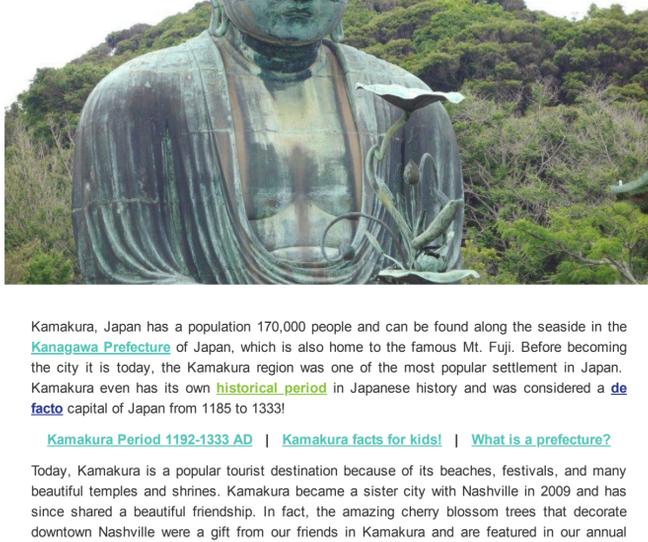




## WELCOME TO KAMAKURA, JAPAN!



Kamakura, Japan has a population 170,000 people and can be found along the seaside in the [Kanagawa Prefecture](#) of Japan, which is also home to the famous Mt. Fuji. Before becoming the city it is today, the Kamakura region was one of the most popular settlements in Japan. Kamakura even has its own [historical period](#) in Japanese history and was considered a [de facto](#) capital of Japan from 1185 to 1333!

[Kamakura Period 1192-1333 AD](#) | [Kamakura facts for kids!](#) | [What is a prefecture?](#)

Today, Kamakura is a popular tourist destination because of its beaches, festivals, and many beautiful temples and shrines. Kamakura became a sister city with Nashville in 2009 and has since shared a beautiful friendship. In fact, the amazing cherry blossom trees that decorate downtown Nashville were a gift from our friends in Kamakura and are featured in our annual [Cherry Blossom Festival](#) celebrated in the spring each year. If you have never been, you can attend through the links below and explore Japanese activities and culture!

[2020 Nashville \(Virtual\) Cherry Blossom Festival and Activities](#)  
[Make oragami with Consul General Fukushima](#) | [Learn to draw Hello Kitty!](#)

## ~EXPERIENCE THE ZEN, SEE THE BEAUTY~

RELIGION AND  
TEMPLES

One of the most important places in Kamakura is Tsurugaoka Hachiman-gū, a [Shinto Shrine](#), which is in the center of the city. As a city with so many Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, it is considered the Japanese center of [Zen Buddhism](#), a form of Buddhism in which meditation is a main practice. [Find your Zen with this meditation video!](#)

Kamakura is also home to a [giant Buddha statue](#), referred to as The Great Buddha, or Daibutsu. This amazing bronze statue dates all the way back to 1252. It is a major attraction in Kamakura because the sight of it is so magnificent. The Shrines and Temples throughout Kamakura create a sacred space for people to find peace and connect with religion.

Would you like to see some of these beautiful places?

[Tour](#) the 6 best Temples in Kamakura.

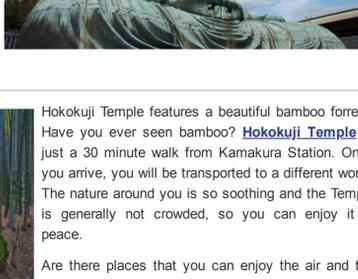


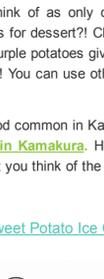
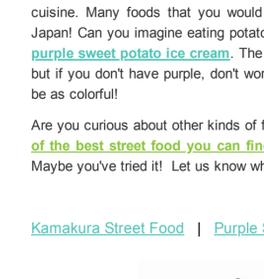
Photo credit of bamboo forest: [www.wikipedia.com](#)

Hokokuji Temple features a beautiful bamboo forest. Have you ever seen bamboo? [Hokokuji Temple](#) is just a 30 minute walk from Kamakura Station. Once you arrive, you will be transported to a different world! The nature around you is so soothing and the Temple is generally not crowded, so you can enjoy it in peace.

Are there places that you can enjoy the air and the trees around you without distraction? Take a 20 minute walk to marvel at the trees, the sky, the birds, and the peace around you.

[Virtual Tour of Kamakura](#) | [6 Best Temples and Shrines in Kamakura](#) | [Meditation Video](#)  
[Virtual tour of Hokokuji Bamboo Forest in Kamakura](#) | [Make your own Zen garden](#)

## ~FLAVORS OF KAMAKURA -- RECIPES!~



Images from [www.fastgongruut.com](#) and [www.trip101.com](#)

Would you eat ice cream made of purple sweet potatoes? That and many other amazing foods await you in Kamakura. One of the most interesting parts of Japanese culture is their unique cuisine. Many foods that you would think of as only dinner foods are considered dessert in Japan! Can you imagine eating potatoes for dessert?! Check out this recipe below for a [simple purple sweet potato ice cream](#). The purple potatoes give the ice cream a beautiful violet color, but if you don't have purple, don't worry! You can use other sweet potatoes as well, it just won't be as colorful!

Are you curious about other kinds of food common in Kamakura? We have a whole list of [some of the best street food you can find in Kamakura](#). Have you seen any of this food before? Maybe you've tried it! Let us know what you think of the recipes below!

