

Fitz's Fish Ponds



GUIDE TO JAPAN



Take a tour with us to visit the koi capital of the world!

Trips available in October, January & April



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BOOKING / PRICING



Hotel/Flight Booking

We will take care of booking the customers hotel at the New Otani, after confirming the dates. Our team will work with you to book your flight. You can always contact us for any assistance needed with booking.

Upfront Costs

- \$5,000 All Inclusive Koi Trips Package
 - Includes Round Trip Flight (\$2,000)
 - Includes Train Ticket from Tokyo to Nagaoka
 - Includes 5 night stay at the New Otani Hotel which includes a Complimentary Breakfast
 - Rental Car Access
 - Authentic Japanese lunch, included daily. Remainder of deposit goes towards rental car, gas, and other travel/tour expenses.
 - Guided Koi Buying Tour- visiting all of the best breeders in Niigata, Japan.

Koi Pricing Breakdown

- In addition to the cost of the koi, we charge a 20% commission (this is standard for koi dealers) as well as the cost of shipping.
- The benefit is, you pay exactly what we pay for the koi, and since we buy koi at such a high volume, the pricing is heavily discounted compared to most other dealers.
- Shipping is charged by box. When picking out koi at a breeder, the breeder will tell us how many of that specific size can fit in a box. You will need to buy in multiples of that number, so you have full boxes. The more koi you can fit in a box, the more the shipping cost gets divided among them.
- To give you an idea, one box can fit 50-150 Tosai, 6-12 Nisai, or 2-4 Sansai. Koi 75cm and over are typically boxed by themselves. The numbers vary based on the size of the koi and the size of the box, so you will want to keep that in mind when calculating your total cost.

Please be aware that all koi purchases, shipping costs and additional fees are NOT included in the ticket. Meal expenses will also be the travelers responsibility as well as any incidentals.



THE TRIPS



Fall Trip (October/November) - Harvest Trip

- Fly into Tokyo and head straight up to Nagaoka via the Shinkansen (bullet train)
- Most popular trip of the year but also the busiest
- Join in on harvests with some of Japan's top breeders
- Breeders harvest koi from their mud ponds throughout the trip and this is the best chance to get first pick on high quality nisai, sansai, or larger koi
- Enjoy mild weather and the beautiful colors of Japan in the fall



Winter Trip (January/February) - All Japan Koi Show Trip

- Fly in and tour Tokyo for a day or two before going to the all All Japan Koi Show
- See the best and largest koi in the world at AJKS including the grand champion
- Following the AJKS, we will take the Shinkansen (bullet train) up to Nagaoka, which will be our home base for the rest of the trip
- Breeders are less busy, so you are free to take your time looking at and selecting koi. Great trip for getting good prices on to sai and nisai.
- Although the temperature rarely gets below freezing, be prepared for massive amounts of snow!



Spring Trip (April/May)

- Fly into Tokyo and typically head straight up to Nagaoka
- A beautiful time of year to visit Japan! Excellent opportunity to add some sightseeing to your itinerary
- Best time of the year to buy jumbo to sai and get good deals on koi before they get back into the mud ponds



ARRIVING IN JAPAN

- Typically we book flights to fly into Narita Airport, although in some cases we may fly into Haneda.
- From Narita airport, we will take the NEX (Narita Express) Train to Tokyo Station. From Tokyo Station we will either get a taxi to our hotel in Tokyo or get directly on the bullet train to Nagaoka. There are ticket offices in the airport as well as in every train station with English speaking employees, should you need to purchase any tickets or ask any questions.
- From Haneda Airport we will either get a taxi to our hotel in Tokyo, or go straight to Tokyo Station where we will get the train up to Nagaoka.
- Once we arrive at Nagaoka Station it is only a short walk to the New Otani Hotel, which is where we will be staying while we hunt for koi!
- From the hotel it's about a 15 minute drive to the Yamakoshi where most of the koi breeders are located.
- For those on their first trip with us, we try to schedule the flights together so we can meet at the airport and make the journey to the mountains together. If for some reason that is not possible, we can either come back to meet you when your flight arrives, or give you detailed instructions on how to get to us.

