

TOHOKU JAPAN

*Luxury Travel to
Northeast Japan*

Treasureland

TOHOKU
JAPAN



FOUR SEASONS

Thousand Cherry Trees on the Shiroishigawa Riverbank in Miyagi Prefecture

Tadami Line in Fukushima Prefecture

Geibikei Gorge in Iwate Prefecture

Aomori Nebuta Festival in Aomori Prefecture

Frost-covered trees of Zao in Yamagata Prefecture

Snow huts of Yokote in Akita Prefecture



SPRING

As the snowy winter ends, the flowers bloom all together in a riot of color. A highlight among them is cherry trees. There are many places famous for their cherry trees and old weeping cherry trees, and some of them are illuminated at night. The fresh green leaves that fill the mountains can only be enjoyed in this season.



AUTUMN

When autumn arrives, it suddenly becomes cool and the forests and mountains all become covered in red and yellow at once. The autumn leaves are magnificent like a beautiful picture scroll. The rice plants ripen in rice-growing areas, there is as much new rice and new *soba* noodles as you want, and *kiritanpo* nabe (a hot pot with rice sticks, meat and vegetables), which warms the body, is a must-eat dish.



SUMMER

Summer is the best season for sightseeing, whether walking through a World Heritage forest, riding on a sightseeing boat and savoring cliff scenery from the ocean, enjoying the scenery of a ravine or going downstream in a boat and viewing the fish on the riverbed through transparent water. The many summer festivals with lively float cars are also worth seeing.



WINTER

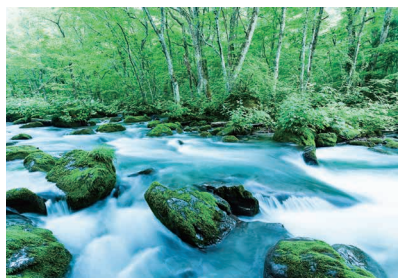
Winter with its charming powder snow. You can encounter a fairytale world of magical mountain trees covered in ice and snow and dome-shaped "kamakura" snow huts, dedicated to the Shinto god of water, where visiting worshipers are entertained.

TOHOKU Area I N F O R M A T I O N



AOMORI

Aomori Prefecture at the northern tip of Honshu is packed with things to see throughout the year. There's the cherry blossoms of Hirosaki in the spring, the Aomori Nebuta Festival in the summer, the autumn leaves in such places as Oirase Keiryu Mountain Stream and Lake Towada in autumn, and frost-covered trees in the Hakkoda Mountains in winter. The prefecture is famous for apple production and has wonderful gourmet seafood, including Oma tuna.



AKITA

In vast Akita Prefecture, you can try hiking in the beech forest of Shirakami-Sanchi, a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site, from spring to autumn. There are other special experiences to be had throughout the year such as the Namahage experience, viewing cherry blossoms or autumn leaves at the Kakuodate samurai houses, the kamakura snow huts of Yokote in winter, and in summer, the Akita Kanto festival.

IWATE

Iwate Prefecture is a place where you can encounter beautiful natural formations such as a complex coastline and oddly shaped rocks. Chusonji Temple in Hiraizumi, founded in 850, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site that was the cultural heart of the Tohoku region in medieval times. Konjikido Golden Hall, construction of which began in 1124, still looks how it did when it was completed. Have a special experience eating Wanko-soba noodles, a famous dish.



YAMAGATA

Yamagata Prefecture faces the Sea of Japan. At Zao Onsen, with its illuminated frost-covered trees, you can have fun skiing. You can also hike near Lake Okama, whose water turns seven different colors. Yama-dera (literally "mountain temple") complex, which haiku poet Matsuo Basho wrote about, is said to have been built in 860, and it includes Japan's oldest beech structure.

