

# 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. 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*. Ukai is done in the way called *awase-ukai* 合わせ鵜飼 that *u-bune* and *yakata-bune* sail down the river together. You can order a *bento* (box lunch) to eat on board or just ride the boat and watch. Some hotels offer a special *ukai* package. Prices vary depending on the plan. It will be canceled if the weather is bad.

You need to make a reservation at Ozu Machinoeki Asamoya

Further information: <https://ozuukai.com>

0893-57-6655 *Ozukanko Sogoannaisho* 大洲観光総合案内所

**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.

## **June 21–August 2 DOYO YOICHI (Saturday Fair) 土曜夜市 13:00– 21:00**

On Saturdays from mid-June to early August 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 enjoy the fun.

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

July 1<sup>st</sup> 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<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup>, 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* 先達さん. 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<sup>th</sup>. In the past no women were allowed to climb Mt. Ishizuchi. Now they can, but they are still not allowed on July 1<sup>st</sup>. If you are male and want to join, you should follow the *sendatsu-san*. It takes about two hours from Tsuchigoya to climb the top.

<https://www.ishizuchi.com>event>event4>

Tel. 0897-55-4044 Ishiduchi-jinja

**Transportation:** Iyotetsu Bus or Setouchi Bus Niihama *Tokkyu* (limited express) Fare (one way) ¥2,030

JR Matsuyama	→	Matsuyama city station #8	→	Ishizuchi-jinja-mae 石鎚神社前
8:45		8:53		10:26
10:15		10:23		11:56
Ishizuchi-jinja-mae	→	Matsuyama city station	→	JR Matsuyama
14:37		16:08		16:15
15:37		17:08		17:15
17:07		18:38		18:45

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 21 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.

(Tel. 0895-49-5800)

- 22** 16:00-21:00 All-comer Festa (food event) at *Michinoeki Kisaiya* square  
 18:30 Sendai *Suzume odori* (sparrow dance) 仙台すずめ踊り at *Kisaiya* square  
 20:00-20:40 Firework display over Uwajima bay (about 10,000 rounds)
- 23** 10:00-11:55 Brass band & trumpet corps concert  
 Prefectural police music band concert at *Michinoeki Kisaiya* square
- 11:30 Sendai *Suzume odori* (sparrow dance) at City Bullring  
 12:00-14:00 *Togyu* 闘牛 (bullfighting) at City Bullring  
 There is a shuttle bus service to the site.  
 15:00-17:30 *Uwajima Gaiya* Carnival (Children) / 18:00-21:00 (Adults)  
 On *Kisaiya* road and *Ushioni* street.  
 "*Gaiya*" means "terrific" in the local dialect.
- 15:00-21:00 All-comer Festa at *Fureai* square  
 16:30 Sendai *Suzume odori* at *Ushioni* street
- 24** 10:00-12:00 *Ushioni* parade (Children) on *Kisaiya* road  
 12:00-15:30 (Adults) on *Ushioni* street & *kisaiya* road

11:30            *Sendai Suzume odori*    on *Ushioni* street & in front of the stage  
 16:30                            in front of Miuraya doll shop on Ebisumachi shopping street  
 16:30- 19:20   *Uwajima odori* (dance)-taikai (gathering) on *Kisaiya* road  
 15:00-19:00   All-comer Festa at *Fureai* square

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

**July 20 – January 12 next year   The 30<sup>th</sup>   NATIONAL EXHIBITION OF KAMABOKO-ITA –NO-E**  
**9:00– 17:00                    Closed on Tuesdays & from Dec. 28–January 3**  
**at GALLERY SHIROKAWA                    Shiokawa-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 6,331 paintings were sent from all over the country and abroad. The painting which won the first prize this year is the one titled “*Banban hagukumu yoni* (the world where all living things are taken care of affectionately) 万万育む世に”. It was painted by Shimizu Hiroyuki 清水宏志 (78 years old) from Ehime prefecture, showing a mother woodpecker feeding her baby in the hole of the tree trunk.

Admission: Adults - ¥500            High school & University students - ¥300

Children younger than junior high school students - free

<https://www.city.seiyo.ehime.jp/miryoku/galleryshirokawa/>            (Tel. 0894-82-1001)

**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 26    KAZAHAYA (風早) SEA FESTIVAL**  
**HOJO FIREWORK DISPLAY    20:20–20:50**  
**at Hojo gaiko-nozumiba 北条外港野積場 (open storage area of outer harbor)**  
**Tsuji, Hojo, Matsuyama City 松山市北条辻**

About 4,000 rounds of fireworks are displayed. Many stalls are set up. In case of rain it will be held on July 27.

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

**August 2    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 3.

**Transportation:** Take the Iyotetsu train bound for Takahama and get off at Mitsu. It is a 15-minute walk from the station.

<https://www.mitsuhaman-hanabi.com>            (Tel. 089-951-7705)



**August 3 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. In case of rain it will be held on August 8. (Tel. 0893-24-2664)

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

**August 3 ONMAKU FIREWORK DISPLAY 20:00-20:50**  
**at Imabari Port seawall, Imabari City**

This is another of the biggest firework festivals in Ehime with about 10,000 rounds of fireworks. *Onmaku* is an Imabari dialect for *omoikkiri* 思いつきり (to one's heart content). The theme this

year is "Passion". In case of rough weather it will be held on August 11.

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

<https://onmaku.jp> (Tel. 0898-23-3939)

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

Details of the event have not been announced yet.