

Access to Tokyo's Airports

Tokyo has two major airports, Narita and Haneda. This article describes railway access to both.

Tokyo New International Airport (Narita Airport)



Tokyo New International Airport or Narita is 60 km from central Tokyo and opened on 20 May 1978.

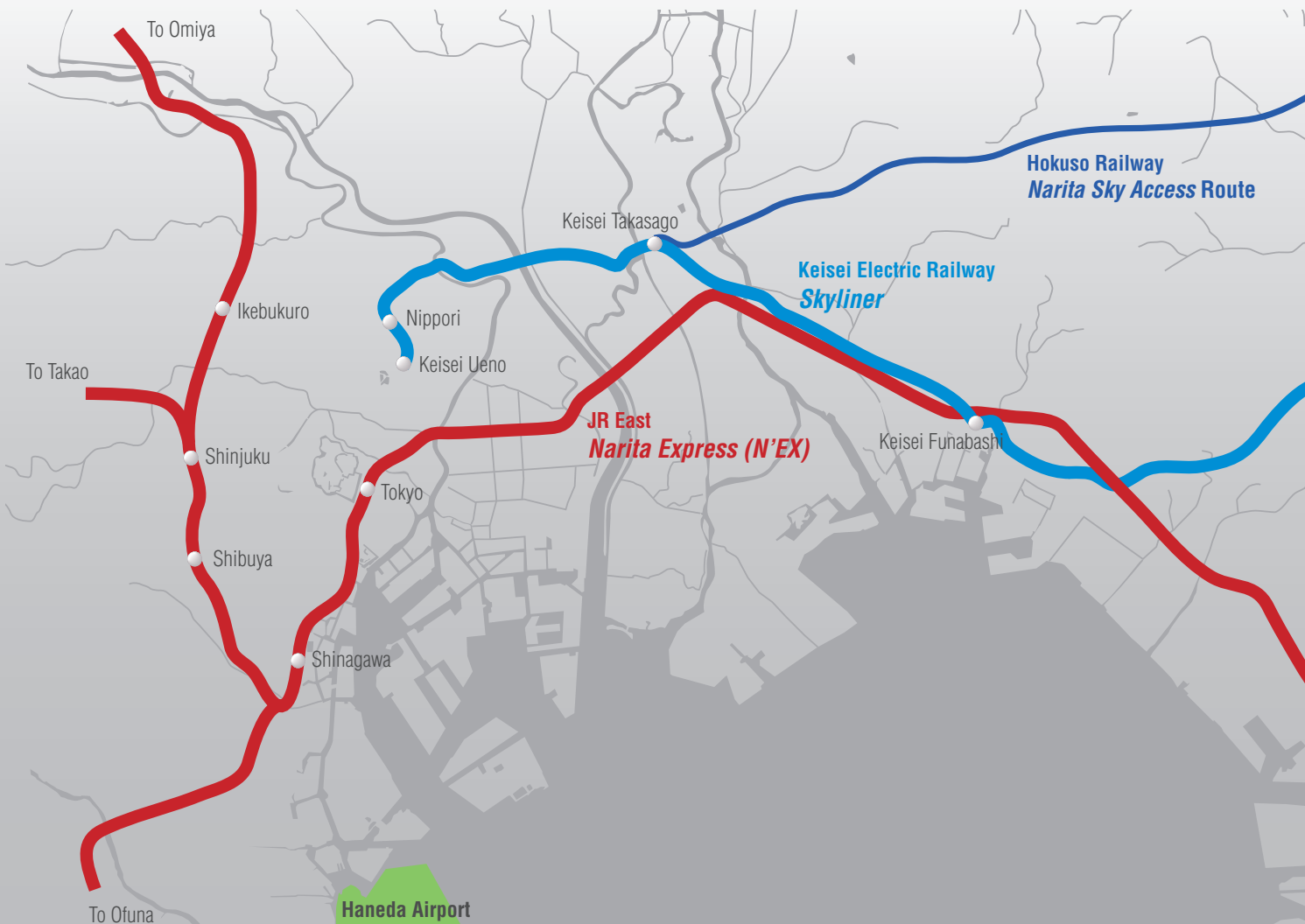
Due to its distance from the city centre and the initial lack of effective transportation, Narita has sometimes been dubbed the 'error port'.

