

Shinkansen. To most English speakers without Japanese language abilities, this word is better known as “a bullet train”. Regular trains exist in a lot of countries; so do buses and airplanes. But bullet trains are a specialty that doesn’t exist in very many countries. Also, the cleanliness inside shinkansen as well as the safety of it is recognized by people all over the world. Due to such fact, the word *shinkansen* can usually tickle the hearts of those who are fascinated by the difference in cultures of public transportation methods around the world, or those who love looking at vehicles and the details on them. If you are familiar with Hokkaido, you may also know that there is no bullet train that goes up to this northern island, as of right now. Well, that is soon to be changed: there is a new railway and a brand new train in preparation, connecting Honshu, the main island of Japan, and Hokkaido, opening by the end of March, 2016.



The Hokkaido Shinkansen project features a brand new railway that will connect Shin-Aomori station in Aomori prefecture and Sapporo station in Hokkaido, providing another option to travel between Honshu and Hokkaido. This project is divided into a couple different processes, and the first one is to connect Aomori prefecture and Hakodate city, prepared to open before the end of March, 2016. This process features three new stations, making a smooth transfer possible from Tohoku region. Below are some digital images of what the new three stations will look like once they are completed.

Kikonai Station (Kikonai, Hokkaido)



Oku-Tsugaru-Imabetsu Station (Imabetsu, Aomori)



Shin-Hakodate-Hokuto Station (Hakodate, Hokkaido)



The total length of Hokkaido Shinkansen is ~360km. It's been 11 years since the start of the construction in May, 2005, and the first process of connecting the ~149km between Shin-Aomori and Shin-Hakodate-Hokuto is opening in March, 2016. The municipalities that are welcoming these three new stations are collaborating with local specialties of their own to promote not only the shinkansen but their own local areas, as well.



Estimated Travel Time from Shin-Hakodate-Hokuto Station

- To Shin-Aomori, Aomori: approx. 1 hr 1 min
- To Morioka, Iwate: approx. 1 hr 53 min
- To Sendai, Miyagi: approx. 2 hr 37 min
- To Omiya, Saitama: approx. 3 hr 44 min
- To Tokyo: approx. 4 hr 9min

So, what is it going to look like?



Hokkaido Railway Company Series H5

Hokkaido Shinkansen cars, named Series H5 based on “Hokkaido”, feature the same basic specification with the fastest Shinkansen in Japan, Series E5 by JR-EAST (East Japan Railway Company), that runs on the Honshu island. This is to ensure that the transfer from Tohoku Shinkansen goes smoothly. It will feature 10 cars, and can run at a maximum speed of 320 km/h (although on the Hokkaido Shinkansen line, it will go at 260 km/h). It can carry 658 passengers in their regular cars, 55 passengers in their green cars, and 18 passengers in the Gran Class.

The main wrapping design is taken from the Series E5 cars as well, with the top half coloured with *Tokiwa Green*, and the bottom half with *Hiun White*. The band colour, which is pink on Series E5, is changed to *Saika Purple* to share the image of lilac, lavender and lupine flowers, sharing the rich natural beauty that Hokkaido offers. The concept of the design of this Series H5 is subtitled “Prologue of the North Experience”, conveying the hopes that people will carry on with themselves when they visit Hokkaido from Honshu on this shinkansen.



Image of Ordinary Car



Image of Green Car

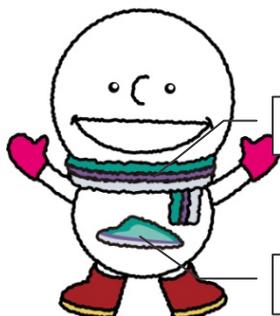


Image of Gran Class

Hi, everyone!
My name is Dokodemo Yuki-chan,
and I'm here to promote the grand
open of Hokkaido Shinkansen!

Hokkaido Shinkansen Promotional Character

Dokodemo YUKI-chan



Series H5 colouring

Shinkansen logo

Dokodemo (=anywhere) YUKI-chan is a character that promotes the opening of Hokkaido Shinkansen. We don't really know what it is and how old it is, but it looks like YUKI-chan is a snowman, and also just a child. But why doesn't it melt even though it's a snowman? Because YUKI-chan is made of fractals of the dreams that everyone carries upon Hokkaido Shinkansen, so it doesn't matter how hot it gets. YUKI-chan's own dream is to travel all the way from Sapporo to Kagoshima on Shinkansen!

YUKI-chan is on Facebook, LINE and Twitter talking about how excited everyone is for the opening of this wonderful addition to the Japanese shinkansen family!