

FREE

Stroll Around Niigata Chuetsu

10 Stories of 12 Cities, Towns and Villages



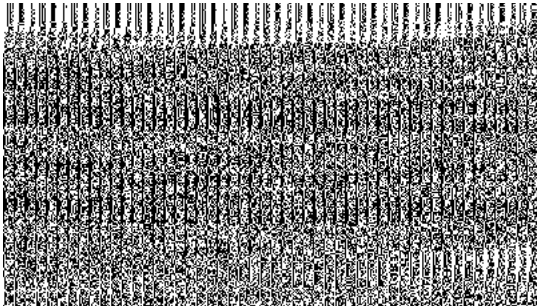
Nagaoka City
Sanjo City
Kashiwazaki City
Ojiya City
Tokamachi City
Mitsuke City
Tsubame City
Unuma City
Minamiunuma City
Yahiko Village
Izumozaki Town
Tsunan Town



The unique landscape and streets of Japan in the Chuetsu area strike at the very heart of those that see the views with nostalgia.



Mitsuke English Garden



An authentic English garden inspired by traditional English gardening techniques and enhanced with Mitsuke's original design. A whole range of plants, including roses and more than 1,000 varieties are planted in this 2.2 hectare park.

🕒 Open from 8:40 until sundown, admission free (although approx. 100 yen donation is appreciated to help maintain the garden). Closed: December through to March, 6-35 Shinkocho, Mitsuke City, 5 minutes by car from Mitsuke Station on the JR Shin-etsu Line, 5 minutes by car from Nakanoshima-mitsuke IC on the Hokuriku Expressway

Okutadami Dam



A huge dam for power generation completed in 1960. Visitors can enjoy the lake by taking the cable car up to the dam and by boarding the pleasure boat which sails on the lake. There is a small museum on the observation deck called the Okutadami Electric Power Museum (admission free).

📍 To the left of the dam is Uonuma City, Niigata Prefecture and to the right is Fukushima Prefecture, about 50 minutes by car from Koide IC on the Kanetsu Expressway, buses depart from Urusa Station on the JR Joetsu Shinkansen Line, about 15 minutes on foot from Okutadami Dam bus stop

Akiyamago



Akiyamago is the name given to the villages that are dotted about Tsunan Town and the Nagano prefectural border as well as the mountainous areas upstream of Nakatsugawa River. From mid-October to early November the beautiful autumn foliage which can be seen in the secluded valleys closed off by the mountains is a sight to behold with the colorful leaves seemingly glued to the mountain slopes.

🕒 Akiyamago, Tsunan Town, about 40 minutes by car from Tsunan Station on the JR Iiyama Line, about 60 minutes by car from Shiozawa Ishiuchi IC or Echigo-kawaguchi IC on the Kanetsu Expressway

Ojiya Balloon Festival



Hot air balloons compete over the snow in the Sea of Japan Cup Cross Country Championship and lots of snow attractions take place at this event on the white snowfields. There is also the Glow Balloon Festival with hot air balloons and fireworks as well as the chance to ride in one of the hot air balloons too.

🕒 Held every year on the weekend end of February to early March, Hirasawa and Nishinaka area, Ojiya City, about 10 minutes by car from Ojiya IC on the Kanetsu Expressway, about 10 minutes by bus from Ojiya Station on the JR Joetsu Line



Terraced Rice Paddies and Mirrored Ponds in Yamakoshi

In many parts of the Yamakoshi area beautifully strange scenes of terraced rice paddies and mirrored ponds can be found. Known as the birthplace of nishikigoi (colored varieties of carp), the ponds were created to breed and stock the fish. On clear sunny days the blue skies and clouds can be seen reflecting in the water of the ponds.

① Yamakoshi area in Nagaoka City, about 30 minutes by car from Ojiya IC on the Kanetsu Expressway

Mt. Hakkai

Known as a sacred mountain, Mt. Hakkai has been the subject of mountain worship since ancient times. The view of the autumnal leaves from the mountain top looks as if the whole side of the mountain has been dyed an orange red. Many people visit the mountain to see this majestic sight. From the Mt. Hakkai Ropeway which reaches the summit in about 5 minutes, passengers can enjoy the beautiful autumn leaves while literally walking in the air.

① 8:20 – 16:20 (8:00 – 17:00 on weekends), adult return from 1,800 yen, children from 900 yen (changes may apply depending on the season)
1610 Yamaguchi, Minamiuonuma City, about 30 minutes by bus from Muikamachi Station on the JR Joetsu and Hokuhoku Lines, about 20 minutes by car from Muikamachi IC on the Kanetsu Expressway



Sunset over the Sea of Japan

Among the many places to view the sunset from the coast along the Sea of Japan is the Yunagi Bridge at the Echigo Izumozaki Tenryo no Sato road station, a sea bridge which juts out in the Sea of Japan. Also called the bridge of marriage, it is rumored that the bridge is a place where love can be fulfilled.



