



Springtime Rich in Nature and History

- Explore the regions -



Tastes of JAPAN by ANA has won the award for Tourism Business (Field of Domestic and Inbound Travel) from Tourism EXPO Japan 2016, supported by Japan Tourism Agency and others.

This northeast region is replete with mountains optimal for year-round leisure activities, history, culture, and crafts. Spring in Tohoku's six prefectures, however, offers varied pleasures among national parks, natural settings, and hot spring spas, including traditional horseback archery but especially beautiful cherry trees ripe for enjoying the nature and traditions unique to this area of Japan.

Aomori Pref.

Koma-kaido, a government office street, is a symbolic road of Towada City with some 150 cherry trees in full bloom in late April. Sakura Yabusame, held in late April under rows of cherry blossoms, is a traditional martial arts form of horseback archery. This *yabusame* is the only one in Japan limited to women riders. They gallop on horses born and raised in Japan along about a 180-meter track called Teppo Baba ("gun racetrack").



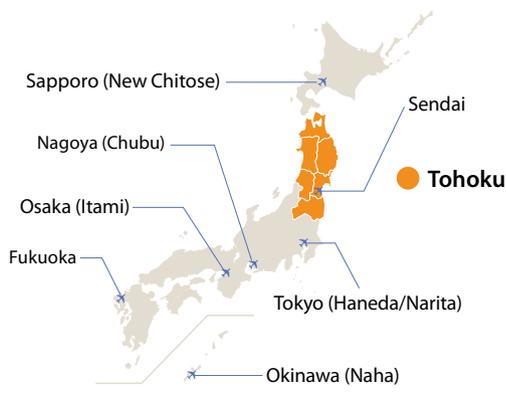
Iwate Pref.

Along with Hirosaki Park of Aomori Prefecture and Kakunodate in Akita Prefecture, Kitakami Tenshochi Park is one of Michinoku's Top Three Cherry Blossom Spots, with 10,000 cherry trees of 150 varieties and 500 Yoshino cherry trees over 90 years old. During the mid-April cherry blossom festival, two-kilometer rows along Kitakami River are enjoyed from sightseeing boats or horse-drawn carriages. And Morioka Castle Ruins has Ishiwarizakura (rock-breaking cherry), an early-flowering tree growing from cracks in granite.

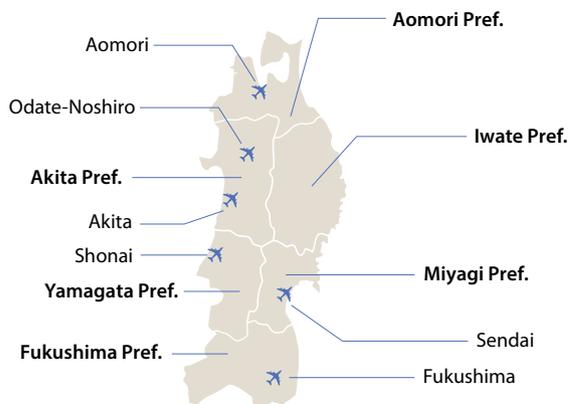


Convenient Access

Getting to the Tohoku region couldn't be easier, with six airports served by ANA and many direct flights from airports



around Japan. Flight time from Tokyo or Osaka, for example, is a little over 1 hour.



Miyagi Pref.

Ogawaramachi's cherry blossom row along the Shiroishi River comes from Takayama Kaijiro, a businessman successful in Tokyo who wanted to create rows of cherry blossoms in his hometown and did so with 700 seedlings in 1923 and 500 in 1927. Their picturesque scenery is called Hitome Senbonzakura (1,000 cherry trees at a glance), and their pink rows of 8.5 kilometers contrast nicely with the remnant white snow atop the Zao mountains.



Photo courtesy of Miyagi Prefectural Government, Tourism Division

Akita Pref.

Kakunodate City is a popular tourist destination and is called Michinoku's Small Kyoto for the ambience created by its black board walls, cherry trees, and more. The city flourished as an Edo-period (1603–1868) castle town and has samurai residence streets recalling that history. In spring, some 400 weeping cherry trees color the town pink, with a famed viewing spot five minutes from the samurai residence district along the Hinokinai River, a tunnel of Yoshino cherry trees over two kilometers long.



Yamagata Pref.

Once an Edo-period lord's residence, Tsuruoka Castle has no remaining buildings (because they had been demolished) but now is part of Tsuruoka Park, which was built on the main building and outer building ruins, with moats and stone walls recalling a rich history. Four-season blooms include azaleas, irises, and roses, but especially prized are the park's 730 cherry trees, one of Japan's top 100 cherry trees, enjoyed in the prefecture's best cherry blossom viewing spot.



Fukushima Pref.

One of the three ancestral cherry trees in Japan, Benishidarezakura (red weeping cherry tree) in Miharu is said to be over 1,000 years old and is popularly dubbed *takizakura* (waterfall cherry tree) because of the light red cherry blossoms that seem to cascade down like a waterfall. Another famed spot is Hanamiyama Park, known as Fukushima's Shangri-La. It gives visitors a chance to enjoy flowers at leisure and look at plants and trees raised by local farmers.



Looking Ahead

The next theme of Get to Know Tohoku is "Culture," set for April, when we feature Hiraizumi in Iwate Pref. and Dewa Sanzan in Yamagata Pref.

Handy URL

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