Japan — October 11–23, 2026

Gary & Romey · Complete Itinerary

Flights: UA 803 IAD→HND (out) · UA 804 HND→IAD (return)
Hotels: The Peninsula Tokyo → Gora Karaku (Hakone) → Hanajukai (Takamatsu) → Arimasansoh Goshobessho (Arima Onsen) → The Thousand Kyoto → The Peninsula Tokyo

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Sunday, October 11 — Departure

- **12:50 PM** — UA 803 departs Washington Dulles (IAD). Nonstop, ~14 hours. Visit Japan Web QR codes stored on both phones.

Monday, October 12 — Arrive Tokyo

- **3:55 PM** — Land Haneda, Terminal 3. Joint kiosk: passport + Visit Japan Web QR.
- **~4:15 PM** — **Welcome Suica ×2** before meeting the driver: after customs, follow the signs for the Tokyo Monorail — the Welcome Suica machines sit just left of the monorail ticket barriers. If the queue is long, the JR East Travel Service Center counter is to the right of the monorail entrance, and the adjacent Pasmo machines sell a functionally identical card. One card per person; no deposit; these machines take credit cards, but top-ups everywhere else in Japan are cash only — load ¥5,000 each now. Cards live 28 days and balances are non-refundable, so spend them to zero by 10/23.
- **~4:30 PM** — Peninsula Toyota Century pickup at HND. ~30–40 min to the hotel.
- Check in at **The Peninsula Tokyo** (Yurakucho). Nights of 10/12 and 10/13.
- **At check-in (bell desk):** arrange tomorrow's takuhaibin pickup — suitcases to Hakone, hand-off by 10:00 AM on the 13th. Forwarding info:
  - To: Hakone Gora Karaku, 1300-8 Gora, Hakone-machi, Ashigarashimo-gun, Kanagawa 250-0408
  - Handover Oct 13 by 10:00 AM · **requested delivery date (write it on the waybill): Oct 14** · confirm transit days and the collection cutoff with the desk
  - Recipient: "Gary McGraw — guest arriving Oct 14" · +1 703 395 8414 · contents: "clothing" · ~¥2,000–3,000 per case, cash or room-billed
  - Keep the tracking slip (12-digit number); track at kuronekoyamato.co.jp/en → Parcel Tracking
  - Never ship: passports, meds, electronics, cash, fragiles. Lock the cases.
- **Evening** — Ramen in the room. No agenda. Jet lag wins tonight; let it. One chore while the broth cools: register both Suica ID numbers against the SmartEX reservations (each traveler's card to their own seats).
- **Nightcap** — Peter: The Bar, 24F. No reservations taken (concierge-confirmed) — walk in on the early side and charm your way to a window.

Tuesday, October 13 — Tokyo Day One

- *Small cases from this morning — the suitcases ship to Hakone today; pack accordingly.*
- **~8:30 AM** — Hand the suitcases to the bell desk on the way out (pickup cutoff 10:00 AM).
- **Morning** — Meiji Jingu. Enter via the great torii at Harajuku; go early, before the crowds and after the priests.
- **11:00–11:30 AM** — **Levi's**, 6-16-12 Jingumae — a stroll down Meiji-dōri from the shrine; doors at 11:00, like most Tokyo retail. Make the purchase and leave it with them for the day — the pickup comes after Mori Tower.
- **11:45 AM** — Lunch at **Izu no Shun Yanmo**, Minami-Aoyama (a 5-minute taxi from Levi's, 2 min from Omotesando Station) — char-grilled Izu fish. **Reserved: the Autumn Color Course for two.** Out by 1:00, which is the day's hard hinge.
- **1:30 PM** — teamLab Borderless, Azabudai Hills (MORI Building Digital Art Museum). Booked: entry window 1:30–2:00 PM, two adults, ticket APY4XCXPVLLT-0001. Budget ~2 hours; wear shoes you can stand in the mirror rooms with.
- **4:00 PM** — Tokyo City View, 52F Roppongi Hills Mori Tower (timed entry booked). Sunset at **5:00 PM sharp** — Tokyo Tower lighting up at dusk is the shot. Indoor deck; the rooftop Sky Deck is permanently closed.
- **~5:45 PM** — Back to **Levi's** (6-16-12 Jingumae, ~12 min by taxi from Roppongi Hills) for the pickup, then onward to Yurakucho (~20 min).
- **Evening** — Casual dinner near the hotel. The yakitori alleys under the Yurakucho train tracks are two minutes from the door and exactly the right register.

