

Latest Narrow-Gauge Express Trains

After privatization, the new JRs have developed rolling stock reflecting corporate identity. Each design incorporates the regional character of the JRs and emphasizes their individuality. This contrasts with the uniform design policy of the old JNR period. The following photographs show examples of narrow-gauge express trains from the six JRs around Japan.

JR East



Series 253 EMU Narita Express (N'EX) (JR East)
N'EX directly links Tokyo International Airport (Narita) 23 times daily in each direction with central Tokyo (59 minutes) and Yokohama (90 minutes).



Series 251 EMU Super-view Odoriko (M. Mashima Photo Office)
Odoriko is a holiday makers' express running from Tokyo through the beautiful Izu Peninsula. The train features panoramic windows for viewing the scenery en route and also has play spaces for children. It takes its name from the famous novel *Izu no Odoriko* (The Izu Dancer) by Nobel Prize Laureate, Yasunari Kawabata.



Series 651 EMU Super Hitachi (JR East)
Super Hitachi runs north from Tokyo (Ueno) to Mito, Iwaki, and Sendai along the Joban Line on the Pacific coast. The majority of travellers are business people. The train was JR East's first rolling stock to reflect the new company's image, coming into service in March 1989.



Series E251 EMU Super Azusa (JR East)
Super Azusa runs west along the Chuo (East) Line from Tokyo (Shinjuku) to Kofu, Matsumoto and Minami Otari. Business travellers use the tilting trains on weekdays and hikers and sightseers travel to the mountains and resort hotels on weekends.

JR Central



Series 371 EMU Asagiri (JR Central)
Asagiri runs southwest via the private Odakyu Electric Railway Line and the JR Central Gotemba Line from Tokyo (Shinjuku) to Numazu. Tourists to the foothills of Mt Fuji form the main travellers. The route is a parallel service to the Tokaido Line.



Series 85 DMU Wide-view Hida (JR Central)
Super-view Hida runs north from Nagoya along the Takayama Line to Takayama and Toyama on the Sea-of-Japan coast. Takayama still retains the flavour of Old Japan and is popular with sightseers.



Series 383 EMU Shinano (JR Central)
Shinano runs east from Nagoya and Osaka along the Chuo (West) Line to Matsumoto, Nagano and Hakuba (sites of 1998 Winter Olympics). It is a tilting train with a similar role to the Super Azusa.



Series 373 EMU Fujikawa (JR Central)
Fujikawa runs north along the Minobu Line from Shizuoka on the Tokaido Line to Kofu in Yamanashi Prefecture on the Chuo (East) Line. The Minobu Line is a branch line served formerly by old-fashioned rolling stock but JR Central has upgraded the service for local travellers and visitors to famous temples and hot springs in the region.

JR West



Series 681 EMU Super Raicho (Thunderbird) (JR West)

Thunderbird is one of the fastest narrow-gauge trains in Japan with a maximum speed of 130 km/h. Eight trains in each direction link Osaka with Kanazawa (267.6 km in 140 minutes) and Toyama (327.1 km in 187 minutes) on the Sea-of-Japan coast.



Series 281 EMU Haruka (JR West)

Haruka links Kansai International Airport with Kyoto (75 minutes) calling at Shin-Osaka Shinkansen terminal (45 minutes) with 30 trains each day in both directions.



Series 283 EMU Ocean Arrow

(H. Morokawa)

Ocean Arrow has a controlled tilting mechanism and is designed to replace the old Series 381 tilting units linking Kyoto and Osaka with the Pacific-coast resorts of Shirahama and Shingu. Most trains have panoramic windows at both ends.

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Recent Improvements to Tokyo Commuter Lines



Toyo Kosoku Tetsudo Line *(Toyo Rapid Railway)*
 The Toyo Kosoku Tetsudo Line, covering a distance of 16.2 kilometers, started operations on 27 April between Nishi Funabashi and Higashi Katsutadai stations. The new Toyo Rapid Railway and Teito Rapid Transit Authority's Tozai subway line offer 166 direct train services on weekdays and 134 on weekends, and the commuting time between Higashi Katsutadai and Otemachi stations is now reduced to about 46 minutes.



Rinkai Fukutoshin Line *(Tokyo Waterfront Area Rapid Transit, Inc.)*
 The eastern portion of the Rinkai Fukutoshin Line, linking Tokyo's centre with the waterfront development area along Tokyo Bay, started operations on 30 March. The line is operated by Tokyo Waterfront Area Rapid Transit Inc. The 4.9-km route has four stations, connecting Shin-Kiba Station in Koto Ward with Tokyo Teiport Station, the central part of the development area, in a 7-minute ride. A total of 38,000 people a day are expected to use the new line. Construction of the western part of the line is scheduled to be completed in 2000.



Saikyō Line Shinjuku - Ebisu Extension *(JR East)*
 To alleviate the overcrowded condition of the Yamanote Line during rush hours, the Saikyō Line connecting Omiya Station in Saitama Prefecture and Tokyo's Shinjuku Station added a 5-km extension to provide train services to Ebisu Station starting 16 March. Seventy-eight of the 187 trains to or from Shinjuku extend services to Ebisu, shortening the commuting time between Ikebukuro and Shibuya by 5 minutes and also greatly ameliorating the congestion between Shinjuku and Shibuya stations.



Namboku Line Komagome - Yotsuya Extension *(Teito Rapid Transit Authority)*
 A 7.1-km extension was added to the Namboku Line on 25 March. The new line has six stations. Connections to other lines can be made at four of these stations, making the Namboku Line even more convenient.

JR Hokkaido



Series 281 DMU Super Hokuto

(JR Hokkaido)

Super Hokuto is a tilting DMU linking Sapporo with Hakodate in Hokkaido covering the distance of 318.7 km in 180 minutes and making it the fastest DMU in Japan.



Series 183 DMU North Rainbow Express

(JR Hokkaido)

North Rainbow Express is a special seasonal service from Sapporo to various tourist destinations in Hokkaido. It features panoramic roof windows for excellent natural views.

JR Shikoku



Series 8000 EMU Express

(JR Shikoku)

Series 8000 is a tilting train running from both Takamatsu to Matsuyama on the Yoson Line along the Inland Sea coast, and from Okayama on the Sanyo shinkansen crossing the Inland Sea over the long chain of the Seto Ohashi Bridges to Matsuyama.



Series 2000 DMU

(JR Shikoku)

Series 2000 is a tilting train mainly linking Kochi on the Pacific Coast with Takamatsu and Okayama. It was the first train in Japan to use controlled natural tilting entering and leaving the curve based on trackside command controllers.

JR Kyushu



Series 787 EMU Tsubame Express

(JR Kyushu Agency)

Tsubame runs from Hakata to Kagoshima in Southern Kyushu. Its stylish and comfortable design has successfully attracted passengers back from the roads.



Series 71 DMU Yufuin-no-Mori

(JR Kyushu Agency)

Yufuin-no-Mori Express links Hakata (Fukuoka), the largest city in Kyushu, with Oita along the Kyudai Line. It is a popular train with people visiting the many hot springs in the region. The rounded high-decker design is quite unique in Japan and gives a better view of the countryside.



Series 883 Sonic Nichirin

(JR Kyushu Agency)

Sonic Nichirin links Hakata with Oita via the Nippo Line along the Inland Sea Coast. It has a tilting mechanism providing a comfortable ride along the curved route. The futuristic style evolved from the Tsubame design.