

Japan Tourism Topics by JNTO

Japan National
Tourism Organization

September 18, 2025

Festival and Event

1. **Soft glow of 20,000 bamboo lanterns illuminates old castle town streets at Usuki Takeyoi in Oita Nov 1-2**



Held on the first weekend of November in Usuki, Oita Prefecture — famous for its national treasure Usuki Stone Buddhas — Usuki Takeyoi (meaning “bamboo night”) is a mysterious and enchanting festival inspired by the local legend of Hannya-hime. The tragic death and “homecoming” of Hannya-hime, the daughter of Manano Choja, who is said to have created the Usuki Stone Buddhas, is reenacted in the historic streets of this old castle town with a procession, as roughly 20,000 bamboo lanterns (or “takebonbori”) light the way and fascinate visitors. The festival’s 20,000 bamboo lanterns, made from locally sourced madake bamboo, symbolize both the sacred fire of local lore and the community’s effort to honor Hannya-hime’s spirit. Since proper thinning is required to keep the forests in good condition, the festival reflects the Usuki residents’ wishes to revitalize the region and restore its satoyama landscape. Visitors can also enjoy musical and other performances held amid the mysterious glow of the lanterns.

[Usuki Takeyoi Festival](#)

Festival and Event

2. **Watch the historical pageant of the Edo Period at Hakone Daimyo Procession in Kanagawa Nov 3**



©hakone yumoto tourist association

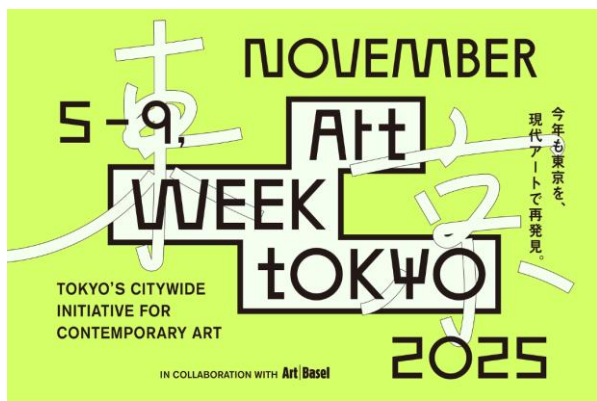


The “Sankin-kotai” system during the Edo Period required feudal lords across Japan to travel regularly to the capital Edo in a grand procession demonstrating their power and loyalty to the shogunate. In Hakone, a key checkpoint on the Tokaido route, this practice is reenacted annually as the Hakone Daimyo Procession. The parade stretches about two kilometers along the Hakone Yumoto area, featuring around 110 participants dressed in meticulously recreated costumes representing samurai, foot soldiers, daimyo, and others. Accompanied by chants of “Shita ni (Bow your head), Shita ni,” the procession includes muzzle-loading gun demonstrations, a local marching band, and geisha dance performances, vividly bringing the colorful samurai-era spectacle to life. This lively festival, set amidst Hakone Yumoto’s famous hot spring town, offers visitors a compelling experience of traditional Japanese culture, making it a must-see autumn event.

[Procession of the Feudal Lord](#)

Festival and Event

3. Art week Tokyo showcasing contemporary art Nov 5-9



© ichio matsuzawa office

Art Week Tokyo, in which leading art institutions and galleries in the nation’s capital work together in coordinated programming and special platforms, is returning November 5-9. Billed as a showcase of the creativity and diversity of contemporary art in Tokyo and held annually since 2021, this year’s edition takes place in more than 50 venues, which will each hold its exhibits as part of the whole event. While there is no “main venue,” all the sites will be linked by a free bus service (Nov 7-9) to make the event more accessible. AWT Focus, its centerpiece special exhibition platform, in which the artworks exhibited at a museum are sold at a gallery, will be held at the Okura Museum of Art. It will be curated by Zurich-based Adam Szymczyk, who is expected to put together both historical and 21st-century artworks under

the theme “What Is Real?” Art Week Tokyo is organized by Japan Contemporary Art Platform in collaboration with Art Basel, with support from the Agency for Cultural Affairs. Art Week Tokyo’s infrastructural development initiative, the Art Week Tokyo Mobile Project, is co-organized by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and the Art Week Tokyo Mobile Project Organizing Committee.

