TOHOKU JAPAN

Luxury Travel to Northeast Japan
As the snowy winter ends, the flowers bloom all together in a riot of color. A highlight among them is cherry trees. There are many places famous for their cherry trees and old weeping cherry trees, and some of them are illuminated at night. The fresh green leaves that fill the mountains can only be enjoyed in this season.

When autumn arrives, it suddenly becomes cool and the forests and mountains all become covered in red and yellow at once. The autumn leaves are magnificent like a beautiful picture scroll. The rice plants ripen in rice-growing areas, there is as much new rice and new soba noodles as you want, and kiritanpo nabe (a hot pot with rice sticks, meat and vegetables), which warms the body, is a must-eat dish.

Summer is the best season for sightseeing, whether walking through a World Heritage forest, riding on a sightseeing boat and savoring cliff scenery from the ocean, enjoying the scenery of a swivel or going downstream in a boat and viewing the fish on the riverbed through transparent water. The many summer festivals with lively float cars are also worth seeing.

Winter with its charming powder snow. You can encounter a fairytale world of magical mountain trees covered in ice and snow and dome-shaped “kamakura” snow huts, dedicated to the Shinto god of water, where visiting worshipers are entertained.
**TOHOKU Area**

**AOMORI**
Aomori Prefecture at the northern tip of Honshu is packed with things to see throughout the year. There’s the cherry blossoms of Hiraizumi in the spring, the Aomori Nebuta Festival in the summer, the autumn leaves in such places as Oirase Keiryu Mountain Stream and Lake Towada in autumn, and frost-covered trees in the Hakkoda Mountains in winter. The prefecture is famous for apple production and its wonderful gourmet seafood, including Oma tuna.

**IWATE**
Iwate Prefecture is a place where you can encounter beautiful natural formations such as a complex coastline and oddly shaped rocks. Chusonji Temple in Mirakum, founded in 850, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site that was the cultural heart of the Tohoku region in medieval times. The construction of which began in 724, still looks like it did when it was completed. Have a special experience eating Wanko-soba noodles, a famous dish.

**MIYAGI / SENDAI**
Miyagi Prefecture’s development is centered around Sendai, a city whose foundations were laid down by Date Masamune, a military commander during the Sengoku period (late 15th to late 16th century). The picturesque scenery woven by the 260 islands of Matsushima Bay is one of the Three Most Scenic Spots of Japan and historically famous. The seashore is lined with small oyster restaurants called “kakigoya” where you can enjoy the delicacy.

**YAMAGATA**
Yamagata Prefecture faces the Sea of Japan. At Zao Onsen, with its illuminated frost-covered trees, you can have fun skiing. You can also hike near Lake Okama, whose water turns seven different colors. Yama-dera (literally “mountain temple”) complex, which haiku poet Matsuo Basho wrote about, is said to have been built in 860, and it includes Japan’s oldest beech structure.

**FUKUSHIMA**
Fukushima Prefecture is blessed with abundant nature including Lake Inawashiro, the variously colored lake cluster Goshikinuma, and Mount Bandai. For people who like history, Otsuchi-ji, which still looks like it did when it was a post town in the Edo period (1603-1868), and Tsuruga Castle, a famous, impregnable castle built in 1384 (and rebuilt in 1965), are must-sees.
World Heritage

At the site of Chusonji Temple, which was founded in 850, Kiyohira, the first generation head of the Northern Fujiwara clan, began a large-scale temple-building project at the beginning of the 12th century. The purpose was to console the spirits of those who died in wars and build a peaceful, ideal society based on the Buddha’s teachings. The Konjikido Golden Hall, whose ridgepole was raised in 1124, is a national treasure. Its inner shrine is completely covered in gold foil and decorated with gems and mother-of-pearl inlay to express Sukhavati, or the Pure Land.

IWATE | Chusonji Temple

IWATE | Motzuji Temple

This temple was founded by Jūkaku Daishi Ennin, and during its heyday it was more prosperous than Chusonji Temple. It has a Pure Land garden with a beautiful pond and artificial hill that represents the Pure Land world and the ruins of 12th-century temples. It has been designated a special historical site and a place of special scenic beauty. Visitors can try zazen seated meditation and sutra copying.

This is a vast mountainous area that spans Aomori and Akita prefectures and was registered as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site in 1993. One of the largest old-growth beech forests in the world, almost unaltered by human intervention, is distributed across the area. It has a visitor center and you can hike in the abundant forest.

