

FESTIVALS

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

On Saturdays from Mid-June to late July the 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 30 three gods are taken in portable shrines from Ishizuchi-jinja near Saijo 西条 to Jojusha, the shrine near 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 1, 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 10. In the past no women were allowed to climb Mt. Ishizuchi. Now they can, but they are still not allowed on July 1. 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		14:38	
15:37		17:08	
17:07		18:38	(Tel. 089- 972-2511)

July 7 TANABATA (star festival)

According to a Chinese legend it is only once a year that two lovers, the Shepherd (Altair) and the Weaving Princess (Vega), are able to cross the Milky Way and meet. Bamboo branches are decorated with *tanzaku*, strips of colored paper on which wishes are written, and brightly colored balls with long paper streamers. In Ehime this is usually celebrated on August 7 according to the lunar calendar.

July 22-Jan. (Next year) THE 29th NATIONAL EXHIBITION OF KAMABOKO-ITA -NO-E 9:00- 17:00 (closed on Tuesday) at GALLERY SHIROKAWA

Shirokawa-cho, Seiyō City 西予市城川町

The national exhibition of paintings on *kamaboko* (fish-paste) boards started about thirty years ago. This year 6,100 paintings were sent from all over the country and abroad. The painting which won the first prize this year is the one titled “*Yoake ni* よあけに (at dawn)”. It was painted by Nakamura Rutsu (33 years old) from Komatsu city, Ishikawa prefecture, who is a Wajima lacquerware craftsman. She painted the Virgin Mary surrounded with grass and flowers in bloom, and a wing of an angel as if flapping against the light shining from the sky. (Tel. 0894-82-1001)

July 15 UMI NO HI (Sea Day) 海の日 National Holiday

July 22-24 UWAJIMA USHIONI (ox devil) FESTIVAL Uwajima City 宇和島市

This is one of the biggest festivals in Shikoku. The main feature is *Ushioni*. *Ushioni*, having the body of an ox and the head of a devil, are made of red, blue or brown cloth or hemp palm bark. They are paraded downtown on the main streets. Legend says *ushioni* were used to frighten the enemy.

It will be canceled in case of rough weather.

- 22** 15:00-21:00 All-comer Festa at *Michinoeki Kisaia* square
20:00-20:30 Firework display over Uwajima bay (5,000 rounds)
- 23** 10:00-12:30 Brass band parade and a trumpet and drum concert
At *Michinoeki Kisaia* square
15:30-17:30 (Children) / 18:00-21:00 (Adults) Uwajima *Gaiya* Carnival
On *Kisaia* road and *Ushioni* street.
"Gaiya" means "terrific" in the local dialect.
15:00-21:00 All-comer Festa at Fureai square

24 10:00-12:00 (Children) / 12:00-15:00 (Adults) *Ushioni* parade

On Kisaiya road and Ushioni street

16:30- 19:00 *Uwajima odor*i (dance) on Kisaiya road

15:00-21:00 All-comer Festa at Fureai square

Transportation: Take a JR express train bound for Uwajima. It takes about one hour and fifteen minutes.

Late July SHIMANAMI-KAIDO TAKIGINO (noh play by firelight)

at Oyamazumi-jinja (shrine) in Miyaura, Omishima-cho, Imabari City

Details of the event have not been announced yet.

July 27 KAZAHAYA (風早) SEA FESTIVAL

HOJO FIREWORK DISPLAY 20:20-20:50 at Hojo Sotominato 外港

Tsuji, Hojo, Matsuyama City 松山市北条辻

About 4,000 rounds of fireworks are displayed. Many stalls are set up.

Transportation: It takes about ten minutes on foot from JR Hojo station to the port.

(Tel.089-993-0567)

August 2 OZU RIVER FESTIVAL FIREWORK DISPLAY

20:00 - 21:00

On the north side of Hijikawa riverside, Ozu City

In Ozu a summer firework display has been held since the Edo era (1600-1867). About 3,000 rounds of fireworks are set off. Most exciting and beautiful is the ‘*Niagara Falls*’, tinting the surface of the river with rainbow colors against the background of Ozu castle, stretching 200 meters long. You might want to try combining this with the cormorant fishing. There is free parking for 1,900 cars.

(Tel. 0893-24-2664)

Transportation: See the Ukai Festival for transportation info. From JR Ozu station it takes about 20 minutes to the north riverside on foot.

August 3 MATSUYAMA PORT FESTIVAL

MITSUHAMA (三津浜) FIREWORK DISPLAY 20:00-21:00

At Mitsuhaman Port, Matsuyama City

This is one of the biggest firework festivals in Ehime with about 9,000 rounds of fireworks.

In case of rain it will be held on August 4.

Transportation: Take an Iyotetsu train bound for Takahama and get off at Mitsuhaman. It is a 15-minute walk from the station. (Tel.

089-951-7707)

August 4 ONMAKU FIREWORK DISPLAY 20:00-21:00

At Imabari Port seawall, Imabari City

(Tel. 0898-23-3939)

This is another of the biggest firework festivals in Ehime with about 10,000 rounds of fireworks. In case of rain it will be held on August 11.

Transportation: It is a 15-minute walk from JR Imabari station.

August 1-Late August DOGO-ONSEN SUMMER FESTIVAL & MURA (village) FESTIVAL

Details of the event have not been announced yet.