

Kanazawa

Ishikawa Prefecture · Japan

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Kanazawa is the capital of Ishikawa Prefecture, on the Sea of Japan coast. It has about 460,000 people. The city was spared from air raids in World War II, so many old districts survive. Today it combines samurai streets, geisha teahouse lanes, a famous garden and a strong craft tradition. Kanazawa also makes almost all of Japan's gold leaf.

It suits a trip of two to three nights for culture, crafts and seafood. The main sights are close together and easy to cover on foot and by bus. Kanazawa also has serious modern art, and the Zen scholar *D. T. Suzuki* was born here.

When to visit

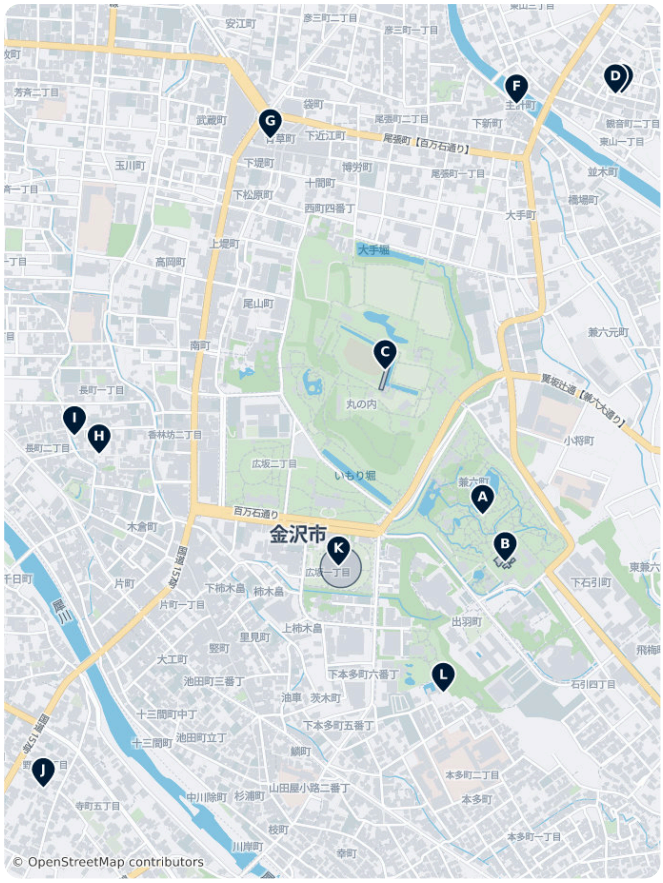
Spring and autumn are mild and the best times for walking. Summer is hot and humid. Winter is cold, grey and snowy, but the garden looks its best then and seafood is at its peak. Rain falls in every season, so carry an umbrella.

The biggest event is the Hyakumangoku Festival. A costume parade on the first Saturday in June re-enacts the entry of the first Maeda lord into the city in 1583. Book hotels early for that weekend.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for sightseeing	5° / 11° Feels like 1°	-2° / -8°	24 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
February	Poor Poor for sightseeing	6° / 13° Feels like 2°	-2° / -7°	19 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
March	Poor Poor for sightseeing	11° / 19° Feels like 7°	1° / -4°	18 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
April	Fair Fair for sightseeing	16° / 23°	6° / 0°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
May	Good Good for sightseeing	22° / 27°	12° / 6°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
June	Good Good for sightseeing	25° / 30°	17° / 12°	14 rainy days · Humid air · Calm winds
July	Fair Fair for sightseeing	29° / 33° Feels like 32°	22° / 18°	19 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · Calm winds
August	Poor Poor for sightseeing	30° / 34° Feels like 34°	23° / 19°	17 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · Calm winds
September	Good Good for sightseeing	26° / 31°	19° / 13°	17 rainy days · Muggy, humid air · Calm winds
October	Good Good for sightseeing	20° / 26°	12° / 7°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
November	Fair Fair for sightseeing	15° / 21°	6° / 1°	17 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
December	Poor Poor for sightseeing	9° / 15° Feels like 5°	1° / -4°	23 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land and ERA5 · 1996–2025

