

PHOTOGRAPHING THE SHINKANSEN: FUJI

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The view of the shinkansen passing Mount Fuji is probably the most well known and well used image of the shinkansen. This article will explain where to go to get that shot... what it cannot do it help you with the weather. I have been twice. Once was a complete wash-out. The other was just about OK. Generally you need to get to the locations no later than 8 am (I just about got away with being there at 10 the second time). Winter is a better bet than summer – but Mount Fuji tends to look best in Spring, when there is still some snow on it – it's also a bit warmer for sitting around and taking photographs.

There are two main locations for taking pictures. Both can be done by using trains and walking. The first requires quite a bit of walking – so make sure you have comfortable walking boots (better than shoes, as you may end up standing in a field) on.

If you are travelling from the Tōkyō direction, then you should get off the shinkansen at Mishima, where you should already get a good view of Mount Fuji (it is possible to get a picture of the end of carriage 1 of a Tōkyō bound shinkansen stopped at the station and Mount Fuji in the same shot – see the earlier article by Dave Fossett and myself on Views from the Tōkaidō Shinkansen). If you are travelling from the Nagoya direction, then change trains at Shizuoka. Don't go to Shin-Fuji (unless you are going to hire a car) as the station is not connected to the Tōkaidō Line and is a long walk from both photographing spots. At both Mishima and Shizuoka, there are usually good connections so you should not need to wait around much at the station (though you may chose to do so as both stations provide good views of both shinkansen and conventional trains).

The key issue in getting to the first location is getting on the right side of the small river (circled in the middle of the map). Make sure that once you get off at Yoshiwara station that you do not start going too far in a North-Westerly direction. The easiest landmark to look out for (other than Mount Fuji itself) is the Nippon Seishi paper mill (there are many paper mills around Fuji – and it is they, as much as the weather, that creates the clouds that tend to block the view of Mount Fuji. They also do not smell particularly pleasant!). You will need to walk past this huge factory before turning left onto Prefectural Route 76. If you find yourself crossing over the Tōkaidō Line and passing the paper mill on its Southern side, do not worry, just make sure you take the next main

road left. This is much better than ending up on the left bank of the river (as I did) – and discover just how few crossings of the river there are (the one closest to the Shinkansen line on the Southern side cannot be accessed on foot – so you would need to pass under the Shinkansen line further West and then cross over the two rivers just north of the Shinkansen line before getting back on the ‘red line’ by passing back under the Shinkansen line close to where the ‘red line’ turns right).



First map taken from <http://www.its-mo.com/z.htm?m=E138.42.53.266N35.8.42.096&l=8>

Assuming you have managed to follow the red line in the first map, just before you get to the Shinkansen line, turn right. Go along this road for a few hundred metres and the take one of the dirt tracks to the left. Anywhere in this area should give you a fairly good view of the shinkansen and Mount Fuji and you are not likely to be the only one there (particularly if you go on a Sunday or a National Holiday).



When you are finished at this spot, one picture you can try to get is Mount Fuji above the shinkansen. To do this, just go closer to the line and then follow the dirt track along until you come to one of the small tracks that go under the Shinkansen line. Find an angle so that you can see Mount Fuji within the bridge area as well as see some of the Shinkansen line above the bridge. All you have to do then is try to get your timing so that you get the shinkansen. This is not easy. Getting it in focus is particularly hard as you are so close to the line (*kodama* services slowing as they approach Shin-Fuji are much easier, naturally). If you pull it off, you'll have a shot of a shinkansen apparently flying over Mount Fuji (albeit you have to ignore the bridge) rather



Just a tenth of a second too late in taking this picture!

than Mount Fuji looming over the shinkansen. As you can see from this shot – I failed. This type of shot can also be tried at the second location.

To get to the second location, you need to get to Fujigawa station on the Tōkaidō Line. If you going there from the first location, you'll need to retrace your steps along the red line of the first map back to Yoshiwara station. From there take a local train going in the direction of Shizuoka. Once out of Fujigawa station, follow the line on the map.



Second map taken from <http://www.its-mo.com/z.htm?m=E138.37.49.786N35.8.9.242&l=8>

When I went to this location it was raining, so Mount Fuji was not visible. The bridge itself is quite iconic – the longest on the Tōkaidō Shinkansen – although trying to get the timing right so that you can see the front of the train can be a challenge due to the number of supports. Remember, you can try to move closer to the bridge and get an angle of the shinkansen passing over Mount Fuji.



Finally, remember there is no seating at the shots so I suggest you take a seat with you.

Happy photographing!

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