show, found popularity beyond Awaji Island, with performances taking place throughout the country. Through these performances, the Awaji ningyo-joruri—with its three-point structure of narrative, three-stringed lute shamisen, and large puppets operated by three puppeteers—expresses the joys and sorrows of human life. The Awaji ningyo-joruri is unique in its performance style and techniques employing quick changes, dogugaeshi technique, and isho-yama display, and will allow you to experience puppet shows in the traditional Japanese sense. Enjoy this gem of theatre performance coming from the culture of Awaji Island.





© Osaka Aquarium Kaiyukan

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## Osaka Aquarium Kaiyukan

OSAKA

Kaiyukan is the most famous aquarium in Kansai and one of the largest in the world. It contains some 30,000 animals from about 620 different aquatic species. The entire museum is meant to express the Ring of Life. There is the Pacific Ocean Tank, with the #1 most popular whale shark swimming languidly about, the tunnel-shaped Aqua Gate, where colorful tropical fish swim overhead, and various other exhibits that give a close-up of the creatures that live in and around the Pacific Ocean. After 5:00pm the Night Aquarium features events and displays of creatures that cannot be seen in daylight.



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## Fukui Prefectural Dinosaur Museum

FUKUI

The Fukui Prefectural Dinosaur Museum specializes in geology and paleontology, with an emphasis on dinosaurs. It is located in Katsuyama City, Fukui Prefecture, which is one of Japan's most important archaeological fossil sites. The Dinosaur World zone has exhibits of 44 complete dinosaur skeletons, of which 10 are genuine fossils. There are also exhibits of fossils of the fukuiraptor and fukuisaurus—new kinds of dinosaurs whose fossils were discovered in Fukui Prefecture—as well as an Earth Sciences and History of Life zone. Among other things the museum also features more than 1,000 specimens and an enormous recreated diorama.

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## Kyoto International Manga Museum

KYOTO

The Kyoto International Manga Museum is a cultural facility that serves as both a museum conducting research on manga culture, and a library where you can view and read manga. The museum has a collection of approximately 300,000 manga, stretching from the comedy woodblock prints of the Edo Period to the magazines of the Meiji, Taisho, and early Showa Periods, the rental books of the post-war period as well as modern popular works. Of these, approximately 50,000 are available for perusal within the museum, with many visitors choosing to read their chosen manga on the outdoor lawn.