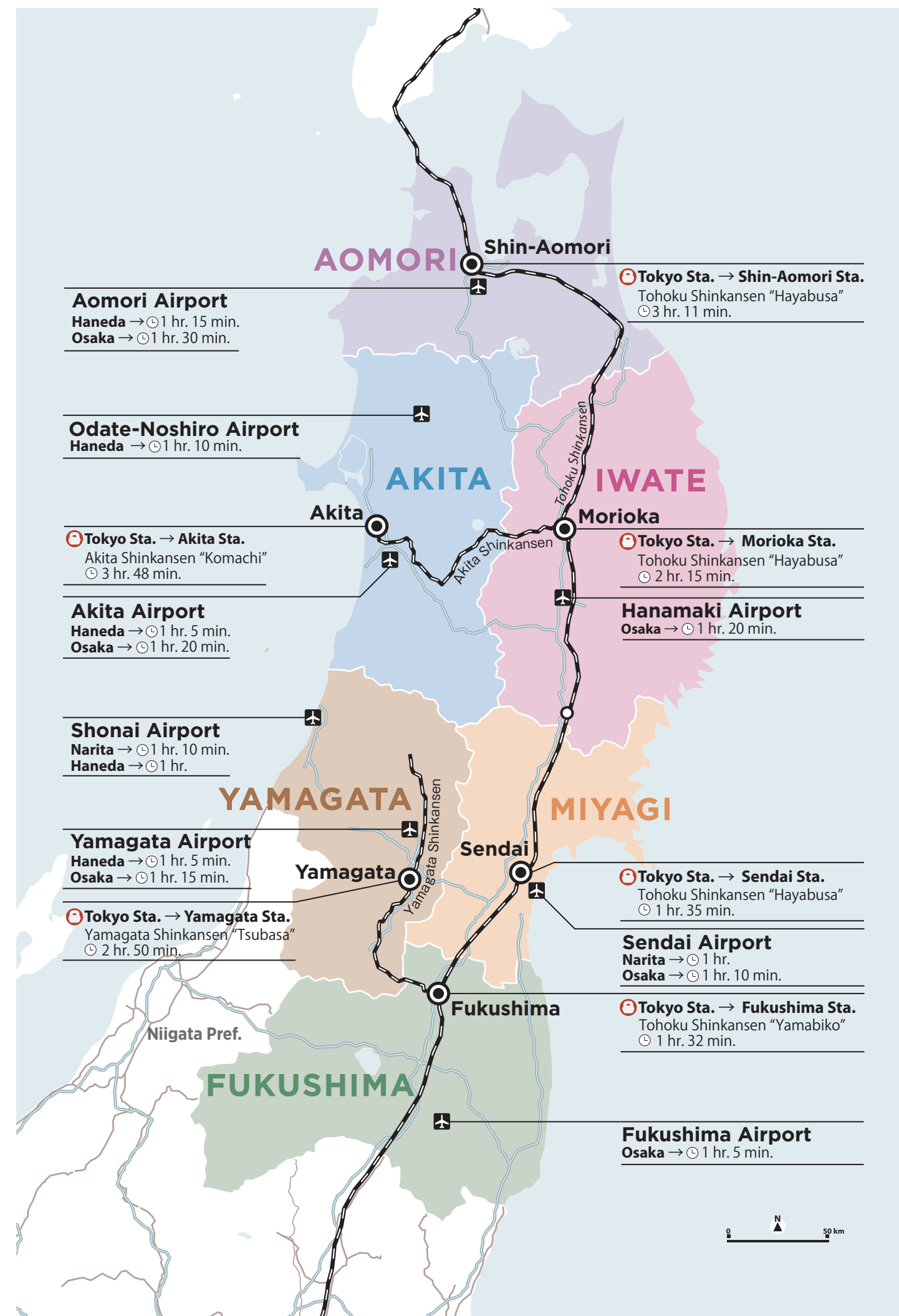
MIYAGI / SENDAI

Miyagi Prefecture's development is centered around Sendai, a city whose foundations were laid down by Date Masamune, a military commander during the Sengoku period (late 15th to late 16th century). The picturesque scenery woven by the 260 islands of Matsushima Bay is one of the Three Most Scenic Spots of Japan and is historically famous. The seashore is lined with small oyster restaurants called "kakigoya" where you can enjoy the delicacy.



FUKUSHIMA

Fukushima Prefecture is blessed with abundant nature including Lake Inawashiro, the variously colored lake cluster Goshiki-numa, and Mount Bandai. For people who like history, Ouchi-juku, which still looks like it did when it was a post town in the Edo period (1603-1868), and Tsuruga Castle, a famous, impregnable castle built in 1384 (and rebuilt in 1965), are must-sees.



WORLD HERITAGE



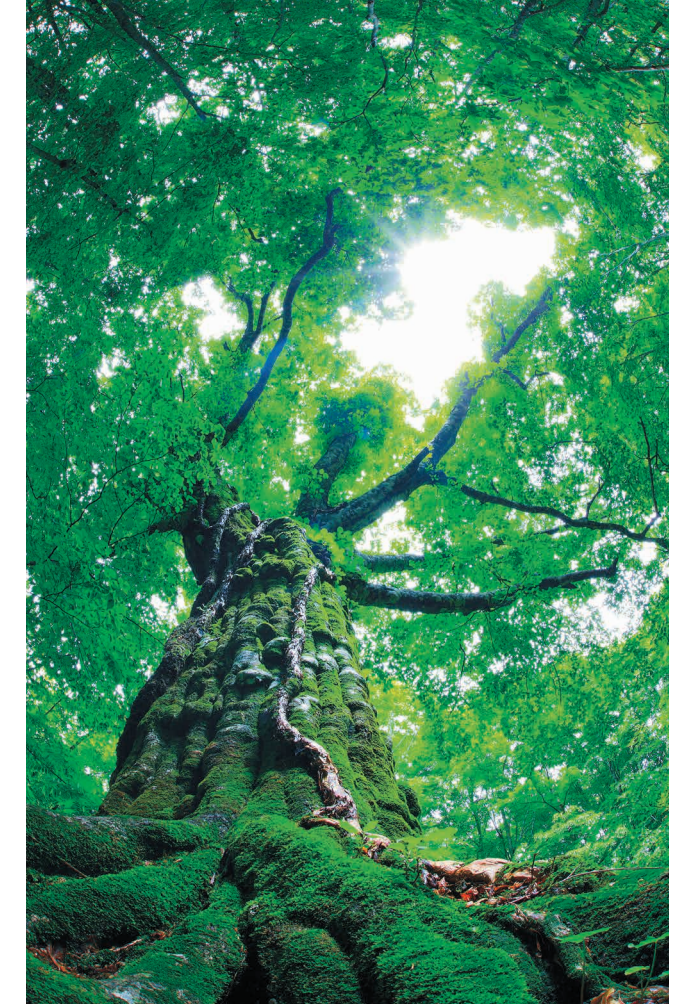
IWATE || CHUSONJI TEMPLE

At the site of Chusonji Temple, which was founded in 850, Kiyohira, the first generation head of the Northern Fujiwara clan, began a large-scale temple-building project at the beginning of the 12th century. The purpose was to console the spirits of those who died in wars and build a peaceful, ideal society based on the Buddha's teachings. The Konjikido Golden Hall, whose ridgepole was raised in 1124, is a national treasure. Its inner shrine is completely covered in gold foil and decorated with gems and mother-of-pearl inlay to express Sukhavati, or the Pure Land.



