

2nd Sta. in Jan. Aizu-Misato Town
Tug-of-War for Massive Straw Rice-Bag

Under a torch light, muscular men pull a rope in a tug-of-war for a massive 3-ton straw rice-bag. A unique way of fortune telling peculiar to Aizu-Misato, the winners' side is promised business prosperity or a rich harvest.
[Place] Omichi-dori Street in Takada district
[Info.] Aizu-Misato Town Tourism Association Tel: +81(242)55-1121
[Access] 10 min. after exiting Niitsuru PA Smart I.C. on Joban Expressway; or 5 min. from Aizu-Takada Sta. on JR Tadami Line

2nd Sat. & Sun. of Jan. Futaba Town
Futaba Town "Daruma" Doll Market

This New Year market has centuries of tradition dating back to the Edo Period. Some 80 open-air stalls dealing in "Daruma" dolls line the station-front Futaba Ekimae-dori Street. Various events take place, including a tug-of-war for a huge daruma doll.
[Place] Nagatsuka district shopping street, Futaba Town
[Info.] Executive Committee for Futaba Town Daruma Market Tel: +81(240)33-2111
[Access] 1 min. walk from Futaba Sta. on JR Joban Line; or 20 min. after exiting Joban-Tomioka I.C. on Joban Expressway

Jan. 14 Aizu-Bange Town
Massive Rice-bag Tug-of-War at Bange New Year Market

In this rugged event, two groups (the East and West) of sturdy men clad only in loincloths stage a tug-of-war for a massive straw rice-bag (4m long, 2.5m high, 5 tons in weight).
[Place] In front of Town Office, etc.
[Info.] Aizu-Bange Town Tourism & Products Promotion Association Tel: +81(242)83-2111
[Access] 10 min. walk from Aizu-Bange Sta. on JR Tadami Line; or 20 min. after exiting Aizu-Bange I.C. on Ban'etsu Expressway



3rd Sun. of Jan. Miharu Town
Miharu "Daruma" Market

Dating back to the Edo Period (17th to mid-19th centuries), this market celebrates the New Year season of Miharu castle town. Some 70 stalls line the street, mainly dealing in luck-bringing "Miharu Daruma" dolls.
[Place] Omachi Omatsuri Street
[Info.] Miharu Town Tourism Association Tel: +81(247)62-3690
[Access] 5 min. by car from Miharu Sta. on JR Ban'etsu-tosen Line; or 10 min. after exiting Funehiki/Miharu I.C. on Ban'etsu Expressway

1st Sat. & Sun. of Feb. Yanaizu Town
Aizu Yanaizu Winter Festival



Snow sculptures and open-air stalls enliven the festival site. Also a variety of events including the "Setsubun" bean-throwing and "Awa Manju (bun)" all-you-can-eat contest.

[Place] Michi-no-eki "Aizu-Yanaizu"
[Info.] Executive Committee for Aizu-Yanaizu Winter Festival (c/o Town Office Community Revitalization Sec.) Tel: +81(241)42-2114
[Access] 20 min. walk from Aizu-Yanaizu Sta. on JR Tadami Line; or 10 min. after exiting Aizu-Bange I.C. on Ban'etsu Expressway

2nd Fri. & Sat. of Feb. Aizu-Wakamatsu City
Aizu Pictorial Candle Festival

In this winter fantasy, some 7,000 pictorial candles, a traditional Aizu craft, are lit in the premises of the Tsuruga-jo Castle and Oyakuen (herbal plant) Garden – both symbolic of Aizu.
[Place] Tsuruga-jo Castle, Oyakuen Garden, etc.
[Info.] Aizu-Wakamatsu Tourism & Products Promotion Association Tel: +81(242)24-3000
[Access] 10 min. by bus from Aizu-Yanaizu Sta. on JR Ban'etsu-saisen Line, alighting at Tsuruga-jo Kita-guchi stop, then 1 min. walk; or 15 min. after exiting Aizu-Wakamatsu I.C. on Ban'etsu Expressway



Early Feb. Inawashiro Town
Inawashiro Snowman Festival

Planned events include a snow sculpture contest and a fireworks display.
[Place] Inawashiro Town
[Info.] Inawashiro Town Commerce & Industry Association Tel: +81(242)62-2331
[Access] 5 min. by car from Inawashiro Sta. on JR Ban'etsu-saisen Line; or 10 min. after exiting Inawashiro/Bandai-kogen I.C. on Ban'etsu Expressway

Early Feb. Soma City
"Taste Treats from the Sea" Crab Festival

Enjoy complimentary crab soup.
[Place] Marine Products Direct Sales Center
[Info.] Marine Products Direct Sales Center Tel: +81(244)38-8956
[Access] 15 min. by car from Soma Sta. on JR Joban Line; or 90 min. after exiting Fukushima-nishi I.C. on Tohoku Expressway