Izumozaki

Izumozaki, where the streets and town sit between the Sea of Japan and the low hills. Here, rows of long houses called “tsumairi” with the entrance built on the narrow side of the house can be seen. It is also where the modern petroleum industry began and visitors will find a memorial park and hall adjoining the roadside station.

① About 7 minutes by car from Izumozaki Station on the JR Echigo Line



Bokushi Street



Shiozawa, which once flourished as a postal town on the Mikuni Kaido Highway, recreates the old town scene with its covered sidewalks reminiscent of the snow country and white-walled shops lining the streets. Bokushi Street is named after Bokushi Suzuki, a literary man from the Edo period who grew up here.

① About 15 minutes from Echigo-Yuzawa Station on the JR Joetsu Line

The firework displays of Chuetsu, Niigata Prefecture as well as the huge Big Three Fireworks Festivals of Echigo are without doubt the best in the country.

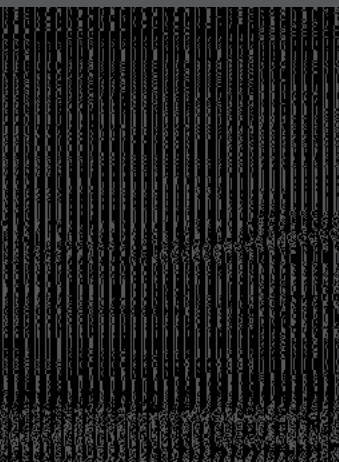


Date 2-3 August

Nagaoka Fireworks Festival

The Kome Hyappyo display with fireworks set off one after the other creating a colorful spectacle with a diameter of 300 meters in the sky is one of the highlights of the festival. Phoenix fireworks, so called as a symbol of rising up for a complete recovery, represent the phoenix bird with the approximately 2 kilometer wide Super Wide Star Mine display.

❗ On the river bed of the Shinano River, Nagaoka City, take the shuttle bus from the Echigo Hillside Park parking lot about 10 minutes by car from Nagaoka IC on the Kanetsu Expressway, about 30 minutes on foot from Nagaoka Station on the JR Joetsu Shinkansen Line



Date 9-10 September

Kataikai Fireworks Festival

Fireworks dedicated with prayers are launched into the sky after the dedication has been announced to the crowd. All sorts of fireworks are set off including several massive fireworks, star mines and the world's largest firework 800 meters in diameter.

❗ Behind Asahara Shrine, Kataikai Town, Ojiya City, take one of the shuttle buses from the temporary parking lots located about 10 minutes by car from Ojiya IC on the Kanetsu Expressway

Date 26 July



Gion Kashiwazaki Fireworks Festival

A fireworks display held on the coast facing the sea. Dynamic looking fireworks, such as the Marine Star Mine coloring the night sky and the surface of the sea, and the simultaneous launch of 100 fireworks only seen in Kashiwazaki are launched with what seems like no end.

❗ Chuo kaigan area, Kashiwazaki City, take the shuttle bus from the temporary parking lot in Kashiwazaki City from the Kashiwazaki IC on the Hokuriku Expressway, about 20 minutes on foot from Kashiwazaki Station on the JR Shin-etsu Line

As well as rice and sake one of the things the people of Niigata are most proud of is the fireworks which color the summer night skies. When summer comes firework festivals are held almost weekly throughout the prefecture boasting some of the best displays in the country in terms of number of fireworks, size and pyrotechnics.

Nagaoka City's Nagaoka Fireworks Festival, Ojiya City's Kataikai Fireworks Festival, and Kashiwazaki City's Gion Kashiwazaki Fireworks Festival are collectively known as the Big Three Fireworks Festivals of Echigo with the displays being called Nagaoka of River, Kataikai of Mountain, Kashiwazaki of Sea based on each of the venue's respective locations.

The Nagaoka Fireworks Festival originated from the

Nagaoka Restoration Festival, which prayed for speedy recovery after the war. The festival also incorporates the memory and regional restoration from the Nagaoka air raid which happened during the war and for those who died in the 2004 Chuetsu Earthquake. At the Kataikai Fireworks Festival, fireworks are set off in the precincts of the Asahara Shrine by the local people as a dedication to pray for the safety of family and good health. The Gion Kashiwazaki Fireworks Festival, set in the open sea, is the largest fireworks display on the coast of the Sea of Japan.

There are many other fireworks festivals taking place in the Chuetsu region with all sorts of history and culture surrounding them so it's fun to go and watch several displays and see how they match up to each other.