IWATE || MOTSUJI TEMPLE

This temple was founded by Jikaku Daishi Ennin, and during its heyday it was more prosperous than Chusonji Temple. It has a Pure Land garden with a beautiful pond and artificial hill that represents the Pure Land world and the ruins of 12th century temples. It has been designated a special historical site and a place of special scenic beauty. Visitors can try zazen seated meditation and sutra copying.



AOMORI || SHIRAKAMI-SANCHI AKITA

This is a vast mountainous area that spans Aomori and Akita prefectures and was registered as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site in 1993. One of the largest old-growth beech forests in the world, almost unaltered by human intervention, is distributed across the area. It has a visitor center and you can hike in the abundant forest.

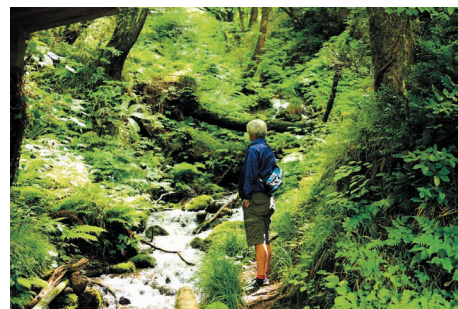
Juniko Twelve Lakes (Blue Pond)

This lake on the Juniko walking trails is so blue it looks like someone poured blue ink in it. The water is so transparent you can see fallen trees on the bottom of the lake.



World Heritage Beech Forest Trail

Here you can easily experience the beeches that make up an important part of the natural environment of Shirakami-Sanchi. It has a 2-kilometer circuit course that takes 1 or 2 hours to walk and a 30-minute course with a shortcut. Visitors can take in flowers such as pheasant's eyes in the spring and summer and vivid autumn leaves in the fall.



INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE



Akita Prefecture's Namahage of Oga

RAIHO-SHIN, RITUAL VISITS OF DEITIES IN MASKS AND COSTUMES

"Raiho-shin, ritual visits of deities in masks and costumes" is a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage that features local deities and messengers of the gods wearing masks and costumes. The most typical of these is the Namahage of Oga, Akita Prefecture, which visit on New Year's Eve as a messenger of the gods and brings blessings to the people. Yoshihama no Suneka of Iwate Prefecture is a local new year event that is closed to tourists and the media. It is held on Jan. 15. Yuza no Koshogatsu Gyoji in Yuza, Akumi District, Yamagata Prefecture, also is closed to tourists and the media. Yonekawa no Mizukaburi is a February festival held continuously for more than 800 years in Tome, Miyagi Prefecture. The participants pour water on their heads and pray for successful fire prevention.



Miyagi Prefecture's Akiu no Taue Odori

FOLK ENTERTAINMENT

Dainichido Bugaku in Kazuno, Akita Prefecture, is 1,300 years old. Akiu no Taue Odori, a traditional dance handed down in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture, features flower-adorned hats and gorgeous costumes. Hayachinekagura in Hanamaki, Iwate Prefecture, is so old it is recorded in an instruction book from 1488. It is performed at shrine festivals.



Aomori Prefecture's Hachinohe Sansha Taisai Festival Float Parade

YAMA, HOKO, YATAI, FLOAT FESTIVALS

"Yama, Hoko, Yatai, float festivals" are local communities' religious festival events held to pray for tranquility and disaster prevention. In the Hachinohe Sansha Taisai Festival float parade in Hachinohe, Aomori Prefecture, 27 floats on which dolls are used to tell stories parade through the city. The Kakunodate Festival float parade in Semboku, Akita Prefecture, a dance accompanied by a Japanese orchestra is performed and as a climax, the festival floats collide. In "Tsuchizaki Shinmeisha Shrine Annual Celebration And The Float Festival" in Akita, Akita Prefecture, samurai dolls and a Japanese

orchestra ride on a float. "Hanawa Float Festival" in Kazuno, Akita Prefecture, is a festival presented with 10 floats and festival music called Hanawa Bayashi. The Shinjo Festival float parade is put on in Shinjo, Yamagata Prefecture. It's a festival begun in 1756 to encourage residents of the fief who had been stricken by a terrible harvest. The luxurious and gorgeous ornaments are magnificent.

ART & CULTURE

MIYAGI

ENTSUIN AND ZUIGANJI TEMPLES / MATSUSHIMA

Entsuin Temple and Zuiganji Temple are located in Matsushima, one of the Three Most Scenic Spots of Japan. Entsuin Temple was founded in 1647. There is a garden that features roses said to have been brought from Europe by Hasekura Tsunenaga, a retainer of the Sendai Domain. As such, there are variously colored roses planted throughout and the temple is widely known as “Bara-dera,” meaning rose temple. Adjacent to Entsuin Temple is Zuiganji Temple, which was completed in 1609 after Date Masamune, the founder of Sendai, spent five years pouring his heart and soul into its construction. The main hall and other buildings are Designated National Treasures.