[Art Week Tokyo](#)

Festival and Event

4. Experience the pinnacle of contemporary craft at the 6th Triennale of Kogei in Kanazawa Nov 8-26

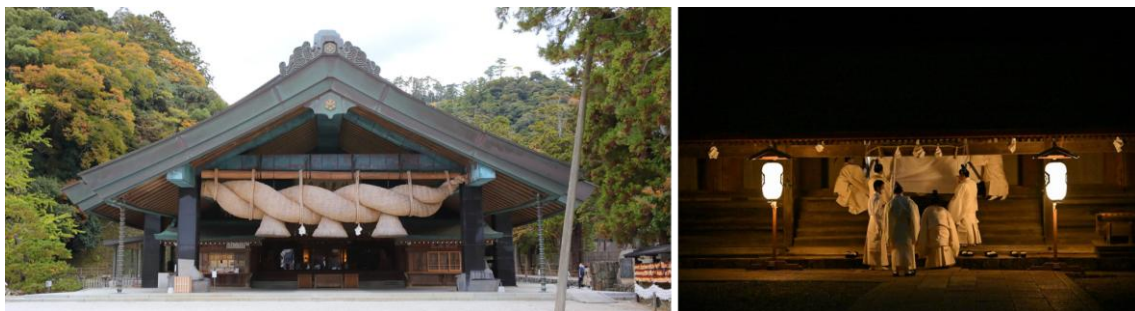


The 6th Triennale of Kogei in Kanazawa will be held November 8-26 at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture. It will showcase works by domestic and international contemporary craft artists who received awards at the 2025 Kogei (Craft) World Competition in Kanazawa. First held in 1989 to share new developments in traditional crafts from Kanazawa to the world, the competition presents works that deepen contemporary artistic expression by artists from around the globe, who utilize techniques cultivated in fields such as ceramics, metalwork, textiles, and lacquerware. The Triennale of Kogei in Kanazawa has been held every three years since 2010.

[6th Triennale of Kogei in Kanazawa](#)

Festival and Event

5. Izumo Taisha Kamiari Festival in Shimane: Spiritual week from Nov 30 to Dec 6 when gods gather from across Japan



The Kamiari Festival at Izumo Taisha (Izumo Oyashiro Shrine) in Shimane Prefecture is a special event where visitors can experience ancient Shinto culture. At Izumo Taisha — one of Japan’s oldest shrines,

dedicated to Okuninushi, the god of matchmaking and nation-building — tradition holds that all deities from across Japan gather here in the 10th lunar month to decide the relationships people will form in the coming year. This is why the month is called “Kamiari-zuki” (month with gods) in Izumo, while much of the rest of the country calls it “Kannazuki” (month without gods). The shrine’s main hall (a National Treasure, rebuilt in 1744, standing 24 meters tall) and the massive “shimenawa” rope (about 13 meters long, 5.2 tons) in the Kaguraden are symbolic of its historical and cultural significance. Izumo is also a sacred site mentioned in the Kojiki and Nihon Shoki ancient chronicles of Japan. During the festival, visitors can watch a series of rituals held to welcome the deities from across the country. Guests can also experience the unique custom of praying with four claps for good relationships, and explore historical sites such as the pine tree-lined approach and the Ancient Izumo History Museum. Set against the tranquil late autumn scenery of Izumo, the festival offers a peaceful journey into Japan’s spiritual heritage.

[Kamiari Festival](#)

Festival and Event

6. Antiquities over a millennium old on display at Shoso-in exhibition in Nara Oct 25-Nov 10



Round Bronze Mirror with Floral and Bird Design in Mother-of-Pearl; Accompanying Tag

Blue Glass Cup with Gilt Metal Base

Aloeswood Incense known as “Ojukuko”

Every autumn, the Annual Exhibition of Shoso-in Treasures is held to display the treasures preserved at Shoso-in, the repository for important documents belonging to Todaiji Temple in Nara. The imperial seal guarding a collection of approximately 9,000 treasures is temporarily opened for regular inspection, and some of the exquisite pieces in the collection are put on public display. This year’s exhibition, the 77th since the inaugural one in 1946, will be held at the Nara National Museum from October 25 to November 10. Shoso-in houses a large number of historical treasures, many of which were personal possessions cherished by Emperor Shomu (701-756) and donated by his wife, Empress Komyo, to the Great Buddha of Todaiji following his death. Most of the artifacts are domestically produced but feature foreign-style designs, while others were imported from China and West Asia. This year, 67 items will be put on display, six of which will be on the lineup for the first time. Among the items are: an 8th-century board for the “sugoroku” game; the “Rurinotsuki” cup of cobalt blue glass estimated to date to the 7th century; a round bronze mirror with floral and bird design in mother-of-pearl; and a piece of fragrant agarwood called “Ojukuko,” or popularly known as “Ranjatai,” which was presented to Emperor Shomu as a tribute from China. Check the official website for details of the exhibition and the items to be on display.

