



Zen Resorts

100年後の日本を作る

日本の地方に眠っている観光資源を再発掘
付加価値の高い、ラグジュアリーな「体験コンテンツ」として開発
インバウンドや国内のハイエンド客へ提供する

2040年までに、全国20地域に地方再生の拠点施設を

第1弾プロジェクト

日本の田舎の“消滅可能性都市”に
1人1泊12万円のラグジュアリーホテルを作る







Zenagi

SINCE 2019



Concept ①

日本初の「体験型ホテル」

木曾・東濃でしかできない 10以上の“スペシャルな体験”を提供



アウトドア体験

元オリンピック選手らをプライベート・ガイドに
大自然を貸切にして遊ぶ



カヌー
元オリンピック選手
ラフティング世界王者



パラグライダー
日本代表
五輪アジア大会・金メダル



スノボード
元オリンピック代表



マウンテンバイク
元オリンピック代表

文化体験

クラフト作家や茶師などとの出会い、モノづくりの心に触れる



“サムライ・トレイル” 中山道と
宿場町ハイキング



世界の「器好き」が恋する
陶器と漆器の聖地



お茶の里・美濃
茶師とのグランピング茶会

Concept ②

高付加価値 × 高単価

「1日1組限定のプライベート・リゾート」

1泊3食1体験のオールインクルーシブで12万円





Concept ③

「欧米のインバウンド」をターゲット

コロナ前は70%が海外からのお客

アメリカ、ヨーロッパ、東アジアが求める「JAXURY」





「日本で絶対にやるべき、
最高の体験のひとつ」



「2020年に、旅すべき場所」

「日本の観光を変える 3つのホテル」

Activities are customized to your preferences, but it's worth asking about some of the more exemplary options, which include shower climbing of waterfalls in the Kiso River, paragliding along the Japanese Alps, hiking and e-biking between the two well-preserved post towns of Magome-juku and Tsumago-juku, and visiting a master woodworker to make your own pair of chopsticks. All the while, you'll be in good hands with expert guides like Taro Ando, an Olympic athlete who now coaches Japan's national canoe team; Yoshiki Kuremoto, paragliding gold medalist in the 2018 Asian Games; and Mamoru Sekiguchi, who formerly worked with Outward Bound and Greenpeace.



Relax in the bath after an expedition

Photo: Courtesy of Zenagi

When it's time to relax, enjoy the oversized bathtubs in one of the three spacious rooms at the hotel (which is set in a 200-year-old *kominka*, or "old house"), and savor Japanese or Western bites that have been curated by Hidehito Uchiyama of Tokyo's Ginza Uchiyama and Patrizia di Benedict of Michelin-starred Bye Bye Blues in Palermo, Italy, respectively.



TRAVEL / HOTELS

3 Hotels That Are Changing the Game in Japan

From the country's first expedition hotel to an exclusive-use residence boasting Tokyo's smallest disco, here are three outstanding hotels that are changing how you travel in Japan.

Zenagi



Zenagi Is Japan's first expedition hotel

Photo: Courtesy of Zenagi


Touted as the first expedition hotel in Japan, [Zenagi](#) opened this past April to provide extraordinary experiences in the Kiso region. In addition to being the only luxury accommodation near this portion of the Nakasendo route—one of two roads that connected [Kyoto](#) and what is now modern-day Tokyo during the Edo period—what makes Zenagi unique is truly exceptional programming that allows travelers to explore the countryside and culture with guides that come from the worlds of professional athletics, Greenpeace, and more.

The Daily Telegraph

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Zenagi

Nagano Prefecture, Japan

[View on a map](#)

8/10
Telegraph expert rating

"Zenagi is a "wellness and expedition hotel" in an exquisitely restored wooden property wrapped in a green valley in Japan's Nagano Prefecture. There are three deluxe guestrooms, quality gastronomy and bespoke outdoor expeditions led by Olympic-level sportsmen, with activities ranging from paragliding to meditation."

TRIP TESTED & RECOMMENDED

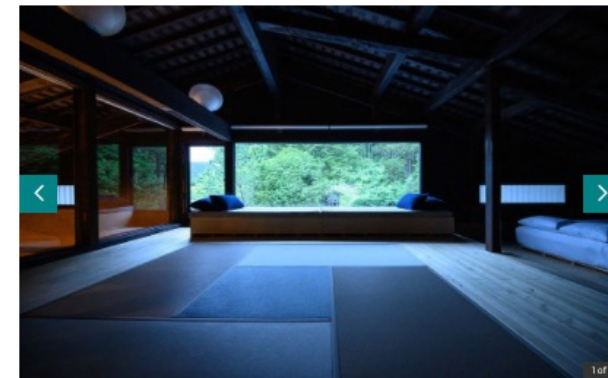
Rooms from **£2,015** per night

It is not currently possible to book this hotel through our partner sites.

You can check availability directly with the hotel or click the button below to view similar hotels.

