

What's happening in the news?



FT Nikkei UK Ekiden

Let's have a look at the poster



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What is an ekiden?



FT Nikkei UK Ekiden

Let's look at the story



A long-distance relay race, called FT Nikkei UK Ekiden, will take place on 12th June 2026. The race will happen along the Thames path between Windsor and Reading. The first ekiden originated in Japan over 100 years ago with two teams of 23 runners covering over 500km.

Now, schools, running clubs, and community groups can host an ekiden race. The events can encourage teamwork, strategy, and endurance, and give participants a chance to challenge themselves while working together.

Learn more about this story [here](#).
Watch the useful video [here](#).



Look at the timeline to find out more about the history of 'Ekiden'.

What is an ekiden?

An ekiden is a long-distance relay race that started and is very popular in Japan. The word eki means station and den means message. Long ago in Japan, messages were carried from station to station by different people, just like the runners in an ekiden pass on a tasuki.

The famous Hakone Ekiden began in 1920.

1920

Fun Fact!

Over 60 million people watch the Hakone Ekiden every year!

1917

The very first ekiden took place in Japan. Two teams of 23 runners ran over 500km from Tokyo, which is the capital city of Japan and Kyoto which used to be the capital.

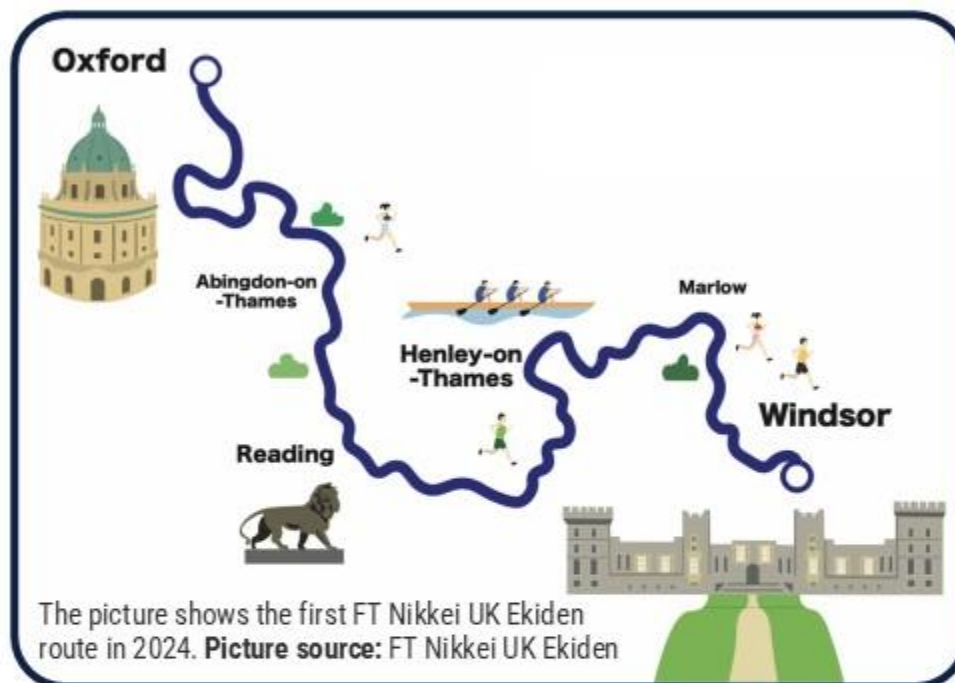
Did you know...?

The length of the first route from Oxford to Windsor was equal to running around a standard UK football pitch 353.5 times!

2024

In January 2024, the Hakone Ekiden celebrated its 100th event. This inspired the beginning of the FT Nikkei UK Ekiden.

In June 2024, the first FT Nikkei UK Ekiden took place and in the same week Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan made a state visit to the UK.





Read through the information below, all about an ekiden relay race.

How can you plan your own school ekiden?

- Choose a safe, clearly marked route (e.g., playground, field or hall). Make sure it is easy to follow.
- Create teams, decide the running order, and set distances based on age and ability.
- Choose clear tasuki handover points – this is where runners will pass the tasuki.
- Mark the start and finish areas clearly.
- Ensure adult supervision and have a basic safety plan in place.
- Have fun!



Pictured: Trinity C of E Primary School, Henley-on-Thames, holding their first Mini-Ekiden in the UK.

What is a tasuki?

Runners don't carry a baton in ekiden races. They wear a tasuki, a special sash that is passed to the next runner after finishing their part of the race. The tasuki is a symbol of perseverance and teamwork, showing that every runner's effort matters.



You can register for your own Ekiden-in-a-Box which includes tasukis, guidebook and stickers [here](#).

What makes an ekiden different from other running races?



Main question

What is an Ekiden?

 **Listen**  **Think**  **Share**

- > Look at the poster image, what do you think is happening? The poster shows a person finishing an ekiden event. Have you ever been part of a relay race or sports event? How did it feel to be part of a team?
- > Read through this week's story. Have you heard of an ekiden before? Why do you think teamwork is important in a relay race? What might happen if teamwork breaks down during a race?
- > Find out some of the history of 'Ekiden' and read the information on the Resource. What challenges might a team face during a long relay race? How can teams prepare for these challenges before the race begins? Why do runners wear a tasuki instead of using a baton? What might be the benefits of a tasuki?
- > Taking part in these ekiden races are not just about running fast. What other qualities do you think help a team succeed? How might these qualities help during difficult moments in the race?
- > Imagine you are planning your own ekiden team. How would you choose the order of runners, and what strategies would you use to help your team do well? Think about the order of runners, how far each person will run, and ways to encourage and motivate your team.

Reflection: *An ekiden shows that working together can make a challenge easier and more fun. Every person's contribution is important, and teamwork can help everyone achieve their goal!*

Useful Weblinks

- > News story:
[Learn more about this story here.](#)
- > Useful video:
[Watch the useful video here.](#)

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