



Kingdom of Winter Trip TOHOKU

WINTER PLAY

Play to the fullest in Tohoku's Snow!

Aomori
Prefecture

Iwate
Prefecture

Miyagi
Prefecture

Akita
Prefecture

Yamagata
Prefecture

Fukushima
Prefecture

Tohoku in Winter Sales Sheet



Stove-Heated Train (Aomori Prefecture)



Namahage (Akita Prefecture)



Nihonsyu (Image)

Visit the winter destination of Tohoku, Japan

Winter festivals, snow festivals, ski resorts, snow parks, snow monsters, winter landscapes, snow-viewing boats, winter fireworks, stove-heated trains, and an abundance of hot springs and foods... There are a myriad of attractive tourism sites and activities that can be enjoyed in Tohoku, Japan precisely because it is winter.

In Tohoku, Japan, there are many traditional winter rituals and festivals that the local people have valued and preserved over many long years. These are held as winter festivals and snow festivals where visitors can experience lifestyles and culture unique to the snow country. In addition, the ski resorts in each area not only delight skiers with powder snow, but there is also a wealth of activities available for enjoying snow, including snowshoeing and playing in the snow. There are too many enchantments in Tohoku, Japan that can be enjoyed only in winter to mention them all, but they include snow-viewing boats and stove-heated trains for viewing the beautiful natural landscapes in winter while being warmed by a heater, winter fireworks that light up the clear night sky, hot pot dishes of fresh ingredients eaten with friends, and local dishes particular to Tohoku.

Tohoku, Japan in winter brings surprises and thrills to many travelers seeking new destinations in Japan.





FESTIVAL



	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
Lake Towada Winter Story				
Iwate Snow Festival				

① Lake Towada Winter Story
(Aomori Prefecture)

This is a large-scale winter festival held in Aomori prefecture at the ice-covered Lake Towada. The lake's symbol, the Statue of Maidens, is illuminated, and visitors can enjoy a magical stroll around corridors and tunnels of snow and light. There are stage performances of folk entertainment, such as Tsugaru shamisen, as well as the Yukiakari Yokocho serving local dishes and the Amakura BAR where sake can be drunk inside snow huts. The winter fireworks set off amid the snowy landscape every night at 8 p.m. during the festival are also popular.

When: Early-late February
<http://towadako.or.jp/> (Japanese)

② Iwate Snow Festival
(Iwate Prefecture)

As one of the snow festivals representative of Tohoku, visitors can have fun looking, handling, and frolicking in the snow. Enjoy large snow sculptures, stage shows, snow activities, and snow trekking. The festival is a highlight of winter in Iwate where foods can also be enjoyed, including local dishes and Japanese sake. The fun lasts all day, with fireworks launched and snow sculptures illuminated at night.

When: Mid February
<http://www.iwateyukimatsuri.com/> (Japanese)





FESTIVAL



	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
SENDAI Pageant of Starlight	●—●			
Namahage Sedo Festival			●	



①SENDAI Pageant of Starlight (Miyagi Prefecture)

This is a winter tradition in Sendai held every December. The 160 zelkova trees that line Jozenji St. is illuminated by approximately 600,000 lights. Starlight Wink is a must-see event held 3 times a day where the streetlamps are turned off and then on again all at once. In addition, visitors can fully enjoy the tunnel of light while riding the loop bus, the Loople Sendai/Pageant of Starlight Bus, which runs during the event period.

When: Early-late December
<http://www.sendaihikape.jp/> (Japanese)

②Namahage Sedo Festival (Akita Prefecture)

One of the snow festivals representative of Tohoku is the Namahage Sedo Festival held at Shinzan Shrine in Oga. Namahage is a traditional event passed down in Oga since long ago. Once a year, the ogre-like Namahage make the rounds among houses to deliver admonitions against misdeeds, purge calamities, and give blessings. The Namahage has been designated an important cultural property by the Japanese government. The Namahage Sedo Festival entrances spectators with the sacred mood of the wild dance of the Namahage, performed by firelight on shrine grounds.

When: 2nd Fri.-Sun. in February
<https://oganavi.com/sedo/> (Japanese/English/Traditional Chinese)





FESTIVAL



① Inukko Festival (Akita Prefecture)

400 years ago, the feudal lord of Yuzawa quashed a band of thieves called Hakuto who were brazenly attacking homes in broad daylight. The Inukko Festival is said to have originated when local residents began making small statuettes of dogs, cranes, and turtles out of rice flour and placing them in the entrances and windows of their homes on the evening of the Lunar New Year to pray that the bandits would not appear again.

When: 2nd Sat. and Sun. in February
<http://akitayuzawa.jp/event-w-04.html> (Japanese)



② Zao Snow Monster Festival (Yamagata Prefecture)

Visitors can easily view the snow monsters (frost covered trees) even without skis by taking the ropeway to and from the base to the top of the mountain. The silvery white shapes are impressive in the daylight, but take on a different appearance at night when illuminated by colored lights. The magical nighttime world of snow monsters can be viewed from a heated snow tractor capable of driving on snow.

When: Late December–early March
 Fee: 2,600 yen (adults; round-trip ropeway fee)
<http://www.kankou.yamagata.yamagata.jp/zao/winter/> (Japanese)



③ Ouchi-Juku Snow Festival (Fukushima Prefecture)

In Ouchi-Juku in Minamiaizu, where many important traditional buildings are preserved, every February a festival takes place that illuminates the entire post town with snow lanterns. The biggest highlight is the sacred fire lit on the evening of the first day of the festival. Men who have been purified before the gods light the snow lanterns placed throughout the post town. When the lanterns are lit and the community is bathed in light from these lanterns for the gods, fireworks are set off in the night sky.

When: 2nd Sat. and Sun. in February
<http://ouchi-juku.com/> (Japanese)



	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
Inukko Festival			●	
Zao Snow Monster Festival	●	—	—	●
Ouchi-Juku Snow Festival			●	



FESTIVAL



	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
Hirosaki Castle Snow Lantern Festival				●	
Hachinohe Enburi Festival				●	
Morioka Snow Lights Festival				●	
Tono Dobekko Festival	●	●	●	●	●
Daito Ohara Water Festival				●	
Miyagi Zao Snow Monster Viewing	●	●	●	●	●
Donto Festival (Osaki Hachimangu Shrine)			●		
Matsushima Oyster Festival				●	

① Hirosaki Castle Snow Lantern Festival (Aomori Prefecture)

This is one of the “Michinoku Godai Snow Festivals.” There are snow sculptures placed in the park, including snow lanterns featuring pictures of warriors and garden lanterns of different sizes. As many as 300 small, candle-lit snow huts line the edges of the lotus pond. The snow-covered Hirosaki Castle tower and ancient pine trees are also illuminated, creating a magical sight. In addition, there is a snow slide and events are held.



When: Early February
<http://www.hirosakipark.jp/84.html> (Japanese)

③ Morioka Snow Lights Festival (Iwate Prefecture)

Numerous small snow huts are made and lit by candles from within. This festival was started to communicate through the lights the warmth of the city and people that are felt so keenly amid the frigid night air of winter nights in Morioka, the coldest city on Honshu. Visitors can enjoy fascinating snow sculptures and ice carvings.



When: 2nd Thur.–Sat. in February
<http://www.odette.or.jp/moriokayukiakari/> (Japanese)

⑤ Daito Ohara Water Festival (Iwate Prefecture)

Men considered of a critical age bravely run nearly naked down streets lined with people waiting to mercilessly douse them with icy water to pray for Fire prevention, health, and the safety of family. This traditional festival has continued since the Edo period and is also called a strange festival because it is held in the coldest month of February. Recently, many people from all over Japan have participated in this winter festival that is representative of Ichinoseki and Iwate prefecture.



When: February 11th
<http://www.ichitabi.jp/event/data.php?no=61&m=2> (Japanese)

⑦ Donto Festival (Osaki Hachimangu Shrine; Miyagi Prefecture)

The Matsutaki Festival at Osaki Hachimangu Shrine is one of the largest rituals in Japan observed to burn New Year's decorations. It is performed on the eve of January 14th on a part of the shrine grounds. This sacred fire sends off the gods that visited people's homes during New Year's, and it is said that if touched by it the body is purified and you are blessed with protection from illness and disaster in the home for the coming year.



When: January 14th
<http://www.oosaki-hachiman.or.jp/festival/matsutaki/> (Japanese)

② Hachinohe Enburi Festival (Aomori Prefecture)

This folk entertainment performed to pray for an abundant harvest in the Hachinohe region has been designated a national important intangible folk cultural property. The ritual shakes awake the gods of the fields asleep in the winter and imbues the earth with the spirits of the people. Not to be missed are the tayu dancers wearing colorful hats who shake their heads in exaggerated movements in a unique dance.



When: February 17th–20th
<https://hachinohe-kanko.com/> (Japanese)

④ Tono Dobekko Festival (Iwate Prefecture)

At Tono Furusato Village, visitors can experience life in the mountain village of Tono, which is known for folktales. A festival is held here for visitors to enjoy “doburoku” sake and “dobekko,” unrefined sake from local sake brewers. Those who don't drink sake can eat their fill of local dishes, watch sacred music and dances passed down in Tono District, and enjoy wintertime in Tono.



