

Japan National Tourist Organization London Office
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Fastest Ever Bullet Train Released &
New Train Museum Set to Open

Opening on 14 October 2007 is the long anticipated new Museum of Railway. To celebrate the 20th anniversary in 2007 of JR East, East Japan Railway Culture Foundation (EJRCF) is working with the Transportation Museum to move the museum that was originally in Tokyo to a large new purpose-built site in Saitama City. The museum is intended to have a threefold role: as a railway museum for preserving and researching heritage rolling stock, equipment and railway – related documents; provide information on the railway industry; and offer educational resources about the latest developments in railway technologies.

The museum will feature about 30 railway cars, train cab simulators, railway model dioramas, mini trains, storage for artefacts and books, video booths, a multi-purpose hall, a gallery balcony, a cafeteria, a museum shop, and a research room. It is sure to become a must visit place for trainspotters! The museum will be in Omiya in Saitama prefecture, just to the north of Tokyo. Getting to Saitama is a breeze with three train lines from Tokyo. From Tokyo's Ueno station to Omiya it takes just 19 minutes by rail.

Whilst in Japan train fans should also take a ride on the new Nozomi N700. The Nozomi N700 went into service on 2 July 2007 and is now the fastest ever shinkansen. It travels from Tokyo to Osaka in just two hours and 25 minutes – five minutes less than before. This is the first shinkansen revamp for eight years. JR West and JR Tokai are offering eight train services a day using the N700 and hope to increase that number to 30 by March 2008.

ViaJapan has created a special package to celebrate the opening of the new Museum of Railway for under £900 per person. Take some time for sightseeing and shopping in Tokyo and have a day at the Railway Museum in Saitama City, less than an hour from your hotel. Use your JR Pass to take a trip to Hiroshima to experience the Shinkansen 'Bullet Train'. Stay a night in Hiroshima and visit the city's museum about the tragic atomic bombing of the city in 1945 and the Hiroshima Peace Park. The following day take the 'Bullet Train' back for a final night in Tokyo before getting the Narita Express back to the airport and flying home.

Cost: For departures 14th - 24th October: £929. For departures 25th October - 09 December £899. Included in the package are return flights on British Airways (or Virgin Atlantic for an extra £10) including taxes, 4 nights in the Crowne Plaza Metropolitan Hotel in Ikebukuro, 1 night in the Central Hotel in Hiroshima including breakfast and a 7-Day Japan Rail Pass which allows you unlimited travel on all JR trains in Japan (excluding Nozomi). This is based on two people sharing a twin room. To book contact Via Japan on 020 7484 3328 or visit www.viajapan.co.uk.

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