Top sights



- A Kenrokuen Park is one of Japan's three great gardens. It has ponds, tea houses and pine trees held up with ropes in winter. Open it early in the day. Next to it is B Seisonkaku Villa, a villa of the Maeda family.
- C Kanazawa Castle Park was the seat of the Maeda lords. Several turrets and storehouses have been rebuilt with traditional methods. The wooden Ishikawa Gate is an original from 1788.
- D Higashi-chaya street (Geisha district) is the largest of the old teahouse districts. Wooden lattice houses line the lanes. Teahouses are open to visitors, and E Shima geisha house is one of them. Quieter F Kazuemachi lies along the river nearby.
- G Omicho Market is the city's food market. It is the best place for fresh seafood and for lunch. Go in the morning for the best choice.
- H Nagamachi Samurai District has narrow lanes with earthen walls and canals. I Nomura Samurai House is a preserved samurai home with a garden that you can enter.
- J Myoryuji (Ninja Temple) is called the Ninja Temple, but it was not used by ninja. It has hidden stairs, trick doors and secret rooms. **Advance reservation is required.**
- K 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa is a round glass museum opened in 2004. Some areas are free to enter. The famous swimming pool artwork can be viewed from above for free, but a ticket is needed to enter the pool.
- L D. T. Suzuki Museum is a calm, modern museum about the Zen scholar. It has a quiet water garden for sitting.

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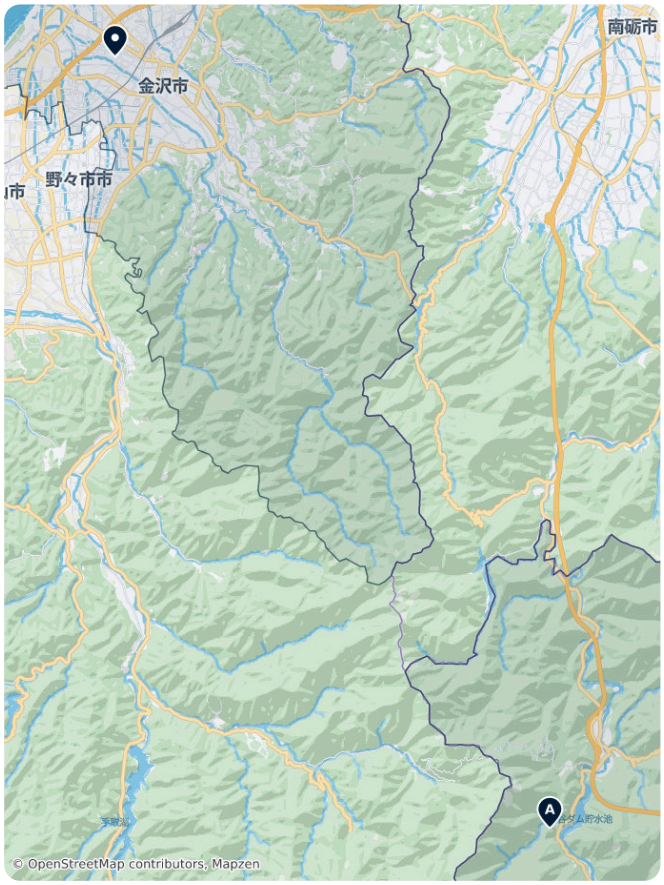
What to experience

Things to do in Kanazawa that go beyond the sights:

- Enter Kenrokuen Park for free in the early morning, before the regular opening time. From April to August the free entry starts at 4:00 and the paths are almost empty. Only the Renchi-mon and Zuishinzaka gates are open then.
- Learn about gold leaf at the Yasue Gold Leaf Museum.
- Drink matcha with a Japanese sweet at the Shigure-tei tea house in the garden. It is open from 9:00 to 16:30 and closed from 29 December to 3 January.
- Visit a teahouse in the geisha district in the evening. Some houses show their rooms by day. Evening performances usually need a booking or an introduction.
- See the winter rope supports on the garden pines. Workers tie them with ropes in a cone shape to protect them from heavy snow.
- Watch the Hyakumangoku Festival parade in early June.