AOMORI | Akita

Shirakami-Sanchi

This lake on the Juniko walking trails is so blue it looks like someone poured blue ink in it. The water is so transparent you can see felled trees on the bottom of the lake.

Juniko Twelve Lakes
(Blue Pond)

Here you can easily experience the beeches that make up an important part of the natural environment of Shirakami-Sanchi. It has a 2-kilometer circuit course that takes 1 or 2 hours to walk and a 30-minute course with a shortcut. Visitors can take in flowers such as pheasant’s eyes in the spring and summer and vivid autumn leaves in the fall.

World Heritage Beech Forest Trail

IWATE

Motsuji Temple

This temple was founded by Jūkaku Daishi Ennin, and during its heyday it was more prosperous than Chusonji Temple. It has a Pure Land garden with a beautiful pond and artificial hill that represents the Pure Land world and the ruins of 12th-century temples. It has been designated a special historical site and a place of special scenic beauty. Visitors can try zazen seated meditation and sutra copying.
Intangible Cultural Heritage

Raiho-shin, Ritual Visits of Deities in Masks and Costumes

"Raiho-shin, ritual visits of deities in masks and costumes" is a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage that features local deities and messengers of the gods wearing masks and costumes. The most typical of these is the Namahage of Oga, Akita Prefecture, which visit on New Year’s Eve as a messenger of the gods and brings blessings to the people. Yoshihama no Suneka of Iwate Prefecture is a local new year event that is closed to tourists and the media. It is held on Jan. 15. Yuza no Koshigaya Gyō in Yuza, Akita Prefecture, is also closed to tourists and the media. Yonekawa no Mizukaburi is a February festival held continuously for more than 800 years in Tome, Miyagi Prefecture. The participants pour water on their heads and pray for successful fire prevention.

Folk Entertainment

Dancshido Bokagin in Kazuno, Akita Prefecture, is 1,300 years old. Akiu no Taue Odori, a traditional dance handed down in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture, features flower-adorned hats and gorgeous costumes. Hayachitsukagura in Hachinohe, Aomori Prefecture, is so old it is recorded in an instruction book from 1488. It is performed at shrine festivals.

Yama, Hoko, Yatai, Float Festivals

"Yama, Hoko, Yatai, float festivals" are local communities’ religious festival events held to pray for tranquility and disaster prevention. In the Hachinohe Sansha Taisai Festival float parade in Hachinohe, Aomori Prefecture, 27 floats on which dolls are used to tell stories parade through the city. The Kakunodate Festival float parade in Semboku, Akita Prefecture, a dance accompanied by a Japanese orchestra is performed and as a climax, the festival floats collide. In “Tsuchizaki Shinmeisha Shrine Annual Celebration And The Float Festival” in Akita, Akita Prefecture, samurai dolls and a Japanese orchestra ride on a float. "Hanawa Float Festival" in Kazuno, Akita Prefecture, is a festival presented with 10 floats and festival music called Hanawa Bayashi. The Shinjo Festival float parade is put on in Shinjo, Yamagata Prefecture. It’s a festival begun in 1756 to encourage residents of the fief who had been stricken by a terrible harvest. The luxurious and gorgeous ornaments are magnificent.
**Art & Culture**

**ENTSUIN AND ZUIGANJI TEMPLES / MATSUSHIMA**

Entsuin Temple and Zuijanji Temple are located in Matsushima, one of the Three Most Scenic Spots of Japan. Entsuin Temple was founded in 1647. There is a garden that features roses said to have been brought from Europe by Hasegura Tsumenaga, a retainer of the Sendai Domain. As such, there are variously colored roses planted throughout and the temple is widely known as “Bara-dera,” meaning rose temple. Adjacent to Entsuin Temple is Zuijanji Temple, which was completed in 1609 after Date Masamune, the founder of Sendai, spent five years pouring his heart and soul into its construction. The main hall and other buildings are Designated National Treasures.

www.entsuin.or.jp

---

**SAZAE, IIMORI HILL**

Sazaedo, a hexagonal, three-story temple built in 1796, is an Important Cultural Property. The interior is a double helix, and in the past, climbing the slope up to the top and back down to complete a circuit was considered to be completing a 33 Kannon pilgrimage. Statues of 19 young soldiers of the Byakkotai (White Tiger Corps) are enshrined in a building to the side of Sazaedo. In the Boshin War, they fought with the new government’s army and committed suicide by sword on Iimori Hill.