The government originally planned to run a shinkansen from Tokyo to Narita. However, due to severe opposition by the residents of the surrounding areas, the plan failed. The private Keisei Electric Railway (Keisei) began non-stop runs from Ueno in central Tokyo to the airport, but passengers had still to take a bus from the airport station which was not directly accessible to the terminal. Direct rail access was only achieved in 1991, when the new Narita Airport

Station, which was built originally for shinkansen, opened and both Keisei (*Skyliner*) and JR East (*Narita Express*, or *N'EX*) started running through services.

Since it still takes about 1 hour to reach the airport even by *N'EX* and *Skyliner*, the government came up with a plan to build a new rapid line operated by Keisei. The new line, called *Narita Sky Access*, will be run using the new Keisei *Skyliner* rolling stock on the tracks of the Hokuso Line scheduled to open in July 2010. This service will enable passengers to reach the airport in 36 minutes from Nippori Station, which is connected to JR Yamanote and Keihin Tohoku lines.

In October 2009, Keisei renovated Nippori Station to





New Skyliner during test run (Keisei Electric Railway)



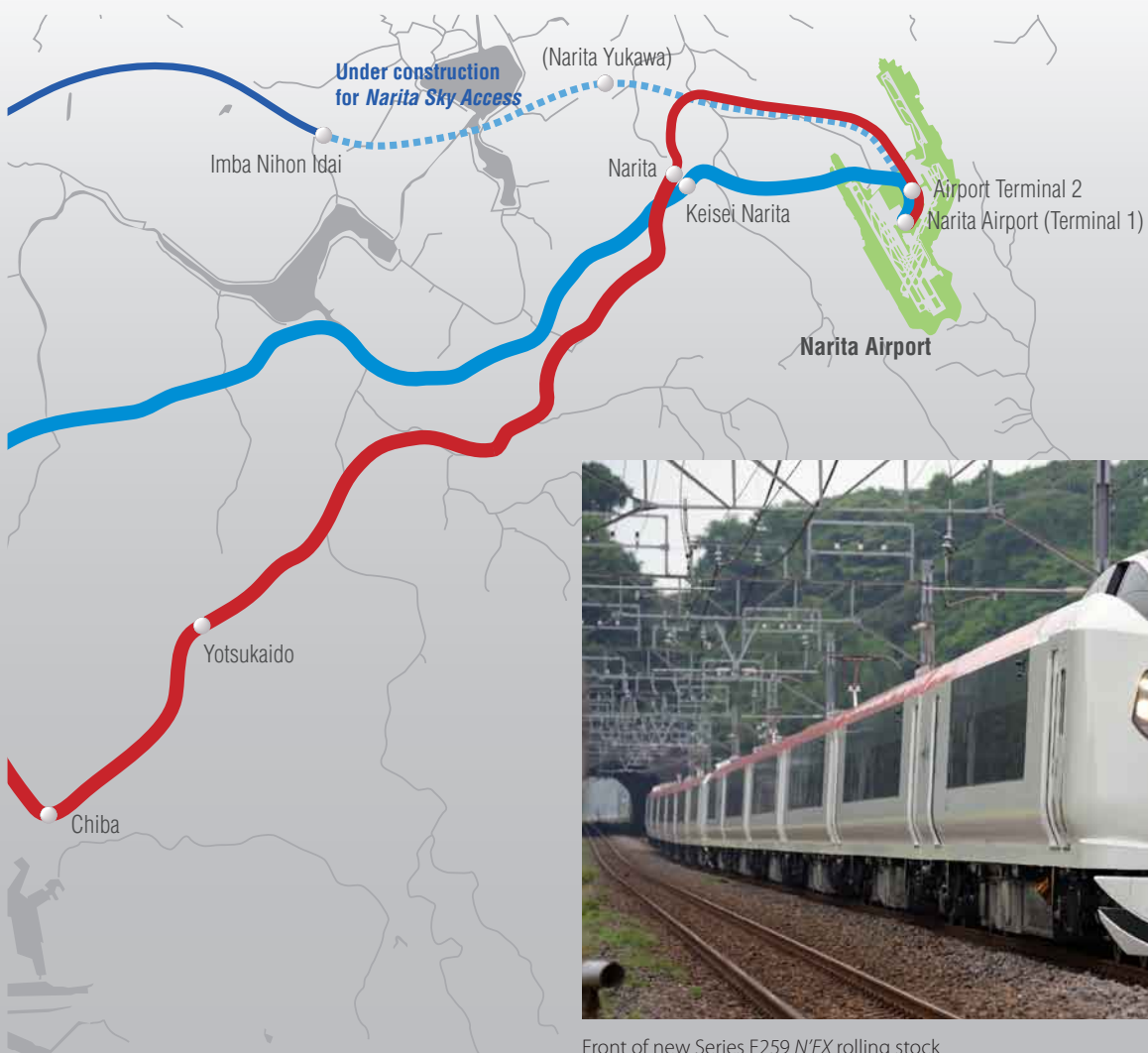
Passenger car of new Skyliner (Keisei Electric Railway)