Day trips

Kanazawa is a good base for day trips by Shinkansen and bus. The close options come first.



- Kaga hot springs, about 30 minutes by Shinkansen to Kaga Onsen Station. Yamashiro and Yamanaka onsen towns are in Kaga. The area is also known for Kutani porcelain.
- Toyama, about 20 minutes by Shinkansen. It is a good stop for fresh sushi and a modern art glass museum.
- Ⓐ Shirakawa, about 1 hour 15 minutes by reserved bus. The thatched farmhouses of Shirakawa-go are a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Book the bus seat in advance. Gokayama, a smaller group of villages, has a bus from April to November.
- Noto Peninsula, about 1.5 hours to Nanao, and longer to the north tip. It has coast, fishing towns and craft traditions. Parts are still recovering from the January 2024 earthquake, so check access and opening hours before you go.

Where to explore

- Heading east: Takayama is an old merchant town in the Hida mountains. A night or two there fits well with a trip to the thatched villages.
- Heading north: Noto is a town on the Noto Peninsula with rural coast scenery. Check road and service status first, as the region is still rebuilding after the January 2024 earthquake.

Getting there

- By air: Komatsu Airport (KMQ) is the nearest airport, with flights from Tokyo Haneda (about 1 hour). A bus runs to Kanazawa Station in about 40 minutes. For most visitors from Tokyo, the train is simpler.
- **By train from Tokyo**: The Hokuriku Shinkansen reaches Kanazawa Train Station in about 2.5 hours on the fast Kagayaki train. The Hakutaka train stops more often and takes about 3 hours.
- By train from Osaka, Kyoto and Nagoya: Take a limited express to Tsuruga, then change to the Hokuriku Shinkansen. Book the change in advance on busy days.
- By bus: Highway buses link Kanazawa with Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya. They are cheaper than the train but slower.
- Arriving at the station, the wooden Tsuzumi-mon gate and the glass dome mark the east exit. The city buses leave from there.
- Official information: Ishikawa Travel: getting to Ishikawa

Getting around

- **City buses**: The Kanazawa Loop Bus runs from the east exit of the station past Omicho, the castle, Kenrokuen and Higashi-chaya. A ride costs 220 yen. Board at the rear door and pay when you get off with an IC card, a contactless bank card or cash. The one-day pass is 800 yen, must be bought in advance, and also gives discounts at about 27 attractions. Hokutetsu local buses also accept contactless cards.
- On foot: The centre is compact. Omicho, the castle, Kenrokuen and Nagamachi are each 10 to 20 minutes apart on foot. Higashi-chaya is a longer walk across the river.
- Taxi: Useful for the Ninja Temple and in rain or snow.
- Official transport page: Visit Kanazawa: getting around

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The main sights are within 10 to 20 minutes of each other on foot, and the loop bus fills the gaps.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

The centre is flat and rental bikes are available, but lanes in the old districts are narrow and winter weather limits riding.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: Not for the city. Buses and walking cover the centre. A car is useful for the hot springs and the countryside.
- Driving side: Japan drives on the **left**. Japan accepts only a 1949 Geneva International Driving Permit. Licences from some countries need an official Japanese translation from JAF.
- Winter: Snow is likely from December to March. Ask your rental company about winter tyres before you drive into the hills.

Food & drink

Kanazawa is known for seafood from the nearby Sea of Japan. Look for sushi, and for snow crab in winter. *Jibuni*, a warm duck and vegetable dish, is a local classic.

Eat in these areas:

- The market streets around Omicho Market for sushi bowls and grilled seafood at lunch.
- Korinbo and Katamachi, the downtown areas, for izakaya, sushi counters and bars in the evening.
- The lanes of the geisha districts for tea houses and sweets.