Wednesday, October 14 — Tokyo → Hakone

- *Small-case travel day — the suitcases will be waiting at Gora Karaku on arrival.*
- **Morning** — Slow breakfast, pack the small cases, checkout by 12:00. Tokyo Station is minutes away.
- **~12:15 PM** — Tokyo Station early, for the basement food halls: **GranSta** (B1, inside the ticket gates) for the box-lunch run, with **Ekibenya Matsuri** (1F, 200+ ekiben varieties) as the classic alternative, and the Daimaru depachika attached on the Yaesu side if the hunt wants expanding. Read the labels — many classics are pork-based; salmon, beef, chicken, and anago boxes keep Romey covered. Boxes, drinks, boarding with time to spare.
- **1:03 PM** — Shinkansen to **Odawara**, arr ~1:38 PM. Booked: Green Car 9, seats 12 C/D (D at the window, north side).
- Transfer to the **Hakone Tozan Railway**: Odawara → Hakone-Yumoto, then the mountain section with its switchback reverses up to **Gora**, arr ~2:45 PM.
- **3:00 PM** — Check in at **Gora Karaku**, a short walk from Gora Station. Two nights. Suitcases waiting at the desk.
- **At check-in:** two desk requests:
  - **Yamaji** — ask the desk to call: tomorrow's lunch hours, book if they take bookings, and check the menu for pork-free options for Romey. The desk will suggest a substitute if Yamaji can't work.
  - **Friday taxi** — prebook a taxi down to Odawara Station for Friday at 9:30 AM. The ryokan's own shuttle budgets 45–50 minutes for that run, with extensions in congestion — and the train is at 11:05, so 9:30 buys the margin the mountain road demands.
  - **Takuhaibin recon** — ask how many days Yamato needs to Takamatsu and the day's collection cutoff. Both branches target the same result, **requested delivery Saturday, Oct 17**: the default is handover tomorrow morning (Oct 15) on two-day service; keep the suitcases through Friday's checkout only if the desk confirms next-day delivery. Forwarding info either way:
  - To: Hanajukai, 3-5-10 Saiho-cho (Nishitakara-cho), Takamatsu, Kagawa 760-0004 · +81 87-861-5580
  - **Requested delivery date (write it on the waybill): Oct 17**
  - Recipient: "Gary McGraw — guest arriving Oct 16" · +1 703 395 8414 · contents: "clothing" · ~¥2,000–3,000 per case
  - Keep the tracking slip; track at kuronekoyamato.co.jp/en → Parcel Tracking
  - Never ship: passports, meds, electronics, cash, fragiles. Lock the cases.
- **Evening** — Dinner at the ryokan; first onsen soak.

Thursday, October 15 — Hakone

- **Morning** — Hakone Open-Air Museum. One stop below Gora on the Tozan line (Chōkoku-no-Mori Station) or a downhill stroll. Picasso pavilion, Miró, Moore, and the stained-glass Symphonic Sculpture tower — climb it. *(Default plan: hand the suitcases over this morning before the museum — requested delivery Oct 17 — unless the desk confirmed next-day service for a Friday handover.)*
- **Lunch** — Yamaji *(arranged at yesterday's check-in)*.
- **3:30 PM** — Private bath at Gora Karaku *(booked)*.
- **Evening** — Kaiseki dinner at the ryokan.

Friday, October 16 — Hakone → Takamatsu (big travel day)