When: 1–2 times a month on Sat. and Sun. from November–December
Fee: 540 yen (adults; Village entrance fee)
<http://www.tono-furusato.jp/densyou/dobekko.html> (Japanese)

⑥ Miyagi Zao Snow Monster Viewing (Miyagi Prefecture)

Visitors ride the Wild Monster, a heated snow tractor equipped with seats to view the globally rare natural phenomenon called snow monsters. Upgrade to the grand class vehicle and receive perks such as a blanket on loan for use in the cabin, an original product as a present, and free drinks.



Runs: Mid December–mid March **Fee: From 5,300 yen (adults)**
<http://www.zao-sumikawa.jp/juhyo.html> (Japanese)

⑧ Matsushima Oyster Festival (Miyagi Prefecture)

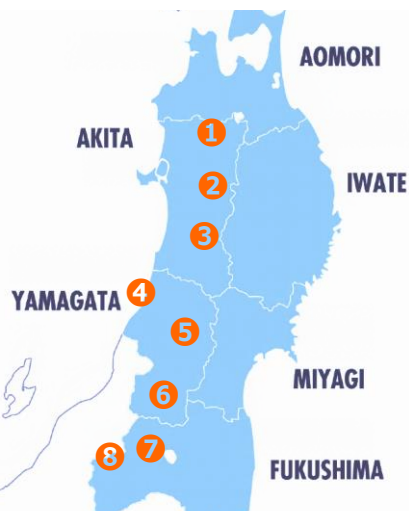
This event lets visitors eat their fill of the taste of winter in Matsushima, oysters. There is an array of delicious items available, including piping hot oyster soup, freshly shucked oysters, oysters in the shell, and foods from the sea and mountains in Miyagi. Visitors should also tour Matsushima by taking advantage of attractions such as a sightseeing boat.



When: Early February
<http://www.matsushima-kanko.com/event/detail.php?id=11> (Japanese)



FESTIVAL



	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
Odate Amekko Fair			●	
Hiburi Kamakura Festival			●	
Yokote Kamakura Festival			●	
Tsuruoka Winter Festival	●	●		
Yamagata Snow Festival			●	
Uesugi Snow Lantern Festival			●	
Aizu Candle Festival			●	
Tadami Snow Festival			●	

①Odate Amekko Fair (Akita Prefecture)

Tradition says that eating candy on this day at the Amekko Fair will prevent you from catching colds. Events are held such as the Akita Dog Parade and Shirahige Okami, a parade reenacting the story of a god coming to buy candy. The venue is lined with food stalls selling foods such as candy on branches and sculptured candy.



When: 2nd Sat. and Sun. in February
<http://www.city.odate.akita.jp/dcity/sitemanager.nsf/doc/amekkoichi.html>
 (Japanese/English/Simplified Chinese/Traditional Chinese/Hangul)

③ Yokote Kamakura Festival (Akita Prefecture)

The Kamakura Festival is a Lunar New Year ritual that worships the god of water. The tradition has been practiced for around 450 years. Children call out to people to enter the snow huts (kamakura) and pray to the god of water. Sweet, mild sake and rice cakes are served. During the festival, about 100 snow huts are built throughout the city of Yokote.



When: Feb. 15th–16th
<http://www.michinokugodai.com/yokote02.html> (Japanese)

⑤ Yamagata Snow Festival (Yamagata Prefecture)

This event kicks off the snow festival season in Yamagata prefecture. A display of snow sculptures symbolic of the event, a snow sculpture/snowman contest, and fireworks entice visitors into a world of snow. After fully enjoying sledding and treasure hunting in the snow, visitors can taste the flavors of winter in Yamagata at the food stall village that serves items such as hot pot dishes and Japanese sake, giving visitors a fully satisfying winter experience in Yamagata.



When: Early February
<http://www.yamagata-yukifes.jp/> (Japanese)

⑦ Aizu Candle Festival (Fukushima Prefecture)

Aizu painted candles are one of the traditional crafts found in Aizu. At Oyakuen Garden, bamboo pipes envelop Shinji Pond, creating a magical, mystical world, while at Tsuruga Castle candles light up Aizu Hongo pottery lanterns and Aizu lacquerware candlesticks. Enjoy the beauty and warmth of the flickering flames.



When: Early February
<http://www.aizu.com/erousoku/> (Japanese)

② Hiburi Kamakura Festival (Akita Prefecture)

In this spellbinding festival, rings of mesmerizing light dance amid the snow. The ritual exorcises evil from the fields and prays for safety for the coming year, such as the well being and health of family. A rope of about 1 m. in length is tied to a charcoal sack which is then lit. Holding the end of the rope, the burning sacks are swung in an arc around the performers' bodies.



When: February 13th–14th
<http://www.city.semboku.akita.jp/event/event.php?id=780>
 (Japanese/English/Simplified Chinese/Hangul)

④ Tsuruoka Winter Festival (Yamagata Prefecture)

This festival is named after the famous song, “Yuki no Furu Machi wo (In the Snowy Town),” a melody inspired by memories of snow in Tsuruoka. Several events are held from late December to February, starting with the Winter Cod Festival that serves the local dish of codfish soup, and continuing with events such as the Tsuruoka Music Festival, the Oyama Newly Brewed Sake & Sake Brewery Festival where newly brewed winter sake can be tasted, and the Kinbozan Snow Lantern Festival.



When: 5 times from late December–late February
<http://www.mokkedano.net/event/183?season=winter> (Japanese)

⑥ Uesugi Snow Lantern Festival (Yamagata Prefecture)

On the 2nd Saturday and Sunday of every February, the entire area of Matsugasaki Park becomes a festival venue and is decorated with approximately 300 snow lanterns and 1000 paper lanterns that light up the park. There is warmth and beauty in the soft light and scene as it sways in the light. Visitors are ushered into a fairytale world of magical poetic sentiment. Of course, visitors can enjoy Yonezawa foods, including Yonezawa ramen and grilled skewered dishes.



When: 2nd Sat. and Sun. in February
<http://yukidourou.yonezawa-matsuri.jp/> (Japanese)

⑧ Tadami Snow Festival (Fukushima Prefecture)

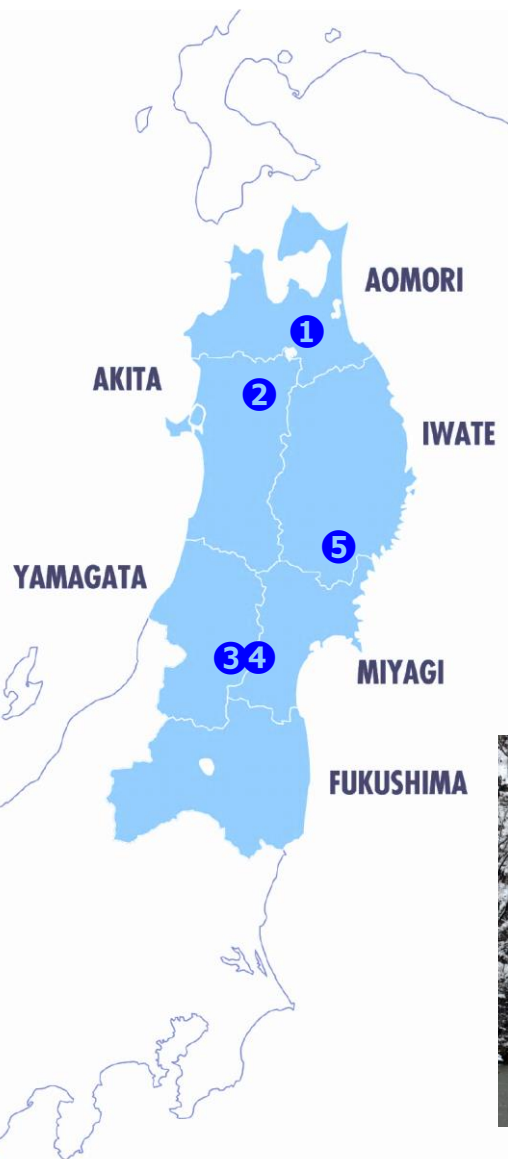
Tadami is a well-known area that experiences heavy snowfall and has been registered as a UNESCO Eco Park. The Snow Festival held here welcomes visitors with a warm and wondrous atmosphere created by snow sculptures and candle-lit roads. Various performances take place, including traditional arts and impressive portable shrines carried in the snow. Yukinko Market features rows of food stalls where visitors can fill up on local flavors.



When: 2nd Sat. and Sun. in February
<http://tadamisnowfes.com/> (Japanese)



SCENERY



①Mt. Hakkoda Snow Monsters (Aomori Prefecture)

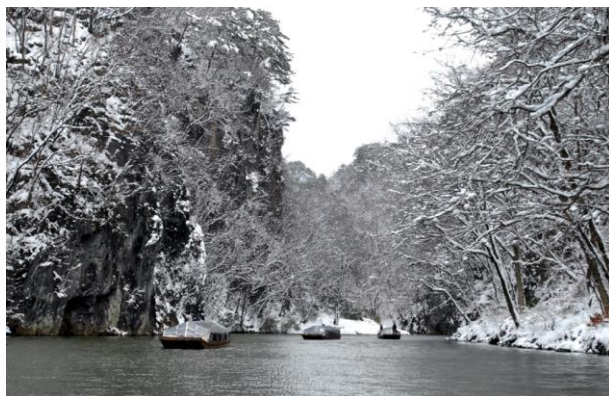
Hakkoda Ropeway is a popular tourist spot where visitors can enjoy not only skiing, but also the spectacle of snow monsters. It is conveniently accessed from Aomori City by car (approx. 40 min.). The ski slopes offer several runs measuring as much as 7 km with something for everyone, from beginners to advanced skiers. It boasts snow quality that is among the best in Japan, and skiers from around the world come to try the guided backcountry skiing.