Book ahead for dinner on weekends, as small counters are very popular.

What to eat & drink

DINNER

Sushi · 寿司 (Sushi)
Vinegared rice paired with raw fish, seafood, or vegetables; ranges from casual conveyor-belt shops to high-end counters.

Ramen · ラーメン (Ramen)
Wheat noodles in a meat or fish-based broth, with countless regional styles.

Tempura · 天ぷら (Tempura)
Lightly battered, deep-fried seafood and vegetables.

Okonomiyaki · お好み焼き (Okonomiyaki)
A savory grilled pancake with cabbage and a choice of fillings, popular in Osaka and Hiroshima.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Onigiri · おにぎり (Onigiri)
Rice balls wrapped in seaweed, often with a savory filling; an everyday convenience-store staple.

Yakitori · 焼き鳥 (Yakitori)
Grilled skewers of chicken, popular at izakaya alongside beer or sake.

DRINKS

Green Tea · 緑茶 (Ryokucha)
The everyday non-alcoholic drink, served hot or cold.

Sake · 日本酒 (Nihonshu)
Rice wine served warm or chilled, a traditional accompaniment to a meal.

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Safety & health

- Kanazawa is very safe, with low crime. Normal care with bags in crowds is enough.
- Earthquakes happen in Japan. Learn the exits in your hotel and follow local instructions.
- Winter snow and rain can make stone paths and steps slippery. Wear shoes with grip.
- Summer is hot and humid. Drink water and avoid long walks in the afternoon.
- Pharmacies and hospitals are easy to find in the centre. Carry cash for small shops and some museums.

History

In the 1400s and 1500s the area was ruled by followers of a Buddhist sect, who held the land for about a century. In 1583 *Maeda Toshiie* made Kanazawa his base after a key battle. His family ruled the Kaga domain until 1871. It became one of the richest domains in Japan, and the lords supported crafts, tea and the arts.

You can see this past today. The lords ruled from Kanazawa Castle Park, and their garden is now Kenrokuen Park. Samurai families lived in Nagamachi Samurai District. The domain also set up licensed teahouse districts, such as Higashi-chaya street (Geisha district). Oyama-jinja Shrine honours Toshiie. Its mixed-style gate from 1875 has coloured glass in the top level.

The city escaped bombing in 1945, so the old streets survived. The Hokuriku Shinkansen arrived in 2015 and made Kanazawa an easy trip from Tokyo.

Country facts

Here are the essentials for travelling in Japan:

CURRENCY
JPY ¥

ELECTRICITY

Type A / Type B
100 V

LANGUAGES
Japanese

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Kanazawa's Absolute Essentials

Kanazawa preserves centuries of history through its Edo-period Kenrokuen garden and the Nagamachi samurai district. The city's geisha culture thrives in the Higashi Chaya and Kazuemachi districts, while Omicho Market offers fresh local seafood. Architectural landmarks range from the historic Ishikawa Gate to the futuristic Kanazawa Station and the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art. Unique spiritual sites include the Myoryuji temple, known for its defensive hidden passages, and the stained-glass gate of Oyama-jinja Shrine.





A Kenrokuen Park

Kenroku-en, located in Kanazawa, Ishikawa, Japan, is a strolling style garden constructed during the Edo period by the Maeda clan.

1 Kenrokumachi, Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture 920-0936, Japan (36.56213, 136.66258)

pref.ishikawa.jp/siro-niwa/kenrokuen/in... , +81 76 234 3800



B Omicho Market

A busy food market offering variety of local products. Experience for all your senses!