- *Small cases from checkout — the suitcases are en route to Takamatsu (shipped at today's checkout, or yesterday per the desk's advice) and land tomorrow, Oct 17; tonight runs on the small cases.*
- **~9:00 AM** — Breakfast done; checkout by 9:15. **At checkout:** hand the suitcases to the desk — takuhaibin to Hanajukai per the forwarding info gathered at check-in, requested delivery Oct 17 *(skip if they shipped yesterday, the default)*.
- **9:30 AM** — Prebooked taxi down the mountain to Odawara Station *(arranged at Wednesday's check-in)*. Budget 45–50 minutes — the ryokan's own shuttle estimate — arriving ~10:20 with a comfortable hour in hand.
- **~10:25 AM** — Odawara buffer: provisions for the ride at the station shops — the journey spans lunch, and Romey's label rule applies.
- **11:05 AM** — Shinkansen west, booked in two legs: Odawara → **Nagoya** arr 1:06 PM, a 20-minute same-station transfer, then **1:26 PM** to **Okayama**, arr **3:05 PM**. Green Car 10, seats 16 C/D on both trains (D at the window, Fuji side — the mountain passes ~11:30 on leg one).
- **3:05–4:13 PM** — Okayama layover, 68 civilized minutes. Tap out through the Shinkansen exit gates (the SmartEX journey ends here) and collect both Marine Liner reservations at a green ticket machine bearing the e5489 logo, in the main concourse by the ticket office: English mode → "Receive reserved ticket(s)" → insert the **credit card used to pay on e5489** (mandatory, cardholder only — carry that card) → enter the 4-digit identification number and the reservation number, **#41491**, then repeat for **#40449** (or scan the reservation QRs instead). Pocket all tickets and receipts, then enter the local-line gates with the paper tickets. Fallback: the staffed Midori-no-Madoguchi window, same credentials. Remaining minutes: provisions, coffee, stretch.
- **4:13 PM** — **Marine Liner** to Takamatsu, arr **5:05 PM**. Booked: car 1, panorama row, seats 1 C/D — forward-facing over the driver's cab, and the Great Seto Bridge crossing lands in full late-afternoon gold.
- **~5:20 PM** — Taxi ~10 min to **Hanajukai**. Two nights. You arrive essentially at sunset, which is what the hotel is for.
- **At check-in:** two desk requests:
  - **Ikkaku** — have the desk call the Takamatsu branch directly (the restaurant routes reservation questions to each branch): third-party listings say Saturday reservations are not taken, so verify at the source. Book a 6:30 table for two if they'll take it; if weekends are walk-in only, get queue intel instead — opening time, when the Saturday wave peaks, whether names go on a door list.
  - **Full-day island charter** — have the desk book a charter taxi on Naoshima for tomorrow: meet at Miyanoura port ~9:55 AM (off the 9:20 boat), waiting charter all day, released at the port ~4:30 PM. Standard car runs ~¥45,000–52,000, time-based, cash to the driver. The island's fleet is tiny and books out — this reservation is the whole point of the ask. *Fallback if no car exists:* the public chain, to be confirmed against current timetables — 10:00 Miyanoura town bus → 10:14 Tsutsuji-sō → 10:30 free art-site shuttle → 10:37 Chichu (the public shuttle, NOT the Benesse House hotel-guests-only courtesy bus).
- **Evening** — Dinner at the hotel over the Inland Sea.

Saturday, October 17 — Naoshima Art Day

- *Small cases until evening — the suitcases land at Hanajukai today while you're on the island.*
- **8:45 AM** — Short taxi to Takamatsu port, straight to the **high-speed passenger boat counter** — it opens 30 minutes before departure, and tickets are one-way only, cash, no advance or online booking. Carry plenty of cash generally: the island's buses, some Art House sites, and most food run cash-first.
- **9:20–9:50 AM** — High-speed boat to Miyanoura. *(Earlier alternative: the 8:12–9:02 regular ferry. Do not fall back to the 10:14 ferry — its 11:04 arrival cannot make an 11:15 Chichu entry.)*
- **9:55 AM** — Charter car meets at Miyanoura *(booked via the Hanajukai desk; it holds all day)*. First move: the Benesse shore — Kusama's **Yellow Pumpkin** on its pier in morning light, before the photo queue exists. Obligatory photo; embrace it.
- **11:00 AM** — Car to Chichu, five minutes; the entrance path runs through the Monet-inspired garden — don't rush it.
- **11:15 AM** — **Chichu Art Museum** (timed tickets in hand). Monet, De Maria, Turrell, and the Ando building itself.
- **~12:45 PM** — Lunch at Chichu Café — the Inland Sea framed in concrete.
- **1:45 PM** — With wheels waiting, the between-acts bonus: **Lee Ufan Museum** — ten minutes away, Ando-framed stillness between the big two — or a second pass along the Benesse sculpture shore.
- **~2:45 PM** — Honmura district, Art House Project.
- **3:00 PM** — **Minamidera** (timed tickets in hand). James Turrell in the dark — give your eyes the full adjustment time; that's the piece.
- **~4:15 PM** — Car back to Miyanoura; driver released ~4:30, settle in cash. One-way ferry ticket at the counter (cash).
- **5:00–6:00 PM** — **Regular ferry** back to Takamatsu — the 5:00 high-speed does not exist, and the next fast boat isn't until 7:45. The slow boat's deck at golden hour over the Inland Sea is no punishment.
- **6:30 PM** — Straight from the port to dinner — the 6:00 ferry arrival meets the table directly, ~10 minutes by taxi; no Hanajukai stop, so freshen up happens at sea. **Ikkaku**, Takamatsu's honetsuki-dori institution: bone-in roast chicken, blistered skin, garlic and pepper, cabbage for the drippings. Order both temperaments — *oyadori* (parent bird, chewy and intense) and *hinadori* (young bird, tender) — and trade. Ten minutes from the port, zero pork. *(Reservation unverified — listings say Saturday bookings may not be taken; Friday's desk call settles it. If it's walk-in only: straight off the ferry, in the queue by 6:15, and the bird is worth the wait. Tsurumaru absorbs any delay.)*
- **Epilogue** — **Tsurumaru**, the late-night udon shop in the Kawaramachi arcades, for a shared bowl of kama-age as the walk-off course — the famous sanuki udon names close by early afternoon, so this is where honest udon lives after dark. Then taxi up the hill.

