The Insider's Guide

- PROUD TO BE IN YAMANASHI -
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“THIS” is the Kotogawa Dam, a multipurpose dam known for being the highest-altitude dam in Japan. At 1,450 meters (or almost 5,000 feet), it is literally a “Dam of the Skies”
Yamanashi’s famous samurai: the eco-friendly warrior

Did you know that besides defeating large armies and conquering expansive territories, Takeda Shingen, the famous 16th century samurai warlord from Yamanashi, was also at the forefront of the era’s environmental movement!?

OK, perhaps he was just conserving his resources, but according to the Koyo Gunkan Military Records, he re-used his army’s leftover bathwater by creating a pipe system that flushed this same water into toilets. Now that’s impressive!
Did someone say “museum”?

Yamanashi is rank one in Japan for number of art museums per 100,000 persons. From the Yamanashi Prefectural Museum of Art, famous for its collection of works by Jean-François Millet, to the Nirasaki Omura Art Museum, established by Nobel Laureate Dr. Satoshi Omura, there is an endless array of museums for budding art connoisseurs to explore!
A species native to Lake Tazawa in Akita Prefecture, the *kunimasu* (or *oncorhynchus kawamurae*), was thought to have gone extinct in 1940. However, black *kunimasu* were rediscovered in Lake Saiko, located in Fujikawaguchiko Town in Yamanashi Prefecture, in March of 2010. The Emperor said of it in a press conference, “this is a miracle fish.”
Seeking that perfect bottle of wine? Look no further!

The prefecture with the highest number of wineries in Japan is ... you guessed it: Yamanashi Prefecture. With 81 wineries in total, or about 30% of the nation’s entire wine industry, wine made in Yamanashi Prefecture is known for its flavor, its smell, and its colors, each of which explain why it brings home so many domestic and international awards. Why not come here and give it a taste, or perhaps two?
Calling all cyclists!

Yamanashi Prefecture is the proud home to TEN cycling roads, totaling almost one-hundred kilometers of trail. Besides being just a recreational activity for the citizens of our prefecture, these paths are also important for commuters getting to school or work. Perfect for weekend outing, it is worth giving these beautiful and scenic routes a try.
The World’s Heaviest Plum!

Recognized by Guinness World Records as the World’s Heaviest Plum, the *kiyo* plum weighs about just as much as an apple. Yamanashi ranks number one in the nation for *kiyo* plum production. And this fruit is not just heavy but also one of the juiciest and sweetest in existence. A must-try snack!
Take a swing!
What’re ya waiting for?

Home of 27 cities ... and 41 golfing ranges!? Yamanashi Prefecture sure loves its golf, and with easy access from the nearby major urban areas it is a highly-rated and popular destination for golfers. Amidst expansive natural landscapes and amongst stunning natural environments, why not come spend a day or two here for some leisurely-played swings?
Egyptian pyramids in Yamanashi?

Well, not quite. But the prefecture has developed an original flower species called the *Pyramid Ajisai*, a type of hydrangea, which is pyramid-like in shape. Its color changes, too, as time passes: it is first a yellowish white, then a pinkish, and finally a vivid purple and red.
The one, two, three, four ...  
... no, the Six Lakes?

Once in a blue moon and after a heavy rain, yet another lake emerges within the Fuji Five Lakes region. The Sixth Lake, sometimes called the “Phantom Lake,” appears near Lake Shoji and is shaped like a heart when viewed from Endo Bridge. This explains its other name, Aka Ike (the Red Lake).

Heart-shaped and a rare occurrence – what a fine metaphor for true love! If only there was no rain involved.
Call an end to your night in true Yamanashi fashion

*Houtou tsukemen,* or *ozara* as it is called in the regional dialect, is a simple dish consisting of boiled noodles eaten by dipping them into a vegetable-filled soup. This is a dish that is oftentimes eaten by locals to call an end to a night out with friends after drinking, singing, and laughing together. In other words, it has the power to rest the mind and relax the soul before it’s time to part ways and head to bed!
**Sessan**: are you “in-the-know”?

If you have heard of it, congratulations, you can consider yourself a true Yamanashi local at heart! The game requires two or more players, the first of whom calls out “sessan” followed by a number between 0 and the player count multiplied by 2 (e.g., 3 players * 2 = can call out from 0 to 6). Using only thumbs, each player sticks up 0, 1, or 2 digits as the number is called out. If the number called out matches the number of thumbs up in the air, the caller gets to remove a hand and it is the next person’s turn to call a number. Otherwise, the game continues until someone is able to remove both hands.
Maps in worship of Mt. Fuji

Did you know that Yamanashi has maps that worship Mt. Fuji? Even though, on most maps, north is up and south is down, maps in Fujiyoshida City generally position World Heritage Site Mt. Fuji as their pinnacle. With Mt. Fuji always in sight, there is no such thing as getting lost when you are traveling here!
Mt. Hinatayama in Hokuto City. You make it to the summit after a two-hour hike. Before you is a stretch of glimmering white sand. Could it be... no way... a beach!?

In fact it is just exposed granite, but it is a sight often mistaken to be a coastal or seashore area. Mt. Hinatayama is one of many famous mountains in the prefecture, but it is certainly one of our favorites. Just make sure to bring your towels and shovels!
Ever try eating a banana peel? You can in Yamanashi!

Yamanashi Prefecture, ranking number one in the nation for grape production, produces many varieties of grape. One of them, and this is no joke, is called “Banana.” The “Banana” (grape) becomes yellow once it has reached maturity and is long-shaped just like a banana. It has a sweet and refreshing taste similar to Muscat grapes, but they are very rare. Look for them while in Yamanashi!