



MUSEUMS
Find history, humor, and quirkiness at these one-of-a-kind museums. **B5**

Travel

THE EPOCH TIMES

B1 FRIDAY, AUG. 29, 2025



FALL TRAVEL
Shoulder-season travel is booming, especially in the Mediterranean. **B6**

SANGA PARK/SHUTTERSTOCK



The stories will stay with you, the ones that touch on everyday life in this empty and strangely beautiful place.

JAPAN

24 Hours in Nagasaki

The city’s peace monuments, tranquil gardens, and seaside cafes invite reflection

By Tim Johnson

Nagasaki, Japan, offers so much more than its World War II history. Surrounded by the mountainous, volcanic splendor of the southern island of Kyushu, this longtime port city of about 400,000 is strung along sparkling seas. With tucked-away beaches, swaying palms, bustling harbors, and very mysterious islands, there is much to discover, enjoy, and explore.

The layers of the past, here, are multiple. Founded by the Portuguese in 1571, the city remained open to international trade when most of the country was closed. The European and Christian influence remains strong. Puccini set “Madama Butterfly” here, and just offshore, you can discover the home of a James Bond villain. And, of course, there’s a Peace Park and plenty of the past to unpack with the Pacific War. One day isn’t a lot to experience ev-

erything, but here’s our guide to getting the most out of Nagasaki in just 24 hours.

Arrival
You won’t fly into many places like Nagasaki Airport (NGS), the first major maritime airport on earth. Opened in 1975, it was a monumental project to construct it in Omura Bay. Builders flattened the hills on Mishima Island and supplemented it with reclaimed land. They put up the Mishima Ohashi Bridge, which stretches more than a half-mile, connecting NGS with the mainland.

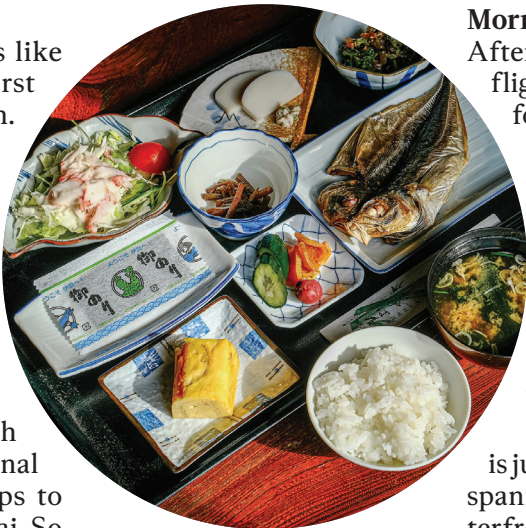
Most flights are domestic, with just a small handful of international destinations, including nonstops to Seoul, South Korea, and Shanghai. So your journey from North America will certainly include a connection or two. You could take a taxi or bus to get into town by road. But, honestly, the ferry

is probably more fun—head to the pier, and you’ll be at the mainland port of Togitsu in about 25 minutes.

Morning
After what was probably a very long flight, trade the confines of the plane for salty breezes along the Dejima Wharf, about seven miles south of Togitsu. A nibble and a little jolt might be welcome, too, to help overcome the jet lag. Pop into Attic Coffee for a latte or a cappuccino and maybe a waffle, best consumed at one of the tables overlooking the white sails on the busy harbor.

From there, the city’s Seaside Park is just to the south. In this green space spanning about 16 acres, walk the waterfront promenade. Then loop back, past the cascades and a small island lined with flowers and along the canal that bisects the park.

Continued on B2



A tray of Japanese delicacies.

TAKAFUMI YAMASHITA/UNSPLASH

SANDRA FOYT/SHUTTERSTOCK



▲ The Nagasaki Peace Statue was unveiled in Nagasaki Peace Park on the 10th anniversary of the atomic bombing of the city.

JULIEN MORAINÉ/SHUTTERSTOCK



▲ Nagasaki’s Megami Ohashi Bridge is Japan’s sixth-largest cable-stayed bridge.



▶ The dining room at the Gunflint Lodge.



RESORTS

Gunflint Lodge Celebrates Its 100th Anniversary

At the end of Minnesota's legendary Gunflint Trail, a century-old four-season resort offers everything from fishing to zip lining and ice skating

By Simon Peter Groebner

It's one of the longest drives a city dweller can make and still be in Minnesota. First, you travel four hours up the interstate and along the rugged North Shore, deep into the Arrowhead Region. At Grand Marais, Minnesota, you abruptly make a jagged, 1,000-foot ascent. You head west onto smooth, straight pavement that tunnels through dense boreal forest and past slivers of glacial lakes.

