



# [MINO]: THE ESSENTIALS 美濃

<http://www.mino-city.jp/en/index.html>

## GETTING HERE

JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus Gifu-Mino Line • 1 hr • ¥990] →  
"Udatsu no Machinami-dori" bus stop

~ Or ~

JR Gifu Station → [JR Takayama Main Line • 35 min] → Mino-Ota Station →  
[Nagaragawa Railway • 37 min • ¥1,130 in total] → Mino-shi Station

## MAIN FEATURE

### Intangible Cultural Heritage: Mino *Washi* and the "Akari" Art Exhibition



Among the industries of Mino City, the one that stands head and shoulders above the rest is that of paper production. With a history of over 1,300 years here, paper-making is at the very heart of the city's culture, a fact that is seen clearly in the many paper-centric festivals and events. Japanese paper, or *washi*, is made from the bark of certain types of trees and is noticeably different from paper we are used to using that is made from wood pulp. Generally tougher, more fibrous, and softer, *washi* is a paper of extremely high quality that, throughout Japanese history, has been used in the making of many traditional crafts. And Mino *Washi*, counted as one of Japan's Three Great *Washi*, is among the best of them all! It is extremely thin when compared to its paper brethren, and yet despite this, it is immensely strong and difficult to tear. *Washi* was added to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list in November of 2014.

With such an outstanding paper-crafting industry, then, it is no surprise that traditional crafts making use of paper also flourished in the general region. Gifu *Chochin* lanterns, Gifu *Wagasa* Japanese umbrellas, and Gifu *Uchiwa* fans are all examples of famous products incorporating Mino paper into their construction, undoubtedly one reason why each of these is considered among the best in Japan. Though not as numerous as in the past, there remain many crafts-men producing paper in Mino City today, continuing to use the traditional techniques that made the product as famous as it is. Around the town, there are various shops selling Mino *Washi* goods, so you can pick up beautiful souvenirs that represent Mino's long history!

When it comes to showing off the incredible allure of Mino paper, nothing does so better than the Mino *Washi* "Akari" Art Exhibition that takes place every October on the old streets of Mino. Here, around 500 works of art, called "Akari," are accepted from artists all over the world and displayed here for all to admire. Each "Akari" makes use of the interplay between the Mino *Washi* and the light of which it is composed, giving birth to a warm, glowing sculpture that showcases the gentle translucency and texture of the paper. Held in the dark of night, this event is absolutely unforgettable, so come visit and experience first-hand the infinite possibilities of Mino *Washi*!



## SPOTLIGHT

### Mino *Washi* in Many Shapes and Sizes!

Thin, strong, and free from any blotchy imperfections, Mino *Washi* Japanese paper can be used to make anything imaginable, not just traditional Japanese handicrafts! From notebooks and postcards to lanterns, the paper comes in many forms at the various shops in town. Thanks to recent technological innovations, you can even buy socks and towels made from Mino *Washi*! Light, easy to pack, and a craftwork that represents Japanese aesthetics, this paper - in any configuration - makes the perfect gift to bring home!



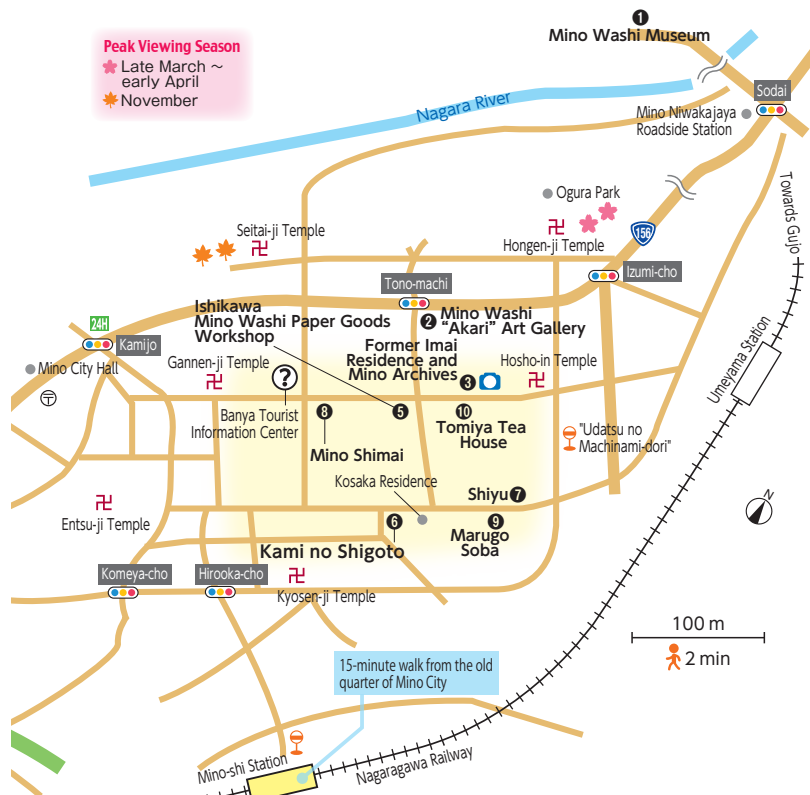
With an old quarter to match any other, the city of Mino - not to be confused with the former Mino Province that encompassed the southern half of modern-day Gifu Prefecture - is famous for its *udatsu*-lined streets (described below). Most of the attractions in Mino City are concentrated in this easily walkable district, and in recent years more and more of the preserved merchant houses have been restored as shops and cafés, making this an area with great practical value for visitors as well as with deep cultural and historical value. That said, if you want to fully experience Mino's beautiful spring and autumn seasons, you should make your way slightly outside the old quarter to Ogura Park (for beautiful sakura cherry trees), Oyada Shrine, and the banks of the Nagara River. Well-known throughout Japan for the Mino *Washi* Japanese paper that has been produced here for 1,300 years, Mino City is also famous for the springtime's Mino Festival, the summer fireworks, and the Mino *Washi* "Akari" Art Exhibition held in the fall!



