

FESTIVALS

Feb. 17- April 24 EXHIBITION OF HINA DOLLS AND FURNISHINGS

9:00-17:00 Closed on Tuesdays

At Uwajima Date Museum 伊達博物館 Uwajima city (Tel. 0895-22-7776)

Feb. 24 - April 7 KUMA-MACHI HINA-DOLL FESTIVAL

On Kuma-machi Shopping Street and at Akebono-za

Kumakogen-cho, Kamiukena-gun 上浮穴郡久万高原町 (Tel.0892-21-1111)

HANA-MI (flower viewing)

Popular *hanami* spots in Matsuyama

Matsuyama Castle

Matsuyama Castle is one of the 100 national sakura spots, where about 200 cherry trees attract us in addition to the fantastic view of the castle against the clear blue sky.

Ishite-gawa Green Belt

There are about 900 cherry trees along the riverside. The area near Izumi-machi and Muro-machi is especially recommended. Between Ichitsubo 市坪 bridge and Tachibana 立花 bridge there are large grassy areas where many people enjoy *hanami*.

Dogo Park

There are about 320 cherry trees of *somei yoshino* and *Tsubaki kanzakura* in bloom. The park is lit up from 18:00 till 22:00 during the *hanami* season. The hilltop area has a good command of the whole park in full bloom. And if you have some time, stop by the south side of the park to see some reconstructed samurai houses at the Yuzuki-jo castle site 湯築城址 (Closed on Mondays).

Saiho-ji 西法寺 Shimoidai-cho, Matsuyama city 松山市下伊台町

According to legend, about 1,300 years ago Emperor Tenmu 天武天皇 presented a cherry tree to the temple together with a letter of thanks for praying for his wife's recovery from an illness written in pale gray ink 薄墨色 *usuzumi*. It is said that is why the cherry trees here came to be known as *Usuzumi-zakura* 薄墨桜 (faintly tinted cherry). There are about 200 cherry trees in the precinct.

Hanami downtown

Along Sanban-cho street 三番町 about 320 trees of bright pink *yaesakura* (double cherry blossoms) start to bloom a little later than other varieties.

April 4, 6, 7 MATSUYAMA SPRING FESTIVAL (CASTLE FESTIVAL)

(Tel. 089-948-6558)

4th 14:00-16:00 The 15th SHINONOME-NOH 東雲能

At Shinonome-jinja shrine, up the stairs at the north end of the Ropeway street
Shinonome-noh was a core event of the Matsuyama spring festival. It was revived after a 13-year interval by the local people who love Matsuyama traditional noh drama. Admission: ¥2,000 (day ticket only) (Tel. 090-4784-5847 Watanabe)

6th 11:00-16:00 The 51st National *Yakyuken* Contest

At Matsuyama Castle Honmaru Hiroba (main tower square)

In case of rain, at Matsuyama Shimin-kaikan

The *Yakyuken* dance, a stylized form of *jan-ken-pon*, originated in Matsuyama. The gestures are borrowed from baseball hand signals.

12:30-16:00 The 20th National *Iyo-bushi* Contest At Matsuyama Shimin-kaikan
Admission: Adults ¥500 / Elementary & junior high school students Free

7th 10:00-16:00 SPRING FESTIVAL IN HORINOUCI At Castle park Horinouchi
Stage events, booths with food & drink, etc.

11:00-12:50 Matsuyama Citizen Parade On Okaido and Chifunemachi streets

11:40-13:20 *Daimyo Musha Gyoretsu* (Procession of the Feudal Lord and Samurai)
Starting in front of the chairlift/gondola station, it goes down the Ropeway street, to Okaido and Chifune-machi streets.

In case of rain, on Okaido and Gintengai streets.

This event started in 1968 to commemorate the completion of the reconstruction of the sub-castle-tower. It re-enacts the procession of feudal lords who had to make regular visits to the Tokugawa Shogunate in Edo (present-day Tokyo) during the 17th-19th centuries. The guest star this year is Okada Yui 岡田結実, who will be the *Ohimesama*, a princess.

10:00-16:30 *Showa-no-komachi-mikoshi* (portable shrine) Rope rolling
At Matsuyama castle park Horinouchi

Other events

6th-7th 17:30 -21:00 Matsuyama castle gondola and chairlift service operates at night during the festival. During the daytime it operates as usual.

Gondola and chairlift ticket (round trip): Adults ¥520 children ¥260

8:30-17:30 (7th -16:00) Flower arrangement
At Matsuyama Castle gondola station 2F (Admission: Free)

10:00-16:00 Tea ceremony
At Matsuyama Castle gondola station 2F (Fare: ¥400)

You can enjoy viewing *yoza-kura*, cherry blossoms lit up at night around the main tower square from March 20 to April 14.

