

Hoshino Resorts to Open Luxury Hotel in Former Nara Prison

もし「泊まってみたいホテル」と聞いて、元は刑務所だった建物が思い浮かぶでしょうか。奈良にある旧奈良監獄を舞台に、星野リゾートが新たな挑戦を進めているようです。少し意外で、でもどこか気になるこの組み合わせは、旅の価値観を揺さぶる存在かもしれません。あなたは、宿泊先にどんな物語や意味を求めると思いますか。



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

On January 20, Hoshino Resorts announced that it will open a hotel developed from a former prison on June 25. The property is located in Nara City and is designated as an Important Cultural Property of Japan.

The company had previously revealed that the hotel would operate under its flagship luxury brand, HOSHINOYA. Hoshino Resorts also announced bold room rates starting at approximately ¥150,000 JPY (around \$970 USD) per night.

In addition, a museum attached to the hotel will open on April 27 ahead of the hotel's launch with the aim of increasing overnight stays in Nara Prefecture, which has long faced challenges in attracting lodging visitors.

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Source: Hoshino Resorts to Open Luxury Hotel in Former Nara Prison

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1. Article

The former Nara Prison was completed in 1908 during the Meiji era. Until its closure in March 2017, when it was operating as the Nara Juvenile Prison, about 700 inmates had been housed there. It is the only surviving example among the so-called Five Major Meiji Prisons, facilities built to modernize Japan's prison system. Its Romanesque-style red-brick architecture possesses both an unexpected beauty and an imposing presence.

The site has been developed as a tourism asset, with revenue used to help fund the building's preservation. At an online press conference held the same day, Hoshino Resorts CEO Yoshiharu Hoshino said, "This is a new initiative to maintain and preserve Japan's Important Cultural Properties through the economic power of tourism. The opening is not the goal, but the starting point."

The hotel has transformed 500 former prison cells into 48 guest rooms. It will offer three room types, each measuring between 50 and 70 square meters, all designed as suite-style accommodations with separate bedrooms, living areas, dining spaces, and bathrooms. Room rates start at ¥147,000 per night per room (including tax and service charge). The hotel will also feature a French restaurant.

According to a survey by the Japan Tourism Agency, Nara Prefecture recorded a total of 2,834,450 overnight guests in 2024, ranking fourth from the bottom among all prefectures for the third consecutive year. Although Nara is close to Kyoto and Osaka, which draw many international visitors, most tourists come only for day trips and spend relatively little.

Nobuya Kakegawa, General Manager of HOSHINOYA Nara Prison, said these tourism challenges are becoming increasingly evident. Referring to the new hotel, he stated, "It will be among the world's leading luxury hotels," and expressed hope that it would help transform the entire area into a destination for extended stays.



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2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. develop 開発する

The town developed quickly after the new railway line opened.

2. former 以前の

Shinji met a former coworker while walking through his old neighborhood.

3. prison 刑務所

The old prison was later turned into a public museum.

4. preservation 保存

The community group works to support the preservation of historic buildings.

5. transform 変える

The city is planning to transform the grassy field into a public park.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. What cultural status is given to the former Nara Prison?

2. What kinds of services and features will the hotel include?

3. What challenges does Nara Prefecture face with tourism?

4. What do you think about using historic buildings for new purposes?

5. Would you like to stay in a hotel with a strong historical background? Why or why not?

4. 星野リゾート「奈良監獄」ホテル 開業は6月25日 全室スイート1泊お値段は強気の…

星野リゾート（長野県軽井沢町）は1月20日、国的重要文化財である旧奈良監獄を活用したホテル「星のや奈良監獄」（奈良市般若寺町）の開業日を6月25日と発表した。星野リゾートが最高級と位置付ける旗艦ブランド「星のや」を冠する宿とすることは以前から決まっていたが、1泊約15万円からという強気の客室料金も示された。4月27日にはホテルに併設するミュージアムが先行して開業し、奈良県が長年の課題としてきた宿泊客の押し上げを図る。

ホテルに再生される旧奈良監獄は、明治時代の1908年に竣工。2017年3月の奈良少年刑務所（旧奈良監獄）閉鎖までは700人ほどが収監されていた。監獄施設の近代化を目指して建てられた「明治五大監獄」の中で唯一現存する施設で、ロマネスク様式の赤レンガ建築は監獄とは思えない美しさと重厚感を兼ね備えている。

観光資源として整備、活用することでその収益を建物の保存費用に充てる計画だ。この日、星野リゾートが実施したオンライン会見で、星野佳路（よしはる）代表は「日本の重要文化財を観光の経済力で維持、保存する新しい取り組み。開業はゴールではなくスタートだ」とメッセージを寄せた。

ホテルは500室あった舎房を全48の客室に改修。1室の広さが50～70平方メートルの3タイプを用意し、すべて寝室や居間、食事スペース、浴室を分けたスイートルーム仕様とする。客室料金は1室1泊14万7千円（税・サービス料込み）から。フランス料理を出すレストランも設ける。

一方、観光庁の調査で奈良県の2024年の宿泊者数は延べ283万4450人と全都道府県で3年連続のワースト4位だった。奈良はインバウンド（訪日客）でにぎわう京都や大阪から距離的に近いが、消費額の少ない日帰り観光にとどまっている課題がある。

星のや奈良監獄の掛川暢矢総支配人は、こうした奈良の観光課題が顕在化していると指摘。その上で、新ホテルについて、「世界でも有数のラグジュアリーなホテルになる」と述べ、「エリア全体を滞在型の観光地に変化させる機会にしたい」と期待感を示した。

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