Asia Concierge

THE ART OF TRAVEL DESIGN



THE CULTURAL COMPANION

JAPAN

BOOKS, FILMS AND SERIES TO ENJOY BEFORE YOU TRAVEL

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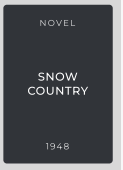
THE CULTURAL COMPANION

BOOKS, FILMS AND SERIES TO ENJOY BEFORE YOU TRAVEL

Japan has inspired some of the world's most beautiful writing and film-making. From Kawabata's snow-covered hot-spring towns to Wim Wenders' quiet Tokyo, these are our favourite ways to tune in to Japanese aesthetics, rhythms and rituals before you arrive.

TO READ

FICTION



Snow Country · Yasunari Kawabata · 1948

A delicate love story set in a hot-spring town in Japan's snowy mountains, by the Nobel laureate.

UK AMAZON · APPLE BOOKS
USA AMAZON · APPLE BOOKS



Norwegian Wood · Haruki Murakami · 1987

A nostalgic story of love and loss in 1960s Tokyo, by Japan's best-known novelist.

UK AMAZON · APPLE BOOKS
USA AMAZON · APPLE BOOKS



Convenience Store Woman · Sayaka Murata · 2016

A short, quirky and very funny novel about a woman perfectly content working in a Tokyo convenience store.

UK AMAZON · APPLE BOOKS
USA AMAZON · APPLE BOOKS



Kokoro · Natsume Sōseki · 1914

A quietly profound classic about friendship and the passing of an era, by Japan's great Meiji-era novelist.

UK AMAZON · APPLE BOOKS
USA AMAZON · APPLE BOOKS



The Housekeeper and the Professor · Yoko Ogawa · 2003

A gentle, moving novel about a housekeeper, her son and a mathematician whose memory lasts only 80 minutes.

UK AMAZON · APPLE BOOKS
USA AMAZON · APPLE BOOKS

NON-FICTION



In Praise of Shadows · Jun'ichirō Tanizaki · 1933

A brief, beautiful essay on Japanese aesthetics, light and shadow, lacquer and old wood.

UK AMAZON · APPLE BOOKS
USA AMAZON · APPLE BOOKS



The Roads to Sata · Alan Booth · 1985

A British writer walks the length of Japan, from Hokkaido to Kyushu, with wit and sharp observation.

UK AMAZON · APPLE BOOKS
USA AMAZON · APPLE BOOKS



Lost Japan · Alex Kerr · 1993

Personal essays on Kabuki, calligraphy, old houses and the Japan that is slowly disappearing.

UK AMAZON · APPLE BOOKS
USA AMAZON · APPLE BOOKS



The Book of Tea · Okakura Kakuzō · 1906

A short, elegant classic on the tea ceremony and the philosophy behind it.

UK AMAZON · APPLE BOOKS
USA AMAZON · APPLE BOOKS



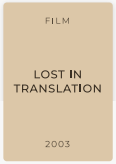
Hokkaido Highway Blues · Will Ferguson · 1998

A very funny account of hitch-hiking the length of Japan following the cherry blossom.

UK AMAZON
USA AMAZON

TO WATCH

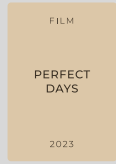
FILMS & SERIES



Lost in Translation · Sofia Coppola · 2003

Two Americans adrift in Tokyo form an unlikely bond, with Kyoto also on screen.

UK APPLE TV · AMAZON
USA AMAZON



Perfect Days · Wim Wenders · 2023

A quiet, uplifting portrait of a Tokyo public toilet cleaner who finds beauty in everyday routines.

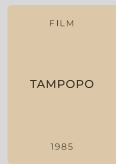
UK APPLE TV · AMAZON
USA APPLE TV · AMAZON



Spirited Away · Hayao Miyazaki · 2001

Studio Ghibli's Oscar-winning masterpiece about a girl lost in a world of spirits and bathhouses.

UK NETFLIX · APPLE TV
USA HBO MAX · APPLE TV



Tampopo · Jūzō Itami · 1985

A joyful "ramen western" about the quest for the perfect bowl of noodles.

UK PRIME VIDEO · APPLE TV
USA HBO MAX · APPLE TV



Shōgun · Rachel Kondo & Justin Marks · 2024

The record-breaking, Emmy-winning drama of power and politics in feudal Japan in 1600.

UK DISNEY+
USA HULU



James May: Our Man in Japan · Amazon · 2020

James May's witty, warm road trip from Hokkaido to Kagoshima, full of food, culture and charming detours.

UK PRIME VIDEO
USA PRIME VIDEO



Joanna Lumley's Japan · ITV · 2016

Joanna Lumley travels the length of Japan, from snowy Hokkaido to the islands of the south.

UK APPLE TV · AMAZON
USA PRIME VIDEO

DOCUMENTARIES & TRAVEL SERIES



Jiro Dreams of Sushi · David Gelb · 2011

A portrait of master sushi chef Jiro Ono and his tiny Tokyo restaurant.

UK PRIME VIDEO · APPLE TV
USA PRIME VIDEO · APPLE TV



Anthony Bourdain: Parts Unknown · CNN · 2015

Includes Bourdain's memorable episodes in Tokyo and on the island of Okinawa.

UK PRIME VIDEO · AMAZON
USA HBO MAX · APPLE TV



The Birth of Sake · Erik Shirai · 2015

A year inside a family-run sake brewery that has operated for nearly 150 years.

UK APPLE TV · AMAZON
USA APPLE TV · AMAZON

YOUTUBE CHANNELS TO FOLLOW



Abroad in Japan · @AbroadinJapan

Chris Broad's witty films about life and travel in Japan.

WATCH YOUTUBE



Paolo fromTOKYO · @paolofromTOKYO

A Tokyo-based filmmaker exploring everyday Japan.

WATCH YOUTUBE



ONLY in JAPAN · @ONLYinJAPAN

John Daub's long-running channel on Japanese food and culture.

WATCH YOUTUBE



Tokyo Lens · @TokyoLens

Relaxed food and travel videos from Tokyo and beyond.

WATCH YOUTUBE

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WE KNOW ASIA INTIMATELY.

ASIA KNOWS US.

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