Stroll Around Niigata Chuetsu

Onsens (Hot Springs)

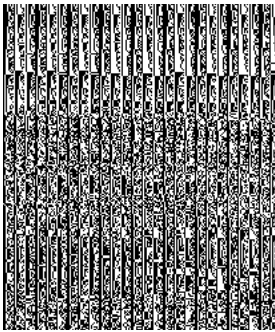
Hot spring baths in onsen resorts, baths steeped in history, and outdoor baths with stunning views. Hot spring baths with a range of health benefits are everywhere.

In the Chuetsu region, there are many quaint hot-spring resorts where visitors can enjoy all sorts of water qualities, effects, and scenery. Nagaoka and Kashiwazaki, which once had the best oil fields in the country, is home to hot springs created as a by-product from the oil industry. High quality springs with plenty of great health benefits are springing up everywhere. The spacious open-air

baths and the sense of being in a place with fine views are the main charms of onsens.

Well known hot springs with the atmosphere of days gone by still remain in the mountain areas. For example, in Matsunoyama Onsen in Tokamachi, a place in the prefecture known for its heavy snow fall, taking a hot bath while enjoying the winter snow is a very popular thing to do.

Matsunoyama Onsen



Boasting some of the highest acid content in the country, the water here is highly regarded for its quality and along with Kusatsu and Arima, Matsunoyama Onsen is known as one of the top three medicinal waters in Japan. The day bath, Takanoyu, is hugely popular here.

📍 Tokamachi City, about 25 minutes by bus from Matsudai Station on the Hokuohoku Line, about 60 minutes by car from Shiozawa Ishiuchi IC on the Kanetsu Expressway

Water quality:
Calcium, Sodium Chloride hot spring
Temperature: 92°C
Number of hotels: 11



Yunotani Onsenkyo

Yunotani Onsenkyo (or onsen village) refers to the small hot springs dotted along National Route 352 heading to Lake Okutadami



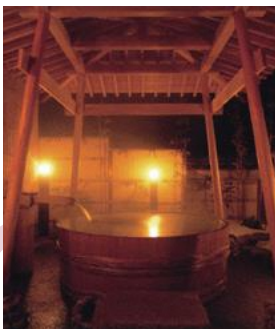
from Uonuma City. The main hot spring in this group is Oyu Onsen with its ryokan sitting on both sides of the Sanashi River.

📍 Uonuma City, about 30 minutes by bus from Koide Station on the JR Joetsu Line, about 15 minutes by car from Koide IC on the Kanetsu Expressway

Water quality:
Simple hot spring
Temperature: 38-58°C
Number of hotels: 10 (Oyu Onsen)



Yahiko Onsenkyo



An onsen located in front of the gate of Echigo Ichinomiya Yahiko Shrine, written about in the Manyoshu (the oldest existing collection of Japanese poetry). The bath boasts a long history with legend having it that the birds and the beasts used to bathe here over 1,000 years ago.

📍 Yahiko Village, just outside Yahiko Station on the JR Yahiko Line, about 25 minutes by car from Sanjo-Tsubame IC on the Hokuuriku Expressway

Water quality:
Simple alkaline hot spring
Temperature: approx. 47°C
Number of hotels: 9



Osawayama Onsen



Osawayama Onsen is a small hot spring resort located in the mountains, with three hotels nearby. The spring water is composed of sodium chloride bicarbonate and it is considered to be good for the skin which is why it is very popular among women.

📍 Minamiuonuma City, about 20 minutes by car from Shiozawa Station on the JR Joetsu Line, about 10 minutes by car from Shiozawa Ishiuchi IC on the Kanetsu Expressway



Sanjo City and Tsubame City with their long history of manufacturing. Both cities continue to develop as the site of the metal processing industry.

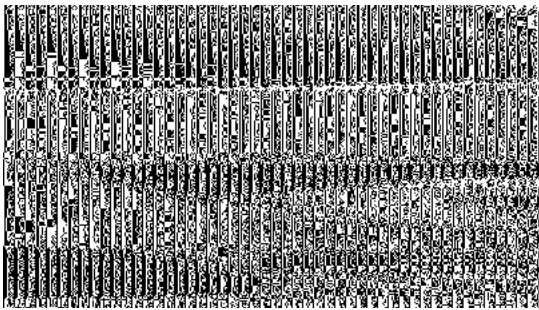


Sanjo and Tsubame, located in the northern part of the Chuetsu region have flourished as manufacturing towns since the Edo period. In Sanjo City, blacksmiths and metal workers have been active since the Middle Ages, and since the Meiji period they have prospered in the production of things like sickles, knives, short swords and saws. Currently the city continues to produce various metal products such as knives and tools. From the late Meiji period in Tsubame City, copperware, files, and flue pipes, etc. known as Tsubame bronze-ware

flourished. Now many stainless steel companies are based here with the city boasting a 95% market share of Western metal tableware in Japan. The manufacture of plastic products using metallic molds is also thriving here.