Sunday, October 18 — Takamatsu → Arima Onsen

- *Small-case night by design — the suitcases ship to Kyoto this morning and skip Arima; yukata does the heavy lifting.*
- **~8:00 AM (optional)** — Early Ritsurin Garden, 10 min from the hotel. One of Japan's finest gardens, at its best before the tour buses.
- **~9:45 AM** — Checkout. **At checkout:** hand the suitcases to the desk — takuhaibin to Kyoto. Forwarding info:
  - To: THE THOUSAND KYOTO, 570 Higashi-Shiokoji-cho, Shimogyo-ku, Kyoto 600-8216 · +81 75-354-1000
  - Handover Oct 18 at checkout · **requested delivery date (write it on the waybill): Oct 19** · confirm transit days and the collection cutoff with the desk
  - Recipient: "Gary McGraw — guest arriving Oct 19 (same-day check-in)" · +1 703 395 8414 · contents: "clothing" · ~¥2,000–3,000 per case
  - Keep the tracking slip; track at kuronekoyamato.co.jp/en → Parcel Tracking
  - Never ship: passports, meds, electronics, cash, fragiles. Lock the cases.
- **10:00 AM** — Taxi to Takamatsu Station.
- **10:40 AM** — **Marine Liner 24** to Okayama, arr **11:30 AM**. Booked: car 1, seats 1 A/B — car 1 trails on the return, so row 1 becomes the rear-window gallery, the bridge and the Inland Sea receding.
- **12:14 PM** — **Sakura** to **Shin-Kobe**, arr **12:45 PM**. Booked: car 6, seats 14 C/D (the 8-car Sakura is 2+2 throughout; D at the window). A relaxed 44-minute transfer at Okayama, tickets already in pocket from Friday.
- **~12:50 PM** — Taxi from Shin-Kobe up the mountain to Arima, ~30–35 min, ¥8,000–10,000.
- **~1:30 PM** — Arrive **Arimasansoh Goshobessho**. Check-in is 3:00 — drop the small cases and wander the old town: Kin no Yu, the Nene Bridge, warm tansan senbei straight off the iron.
- **Evening** — Kaiseki and the gold and silver waters. One night, used properly.

