



- Explore the regions -

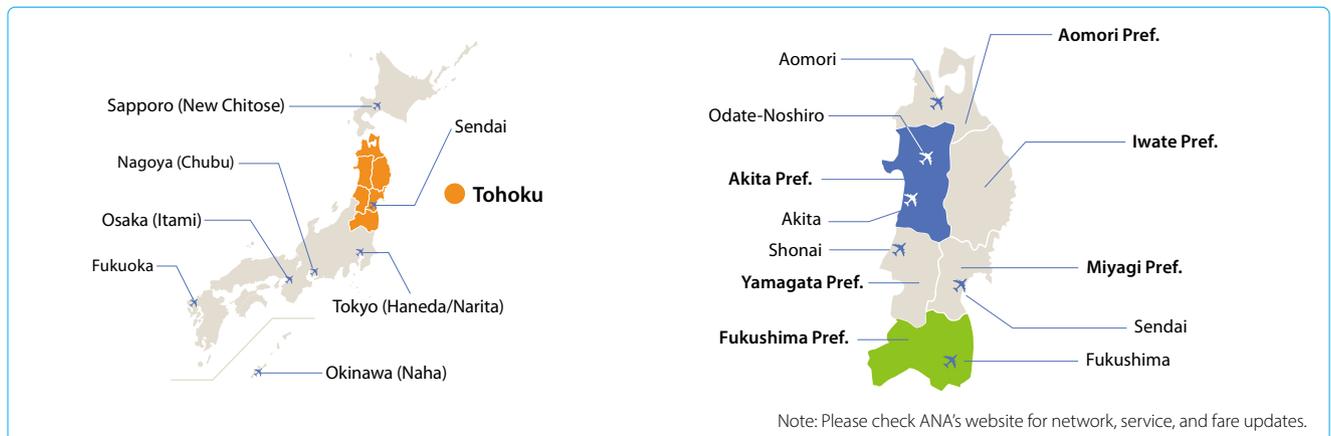


- 1 Women farmers in small boats pick underwater *junsai* sprouts, Mitane, Akita Pref.
- 2 Entrance to one of the traditional sake breweries in Aizu-Wakamatsu, Fukushima Pref.

Beautiful Waters for Savory Greenery and Sake

The Tohoku region is replete with mountains, lakes, hot springs, and more. The waters here are beautiful yet perfect for rice agriculture, savory greenery, and sake. Akita Prefecture sees in summer the aquatic herb of watershield

(*junsai*), used as food with unique texture. With over 50 breweries of sake, Fukushima Prefecture has tours for you to see how it's made amid a breathtaking landscape of vibrant history and culture.



Note: Please check ANA's website for network, service, and fare updates.

Note: Unfortunately, this year's *junsai* picking in Akita Pref. was cancelled due to the effects of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) infection. Also some sake breweries in Fukushima Pref. may not be available for your visit. Please check with your desired brewery for the latest information.

Akita Pref.

A Rich Harvest by Boat

Summertime in Akita is the season for *junsai* or watershield, a floating aquatic herb resembling a lotus. This water plant, found atop marshes as well as ponds, is a perennial that has long fed Japanese food culture, going back to the days of the eighth-century poetry collection *Man'yōshū*. Younger leaves and stalks below the surface are edible and made into a popular food that many people enjoy for its chewy texture and gelatinous feel. The town of Mitane has the number one manufacture share in Japan, producing roughly 90 percent. Small box-like boats for one or two people are available (for a fee and instruction from a local farmer) to pick leaves from a pond 50 to 60 cm deep. Long poles are how you ply the waters, pushing from the bottom of the pond to harvest savory plants so thick on the surface they resemble a green carpet. Enjoy this culinary adventure of polling and then picking your bounty, coursing through surface leaves until the treasure hunt ends with discovery of your “emerald of the water”—as locals call *junsai*—which you can take home as a souvenir. Optimal harvest time is mid-May through mid-August, also the best period to savor the herb. Another taste treat is the town specialty known as Mitane Junsai Rice Bowl, found in restaurants serving up their own unique menu of watershield as well as seasonal and local dishes.



Hand-picked gelatinous watershield (*junsai*) sprout

Getting There: ANA serves Akita Airport daily from Tokyo (Haneda), Osaka (Itami), Nagoya (Chubu), and Sapporo (New Chitose). Travel from the airport by car to Mitane Town is about 50 min.

Handy Info

For *junsai* picking
Mitane-cho Tourism Information Center
+81-185-88-8020 / jyunsaijapan.com (in Japanese)

Fukushima Pref.

Tasty Tour of Sake Breweries

Fukushima is blessed with a natural abundance of sea, mountains, hot springs, and more to enjoy. The eastern Hamadori area is cool in summer and relatively warm in winter. To the west is Aizu, home to historical remains as well as Lake Inawashiro and Mt. Bandai, perfect for summer and winter recreation fun. Nakadori, flanked by the Ou Mountains and



Sake varieties like *junmaishu* and *daiginjo*, Fukushima Pref.

Abukuma Highlands in the prefecture's center, has some of Japan's finest hot springs as well as fruitful peach, apple, and Japanese pear orchards. The different climates and cultures of the three areas yield unique offerings and attractions. Sake brewing is a fine example, with more than 50 breweries in the prefecture.

In the Annual Japan Sake Awards, held for breweries from all over Japan, Fukushima brewers won the largest number of gold prizes for each of seven consecutive years till 2019—the most wins in all Japan. There are many kinds of breweries for you to visit and experience, ranging from a traditional one with a 300-year history or a brewery fusing tradition with the latest technology to a mother-daughter brewery or a brewery run by local rice farmers producing *shochu* off-season. Travel this journey not only in spaces devoted to elegant and tasty refining but also in time, when craftsmanship and quality were family legacies that endure today. Find a favorite sake that will make long-lasting memories and excellent recommendations to friends and family for a genuine taste of Japan.

Getting There: ANA serves Fukushima Airport daily from Osaka (Itami) and Sapporo (New Chitose).

Looking Ahead

The next theme of Get to Know Tohoku is “Food,” set for July, when we feature *maguro* tuna in Aomori Pref. and Iwagaki oysters in Yamagata Pref.

Handy URL

Visit the special website of Tastes of JAPAN by ANA Tohoku.



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