www.entuin.or.jp



YAMAGATA

HOJUSAN RISSHAKUJI TEMPLE

This temple's popular name is Yama-dera. It's a sacred mountain temple established in 860 and well known in the Tohoku region. It's famously depicted in a poem by Matsuo Basho, Japan's best-known haiku poet. There are more than 30 temple buildings on some 1.09 million square meter grounds, which are reached by climbing more than 1,000 stone steps from the foot of the mountain. It's a wonderful, nature-filled environment with fresh verdure in the spring and colorful leaves in autumn.

www.rissyakuji.jp



AOMORI

AOMORI MUSEUM OF ART

This museum's collection contains many works related to Aomori Prefecture such as Aomori Dog by modern artist Yoshitomo Nara and works by internationally known woodblock printmaker Shiko Munakata. Jun Aoki, who has designed Louis Vuitton shops in various places, designed this museum, drawing inspiration from the Sannai-Maruyama site.

www.aomori-museum.jp/en/



Photo©Daici Ano Artwork©Yoshitomo Nara

FUKUSHIMA

SAZAEDO, IIMORI HILL

Sazaedo, a hexagonal, three-story temple built in 1796, is an Important Cultural Property. The interior is a double helix, and in the past, climbing the slope up to the top and back down to complete a circuit was considered to be completing a 33 Kannon pilgrimage. Statues of 19 young soldiers of the Byakkotai (White Tiger Corps) are enshrined in a building to the side of Sazaedo. In the Boshin War, they fought with the new government's army and committed suicide by sword on Iimori Hill.

www.sazaedo.jp

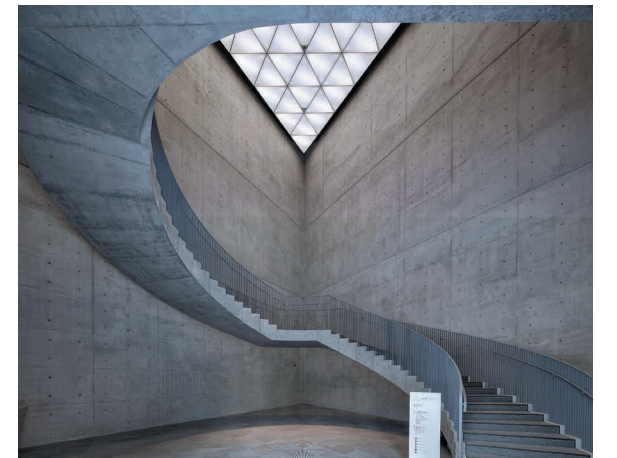


AKITA

AKITA MUSEUM OF ART

This museum displays the works of Tsuguharu Fujita, known as a representative artist of the School of Paris. It has the large wall painting “The Events of Akita,” which depicts Akita in 1937, shows the beauty of Akita to the world. It was designed by Tadao Ando with a triangle motif. Ando has won multiple prizes including the Pritzker Prize and the Order of Cultural Merit.

www.akita-museum-of-art.jp/contents/contents_show.php?contents_id=201



YAMAGATA

MOUNT HAGURO FIVE-STORIED PAGODA AND CEDAR TREES

The shrines on the Three Mountains of Dewa are 1,400 years old and the mountains are a place for practicing Shugendo. Mount Haguro Five-Storied Pagoda is a National Treasure, and the cedars planted around it were awarded three stars by the Michelin Guide for their scenic beauty. Saikan, near the summit, is a building where itinerant Buddhist monks lived. There visitors can spend the night and eat the Buddhist vegetarian cuisine that was eaten by Matsuo Basho.

www.dewasanzan.jp/publics/translation/JE/



TRADITIONAL CRAFTS

AKITA

ODATE MAGEWAPPA

Odate Magewappa, which are made from natural, uncoated cedar, are both beautiful and strong. The production of Magewappa has been flourishing for 400 years in Odate. When freshly steamed rice is put inside these containers, they absorb extra moisture, which enhances the rice flavor. They also boast the practical benefits such as anti-bacterial and anti-mold properties, which allows rice to keep at room temperature for two days even in the summer.



Photo courtesy of Shibata Yoshinobu Shoten

MIYAGI / SENDAI

SENDAI TANSU

These chests of drawers were made for samurai to put their swords in at the end of the Edo period (1603-1868). Made from Japanese zelkova and Japanese chestnut, they feature kiji-urushi lacquer that beautifully highlights the wood grain and gorgeous decorative metal fittings. These Sendai treasures can be used for more than 100 years.



Photo courtesy of Yaegashi Sendai Tansu Kanagu Kobo

TOHOKU || KOKESHI

These lathed, wooden dolls have been popular as souvenirs from hot springs in the Tohoku region since the late Edo period (1603-1868). They have been familiar as dolls that carry the meaning of a wish for children to grow up healthy. Recently more color variations have become available and kokeshi are popular in Europe.



Photo courtesy of Sakurai Kokeshiten
<https://en.sakuraikokeshiten.com>

IWATE || NAMBU IRONWARE

The ironware of Oshu, Iwate Prefecture, began around 1090. Cast metal artisans who made such items as the bell of the UNESCO World Heritage Site Chusonji in Hiraizumi became well-established, and Nambu Ironware took root as a local industry that makes use of high-quality iron from the prefecture. Water boiled in iron kettles has a mild taste.



Photo courtesy of Oigen Foundry Co., Ltd.

FUKUSHIMA || OKUAIZU WEAVING

This is weaving using carex multifolia, crimson glory vine, matatabi, and other plants that can be harvested in the mountainous region of the Okuaizu region. The items created are strainers, baskets and other things that can be made by hand during the snowy time of year. It's a handicraft handed down from the Jomon period (14,000-300 BCE).



