

FESTIVALS

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. We can also enjoy seeing about 36,000 azalea plants and about 2,000 hydrangea plants.

Main events

May 25th -June 2nd The park area is lit up from 17:00 to 21:00.

Take-toro (bamboo lantern) Art *no Yube* (evening) 竹灯籠の夕べ

May 19th, June 9th *Shamisen* performance 11:00 / 13:00

May 24th *Ushioni* and *wadaiko* (Japanese drums) performance 11:00 / 13:30

June 2nd *Yosakoi odori* 11:00 / 13:30

May 26th, June 2nd *Fuku mochi-maki*

May 26th, June 2nd Tea ceremony 10:00-13:00

Tobe-yaki (pottery) Sales / Local product sales

Admission: Adults ¥310 Children ¥150 Over 65 years old ¥150

<https://www.nanreku.jp/> 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).

Early June – Mid June SHOBU FESTIVAL at Niiya Shobu park Niiya, Ozu City 大洲市新谷

Niiya Shobu-en has about 8,000 iris plants. There are many stalls during the festival.

Transportation: Take an express bus bound for Yawatahama from Shieki, gate #4, and get off at Niiya (a one-hour ride). From the bus stop it is a 3-minute walk to the park. Or take a JR local train bound for Yawatahama from Matsuyama and get off at Niiya. (Tel. 0893-24-2111)

June 1–Sept. 20 UKAI (Cormorant Fishing) on the Hiji-kawa (river) Ozu City

In Japan the tradition of fishing with cormorants goes back at least a thousand years. In Ozu it started as a tourist attraction in 1957 and now the Hiji-kawa is one of the three most famous *ukai* spots in Japan, including the Nagara-gawa in Gifu Prefecture and the Mikuma-gawa in Oita Prefecture. The fishing is done in the evening from a boat called *u-bune*, which is lit by torches as it sails down the Hiji-kawa, the river that runs through Ozu. Cormorant fishermen called *usho* beat the sides of the boats to encourage trained cormorants to catch fish. They are drawn by long strings attached to rings around the birds' necks, which prevent them from swallowing fish. When a cormorant makes a catch, a fisherman pulls the bird in and has it cough up the fish on the boat. You can watch from special sightseeing boats called *yakata-bune*. You can order a bento to eat on board or just ride the boat and watch, and some hotels offer a special *ukai* package. Prices range from ¥5,000 to ¥12,000, depending on your plan.

You need to make a reservation at Ozu Machinoeki Asamoya (Tel. 0893-57-6655).

It will be canceled if the weather is bad.

Transportation: Take an Iyotetsu bus bound for Yawatahama from Shieki, gate #4, and get off at Ozu-honmachi bus stop (a 90-minute ride). Or take a JR express train from Matsuyama and get off at Ozu (a 40-minute ride). From the station take a taxi or walk for 30 minutes.

<https://www.city.ozu.ehime.jp/>

**June 10 OTAUE (Planting Rice) SAI 御田植祭 at Oyamazumi-jinja 大山祇神社 12:30
Omishima-cho, Imabari City 今治市大三島町**

A ceremonial rice planting called Otaue-sai has a history of more than 600 years. It is held to pray to the god for a good grain harvest. Omishima Island is the third island on the Shimanami Kaido Highway from Imabari city and has been famous since ancient times for being the home of the gods of the sea and generals. After the ceremony, sixteen *saotome* 早乙女, girls dressed in white robes with red sashes *tasuki* 褌, and *tekkokyahan* 手甲脚絆 move in line in the rice paddy led by a man called *taotoko* 田男 and plant rice seedlings one by one carefully in the sacred field. The feature of this festival is a well-known comical performance 'Hitori-zumo (one man *sumo* wrestling) 一人角力. A man called *Ichirikizan* 一力山 fights against the invisible Spirit of the rice plant in a *dohyo* ring in front of the sacred rice field to divine whether the harvest this year will be good or not. It is no wonder that the Spirit wins every year. This unique fight is designated as an Ehime Prefectural Intangible Cultural Folk Asset.

<https://oomishimagu.jp/> Tel. 0897-82-0032

Transportation: Setouchi *Kosoku* (highway) Bus Fare (one way) ¥1,850

Matsuyama city station #5 → Oyamazumi-jinja Oyamazumi-jinja → Matsuyama city station
10:00 12:19 15:02 17:21

June 15 - July 27 DOYO YOICHI (Saturday Fair) 土曜夜市 13:00- 21:00

On Saturdays from Mid-June to late July Okaido and Gintengai Arcades and Matsuchika Town are filled with booths. There are games such as *kingyo-sukui* (goldfish catching), food, many sorts of things to buy and crowds of people enjoying the fun.

July 1 - 10 OYAMA-BIRAKI (Opening of Mt. Ishizuchi)

July 1st is the official opening of Mt. Ishizuchi 石鎚山 (1,982 m), the highest mountain in western Japan. It is considered a holy mountain and many believers from all over Japan come to climb it and pray. On June 30th three gods are taken in portable shrines from Ishizuchi-jinja near Saijo 西条 to Jojusha, the shrine at the top of the mountain. The three gods represent wisdom, compassion and courage, which are said to be the three masculine virtues. On the morning of July 1st, from about 7:00 small statues of the gods are carried to the top of the mountain one by one to the accompaniment of drums and conch shells followed by men dressed in white, called *sendatsu-san*. At the top they pray for health and safety while tapping the statues on each others' backs.

The gods are enshrined there until July 10th. In the past no women were allowed to climb Mt. Ishizuchi. Now they can, but they are still not allowed on July 1st. If you are male and want to join, you should follow the *sendatsu-san*. The climb is not so difficult and takes about two hours from Tsuchigoya.

<https://www.ishizuchi.com>event>event4> Tel. 0897-55-4044 Ishiduchi-jinja

Transportation: Iyotetsu Bus Niihama *Tokkyu* (limited express) Fare (one way) ¥1,800

Matsuyama city station #8 → Ishizuchi-jinja-mae 石鎚神社前

8:53 10:26

10:23 11:56

Ishizuchi-jinja-mae → Matsuyama city station

13:07

15:37

17:07

14:38

17:08

18:38

(Tel. 089-972-2511)