Renovated Nippori Station platform (Keisei Electric Railway)



Current Skyliner (Keisei Electric Railway)



Front of new Series E259 NEX rolling stock (JR East)

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prepare for the influx of passengers following opening of the new line.

To compete with *Narita Sky Access*, JR East has introduced the new series E259 rolling stock for the *N'EX* service. It features:

1. Seats with adjustable headrests
2. Power outlets on armrests for laptops
3. Increased leg room
4. On-board telephone service
5. Luggage space with combination locks
6. Wireless LAN service
7. Barrier free design
8. LED information displays showing four languages (Japanese, English, Korean and Chinese)



LED Information display in four languages

(JR East)



New *N'EX* first class car with leather seats

(JR East)




Luggage space with combination locks

(JR East)



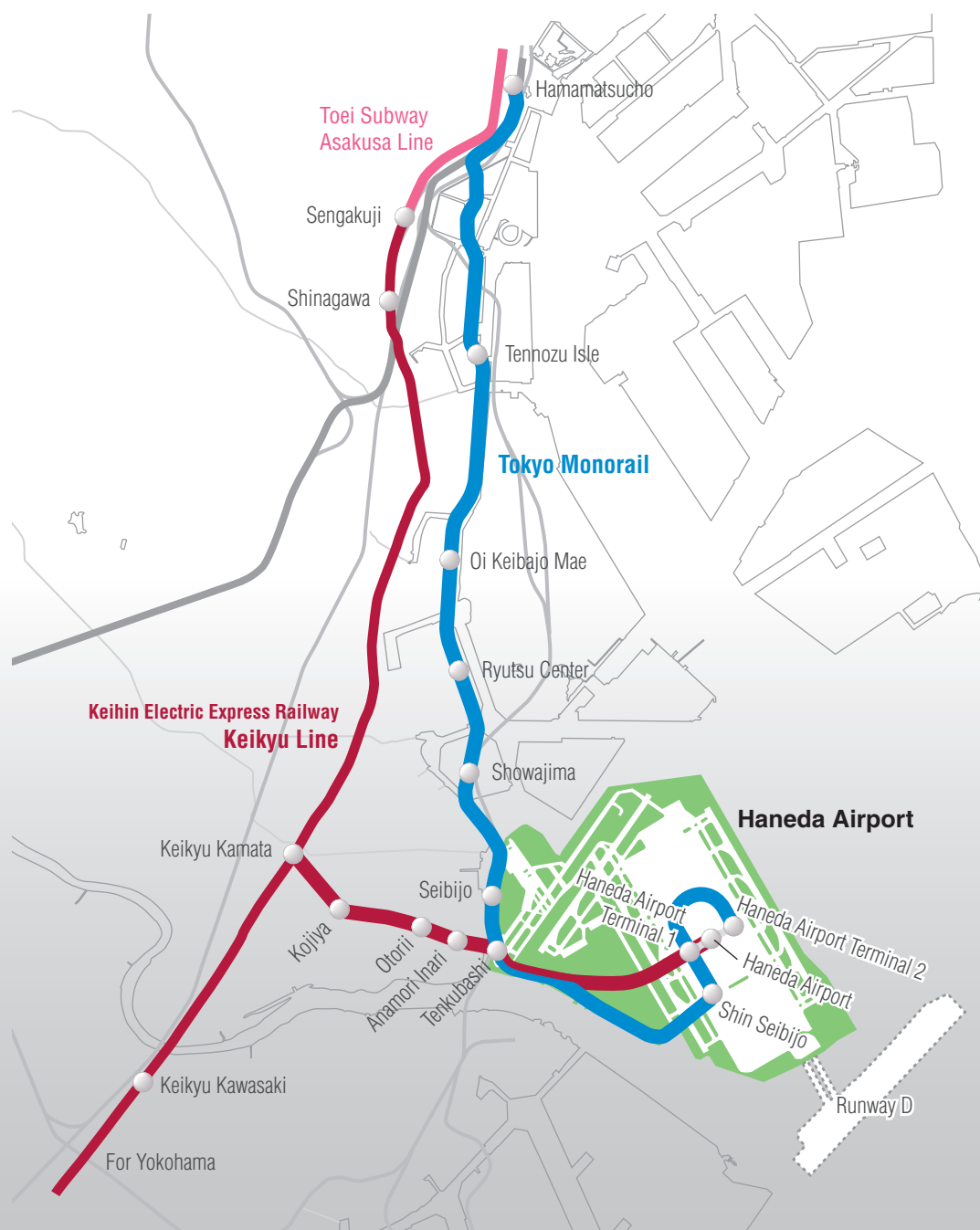
Ordinary car of new *N'EX*

(JR East)

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Tokyo International Airport (Haneda Airport)



Tokyo International Airport or Haneda opened in 1931 as the first government-owned civil airport in Japan. In 1939, the airport added a second runway. Since WWII it has been expanded another 12 times (1946, 1959, 1961, 1964, 1971, 1984, 1988, 1993, 1997, 1998, 2000, and 2004). Today, Haneda has three runways: Runway A (3000×60 m), Runway B (2500×60 m), and Runway C (3000×60 m). Haneda became the domestic hub after Narita opened.

To meet the increasing demand for both domestic and international flights, the government has planned further expansion consisting of adding a new runway (D), and new terminals and surface. The new expansion will increase capacity from 296,000 (October 2005) to 407,000 slots per year. Local tax revenue and employment are also expected to increase. In addition, the new construction will increase convenience for users, and market share.