②Mt. Moriyoshi Snow Monsters, (Akita Prefecture)

The snow monsters (frost covered trees) on Mt. Moriyoshi can be easily accessed via a short 5 min. walk from the gondola lift station at the top of the mountain. A viewing path has been created that takes around 30 min. to complete. Visitors can relish a globally rare experience, such as skiing among Aomori fir trees covered in sparkling frost spread out on the mountain top at an altitude of 1,000 m.

③Snow Monsters in Yamagata Zao (Yamagata Prefecture)

The snow monsters of Zao are needle-leaved Aomori fir trees, which grow in the subalpine zone, that are covered in snow and ice. Cloud particles (supercooled water droplets) in snow clouds collide with branches and leaves, and freeze to form a kind of curved tail shape. Many snowflakes then become trapped within those spaces and harden. This phenomenon is repeated over and over to create the snow monsters.



④Snow Monsters in Miyagi Zao (Miyagi Prefecture)

Snow monsters are a fascinating sight. In addition to Zao, they can only be seen in Japan at locations such as Hakkoda in Aomori and Mt. Moriyoshi in Akita. Creating these snow monsters requires certain conditions--the existence of trees, winter climate conditions, snowfall, and supercooled water droplets. Not only are these harsh conditions just right in Miyagi Zao, but there is also an expanse of frost covered trees that provides a vast panoramic view. When the weather is bad, visitors can experience the awesome blizzards at an altitude of 1,600m in minus 10°C temperatures that are necessary to create the snow monsters. People of all ages, from small children to seniors, can effortlessly enjoy viewing the globally rare natural phenomenon amid the stunningly beautiful frost-covered forest.

⑤Geibikei Gorge Boat Ride (Iwate Prefecture)

A boat featuring a heated table (kotatsu) runs only during winter so that visitors can enjoy a boat ride even during the cold winter months. The sound of water echoing in the gorge amid crisp air and quiet of winter is quite delightful. Visitors can feed the ducks and try throwing "luck stones" into a small hole on a cliff face, which is said to bring luck if successful.

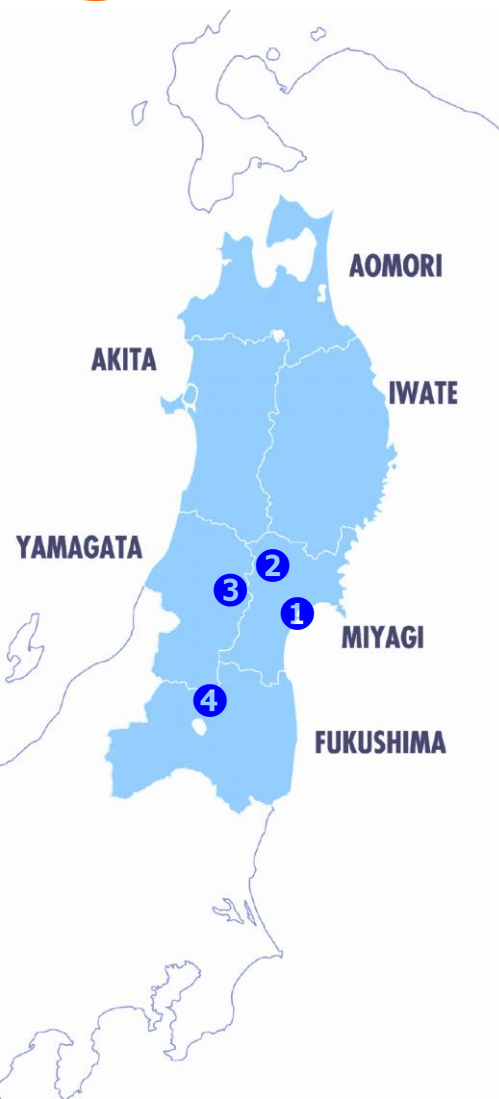
■ Period: Year round

■ Fee: 1,600 yen (adults)

<http://www.geibikei.co.jp/funakudari/> (Japanese)



SCENERY



① Matsushima (Miyagi Prefecture)



Matsushima, one of the three most scenic spots in Japan, has a beautiful winter setting. The snowy spectacle of Godaido is a picturesque view distinctive of winter. The best time to eat the popular oysters in Matsushima is November to March, so visitors can enjoy both the lovely landscape and hot dishes such as oyster hot pot.

② Snow Walls of Zao Echo Line(Miyagi Prefecture)



The mountain road, Zao Echo Line traverses the Zao mountain range. The heavy snow that piles up during winter is plowed in April, forming walls of snow reaching several meters high on either side of the road. Cars can drive between the long, unending snow walls and enjoy the impressive sight.

③ Ginzan Hot Springs (Yamagata Prefecture)



Western-style wooden inns standing several stories high line both sides of Ginzan River. Visitors can experience the distinctive scenery unchanged from long ago. The hot springs town lit up at night by gas lamps is particularly enchanting. Although the setting is enjoyable as it changes through the four seasons, from the new greenery of spring to autumn colors, the hot spring landscape blanketed in snow is especially exceptional.

④ Ice Sculptures (Fukushima Prefecture)



Buffeted by the winds blowing from Mt. Bandai, water on the lake's surface is stirred up and blown onto the trees along the shoreline where it freezes. These natural ice sculptures, called shibuki-gori (ice sculptures), are an exceedingly rare phenomenon in Japan. They create a beautiful natural landscape in winter at Lake Inawashiro.



CULTURE



① Stove-Heated Train (Aomori Prefecture)

A train equipped with an old-fashioned potbelly stove runs on this local line during winter. Locals and tourists alike are drawn together as they gather around the stove with its red-hot burning coals, spurring communication. Why not enjoy chatting while looking out at the Aomori landscape from the window of a stove-heated train?

■ **Period:** December 1st–March 31st

■ **Fee:** Train fare + 400 yen

<http://tsutetsu.com/stove.html> (Japanese)



② Sanriku Railway Heated Train (Iwate Prefecture)

The Sanriku Railway Kita Riasu Line operates a special train in winter where all seats become “kotatsu” (tables with heating elements underneath). Passengers can enjoy a trip lasting approx. 100 min. that runs through 16 stations while cozily sitting under the heated table. Several features of the train ride include the appearance of a character resembling the traditional Namahage of Tohoku and announcements made as the train pauses at picturesque points along the journey.

■ **Period:** Sat., Sun., and holidays from mid December–late March; daily 12/30–1/8 ■ **Fee:** Train fare + 310 yen

<http://www.sanrikutetsudou.com/wp-content/themes/responsive/event.html> (Japanese)



③ Donto Festival (Miyagi Prefecture)

Donto Festival is a Japanese festival held around January 15th. Decorations put up for New Year's are burned to send off the gods that visited each home during New Year's. The Donto Festival in Miyagi prefecture is famous for the “hadaka mairi” where several adult worshippers wearing next to nothing approach the burning sacred fire. The Donto Festival held at Osaki Hachimangu Shrine in particular is the largest in the prefecture and known as a winter tradition in Sendai.

■ **When:** January 14th





CULTURE



① Snow Huts (Akita Prefecture)

Snow huts called “kamakura” are made by hollowing out snow. Making these snow huts is a traditional, seasonal event in snowy regions of Japan. The Yokote Kamakura Festival, held every February, is a snow festival representative of Tohoku and a famous winter highlight. Visitors can thoroughly enjoy the snow country event while trying refreshments such as warm drinks, rice cakes, and sweets served inside the snow huts.

② Mogami River Boat Ride (Yamagata Prefecture)

Visitors ride the current of the Mogami River as they take a boat downstream and view the scenery along the Mogami Ravine. In winter, the trip is made on a Japanese-style boat equipped with a “kotatsu” (heated table). Passengers can fully appreciate the winter scenery, reminiscent of an ink painting, while feeling toasty warm and listening to the boatman’s animated delivery of information and a boat song.

■ When: Year round

■ Fee: From 2,200 yen (adults)

www.blf.co.jp

(Japanese/English/Simplified Chinese/Traditional Chinese/Hangul)



③ Sake Brewery Tours (Fukushima Prefecture)

Tohoku is a region of rice and sake, and the Aizuwakamatsu area in Fukushima prefecture is famous for producing Japanese sake. Not only can visitors tour the brewing process and sample the sake, but they can also enjoy coffee and sweets made with sake at the adjoining sake brewery café.





FOOD



① Misokayaki (Aomori Prefecture)

This local dish from the Tsugaru and Shimokita regions is said to have its beginnings in the past when fishermen used scallop shells in place of pots to cook miso and sliced fish. The flavors of scallops, dried bonito, green onions, and other ingredients merge with the miso and thoroughly warm the body.



③ Oyster Hot Pot (Miyagi Prefecture)

This hot pot dish called “kaki nabe” is made with an abundance of oysters, which come into season in winter. The gently simmered oysters are tender, and when eaten in one bite, fill the palate with their fresh flavor. There are also cruise tours that serve passengers oyster hot pot on the boat.



② Miyako Hair Crab (Iwate Prefecture)

Hair crab is a winter specialty in Miyako. The Hair Crab Festival features several tasty events, including hair crab sold at discount prices, free servings of hair crab soup, and a demonstration of tuna being carved.