April 20-21 TOBE-YAKI FESTIVAL Tobe-cho, Iyo-gun 伊予郡砥部町

Tobe-yaki (porcelain), which is famous for its beauty and durability, will be on display and for sale. This event is popular because the prices will be lower than usual. Many stalls are set up and local foods and products will be on sale.

Place 1. 20th 9:00 -20:00 / 21st 9:00-17:00

Tobe-cho Tokaido Yutori-Koen (Multi-Purpose Park) near Tobe-cho Town Office

Tobe-yaki big sales / Sales of local foods and products

Etsuke (painting your own design on an item of pottery)

20th 9:00-16:00 / 21st 9:00-15:30 ¥ 500

Tobe-yaki-no-sato Stamp rally / Gotochi Chara ご当地キャラ parade / Bazaar

Café EBOT ¥2,000 (Includes a Tobeyaki cup, drink, and cookies) 11:00-15:00

Place 2. 20th, 21st 9:00 -17:00

Tobe-yaki Dento-sangyo-kaikan (Traditional and industrial Tobe-yaki Center)

Display of newly-made Tobe-yaki pieces (-May 12) Admission is free during the festival.

Tobe-cho Shoko-Kaikan (Tobe-cho Commercial Center)

Sales of local foods and products / Charity Auction

Mochimaki (rice cake scattering) 21st 12:00

(Tel. 089-962-7288)

Transportation:

To Place 1

(Iyotetsu Bus) Buses leave every 30 minutes. There is no free shuttle service between Place 1 and Place 2.

To get to Yutori -koen, take a bus bound for Tobe-dansoguchi (断層口) or Tobe-oiwabashi (大岩橋) from Matsuyama Shieki #3 and get off at Tobe-cho yakuba (town office) -nishi (a 40-minute ride). Then it's a 15-minute walk to the park.

(JR Bus) Take a bus bound for Kumakogen and get off at Tobe-cho Chuokominkan-mae. (a 40-minute ride). Then it's a 15-minute walk to the park.

To Place 2

(Iyotetsu Bus) To get to Dento-sangyo-kaikan, take a bus bound for Tobe-dansoguchi (断層口) or Tobe-oiwabashi (大岩橋) from Matsuyama Shieki #3 and get off at Dento-sangyo-kaikan-mae. (a 40-minute ride). Then it's a minute's walk to Dento-sangyo-kaikan.

<http://www.tobe-kanko.jp/news/>

(Tel. 089-962-7288)

April 25-May 15 MT. TOMISU TSUTSUJI (Azalea) FESTIVAL

On Mt. Tomisu Park 富士山公園

Ozu city

About 63,000 plants of azaleas are in bloom on top of Mt. Tomisu about this time of the year. Mt. Tomisu is wellknown in east Japan for its azalea blossoms. (Tel.0893-24-2111)

Transportation: Take a bus bound for Yawatahama from Matsuyama Shieki #4 and get off at Ozu Honmachi. It takes one hour and 20 minutes. Or take a JR express train bound for Uwajima and get off at Ozu. It takes 40 minutes. From the station it takes 15 minutes by taxi to get to the park. Combine this with the Garyu sanso villa and Ozu castle for a full day of sightseeing.

GOLDEN WEEK (April 29-May 5)

The string of holidays starting on April 29th and ending on May 5th is called Golden Week. Since it is a popular time to travel, all means of transportation are very crowded. If you want to take a trip you need to plan well in advance to get reservations.

April 29 THE 49th NINOMIYA CHUHACHI MEMORIAL FLIGHT FESTIVAL

9:00-12:00

At Yawatahama Citizen Sports Park

Yawatahama City 八幡浜市

Ninomiya Chuhachi 二宮忠八 was born in Yawatahama in 1866. He is called the 'father of the plane' because he succeeded in flying the first model plane 12 years before the Wright brothers made their famous flight. This event is held to commemorate Ninomiya's creative spirit. There are races of various kinds of model planes competing for the length of flying time. You need to make a reservation if you wish to join the race. (Tel. 0894-22-311)

Transportation: Take a JR express train bound for Uwajima and get off at Yawatahama. It takes about one hour. There is free shuttle service from JR Yawatahama station to the festival site (a 20-minute ride).

April 29 SHOWA-NO-HI 昭和の日 (National Holiday)

The Showa era lasted from 1927 to 1989. This day commemorates the Showa era.

May 3, 4 HOJO KASHIMA FESTIVAL Kashima, Hojo, Matsuyama City 松山市北条鹿島

This festival is famous for *Kaineri* (see below), which is designated as a Prefectural Intangible Cultural Folk Asset, and *Oshimenawa-no-harikae* (see below), both of which are performed on the sea.