Photo courtesy of Society for the Promotion of Okuaizu Mishima Woven Goods

AKITA || KABAZAIKU (CHERRY BARK WORK)

These are traditional handicraft items made only in Kakunodate, Akita Prefecture, using the bark of wild cherry trees. The beautiful patterns and luster that characterize the bark of wild cherry trees add beauty to daily-use items such as tableware. Wild cherry is excellent for resisting moisture, drying out and bacteria, and it is particularly suited to tea caddies and tea utensils.



AOMORI || TSUGARU LACQUERING

This is a traditional handicraft handed down since around 1700 in the Tsugaru region of Aomori Prefecture. This lacquer ware takes more than two months and requires dozens of processes to make. These creations have luxurious, gorgeous patterns and are durable. In recent years, products made in collaboration with overseas glass makers have also been developed.



EXPERIENCE

YAMAGATA MIYAGI

LAKE OKAMA HIKING

Lake Okama is a crater lake on the highest peak of the Zao Mountain Range. It is accessible via the Zao Ropeway. It is also called Goshiki-numa (five-colored lake) because its color changes hour by hour from blue all the way to green. A crater was created by the 1182 eruption and it filled with water and became a lake during rumbling in 1820. Private guide available to visitors upon request.

Zao Trekking Department in the Zao Onsen Tourism Association
www.zao-spa.or.jp/english/



AOMORI

LAKE TOWADA CANOEING

Lake Towada, one of the largest caldera lakes in the world, is in the area of Towada-Hachimantai National Park, and is said to be a mystical lake. Set out on a small adventure with a nature-experience tour by canoe. An experienced guide will show you around the mystical lake and its surroundings.

Towadako Guidehouse KAI
<http://tgkai.jp>



AKITA NAMAHAJE

Namahage events are an Intangible Cultural Property held on New Year's Eve almost everywhere on the Oga Peninsula. The Oga Shinzan Folklore Museum is a facility in an old traditional house where courses allow tourists to have a namahage experience throughout the year. It's an immersive experience that is very popular.

Oga Shinzan Folklore Museum
www.namahage.co.jp/namahagekan/english/

YAMAGATA ITINERANT BUDDHIST MONK ASCETIC PRACTICE

Experience life, death and rebirth through itinerant Buddhist monk ascetic practice in the Three Mountains of Dewa. Experience part of their practice, including fasting, abstaining from water and walking in the mountains. This mysterious experience of becoming one with nature in white clothing is a special one that will allow you to see yourself in a new light.

Itinerant Buddhist Monk Ascetic Practice Experience Juku
www.tsuruokacity.com
Email: hagurokanko@bz04.plala.or.jp

YAMAGATA IAIDO (SWORD DRAWING)

In Murayama, the birthplace of iaido, learn from instructors who could be called modern samurai the form and spirit of a practice that has been handed down for 450 years. You can experience everything from sword salute etiquette to the movements of the form and trying out a real Japanese sword.

Murayama City Tourism and Local Products Association
www.iaidoexperience-en.com

IWATE WANKO-SOBA NOODLES

With Wanko soba, servers put soba in your bowl one mouthful at a time with a fast tempo as you eat rapidly. Kajiya, which was founded in 1904, is where the All-Japan Wanko Soba Tournament began. Popular author Kenji Miyazawa used to patronize Kajiya. In the experience, you receive an apron that records how many bowls of soba noodles you were able to finish.

IWATE LACQUER PAINTING

Northern Tohoku is famous as a lacquer producing area. Paint the design of your choice on an everyday-use item like chopsticks or a dessert plate in a longstanding workshop in the hometown of lacquer. After the painting workshop, your creation can be finished and mailed to you on request. (You will be charged for full expenses to ship overseas. Japanese language only.)



STAY



FUKUSHIMA

AIZU HIGASHIYAMA ONSEN MUKAITAKI

☎ 0242-27-7501

📍 200 Kawamukai, Higashiyama-machi Yumoto,
Aizuwakamatsu City, Fukushima Prefecture

💻 www.mukaitaki.jp

The building is a Registered Tangible Cultural Property.

A fantastic world unfolds in the Japanese garden in
the moss-covered courtyard the hall looks out on.

The winter snow-viewing candles are a must-see.



MIYAGI

CHIKUSENSO MT. ZAO ONSEN RESORT & SPA

☎ 0224-34-1188

📍 88-11 Uwanohara, Togatta Onsen,
Zao-machi, Katta-gun, Miyagi Prefecture

💻 www.mtzaoresort.com/en/

An elegant resort hotel that stands at the foot of Mount Zao.

Experience the murmurings of forests and clear streams on 66,100
square meters of resort. Enjoy authentic Japanese cuisine and a hot
spring bath with water flowing directly from the source.



AOMORI

HOSHINO RESORTS OIRASE KEIRYU HOTEL

A hotel that stands along the Oirase Keiryu, one
of Japan's leading places of picturesque scenery.
In the summer take a walk along the mountain
stream, and in winter enjoy Hyobaku no Yu, an
open-air bath surrounded by ice pillars.

☎ 0570-073-022 (9 a.m. to 8 p.m.)