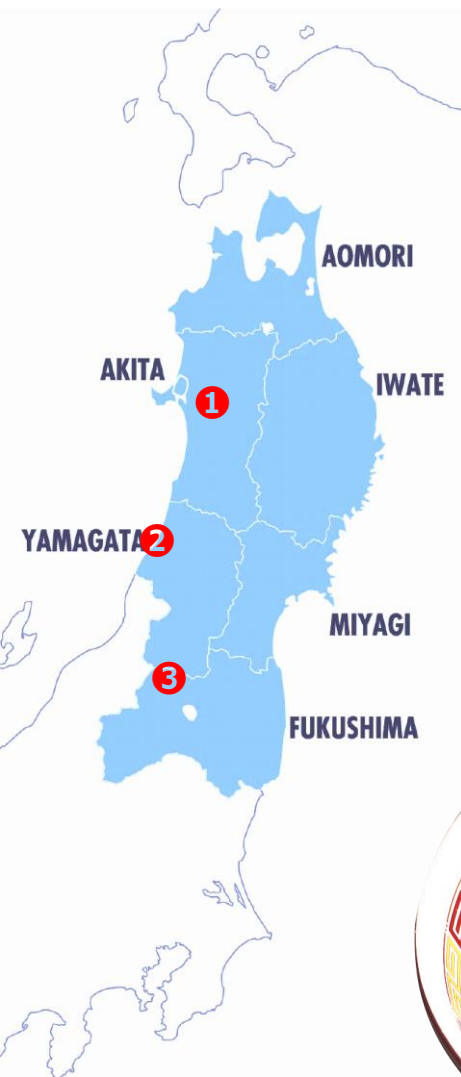


④ Japanese Parsley Hot Pot (Miyagi Prefecture)

Japanese Parsley Hot Pot (seri nabe) is a local dish in Sendai, Miyagi that is made from Japanese parsley grown in the city of Natori. The vegetable from Natori can be eaten in its entirety down to the roots and is characterized by thick stems and thick roots. In addition, the leaves, stems, and roots each have a different flavor and texture that can be enjoyed.



FOOD



① Kiritanpo Hot Pot (Akita Prefecture)

Kiritanpo hot pot is a local dish from northern Akita, a prefecture known for rice and snow. Cooked rice is mashed and toasted on a wooden stick to make “kiritanpo.” This is simmered in a soup of chicken stock together with ingredients such as chicken, green onions, mushrooms, burdock, and Japanese parsley. The gourmet dish from Akita is prepared with the famous brand of rice, Akita Komachi, locally grown vegetables, and the brand-name chicken, Hinai chicken.

② Codfish Soup (Yamagata Prefecture)

Nothing says the taste of winter more than winter cod (kandara) from the Japan Sea! This codfish soup, or “dongara-jiru,” is a hearty dish flavored with miso that is appreciated more for the offal and soft roe than the meat. The liver, which is important because it is key to the rich flavor, is broken up and mixed into the miso, or parboiled in bite-sized pieces and added to the soup. The green onions and seaweed also give the soup its great taste!



③ Kitakata Ramen (Fukushima)

Kitakata ramen can be counted among the 3 best types of ramen in Japan, after Sapporo and Hakata ramen. The pork broth-based soup mixes with distinctive curly noodles in this ramen that is very popular with men and women of all ages.



EXPERIENCE



① Hakkoda Ski Resort (Aomori Prefecture)

Located in the northern part of Towada-Hachimantai National Park, this is one of the largest mountain ski resorts in Japan. Skiing can be enjoyed from late November to mid May, and skiers can dynamically ski through the snow monsters spread out on the mountain top. Visitors can also take a guided tour to enjoy a full-fledged back country course that includes Sukayu Hot Springs and Jogakura Hot Springs.

<http://www.hakkoda-ropeway.jp/>
(Japanese/English/Simplified Chinese/
Traditional Chinese/Hangul)



② Appi Kogen Ski Resort (Iwate Prefecture)

This is the largest ski resort in the Tohoku area. It has 8 lifts and 21 different ski runs in all for a huge variety to choose from. The resort generally offers long ski runs with the intermediate to advanced slopes higher up and gentle slopes lower on the mountain for beginners. The longest ski run, the Yamabato Course (5.5 km), can even be skied by beginners. Enjoy skiing on what is said to be the best powder snow in Tohoku.

<http://www.appi.co.jp/ski>
(Japanese/English/Traditional Chinese/
Simplified Chinese/Hangul/Thai)





EXPERIENCE



① Zao Hot Springs Ski Area (Yamagata Prefecture)

This is one of the leading ski areas in Japan. There are a total of 26 ski runs spread over 14 areas with 41 lifts, including the gondola ropeway. During the Snow Monster Festival in February, visitors can view the snow monsters illuminated at night. The Snow Monster Forest Course that can be skied while viewing the frost-covered trees is very popular, and Zao Hot Springs in the base area has long been known for its high quality hot spring waters.

<http://www.zao-ski.or.jp/> (Japanese)



② Grandeco Snow Resort (Fukushima Prefecture)

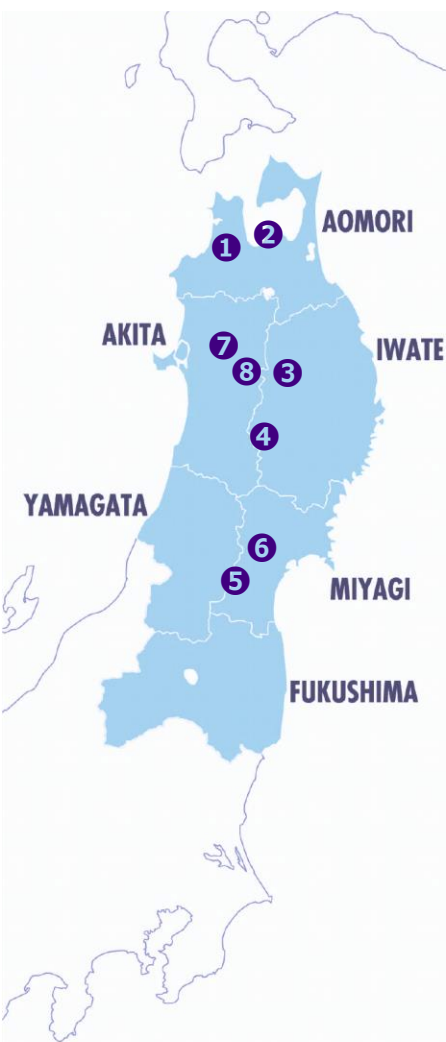
The base elevation is over 1000 m at this resort where visitors can appreciate an abundance of snowfall and superb snow quality in the Urabandai area. Multiple slopes for beginners and intermediate skiers put beginners and families feel at ease. Of course, there are also natural mogul courses and uncompressed snow runs for expert skiers. Plus, the Grandeco Hotel, which is directly linked to the slopes, has amenities including an indoor pool and natural hot spring baths.

<http://www.grandeco.com/>
(Japanese/English)





EXPERIENCE



①Aomori Spring Ski Resort (Aomori Prefecture)

This ski resort is located on the northern slope of Mt. Iwaki and has an excellent reputation for steady snowfall and good quality powder snow. A panoramic view of the Japan Sea and the Tsugaru Plain is visible from the mountaintop gondola station (921 m). There are a variety of slopes to be enjoyed, including an exhilarating 3.4 km-long course featuring a difference in elevation of 545 m. that gives skiers the feeling they are jumping into the sea. They can get an eyeful of nature on the course going through a beech tree forest.

<https://aomorispringski.com/> (Japanese/English)



②Moya Hills Ski Resort (Aomori Prefecture)

Easily accessed via a 30 min. car ride from Aomori City, this urban ski resort is open until 9 p.m. during ski season, letting visitors ski while viewing the night skyline of Aomori City. It offers slopes to accommodate a wide range of ski levels, from a kids' slope to a very steep slope with a maximum grade of 31 degrees. There are also hot spring facilities, so visitors can relax away their fatigue after skiing.

<http://www.moyahills.jp/> (Japanese)



③Shizukuishi Ski Resort (Iwate Prefecture)

This large ski slope is a major resort in Northern Tohoku. The World Cup and many other competitions have been held at this popular ski resort that has challenging ski runs. It is distinctive for a course layout offering long ski runs and a variety of slope terrains featuring moguls and powdered snow. Though this ski resort is generally regarded as for advanced skiers, there are also many gentle slopes that even beginners can enjoy.

<http://www.princehotels.co.jp/ski/shizukuishi/> (Japanese/English/Simplified Chinese/Traditional Chinese/Hangul)



④Geto Kogen Ski Resort (Iwate Prefecture)

The slopes in Geto, a place that experiences heavy snowfall, offers a good balance of ski runs for everyone from beginners to advanced skiers.

Visitors can efficiently enjoy all 14 courses using the 2 gondolas and the high-speed quad. For intermediate to advanced skiers, there is also an uncompressed snow area and a mogul slope for a satisfying ski experience. The night course using the gondola is the largest in Tohoku and lets visitors enjoy all the fun of snow throughout the day.