www.sazaedo.jp

---

**AOMORI MUSEUM OF ART**

This museum’s collection contains many works related to Aomori Prefecture such as Aomori Dog by modern artist Yoshitomo Nara and works by internationally known woodblock printmaker Shiko Munakata. Jun Aoki, who has designed Louis Vuitton shops in various places, designed this museum, drawing inspiration from the Sannai-Maruyama site.

www.aomori-museum.jp/en/

---

**AKITA MUSEUM OF ART**

This museum displays the works of Tsuguharu Foujita, known as a representative artist of the School of Paris. It has the large wall painting “The Events of Akita,” which depicts Akita in 1937, shows the beauty of Akita to the world. It was designed by Tadao Ando with a triangle motif. Ando has won multiple prizes including the Pritzker Prize and the Order of Cultural Merit.


---

**YAMAGATA**

**Mount Haguro Five-Storied Pagoda and Cedar Trees**

The shrines on the Three Mountains of Dewa are 1,400 years old and the mountains are a place for practice of Shugendo. Mount Haguro Five-Storied Pagoda is a National Treasure, and the cedar planted around it were awarded three stars by the Michelin Guide for their scenic beauty. Saikan, near the summit, is a building where temporal Buddhist monks lived. There visitors can spend the night and eat the Buddhist vegetarian cuisine that was willed by Matsu Basho.

www.dewasanzan.jp/publics/translation/EN/
TRADITIONAL CRAFTS

Odate MAGEWAPPAs
Odate Magewappa, which are made from natural, uncoated cedar, are both beautiful and strong. The production of Magewappa has been flourishing for 400 years in Odate. When freshly steamed rice is put inside these containers, they absorb extra moisture, which enhances the rice flavor. They also boast the practical benefits such as anti-bacterial and anti-mold properties, which allows rice to keep at room temperature for two days even in the summer.

Akita

Sendai TANSU
These chests of drawers were made for samurai to put their swords in at the end of the Edo period (1603-1868). Made from Japanese zelkova and Japanese chestnut, they feature kiijiro-urushi lacquer that beautifully highlights the wood grain and gorgeous decorative metal fittings. These Sendai treasures can be used for more than 100 years.

Niigata

Okuaizu weaving
This is weaving using carex multifolia, crimson glory vine, matatabi, and other plants that can be harvested in the mountainous region of the Okuaizu region. The items created are strainers, baskets and other things that can be made by hand during the snowy time of year. It’s a handicraft handed down from the Jomon period (14,000-300 BCE).

Fukushima

Tsugaru lacquering
This is a traditional handicraft handed down since around 1700 in the Tsugaru region of Aomori Prefecture. This lacquer ware takes more than two months and requires dozens of processes to make. These creations have luxurious, gorgeous patterns and are durable. In recent years, products made in collaboration with overseas glassmakers have also been developed.

Miyagi

Kabazaiiku (cherry bark work)
These are traditional handicraft items made only in Kakunodate, Akita Prefecture, using the bark of wild cherry trees. The beautiful patterns and luster that characterize the bark of wild cherry trees add beauty to daily-use items such as tableware. Wild cherry is excellent for resisting moisture, drying out and bacteria, and it is particularly suited to tea caddies and tea utensils.

Sendai TANSU
These chests of drawers were made for samurai to put their swords in at the end of the Edo period (1603-1868). Made from Japanese zelkova and Japanese chestnut, they feature kiijiro-urushi lacquer that beautifully highlights the wood grain and gorgeous decorative metal fittings. These Sendai treasures can be used for more than 100 years.

Akita

Sendai TANSU
These chests of drawers were made for samurai to put their swords in at the end of the Edo period (1603-1868). Made from Japanese zelkova and Japanese chestnut, they feature kiijiro-urushi lacquer that beautifully highlights the wood grain and gorgeous decorative metal fittings. These Sendai treasures can be used for more than 100 years.
Experience

YAMAGATA MIYAGI

LAKE OKAMA HIKING
Lake Okama is a crater lake on the highest peak of the Zao Mountain Range. It is accessible via the Zao Ropeway. It is also called Goshikinuma (five-colored lake) because its color changes hour by hour from blue all the way to green. A crater was created by the 1882 eruption and it filled with water and became a lake during rumbling in 1820. Private guide available to visitors upon request.

