The Sweet Train

https://www.irtsociety.com/train/the-sweet-train/



Overview

The Aru Ressha, or *Sweet Train,* is one of a dozen special trains dreamed up by the creative minds of JR Kyushu railway officials on Japan's southernmost island.

It skirts the broad, blue Omura Bay between Sasebo and Nagasaki during the winter; in summer, the route is between Oita and Hida.

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Like its "big sister," the *Kyushu Seven Stars*, the *Sweet Train* sells out months in advance.

The *Sweet Train* itinerary lasts a little more than two hours and includes a light lunch and four courses of desserts as beautiful as they are tasty. It's a must-do option if you get anywhere near

Kyushu. The train’s design, food, service and scenery are superb.

The *Sweet Train* was designed by Mr. Eiji Mitooka, who also designed the *Seven Stars* and reflects many of its elements.

Lighting and decor employ similar patterns (fabrics and wallpapers in rich hues, often with a nature theme); sumptuous woods and intricate details for those who take time to seek them out.

Rail enthusiasts, for example, must be sure to excuse themselves to wander back towards the lavatory. On the way, they’ll discover a cabinet with several scale-model steam engines and tenders.

Even the bathroom is richly decorated and not to be missed.

For Owen Hardy's report of his *Sweet Train*, experience, please click here.

Accommodations

The self-propelled, daytime-only *Sweet Train* comprises just two cars. Car No. 1 has a more traditional, open seating plan. Car No. 2 consists of private “booths,” accessible through sliding wooden doors.

Whichever you choose, you’ll marvel at the train’s richly decorated walls, plush furnishings and intricate, wooden sliding doors and shutters.

Dining

Elegantly presented, locally sourced, exquisite food and drink are the Sweet Train’s *raison d’etre.*

Herewith, one diner’s experience:

“Following a starter of orange juice and champagne, the fanciful parade of delicate food started with a colorful *bento* box of meat, fish and vegetables, all sourced from Kyushu’s finest providers.

Then came three sweets courses, made from a variety of seasonal fruits, followed by a delicacy called mignardises (tea cakes).”

The menu is the brainchild of Mr. Yoshihiro Narisawa, who has a famous restaurant named Narisawa in Tokyo.

The service on the *Sweet Train*, meanwhile, is top-notch: friendly, knowledgeable and indefatigable. The *Sweet Train* staff knows how to put on a show.

IRT Insights

Be forewarned: As noted above, the *Sweet Train* sells out many months in advance.

For an eyewitness account of a trip on the *Sweet Train,* please click here.