



- 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.

Illuminating Summer Nights With Lively Celebration

There's nothing like a summer festival in Japan to experience its culture and traditions while immersed in the local atmosphere and how people celebrate the season. In this issue, we introduce festive fun—from fireworks to flowing lanterns—in Tokai and Hokuriku Shin'etsu regions' five prefectures of Nagano, Fukui, Ishikawa, Gifu, and Toyama.



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Nagano Pref.

Sakaki Festival (Saku-shi) Aug. 15 (Thu.)

This annual festival of Otomo Shrine, on Aug. 15, incorporates ritual purification by fire and *sakaki* wood to assure good crops and health. At night, hundreds of youths run down a two-kilometer path to Mochizuki Bridge, bearing torches they'll throw into Kakumagawa River. Traditional songs and a lion dance precede a parade of four portable shrines (*mikoshi*) made of sakaki, the festival highlight. Mikoshi do battle then head to the shrine, where they're slammed onto the ground and purified with water, slamming continuing late into the night. Bringing home a sakaki twig brings good luck.

Getting There

ANA serves Tokyo (Haneda) with daily flights from Osaka (Itami), Nagoya (Chubu), Sapporo (New Chitose), Fukuoka, Okinawa, and many other airports. Travel time from Tokyo to Saku takes about two hours by bus and train.



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Fukui Pref.

Kuzuryu Festival Eiheiji Dai Toro Nagashi (Eiheiji-cho) Aug. 24 (Sat.)

Held at the end of August, this festival signifies summer's end in Fukui. Said to be the largest *toro nagashi* ("floating lanterns") festival held riverside in Japan, 10,000 glowing paper lanterns float down the river, creating an ethereal, memorable night designated a historical cultural heritage. Daytime fun includes live performances and bazaars, but after sundown, spectacular sutra chanting by some 130 monks from the temple of Eiheiji takes center stage. After the chanting comes release of lanterns onto the water. And the grand finale lights the evening sky with colorful fireworks.

Getting There

ANA serves Komatsu with daily flights from Tokyo (Haneda). Travel by bus from Komatsu Airport takes 1 hour to JR Fukui Station. From Fukui Station, take the Echizen Railway to Eiheijiguchi Station (30 min.) and walk about 15 min. to the river park.



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Ishikawa Pref.

Noto Kiriko Festival (Noto Peninsula) Early July–Mid-September

Representative of the Noto region, the festival is named *kiriko-toro* lanterns and references the light offered to the local shrine deity. Large *kiriko* are carried in a mikoshi parade, lighting the way for paraders who shout energetically. Some 200 celebrations are held in Noto regions, varying in size and mood: the fiery Abare Festival, lit by kiriko, has jostling mikoshi; Horyu Tanabata Kiriko Festival participants carry kiriko into the sea and light fireworks; another variation is where participants fight for tags on the end of torches.

Getting There

ANA serves Noto Satoyama Airport with daily flights from Tokyo (Haneda).



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Gifu Pref.

Gujo Odori (Gujo-shi) Jul. 13 (Sat.)–Sep. 7 (Sat.)

Gujo Odori began in the Edo period (1603–1868) as a festival for people of all classes to dance the *bon odori* on nights from Aug. 13 through 16. It grew in popularity, and today is held for 33 nights, mid-July to early September, Japan’s longest *bon odori* festival. Sites vary, one per day, and the climax is dancing till dawn during the four-night *tetsuya-odori* (“all-nighter”). As the festival was originally a caste-free dance for all, tourists are also very much welcome to join in. Tourists considered to have danced thoroughly and well receive a “license.”

Getting There

ANA serves Nagoya (Chubu) with daily flights from Tokyo (Haneda and Narita), Sapporo (New Chitose), Fukuoka, Okinawa (Naha) and many other cities. From the airport, Meitetsu μ-SKY Limited Express train takes 40 min. to Nagoya Station. From the station, travel time to Gujo Hachiman is about 3 hours by train and bus.



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Toyama Pref.

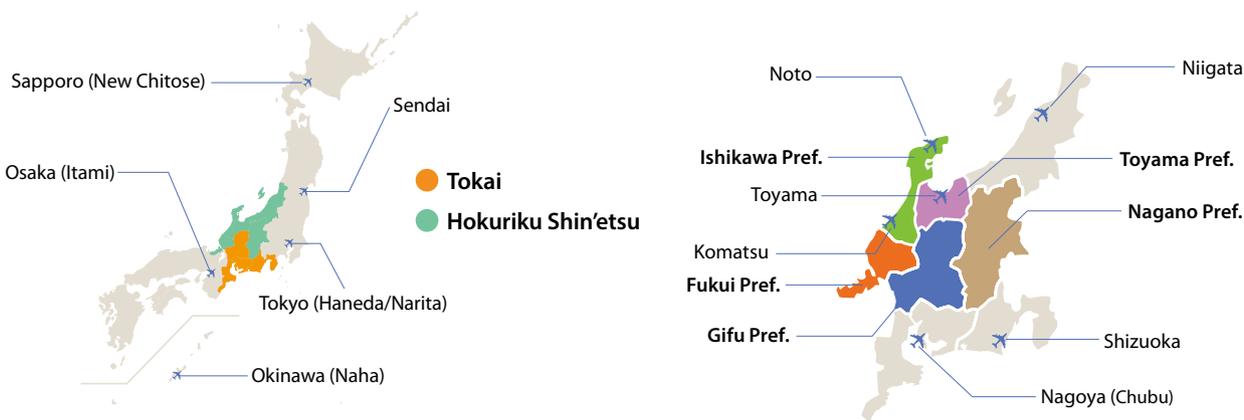
Etchu Yatsuo Owara Kaze-no-Bon Festival (Toyama-shi)

Sep. 1 (Sun.)–3 (Tue.)

Held in Etchu Yatsuo, a town of Edo-style homes and storehouses, the festival sees a road lit by lanterns where locals perform Owara-style songs accompanied by *shamisen*, Chinese fiddle and drum, while dancers in matching *happi* and *yukata* dance mysteriously under braided sedge hats hiding their faces. In early autumn—season for typhoons and this festival—people pray for a bountiful harvest and favor from the wind god. Three kinds of dance—a graceful women’s dance, powerful men’s dance, and harvest dance—are enlivened by Owara-bushi music.

Getting There

ANA serves Toyama Kitokito Airport with several flights from Tokyo (Haneda) and one daily flight from Sapporo (New Chitose).



Looking Ahead

The Area Guide to Kanto region is set for September 2019. Among many pleasures of visiting this region are its captivating history, inviting hot springs, healthy food, and more.

Handy URL

Visit the special website of Tastes of JAPAN by ANA Tokai and Hokuriku Shin'etsu webpage.



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