Tourist Information with Wide-Area Map of Niigata Prefecture

Please take a copy

Gourmet Experience Nature Events

Enjoy your trip!

Recommended spots listed by category

A lot of charms in Niigata!

*Data shown is current as of December 1, 2022. For the latest information, check the official website.
Niigata Prefecture is a treasure trove of culinary delights. In addition to its rice and sake, you will find a range of dishes that reflect the four seasons, from mountain and sea delicacies to local cuisine. Savor all of Niigata’s great flavors!

**Nagaoka**

Satoyama views and time-honored tastes

This is a long-established confectionery store with a history of more than 100 years. An old renovated house from the Edo period, the main store’s charm is its historical atmosphere and the natural beauty of the surrounding area. On the second floor is a coffee shop where visitors can enjoy freshly made sweet dumplings and anmitsu while gazing at the ever-changing seasonal views of the nature-rich satoyama.

**Tsubame**

Representative of Niigata ramen

In fact, Niigata Prefecture is said to be a ramen powerhouse. This well-established restaurant has become known nationwide for its back fat ramen, one of the top five ramen in Niigata. The special homemade noodles go really well with the mild flavor of the soup, which is made from dried sardines and added back fat.

**Murakami**

Stunning sight of row upon row of salmon

Murakami’s salmon cuisine has a history going back 1,000 years. These flavors have been inherited by this restaurant, which serves a wide variety of processed salmon products. Visitors can also tour the 130-year-old townhouse, a designated Registered Tangible Cultural Property of Japan.
Tokamachi

Long-established restaurant, origin of a Niigata specialty

The restaurant was established in 1931. It is the birthplace of Niigata tare katsudon, one of the specialties of the prefecture. This is a hearty bowl of rice topped with a crispy fried pork cutlet dipped in a special salty-sweet sauce. Many customers from Niigata and beyond come to this famous restaurant for this dish, so a long line is inevitable.

Niigata Prefecture is known as one of the nation’s leading rice-producing areas. Its best known rice varieties, such as Koshihikari, Shinnosuke, and Koshiibuki, are sweet and sticky, delicious even when cold, and make excellent rice balls!

Exquisite tonjiru with white rice

This tonjiru specialty restaurant has many fans even beyond Niigata for the taste of its pork miso soup made from a recipe that has not changed for more than four decades. Tonjiru, which is pork, onion, and tofu slowly simmered in a broth of bonito and kelp, is characterized by its thick texture. The moment you eat it with inochi-no-eki (Dragon’s Eye), a rare type of rice, the delicious taste will make you gasp!

Niigata’s best-known soba noodles, hegi soba

Established in 1922, this famous restaurant is known as the pioneer of hegi soba, a byword for Niigata’s soba noodles. Homemade stone-ground buckwheat flour is bound together with funori (seaweed), which has been handed down from the textile culture, to produce soba noodles that are both smooth and firm.

Kurosaki chamame were registered under the Geographical Indications (GI) protection system in 2017. The rich water and fertile soil produce a flavorsome, sweet taste that has earned these edamame the reputation of being the best in Japan.
Experiences

Sake brewery tours and onsen town walks... Enjoy your trip to Niigata to the fullest by experiencing the history, culture, and natural bounty the prefecture has to offer.

Sado

Coastal excursions by tub boat
This is a facility where visitors can experience a leisurely ride along the coast in a tarai, an oval-shaped flat tub made of cedar wood. With a vermilion bridge in the background and a boatman wearing a bamboo hat, this tarai boat ride offers the traveler a real taste of traditional Japan. Another attraction is that the boat has a glass bottom, giving a close-up view of fish swimming in the sea.

Nyima Taiken Koryukan
365-1 Ogi, Sado, Niigata Prefecture
Approach: 70 minutes by car from Ryotsu Port. 8 minutes by car from Ogi Port.
For directions and travel times to Ryotsu Port and Ogi Port see Map of Listed Places.

Niigata

Tours and tastings! Enjoying sake culture
Sake is a specialty of Niigata Prefecture. Founded in 1767, the Imayo Tsukasa Sake Brewery is a popular tourist spot located near the center of Niigata City. The popular brewery tours include audio-guided tours and English-language tours, making it easy for overseas visitors to experience Japanese sake culture. We also recommend the tasting corner and gift shop for buying souvenirs.

Enjoy a foot bath after a stroll around town
This onsen town makes you want to walk around, its center being dotted with stores where you can sample sake and wine, try locally born dried fish and fermented foods, and try your hand at baking and painting rice crackers. There is also a public footbath that anyone can use for free, so enjoy soaking your feet after your walk.

Niigata

Experience Niigata's Kagai culture
This cafe lets you experience the culture of Niigata's Kagai (geisha district) in a casual setting. You can interact with geisha in a historic tatami room while enjoying green tea and other treats served by them.

