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## Cheap Travel by N. Ehara

Looking to get away for the winter holiday? Travel in Japan is not very cheap, and even if you have a car, highway tolls and gasoline costs all add up. In this edition, we list some useful ways to travel cheaper.

### JR train

#### Save ¥5,680 on return Shinkansen tickets to Tokyo

Nozomi Hayatoku Oufuku Kippu

Buy a のぞみ早特往復きっぷ (Nozomi-express earlybird return ticket) between one and three weeks before you travel. Usual fare from Okayama to Tokyo station is ¥31,680 return, but this special ticket costs only ¥26,000. Available until Mar. 24th, 2008.

#### Travel on as many JR trains as you can in 24 hours: ¥11,500 for 5 tickets.

If you have the time to use regular trains and want to travel a long way, buy a 青春 18 きっぷ (Seishun Juhachi Kippu) and travel as far as you can in 24 hours for only ¥2300. You have to buy a set of 5 tickets for ¥11,500, but you can use them all at once with four friends, or use them yourself on five separate trips, or take a two day trip with a friend and then a one day trip on your own. This winter they will be sold from Dec. 1st to Jan. 10th, to be used between Dec. 10th and Jan. 20th. This ticket does not permit travel on shinkansen, Limited Express, or Express trains, or in Green cars (1st class), sleeping cars, or on JR buses. Sometimes these tickets are also sold individually for around ¥2500 on internet auction sites like yahoo!, or at discount ticket shops like those near Okayama Station.

#### All-you-can-travel in Kansai (including Osaka and Kansai International Airport)

Kansai Oufuku Free Kippu

関西往復フリーきっぷ is a ticket which includes a return shinkansen ticket on a reserved seat from Okayama to Shin-Osaka Station and an unlimited JR travel in specific areas of Kansai, including Kyoto, Nara, Wakayama and Kansai International Airport for 4 days. A reserved seat on a shinkansen from Okayama to Shin-Osaka return usually costs ¥12,120, but this 4-day pass costs only ¥12,200. Sold until Mar. 31st, 2008.

#### Save ¥1,460 on travel to Himeji on weekends

Himeji Casual Kippu

A 姫路カジュアルきっぷ can be used for shinkansen travel on Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays if purchased at least one day before departure. The ticket costs ¥4,800 for travel that would normally cost ¥6,260. Sold until Mar. 31st, 2008.

#### To Kochi or Matsuyama

Kochi Kankou Kippu

高知観光きっぷ includes a return Limited Express ticket on

a non-reserved seat from Okayama to Kochi and unlimited JR travel in specific areas of Kochi. A Limited Express ticket from Okayama to Kochi return usually costs ¥10,560, but this 4-day pass costs only ¥6,300.

There is a similar ticket for travel to Matsuyama, called the Matsuyama Kankou Kippu 松山観光きっぷ, which costs ¥7,800, a saving of ¥4,260. It is sold all year round.

### Other JR specials

JR also offers "Gururin Passes," which are a return reserved seating shinkansen ticket with the added bonus of admission tickets to certain tourist attractions in the area AND a two or three day pass on JR trains and ferries in the destination area, but they are cheaper or only cost a few hundred yen more than regular shinkansen fares.

- Kanawaza Kaga Gururin Pass  
1) 金沢・加賀ぐるりんパス to Kanazawa: ¥24,000
- Matsue Izumo Gururin Pass  
2) 松江・出雲ぐるりんパス to Matsue: ¥13,000
- Miyajima Setouchi Gururin Pass  
3) 宮島・瀬戸内ぐるりんパス to Hiroshima: ¥13,500
- Kanmon Kaikyo Gururin Pass  
4) 関門海峡ぐるりんパス to Yamaguchi: ¥20,500

### Highway Buses / Coaches

**Chutetsu Bus** from Okayama (Ph. 0120-230-616 toll free)

To Tokyo: ¥9,800 single, ¥16,600 return

To Kobe: ¥2,750 single, ¥3,260 return

**Ryobi Bus** from Okayama (Ph. 086-232-6688)

To Tokyo: ¥9,800 single, ¥16,600 return

To Kansai International Airport: ¥4,500 single, ¥7,500 return

To Kyoto: ¥3,500 single, ¥6,300 return

To Osaka: ¥3,060 single, ¥5,610 return

**Okaden Bus** from Okayama (Ph. 086-235-3455)

To Kobe: ¥2,750 single, ¥3,260 return

**Shimoden Bus** from Okayama (Ph. 086-231-4333)

To Tokyo: ¥9,800 single, ¥16,600 return

To Kyoto: ¥3,500 single, ¥6,300 return

To Osaka: ¥3,060 single, ¥5,610 return

The following two companies do not have offices in Okayama, but offer competitive prices via internet and telephone reservations. Prices vary depending on demand.

**Sunshine Tour** (Ph. 06-6344-3077)

Okayama-Tokyo: ¥5,600~ single, ¥11,200~ return

<http://www.sunshinetour.co.jp>

**Orion Tour** (Ph. 0120-202-324 toll free)

Okayama-Tokyo: ¥5,800~ single, ¥10,600~ return

<http://www.orion-tour.co.jp/english/>