One out-and-back trail winds through wetlands and woods to perhaps the resort's most beautiful sight: the fairy-tale, teardrop-shaped Lonely Lake.

This is the Gunflint Trail. Deep in the Superior National Forest, across a continental divide and past a smattering of fishing resorts and boat launches for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, a right turn onto gravel at about mile 43 takes you to the Gunflint Lodge. It was started in 1925 by Chicago natives Dora and Russell Blankenburg as a rustic fishing and hunting outpost on the south shore of Gunflint Lake, along a chain of waterways that forms an un-

assuming international border. One mile across the pristine lake, looking wholly undiscovered but close enough to touch, is Canada.

One century later, that view is about the same, but Gunflint Lodge is bigger and one of a shrinking number of classic Minnesota wilderness resorts. Many guests still come to fish and hunt. Many use it as a launching point for multi- or single-day paddling trips into the million-acre Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Some just come to relax.

After checking in at the lodge, my family of three descended an outdoor staircase to Cabin 19, a green, A-frame bunker built into the lakeside slope. Inside, the cabin didn't take me back to the 1920s as much as to the low-frills Minnesota lake resorts of the '80s: wood-paneled everything, mismatched furniture, and everything my extended family would have needed for days of fishing and swimming and evenings of cooking and dining on the day's catch, topped off with endless rounds of Uno.

There was a short footpath to the lakeshore, where two Adirondack chairs stood on a wooden platform and the midsummer sun was just thinking about setting over two countries. Sitting deep in one chair, our 2 1/2-year-old daughter was so enchanted by the scene that we swear she uttered the words, "The whole world's a sunset."

In 1925, Gunflint Lodge sat at what was then the very end of the road. Back then the Gunflint Trail itself was rugged and unpaved, with roots in the 1800s as an Ojibwe footpath and as a mining road.

Today, a guest could greet each day with a different activity. You could go hiking or boating or stay back at the beach and playground with the kids. An extensive zip line course was in-

roduced in 2012. Snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, fat biking, and ice skating prevail in the winter.

The Blankenburgs decided to sell after only two years, handing the Gunflint Lodge over to Chicago friend Mae Spinner. She arrived in 1929 with her daughter, Justine, an aspiring medical student who quickly fell in love with the Northwoods. As the Depression settled in, the Spinners relocated permanently from Chicago to Gunflint. In 1934 Justine Spinner married Bill Kerfoot, a onetime lodge guest from St. Paul, Minnesota.

In June 1953, when a fire destroyed the main lodge building, Justine Kerfoot directed the construction of an all-new headquarters. The completed lodge forms the core of today's resort, with a reception desk, gift shop, and Justine's Restaurant, a cozy, pine-framed dining room with big windows and a patio overlooking Gunflint Lake.

Eventually, a second generation of Kerfoots took over, expanding and modernizing the resort. Gunflint's roster of 35 cabins (26 year-round cabins and nine summer camper cabins) is a hodgepodge of eras and updates, but all pay tribute to the wilderness, clad in the same green camouflage paneling. In any given cabin, you might find tables and chairs fashioned from logs and branches by Justine herself.

Justine Kerfoot died in 2001 at age 94. And by the 2010s, the next generation, Bruce and Sue Kerfoot, decided to retire. Enter John and Mindy Fredrikson, who had worked in telecom in the Twin Cities and as a lawyer for Delta Air Lines, respectively. Completely new to hospitality, the spouses jumped at the opportunity to own such an iconic destination.

"We see ourselves as not just the new owners, but stewards of this great place," the affable John Fredrikson told me as we toured the 125-acre grounds on an all-terrain vehicle.

That means no drastic changes—the lodge and cabins still retain their modest character—but preservation of the Kerfoot legacy and some sensible modifications. Some acreage and neighboring cabins have been annexed. One



▶ Boy Scout badges from past visitors are up in the outfitters building.



▶ Justine Kerfoot, in 1986. THE MINNESOTA STAR TRIBUNE/TNS



▶ Owner John Frederickson looks out on Lonely Lake in Grand Marais, Minn.



▶ A view of Gunflint Lake from the Look Out Point Overlook in Grand Marais.



▶ A room at the new Northern Lights Lodge.



▶ Owner John Frederickson chats with the Appleby family at dinner in Grand Marais on July 28, 2025.

feature that definitely didn't exist in 1925: zip lining. The Towering Pines Canopy Tour provides adventurers with two hours of panoramic pinetop views. Meanwhile, in the winter of 2024 to 2025, John Fredrikson got the idea to groom a six-mile network of ice skating trails on the Gunflint Lake ice. It drew national attention.

