

PHOTOGRAPHING THE SHINKANSEN: LAKE

HAMANA

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Although the Tokaido Shinkansen may not offer the variety of rolling stock that is found on the Sanyo Shinkansen or on the JR East lines, it does have good vantage points from which to take pictures. This article covers 7 different shots that can easily be covered in a half day. Note that there is little in the way of shade or shops along the route, so if it is a hot day, be sure to bring sun protection with you. You may also want to buy your drinks and food at a main station before getting to the area. To start off with take the shinkansen to Hamamatsu (which is one of the better stations on the Tokaido Shinkansen for taking pictures at due to it being on a curve) and then transfer to the Tokaido main line and take a train westwards (towards Nagoya) and go as far as Bentenjima.



On leaving the station take the small road that goes underneath the station itself (to the left of the exit). The photo spot (A on the map) is on the bridge just a hundred metres from the station. The views to the left are generally better than those to the right as there is less of a fence and you can also get in some of the lake and boats in the foreground too.

Once you have finished at this point, you need to retrace your steps to the southern side of Bentenjima station again. Turn right and continue along the main road for about 500 metres, where you will come to a set of traffic lights. Turn right and continue under the railway lines. Photo point B is near the next set of traffic lights. Although not as good as Point A for getting pictures of the trains, if you're timing (and patience) is right, you may be able to get a good shot of a shinkansen as a boat passes beneath the bridge from a relatively wide angle.





To get to Point C take the road that is perpendicular to the water at the traffic lights near Point B and continue along this road for about 1km. The road is pretty busy and the photo spot is on the bridge itself – where there is no pavement – so I suggest that you get your camera, etc. ready before you go up the slope onto the bridge. If you have quite a few bags, you

can leave them by the side of the road before go on to the bridge – they will still be in view and you need to go back this way to point D. Point C itself, despite the precarious position when trucks are going by, offers some great shots of the shinkansen coming from the Nagoya direction – but you'll probably not want to stop here for too long!



To get to Point D, go back down the bridge and go down the dirt track by the side of the rise of the bridge to the water's edge. Walk underneath the shinkansen and continue just another ten metres or so and you will find that there is a fairly unrestricted view of the shinkansen crossing the bridge – with trains coming down from Hamamatsu being easier to see.

To get from Point D to Point E you will need to be prepared to do some careful balancing, so make sure your camera is safely packed away and all your bags are closed. Go down to the water's edge (make sure no boats are about to pass as their wash could get you wet!). Follow the rocks (most of which are fairly secure) round and underneath the conventional line. Now climb back up to the bank and follow the slope back up to the main road, turning right on to the bridge. There are various spots along the bridge, and it is just a matter of personal preference as to which angle to take the photos from. There are some raised areas at various points along the

bridge which makes it a little easier to rest weary arms on! The main problem is the conventional line in the foreground and you may want to take some time finding an angle where the green posts for the overhead cables do not cause too much of an obstruction – generally wide angle shots make them less intrusive, although using a tight angle with the camera focused on the train and moving the camera with the spot on the train you have focused on before pressing the button to take the shot can make the posts blur to such an extent that they become less intrusive and give the impression of the train moving at great speed (which of course it is!). You also need a bit of luck – the last time I went a long, a freight train passed this point at exactly the same moment as a 500-series shinkansen passed (as with Kakegawa, you may want to make a note on a separate sheet of paper with estimates of when the 500-series shinkansen are likely to pass in each direction as it would be a shame to miss them while walking between photo spots)



To get to Point F, continue along the road away from Bentenjima. You will pass a shrine on your right hand side – don't waste too much time trying to get a shot of a shinkansen within the *torii*... I've tried it and the wall is too high! After about another 200 metres you will see a bridge going over the railway lines, go up the slip road to your right onto the bridge. There is no pavement and the road can get busy (particularly if there is racing on at the power-boat racing circuit), so be sure to keep your bags placed tightly up against the wall. As there is fencing on the bridge itself,

the best shot is actually from the edge of the bridge or even on the ramp itself, although with a bit of persistence you should find that your camera lens fits through the fencing and you can get a good shot – it's just a matter of finding the right hole! This picture location is one of the most popular along the Tokaido Shinkansen – although other than when I went with two other JRS members, I've never actually seen anyone else there – with JR Central themselves using pictures from this location in some of their publicity materials. The main feature is that there are some nice trees and the lake in the background. Again the wires and structures of the conventional line can get in the way.