### Udatsu-Lined Old Streets of Mino

This old quarter of Mino City is known far and wide for the handsome *udatsu* firewalls that rise above the roofs of the wealthy traders' houses. As an old, Edo period (1603 ~ 1868) town, Mino is composed of largely wooden buildings, making it extremely vulnerable to fire. From early on, then, the townspeople feared the spread of fire from one house to the next, and so they installed *udatsu* between the ends of adjoining roofs to contain one in case it broke out. But these firewalls have more than just a practical purpose; they also embody the competition that existed between the wealthy merchants of the town. As with the *yatai* floats used in the

Takayama Festival, Mino's *udatsu* are highly decorative and embellished as a result of the merchants' desire to outdo one another! A symbol of status and wealth, then, the *udatsu* is a unique architectural contrivance that speaks to the history of the town.





## 1 Mino Washi Museum 美濃和紙の里会館



The best place to go to learn all about the history of and production process behind Mino *Washi*, this museum also informs about *washi* paper more generally, introducing many of the different kinds made throughout Japan. You can also make your own Mino *Washi* here and get a sense for how difficult it is to do it well! 9:15-3 Warabi, Mino City 9 am ~ 5 pm (Last entry: 4:30 pm) ¥500 (Middle and elementary school students: ¥250) X Tuesday (Or the following business day instead when Tuesday is a holiday), December 29 ~ January 3, Days following national holidays (museum is opened if the following day is during the weekend) Mino-shi Station → [Taxi 20 min] ☎0575-34-8111 http://www.mino-city.jp/en/tourist/history01.html

¥50 off admission fee (Valid until March 31, 2021)



## 2 Mino Washi "Akari" Art Gallery 美濃和紙あかりアート館



A re-creation of the Mino Washi "Akari" Art Exhibition that graces the streets of Mino in October, this museum displays a selection of the gorgeous "Akari" paper light sculptures that have been shown off at the Exhibition. An eclectic variety of Mino *Washi* goods is also available in the museum's shop. 1901-3 Motozumi-cho, Mino City 9 am ~ 4 pm (April ~ September: until 4:30 pm) ¥200 X Tuesday (Or the following business day instead when Tuesday is a holiday), New Year's holiday season Mino-shi Station → [15-minute walk] ☎0575-33-3772 http://www.mino-city.jp/en/tourist/history02.html

Gift such as facial oil blotting paper (Valid until March 31, 2021)



旧今井家住宅・美濃史料館

## 3 Former Imai Residence and Mino Archives



This grand residence of a once-prosperous merchant family, built in the late 18th century, is used today as a historical archive, housing materials pertaining to Mino City. It boasts grand *udatsu* firewalls decorating its roof that are among the oldest in existence. And a *suikankutsu* - a Japanese garden ornament and musical device - is located in the courtyard and soothes the soul of anyone who has a listen to its quiet, harp-like tune! 1883 Izumi-cho, Mino City 9 am ~ 4 pm (April ~ September: until 4:30 pm) ¥300 X December ~ February: Tuesday (Or the following business day instead when Tuesday is a holiday), New Year's holiday season Mino-shi Station → [15-minute walk] ☎0575-33-0021 http://www.mino-city.jp/en/tourist/construction01.html

Gift such as facial oil blotting paper (Valid until March 31, 2021)