📍 231 Tochikubo, Okuse, Towada City,
Aomori Prefecture

💻 www.oirase-keiryuu.jp/en/



IWATE

KASHOEN

This is an onsen ryokan in the sukiya building style
that stands in the middle of a nambu akamatsu
Japanese red pine forest. It's a hot spring with an
exceptional skin beautifying effect, and the food is
a traditional Japanese multiple course meal made
using local, seasonal ingredients. At night a brazier
in the courtyard invites you to an unusual space.

☎ 0198-37-2111

📍 1-125 Yumoto, Hanamaki City, Iwate Prefecture

💻 www.hanamakionsen.co.jp/kashoen/en/



AKITA

KAKUNODATE SANSO WABIZAKURA

The reception desk is in a 200-year-old
traditional Japanese house with a thatched
roof. Enjoy the scenery of a magnificent forest
from your spacious guest room. There is a half-
outdoor bath in the rooms, and you can take in
the starry sky from a starry sky deck.

☎ 0187-47-3511

📍 2-8 Sasayama, Nishiki-cho Kadoya,
Semboku City, Akita Prefecture

💻 www.wabizakura.com/en/



YAMAGATA

TENDOSO

The guest rooms include free-standing
structures in the sukiya style where you can feel
craftsmanship everywhere and Azumatei rooms
that fuse tradition with functional beauty. For
dinner, get your fill of kabayaki eel, a traditional
dish.

☎ 023-653-2033

📍 2-2-18 Kamata, Tendo City,
Yamagata Prefecture

💻 www.tendoso.jp



MIYAGI

MATSUSHIMA SAKAN SHOUAN

The sight of Matsushima Bay filling the guest
room windows is an incredible scene not
just during the day, but also during moonlit
evenings. Be soothed by a formal Japanese
multi-course meal and a semi-outdoor bath
scented with the fragrance of hinoki cypress.

☎ 022-354-3111

📍 1 Umeki, Tataru, Matsushima-machi,
Miyagi-gun, Miyagi Prefecture

💻 www.shoan-umine.com/en/

LOCAL CUISINE

Hot-pot dishes and hot soups are essential in the Tohoku region, where the first snow falls in November and the last in April. For Akita Prefecture's kiritanpo hot pot, Hinai Jidori — one of Japan's three great freerange local traditional pedigreed chicken breeds — is slowly stewed to derive soup stock. Other local flavors include senbei soup, in which Aomori Prefecture's Nanbu Senbei rice crackers are stewed in stock, and Yamagata Prefecture's imoni (taro soup).



NOODLES

The Tohoku region also has many noodle varieties. In Ouchi-juku, Fukushima Prefecture, Negi Soba is a popular dish where you eat using a long green onion in place of chopsticks. It's a refreshing, cold soba dish eaten with spicy daikon radish broth. Iwate Prefecture's Morioka Reimen has a chewy texture. Inaniwa Udon from Akita Prefecture is hand-pulled udon that feels smooth going down.



SAKE

In Tohoku, rich forests create plenty of pure water, making it a natural home to high-quality sake. In SAKE COMPETITION 2019, the only competitive sake-only show in the world, 1919 sakes were entered in seven categories. Not excluding the super premium category, famous Tohoku sake won first place across the board.



Photo courtesy of Kongoukaku

WAGYU BEEF

Yonezawa beef from Yamagata Prefecture, Iwate Prefecture's Maesawa beef and Miyagi Prefecture's Sendai beef are rare varieties of wagyu beef produced in small amounts that are hard to find except in their local areas. Create a delicious memory by eating sweet ultra high-grade beef as sukiyaki or steak.



SEAFOOD AND SUSHI

In the Tohoku area, which has a lot of fishing harbors, there is plenty of just-caught, fresh seafood. You'll want to enjoy seafood such as scallops, oysters, sea urchins, crab, and Oma Tuna, an ultra high-grade natural food of Aomori Prefecture, as sashimi or sushi. There are also places that offer them grilled on the spot, such as morning markets, fish markets and roadside stations.

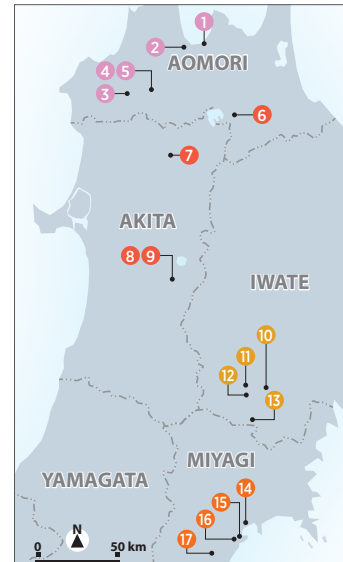


FRUITS

The Tohoku Region is heaven for fruit-lovers. Aomori Prefecture is famous for the production of sweet, crunchy, juicy apples. The cherries of Yamagata Prefecture are shiny and refreshingly sweet. The Akatsuki peaches of Fukushima Prefecture are supplied to the imperial household. With soft flesh and a sweet, rich smell, they are distinguished by their plentiful juice.