Tsubame

Traditional techniques up close
Tojiro has been making high-quality knives for many years in Tsubame Sanjo, one of Japan's leading cutlery production centers. You can observe the process of making knives and, if you find one you like, you can purchase it at the store.

Niigata Snow Fan Club
The Niigata Snow Fan Club is a website providing information about ski resorts throughout the prefecture. Check it out if you want to enjoy winter sports in Niigata!
Niigata Prefecture is set amidst rich natural surroundings and dotted with beautiful landscapes. Even at the same location, the scenery changes with the seasons, so you can find spectacular views all year long.

Myoko

Famous waterfall where you can feel the four seasons
Naena Falls is selected as one of the 100 best waterfalls in Japan, and nicknamed “Earthquake Waterfall” because of the roar created by its dramatic 55 m drop. In the summer it is cool, and in the fall you can enjoy the vivid colors of the surrounding trees. Feel the four seasons of Japan as you soak up negative ions around the waterfall.

Yahiko Village

Power spot for good fortune
This is a symbol of the Yahiko area, visited by more than a million visitors a year. At the end of the tranquil approach stands a magnificent shrine building. You can enjoy walking around the streets of the surrounding hot spring resort area, which are lined with souvenir shops and restaurants. A power spot tour given by one of the Yahiko Kanko Volunteer Guides is also recommended.

Sado

Mirror of water stretching all over
On days when the wind is calm, you can see a beautiful mirror of water all around, just like the Salar de Uyuni in Bolivia, often called the world’s most spectacular view. The shallows are crystal clear, and at low tide you can walk across a mirror of water. The view changes with the tide and the time of morning or evening, making it a popular photo spot.

Cherry Blossom

Niigata’s proudest cherry blossom viewing spot
This is one of the best cherry blossom viewing spots in Niigata Prefecture. About 4,000 cherry trees bloom together all around the park. While lovely in the daytime, the blossoms are especially famous in the evening when they are illuminated. The cherry blossom viewing season, which attracts many visitors every year, is really stunning. In the fall, visitors can also enjoy the rows of cherry trees as they turn into autumn colors.

Northern Culture Museum, a prosperous farmer’s home
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Kitazawa Flotation Plant ruins
These are the ruins of an ore processing plant in the Kitazawa district of Akawa, Sado. Gold, silver and other useful minerals were extracted from ore mined at the Sado Gold Mine. It is called the “Laputa of Sado Island,” and is one of the most popular tourist attractions here.

Joetsu

Niigata’s proudest cherry blossom viewing spot
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Takada Castle Site Park

Driving time from Niigata Airport Nearest interchange and expressway number for route from Niigata Airport

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Niigata Prefecture hosts a variety of events throughout the four seasons, including world-class fireworks displays and other annual events that attract many people from all over the country. Attend events that interest you.

### Joetsu

**Cherry blossoms in full bloom create a magical world**

One of the best places in the prefecture to see cherry blossoms, it has been named one of Japan’s Three Great Evening Cherry Blossom Viewing Spots. In the daytime, you can admire the magnificent cherry blossoms that fill the sky, and at night, you can enjoy the magical world created by the reflection of the illuminated triple turrets and cherry blossoms on the surface of the moat. During the cherry blossom season, there are also many food stalls where you can enjoy delicious street food.

### Late March to mid-April

- **Cherry blossom viewing at Takada Castle Site Park**
  - 6-1 Motoshirocho, Joetsu, Niigata Prefecture
  - 120 mins [E37] Joetsu Takada IC

### Mid to late February

- **Tokamachi Snow Festival**
  - The city of Murakami is home to a large number and variety of dolls, including hina dolls. During the festival period, they are displayed in townhouses and shops for visitors to see while walking around the town.

### March–April

- **Townhouse doll tour in Murakami castle town**
- **Niigata Sake no Jin**
- **Tsubame Sakura Festival, Bun sui Oiran Dochu**
- **Tenryosado Ryotsu Takigi Noh**
- **Gion Kashiwazaki Festival**
- **Niigata Soh Odori Festival**
- **Yahiko Chrysanthemum Festival**

### August 2–3

- **Nagaoka Fireworks Festival**
  - Riverbed of Shinano River, downstream of Chosei Bridge in Nagaoka, Niigata Prefecture
  - 80 mins [E37] Nagaoka IC

### June–October (once a month)

- **Ojiya Balloon Festival**
  - Oaza Hirasawashinden, Ojiya, Niigata Prefecture

### Mid–September (once a month)

- **Niigata Soh Odori Festival**

### November 1–24

- **Yahiko Chrysanthemum Festival**

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**Event Calendar**

**Mid to late February**

- **Tokamachi Snow Festival**
  - This festival has something for everyone, from snow sculptures created by local residents to the place where all kinds of events are held. At Tokamachi’s unique Snow Festival, you can “enjoy snow, make it your friend.”