Monday, October 19 — Arima → Kyoto

- *Small cases until check-in — the suitcases arrive at The Thousand today.*
- **Morning** — Baths before breakfast if ambition allows; checkout by 10:15.
- **10:30 AM** — Private car to Kyoto *(confirmed by the ryokan: Toyota Grand HiAce or Alphard)*, ~50–55 min via the Chugoku and Meishin Expressways.
- **~11:25 AM** — Arrive **The Thousand Kyoto** (2 min from Kyoto Station). Drop the small cases with the concierge. Two nights.
- **Lunch after arrival** — **Men-ya Inoichi** (Bib Gourmand fish-dashi ramen, white or black soy sauce; 10 min from the hotel) *only if* same-day numbered tickets remain and the return time fits: tickets are distributed from 10:30 AM, often run out before opening, entry is not permitted without one, and the printed return time is not a guaranteed seating. Otherwise, lunch near the hotel — no obligation to organize the afternoon around ramen.
- **1:00–3:00 PM** — Walk east to **Sanjūsangen-dō** — the hall of 1,001 Kannon statues. No photos allowed inside, which is part of why it works. *(The Genji exhibition across the street is dark today — the National Museum closes Mondays — so take the unhurried afternoon.)*
- **3:30 PM** — Check in; decompress.
- **At check-in:** two items:
  - Confirm the suitcases arrived from Takamatsu (the tracking slip has the number).
  - Book tomorrow morning's taxi: departure timed to reach Shōden-ji (Nishigamo) just before 9:00 — roughly 8:30 from the hotel.
  - Arrange tomorrow's takuhaibin pickup and confirm timing with the desk — suitcases to Tokyo, hand-off ~8:00 AM for next-day delivery. Forwarding info:
  - To: The Peninsula Tokyo, 1-8-1 Yurakucho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0006 · +81 3-6270-2888
  - Handover Oct 20 ~8:00 AM · **requested delivery date (write it on the waybill): Oct 21** · confirm transit days and the collection cutoff with the desk
  - Recipient: "Gary McGraw — guest arriving Oct 21" · +1 703 395 8414 · contents: "clothing" · ~¥2,000–3,000 per case
  - Keep the tracking slip; track at kuronekoyamato.co.jp/en → Parcel Tracking
  - Never ship: passports, meds, electronics, cash, fragiles. Lock the cases.
- **6:30 PM** — Dinner at **Pontocho Misoguigawa** — French-kaiseki on the Kamogawa. **Reserved** — confirmed by The Thousand concierge.
- **~8:45 PM** — Monday-night cocktail stop near Pontocho — **ask The Thousand concierge (in the open email thread) to name a room that's genuinely open Mondays**: candidates to check are Bar Rocking Chair, Bar K6, and Sour, but Monday is Kyoto's bar sabbath and listings lie, so the locals verify. Fallback with full honor: a Kamogawa stroll and the hotel's own bar. *(Bee's Knees is out — walk-in only and dark Mondays.)*

Tuesday, October 20 — Kyoto: Zen, Art, Inari, Pontocho

- *Small cases from 8:00 AM — the suitcases ship to Tokyo this morning; tonight runs on the small cases.*
- **8:00 AM** — Hand the suitcases to the front desk on the way to breakfast *(pickup arranged at yesterday's check-in)*.
- **~8:30 AM** — Prebooked taxi north to Nishigamo *(booked at yesterday's check-in)*, ~25 min — timed to land just before 9:00.
- **9:00–9:45 AM** — **Shōden-ji** in the morning silence: a white-walled karesansui where clipped azaleas stand in for stones in the 7-5-3 arrangement, with Mt. Hiei as borrowed scenery over the wall. The temple that made Bowie cry. Nearly always empty.
- **~10:30 AM–12:00 PM** — **Kyoto City KYOCERA Museum of Art** (taxi down ~9:50, doors at 10:00, buffer for tickets) — carrying the morning alone, since MoMAK is dark Oct 4–24 for exhibition changeover. The fall slate is strong: **Zen and Ghibli** (Higashiyama Cube), the **Yamaga Seika** textile retrospective (South Wing), the fall Collection Room, and the free Triangle. Check whether Zen and Ghibli uses timed entry and pre-buy if so.
- **12:00–12:45 PM** — Lunch in Okazaki — kept deliberately loose and quick; the mountain owns the afternoon.
- **1:00–1:15 PM** — Leave for Fushimi (~25–30 min by taxi).
- **~1:45–4:45 PM** — **Fushimi Inari Taisha, full summit loop.** The complete 4 km circuit through the torii gates; crowds evaporate above the Yotsutsuji intersection. Aim to finish by 4:30–4:45 for a real interval before dinner — or linger to ~5:10 for the lantern-lit dusk descent, knowingly spending the dinner buffer on it (sunset ~5:10; phone lights for insurance either way).
- **~5:00 PM** — Back at the hotel — shower, reset, no racing.
- **6:30 PM** — Dinner at **Gion Fuji** — course-only tempura counter in a Gion machiya (doors 17:00, last call 20:30; closed Sundays, open your Tuesday). Carrying the Ten You torch, which is closed Tuesdays and thus excluded by the calendar. **Reserved** — semi-private seating, confirmed by The Thousand concierge.
- **~8:30 PM** — **L'Escamoteur** (Saitōchō, just west of the Kamogawa at Kiyamachi-Shijō — a ten-minute walk from Gion Fuji): the steampunk magic den, French bartenders doing sleight-of-hand with the drinks, ~15 seats, doors at 8:00 — arrive at opening or queue. Unanimously open Tuesdays. Unfinished business from 2019, when the crowds won. History records the morning after; tomorrow is only a garden and a train.