[View hotels](#)

「日本最高点のホテル」



9/10 Service and Facilities

Friendly staff thoroughly spoil guests from the moment they arrive – and with only three maisonette-style guestrooms, it's often just one group or family at a time staying there (perfect for Covid times). A self-described "wellness and expedition" hotel, key to its identity are its activities. Charismatic Olympic-level athletes helm the team, guiding guests on a raft of adventurous activities, often in farflung nature spots normally inaccessible to the public – from paragliding across rural landscapes and canyoning-style "shower climbing" in remote waterfalls to "river retreats" (on SUPs and inflatable "ducky" canoes).

escape

Luxury on the Nakasendo with a dash of adventure

New 'expedition hotel' seeks to combine extreme sports and comfort



OSCAR BOTO
STAFF WRITER

Even in its heyday, the Nakasendo trail was never quite as popular as the Tokaido—never quite so well-trodden, and never quite so wealthy. While the Tokaido road hugged the coast, cutting a wider, faster path on its 514-kilometer journey between Edo (now Tokyo) and Kyoto, the Nakasendo connected the two cities via Japan's mountainous interior, rolling over altogether more rugged terrain. Little about that relationship has changed since the end of the Edo Period (1603-1868). Today, the corridor through which the old Tokaido road ran is the most heavily traveled part of the country, home to the Tokaido Shinkansen line that connects Tokyo to Yokohama, Nagoya, Kyoto and Osaka, various expressways between those cities, and the endless sprawl of Japanese suburbs. The Nakasendo, though hardly undeveloped, still remains the Tokaido's less-accessible and less-explored cousin.

In Nagano Prefecture's Kiso Valley there is a particularly fine extant portion of the Nakasendo, an easy-to-walk, well-signposted 5-kilometer route that runs between the two former post towns of Magome and Tsumago. These post towns evolved to cater to the Nakasendo's travelers, and were made rich by the Edo Period policy of *sankin-kotai*, under which feudal lords and their families had to commute regularly between their fiefdom and the capital.

Post-dinner and with nothing on the mind but a full belly, thoughts turn to Zenagi's final asset: true quiet.

On a guided tour of a cobbled portion of the trail organised by the Zenagi hotel, guide Mamoru Sekiguchi explains the region's history, fauna (there are bears here, and apparently plenty of them) and flora. Low down we find *kumazasa* grass, a medicinal plant that takes its name not from the bear (also *kuma*), but from theater—the leaves' variegated patterns are said to look like the stage makeup worn by kabuki actors. Also hidden among the bushes are weathered, just, small bodhisattva statues that are said to be guardians for travelers and the weak.

The real treat is not at floor-level, but instead above, where the eye is drawn to the vast trunks of the *hinoki* cypress trees that stretch high into the forest canopy. The Kiso Valley has historically supplied the fragrant *hinoki* timber used to rebuild the Grand Shrines of Ise—Japan's holiest Shinto shrine—every 20 years. To ensure supply, during the Edo Period, *hinoki* were protected by law, alongside four other species that bore a resemblance to the tree—*sasura*, *nenado*, *asazuro* (all species of cypress) and *kyogomaki* (Japanese umbrella pine). The punishment for plundering the protected resource? An arm for a branch, a head for a tree. The result today is the Kiso Valley's pristine forests, and trees that date back centuries.

Entering Tsumago, the eye turns back downward, to the lanes of Edo Period buildings that have been restored and rebuilt en masse. Due to the present actions of residents in the 1960s to preserve the post town, the rapid development that reduced to rubble the rest of the country's old wooden buildings



has not made a dent on the hillside village—a single telegraph pole or wire pollutes the sky, and residents are forbidden to demolish, rent or sell the buildings. In 1976, the town was named a Nationally Designated Architectural Preservation Site by the Japanese government, the first of its kind, and it boasts many notable Nakasendo-era buildings. One of the finest is Wakuhonin, a guesthouse for feudal lords traveling the road to the capital and back. Formerly owned by the Higashi family, the building survived the decline of the Nakasendo on the fortunes of the family's sake business and was then built in 1871 in its current grandeur. It is now preserved as a museum to the town's history.

Inside, a cast iron kettle sits above a gently burning log fire, and light streams through the open wooden slats used to provide ventilation. Visible through the sliding shoji screens on the north side of the building is a well-kept