9200907 (36.57144, 136.65604)

ohmicho-ichiba.com, 0762311462

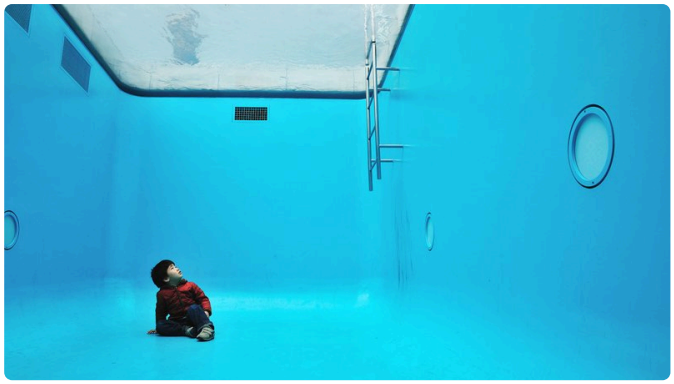


C Higashi Chaya District

This district is named after chaya - a traditional house where the guests would come to see a performance by geishas.

Kanazawa, Japan (36.57256, 136.66668)

kanazawa-tourism.com/eng/guide/guide1_4.php



D 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

The 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa is a museum of contemporary art located in Kanazawa, Ishikawa, Japan.

(Unnamed Road), Kanazawa, Japan (36.56085, 136.65814)

Mo–Th	10:00–18:00
Fr–Sa	10:00–20:00
Su	10:00–18:00

kanazawa21.jp, 076-220-2800



E Kanazawa Train Station

Kanazawa Station is a major railway station in Kanazawa, Ishikawa, Japan, operated by West Japan Railway Company, the private railway...

Kanazawa, Japan (36.57829, 136.64775)

kanazawastation.com, +81 762 603 700



F Ochaya Shima

Once a carefully polished place where geishas showed their skills of entertainment, it now houses a nice museum where you can see how the...

〒920-0831　石川県金沢市東山一丁目13-21
(36.57256, 136.66687)

ochaya-shima.com, +81 76 252 5675



G Kazuemachi

This old geisha district is a labyrinth of traditional houses where geishas used to perform.

(Unnamed Road), Kanazawa, Japan (36.57230, 136.66363)

kanazawa-tourism.com/eng/guide/guide1_3.php



H Oyama-jinja Shrine

Oyama Shrine is a Shinto shrine in Kanazawa, Ishikawa, Japan.

Kanazawa, Japan (36.56593, 136.65555)

oyama-jinja.or.jp



I Myôryûji (Ninjadera Temple)

Myōryū-ji, commonly known as Ninja-dera, is a Buddhist temple belonging to Nichiren sect located in the city of Kanazawa, Ishikawa, Japan.

蛤坂, Jusangenmachi, Kanazawa, Nomachi 1-chome 921-8031, Japan (36.55536, 136.64904)

myouryuji.or.jp, +81 76 241-0888



J Seisonkaku Villa

The Seisonkaku is a large Japanese villa in the city of Kanazawa, built in 1863 by Maeda Nariyasu, 13th daimyō of the Kaga clan, as a...

(Unnamed Road), Kanazawa, Japan (36.56096, 136.66328)

Mo–Su 09:00–17:00

seisonkaku.com



K Shinise Kinenkan Museum

This building formerly housed a pharmacy that belonged to one of Kanazawa's most respected families.

(Unnamed Road), Kanazawa, Japan (36.56265, 136.65034)

Mo–Su 09:30–17:00

kanazawa-museum.jp/shinise/english/, 076-220-2524



L Nomura Samurai House

A restored residence of a high-ranking samurai family in the Nagamachi district. It features a renowned small garden with a multi-level waterfall and koi pond, alongside period artifacts and painted screen doors.

Kanazawa, Japan (36.56408, 136.65000)

Mo–Su 08:30–16:30



M Ishikawa Gate

This gate survived the huge fire in 1881 so you can see it in its original beauty. It is the main entrance to the Kanazawa Castle Park.

Kanazawa, Japan (36.56540, 136.66130)

Kanazawa Editor's Picks

Kanazawa offers a blend of Edo-period heritage and modern design. Kenrokuen Park, a strolling garden developed by the Maeda clan, showcases classic Japanese landscaping. The Higashi Chaya District preserves traditional wooden teahouses once used for geisha performances, while Omicho Market serves as the city's primary fresh food hub for local seafood and produce. Modern landmarks include Kanazawa Train Station, known for its futuristic Tsuzumi-mon gate, and local dining spots like Full of Beans, which serves Japanese cuisine in a renovated traditional space.