Zao Trekking Department in the Zao Onsen Tourism Association
www.zao-spa.or.jp/english/

AOMORI

LAKE TOWADA CANOEING
Lake Towada, one of the largest caldera lakes in the world, is in the area of Towada-Hachimantai National Park, and is said to be a mystical lake. Set out on a small adventure with a nature-experience tour by canoe. An experienced guide will show you around the mystical lake and its surroundings.

Towadako Guidehouse KAI
http://tgkai.jp

IWATE

NAMAHAGE
Namahage events are an Intangible Cultural Property held on New Year's Eve almost everywhere on the Oga Peninsula. The Oga Shinzan Folklore Museum is a facility in an old traditional house where courses allow tourists to have a namahage experience throughout the year. It's an immersive experience that is very popular.

Oga Shinzan Folklore Museum
www.namahage.co.jp/namahagekan/english/

YAMAGATA

ITINERANT BUDDHIST MONK ASCETIC PRACTICE
Experience life, death and rebirth through Itinerant Buddhist monk ascetic practice in the Three Mountains of Dewa. Experience part of their practice, including fasting, abstaining from water and walking in the mountains. This mysterious experience of becoming one with nature in white clothing is a special one that will allow you to see yourself in a new light.

Itinerant Buddhist Monk Ascetic Practice Experience Juku
www.tsurukikacity.com
Email: hagurokanko@bu04.plala.or.jp

YAMAGATA

IAIDO (SWORD DRAWING)
In Murayama, the birthplace of iaido, learn from instructors who could be called modern samurai the form and spirit of a practice that has been handed down for 450 years. You can experience everything from sword salute etiquette to the movements of the form and trying out a real Japanese sword.

Murayama City Tourism and Local Products Association
www.iaidoexperience-en.com

IWATE

WANKO-SOBA NOODLES
With Wanko soba, servers put soba in your bowl one mouthful at a time with a fast tempo as you eat rapidly. Kajiya, which was founded in 1904, is where the All-Japan Wanko Soba Tournament began. Popular author Kenji Miyazawa used to patronize Kajiya. In the experience, you receive an apron that records how many bowls of soba noodles you were able to finish.

IWATE

LACQUER PAINTING
Northern Tohoku is famous as a lacquer producing area. Paint the design of your choice on an everyday-use item like chopsticks or a dessert plate in a longstanding workshop in the hometown of lacquer. After the painting workshop, your creation can be finished and mailed to you on request. (You will be charged for full expenses to ship overseas. Japanese language only.)
FUKUSHIMA

AIZU HIGASHIYAMA
ONSEN MUKAITAKI

The building is a Registered Tangible Cultural Property. A fantastic world unfolds in the Japanese garden in the moss-covered courtyard the hall looks out on. The winter snow-viewing candles are a must-see.

AIZU HIGASHIYAMA
ONSEN MUKAITAKI

0242-27-7501
200 Kawamukai, Higashiya-machi Yumoto, Aizuwakamatsu City, Fukushima Prefecture

www.mukaitaki.jp

CHIKUSENSO
MT. ZAO ONSEN RESORT & SPA

An elegant resort hotel that stands at the foot of Mount Zao. Experience the murmurings of forests and clear streams on 66,100 square meters of resort. Enjoy authentic Japanese cuisine and a hot spring bath with water flowing directly from the source.

FUKUSHIMA

AOMORI

HOSHINO RESORTS
OIRASE KEIRYU HOTEL

A hotel that stands along the Oirase Keiryu, one of Japan’s leading places of picturesque scenery. In the summer take a walk along the mountain stream, and in winter enjoy Hotakuro no Yu, an open-air bath surrounded by ice pillars.

AOMORI

HOSHINO RESORTS
OIRASE KEIRYU HOTEL

0570-073-022 (9 a.m. to 8 p.m.)
231 Tochikubo, Okuse, Towada City, Aomori Prefecture

www.oirase-keiryu.jp/en/

IWATE

KASHOEN

This is an onsen ryokan in the sukiya building style that stands in the middle of a namiki akamatsu Japanese red pine forest. It’s a hot spring with an exceptional skin beautifying effect, and the food is a traditional Japanese multiple course meal made using local, seasonal ingredients. At night a brazier in the courtyard invites you to an unusual space.

