

FESTIVALS

-May 15 MT. TOMISU TSUTSUJI (Azalea) FESTIVAL

Ozu City 大洲市

About 63,000 plants of azaleas are in bloom on top of Mt. Tomisu 富士山 about this time of the year. Mt. Tomisu is well known in east Japan for its azalea blossoms. Many stalls are set up and the azaleas are lit up at night.

Transportation: Take a JR express train from Matsuyama bound for Uwajima and get off at Ozu (a 40-minute ride). From the station it takes about 10 minutes by car to the park.

(Tel.0893-24-2111)

May 3 KENPO-KINEN-BI (Constitution Day)

National Holiday

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

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*

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 7:00 Preparing and making the new *Oshimenawa* (sacred rope) in front of *Kashima-jinja torii* gate.

10:00 Carrying the new *Oshimenawa* to Ryu-jinja 龍神社

12:00 Carrying the new *Oshimenawa* to Kandojima 寒戸島

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

12:30-14:00 *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 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 cultivate a love for all living things on the earth.

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

Traditionally, this was Boys' Day, but 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 which, according to Chinese legend, 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. In case of rain, it is held on May 6th. (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 is held on May 4th 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.

May 3 - 28 IMABARI SPRING FESTIVAL**Imabari City 今治市**

This festival features an unusual version of *shishimai*, a lion dance, called *tsugi-jishi*. Young men stand on other men's shoulders, two or three men high, and a child stands on the top wearing a lion mask, which weighs 4 kilograms. In this way they build human towers called

tsugi-jishi. The child on the top is called *shishiko*, a child lion, and all perform an elegant and splendid dance to the drums, swinging *sensu* (folding fans) and a bell. The highlights of this festival are at Kannomiyanoma-jinja and Fukiage-jinja, where several *tsugi-jishi* gather and compete in each district. (Tel. 0898-32-5200)

3 Kannomiyanoma-jinja 神宮野間神社 In Noma district 8:30 Miyadashi / Tsugijishi

13 Fukiage-jinja 吹揚神社 In the precinct of the shrine 9:30 Miyadashi / Tsugijishi

21 Ryu-jinja 龍神社 In Onishi district

9:00 Miyadashi / *Senjo*-tsugi-jishi (Daring acrobatics on boats) 船上継獅子

This rite evolved in the early 17th century from a ritual of praying for rain. The rite begins on the sea just in front of Ryu-jinja and you can watch it from the shore.

Transportation: Take a JR local train from Matsuyama to Onishi, then take a taxi to the shrine.

26 Namikata Tamohachiman-jinja 波方玉生八幡神社 In Namikata-cho

10:00 Miyadashi / Tsugijishi

Transportation: Take a JR express train from Matsuyama to Imabari. Then take a Setouchi bus bound for Namikata and get off at the last stop, Namikata-ko-kita (a 30-minute ride)

May 18- June 9 NANRAKU-EN 南楽園 HANA-SHOBU (Iris) FESTIVAL 9:00-17:00

Nanraku-en is the biggest Japanese-style garden in Shikoku. There are many kinds of trees and flowers in the garden. More than 30,000 iris plants are in full bloom around this time. In addition, we can enjoy seeing about 36,000 azalea plants and about 2,000 hydrangea plants.

Main events:

Take-toro (bamboo lantern) Art *no Yube* (evening)

The park area is lit up from 17:00 to 21:00 (May 27th -June 4th).

Local entertainments such as *wadaiko* (Japanese drums), *shamisen*, *Ushioni*

Tobe-yaki (pottery) Sales

Local product sales

Tea ceremony

Mochi-maki

Admission: Adults ¥310 High, Jr. high & Elementary school students ¥150
(Tel. 0895-32-3344)

Transportation: Take a JR express train bound for Uwajima and get off at Uwajima (an 80-minute ride). Then take an Uwajima bus bound for Nanrakuen, Fukuura or Kakeajiro and get off at Nanrakuen-mae (a 40-minute ride).