



- Explore the regions -



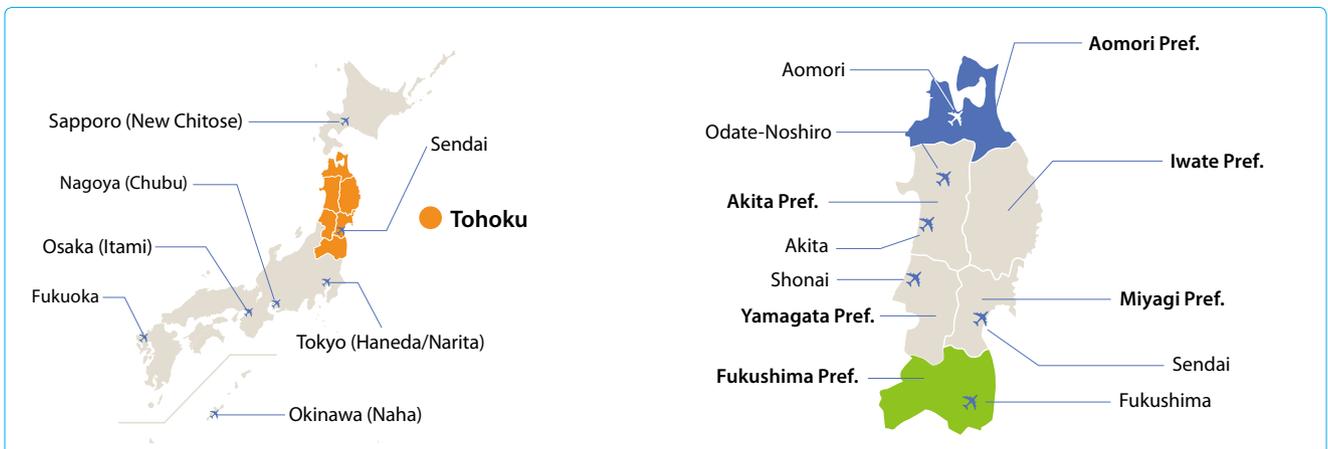
1 Sannai-Maruyama Site, Aomori Pref.
Reconstructed pillar-supported building structure (front) and roofed pit-dwellings.

2 Tsurugajo Castle, Fukushima Pref.
Red roof tiles and white ramparts harmonize beautifully in all seasons.

Living History in Northern Japan

Set among Tohoku's six prefectures, Aomori and Fukushima are replete with history, world-class archeology sites, a castle of dynamic aesthetics, and vital culture in the context of ancient village life. Walk back in time to clay figures and

other artifacts in Aomori's Jomon site or look into the living history of Tsurugajo Castle and its park, complete with blossoming cherry trees that show springtime nature at its finest.



Ancient Jomon Site, Aomori Pref.

Feel the Past Come to Life

At time of great change in prehistoric Japan, the Jomon period (14,000–300 BCE) was when people made clay vessels for cooking and storage with unique designs. Hunting and gathering became a standard way of living, and people reaped the benefits of nature and coexisted with it. The Sannai-Maruyama Site, which is said to



Large-eyed clay figure greets visitors to the Kamegaoka Stone Age Site, Tsugaru City.

have been one of the largest settlement sites from the era, has been formed into a park for visitors to see and experience the culture from back in the day. This wasn't the initial plan, though, as the prefecture had originally conducted inspection on the area in 1992 with plans to build a baseball field. However, excavation of several artifacts led the site to be preserved. Among the discoveries was evidence of buildings supported by chestnut-wood columns with a diameter of one meter. Enjoy the hands-on experience of making clay figures or Jomon-style braided cords, or make a fire with period tools.

Eight relic sites include the Kamegaoka Stone Age Site, known for its big-eyed clay figures. Currently, preparation is underway to have 17 sites (in Aomori, Iwate, and Akita prefectures and Hokkaido) inscribed on the World Heritage list as Jomon Archaeological Sites in Hokkaido and Northern Tohoku.

Getting There: ANA serves Odate-Noshiro Airport from Tokyo (Haneda). Car travel from the airport to Sannai-Maruyama Site is about 1.5 hr. We serve Aomori Airport from Osaka (Itami) and Sapporo (New Chitose). Car travel from the airport to Sannai-Maruyama Site is about 30 min.

Note: Sapporo-Aomori service is subject to suspension. Please check ANA's website for network, service, and fare updates.

Tsurugajo Castle, Fukushima Pref.

Historic Castle Blooms with Color

Tsurugajo Castle, symbol of Aizu-Wakamatsu, has a tragic history that burns brightly to this day. The tragedy revolves around a samurai group of youths retreating from the frontlines of a war late in the Edo period (1603–1868). On their way back to the castle, they spotted a fire that broke out in a city atop Imori Hill, which they mistakenly thought was the castle burning down. Seeing the flames, they took their own lives then and there. The castle was reinforced at the end of the 16th century to be combat-ready and virtually impregnable, and in time would come to face many harsh sieges. In 1874, the castle was taken down with only the stone walls remaining. The present castle tower, rebuilt in 1965, is a folk and literary museum introducing Aizu history.

The roof tiles are glazed red and fired to survive the Aizu winter, the same style as noted in period records. This makes the castle unique in Japan, with beautifully contrasting white ramparts. The immaculate Tsurugajo Castle Park, an Important Cultural Property, has a thousand Yoshino cherry trees, among others, making it Japan's only castle with a splendid mix of soft pink blooms and red roof during blossom time (usually mid- through late April).



Three-day Aizu Festival, in late September, is Aizu-Wakamatsu City's biggest festival.

Getting There: ANA serves Fukushima Airport daily from Osaka (Itami) and Sapporo (New Chitose). Travel from the airport by bus to Tsurugajo Castle takes about 2.5 hr.

Looking Ahead

The next theme of Get to Know Tohoku is "Experience," set for June, when we feature the picking of *junsai* (water-shield plant) in Akita Pref. and a sake brewery tour in Fukushima Pref.

Handy URL

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