**SCAN FOR DETAILED DIRECTIONS
FROM HANEDA AIRPORT TO
NAGAOKA**



**SCAN FOR DETAILED DIRECTIONS
FROM NARITA AIRPORT TO
NAGAOKA**



DAILY ROUTINE

- We meet in the hotel lobby in the morning and head out to the breeders at 9am, unless otherwise specified.
- Everyone typically does their own thing for breakfast. The New Otani has a breakfast buffet which is included, however if you would prefer, there is a Starbucks as well as some other coffee shops within walking distance (in the train station).
- The first day on the mountains is usually just looking and getting a feel for things. We will try and hit as many breeders as possible just to see what each has to offer. From there we will plan out which breeders we want to return to on the following days to start picking out koi.
- In the afternoon we will break for lunch, with one of the breeders or at a local restaurant.
 - Note: If you have any dietary restrictions, please let us know ahead of time.
- We return to the hotel between 4 and 5 pm. After returning we will take a little break and then grab dinner. After that you can either call it a night, or see what else Nagaoka has to offer!
 - Note: While some nights we will have scheduled group dinners, other nights will be left for smaller group or individual meals.



NAGAOKA FOOD & FUN



Here are some restaurants and things to do around Nagaoka!

Restaurants/Bars

- **Kobayashi Bar** - A quiet bar/lounge conveniently located in the hotel lobby. Usually we will meet here before getting dinner.
- **Liffey Tavern** - Believe it or not, Japan is full of Irish Pubs! The Liffey is an Irish Bar we will meet at sometimes to get some drinks and food. It's nothing fancy but it's quick and its only a 5 minute walk from the hotel
- **Hama-Sushi** - A cheap but good sushi restaurant where you order on an iPad, and your sushi is delivered on a conveyer belt! Great place if you want to eat a lot but not spend a lot of money.
- **Steak Club** - Conveniently located on the second floor of the hotel, Steak Club is a high-end Japanese steakhouse that has some of the best Wagyu beef you will ever taste in your life! The price tag is high, but in our opinion it's worth every penny.

Local Attractions

- **Nishikigoi village** - Located in Ojiya, Nishikigoi village is a fun little koi museum where you can learn about the history of koi, and see their awesome indoor koi pond and Japanese garden! They also have a mall across the way that has a great gift shop.
- **Koi Shop** - A tiny store packed tight with koi supplies. Great if you want to buy some Matsuda nets, cage nets, or other koi items that are difficult to get outside of Japan. We usually make a stop at this store while visiting other breeders in the area.
- **Hotokusan Inari Shrine** - A beautiful shrine located high up on a hilltop. Provides great views of the entire valley.
- **Bull Fights** - Besides koi, yamakoshi is also famous for bull fighting! This is not the bull fighting you have seen in movies or TV, this is literally two bulls wrestling each other for glory! The bulls are well cared for, and it is more of a fun event to keep the tradition going, rather than a competition.
- **Echigo Yuzawa** - The skiing capital of Japan! If you are interested in skiing or snowboarding, you can take a 15 minute train ride from Nagaoka and experience some of the best skiing in the world! There are rental shops within walking distance that will set you up and drive you to one of the several world-class mountains in the area.



Nishikigoi Village



A Champion Bull!



Ishiuchi Ski Mountain

TOKYO FOOD & FUN



Here are some of our favorite spots in Tokyo!

- **Tokyo Skytree** - The tallest tower in Tokyo, Incredible 360 degree view of the city!
- **Parks, Shrines & Temples** - Tokyo is full of incredible parks, historical shrines, and temples. Here are a few to check out:
 - Shinjuku Gyoen National Garden - Shinjuku
 - Meiji Shrine - Shibuya
 - Ueno Park & Zoo - Ueno
 - Sensō-ji Temple - Asakusa
 - Imperial Palace - Taito City
- **Shibuya** - Tokyo's trendiest neighborhood, famous for Shibuya Crossing. Great combination of shopping, restaurants, and fun!
- **Ginza** - Tokyo's shopping district, within walking distance from Tokyo Station. If you like designer clothes, watches, and everything else luxury, Ginza is the place for you! Besides shopping, Ginza is home to many world-class restaurants.
- **Shinjuku** - Tokyo's entertainent capital, recommended for those who aren't afraid to party! Reserve a spot at Robot Restaurnt for an insane yet amazing off-broadway style show, or take a walk through Golden Gai, which is a famous street packed with tiny themed bars.



SHIBUYA CROSSING



IMPERIAL PALACE



ROBOT RESTAURANT



GOLDEN GAI

USEFUL INFO

Useful Apps:

- **Google Maps** - Great for navigating anywhere in Japan, will show you train times, and tracks.
- **Google Translate** - Besides the obvious uses, google translate also has a camera feature which is great for translating Japanese menus and signs.
- **DiDi** - Japan's version of Uber, although you can usually just hail a taxi.
- **PayPay** - Cashless payment app, which makes paying at stores and vending machines easier. You can also just use Yen or your card.
- **Facebook Messenger/WhatsApp** - Free messaging apps to keep in touch, especially useful if you didn't pay for an international data plan.