2nd Sat. & Sun. of Feb. Shimogo Town
Ouchi-juku Snow Festival

Ouchi-juku is an old post town, which has been nationally designated as a traditional architectural preserve. A variety of events take place. They include Japan's largest dumplings on the branches of a tree, a fireworks display, an "All-you-can-eat" soba noodle contest and a tug-of-war by participants wearing straw sandals.
[Place] Ouchijuku
[Info.] Shimogo Town Commerce & Industry Sec. Tel: +81(241)69-1144
[Access] 15 min. by car from Yunokami Onsen Sta. on Aizu Tetsudo Line; or 75 min. after exiting Aizu-Wakamatsu I.C. on Ban'etsu Expressway



2nd Sat. & Sun. of Feb. Tadami Town
Tadami Furusato (Hometown) Snow Festival

The main stage is made of snow, surrounded by a number of snow sculptures. The site is beautifully illuminated at night. A snow sculpture contest is featured. The snow images back-lit a fireworks display are truly fantastic.



[Place] Tadami Station-front square
[Info.] Executive Committee for Tadami Furusato Snow Festival (c/o Town Office Industrial Promotion Sec.) Tel: +81(241)82-5240
[Access] 1 min. walk from Tadami Sta. on JR Tadami Line; or 90 min. after exiting Aizu-Bange I.C. on Ban'etsu Expressway

2nd Sat. of Feb. Mishima Town
Snow & Fire Festival

This festival is a present-day adaptation of the traditional "Sainokami" rite that prays for a rich harvest and peace for the family. Enjoy the sight of a huge bonfire coupled with a fireworks display that turns the night sky ablaze.
[Place] Mishima Town Athletic Ground
[Info.] Mishima Town Tourism Association Tel: +81(241)48-5000
[Access] 5 min. drive from Aizu-Miyashita Sta. on JR Tadami Line

2nd Sun. of Feb. Nishi-Aizu Town
Nishi-Aizu Snow Country Festival

A diversity of events such as the All-Japan Paulownia "Geta" (wooden clogs) Throwing Contest, the Haruki-yama Race, and a fireworks display.
[Place] Naritahara district, Kagamiishi Town
[Info.] Nishi-Aizu Furusato Promotion Committee Tel: +81(241)45-2213
[Access] 20 min. walk or 2 min. drive from Nozawa Sta. on JR Ban'etsu-saisen Line; or 10 min. drive after exiting Nishi-Aizu I.C. on Ban'etsu Expressway

Feb.10 ~ 11 Fukushima City
Shinobu-sanzan Akatsuki Mairi

This religious rite highlights the offering of a 12-meter-long, 2-ton straw sandal, to Haguro Shrine on Mt. Shinobu, the symbol of Fukushima City. A large number of locals visit the shrine in prayer for rich harvest, family prosperity, and happy marriage.
[Place] Haguro Shrine on Mt. Shinobu
[Info.] Fukushima City Commerce & Labor Sec. Tel: +81(24)525-3720
[Access] 10 min. by bus from Fukushima Sta. on JR Tohoku Shinkansen or Tohoku-honsen lines, alighting at Fukushima TV stop, then 30 min. walk; or 20 min. drive after exiting Fukushima-Iizaka I.C. on Tohoku Expressway

Feb. 11 Shirakawa City
Shirakawa "Daruma" Doll Market

This is a favored market of the winter season. With some 70 open-air stalls selling "Shirakawa Daruma" dolls, the market throngs with many visitors seeking good fortune.
[Place] From Tenjinmachi to Motomachi districts in Shirakawa City
[Info.] Shirakawa Tourism Association Tel: +81(248)22-1147
[Access] 1 min. walk from Shirakawa Sta. on JR Tohoku-honsen Line; or 15 min. drive after exiting Shirakawa I.C. on Tohoku Expressway



Mid- to late Feb. Kitakata City
The "Town of Warehouses" Kitakata Winter Festival

This festival was initiated in response to a strong desire to "Enliven Kitakata in Winter." A variety of events take place, highlights being the Kitakata Soba (buckwheat noodles) Festa, the All-Japan Ramen (Chinese noodles) Festa, and a Local Performing Arts Festival. During the period, a stamp imprint rally visiting landmark warehouses around town is also held, with gorgeous prizes for good performers.
[Place] Kitakata Plaza
[Info.] Kitakata City Office (Tourism Sec.) Tel: +81(241)24-5200
[Access] 10 min. walk from Kitakata Sta. on JR Ban'etsu-saisen Line; or 20 min. drive after exiting Aizu-Wakamatsu I.C. on Ban'etsu Expressway