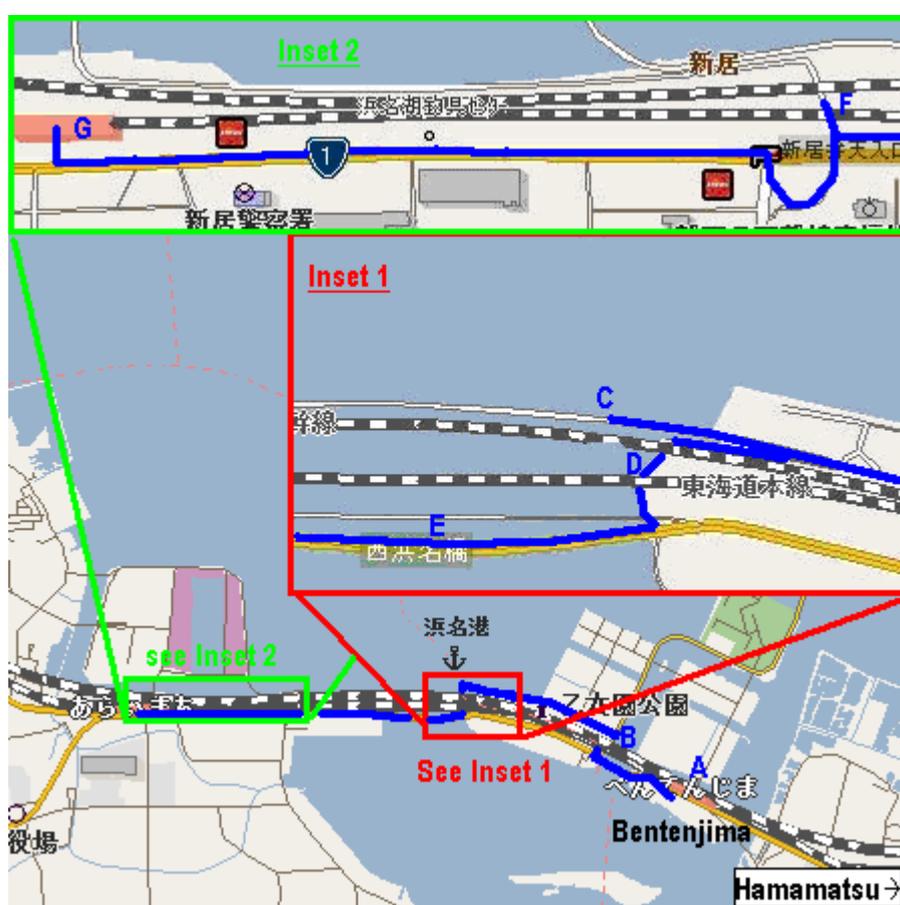


Point G is on the platform of Araimachi station itself, which is visible on the other side of the bridge (photos on this side are less interesting than the East side due to the amount of concrete on display in one form or another). Continue down the large curved slip road on the south side of the bridge and follow the main road for about 600 metres to the station. Pictures from the platform only work well if your camera has a good



zoom and the light is still good. Although there appear to be a lot of pylons crossing over the line, you can actually get quite a good shot of the shinkansen coming down the hill from the Nagoya direction as it takes a slight left curve. From Araimachi you can return to Hamamatsu – if you're quick you may even be able to get shots of the places where you had just been taken pictures from (I often try to do this – but as many spots are only visible from the shinkansen rather than conventional trains, many end up as a blur!) – although as you will probably be hot and tired by now, you may be depressed at just how quickly the train gets to Bentenjima!

Happy photographing!



Map taken from <http://www.its-mo.com/z.htm?m=E137.35.31.974N34.42.12.36&l=7>

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