IWATE

KASHOEN

0219-37-2771
1-125 Yumoto, Hanamaki City, Iwate Prefecture

www.hanamakionsen.co.jp/kashoen/en/

AKITA

KAKUNODATE SANSO
WABIZAKURA

The reception desk is in a 200-year-old traditional Japanese house with a thatched roof. Enjoy the scenery of a magnificent forest from your spacious guest room. There is a half-outdoor bath in the rooms, and you can take in the starry sky from a starry sky deck.

AKITA

KAKUNODATE SANSO
WABIZAKURA

0187-47-3311
1-8 Sassozama, Nichihō-cho Kadomasa, Semboku City, Akita Prefecture

www.wabizakura.com/en/

YAMAGATA

TENDOSO

The guest rooms include free-standing structures in the sukiya style where you can feel craftsmanship everywhere and Azumatei rooms that fuse tradition with functional beauty. For dinner, get your fill of kabayaki eel, a traditional dish.

YAMAGATA

TENDOSO

023-653-2033
2-18 Kamata, Tendo City, Yamagata Prefecture

www.tendoso.jp

MIYAGI

MATSUSHIMA
SAKAN SHOIAN

The sight of Matsushima Bay filling the guest room windows is an incredible scene not just during the day, but also during moonlit evenings. Be soothed by a formal Japanese multi-course meal and a semi-outdoor bath scented with the fragrance of hinoki cypress.

16
Food

LOCAL CUISINE

Hot-pot dishes and hot soups are essential in the Tohoku region, where the first snow falls in November and the last in April. For Akita Prefecture’s kiritanpo hot pot, Hinai Jidori — one of Japan’s three great free-range local traditional pedigree chicken breeds — is slowly stewed to derive soup stock. Other local flavors include senni soup, in which Aomori Prefecture’s Nanbu Senni rice crackers are stewed in stock, and Yamagata Prefecture’s imoni (taro soup).

Noodles

The Tohoku region also has many noodle varieties. In Ouchi-juku, Fukushima Prefecture, Negi Soba is a popular dish where you eat using a long green onion in place of chopsticks. It’s a refreshing, cold soba dish eaten with spicy daikon radish broth. Iwate Prefecture’s Morioka Reimen has a chewy texture. Inaniwa Udon from Akita Prefecture is hand-pulled udon that feels smooth going down.

Seafood and sushi

In the Tohoku area, which has a lot of fishing harbors, there is plenty of just-caught, fresh seafood. You’ll want to enjoy seafood such as scallops, oysters, sea urchins, crab, and Oma Tuna, an ultra high-grade natural food of Aomori Prefecture, as sashimi or sushi. There are also places that offer them grilled on the spot, such as morning markets, fish markets and roadside stations.

Sake

In Tohoku, rich forests create plenty of pure water, making it a natural home to high-quality sake. In SAKE COMPETITION 2019, the only competitive sake-only show in the world, 1191 sakes were entered in seven categories. Not excluding the super premium category, famous Tohoku sake won first place across the board.

Fruits

The Tohoku Region is heaven for fruit-lovers. Aomori Prefecture is famous for the production of sweet, crunchy, juicy apples. The cherries of Yamagata Prefecture are shiny and refreshingly sweet. The Akatsuki peaches of Fukushima Prefecture are supplied to the imperial household. With soft flesh and a sweet, rich smell, they are distinguished by their plentiful juice.

WAGYU BEEF

Yonezawa beef from Yamagata Prefecture, Iwate Prefecture’s Maesawa beef and Miyagi Prefecture’s Sendai beef are rare varieties of wagyu beef produced in small amounts that are hard to find except in their local areas. Create a delicious memory by eating sweet ultra high-grade beef as sukiyaki or steak.
Model Plan  4 days 3 nights

01
Beautiful cherry blossoms and handed down craftsmen’s techniques

Day / 1
For your Northern Cherry Blossom Trip, you’ll start at Seiryu Temple, which has Japan’s largest bronze Buddha statue and weeping cherry blossoms. Then go to Aomori Museum of Art and the Sannai-Maruyama site, where you will examine a collection of ruins from the Jomon period (14,000–300 BCE), along with art and other items. In Nishimeya, try the BUNACO Production Experience. BUNACO is a craft in which tape made from thinly processed beech wood is used to create a mold, which is in turn used to create beautiful containers. At Tsugaru-han Neputa Village, experience Tsugaru lacquer ware, and look forward to having your creation sent to you later. At Hirosaki Park, a famous place for viewing cherry blossoms, don’t miss the sight of the Hirosaki Castle moat covered in fallen cherry blossom petals. Spend the night at Oirase Keiryu Hotel.