stony garden, oriented so that the garden's flowers grow toward the south and so can be seen from the former guest rooms. These rooms are where the visiting Emperor Meiji took tea at the establishment in 1880 and the wooden table from which he was served is preserved in situ, along with a bath and toilet made for the emperor in case he so felt the desire—still unused to this day. Though Zenagi is sublimely comfortable, it is not just a countryside retreat. It styles itself as an "expedition hotel" and offers a broad program of guided adventure activities to its guests in both English and Japanese. These range from the aforementioned historical tour of Tsumago and the Nakasendo trail, moving through to e-mountain biking—the "e" for electric, which seems like a gimmick at first, but turns out to be fantastic fun—to river canyoning and paragliding above the Kiso Valley. The activities continue year-round, with winter sports on offer once it begins to snow. Zenagi provides all the gear, and the necessary expertise to conduct the activities safely. The focus on extreme sports is unsurprising when you look toward Zenagi's team of directors, which includes past Olympic athlete Taro Ando, who now coaches Japan's canoeing national team, and former world champions in sports including paragliding, snowboarding and mountain biking. The team first assembled to compete in Austria's Dolomitenmarathon, an extreme sports relay that combines trail running, paragliding, mountain biking and kayaking, before turning their efforts to the Zenagi project under the leadership of documentary filmmaker Muneyuki Okabe. The group is well-respected and connected in the extreme sports world, and this affords Zenagi and its guests access to some of the Kiso Valley's most remote areas, including a restricted area of protected forest within the nearby Kakizoe Valley. There guests can experience canyoning and other water-sports along the Kakizoe River, an emerald tributary that races down to meet the Kiso River via a series of dramatic waterfalls.

Regional revitalization is Zenagi's second focus, and its culture-based experiences guests can visit local craftsman such as woodworker Kiyota Yamato of Wood Crafts Yamato Studio, whose family has occupied the same spot in the Kiso Valley for four generations and has been collectively working wood for the best part of a millennium. Yamato leads

woodworking workshops and guides visitors through the studio, which specializes in wood-turned lacquerware. In Tsumago, a museum visit to Obirinai, a specialty shirt and suit shop owned and run by Jun Obara, who hand-stitches indigo-dyed fabrics into intricate Edo Period-influenced designs. Obara is brusque, but welcomes anyone with curiosity into his musty little shop: the clothing is expensive but one of a kind. The menu at Zenagi is similarly based on the local, and relies heavily on seasonal ingredients from the Kiso Valley and greater Nagano Prefecture. The restaurant serves three meals at counter or table seating (choose the counter to see the chef at work), but the main affair is dinner. There are only two choices to be had here: Japanese or Western, and both have been designed by Michelin-starred chef—Hidetsugu Kichiyama of Ginza Uchiyama for the Japanese course and Patricia Di Benedetto from Bye Bye Blues in Sicily for the Western.

Though the presentation differs, the consistent ingredients for the two menus are largely the same, and include a selection of regional produce such as wild plants and vegetables, wild boar, snow trout, venison and, occasionally, as a byproduct of local population control measures, bear. Dietary requirements are catered to, and the vegetarian alternatives allow for a deeper exploration of the region's edible plants. The drinks menu also focuses on the local, with regional sake, craft beer and wines, although there is also a strong selection of European wines for those wanting something more continental. The food stands up to some of Tokyo's finest establishments, but to find it in deepest Nagano Prefecture after a hard day's exploring is special indeed.

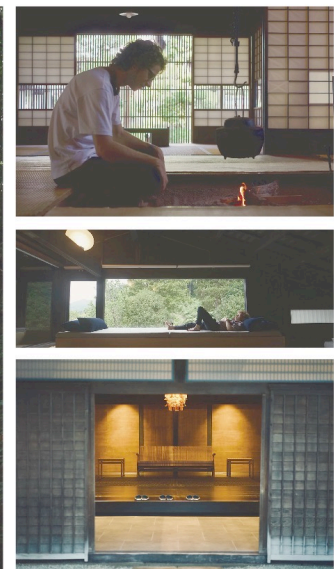
Post-dinner and with nothing on the mind but a full belly, thoughts turn to Zenagi's final asset: true quiet. Out in the Kiso Valley, there is little to hear but the chirp of crickets and cicadas, and the wind rustling through the trees. Up in the rafters all is calm—it would be nice to stay awake to enjoy the comfort, but sleep beckons too quickly.

The Kiso Valley and Nakasendo trail can be accessed by limited express trains from Nagoya. Rooms at Zenagi are from ¥2,200,000 per person per night, including full board and chosen adventure program. The author received assistance from the Zenagi hotel while researching this article.

Clockwise from above: The welcoming entrance of the Zenagi hotel; visitors carrying wax paper umbrellas walk the Nakasendo between Magome and Tsumago; the interior of Wakuhonin, an Edo Period guesthouse that has been preserved as a museum to the history of the post town of Tsumago and the Nakasendo trail; a guest lies on a chaise longue in a room at the Zenagi hotel. OSCAR BOTO/GABRIELE BORTOLOTTI



Right: The Zenagi hotel offers guided adventure activities including canyoning, e-mountain biking and paragliding; the menu at Zenagi is made from local seasonal ingredients such as snow trout, Kiso beef and beer, and caters to vegetarians and those with other dietary requirements. OSCAR BOTO/GABRIELE BORTOLOTTI



田舎なのに ラグジュアリーな体験

12万円は高くない

わざわざそこを訪れる 価値がある

the japan times

with /Afterコロナの「新しい価値観」

◆都会から地方へ、都市から自然へ

◆お金を払ってでも、価値あるものを求める

◆ラグジュアリーは、施設から体験へ
「体験とは、人である」