**Mid-March (2 days)**

- **Niigata Sake no Jin**
  - This sake festival brings together sake breweries from all around the prefecture. A tasting ticket lets you compare sakes from the exhibitor breweries, or you can just buy a drink on the spot. You can also enjoy a variety of dishes unique to Niigata at the food booths.

**Mid-April**

- **Tsubame Sakura Festival, Bunsui Oiran Dochu**
  - Oiran performers, dressed in gorgeous costumes and accompanied by their attendants, parade under the cherry trees lining the Okozu Canal. There are also stalls selling food, drink, and various merchandise.

**Mid-September (3 days)**

- **Niigata Soh Odori Festival**

**November 1–24**

- **Yahiko Chrysanthemum Festival**
  - The best chrysanthemum exhibition in Japan is held in the grounds of Yahiko Shrine. The grounds of the shrine are decorated with around 9,000 pots created by enthusiasts from inside and outside of the prefecture. The autumn foliage can also be enjoyed at this time of year.

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Events are subject to change or cancellation. Please see official information regarding timing and availability of events.

**Data shown is current as of December 1, 2022.**
Niigata Prefecture offers beautiful nature, rural scenery, and a blend of cultures. It is located almost in the center of Honshu, facing the sea. Blessed with vast land and abundant nature including the sea, mountains and rivers, the prefecture is a thriving rice and sake producer. The prefecture is long from north to south, and is divided into four regions, Joetsu, Chuzu, Kaetsu, and Sado, each with its own unique traditions and culture. The four seasons also have their own distinct character, so you can enjoy their respective charms throughout the year.
How to use toll booths

1. Toll booth lanes

ETC vehicle lane
Lane for both ETC vehicles and non-ETC vehicles
Non-ETC vehicle lane

[Entry toll booth]
When you're driving a car with ETC
Enter at less than 20 km/h and drive slowly through the ETC lane. If the word "STOP" is displayed, do not back up. Turn on your hazard lights and wait until a clerk arrives.

Non-ETC vehicles
Stop at the entry toll booth and take a toll ticket from the automated ticket machine. You will pay when exiting the expressway.

The toll between Sapporo-nishi and Sapporo-minami ICs is a flat fee.

[Exit toll booth]
When you're driving a car with ETC
Enter at less than 20 km/h and drive slowly through the ETC lane. If the word "STOP" is displayed, do not back up. Turn on your hazard lights and wait where you are until a clerk arrives.

Non-ETC vehicles
Stop at the exit toll booth and hand over your toll road ticket at the exit. Pay the toll road ticket in cash or with a credit card. Use the lane marked "ETC" and pay using the self-operated toll machine.

2. ETC (Electronic toll collection)

This expressway toll payment system allows your vehicle to pass through the tollgate and pay the toll without stopping. Securely insert your ETC card (an IC card) into the ETC device in your vehicle. When the device receives your ETC data, the toll is paid and the tollgate opens.

- If your vehicle is ETC-equipped, use an ETC lane (*ETC*). ETC is a lane open to both ETC (*ETC*) and non-ETC vehicles. ETC can be used for the entire toll expressway.
- Look at the signage in the lane to determine which type of lane it is.
- When there are beam barriers installed at entrance and exit lanes, if there is some problem with the wireless ETC signal, the roadway display will flash "STOP" and the barrier will not be raised.

3. Regarding Smart ICs

A Smart Interchange (Smart IC) is an interchange that is only open to ETC vehicles. There are two Hokkaido Smart ICs in Hokkaido: Watutto Smart IC and Sunagawa SA Smart IC.

- Watutto Smart Interchange and Sunagawa SA Smart Interchange only uses ETC. (A vehicle with an ETC card built into the IC card can use a Smart IC gate.)

- ETC only works at this gate when the vehicle is stopped. The gate will not open if you do not stop your vehicle. Be sure to stop.

Winter freeway awareness

In the winter season, you absolutely must ensure that you slow down and that you maintain a reasonable distance between vehicles.

Watch out for blizzards and snow blown on the ground by winds from the northwest. Even if the weather is relatively good, visibility can suddenly worsen.

To be able to cope with sudden weather changes, be mindful of gathering information, slowing down and maintaining a safe distance between cars.

Winter expressways: Pay especially close attention in spots like these!

- Mished of snow
  - Be careful on roads and near sudden slush or the slushing snow
- Long descents
  - Be careful on long descents without snow or slush, and maintain a safe distance between cars
- Shaded road surfaces
  - Shared between cars and slush
- On bridges
  - Bridge can be slippery and not easily visible. Be careful to slow down
- Winter running
  - Bridge can be slippery and not easily visible. Be careful to slow down
- Winter paranoid
  - Bridge can be slippery and not easily visible. Be careful to slow down

Safe Driving Tips on Winter Roads:
1. Don't be overconfident in your driving skills or your vehicle's performance
2. Always anticipate what's on the road ahead
3. Don't push too hard
4. Prepare early for winter conditions