Wifi Block/E-sim

There are two ways you can go about getting cell service/internet for your trip. The airport has kiosks where you can rent a Wi-Fi block. They cost about \$40 to rent, and will allow multiple people to connect to it like a hot spot.

The other option is to get an e-sim online before your trip. We recommend going to [esim.holafly.com](https://www.esim.holafly.com) they offer affordable unlimited data plans depending on how many days you are staying in Japan. Just remember that you need to activate the e-sim before entering Japan or it will not work.



PACKING CHECKLIST



Here is a general packing list of things you should bring on your trip.

Wallet Items/Essential Items

- Passport
- License
- International Drivers Permit (If you plan on driving)
- Debit/Credit Cards
- Cash
- Phone & Charger
- Any medication you may need (Japan has very strict guidelines on what medication can be brought please visit <https://jp.usembassy.gov/services/importing-medication/> for more information)

Clothes

- Basics (Socks, Underwear, T-Shirts)
- Pants
- Sweatshirts/Sweaters
- Snow Jacket (for Winter trip)
- Good Snow Boots (for Winter trip)
- Gloves & Hat (for Winter trip)
- Sneakers
- Sunglasses

Toiletries

- Deodorant (They don't have roll on deodorant in Japan!)
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Sunscreen
- Hair Products etc.

Electronics

- Headphones (Preferably noise cancelling - It's a long flight!)
- Charging cables and blocks (Japan outlets are the same as US outlets)
- Outlet Adapter (If you are coming from outside the USA)
- Power Bank - good to have in case you don't have access to an outlet.



MEET YOUR GUIDES



Brian Fitzsimmons

- Owner and CEO
- Has been on 10+ Japan koi trips
- Began importing Japanese koi in 2018, and in 4 years grew to be the largest importer of koi in the United States.
- Expert in handling huge koi, navigating the mountains, and getting the best deals
- Master and inventor of the “Zenbu’ technique



AJ Mandell

- Runs marketing and koi sales at the farm and online
- Started coming on koi trips in 2022
- Expert in selling koi, marketing, and getting things done
- Professional photographer
- You can most likely find AJ on his phone closing sales, or flying his drone around the Yamakoshi mountains getting epic shots.



Ryan Cardillo

- Runs our Green Brook retail location and EBay koi sales
- Has been working at FFP for 10 years and has been coming on koi trips since 2018
- Expert in koi and pond knowledge, identifying koi varieties, and navigating Japan.
- Specializes in Japan nightlife and entertainment!

Contact Info

Brian Fitzsimmons - brian@fitzfishponds.com

AJ Mandell - aj@fitzfishponds.com

Ryan Cardillo - ryan@fitzfishponds.com

Please feel free to reach out to us for anything!

Fitz's Fish Ponds - www.fitzfishponds.com- [@FitzFishPonds](https://www.instagram.com/FitzFishPonds)

CUSTOMER TESTIMONIALS

“Wow... this was my first trip to Japan and Fitz ponds made me feel very welcome. Great guys! I personally had a great experience today with AJ who was absolutely fantastic and such a great guy. His knowledge and his great support was really amazing. AJ and Ryan drove us around touring all the top koi farms and went through the qualities of all the fish and what each breeder had to offer. I also really enjoyed hanging out with Ryan, as he knew where all the nightlife was! I will definitely be coming back after this experience and looking forward to the harvest trip next! I highly recommend this to anyone! See you guys soon!” -D. Williams



“Brian, AJ and Ryan showed a proficient knowledge of koi. This, combined with the close relationships they have with many top breeders in Japan, really made our buying trip special! The fact that I was able to actually pull a koi from a Shintar mud pond, where it was born and raised, and then purchase it for my own pond, still blows my mind! What an incredible experience! Thanks for the love of our industry and your passion for the koi! Can't wait to get the fish back in my pond where I can see them every day! Keep doing what you do guys!” - J. Adams.

“After having a retail store and selling koi for 25 years, it was a dream come true and a trip of a lifetime to visit Japan. Our time spent with koi breeders in the mountains of Niigata was amazing. I'll never forget harvesting nisai (two year old koi) from the mud ponds! Thanks Brian, Aj and Ryan for the great trip!!” - T. Smith





@FitzFishPonds



神奈川
大磯
白砂