Model Plan 4 days 3 nights

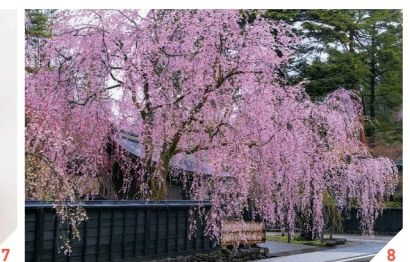
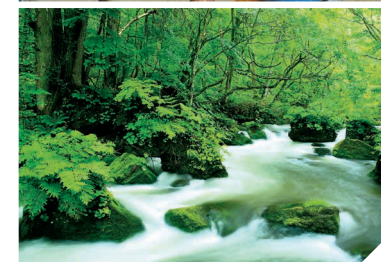
01 Beautiful cherry blossoms and handed down craftsmen's techniques



Day / **2**

At Oirase Keiryu Mountain Stream in Towada-Hachimantai National Park, take a walk on the footpaths in the deep forest **6**. In Odate, see the skilled artisanry at a Magewappa workshop, where natural cedar is processed into round containers by hand **7**. The streetscape of samurai houses in Kakunodate makes you feel like you've gone back in time to the Edo period (1603-1868). The area is also famous for its cherry blossoms **8**. Kabazaiku (cherry bark work) has been practiced since the Edo period. Visit the workshop where artisans carefully make woodworks by hand using cherry bark **9**.

Spend the night at Wabizakura

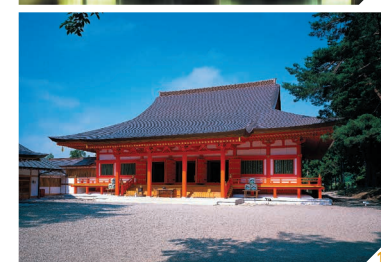


6. Oirase Keiryu Mountain Stream 7. Magewappa 8. The cherry blossoms of the Kakunodate samurai houses 9. Kabazaiku workshop

Day / **3**

At Shoboji, an ancient temple founded in 1348, experience zazen (seated meditation). Encounter a part of Buddhism that has been opened to everyone **10**. Have a Maesawa beef lunch, featuring this rare wagyu beef whose fat is sweet, at Ogata, a ranch that produces and sells beef **11**. At the UNESCO World Heritage Sites Hiraizumi Chusonji Temple and Motsuji Temple, encounter the history and culture of the florid Heian period (794-1185) **12**. At Sekino-Ichi Brewery in Ichinoseki, see the production of local sake and beer. Also try some samples **13**.

Spend the night at Shouan or the Westin Sendai



10. Shoboji Temple 11. Maesawa beef 12. Motsuji Temple 13. Sekino-Ichi Brewery

Day / **4**

At Zuiganji Temple, take a look at the carvings and fusuma paintings of the main hall, which feature many skills of the artisans at the time. At Entsuin Temple, experience making your own original prayer beads **14**. For tasting authentic green tea, visit Yabe-en. The workshop where you get to make your own top-quality tea is popular **15**. Have an unforgettable lunch of delicious sushi at Sushitetsu, where they use only the very best ingredients **16**. Visit a Sendai tansu (chest of drawers) work studio and appreciate the gorgeous dragon and tree peony designs of the metal fittings and lacquerware **17**.



14. Entsuin and Zuiganji Temples 15. Yabe-en 16. Sushitetsu 17. Sendai Tansu

Day / **1**

For your Northern Cherry Blossom Trip, you'll start at Seiryuji Temple, which has Japan's largest bronze Buddha statue and weeping cherry blossoms **1**, then go to Aomori Museum of Art and the Sannai-Maruyama site, where you will examine a collection of ruins from the Jomon period (14,000-300 BCE), along with art and other items **2**. In Nishimeya, try the BUNACO Production Experience. BUNACO is a craft in which tape made from thinly processed beech wood is used to create a mold, which is in turn used to create beautiful containers **3**. At Tsugaru-han Neputa Village, experience Tsugaru lacquer ware, and look forward to having your creation sent to you later **4**. At Hirosaki Park, a famous place for viewing cherry blossoms, don't miss the sight of the Hirosaki Castle moat covered in fallen cherry blossom petals **5**.

Spend the night at Oirase Keiryu Hotel

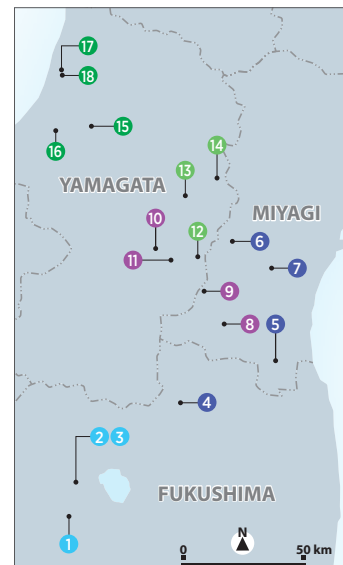


1. The cherry blossoms of Seiryuji Temple 2. Aomori Museum of Art and the Sannai-Maruyama site 3. BUNACO production 4. Tsugaru lacquer ware 5. The cherry blossoms of Hirosaki Park

Model Plan 5 days 4 nights

02

A culture of abundant spirit and the appearance of old Japan



Day / 1

Ouchi-juku is a must-see spot where more than 30 old houses with thatched roofs from the Edo period (1603-1868) stand in a row ①. Take a walk from Tsuruga Castle, a famous castle built in 1384 (and rebuilt in 1965) to Sazaedo (National Important Cultural Property) with its strange architecture on Imori Hill ②. At 300-year-old Shirokiya Lacquerware, see wooden lacquer ware made with genuine lacquer. Enjoy gorgeous designs including gold or silver lacquer and gold-inlaid lacquer ware ③.

