

16 In depth

All Blacks' fixtures

Pool play (Pool B)

Sat, Sept 21 v South Africa: International Stadium, Yokohama Stadium
Wed, Oct 2 v Repechage Winner: Ōita Stadium, Ōita Prefecture
Sun, Oct 6 v Namibia: Tokyo Stadium, Tokyo
Sat, Oct 12 v Italy: City of Toyota Stadium, Toyota City

Knockout stages

Sat, Oct 19 & Sun, Oct 20: Quarterfinals, Tokyo Stadium
Sat, Oct 26 & Sun, Oct 27: Semifinals, International Stadium, Yokohama City
Fri, Nov 1: Bronze final, Tokyo Stadium
Sat, Nov 2: Final, International Stadium, Yokohama City

Katarina Williams travelled to Japan with the assistance of the Asia New Zealand Foundation



A statue honouring Kumahachi Aburaya, credited with bringing tourism to Beppu City, Japan, has been dressed up in Ōita rugby colours in preparation for the 2019 Rugby World Cup.

NZ host cities at a glance

Yokohama

Population: 3.7 million
Stadium: 72,327, completed Oct 1997
Attractions: Sankeien Garden, Minato Mirai
Access from Tokyo: Train, 30 min

Ōita

Population: 478,000
Stadium: Capacity 40,000, completed March 2001
Attractions: Beppu onsens, Takasakiyama Natural Zoo
Access from Tokyo: Flight, 1.5 hours

Tokyo

Population: 9.2 million
Stadium: Capacity 45,000, completed June 2001
Attractions: Sensō-ji temple, Shibuya Crossing, shopping, museums and eateries
Access: Flights from Auckland, approx 11hr

Toyota

Population: 422,500, Nagoya 2.29 million
Stadium: Capacity 45,000, completed June 2001
Attractions: Toyota Kaikan Museum
Access from Tokyo to nearby Nagoya: Flight 1hr; Shinkansen bullet train (Nazomi) 1.5hr, or using Japan Rail Pass (Hikari) 1hr 50min.

Getting the call up

Mastering Japanese etiquette:

Eating

Don't leave chopsticks standing in your rice. When it comes to soup, slurping is encouraged.

Public transport

It is considered rude to talk on your phone while on trains and buses. Orderly queuing is a necessity.

Temple visits

Speak quietly, take your shoes off and dress modestly.

Shoes

Take them off when entering a person's home, ryokan, or whenever shelves or rows of shoes sit at an entrance. Generally, slippers will be provided.

Bowing

If a Japanese person bows to you, it is customary to respond by bowing your head.

Passing items

Always use two hands and receive items, like business cards and gifts, in the same way.

Your guide to the Rugby World Cup in

JAPAN



Replica football shirts at Yokohama Stadium.

Turf talk

Behind-the-scenes at Yokohama

It's being tasked with hosting the biggest game in the rugby world, but there's no denying Yokohama's round-ball roots.

International Stadium, inset above, in Kanagawa Prefecture is among the cluster of legacy venues from Japan's joint-hosting of the 2002 Fifa World Cup with Korea.

In 2002, Brazil triumphed over Germany by 2-0 in the World Cup final there, a victory secured after two goals from man-of-the-match Ronaldo.

Brazil's winning locker room

has been preserved, with playing strips from the winning team still hanging proudly in the cubicles.

Even the whiteboard with the scrawled tactics of Brazilian coach Luiz Felipe Scolari have not been erased.

With a capacity of around 72,000, International Stadium - which took three years to build - is the largest in Japan, contributing to what officials describe as its "vast dynamism".

Some critics have raised questions over whether this traditional football stadium can

produce an environment befitting a Rugby World Cup final.

Currently, the hybrid turf surface sits inside an all-weather athletics track, making the on-field action some distance away from the fans.

Stadium facility manager Tsutomu Nakayama said it was a problem that was easily solved.

"Because of this field and track, there is some space or distance between the seats and the field. However, we can cover the track using artificial or natural turf to create this closeness."