Day / 2
At Oirase Keiryu Mountain Stream in Towada-Hachimantai National Park, take a walk on the footpaths in the deep forest. In Odate, see the skilled artistry at a Magewappa workshop, where natural cedar is processed into round containers by hand. The streetscape of samurai houses in Kakunodate makes you feel like you’ve gone back in time to the Edo period (1603-1868). The area is also famous for its cherry blossoms. Kabazuki (cherry bark work) has been practiced since the Edo period. Visit the workshop where artisans carefully make woodworks by hand using cherry bark. Spend the night at Wabizakura.

Day / 3
At Shoboji, an ancient temple founded in 1348, experience zazen (seated meditation). Encounter a part of Buddhism that has been opened to everyone. Have a Maesawa beef lunch, featuring this rare wagyu beef whose fat is sweet, at Ogata, a ranch that produces and sells beef. At the UNESCO World Heritage Sites Hiraizumi Chusonji Temple and Motsuji Temple, encounter the history and culture of the florid Heian period (794–1185). At Sekino-Ichi Brewery in Ichinoseki, see the production of local sake and beer. Also try some samples. Spend the night at Shouan or the Westin Sendai.

Day / 4
At Zuiganji Temple, take a look at the carvings and fusuma paintings of the main hall, which feature many skills of the artisans at the time. At Entsuin Temple, experience making your own original prayer beads. For tasting authentic green tea, visit Yabe-En. The workshop where you get to make your own top-quality tea is popular. Have an unforgettable lunch of delicious sushi at Sushitetsu, where they use only the very best ingredients. Visit a Sendai tansu (chest of drawers) work studio and appreciate the gorgeous dragon and tree peony designs of the metal fittings and lacquerware.
Model Plan  5 days 4 nights

02  A culture of abundant spirit and the appearance of old Japan

Day / 1

Ouchi-juku is a must-see spot where more than 30 old houses with thatched roofs from the Edo period (1603-1868) stand in a row. Take a walk from Tsuruga Castle, a famous castle built in 1584 (and rebuilt in 1965) to Sazaedo (National Important Cultural Property) with its strange architecture on Iimori Hill. At 300-year-old Shirokiya Lacquerware, see wooden lacquer ware made with genuine lacquer. Enjoy gorgeous designs including gold or silver lacquer and gold-inlaid lacquer ware.

Spend the night at Mukaitaki

Day / 2

At Bonsai Abe, try your hand at making bonsai and see bonsai made by artisans. Take on the challenge of a taiko Japanese drum experience at Sairi Yashiki, the house of a wealthy merchant in the Edo period (1603-1868). The fire offering at Jigenji Temple is a rare experience in which you write a wish on a piece of paper and a high-ranking monk purifies it with fire and prays for it to be fulfilled. See environmentally friendly wine making at Akiu Winery. Also enjoy wine-tasting.

Spend the night at Togatta Hot Spring Chikusenso

Day / 3

This mountain temple (Yama-dera) founded in 860 is reached by climbing a mountain trail all the way to the inner sanctuary. The climbing makes it all the more impressive. The Samurai Experience that can be had in the Mecca of Iaido (the art of sword drawing), a fundamental part of bushido, cannot be experienced anywhere else. Visit Ginzan Onsen, which is said to still look like it did during the Taisho period (1912-1926). It is also known as the Hot Spring of Taisho Romance.

Day / 4

Mount Haguro is famous for its stone steps up to Ida-ha-jinja Shrine at the summit and as a mountain where Shugendo is practiced. Have lunch at Al-ché-cciano, which has won multiple prizes in contests. Get your fill of local Shonai foods. Visit Kaikoji Temple, which has 1,200 years of history and is the only temple in Japan with two mummified monks enshrined.

As the last part of your Tohoku trip, enjoy a dance performance by Sakata apprentice geisha at Somaro, which began as a traditional Japanese restaurant in the Edo period (1603-1868).