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kanazawastation.com, +81 762 603 700

E Full of Beans

Japanese restaurant situated in a renovated 100-year-old traditional townhouse. It specializes in healthy dishes prepared with locally sourced Ishikawa ingredients and organic vegetables.

Kanazawa, Japan (36.55952, 136.65462)

Kanazawa Cultural Treasures

Kanazawa preserves the essence of Edo-period Japan through its well-preserved geisha districts like Higashi Chaya and Kazuemachi. This list highlights the city's architectural heritage, from the historic gates of Kanazawa Castle to the 19th-century Seisonkaku Villa. Cultural exploration continues through specialized museums dedicated to local crafts, including gold leaf production, Kaga Yuzen silk dyeing, and traditional wagashi sweets. Visitors can also experience classical Noh theater and tea ceremony artifacts, contrasted by the circular, glass-walled 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art.





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ochaya-shima.com, +81 76 252 5675



D Ishikawa Gate

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Kanazawa, Japan (36.56540, 136.66130)



E Kahokumon Gate

The Kahoku-mon gate is one of the main gates to Kanazawa Castle. Inside, there is a small exposition about the history of this gate.

Kanazawa, Japan (36.56610, 136.66058)

pref.ishikawa.jp/siro-niwa/kanazawajou/e/kahoku_gate/



F Kanazawa Confectionary Museum

Visit this museum and explore the exhibition on typical Japanese sweets.

(Unnamed Road), Kanazawa, Japan (36.56958, 136.66397)

morihachi.co.jp/honten_museum



G Yasue Gold Leaf Museum

This museum was built in order to preserve the art of gold leaf craft for the future generations.

(Unnamed Road), Kanazawa, Japan (36.57376, 136.66599)

Mo–Su 09:30–17:00

kanazawa-museum.jp/kinpaku/, 076-251-8950

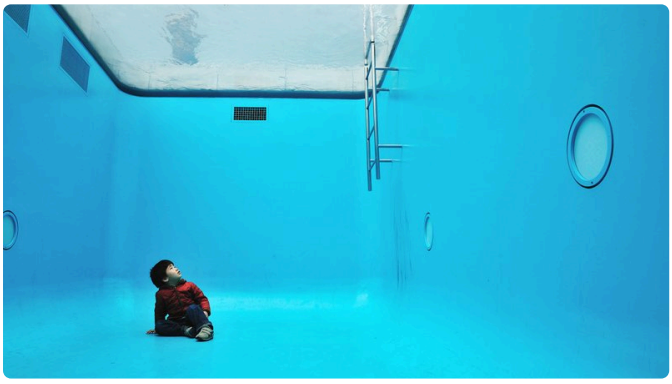


H Nagamachi Yuzenkan

Visit this craft centre and see how the beautiful kimonos of this region are made.

(Unnamed Road), Kanazawa, Japan (36.56512, 136.64773)

kagayuzen-club.co.jp



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kanazawa21.jp, 076-220-2800



J Kanazawa Noh Art Museum

This museum preserves the tradition of Noh theatre - a form of classical Japanese musical drama.

920-0962 Kanazawa (36.56157, 136.65812)

Tu–Su 10:00–18:00

kanazawa-noh-museum.gr.jp, 076-220-2790



K Shinise Kinenkan Museum

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kanazawa-museum.jp/shinise/english/, 076-220-2524



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(Unnamed Road), Kanazawa, Japan (36.56096, 136.66328)

Mo–Su 09:00–17:00

seisonkaku.com



M Municipal Nakamura Memorial Museum

Muso Soseki's calligraphy work, variety of paintings or traditional tea bowls - these and many more objects can be found in this charming...

(Unnamed Road), Kanazawa, Japan (36.55878, 136.66046)

hot-ishikawa.jp/kanko/english/20058.html

DATA SOURCES

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