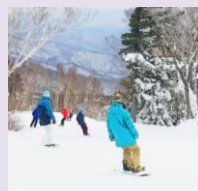
<http://www.geto8.com/> (Japanese/English/Simplified Chinese)



⑤Miyagi Zao Sumikawa Snow Park (Miyagi Prefecture)

This snow park is divided into Sumikawa with primarily gently slopes, and Atomi with primarily medium to steep slopes. Both the amount of Snowfall and snow quality are perfect. The park is open from early December to early April. Skiers can fully enjoy good-quality powder snow daily during the peak season. There is a well-maintained terrain park with an array of features, so skiers can enjoy a variety of skiing.

<http://www.zao-sumikawa.jp/> (Japanese)



⑥Spring Valley Ski Resort (Miyagi Prefecture)

While this is a compact ski resort, it has a mogul course and park with a wide variety of course layouts to satisfy everyone from families to freestylers. Many skiers from Sendai visit after 5 p.m. since it is just 40 min. by car from the city and stays open until 10 p.m.

<http://www.springvalley.co.jp/> (Japanese/English)



⑦Ani Ski Resort (Akita Prefecture)

From January to February, the especially large snow monsters can be viewed in the vicinity of the mountaintop. Use the Ani gondola to swiftly get to the top and enjoy the sweeping view of the snow-covered Ou Mountains. After thoroughly appreciating the breathtaking view, skiers can enjoy an exciting run amid the snow monsters and nature on the Forest Course. After the snowfall in the peak season, skiers can enjoy high-quality powder snow.

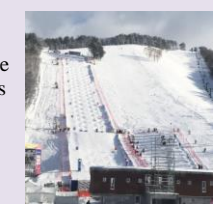
<http://www.aniski.jp/> (Japanese)



⑧Tazawako Ski Area (Akita Prefecture)

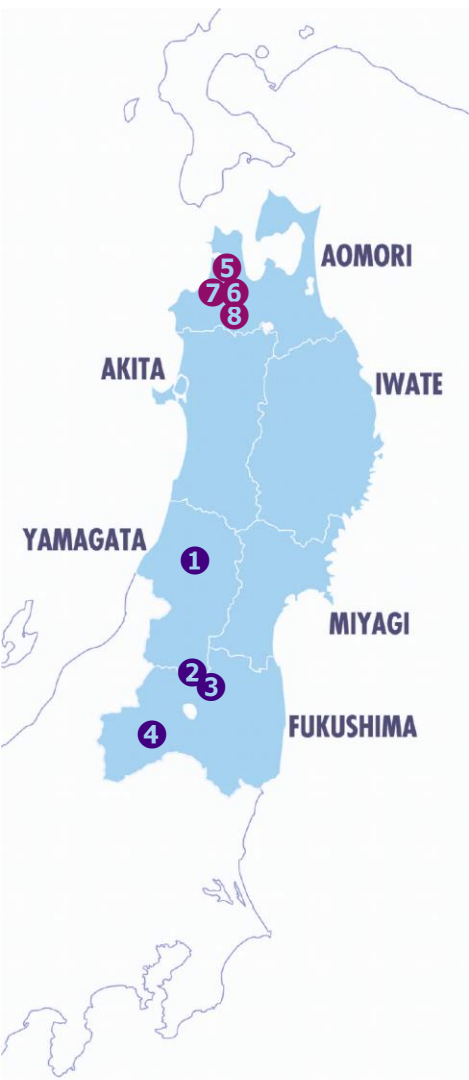
At this popular ski area, a dynamic view of Lake Tazawa spreads out below, giving skiers the sensation that they are skiing right into the lake. The slopes fan out on Mt. Akita-Komagatake, and skiers can enjoy an array of experiences, from well-maintained compressed snow to deep snow on uncompressed slopes, as well as mogul runs, and a park. Visitors can join back country tours and thoroughly experience the nature of Tohoku.

<http://www.tazawako-ski.com/> (Japanese/English/Traditional Chinese/Hangul)





EXPERIENCE



① Gassan Ski Resort (Yamagata Prefecture)

This ski resort is located in such a very heavy snowfall area that it is open from April to July because there is too much snow in winter. The ski zone encompasses the entire area of Mt. Gassan, which means that generally speaking skiers are free to ski anywhere, excluding areas noted as dangerous. Skiing at the height of summer in short sleeves is the ultimate exhilarating experience. Plus, there are also hot springs in the area visitors are encouraged to enjoy.

<http://www.gassankanko.jp/> (Japanese)



② Alts Bandai Ski Resort (Fukushima Prefecture)

This ski resort is comprised of 29 courses in total that are spread out over 3 ridges at the base of Mt. Bandai. It boasts a wide variety of courses that accommodate beginners up to advanced skiers. There is an uncompressed snow area called the Natural Zone where skiers can experience the best powder snow after a snowfall. The snow park has different features for everyone, from beginners to experienced skiers.

<http://www.alt.co.jp/> (Japanese/English)



③ Listel Ski Fantasia (Fukushima Prefecture)

This ski resort has 6 courses offering a variety of challenges to suit beginners up to advanced skiers. The summit affords a majestic view with Mt. Bandai to the right and Lake Inawashiro to the left. The advanced course was used in the World Cup by top world-class mogul skiers. Visitors should be sure to give it a try. The hotel is directly connected to the slopes, so visitors can also fully enjoy their time off the slopes.

<http://www.listel-inawashiro.jp/> (Japanese/English)



④ Aizu Kogen Takatsue Ski Resort (Fukushima Prefecture)

Takatsue has a total of 15 courses offering a variety of challenges for all, from beginners to experts. It is situated at the skirts of Mt. Takatsue, which stands at an elevation exceeding 1600 m. The difficult courses are found higher up, while the slopes for beginners and families are concentrated lower down, so visitors can ski with peace of mind. The genuine half pipe has proved very popular.

<http://takatsue.jp/> (Japanese/English)



⑤ Ground Blizzard Tour (Aomori Prefecture)

In this unusual offering unique to the snow country, visitors experience a fierce ground blizzard in the biting cold of Tsugaru in Aomori as they go on a tour to experience firsthand an actual ground blizzard, for which Tsugaru is famous. Strong winds pick up snow on the ground and blow it around. Visitors wear 3 pieces of traditional clothing from the north country, a winter shawl, work pants, and snowshoes, then brave the ground blizzard!

■ Place: Goshogawara ■ Period: Late January–late February
■ Fee: 2,500 yen (adults)

http://www.aptinet.jp/Detail_display_00004065.html (Japanese)



⑥ Inakadate Rice Paddy Art (Aomori Prefecture)

This event was started in 2016 with the idea of having fun in winter and playing in the snow. Snow art created using light and shadows is displayed in winter rice paddies. There are also workshops and hands-on experiences available for an event that offers fun for kids and adults alike.

■ Place: Roadside Station Inakadate Yayoiosato, Inakadate
■ Period: Early February ■ Observatory Entrance Fee: 300 yen (adults)
■ Dwarf (elementary school student) 100 yen

<http://www.vill.inakadate.lg.jp/> (Japanese/English/Simplified Chinese/Traditional Chinese/Hangul)



⑦ Evening Guided Tour of Hirosaki Back Streets (Aomori Prefecture)

In this slightly offbeat tour, visitors walk the back streets of Hirosaki at dusk. Participants see the local train line running along the Tsubuchi River and visit old-fashioned buildings, such as the Historic Hirosaki Mujin Office Bldg. Visitors should also check out HOME WORKS St. lined with miscellaneous stylish stores, and the working-class atmosphere of the Golden Quarter, which has a concentration of eateries. The tour gives visitors an in-depth look at Hirosaki!

■ Place: Hirosaki ■ Period: Year round ■ Fee: 1,500 yen
<http://www.asoview.com/act/guidetour/aomori/are0020500/pln3000005220/> (Japanese)



⑧ Apple Bath (Aomori Prefecture)

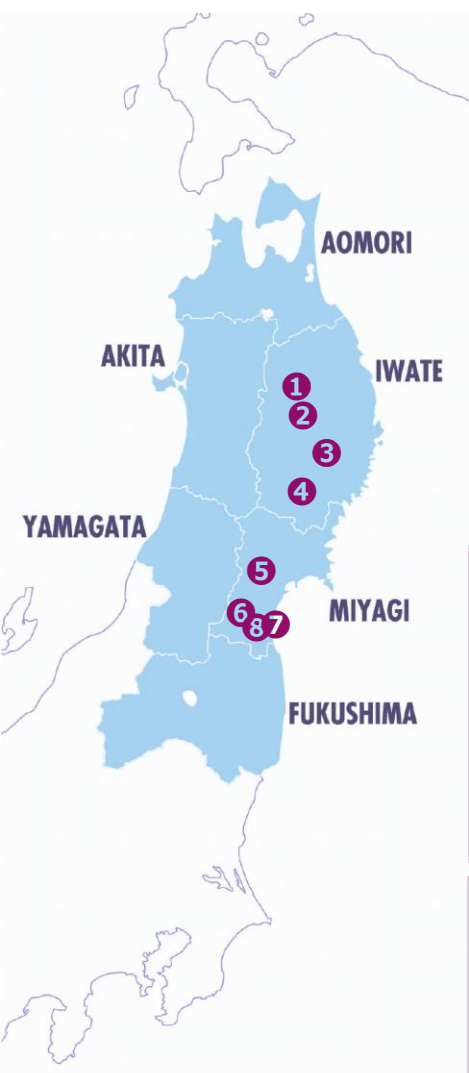
The acidic elements of malic acid and caproic acid penetrate the skin and encourage blood flow. Vitamins, minerals, and polyphenols are effective for recovery from fatigue, relaxing, beautiful skin, improving sensitivity to cold, and speeding up metabolism.

