

2024 July Vol.3

Festival and Event

1. Riveting Artwork at the World Cultural Heritage Site, Sado Island, August 11 – November 10, Niigata



©Ethan Estess Enso

©Charles Munka / Sado Island Galaxy Art Festival 2020

Niigata Prefecture has been building a name for itself as a hotspot for art, and the Sado Island Galaxy Art Festival only adds to this reputation. Taking place on the outer island of Sado that floats in the Sea of Japan, this art festival features pieces from Japanese and international artists that are displayed all across the island, though concentrated in the Ryotsu area. Sado Island's local traditional performing arts, buildings, and culture are utilized for and inspire the artworks and performances. There will also be workshops held by local experts, as well as Sado folk songs and traditional performing arts, and even guided tours that take visitors around the local attractions. Also known as the "Island of Gold", Sado Island's gold mines produced large amounts of gold through traditional unmechanized methods between the 16th and 19th century. On July 27, Sado Gold Mine was officially included on the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List. Be sure to visit this unique art festival held on Japan's newest World Cultural Heritage Site, Sado Island!

[Sado Island Galaxy Art Festival](#)

New Open

2. Four Seasons Hotel Osaka Will Be a New Addition to the Luxury Hotel Brand, Opening on August 1



©Four Seasons Hotel Osaka

The global luxury hotel brand Four Seasons is opening a new location in downtown Osaka, bringing travelers a new place to relax in style and comfort. With hotels in Tokyo and Kyoto as well, this will be the brand's fourth Japanese location. Its modern design is based on Japanese "Ryokan" inns, incorporating traditional elements throughout the sophisticated interior, such as guest rooms with Tatami floor mats. Views of the Osaka cityscape can be enjoyed from the guest rooms as well as on-site bar and restaurants. The hotel is easily accessible, as it is around a 10-minute walk from JR Osaka Station, with easy access to some iconic landmarks such as Osaka Castle Park and Dotonbori, making it perfect for sightseeing around the city. For a special Osaka experience, consult with the hotel's concierge, who can suggest both famous and off-the-beaten path spots that match your wants and needs.

[Four Seasons Hotel Osaka](#)

Festival and Event

3. Listen to Powerful Drumbeats at the Okinawa Zento Eisa Matsuri, August 23 - 25



©Okinawa Zento Eisa Festival Committee

Eisa is a traditional Okinawan folk dance that has been part of the culture for centuries. To many, it is an iconic symbol of summer in Okinawa, and it is known for its powerful drumbeats, dynamic movements, lively chants, and vibrant costumes. The Okinawa Zento Eisa Matsuri takes place in Okinawa City in the central part of the main island, attracting 300,000 visitors over 3 days who flock to see this unique and exciting custom. Eisa dance groups from Okinawa and sister cities around the country gather to put on splendid performances, and the grounds are overtaken by the sounds of drums, the traditional "Sanshin" string instrument, finger whistling, and the chants

of the dancers. People can be seen enjoying the vibrant atmosphere of the festival, dancing along to the music with the "Kachashi" folk dance. The festival is held in tandem with the Orion Beerfest, so you can also sip on a cup of delicious local beer as you watch the Eisa performances. [Okinawa Zento Eisa Matsuri](#)

Festival and Event

4. The Gates of Hell Open During the Noboribetsu Jigoku Matsuri, August 23 - 25, Hokkaido



©Noboribetsu Int'l Tourism & Convention Association

Noboribetsu Onsen is a famous hot spring area located in southwestern Hokkaido that is home to the local Jigokudani (Hell Valley). Jigokudani was named as such due to its fascinating topography that consists of numerous holes and fumaroles that exhibit boiling, steaming water and looks like a dwelling for demons. It is said that every year, during the last weekend in August, the lid of the cauldron of Hell located in Noboribetsu Onsen's Jigokudani opens. At the same time, Enma, the ruler of Hell, and his entourage visit the area. The Noboribetsu Jigoku Matsuri celebrates this legend, with extraordinary floats that represent Enma, portable demon shrines, the sounds of Taiko drums, and demon dances. This is the only time in the year you can see the fearsome ruler of Hell parading through Gokuraku (Paradise) Street. For the latest information on the dates of the event, please visit the official website.

[Noboribetsu Jigoku Matsuri](#)

Festival and Event

5. Huge Floats Race Through the Streets During the Kishiwada Danjiri Festival, September 13 - 15, Osaka



©Kishiwada city

It could be said that the 300-year-old Kishiwada Danjiri Festival is one of the most wild and thrilling festivals in Japan, with 34 floats called "Danjiri" that weigh around 4 tons being pulled by a procession of men through the streets of Kishiwada City, located around 30 minutes away from central Osaka City. Each traditional float is from a different neighborhood in the city and is decorated with ornate details that portray local history and folklore. But the beautiful craftsmanship of the Danjiri does not prevent them from being whisked through the city at surprising speeds, taking sharp turns and creating nail-biting scenery as they fly by. There are also several men who balance on the Danjiri while they are being pulled, providing energetic chants and movements that perfectly complement the accompanying drum beats and the dynamism of the festival.

[Kishiwada Danjiri Festival](#)

Festival and Event

6. Manga and Anime Fans Gather at the Kyoto International Manga Anime Fair (KYOMAF), September 21 - 22



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The Kyoto International Manga Anime Fair showcases the country's leading forms of pop culture: manga, anime and video games. With over 30,000 visitors (100,000 including online participants!), it is one of the largest manga/anime/video game-related events in Japan and features a wide variety of attractions that any manga, anime, and/or video game lover will enjoy. Here, attendees can purchase merchandise, hear the latest news, view exhibits, see talk shows with voice actors, join the stage events, indulge in themed food and drinks at a cafe, and more. It goes without saying, but everything is manga, anime or video game related! Cosplay fans will

also rejoice in the designated cosplay area, which even has KYOMAF-exclusive backgrounds. There are also special Kyoto goods that highlight the wonders of the traditional city where the event is held.