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Tokyo International Airport (Haneda Airport)



Aerial view of Haneda's construction site; the long rectangle in the foreground will be runway D to be opened in October 2010
(Tokyo International Airport Office)

Railway Access

Keihin Electric Express Railway (Keikyu) was the sole provider of railway access to Haneda in the prewar era. However, when the airport was taken over by the occupation forces in the postwar period, Keikyu had to abandon the service. While Keikyu did have 'Haneda Airport Station', the station was located away from the airport itself. As a result, from 1964 to 1998, Tokyo Monorail was the only direct access to the airport. Keikyu's direct access was not recovered until 1993, when Terminal Building 1 opened. In

1998, Keikyu opened Haneda Airport Station, marking the full recovery of its airport access.

To improve access following expansion of the airport, both Keikyu and Tokyo Monorail are currently constructing a new station for the new international terminal scheduled to open in October 2010.

Keikyu is now renovating Kamata Station, where the airport branch joins the main line, by building a double elevated overpass to increase accessibility and capacity.



Keikyū Kamata Station under renovation

(Keihin Electric Express Railway Co., Ltd)

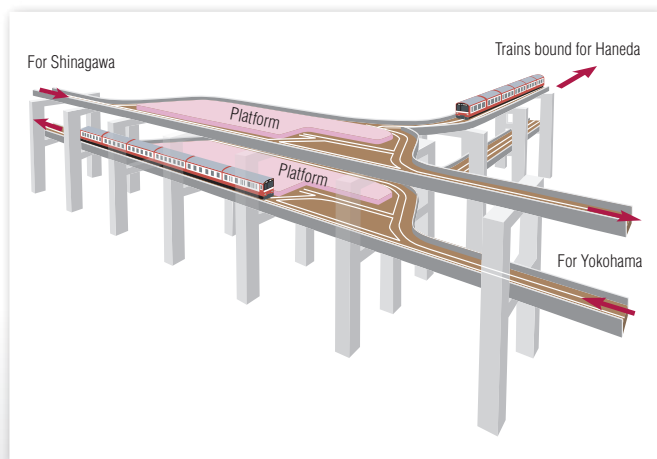


Image of Kamata Station as double elevated overpass
(Keihin Electric Express Railway Co., Ltd)



Keikyū's airport access line 'Kuko Line' pulling into Haneda Airport Station
(Keihin Electric Express Railway Co., Ltd)



Artist's impression of Tokyo Monorail Haneda International (Terminal) Building Station
(Tokyo Monorail)