My first visit to Gunflint was in the early thaw of 2021. I was impressed with the views and expansive grounds, with a backcountry promising days of exploration. Beyond the resort buildings, there are miles of hiking, skiing, snowmobiling, and dogsled trails that link up with the national forest. One out-and-back trail winds through wetlands and woods to perhaps the resort's most beautiful sight: the fairy-tale, teardrop-shaped Lonely Lake. Elsewhere, steep little peaks and cliffs with impressive vistas seem to come out of nowhere: terrain that also happens to make for some nice, stealthy zip lining runs.

One evening in July, the Fredriksons invited my family aboard one of the resort's rental pontoons for a spontaneous sunset dinner cruise and entrees from Justine's Restaurant. We motored through a narrow channel to Magnetic Lake, with few visual hints that we were straddling an international border. We circled tiny Gallagher Island, dominated by a 1920s Swiss chalet-style cabin. John Fredrikson told a story of original owner Ben Gallagher's partying days, which somehow involved a beaver in a hotel bathtub in Duluth, Minnesota. Moments later, we spotted an actual beaver shuffling off the rocky shore.

On the way back to the resort, John and Mindy Fredrikson—who raised a teenage son at Gunflint and are now expectant grandparents—helped my 2-year-old, Petra, briefly take the helm of the slow pontoon.

"Toddler of the Boundary Waters," I remarked.

As for the original Woman of the Boundary Waters, in May 2022 yet another fire claimed Justine's Cabin, her historic home in the center of the resort. The loss was a blow to both the surviving Kerfoots and the new owners. The Fredriksons responded wisely—as Justine might have—by building the two-story, seven-room Northern Lights Lodge on the site. It was the couple's first-ever foray into new construction and the resort's first hotel-style rooms.

I was skeptical about the idea of modern hotel rooms at Gunflint Lodge. Then I stepped into two of the sleek rooms. The new build doesn't look or feel out of place, and the elevated guest rooms offer some of the best views of Gunflint Lake and Ontario, Canada. When the aurora borealis is at full strength, you could conceivably watch it from the comfort of your king or queen bed—a possibility that gives the new lodge its name.

Downstairs is a snug, 50-capacity wedding and event center. The new fireplace is constructed partly of stones from Justine's Cabin. A quote from one of her books adorns the mantel, reminding resort guests why we're here in the first place.

"I stood on the shore of Gunflint Lake beneath a great white pine—matriarch of a fast vanishing tribe," Justine Kerfoot wrote.

"And I knew I was home."

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EHRLIP/DREAMTIME



▶ A home in the shape of a pickle barrel delights visitors to Grand Marais, Mich.

MUSEUMS

Quirky, Offbeat Museums You'll Never Forget

For travelers seeking novelty, there are museums that celebrate topics such as mustard, locks, and amazingly bad art

By Victor Block

Each year, more than 5 million people visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. The American Museum of Natural History, located nearby, attracts some 4 million visitors annually. Other museums around the country appeal to far fewer folks, but those who discover them find much that educates and entertains.

We're talking collections focused on potatoes and mustard, locks, and alleged landings of unidentified flying objects, along with other offbeat galleries. Some may be located near where you live, while others might tempt you to make a trip to see them.

The Idaho Potato Museum showcases that state's famous spuds. Exhibit topics include the world's largest potato chip, a 14- by 15-inch crisp, the introduction of french fries to the White House by President Thomas Jefferson, and 1,600-year-old vessels that are believed to be the first containers used specifically for potato storage.

More than 5,600 jars of mustard from more than 60 countries greet callers at the National Mustard Museum in Middleton, Wisconsin. Other displays include mustard memorabilia and exhibits depicting the use of the condiment throughout history. Those who wish to take home a souvenir can choose from a long list of recipes, a mustard jar opener, and clothing ranging from an apron that reads "Mustard Happens" to a "Poupon U" T-shirt.

A unique bolt that sprays tear gas is among the items seen at the Lock Museum of America in Terryville, Connecticut. It is home to the largest collection of locks, keys, handcuffs, and ornate door hardware anywhere.

The building occupies the site of the Eagle Lock Co., which during its lifespan (1833 to 1975) was the largest manufacturer of locks for trunks and cabinets in operation. The establishment claims to provide an introduction to "the genius of lock makers who over the centuries have constantly tried to stay one step ahead of the bad guys."