[Kamakura Street Food](#) | [Purple Sweet Potato Ice Cream](#) | [Easy Chicken Tempura](#)



## ~LET'S PLAY! ENTERTAINMENT &amp; FESTIVALS~

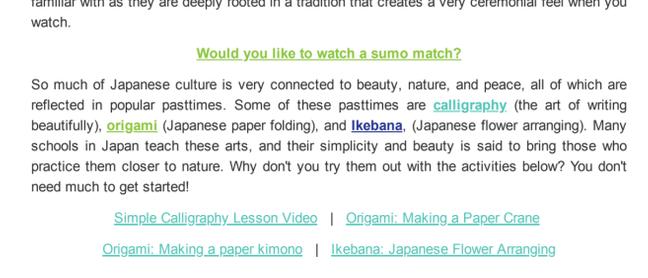


Photo credit <https://www.japan-guide.com/>

## SUMO AND SO MUCH MORE

One of the most well known sports from Japan is [Sumo Wrestling](#). This sport features two wrestlers attempting to force each other out of a circle without touching the ground. This sport goes back for centuries and the athletes who compete in this sport dedicate their lives to it. Their lifestyle is about preparation and competition, and they are required to follow specific traditions that guide the sport. Sumo matches are very different from any other sport you may be familiar with as they are deeply rooted in a tradition that creates a very ceremonial feel when you watch.

[Would you like to watch a sumo match?](#)

So much of Japanese culture is very connected to beauty, nature, and peace, all of which are reflected in popular pastimes. Some of these pastimes are [calligraphy](#) (the art of writing beautifully), [origami](#) (Japanese paper folding), and [ikebana](#), (Japanese flower arranging). Many schools in Japan teach these arts, and their simplicity and beauty is said to bring those who practice them closer to nature. Why don't you try them out with the activities below? You don't need much to get started!

[Simple Calligraphy Lesson Video](#) | [Origami: Making a Paper Crane](#)  
[Origami: Making a paper kimono](#) | [Ikebana: Japanese Flower Arranging](#)



Photo credit: <https://kids.kiddle.co/ikebana>

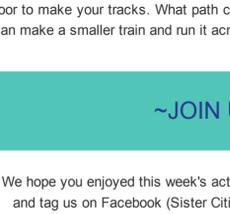
## TANABATA: JAPANESE STAR FESTIVAL

Tanabata 七夕, or "Star Festival" is a Japanese holiday that is celebrated each summer - on the 7th day of the 7th month - to mark the celestial meeting of stars Altair and Vega as they come close to each other in the sky. In Kamakura, this festival takes place at the [Tsurugaoka Hachiman-gū Shrine on July 7](#). A popular Tanabata custom is to write your wishes on a colorful piece of paper and hang that piece of paper on a bamboo tree, in the hope that the wishes become true. Tanabata is a beautiful, colorful festival. You can listen to the story behind the holiday below and then make your own wishes come true!



And on the night of July 7th,  
Orion crosses over the Amanogawa  
to meet Hikoboshi.

[Make your own Tanabata decorations](#) | [Wishing paper coloring sheet](#) | [Origami stars](#)



## CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

One of the most beautiful sites to see in Kamakura is something that only happens once a year! Hanami, or cherry blossom viewing, takes place all across Japan during March. Many cities even have festivals with unique foods, picnics, and games enjoying the beauty of the blooms. [Experience a Japanese Cherry Blossom Festival and see what it's all about!](#) You may notice that some people are wearing masks, just like many of us are doing now. But in Japan, it has been common to wear masks for health and safety reasons for years.

[Cherry blossom crafts](#) | [Cherry blossom coloring page](#) | [All about Cherry blossom festivals](#)

## ~ON THE GO IN KAMAKURA~

## TRAINS!

Have you visited a city like Chicago or New York where public transportation is the main way people get around the city? It is not like that in many cities in the United States, but in Japan, it's very common to travel by train. Even smaller cities like Kamakura have very strong public transportation systems. This system works across much of Japan and is very commonly used. The trains range from high end luxury to basic, small commuter trains.

You can see a couple of those trains in this [video of trains in Kamakura](#).

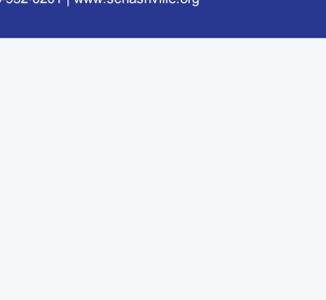


Photo credit: [www.digitaltrends.com](#)

Public transportation in Japan is a combination of trains, subways, and buses, all working together to keep the citizen of Japan moving to their destinations. Would you like to learn more about this system?

[You can read about it here.](#)

Would you like to build your own train? All you need are some boxes and painters tape! Get creative and decorate the outside of the box to look like your dream train! Then take the painters tape and lay in on the floor to make your tracks. What path can you make through your house? Your neighborhood? Maybe you can make a smaller train and run it across a table. Let your imagination go wild!

## ~JOIN US NEXT WEEK!~

We hope you enjoyed this week's activities! Be sure and post pictures of your camp activities and tag us on Facebook (Sister Cities of Nashville) Instagram (@SCNashville) and Twitter (@SCNashvilleTN)! We can't wait to see all the fun you get up to!

[Next week we will venture to our sister city Magdeburg, Germany!](#)

**\*\*Want to receive weekly camp emails? [Sign up here!](#)\*\***



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