

Autumn in Japan, Two Weeks Self-Drive Travel Itinerary (Nagano, Hakone, Izu, Tokyo) â?? Day 3

Description

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Good morning, everybody; today is a fine day. You can see the mountain peaks!

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A post shared by Kevin Yeo (@kevinyeo82)

Since the weather is beautiful today, we should catch some lovely autumn leaves and scenery.

If you got a copy of my itinerary, you might realise we switched some activities. Part of the reason is the unexpected cold weather; we were at the mercy of the weather. (e.g. we planned to visit the Jigokudani Snow Monkey Park, but everyone was underdressed for the temperature, so we skipped)

We visited Lake Momiji (Minowa Dam), which is gorgeous. Itâ??s a bit of a drive up a narrow mountain road but a must-go.

I think we missed the absolute peak, but whatâ??s left of autumn was still very beautiful.

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(I got a few more posts of the location on my IG. I decided to journal my travels on IG, so do check it out)

Lunch: Miso Feast!

That was the plan. Visit this place named Ishii Miso, where they make their miso. You can sign up for their factory tour and then have lunch at their restaurant, which contains miso soup, salad with miso dressing, rice balls, and even ice cream using our miso.



Another disappointment: I could not make reservations online (even though I tried doing that one month in advance). Still wanting to try our luck, we headed over and try walking in. Unfortunately, it was full. Our consolation was the miso ice cream and snagging some miso related products back.

The ice cream was yummy, sweet and savoury at the same time. Almost like a Japanese version of sea salt vanilla ice cream.



I also bought the ready to eat miso soup. All that is needed is to add hot water to it. The more years it was fermented, the pricier but also a lot more delicious.



This place is super popular amongst locals. If you plan on a visit, you really need to make a reservation, perhaps 2 months in advance.

Lunch: 100 Yen Sushi

Our plan B was to have sushi for lunch. Itâ??s a random pick but it seemed popular with locals. The variety on offer was a lot more than what we can get in popular sushi chains in Singapore.



Also, I love that they have a 1/2 rice portion option. (Always wondered why this is not implemented in Singapore) That way, we get to enjoy even more items on the menu without being full from the rice.



Matsumoto-jÅ• Castle

After lunch, we made our way back to the city. Matsumoto Castle is one of the grandest castles in Japan. Its five-tiered, six-story main tower, built in late 16th century, is the oldest surviving castle tower in the nation. Itâ??s famously photogenic.



Since itâ??s not my first time to Japan, we skipped on touring the inside of the castle. Itâ??s a pretty sight, you can do a 30 minutes stop here.

Nawate Street

Just across a small bridge on the way to Matsumoto Castle, Nawate Street is a row of small shops with a subtle but recurring frog theme.


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It could be because we were there too late or it was a lull period for travel. Quite a number of shops were not open. For the few that were, it did not quite pique my interest.

They were mostly souvenir shops and snacks.

Anyway, it is not a very long stretch so if you happen to be in the area with some time to kill, I say why not?

If you are there, the noteworthy shop is this ice cream parlour. Mt. Desert Island Ice Cream. They have got quite some interesting flavours including wasabi ice cream.



The rest of the evening was rather uneventful. It started to rain so we took shelter in a shopping mall.

Shabu Shabu would have been the perfect dinner for a cold and wet evening. The queue was too long a wait so we drove nearby and chanced upon this yakiniku shop.

Surprisingly, it was very good and rather affordable too. If you visit, remember to order the cold noodle!

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