In 1947, a rancher in New Mexico discovered metal debris near a trench that spanned hundreds of feet. That became the basis for conspiracy theories alleging that the fragments were from an extraterrestrial spacecraft that had crashed.

In fact, they were from a military balloon that was designed to detect nuclear tests by the Soviet Union. That incident is recalled at the International UFO Museum and Research Center in Roswell, New Mexico. It preserves materials and information connected to the event and other unexplained phenomena related to unidentified flying objects.

Those who happen upon an unusual structure in Grand Marais, Michigan, also might imagine that they have been transported to a never-never land. It's a 16-foot-high building made up of two oversized barrels, with windows shaped like pickle jar lids. That quirky wooden wonder was erected in 1926 in the shape of a pickle barrel. The larger cask of the Pickle Barrel House serves as the living area and bedroom, while the smaller adjacent drum contains the kitchen. In keeping with its history, the furnishings are 1920s decor. In keeping with its architectural theme, exhibits at the Pickle Barrel House Museum trace the history of the building, showcase the story of pickling, and include vintage photographs and pickle-themed memorabilia.

An equally quirky experience awaits guests at the Museum of Bad Art in Boston. Its motto is: "Art too bad to be ignored." It was founded in 1933 after an antique dealer showed an appallingly bad painting he had recovered from the trash to friends, who suggested that he start a collection.

Surprisingly, the museum sets rigorous standards for works it will accept. Its tongue-in-cheek explanation is: "Nine out of 10 pieces don't get in because they're not bad enough. What an artist considers to be bad doesn't always meet our low standards."

Victor Block is a freelance writer. To read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate website at Creators.com. Copyright 2025 Creators.com.

IF YOU GO

Check out the following websites for more information:

IdahoPotatoMuseum.com
MustardMuseum.org
LockMuseumOfAmerica.org
RoswellUFOmuseum.com
Michigan.org/attractions
MuseumOfBadArt.org



▶ The National Mustard Museum in Middleton, Wis., is home to hundreds of types of mustard and mustard memorabilia.



Cefalu, a medieval village in Sicily, is still warm and inviting in October.

FALL TRAVEL

Why Shoulder Season Travel Is Heating Up

With intense heat and rising prices during summer months, travelers are turning to spring and autumn for their European getaways

By Chris Bryant

For a growing number of holidaymakers, the rational response to the intense heat, high prices, and overcrowding that blight the Mediterranean in July and August is to visit in the spring or fall. After all, the weather is cooler, hotels are better value, and the vibe is more relaxed.

This so-called “shoulder season” travel is booming. The trend could help ameliorate overtourism while boosting the use of aircraft and accommodation during the normally fallow winter months. But this rebalancing won’t happen without a coordinated industry effort to keep resorts open and highlight the attractions of off-peak travel. Oh, and more flexible school holidays would also help.

Europe is once again anticipating an influx of wealthy American visitors this year, but if they’re sensible, those unrestricted by the school calendar will delay their visit until the autumn. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, Delta Air Lines has seen a “multi-year” “systematic shift” of U.S. demand for

European trips from July and August into the shoulder periods “as consumers look to avoid peak crowds and summer heat,” its president, Glen Hauenstein, told investors earlier this month. “The peak is getting less peaky and the shoulders are getting stronger,” he said.

While anti-tourist protests and sweltering weather in southern Europe haven’t affected UK budget carrier EasyJet’s peak summer bookings, EasyJet is benefiting from more demand in the shoulder season. The final quarter of the calendar year has historically been loss-making, but there’s hope for generating profits in the future in part because of the elongation of summer into October, Kenton Jarvis, EasyJet’s chief executive officer, told analysts in May.

Greek carrier Aegean Airlines SA has also seen its financial performance improve in the October to December period amid more travel to and from Athens and Thessaloniki, which it attributes in part to climate change and

milder winter temperatures creating a “gradual smoothing” of demand, Chairman Eftichios Vassilakis said in March.

Inbound travelers to Greece increased 24 percent year-on-year in November, according to the Bank of Greece, while monthly travel receipts jumped 45 percent to 618 million euros (\$727 million). American visitors to Greece boosted their spending that month by 78 percent and accounted for almost one-fifth of the total.

Europe’s short-term rental market is also seeing more demand in the autumn, according to AirDNA, which tracks listings on Airbnb and Vrbo; nights booked jumped 18 percent year-on-year in October 2024 and were 31 percent higher than the total in October 2019. Holidaymakers are taking advantage of lower off-season rates to book more upscale properties, and peak summer now represents a smaller share of total annual demand in popular vacation destinations.