[The 77th Annual Exhibition of Shoso-in Treasures](#)

Renewal Open

7. ANA Holiday Inn Resort Karuizawa opens Sept 12, offering a casual highland getaway



ANA Holiday Inn Resort Karuizawa offers a casual highland getaway. It features 100 guest rooms, dedicated kids' suites with custom beds and play spaces, and two dog-friendly cottages. Located in a highland area at the foot of Mt. Asama and accessible from Tokyo, Karuizawa is a popular resort where visitors can get immersed in nature throughout the year. The hotel, in Kita-Karuizawa, Gunma Prefecture, has all the essential amenities: natural hot springs with open-air baths, an indoor pool, a gym, and a restaurant serving local seasonal cuisine. Unique to the property are its direct access to an 18-hole golf course and a ski slope. Guests can access nature trails directly from the hotel grounds, enjoy panoramic views of Mt. Asama, and relax in spacious guest rooms designed for families and groups — making it an easy base for both outdoor adventure and relaxation in the highland air. Newly opened following a renovation and rebranding of a popular hotel that had earlier operated on the site, ANA Holiday Inn Resort Karuizawa stands out with its focus on multi-generational travel and direct access to all that the highland resort's outdoors has to offer. It is just 100 minutes away from Tokyo (one hour by shinkansen to Karuizawa Station, plus a 40-minute complimentary shuttle bus ride).

[ANA Holiday Inn Resort Karuizawa](#)

Adventure Travel

8. Walking through stunning autumn scenery — Goshikinuma Trail tour in Urabandai, Fukushima



A guided trail walking tour of the Goshikinuma volcanic lakes and marshes, in Fukushima Prefecture's Bandai-Asahi National Park, is available this season. Visitors can explore the 3.6km Goshikinuma Nature Trail with a local nature guide, experiencing the vibrant colors — emerald green, cobalt blue, turquoise,

etc. — of the Goshikinuma lakes set against the area's autumn foliage, which peaks in October. The flat, well-maintained trail makes it easy for anyone to join, and the tour covers the course at a leisurely pace of about two hours. This year, the guided tour, held twice a day (in the morning and early afternoon), is available through November 16. The course highlight is Bishamon-numa, where breathtaking views of Mt. Bandai are reflected on the lake's surface. Guides (who speak Japanese only) provide in-depth explanations of the area's geology, plants, and wildlife to enrich the walk. From the surrounding Urabandai Highlands, panoramic views of Mt. Bandai and Lake Hibara can also be enjoyed amid brilliant autumn leaves.

[Mysterious Goshikinuma Trail Walking](#)

Special Experience

9. Adventure ride on canoe made of 100-year cedar and lunch of wild game in Mie



Take a guided trip on a "100-year old cedar canoe." Handcrafted from century-old, locally sourced cedar trees, it won the Wood Design Award for its striking wood grain and craftsmanship. Paddle along Mie Prefecture's Kushida River, retrace the historic timber transport route, and explore the river's upper reaches and surrounding forests to appreciate the natural landscape and cultural traditions of the litaka area of Matsusaka in central Mie. In the past, lumber produced in the area was carried on rafts across the open plains. After the canoe experience, enjoy a lunch made with local game meat and seasonal ingredients, highlighting the region's connection between its forests, the logging industry, people, and food.

[A ride on a canoe made of 100-year-old cedar & a wild game lunch](#)

[Exclusive Activities Information for Travel Agencies](#)

Marugo Kabushiki Kaisha (email: maekawa.mokuichi0707@outlook.jp)

Special Experience

10. Appreciate the beauty of bonsai in Takamatsu, Kagawa along with local culture and history



Takamatsu in Kagawa Prefecture is Japan's largest producer of pine (matsu) bonsai — the art of growing miniature trees in a shallow pot. With a 200-year history of bonsai-making, the city has an 80 percent share of the nationwide market of pine bonsai. Its products are popular worldwide, and buyers from Europe and the rest of Asia descend here in pursuit of the premier works of bonsai art. A tour jointly developed by the city office and travel agency H.I.S. takes visitors through the deep charm of bonsai as well as other cultural heritages of Takamatsu. Tour participants, accompanied by English- and French-speaking guides knowledgeable about Takamatsu bonsai plus the area's local history and culture, will visit [bonsai garden Nakanishi Chinshoen](#) and try their hand at bonsai craftsmanship. The two-day program also includes a stroll in the historic [Ritsurin Garden](#), hands-on experiences such as the making of dried wagashi sweets using traditional wasanbon sugar, and a visit to the open-air [Shikokumura Museum](#). It is a story-driven tour designed to deepen appreciation for the local art and culture through active participation and expert guidance.

[HIS: Bonsai Experience in Kagawa](#)
[Experience Takamatsu](#)

Notes:

- The above details are correct as of the time of publication, and are subject to change.
- Item 9 is based on information from JNTO partner.

If you'd like to download photos and videos of Japan's tourist attractions, please visit the [Japan Photo & Video Library Links](#)

For media inquiries, including requests to use photographs, please contact JNTO at media_inquiry@into.go.jp



Japan National
Tourism Organization



Copyright ©2025 Japan National Tourism Organization. All Rights Reserved.

※If you no longer wish to receive our email newsletter, please click [here](#) to unsubscribe.