[Kyoto International Manga Anime Fair 2024](#)

Special Experience

7. Canoe Among Precipitous Rock Faces in Mifuchi Valley, Yamagata



©YAMAGATA EXPERIENCE

The prime seat for viewing the stunning scenery of Mifuchi Valley, just 20 minutes from Nagai City, is arguably in a canoe atop the water, as you will be treated to the sight of towering cliffs sandwiching you on both sides and sunlight twinkling through the lush, green canopy. This half-day tour takes you deep into the dense nature of Yamagata Prefecture, where you can let the soothing sounds of the rippling water, rustling leaves, and rumbling waterfalls help you forget about the chaos of modern life. While the leaves of the trees are a vibrant green in the summer, they turn fiery shades of red and orange in the autumn, offering different scenic views throughout the seasons. As the tour is guided, people of all skill levels can participate and learn about the surroundings and the area as they embrace the calming atmosphere.

[Mifuchi Valley Canoe Tour](#)

Special Experience

8. The Mystical Sight of Daishizan Seidaiji Temple Being Enshrouded in a Sea of Clouds, Fukui



©KatsuyamaDMO

Daishizan Seidaiji Temple in Katsuyama City, Fukui Prefecture is home to the 17-meter-tall Echizen Great Buddha, one of the largest seated Buddha statues and the tallest five-stories pagodas in Japan. The awe-inspiring Buddha statue is also surrounded by some 1,281 other smaller statues, creating a solemn ambiance. From April to November, for 1 hour after the gates open and 1 hour before they close, an artificial "sea of clouds" appears and envelops the grounds in front of the temple, further emphasizing the mystical atmosphere. There is also a special service that includes "Yukata" summer Kimono rental and dressing as well as a photoshoot with a professional photographer, ensuring the ultimate souvenirs for your trip. The special course also offers a dinner following the concept of a sea of clouds in a historical restaurant.

[Special viewing of Echizen Daibutsu Sea of Clouds](#)

National Park

9. Adventure Through the Extraordinary Subtropical Scenery of Iriomote-Ishigaki National Park, Okinawa



©Ministry of the Environment

Japan's southernmost prefecture of Okinawa is made up of dozens of islands, including the main Okinawa Island, that boast unique wildlife and scenery thanks to its subtropical climate. The remarkable Iriomote-Ishigaki National Park consists of several outer islands that host breathtaking views that range from dense mangrove forests to glowing white sand beaches, sparkling turquoise waters, and Sekisei Lagoon (the largest coral lagoon in Japan). The islands that make up the park are also home to wildlife that are endemic to the region, which may be

spotted as you explore (please be sure to drive safely to protect the animals on the road). Manta rays tend to flock from September to November, so it's possible you may run into them during this season. There are several activities available that let visitors fully appreciate what the park has to offer, including snorkeling, sightseeing boats, kayaking, and more. In addition to the stunning nature, the warm local culture makes a trip to this gorgeous part of Okinawa even more fulfilling, offering an experience that cannot be found anywhere else.

[Iriomote-Ishigaki National Park](#)

Luxury Travel

10. Have Your Every Wish Fulfilled While Touring Around the Art Island of Naoshima, Kagawa



©Loyal Experience

Naoshima is an island that is part of Kagawa Prefecture and floats in the Seto Inland Sea. It is known for its contemporary art museums and fixtures, home to works by world-renowned artists and architects such as Kusama Yayoi and Ando Tadao. Also enjoying the temperate climate of the Setouchi region, Naoshima is the perfect place to get a taste of luxury sightseeing with a tour that offers exclusive perks such as traveling on a chartered plane, boat, and even helicopter. You will also be accompanied around the island by a personal tour guide and interpreter, who can not only explain the sights, but also converse with you to help you create memories and impressions that are unique to your experience. Of course, a luxury tour isn't complete without food, and you can savor dishes made by a personal chef with locally sourced ingredients as you take in the sights of the beautiful Setouchi region. There are numerous options for the tour itinerary, making it customizable and truly one-of-a-kind.

[Naoshima Island Private VIP Tour](#)

Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai

Expo : Saving Present and Future Lives by Preserving Nature and Culture in the Heart of Kyushu and Okinawa



Explore the unique experiences of Kyushu and Okinawa in southwestern Japan, with each adventure highlighting the importance of preserving nature and culture and aligning with one of the Osaka Expo's themes: Saving Lives. Start with a thrilling boat ride at Takachiho Gorge, a famous power spot with a mesmerizing hidden waterfall and winding river, showcasing the beauty of nature as a treasure to be preserved, not just enjoyed. Then, marvel at Japan's feudal past at the iconic Kumamoto Castle, connecting you to history to help navigate the future. In Okinawa, diverge from the usual water activities and delve into its martial arts heritage at Okinawa Karate Hall. Test your skills in their classes and, afterward, enjoy a refreshing horse ride at the Yomitan Village Riding Club. Explore the lush Southeast Botanical Gardens, home to a diverse array of plants and animals. Whether you're a thrill-seeker or prefer a relaxed pace, there's something for every traveler. Immerse yourself in Japan's nature, history, and culture, enriched by the locals' warm hospitality. Each experience enriches your life and contributes to preserving these treasures for future generations.

For more details, visit the JNTO Expo 2025 website.

URL : <https://www.japan.travel/en/expo2025/article/kyushu-okinawa/>

Notes:

- The above details are correct as of the time of publication, and are subject to change.

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