## 4 Oyada Shrine and Maple Valley 大矢田神社もみじ谷



A national Important Cultural Property, Oyada Shrine is enclosed by a forest of over 3,000 maple trees which itself is designated a Natural Monument of Japan. A deep crimson color in mid-November, the forest is one of the absolute best autumn spots in Gifu. Together, the shrine - with its stunning wooden carvings - and its forest compose one of Mino City's greatest power spots! On November 23rd, the Hinko Festival is held, a 500-year-old puppet performance (a national Intangible Folk Cultural Property) that represents the simple, non-embellished festivals that used to dot the Japanese countryside. 2596 Oyada, Mino City Mino-shi Station → [Gifu Bus on the Gifu-Mino Line or Makidani Line towards "Chuno Chosha" 20 min] → "Chuno Chosha" bus stop → [Gifu Bus on the Takami Line towards JR Gifu Station 8 min] → "Oyada Jinja" bus stop → [30-minute walk]



## 5 Ishikawa Mino Washi Paper Goods Workshop 美濃和紙雑貨体験ショップ石川紙業

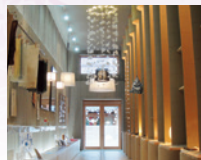


Create your very own Mino *Washi* souvenir - such as dolls, plates, chopstick holders, pen stands, bookmarks, and chopstick envelopes - in a building that holds a history of 260 years. Our workshop is enjoyable for all ages, and items can be taken home immediately upon completion. Additionally, we have roughly 600 different types of handmade *washi* items - such as *washi* dolls and an assortment of lifestyle goods - on display that are available for purchase. 1909-3 Motozumi-cho, Mino City, Gifu 10 am ~ 4 pm ¥ chopstick-envelope workshops starting at ¥540 X Monday ~ Wednesday 10-minute walk from Mino-shi Station shigyo@t7.so-net.ne.jp http://www.ishikawa-shigyo.com/global/shop.html

Small Gift (Valid until March 31, 2021)



## 6 Kami no Shigoto カミノシゴト



A Mino *Washi* specialty store, Kami no Shigoto offers only the best in all-natural Mino paper. Everything available here is personally made by paper artisans in Mino City, who combine carefully selected materials with their superb technique to give birth to gorgeous paper goods in many shapes and sizes.

2249 Aioi-cho, Mino City 10 am ~ 5 pm X Monday ~ Thursday Mino-shi Station → [15-minute walk] ☎0575-33-0621 http://www.iedashikou.com/1\_100brand/en/index.html

5% off your purchase (Valid until March 31, 2021)



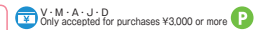
## 7 Shiyu 紙遊



Located in an elegant building, this Mino *Washi* specialty shop sells paper-related goods of all sorts. In addition, there is also a café where you can relax after strolling the old streets of Mino, as well as a small gallery showcasing crafts and works of art not limited to Mino paper.

2296 Tokiwa-cho, Mino City 10 am ~ 5 pm X Tuesday (Except when a holiday) Mino-shi Station → [15-minute walk] ☎0575-31-2023 http://www.shiyu.co.jp (JPN)

Small gift (Valid until March 31, 2021)



## 8 Mino Shimai みの紙舞



This fabulous shop strives to bring Mino *Washi*, with its long 1,300 year history, into the 21st century. The creators at Mino Shimai have spent years developing new processing techniques in order to overcome *washi*'s weak points, namely its vulnerability to water and lack of durability. Having succeeded, they adapted the paper to modern sensibilities, all while making the most of the paper's tough yet delicate texture and quality. From dresses to socks to various other accessories, Mino Shimai offers paper goods that you might have to see to believe! 1917 Motozumi-cho, Mino City 10 am ~ 6 pm X Tuesday Mino-shi Station → [15-minute walk] ☎0575-35-2822 http://minoshimai.jp (JPN)



## 9 Marugo Soba そば切り まる伍



A handmade soba noodle shop, Marugo Soba even makes its own buckwheat flour. Enjoy a delicious meal in a 140-year-old former tradesman's house representative of the old quarter of Mino City.

2275-1 Tokiwa-cho, Mino City 11:30 am ~ 3 pm (Or until supplies last) X Tuesday Mino-shi Station → [15-minute walk] ☎0575-33-3905 https://www.facebook.com/sobamarugo

¥50 off the bill (Valid until March 31, 2021)



## 10 Tomiya Tea House 茶房 とみや



This café featuring homemade Japanese-style sweets is located in Mino's old quarter and set in an old, former wholesale store that dealt in raw materials for paper. The confections made with *adzuki* red beans are among their most popular. You can also buy sweets to take home at this delicious shop!

1887 Izumi-cho, Mino City 1 pm ~ 6 pm (Holidays: from 10 am) X Wednesday Mino-shi Station → [15-minute walk] ☎0575-33-4827

One complimentary Japanese sweet (Valid until March 31, 2021)