Spend the night at Mukaitaki



1. Ouchi-juku 2. Imori Hill and Sazaedo 3. Shirokiya Lacquerware

Day / 2

At Bonsai Abe, try your hand at making bonsai and see bonsai made by artisans ④. Take on the challenge of a taiko Japanese drum experience at Sairi Yashiki, the house of a wealthy merchant in the Edo period (1603-1868) ⑤. The fire offering at Jigenji Temple is a rare experience in which you write a wish on a piece of paper and a high-ranking monk purifies it with fire and prays for it to be fulfilled ⑥. See environmentally friendly wine making at Akiu Winery. Also enjoy wine-tasting ⑦.

Spend the night at Togatta Hot Spring Chikusenso



4. Bonsai Abe 5. Sairi Yashiki 6. Jigenji Temple 7. Akiu Winery

Day / 3

For animal lovers, Fox Village, where more than 100 foxes are allowed to run free, is essential. Visitors also get a chance to hold a baby fox ⑧. To enjoy the nature of Zao, go hiking at Lake Okama, which changes color five times a day ⑨. At Oriental Carpet, watch the breathtaking handiwork of the integrated production process that starts with making yarn from wool ⑩. The cast metal of Kikuchi Hojudo boasts 400 years of history. They include everything from traditional handicrafts to new induction heating-compatible pots ⑪.

Spend the night at Tendoso



8. Miyagi Zao Fox Village 9. Okama 10. Oriental Carpet 11. Kikuchi Hojudo

Day / 4

This mountain temple (Yama-dera) founded in 860 is reached by climbing a mountain trail all the way to the inner sanctuary. The climbing makes it all the more impressive ⑫. The Samurai Experience that can be had in the Mecca of laidō (the art of sword drawing), a fundamental part of bushido, cannot be experienced anywhere else ⑬. Visit Ginzan Onsen, which is said to still look like it did during the Taisho period (1912-1926). It is also known as the Hot Spring of Taisho Romance ⑭.

Farm stay in Tozawa-mura



12. Yama-dera 13. laidō (sword drawing) 14. Ginzan Onsen



Day / 5

Mount Haguro is famous for its stone steps up to Ideha-jinja Shrine at the summit and as a mountain where Shugendo is practiced ⑮. Have lunch at Al-ché-cciano, which has won multiple prizes in contests. Get your fill of local Shonai foods ⑯. Visit Kaikoji, which has 1,200 years of history and is the only temple in Japan with two mummified monks enshrined ⑰. As the last part of your Tohoku trip, enjoy a dance performance by Sakata apprentice geisha at Somaro, which began as a traditional Japanese restaurant in the Edo period (1603-1868) ⑱.



15. Mount Haguro 16. Al-ché-cciano 17. Kaikoji Temple 18. Somaro

Tohoku Event Calendar

Season	Schedule	Event name	Venue	Area
Spring 	Early to late April	Megohime Cherry Blossom Festival	Miharu Town	Fukushima
	Mid-April	Human Shogi	Tendo Park	Yamagata
	April 20 to May 5	Kakunodate Cherry Blossom Festival	Kakunodate, Semboku City	Akita
	Late April to early May	Hirosaki Cherry Blossom Festival	Hirosaki Castle	Aomori
	May 1 to 5	Spring Fujiwara Festival	Chusonji Temple, Motsuji Temple, etc.	Iwate
	3rd Sunday in May and the day before	Sendai Aoba Festival	Central Sendai City	Miyagi / Sendai
Summer 	3rd Monday in July	Shiogama Minato Festival	Shiogama City	Miyagi / Sendai
	Late July	Soma Nomaoui Festival	Minamisoma City	Fukushima
	August 1 to 4	Morioka Sansa Odori Festival	Morioka City	Iwate
	August 2 to 7	Aomori Nebuta Festival	Aomori City	Aomori
	August 3 to 6	Akita Kanto Festival	Akita City	Akita
	August 5 to 7	Yamagata Hanagasa Festival	Yamagata City	Yamagata
	August 6 to 8	Sendai Tanabata Festival	Sendai City	Miyagi / Sendai
Autumn 	September 7 to 9	Kakunodate Festival Float Parade	Kakunodate, Semboku City	Akita
	2nd Sunday in September and the day before	Jozenji Street Jazz Festival	Central Sendai City	Miyagi / Sendai
	3rd Sunday in September	Yamagata Imoni Festival	Mamigasaki Riverbed, Yamagata City	Yamagata
	Late September	Aizu Festival	Aizuwakamatsu City	Fukushima
	1st Saturday in October	Oni Kojuro Festival	Shiroishi Castle Honmaru Square, etc.	Miyagi / Sendai
	Mid-October	Hachimantai Autumn Leaves Festival	Iwate Kenmin no Mori Forest i	Iwate
	Late October	Oirase Keiryu Eco Road Festa	Oirase Keiryu Mountain Stream	Aomori
Winter 	January 14	Matsutaki Festival (Dontosai Festival)	Osaki-hachimangu Shrine	Miyagi / Sendai
	Early February	Iwate Snow Festival	Shizukuishi Town	Iwate
	2nd Friday, Saturday and Sunday in February	Namahage Sedo Festival	Shinzan-jinja Shrine, Oga City	Akita
	2nd Saturday and Sunday in February	Uesugi Snow Lantern Festival	Yonezawa City	Yamagata
	2nd Saturday and Sunday in February	Ouchi-juku Snow Festival	Ouchi-juku	Fukushima
	February 17 to 20	Hachinohe Enburi Festival	Hachinohe City	Aomori

Note: Schedules and operating days are subject to change.

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