

Japan for Kid(s) 2025

by
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This was our third trip to Japan with our grandchildren to share our love of travel and more particularly our love of Japan. This time it was Henry's turn to experience Mama and Grandpa's "Japan for Kids" tour of Tokyo and surrounds. His cousins Abby and Jack had their trips in 2015 and 2023, when they were ten. His sister Maggie is looking forward to her trip in 2027. Great memories for all of us sharing their excitement, wonder and yes sometimes shock.



19 June, Tobu Hotel Narita Airport

A reasonably comfortable day flight from Brisbane had us at Narita on time at 6:30pm. With only carry-on luggage, we were through Immigration and Customs in record time. For the past few trips to Japan we have chosen to stay at the airport on our first night rather than take the long trip into Tokyo at night. Our favourite is the Tobu Hotel, walking distance from Terminal 3.

Henry was quickly introduced to the wonders of Japanese convenience stores, selecting his dinner from the small, but well-equipped store in the hotel. Our three bed room cost us just over 100AUD.

20 June, Tabata inner Tokyo

Next morning it was back to the terminal, to sort out our rail passes, grab some cash and catch the Narita Express to Tokyo station. From there we took the Yamanote subway line to Tabata, an inner Tokyo suburb where our home for the next ten days waited for us in a quiet residential street.

We have stayed here before, with Henry's cousin Jack and were familiar with the neighbourhood. After a quick unpack, we were off for Henry's introduction to a little known aspect of this enormous city, the back streets where many of the city's 37 million inhabitants live.

With local kids chasing butterflies around him, Henry enjoyed a quick play in the small, local playground before we made a visit to a small local temple and traditional graveyard! Oops! Our first little drama. Henry discovered he had left his phone on the bench at the playground. "Don't worry," we reassured him, "this is Japan. It will still be there." And it was.





21 June, Day trip to Kamakura

Our three day, JR Tokyo Wide rail passes were activated today, allowing us to explore some attractions outside greater Tokyo. Being Saturday, we expected crowds, but we were a little shocked when we arrived at Kamakura station to a platform full of day trippers and hundreds more arriving every few minutes. Welcome to Japan, Henry!

To allow the crowds to thin a little, we took a walk to the local beach. Not the main attraction here, which is surprising as it is a fairly nice little beach. It even has a surf shop!

What the crowds are here for however, are the temples and monuments, particularly the huge Buddha and, of course, the shopping, a feature that was high on Henry's agenda for this whole trip. He was amazed at the Buddha and enthralled by the shrines and monuments. But it was the shopping street and ice cream shops that were the big winners









22 June Day trip to Nikko

Off to the small town of Nikko today. Yes more temples and shrines, but also a Shinkansen ride!

Nikko is a long haul from Tokyo, so our visit here is always a bit rushed. Henry managed the long uphill walk without a complaint, but the promise of an ice cream was needed to keep him up to speed for the rush back to catch the train home.



23 June, Day trip to Mt Fuji

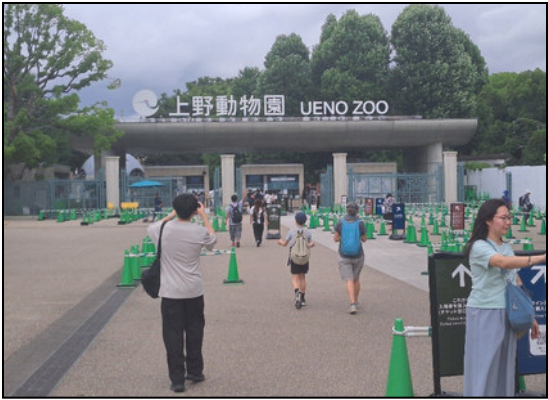
The last day on our rail passes today and another long train and bus trip to Lake Kawaguchiko to a viewing spot for Mt Fuji. We have not had a lot of luck in the past with the weather on this day trip and today was no different. It was cloudy and windy so windy that our traditional ride on the pedal swans on the lake was not possible. Not only that, but the view of Fuji was hampered by heavy cloud. There was a bright spot though. There was an ice cream shop! Again Henry was a real trooper, taking it all in his stride.





24 June, What a Day!

Henry was extremely excited as we headed off to Disney Sea. However, as we rode the driverless monorail towards the attraction, a check of our tickets revealed that we had double booked Disney Sea and Kidzania for tomorrow. Not today! Oops! Plan B. We will go to the Museum of Science and Innovation and do both Disney Sea and Kidzania tomorrow, Disappointed but dealing with it well, Henry refocused on robots and hands-on science displays that awaited at the museum. But we were not finished messing with his young mind. It was Tuesday and the museum was closed. Plan C. Ueno Zoo. At last a hit. He loved it.