3rd At and near Kashima-jinja shrine

10:30 / 12:30 *Shishimai* (lion dance)

10:55 Stage events – dance, music, etc.

13:00 Parade of children's *danjiri*

Otomobune (boat for viewers) starts at Kashima Pier (¥500 for adults)

14:00 *Kashima-mikoshi miyadashi*

Kashima-no-Kaineri (dance)

Kaineri is a prayer dance for succeeding in battle and also a celebratory dance for victory. Boats are decorated with bamboo and flowers. Men row the boats and boys perform dances on board, re-enacting sea battles using oars. It recalls the Kono *Suigun*, powerful marine guards who patrolled the sea near here in ancient times.

15:00 Parade of children's *danjiri*

15:30 *Mikoshi miyairi* / *Mochi-maki* (rice cake throwing) at Kashima Island Park

4th 8:30-11:00 Preparing and making the new *Oshimenawa* (sacred rope) in front of *Kashima-jinja torii* gate.

11:30 Carrying the new *Oshimenawa* to Ryu-jinja 龍神社

13:30 Carrying the new *Oshimenawa* to Kandojima 寒戸島

Otomobune (boat for viewers) starts at Kashima Pier (¥500 for adults)

14:00-15:30 ***Oshimenawa-no-harikae*** (Replacing the Sacred Rope) praying for safety on the sea and the good harvest this year.

A 45m long and 30cm thick *shimenawa* (sacred rope) that links the two small islands *Meoto-iwa* (a couple of rocks), Gyokuri 玉理 and Kandojima 寒戸島 is replaced. The old one is taken down and a new one is put in place.

Transportation: Take a JR train from Matsuyama and get off at Iyo Hojo. From the station, walk straight toward the sea and there is a ferry dock with frequent service to the island (a 10-minute ride). (Tel. 089-992-1423)

May 3 KENPO-KINEN-BI (Constitution Day) (National Holiday)

The present constitution was promulgated on May 3rd, 1947. This day commemorates the event and it is also a day for us to reaffirm hope in national growth.

May 4 MIDORI-NO-HI (Greenery Day) (National Holiday)

This holiday was established in 1989 for people to admire nature, give thanks for its blessings, and to cultivate love for all living things on the earth.

May 5 KODOMO-NO-HI (Children's Day) (National Holiday)

Traditionally, this was Boys' Day. After World War II it was changed to Children's Day. Now it is

a day to pray for the healthy growth of children. *Koinobori* (carp streamers) are flown from poles. According to Chinese legend, carp symbolize vigor and strength. *Chimaki* (rice dumpling wrapped in a bamboo leaf) and *kashiwa-mochi* (rice cake wrapped in an oak leaf) are the traditional treats of the day.

May 5 IKAZAKI ODAKO GASSEN (Big Kite Fight Festival)

Ikazaki, Uchiko-cho 内子町五十崎

This festival has over a 400-year history and is one of the three biggest kite fights in Japan. It is designated as a Prefectural Intangible Cultural Folk Asset. Several hundreds of kites are flown high from both sides of the Toyoaki river in Ikazaki. The feature of this event is *Odako-gassen* that each flier tries to cut down the other kites using *gagari*, a sharp piece of metal attached to the line of the kite. The last kite left flying is the winner. The origin of this festival was to celebrate babies newly born within the past year, hoping for their healthy growth by putting their names on the kite called *Shusse-dako* 出世凧 and flying them in the sky (*Hatsuzeku* 初節句 Shinto ceremony). All events are held at or near the Toyoaki Bridge. In case of rain, it will be held on May 6th. You can join the kite fight if you wish. Kites can be rented for ¥2,000 and you get ¥1,000 back when you return the string and *gagari* after the fight. The kite is yours to keep.

(Tel. 0893-44-2118 Uchiko Town Office)

8:00 Boys' *kendo* contest

9:45 Handmade kite (by junior high students) contest

10:00 Exhibition of calanthe discolors (May 4th, 5th) at Ikazaki Kite Museum

Flight of *Kanreki*, 60th birthday celebration kites praying for the happiness and longevity of those who have turned 60.

12:00 Flying a big 100-*jo* (*tatami* mats) sized kite up in the sky by about 100 men

12:30 Flight of *Shusse-dako* *Hatsuzeku* Shinto ceremony to bless babies born since last April

13:00-15:00 *Odako-gassen*

13:00 Japanese drum performance by Uchiko High School students

Transportation: It is recommended to go by train because traffic on Route 56 is very crowded on this day. Take a JR train bound for Ozu or Yawatahama from Matsuyama and get off at Uchiko. There is free shuttle service from Uchiko station to the festival site (a 5-minute ride).

Across the river from the festival site is Ikazaki Kite Museum which has a collection of kites from all over the world.