Amid evacuations due to summer wildfires and the Acropolis having to

close during periods of extreme heat, it’s not surprising that several travel firms now report more bookings in September than during peak summer.

Selling active holidays in July and August can be challenging, according to Ben Colbridge, product and commercial director for Exodus Adventure Travels, whose offerings include hiking, cycling, and cultural trips. “Most people don’t want to be doing that sort of thing if the temperatures are above 40 degrees C,” he told me, and those who must travel in July and August are increasingly picking cooler, northern destinations such as Scandinavia.

Exodus’s main European travel period used to run from May until the middle of October, but it’s seeing a “creep at the edges” extending the season from April through the end of October. “Going forward we will start to push into the beginning of November in southern Europe,” he said, while acknowledging that airline capacity in the shoulder season remains a limiting factor.

Indeed, this nascent shift will only succeed if the travel industry coordinates to make off-peak visits more available and appealing, while being sensitive to local residents’ concerns that this will cause an increase in overall demand (rather than just redistributing guests from the summer peak).

Convincing restaurants, transport services, and attractions to remain open longer isn’t easy either. Seasonal workers often depart, and what if visitors don’t come?

“Prioritizing staff retention through flexible scheduling, short-term contract extensions, or end-of-season incentives is key to maintaining service quality,” notes the nonprofit European Travel Commission.

Resorts also need to offer more than just a sun lounger in case the weather turns inclement—culture, nature, sporting, and wellness offers are essential. For example, German travel giant Tui AG is trying to appeal to runners by sponsoring marathons on Rhodes, Majorca, and Cyprus in the off-season (and offering shorter races for accompanying family members).

It would help, too, if families could be more flexible in their travel dates.

Europe’s short-term rental market is also seeing more demand in the autumn, according to AirDNA, which tracks listings on Airbnb and Vrbo.

Schools in England traditionally have a six-week summer holiday, but some institutions are opting for a shorter hiatus. As well as easing child care pressures and the potential educational benefits (kids forget much of what they’ve learned after a long break), this would mean the October half-term could be extended to a fortnight instead of one week—as is already the norm in Germany.

The German school holiday system—which is also staggered by region to lessen the bunching of vacation bookings—is no panacea, though. Flight prices during the autumn half-term are often extortionate, as this Berlin-based columnist can confirm.

Yet after experiencing the delights of Sicily in late October—when the beach was comparatively empty and the sea still invitingly warm—I’ve decided “shoulder season” vacations are the way forward. Please don’t tell everybody.

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Some European families choose to travel during school breaks in October.



Shoulder season visitors often enjoy lower prices and more relaxed atmospheres in cities that are crowded in midsummer.



The number of November travelers to Greece increased by 24 percent in a single year.



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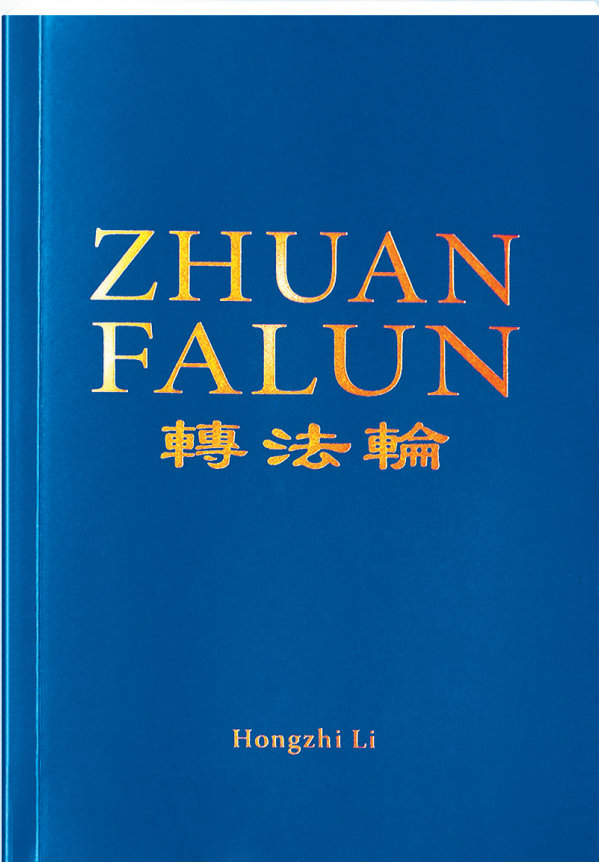
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— Gail Rachlin, 81, retired PR executive, USA



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