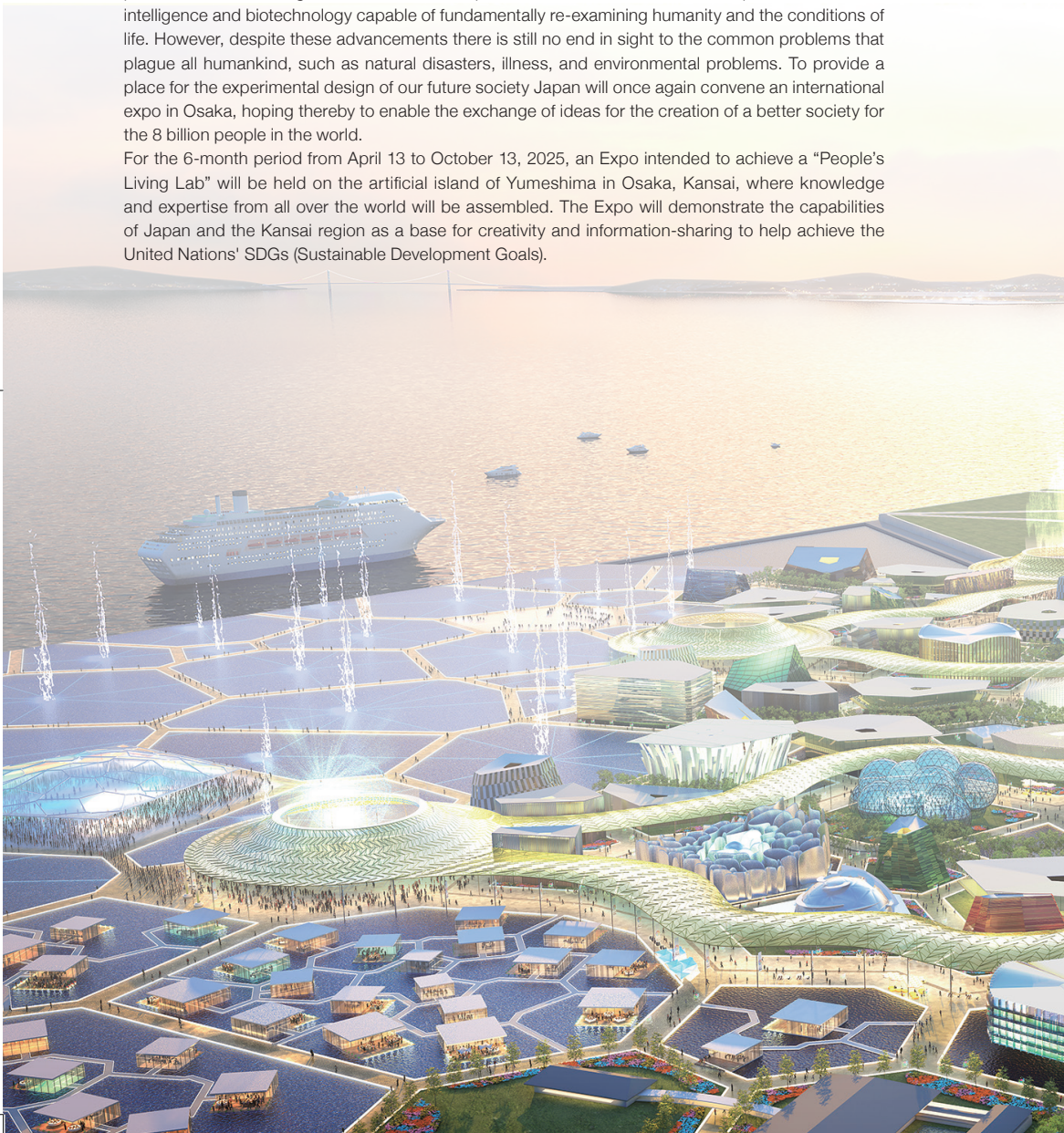
# EXPO 2025

## OSAKA, KANSAI, JAPAN

In 1970, Asia's first International Expo was held in Osaka, Japan, on the theme of "Progress and Harmony for Mankind." With 77 participating countries, it was a great success.

Over the last half-century, humankind has made even greater progress, including worldwide phenomena such as globalization and computerization, the dramatic development of artificial intelligence and biotechnology capable of fundamentally re-examining humanity and the conditions of life. However, despite these advancements there is still no end in sight to the common problems that plague all humankind, such as natural disasters, illness, and environmental problems. To provide a place for the experimental design of our future society Japan will once again convene an international expo in Osaka, hoping thereby to enable the exchange of ideas for the creation of a better society for the 8 billion people in the world.

For the 6-month period from April 13 to October 13, 2025, an Expo intended to achieve a "People's Living Lab" will be held on the artificial island of Yumeshima in Osaka, Kansai, where knowledge and expertise from all over the world will be assembled. The Expo will demonstrate the capabilities of Japan and the Kansai region as a base for creativity and information-sharing to help achieve the United Nations' SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals).







### Khu Plazas

Five large plazas, called Khu or “expanse” in Japanese, host a series of events, designed to offer unexpected encounters and interactions for visitors.



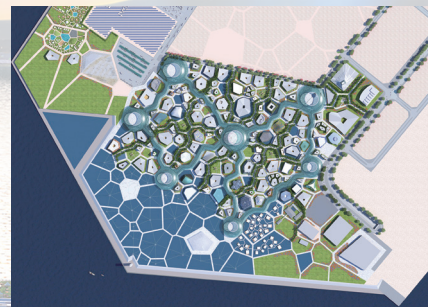
### Most Advanced Security Protecting Visitors and Participants

Leading security technologies, such as biometric identification and patrolling drones, will be in place to offer security and safety on site. Counter-measures against tsunami and storms are also fully in place.



### Close to the Centre of Osaka

Yumeshima Island is accessible within 20 to 30 minutes by subways and driving from the centre of Osaka.



### Decentralized and Dispersed Design Reflecting a Future Society

The decentralized and dispersed facility arrangement encourages and interaction among visitors and the co-creation of future society.