■ Place: Hotel Apple Land, Tsugaru, Hirakawa
■ Period: Year round ■ Bath Fee: 350 yen
<http://www.apple-land.co.jp/> (Japanese/English/Traditional Chinese/Simplified Chinese/Hangul/Thai)





E_XPERIENCE



① 1-Day Cross Country Skiing (Iwate Prefecture)

Participants can readily enjoy Hachimantai through cross country skiing without bringing their own equipment. Why not take a leisurely walk through a silvery white world? Participants may discover animal paw prints along the snowy road in this popular activity that stirs the adventurous spirit. All equipment can be borrowed free of charge, and lunch is homemade ham club sandwiches, hot soup, and a hot drink.



■ Place: Hachimantai ■ Fee: 10,260 yen
<http://www.asoview.com/act/ccski/iwate/are0030300/pln3000005774/>
(Japanese)

③ Overnight Stay at a Farming Village (Iwate Prefecture)

Stay at a private home and experience life on a farm and daily farm work. Guests can enjoy hands-on experiences, including working in the farm fields, making pizza, cooking local dishes, and in winter, making a decorated basket craft called ikkanbari. Cook using vegetables you harvested, sleep on futons laid out side by side, and enjoy travel experiences you won't find at a hotel stay.



■ Place: Tono ■ Period: Year round
■ Fee: From 7,000 yen (adults)
<http://sinoboo.wixsite.com/agriturismo-bigwoods> (Japanese)

⑤ Snowshoeing on Mt. Izumigatake (Miyagi Prefecture)

Even beginners can easily put on snowshoes and explore a snowy mountain typical of Tohoku featuring beautiful white birch and Mongolian oak towering over the landscape. Participants take the lift from Izumigatake Ski Resort and head toward Usagidaira where there is a marshland that can only be entered when snow has fallen. Participants can get an eyeful of beautiful, must-see sights that can only be experienced in winter on a snowy mountain.



■ Place: Sendai ■ Fee: 7,000 yen + 1,500 yen snowshoe rental
<http://www.asoview.com/act/snowshoe/miyagi/are0040200/pln3000005987/>
(Japanese)

⑦ Strawberry Picking (Miyagi Prefecture)

Miyagi is the largest producer of strawberries in the Tohoku region. In the town of Yamamoto, the warm climate is utilized to cultivate strawberries that can be picked from January to late May. Visitors can have fun picking and tasting the fresh, flavorful strawberries.



■ Place: ICHIGO WORLD, Yamamoto
■ Period: Early Jan.-late May (Closed: Thur., Fri.) ■ Fee: From 1,300 yen (adults)
<http://ichigo-world.jp/> (Japanese/English/Traditional Chinese/Hangul/Thai)

② Morioka Handi-Works Square (Iwate Prefecture)

This facility brings together traditional local industries in the Morioka region under one roof. Based on the concept of "see, touch, and create," visitors directly interact with craftsmen who give face-to-face guidance during handicraft lessons. Visitors can try making their own souvenirs, such as pottery, indigo dye, and woven fabric.



■ Place: Morioka ■ Closed: 12/29-1/3
■ Entrance Fee: Free
<http://tezukurimura.com/main/> (Japanese)

④ Chuson-ji Temple (Iwate Prefecture)

In the early 12th century, the first Oshu Fujiwara lord, Kiyohira, began constructing many temple buildings, such as a 2-storey pagoda and hall. Even today, it is a treasure house of Heian art that communicates over 3,000 national treasures such as the Golden Amida Hall and important cultural properties.



Photo Provided By: Chuson-ji Temple

■ Place: Hiraizumi ■ Period: Year round
■ Visitor's Fee: 800 yen (adults)
<http://www.chusonji.or.jp/>
(Japanese/English/Simplified Chinese/Traditional Chinese/Hangul/Thai)

⑥ Fox Village, Miyagi Zao (Miyagi Prefecture)

Over 100 foxes of 6 different species roam freely within a park in a natural forest. Visitors can observe them and hold them. There are also other animals such as rabbits that can be petted.



■ Place: Shiroishi ■ Closed: Wed.
■ Entrance Fee: 1,000 yen (adults)
<http://zao-fox-village.com/> (Japanese/English)

⑧ Abukuma Line Boat Ride (Miyagi Prefecture)

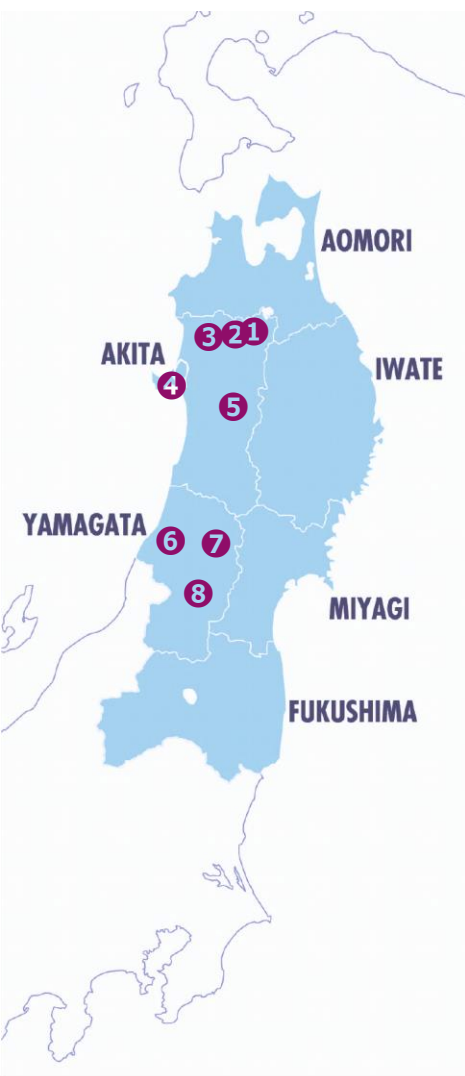
Passengers ride a boat down the Abukuma River Valley, a distance of 4 km one way and 8 km round trip. A boatman who loves the local area and nature guides passengers to various scenic spots and strangely shaped rocks. There are different views to enjoy in each season, and from December to March boats run that are heated with a warm, comfy kotatsu table. Enjoy the gentle flow of the river while partaking of a hot pot dish.



■ Place: Marumori ■ Period: Year round (closed year's end/New Year's)
■ Fee: 1,500 yen (adults) <http://marumori.jp/spot/funakudari/> (Japanese)



EXPERIENCE



① Akita Inu Museum (Akita Prefecture)

The Akita inu dog is one of 7 breeds chosen in Japan as natural treasures. The museum details the history of the Akita inu and the ecological system in displays that include the life of "Hachiko," the dog that made the Akita inu famous, as well as photos and books about the dog breed.

■ Place: Odate

■ Closed: Sat. afternoons mid November-late April; Sun., Aug. 13th, year end/New Year's

■ Fee: 200 yen (adults), 100yen (children)

<http://www.akitainu-hozonkai.com/> (Japanese)



③ Akita Cross-Country Railway (Akita Prefecture)

This local railway traverses north-south in the inland country of Akita Prefecture from Takanosu Station in Kitaakita, Akita Prefecture to Kakunodate Station in Semboku. Trains run through rural areas and valleys that change in each season, and give a glimpse of scenery that conveys a sense of the local people's lives.

■ Place: Takanosu Station-Kakunodate Station

<http://www.akita-nairiku.com/>

(Japanese/English/Traditional Chinese/Hangul/Thai)

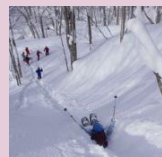


⑤ Lake Tazawa Snowshoeing (Akita Prefecture)

Snowshoeing is recommended for people who don't ski but want to try a winter sport. Anyone can put on snowshoes and effortlessly walk on the snow to experience an awesome tour, leaving behind only your own footprints in pristine snow. When feeling a little tired, create a makeshift table and chair out of snow and have an instant tea party.

■ Place: Senpoku Tazawako Highlands/Nyuto Beech Tree Forest ■ Fee: 4,900 yen

<http://www.asoview.com/act/snowshoe/akita/are0050300/pln3000020310/> (Japanese)



⑦ Making Kakikoma (Yamagata Prefecture)

The city of Tendo in Yamagata prefecture is famous for producing pieces (koma) for the game of shogi. Why not make your own unique koma? Draw a Japanese character of preference using lacquer onto a decorative koma (9 cm or 12 cm in size) to create a special piece. Skilled staff will kindly and patiently help you create your own kakikoma.



■ Place: Shogi Mura Tendo Tower, Tendo ■ Duration: whole year ■ Fee: 1,080 yen
<http://www.asoview.com/act/traditionalcraft/yamagata/are0060200/> (Japanese)

② Making Mage-Wappa (Akita Prefecture)

At the Odate Mage-Wappa Workshop, visitors can pick the mage-wappa (bentwood) kit they prefer and enjoy making Odate mage-wappa. Why not try making a one-of-a-kind bentwood piece while learning about the traditional techniques of Odate mage-wappa?



■ Place: Odate Mage-Wappa Workshop, Odate

■ Closed: Irregular dates

■ Fee: From 3,000 yen

<http://odate-magewappa.com/> (Japanese)

④ Oga Lessons and Q&A Session (Namahage; Akita Prefecture)

Has your child been disobedient lately? If so, why not give the Namahage Lessons and Q&A Session a try? It is the Oga way of parenting. Children admonished by the Namahage will keenly feel gratitude for their parents and will be obedient, and parents will be protective of their child. In addition, couples become even closer when they communicate feelings and gratitude they normally don't express.

