



Conveying the Appeal of JR East Areas and Helping to Revitalize Regions

TRAIN SUITE Shiki-shima Begins Operation

Launched in May 2017, the purpose of TRAIN SUITE Shiki-shima is to take passengers on a journey that showcases the unique charms of train travel and further enhances their enjoyment by providing them with a luxurious on-board space. It reveals and enhances the appeal of different regions and creates connections with them by enabling travelers to experience the hospitality of locals as well as the cruise train.

◎The TRAIN SUITE Shiki-shima Travel Concept

We express the travel concept behind TRAIN SUITE Shiki-shima using the phrase “journeys to discover hidden depth.”

Eastern Japan, including the Tohoku area served by JR East, is a region that changes markedly from season to season. It is a place where subtle pleasures to be found amid the power and beauty of the landscape.

Accordingly, with TRAIN SUITE Shiki-shima, we are providing travelers with destinations and “journeys to discover hidden depth” that enable them to enjoy new experiences never known before, including Japan’s abundant natural beauty and the traditional industries and culture that are an integral part of daily life in each region, while relaxing and appreciating the changing scenery as only those on board a train can.

Unlike a conventional train journey, which is mainly a means of transporting you to your destination, TRAIN SUITE Shiki-shima is a new type of service: a “cruise train” that departs from Ueno, travels around east Japan and Hokkaido, then brings passengers back to Ueno.



Train interior furnished with hand-woven Yamagata carpeting

◎Appreciating the charms of eastern Japan

The locations that we have selected for TRAIN SUITE Shiki-shima are destinations which possess highly appealing tourism resources and are equipped to handle a steady influx of visitors, thanks to their experience in tourism development (including the destination campaigns run in collaboration with different regions), enabling travelers to have high-quality experiences. The tourism options available at these destinations have been further enhanced so that TRAIN SUITE passengers can enjoy unique encounters and discoveries. What's more, through PR activities that promote the regions as destinations visited by TRAIN SUITE Shiki-shima, we hope to create a ripple effect that will encourage other customers to visit them as well. With regard to dining, which is an integral part of the travel experience, passengers can savor the distinctive, seasonal tastes of each region, and we have made extensive use of local products from different parts of eastern Japan for everything from the interior decor of the cars to on-board items like yukata and dishware.



The Sannai-Maruyama site
— one of the destinations visited
by the train



Hands-on experience at a
workshop making Bunaco
products (Aomori), which are also
part of the on-board furnishings



Akita mokko, which is also part of
the on-board furnishings



Dishes prepared using ingredients
from various regions of eastern
Japan: Sekimura beef (Iwate,
Miyagi), black garlic (Aomori),
iburi-gakko smoked pickles (Akita),
etc.

◎Building bridges with regions

Locals in each region provide ongoing support for this initiative, greeting and bidding farewell to travelers at each stop and along the track, which is one of the reasons why passengers find the journey so rewarding. TRAIN SUITE Shiki-shima has helped to promote interaction between passengers and locals: some regions, for example, are later sent heartfelt letters of gratitude from visitors for the greeting and send-off they received. We hope that operation of Shiki-shima will continue to serve as a bridge that makes each region stronger in future.



Letter of welcome from local children



Welcome at Aizu-Wakamatsu Station



Send-off at Atsumi Onsen Station

VOICE



Michiko Ozawa

Train Manager, View
Travel Service Co., Ltd.

As train manager, my role is to create an environment that enables passengers to enjoy traveling, to ensure effective communication between team members, and to coordinate tasks so that they are able to concentrate on their work. Collaboration with conductors also plays an important role in day-to-day operation. We work together toward a common goal: offering a safe, memorable trip for passengers on board Shiki-shima through sharing information about the train's operation as well as detailed information about the passengers.

I hope that, through my daily work, customers and people in different regions will be able to build stronger connections via TRAIN SUITE Shiki-shima. Passengers often talk about how touching it is to see people along the track waving to them and responding with a smile and a wave of their own and to receive such remarkable hospitality at each station, saying it's an experience that can only be had on board Shiki-shima.

The passengers also say that they greatly enjoy their encounters with locals, so in future, we would like to increase the opportunities for interaction. We would also like to visit even more places and enable many people in different regions to experience the dynamism that TRAIN SUITE Shiki-shima creates when it passes through. Additionally, I hope our presence will help inspire and energize the children who are the future of these regions.



Tasuku Hiramatsu

Deputy Manager,
Cruise Train-TRAIN SUITE
SHIKI-SHIMA-Section
Sales Dept. Head Office

During the four years before Shiki-shima started operation, I was involved in determining the travel route and the details of providing tourist attractions, dining, and services to passengers.

After the train began operation, I would see passengers get off with tears in their eyes once they returned to Ueno, and many customers have sent us letters of appreciation or reserved another trip on the train, which makes me really happy. I have two roles when it comes to TRAIN SUITE Shiki-shima. First, I have to provide passengers with a travel experience unlike any they've ever had before. Second, I have to make sure that people in different regions look forward to the train's visits.

We are leveraging TRAIN SUITE Shiki-shima to promote the appeal of the eastern Japan region to passengers, and our aim is for passengers to share the experiences they had on the journey with people they know and thereby attract new customers. This domino effect should help to further enhance the reputation and develop the brand of each area. We use the phrase "building bridges with regions," and it is truly our hope that TRAIN SUITE Shiki-shima will serve as a bridge connecting regions with other regions and with the JR East Group.