3rd Sun. of Feb. Kaneyama Town
Aizu-Kaneyama Snow Festival

Complimentary warm soup from a huge hotpot plus many other events are featured! Slip into one of our eight hot springs – the largest number in the Inner-Aizu area – is the best way to warm you up after spending fun-filled outdoor hours.
[Place] Nakagawa district community sports ground in Kaneyama Town
[Info.] Kaneyama Town Tourism Association Tel: +81(241)54-2311
[Access] 5 min. walk from Aizu-Nakagawa Sta. on JR Tadami Line

3rd Sun. of Feb. Namie Town
Anba Festival

In this passionate festival, young men in loincloth only boldly march into the cold mid-winter sea, carrying a portable shrine.
[Place] Ukedo Beach, etc.
[Info.] Namie Town Office (Industry Promotion Sec.) Tel: +81(240)34-2111
[Access] 10 min. by car from Namie Sta. on JR Joban Line; or 10 min. drive after exiting Joban-Tomioka I.C. on Joban Expressway

Mid-Feb. Okuma Town
Okuma "Ekiden" Race

This is an "Ekiden" (relay marathon) race through scenic Okuma Town, well known as a Land of Fruits. Competitors vie in eight divisions, from elementary school students to adults. (Prior application required to participate.)
[Place] Okuma Town General Athletic Ground
[Info.] Okuma Town Sogo Sports Center Tel: +81(240)32-3604
[Access] 10 min. walk from Okuma Sta. on JR Joban Line; or 10 min. drive after exiting Joban-Tomioka I.C. on Joban Expressway

3rd Sun. of Feb. Showa Village
"Karamushi-ori-no-Sato" Snow Festival

The "Karamushi-ori," a textile woven with fibers from the "karamushi" plant is the specialty here. This festival features weaving, on-snow bleaching demonstrations and sale of the textile, along with on-snow games, rice cake pounding and local performing arts.



[Place] Karamushi-ori-no-Sato
[Info.] Executive Committee for Karamushi-ori-no-Sato Snow Festival Tel: +81(241)57-3100
[Access] 30 min. by bus from Aizu-Kawaguchi Sta. on JR Tadami Line; or 80 min. drive after exiting Aizu-Bange I.C. on Ban'etsu Expressway

Swans – The Symbol of Winter in Fukushima

Invitation to foster-parent swans (Fukushima City)

We invite those willing to become foster parents by lending financial support to feed swans that migrate to the Abukuma River. Privileges for foster parents include a Foster Parent certificate, discounts when staying at cooperative inns and hotels, and invitation to the "Friendship with Swans Gathering."
[Period] Late Oct. ~ late Feb.
[Place] Abukuma Riverside Park
[Access] 15 min. by bus from Fukushima Sta. on JR Tohoku Shinkansen or Tohoku-honsen lines, alighting at Okabe stop, then 15 min. walk
[Info.] Fukushima Tourism & Products Association Tel: +81(24)525-3722

Swans in Koya-ike Pond (Kagamiishi Town)

Some 1,000 whooping and whistling swans migrate to the pond after their long flight. Tourists flock to this place from both inside and outside the prefecture, to observe them.
[Period] Nov. ~ Mar.
[Place] Naritahara district, Kagamiishi Town
[Access] 10 min. by car from Kagamiishi Sta. on JR Tohoku-honsen Line; or 25 min. drive after exiting Sukagawa I.C. on Tohoku Expressway
[Info.] Kagamiishi Town Office (Industry Promotion Sec.) Tel: +81(248)62-2118

Natsui-gawa "Fureai" Swan Viewing (Iwaki City)

The purpose of this gathering is to experience the joys of Mother Nature and appreciate the importance of our environment. The "Fureai Hiroba" square is dotted with illustrated panels allowing visitors to learn about swans.
[Period] Late Oct. ~ early Dec. (9:00 ~ 15:00)
[Place] Natui River "Fureai Hiroba" square
[Access] 15 min. by bus from Iwaki Sta. on JR Joban Line; or 15 min. drive after exiting Iwaki-chuo I.C. on Joban Expressway
[Info.] Hirakubo Community Center Tel: +81(246)23-9483

Nagahama Beach on Lake Inawashiro (Inawashiro Town)

This beach, along National Route #49, is a favored wintering place for swans and ducks migrating from Siberia. Nagahama Beach is well known for being able to approach the birds very closely.
[Period] Mid-Nov. ~ Mar.
[Place] Nagahama Beach on Lake Inawashiro
[Access] 15 min. drive after exiting Inawashiro/Bandai-kogen I.C. on Ban'etsu Expressway; or 15 min. by bus from Inawashiro Sta. on JR Ban'etsu-saisen Line
[Info.] Inawashiro Tourism Association Tel: +81(242)62-2048