■ Place: Oga Hot Spring Village, Oga ■ Period: Early November-late March

■ Fee: From 7,000 yen per family <http://e-ogaonsen.com/kosodate/> (Japanese)



⑥ Making Gotenmari (Yamagata Prefecture)

Gotenmari are classic folk toys said to have first been made for amusement by the feudal lord's wife and women in waiting in the Shonai Clan during the Edo period. The beautiful folk craft featuring fine designs are embroidered stitch by stitch with colorful threads. It takes around 3 hours to create a gorgeous gotenmari. Visitors can try making their own original gotenmari in the color they prefer.

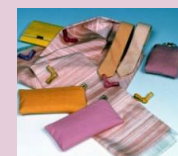


■ Place: Ueno Gotenmari Classroom, Tsuruoka ■ Period: Excluding Sun.

■ Fee: From 1,500 yen <https://www.tsuruokakanko.com/cate/p0359.html> (Japanese)

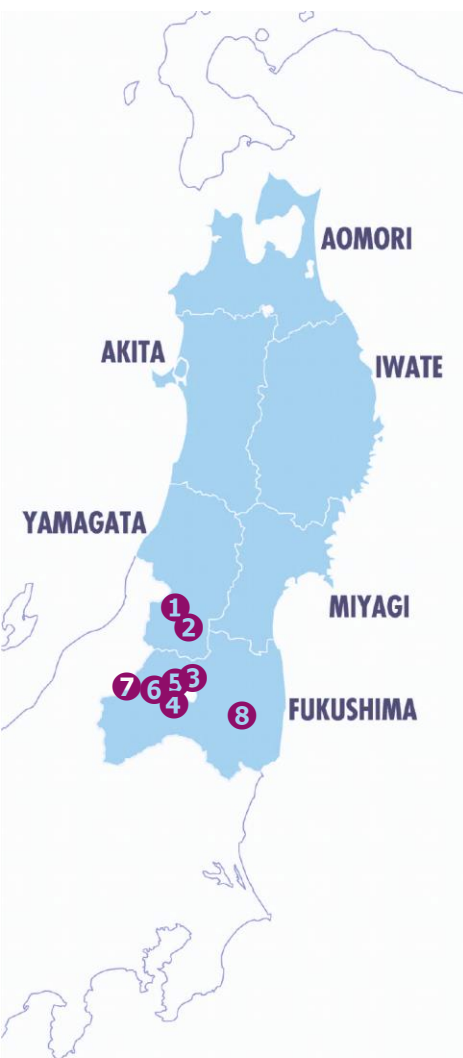
⑧ Yonezawa Weaving: Making a Silk Coaster (Yamagata Prefecture)

Yonezawa-ori weaves cloth from threads that have been dyed beforehand. It is part of the traditional culture in the city of Yonezawa in Yamagata prefecture that has been practiced for over 200 years. Visitors can make a coaster using beautifully dyed, colorful silk threads for a smooth, glossy finish. The color and design is up to each individual. A single coaster is crafted using a hand loom. Skilled staff provide help throughout the process.



■ Place: Waku Waku-kan, Yonezawa ■ Closed: Wed. ■ Fee: 2,160 yen

<http://www.asoview.com/act/weave/yamagata/are0061100/pln3000004425/> (Japanese)

**E**XPERIENCE**① Dondendaira Snow Park (Yamagata Prefecture)**

Visitors can have the kind of fun not offered at ski resorts, such as riding snowmobiles, banana boards, and sliding down a giant slide. There are also hands-on activities only available in winter, including snowshoeing. Plus, visitors can try experiences such as a snowmobile woodland for a separate fee.

■ Place: Iitoyo ■ Period: Early January–early March

■ Entrance Fee: 500 yen (adults)

<http://http://www.iikanjini.com/asobu/snow.html> (Japanese)

**② Onogawa Hot Spring Kamakura Village (Yamagata Prefecture)**

Kamakura Village is a popular tradition in winter. Tables, chairs, and a menu are placed inside a kamakura (snow hut) that fits 6 adults. Food such as ramen and drinks can be ordered by phone for delivery from nearby restaurants to enjoy piping hot ramen inside the kamakura.

■ Place: Yonezawa ■ Period: Mid January–early March

<http://www.onogawa.jp/index.html/> (Japanese)

**③ Urabandai Snowshoeing to Fudo Falls (Fukushima Prefecture)**

This snowshoe trek takes participants to the largest waterfall in Urabandai, Fudo Waterfall at Ono River. The trek is full of exciting experiences. Fudo Falls cascades from an impressive height of 25 m. Water droplets from the waterfall that freeze and sparkle a bluish hue are called blue ice. That blue ice, which beautifully and mysteriously colors Fudo Falls, is a gift from the winter season.

■ Place: Kitashiobara ■ Fee: 3,800 yen

<http://www.asoview.com/act/snowshoe/fukushima/are0071500/pln3000016784/> (Japanese)

**④ Aizuwakamatsu Historic Tour (taxi tour; Fukushima Prefecture)**

Take a short, 3 hr. trip in a London-style taxi. Tourists can fully enjoy a nostalgic journey in Aizuwakamatsu. Nanoka-machi can be viewed from the window of the taxi as it makes its way through Nogushi Hideo Seishun Rd. to Tsuruga Castle. The taxi continues on to Oyakuen Garden, the grave of Kondo Isami, and Mt. Iimori. Tourists are free to ask to change the tour sites.

■ Place: Aizuwakamatsu ■ Period: Year round

■ Fee: 20,000 yen per taxi/from 3 hr.

<http://www.asoview.com/act/taxi/fukushima/are0071700/pln3000016762/> (Japanese)

**⑤ Tadami Line (Fukushima Prefecture)**

This line connects Aizuwakamatsu Station in Fukushima Prefecture to Koide Station in Niigata Prefecture. Because the road running parallel to the Tadami Line is closed to traffic in the winter, this is an important means of transportation in wintertime. It is extremely popular as a secluded line affording picturesque scenery and is loved by many travelers.

■ Place: Aizuwakamatsu Station–Koide Station

<http://www.pref.fukushima.lg.jp/sec/16005d/tadamisen.html> (Japanese)

**⑥ Roadside Station Aizuyanaizu Tourist Center Seiryuen (Fukushima Prefecture)**

This roadside station displays and sells numerous local products from Okuaizu in addition to local products from the town of Yanaizu. Visitors can eat handmade soba noodles made from locally produced soba flour, Aizuyanaizu sauce pork cutlet atop rice with sauce, and awa soft serve ice cream topped with awa, a local product from Yanaizu. Visitors can also try making soba noodles or paint an akabeko (red cow) toy.

■ Place: Yanaizu ■ Closed: Open year round

<http://www.thr.mlit.go.jp/road/koutsu/Michi-no-Eki/fukushima/fu10.html> (Japanese)

**⑦ Roadside Station Ozekaido Mishimajuku (Fukushima Prefecture)**

This roadside station is a rest stop for tourists and the gateway to Okuaizu. The shop sells local products from neighboring towns and villages, such as goods made from paulownia wood and Aizu Jidori chicken, a product from the town of Mishima. In addition, nearby is a site that affords a sweeping, picturesque view of the well-known railway bridge on the JR Tadami Line.

■ Place: Mishima ■ Closed: January 1st–3rd

<http://www.thr.mlit.go.jp/road/koutsu/Michi-no-Eki/fukushima/fu13.html> (Japanese)

**⑧ Sake Tasting/Sake Brewing (Fukushima Prefecture)**

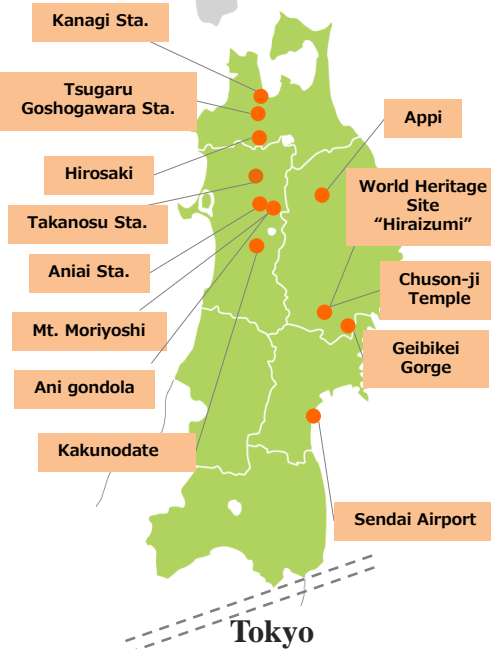
Participants can brew their own sake at a brewery that has been making sake since the Edo period. Original labels can also be made, so participants feel just like a real brewer! The sake participants make can be taken home with them. Behind-the-scenes activities in the sake brewing process not normally seen are introduced, so participants can learn about the traditional Japanese brewing culture and the intrigue of sake. Foreigners who want to learn about Japanese culture are enthusiastically welcomed.

