

**TRAIN** : Shinkansen

**JOURNEY** : Tohoku Shinkansen : Tokyo - Aomori

**Journey Duration** : Scenic Day Trip

### **Six train categories operate on the Tohoku Shinkansen:**

The **Hayabusai**s the fastest train category along the Tohoku Shinkansen, serving only Tokyo, Omiya, Sendai, Morioka and Shin-Aomori Stations. Introduced in March 2011, the Hayabusa currently operates only two round trips per day along the entire line, but the number of services will be increased in the future. Trains run at speeds of up to 300 km/h, to be increased to 320 km/h in spring 2013.

The Hayabusa is one of the few shinkansen trains where advance seat reservation is mandatory. When all seats are booked out, standing tickets can be purchased. Only between Morioka and Shin-Aomori, passengers may use vacant seats without seat reservations. Besides ordinary seats (3x2 seats per row) and a Green Car (2x2 seats per row), the Hayabusa carries one Gran Class car, the first class service by JR East with 2x1 seats per row.

The **Hayate** is the second fastest train category along the Tohoku Shinkansen, running along its entire length between Tokyo and Shin-Aomori, but stopping at a few more stations than the Hayabusa trains. Most of the Hayate trains are coupled with a Komachi train between Tokyo and Morioka.

The Hayate also has mandatory advance seat reservations. When all seats are booked out, standing tickets can be purchased. Only between Morioka and Shin-Aomori, passengers may use vacant seats without seat reservations. The same exception also applies between Sendai and Morioka on Hayate trains that stop on stations between Sendai and Morioka.

The **Yamabiko** is the third fastest train category, running as far north as Morioka although some terminate at Sendai. Many Yamabiko trains are coupled with a Tsubasa

train between Tokyo and Fukushima. Some Yamabiko trains use 2-story train sets and are known as MAX Yamabiko with some non-reserved cars.

The **Nasuno** is the slowest train category along the Tohoku Shinkansen, serving all stations between Tokyo and Koriyama and targeting commuters from Fukushima and Tochigi Prefectures.

The **Komachi** is the only train category of the Akita Shinkansen. The trains are coupled with a Hayate train between Tokyo and Morioka and run on their own between Morioka and Akita. Trains change directions between Akita and Omagari, the last station before Akita.

The Komachi also has mandatory advance seat reservations. When all seats are booked out, standing tickets can be purchased. Only between Morioka and Akita, passengers may use vacant seats without seat reservations. Because Komachi trains are narrower than regular shinkansen trains, seating comes in rows of 2x2 seats.

The **Tsubasa** is the only train category of the Yamagata Shinkansen. Virtually all Tsubasa trains are coupled with a MAX Yamabiko train between Tokyo and Fukushima and run on their own between Fukushima and Shinjo. Some trains terminate at Yamagata Station. Because Tsubasa trains are narrower than regular shinkansen trains, seating comes in rows of 2x2 seats.