25 June Disney Sea and Kidzania

Henry was very enthusiastic about Kidzania and threw himself into all the activities he signed up for. Dentistry, soft serve ice cream making (of course) learning to drive on a simulator and sausage making were all on his list. All done by lunchtime, we were off at last to Disney Sea. A heavy rain shower greeted us, but once it had passed, the sky cleared and the remainder of the day was relatively dry. Sadly, the queues were long, but yet again Henry showed great patience.

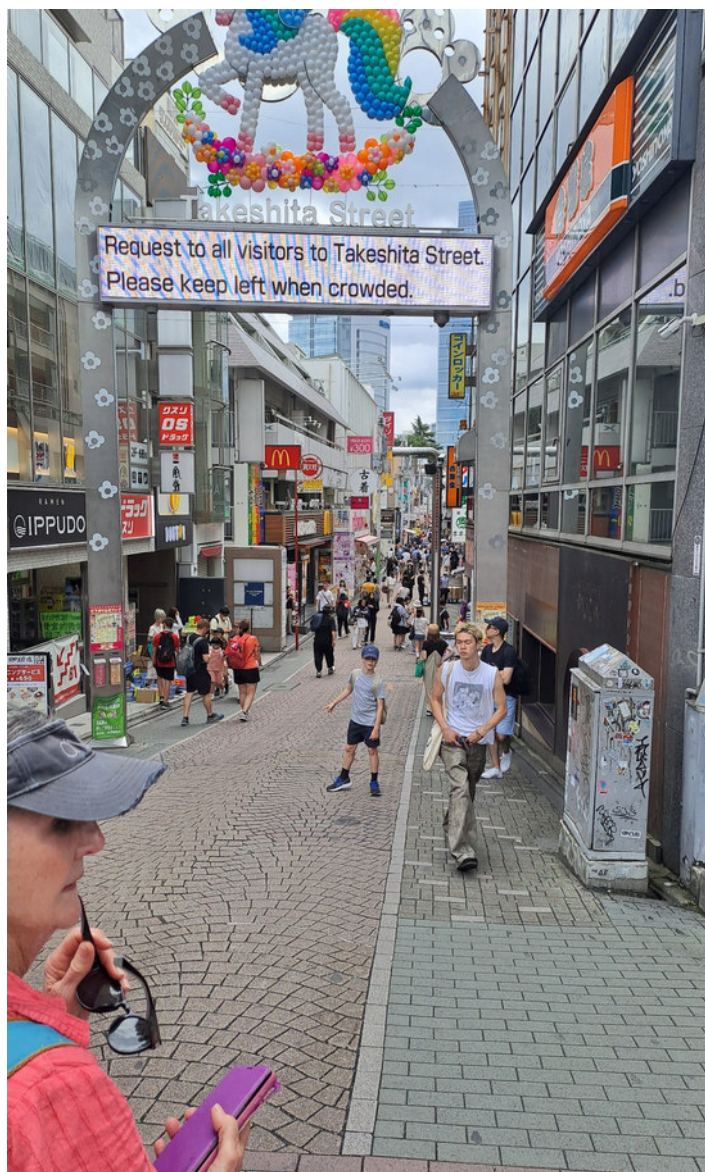












26 June, Mama and Grandpa's "Grand Tokyo Tour"

On our last full day in Tokyo we took Henry on our Tokyo highlights tour. Harajuku, the Meiji Shrine and Park, the Imperial Palace, Asakusa, the BIG Poo and shopping for Shinkansen chopsticks in the maze that is Tokyo station were visited - a whirlwind tour of Tokyo.





June 27, Tokyo Museum of Science and Innovation

Filling in the day before our night departure has proven a problem in the past, so this trip we elected to pay for an extra night in our Tabata "home" to give us time to visit the Science and Innovation Museum in the morning and return for a shower and an afternoon rest before the long journey back to Narita and home. It worked out well. Henry loved the museum and all its interactive displays and we were able to arrive at Narita in time for a leisurely dinner and a few drinks before our flight.

We have always loved our time in Japan with our grandkids, spending quality time with them in an exciting and sometimes challenging environment always brings out the best in them and us.

We can't wait for our trip with Maggie in two years' time.

