

# FESTIVALS

## -May 15 MT. TOMISU TSUTSUJI (Azalea) FESTIVAL

Ozu City 大洲市

About 63,000 azalea plants are in bloom on top of Mt. Tomisu 富士山 about this time of the year. Mt. Tomisu is well known in western 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. It is canceled in bad weather.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> 10:00 *Shinto* ceremony At Kashima-jinja shrine  
10:30 Stage events: *Shishimai* (lion dance) *Iyomanzai*, music live, dance, etc.  
13:00 Parade of children's *danjiri*  
13:30 ***Kashima-no-Kaineri*** On the sea in front of Kashima island  
*Kaineri* is a prayer dance for success in battle and also a celebratory dance of 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.  
14:00 *Kashima-mikoshi miyadashi* and parade  
14:20 Brass band parade by Hojo high school students  
15:00 Parade of children's *danjiri* / *Mikoshi miyairi*  
*Mochi-maki* (rice cake throwing) at Kashima Park
- 4<sup>th</sup> 8:30 Making the new *Oshimenawa* (sacred rope) At Kashima park  
11:30-12:00 Carrying the new *Oshimenawa* to Kashima Ryu-jinja 龍神社  
13:30-14:00 Carrying it to Gyokuri 玉理 & Kandojima 寒戸島  
14:00-15:30 ***Oshimenawa-no-harikae*** (Replacing the Sacred Rope) praying for safety on the sea and a good harvest this year.  
A newly made *Oshimenawa*, 40 m long and 30 cm thick, which links the two small islands *Meoto-iwa* (a rock 'couple'), Gyokuri & Kandojima, is exchanged for the old one.

**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 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, the carp symbolizes 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) 五十崎大凧合戦 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. The feature of this event is *Odako-gassen* that each flier tries to cut down the other kites using *gagari*, a blade attached to the string 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 (*Hatsuzeku* 初節句 Shinto ceremony), hoping for their healthy growth by putting their names on the kite called *Shusse-dako* 出世凧 and flying them in the sky. All events are held around the Toyoaki Bridge. In case of rain, it is held on May 6<sup>th</sup>.

### Main events

11:00 / 11:40 *Tako odori* (kite dance)

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

12:30 Flying *Shusse-dako*

*Hatsuzeku* Shinto ceremony is held on May 4<sup>th</sup> to bless babies born since last April.

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

You can join the kite fight if you wish (¥2,000). You need to return the kite, string and *gagari* after the fight.

<https://www.ikazaki.ne.jp/takohaku/> Tel. 0893-44-2118

**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,.

Free shuttle bus service: Between the JR Uchiko station and the festival site 9:00-16:00

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

## May 3 - 24 IMABARI SPRING FESTIVAL Imabari City 今治市

This festival features an unusual version of *shishimai*, 獅子舞 (lion dance) called *tsugi-jishi*. 継獅子. It is designated as a Prefectural Intangible Cultural Folk Asset. Young men stand on other men's shoulders: two-men high, three-men high, and four-men high. In this way they build human towers called *tsugi-jishi*. The child standing on the top is called *shishiko*, a child lion, and wears a lion mask and dances swinging *sensu* (folding fans). The highlights of this festival are at Kannomiyanoma-jinja and Fukiage-jinja, where several *tsugi-jishi* gather and compete in each district. (Tel. 0898-36-1541)

### *Tsugi-jishi* schedule

3<sup>rd</sup> 8:30 Kannomiyanoma-jinja 神宮野間神社 In Noma district

10:00 Hashihamaryu-jinja 波止浜龍神社 In Hashihama district

*Senjo* -*tsugi-jishi* (Daring acrobatics on boats) 船上継獅子 on the sea just in

front of Ryu-jinja and you can watch it from the shore.

9<sup>th</sup> 9:30 Fukiage-jinja 吹揚神社 In the district of the former Imabari city

**May 16- June 7 NANRAKU-EN 南楽園 HANA-SHOBU (Iris) FESTIVAL 花菖蒲祭り**  
**9:00-17:00**

Nanraku-en is the biggest Japanese-style garden in Shikoku. 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* 竹灯籠 (bamboo lantern) Art Evening

The park area is lit up from 17:00 to 21:00 (May 23<sup>rd</sup> - June 7<sup>th</sup>).

Tea ceremony ¥ 500 May 24<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup> 10:00-15:00

*Mochimaki* May 24<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>

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

*Tobe-yaki* (pottery) sales / Local product sales

SATONOIE 里の家 *Udon*, *Sooba*. Coffee, etc

Admission: Adults ¥320 Seniors more than 65 years old ¥160

High, Jr. high & Elementary school students ¥160

<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).