<https://www.asoview.com/item/activity/pln3000011904/> (Japanese)









MODEL COURSE



WINTER FESTIVAL

- ★ Hirosaki Castle
Snow Lantern Festival (Hirosaki)
(Early February)
- ★ Odate Amekko Fair (Odate)
(2nd Sat. and Sun. in February)
- ★ Namahage Sedo Festival (Oga)
(2nd Fri.–Sun. in February)
- ★ Yokote Kamakura Festival (Yokote)
(February 13th)
- ★ Morioka Snow Lights Festival
(Morioka)
(2nd Thur.–Sat. in February)

Route ① Northern Tohoku Tour (4 days, 3 nights) (Iwate, Aomori, Akita prefectures)

1	09:35		12:15		14:45		
	Various locations → → Sendai Airport		Hiraizumi		Chuson-ji Temple (after lunch, visit Chuson-ji Temple)		
2	15:00		16:30		18:30		
	Geibikei Gorge: Boat ride downstream		Appi (overnight)				
3	08:45		11:20		11:45		
	Appi		Tsugaru Goshogawara Sta.		Kanagi Sta.		
4	16:40		15:00		16:10		
	Kanagi Sta.		Goshogawara Sta.		Hirosaki Sta.		

【Legend】

→ → →	Airplane	□ □ □ □ □	Bullet train
=====	Bus	On foot
+++++	Train	~ ~ ~	Cable car

Route Info: Fly in from Sendai Airport and take a highway bus to Iwate Prefecture. From Iwate Prefecture take a sightseeing course to Akita by way of Aomori. On Day 1, visit historic Hiraizumi and Chuson-ji Temple. Then, after enjoying a heated boat ride down the river in Geibikei Gorge, stay overnight in Appi. On Day 2, ride the winter tradition, a stove-heated train (Tsugaru Railway) and enjoy a nostalgic mood while eating a boxed lunch on the train. Participants can also experience nature's harsh phenomenon, a ground blizzard. On Day 3, take a local train from Aomori to Akita. On Mt. Miyoshi, take a gondola from the summit to view ice monsters.

Fee (reference): From/to Tokyo 140,000 yen–180,000 yen (excluding airfare from overseas)

For other recommended routes, go here→ <http://www.kingdom-of-winter-trip-tohoku.jp/>





MODEL COURSE



WINTER FESTIVAL

- ★ Yamagata Snow Festival (Sagae) (Early February)
- ★ Zao Snow Monster Festival (Zao Hot Springs) (Late December–early March)
- ★ Ouchi-Juku Snow Festival (Shimogo, inamiazumi District) (2nd Sat. and Sun. in February)

Route ② Southern Tohoku Tour (3 days, 2 nights) (Fukushima, Yamagata, Miyagi prefectures)

	07:50	08:00	09:00	09:50	
	Various locations ++ Aizuwakamatsu St. === Roadside Station Ozekaido Mishimajuku=====				
	<80> 【Train that crosses the 1st bridge on JR Tadami Line; view snowy landscape】 <20>				
	10:10	11:10	11:30 12:30	13:00	JR Tadami Line 13:25
1	=Roadside Station Aizuyanaizu Seiryuen =Lunch== Aizu-Miyashita Sta.+++ Aizuyanaizu Sta.				
	【Paint an akabeko (red cow) toy】		【Local free-range chicken dishes】		【Ride JR Tadami Line】
	<30>		<25>		
	15:00	15:50	17:00		
	==Ouchi-Juku===Aizuwakamatsu St. =Within Aizuwakamatsu== Aizuwakamatsu (overnight)				
	【Sightseeing on your own】		【Dinner】		
	<70>				
	07:30	09:30	10:45	12:15	
	Aizuwakamatsu=== Dondendaira Snow Park=====		Zao Hot Springs~~~		
	<210> 【Hands-on snow activities】		<90> 【Lunch】		
2	Zao Ropeway	14:15	16:00	17:15	18:15
	Zao summit~~~=====		Ginzan Hot Springs === Tendo Hot Springs (overnight)		
	【Snow monsters】		<105> 【Walk around on your own】		<60>
	10:40	12:30	13:00 14:40	15:30	
	Tendo Hot Springs===Fox Village,Zao===		ICHIGO WORLD, Yamamoto=====		
	<80>		<100> 【Lunch: Boxed lunch】 【Strawberry picking】		
3	17:00				
	=====Sendai Sta. Various locations				
	<90>				
	<div>【Legend】</div> <div>===== Bus</div> <div>+++++ Train</div> <div>~~~~~ Bullet train</div> <div>~~~~~ Cable car</div>				
					



Route Info: Arrive from Fukushima Prefecture and take a tour of popular spots in South Tohoku, including snow monsters, Sendai, and Ouchi-Juku. The tour also includes activities popular with foreign tourists, such as painting an akabeko (red cow) toy, hands-on snow activities, and strawberry picking. If it is winter (snow) festival season in February, visitors should also go to the Yamagata Snow Festival, Ouchi-Juku Snow Festival, etc.

Fee (reference): From/to Tokyo 150,000 yen–190,000 yen (excluding airfare from overseas)

For other recommended routes, go here→ <http://www.kingdom-of-winter-trip-tohoku.jp/>



Access

Airplane (International routes)

Beijing approx. 6 hr., 10 min. → Sendai

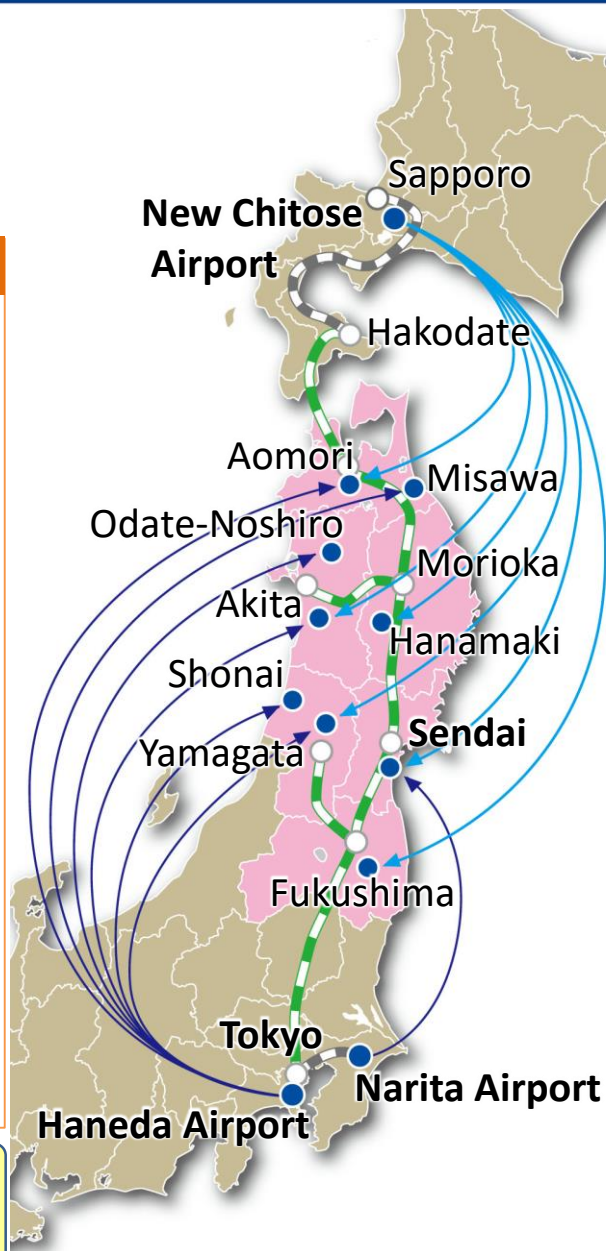
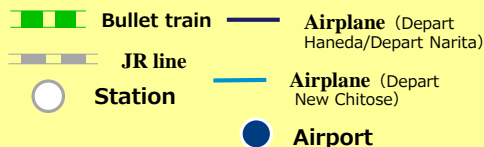
Shanghai approx. 2 hr., 50 min. → Sendai

Tianjin approx. 3 hr., 15 min. → Aomori

Taipei approx. 3 hr., 10 min. → Sendai

Seoul approx. 2 hr., 20 min. → Aomori

approx. 2 hr., 25 min. → Sendai



Airplane (Domestic routes)

Haneda Airport

Aomori Airport	1 hr. 15 min.	6 flights (JAL)
Misawa Airport	1 hr. 15 min.	3 flights (JAL)
Odate-Noshiro Airport	1 hr. 10 min.	2 flights (ANA)
Akita Airport	1 hr. 05 min.	9 flights (JAL/ANA)
Shonai Airport	60 min.	4 flights (ANA)
Yamagata Airport	60 min.	2 flights (JAL)

Narita Airport

Sendai Airport	60 min.	2 flights (ANA)
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New Chitose Airport

Aomori Airport	50 min.	5 flights (JAL/ANA)
Hanamaki Airport	60 min.	3 flights (JAL)
Akita Airport	1 hr. 10 min.	4 flights (JAL/ANA)
Yamagata Airport	60 min.	1 flight (FDA)
Sendai Airport	1 hr. 10 min.	18 flights (JAL/ANA Peach/AIRDO)
Fukushima Airport	1 hr. 25 min.	1 flight (ANA)

Tohoku Bullet Train/JR Line

Tokyo

Shin-Aomori Sta.	2hr. 59 min.
Akita Sta.	3 hr. 45 min.
Morioka Sta.	2 hr. 11 min.
Yamagata Sta.	2 hr. 26 min.
Sendai Sta.	1 hr. 30 min.
Fukushima Sta.	1 hr. 22 min.

*Shortest time required from Tokyo