Wednesday, October 21 — Kyoto → Tokyo

- *Small-case travel day — the suitcases will be waiting at the Peninsula on arrival.*
- **9:15 AM** — Morning walk through **Shosei-en Garden**, 5 min north of the hotel.
- **~10:30 AM (optional)** — **Kagizen Yoshihusa Honten**, Gion (opens 10:00, open Wednesdays): the 300-year-old wagashi house — kuzukiri and matcha as Kyoto's closing argument. Brisk: back to the hotel by 11:30.
- **12:00 PM** — Checkout.
- **~12:30 PM** — Kyoto Station, two minutes away. Optional ekiben sweep for the train — same label rule for Romey.
- **1:01 PM** — **Nozomi** to Tokyo, arr 3:15 PM. Booked: Green Car 9, seats 10 C/D — D is the left-side window, the Fuji side. The mountain holds court out that glass around **2:10 PM**, roughly ten minutes of full profile on a clear day.
- **3:15 PM** — Arrive Tokyo Station; short taxi to **The Peninsula Tokyo**. Two nights. Suitcases waiting at check-in.
- **Evening** — Ginza at night, a ten-minute walk and properly lit. Dinner low-key: yakitori under the Yurakucho tracks, or a Ginza tempura counter if the mood is upgraded.

Thursday, October 22 — Tokyo Finale

- **Morning** — **Tsukiji Outer Market**, grazing breakfast: tamagoyaki, tuna, whatever the stalls insist on. Cash or IC card here.
- **Late morning** — Walk down to **Hamarikyu Gardens** — matcha in the teahouse on the tidal pond, autumn flowers in season.
- **Afternoon** — **Tokyo National Museum**, Ueno (~20 min from Hamarikyu): the Honkan permanent galleries rotate continuously, so no changeover blackout applies — the national collection closes the art loop. (Artizon and Nezu are both dark Oct 4–24 between exhibitions.) Leave by 3:45; back at the hotel by 4:15 to dress.
- **5:00 PM sharp** — **Kyubey Ginza Honten** — counter seats for two, booked and confirmed via the Peninsula concierge. The 1935 institution where gunkan-maki was invented; the trip's final swing. *Punctuality clause in the confirmation: 15 minutes late and the seats auto-release — and they bill you anyway. Walk over by 4:50; it's ~10 minutes from the hotel.*
- **~7:15 PM** — Straight from dinner into a Ginza cocktail den to close the trip. First choice: **Bar High Five** (Hidetsugu Ueno — no menu; describe a mood and receive a diagnosis in glass). Backups of equal caliber: **Star Bar Ginza** (Hisashi Kishi) and **Tender** (Kazuo Uyeda, inventor of the hard shake). All within ten minutes, all walk-in (concierge-confirmed, none take reservations) — earlier is better odds at High Five's dozen seats.
- **Night** — Ten-minute walk home through lit-up Ginza.

Friday, October 23 — Departure

- **Morning** — Slow start. Hibiya Park is across the street if legs want stretching (the Palace East Gardens are closed Fridays).
- **Suica last call** — balances die non-refundable when the cards expire, so spend them to zero: the hotel-adjacent konbini, or the Terminal 3 shops after security.
- **12:00 PM** — Checkout.
- **12:45 PM** — Peninsula Toyota Century to Haneda, Terminal 3.
- **3:45 PM** — UA 804 departs HND; arrives **IAD 3:50 PM the same day**, thanks to the dateline giving back what it took.

Notes

- **Money:** US credit cards work everywhere that has a table or a meter — restaurants, hotels, taxis. Carry yen and a Suica/ICOCA for street stalls, market vendors, and small shrines' worth of vending machines.
- **Luggage strategy:** the suitcases travel by TA-Q-BIN via the per-day hand-offs above; humans travel with the small cases. Two suitcases across four hops runs roughly ¥16,000–24,000 total, and every train day is hands-free.
- **Weather:** mid-October is Japan at its best — 60s–70s °F, low humidity, early autumn color starting in the hills. Pack a light layer for Hakone and Arima evenings.