Day / 5

For animal lovers, Fox Village, where more than 100 foxes are allowed to run free, is essential. Visitors also get a chance to hold a baby fox. To enjoy the nature of Zao, go hiking at Lake Okama, which changes color five times a day. At Oriental Carpet, watch the breathtaking handiwork of the integrated production process that starts with making yarn from wool. The cast metal of Kikuchi Hojudo boasts 400 years of history. They include everything from traditional handicrafts to new induction heating-compatible pots.

Spend the night at Tendoso
### Tohoku Event Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
<th>Event name</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring</strong></td>
<td>Early to late April</td>
<td>Megohime Cherry Blossom Festival</td>
<td>Miharu Town</td>
<td>Fukushima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mid-April</td>
<td>Human Shogi</td>
<td>Tendo Park</td>
<td>Yamagata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April 20 to May 5</td>
<td>Kakunodate Cherry Blossom Festival</td>
<td>Kakunodate, Semboku City</td>
<td>Akita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Late April to early May</td>
<td>Hirosaki Cherry Blossom Festival</td>
<td>Hirosaki Castle</td>
<td>Aomori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May 1 to 5</td>
<td>Spring Fujiwara Festival</td>
<td>Chusonji Temple, Motsuji Temple, etc.</td>
<td>Iwate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd Sunday in May and the day before</td>
<td>Sendai Aoba Festival</td>
<td>Central Sendai City</td>
<td>Miyagi / Sendai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summer</strong></td>
<td>3rd Monday in July</td>
<td>Shiogama Minato Festival</td>
<td>Shiogama City</td>
<td>Miyagi / Sendai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Late July</td>
<td>Soma Nomaoi Festival</td>
<td>Minamisoma City</td>
<td>Fukushima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>August 1 to 4</td>
<td>Monika Sansa Odori Festival</td>
<td>Monika City</td>
<td>Iwate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>August 2 to 7</td>
<td>Aomori Nebuta Festival</td>
<td>Aomori City</td>
<td>Aomori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>August 3 to 6</td>
<td>Akita Kanto Festival</td>
<td>Akita City</td>
<td>Akita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>August 5 to 7</td>
<td>Yamagata Hanagasa Festival</td>
<td>Yamagata City</td>
<td>Yamagata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>August 6 to 8</td>
<td>Sendai Tanabata Festival</td>
<td>Sendai City</td>
<td>Miyagi / Sendai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Autumn</strong></td>
<td>September 7 to 9</td>
<td>Kakunodate Festival Float Parade</td>
<td>Kakunodate, Semboku City</td>
<td>Akita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd Sunday in September and the day before</td>
<td>Jozanji Street Jazz Festival</td>
<td>Central Sendai City</td>
<td>Miyagi / Sendai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd Sunday in September</td>
<td>Yamagata Imoni Festival</td>
<td>Mamigasaki Riverbed, Yamagata City</td>
<td>Yamagata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Late September</td>
<td>Aizu Festival</td>
<td>Aizuwakamatsu City</td>
<td>Fukushima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st Saturday in October</td>
<td>Oshigata Festival</td>
<td>Shiroishi Castle Honmaru Square, etc.</td>
<td>Miyagi / Sendai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Late October</td>
<td>Hachimantai Autumn Leaves Festival</td>
<td>Iwate Kenmin no Mori Forest</td>
<td>Iwate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Winter</strong></td>
<td>January 14</td>
<td>Matsutaki Festival (Dontosai Festival)</td>
<td>Osaki-hachimangu Shrine</td>
<td>Miyagi / Sendai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Early February</td>
<td>Iwate Snow Festival</td>
<td>Shizukushin Town</td>
<td>Iwate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd Friday, Saturday and Sunday in February</td>
<td>Namahage Sada Festival</td>
<td>Shizunao-jinja Shrine, Oga City</td>
<td>Akita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd Saturday and Sunday in February</td>
<td>Uesugi Snow Lantern Festival</td>
<td>Yonezawa City</td>
<td>Yamagata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd Saturday and Sunday in February</td>
<td>Uchi-juku Snow Festival</td>
<td>Uchi-juku</td>
<td>Fukushima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>February 17 to 20</td>
<td>Hachinohe Enburi Festival</td>
<td>Hachinohe City</td>
<td>Aomori</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Schedules and operating days are subject to change.

Photos: iStock, PIXTA, Aflo
Produced by GOOD LUCK TRIP (Diamond-Big Co., Ltd.)