There are many metalworking companies manufacturing these kinds of products in Sanjo and Tsubame, and there are places where visitors can look around and even have a go at metalwork, making it a great place to come and visit. In Mitsuke City nearby, visitors can also visit the knit factory.

Sanjo Kaji Dojo

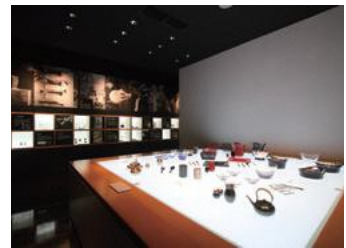


The Sanjo Kaji Dojo, or Sanjo's Blacksmith, is a place where visitors can try their hand at making things with the idea of keeping alive traditional skills and developing the area of Sanjo. Visitors can have a go at making Japanese nails or letter openers with the help of trained blacksmiths (fees apply).

① 11-53 Motomachi, Sanjo City, Open: 9:00 – 17:00 (activity bookings close at 15:30), Closed: Mondays and 29 Dec. - 3 Jan., 10 minutes by car from Sanjo-Tsubame IC on the Hokuriku Expressway, 3 minutes on foot from Kita-Sanjo Station on the JR Yahiko Line, 10 minutes by car from Tsubame-Sanjo Station on the JR Joetsu Shinkansen Line

Tsubame Industrial Materials Museum

The Tsubame Industrial Materials Museum holds dear those who have gone before us and preserves their skilled heritage.



The new wing exhibits the history of western tableware and metal houseware which Tsubame is so proud of, as well as a unique collection of spoons from all over the world. Visitors can also have a go at making some small spoons (free).



① 4330-1 Omagari, Tsubame City, Open: 9:00 – 16:30, Adults 300 yen, Children 100 yen, Closed: Mondays (or the following day if national holiday) and the New Year's holiday season, 5 minutes by car from Sanjo-Tsubame IC on the Hokuriku Expressway, 5 minutes by car from Tsubame-Sanjo Station on the Joetsu Shinkansen Line

Tsubame-Sanjo Factory Festival

This event, held every year for four days in early October, sees factories in the metalworking region of Tsubame-Sanjo open their doors to visitors. Visitors can go to factories where all sorts of products are manufactured including agricultural products and they'll also have the opportunity to buy local products at this large-scale event.



Tsubame-Sanjo Factory Festival Committee

Tsubame Sanjo Brand Development Division, Industry Development Dept., Tsubame Sanjo Regional Industries Promotion Center 1-17 Sugoro, Sanjo City <http://kouba-fes.jp>

Knit Factory Tours



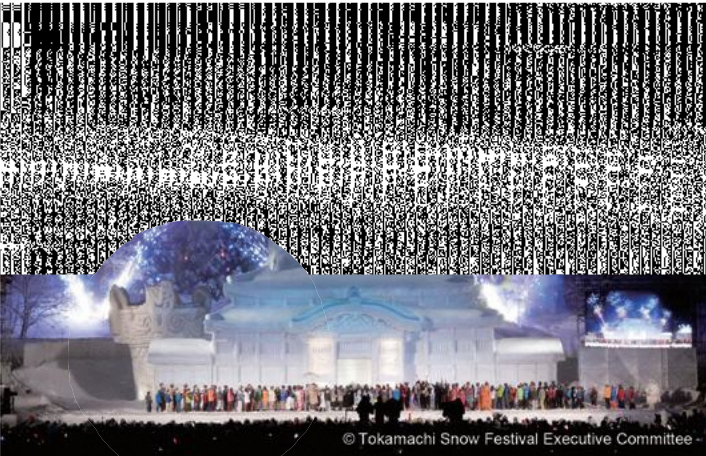
Mitsuke City is one of the leading producing areas of knitwear products in Japan. They design, manufacture and sell knitwear products. A company called Daiichi Knit Marketing holds events throughout the year where visitors can take a factory tour or do some outlet shopping.

Daiichi Knit Marketing Co., Ltd.

270-1 Yanagibashi, Mitsuke City, factory tours on weekdays only (please enquire for Saturday tours). Tours available only for groups of between 10 and 80 people. Booking required at least one week in advance (free), 5 minutes by car from Nakanoshima-mitsuke IC on the Hokuriku Expressway, 5 minutes on foot from Mitsuke Station on the JR Shin-etsu Line



There are lots of events going on in the snowy landscapes of the heavy snowfall areas during winter.



Tokamachi Snow Festival

At this snow festival, considered to be where modern day snow festivals first began, people from the city create artistic statues out of the snow all around the city. There are plenty of things to see and do, such as the snow carnival performed on a huge snow stage, and the festival plaza where you can enjoy warm gourmet food and even warmer hospitality from the local people.

① Held on the third Friday, Saturday and Sunday in February every year, Venue: Jogaoka Pure Land, Tokamachi City and other venues, about 20 minutes by car from Muikamachi IC on the Kanetsu Expressway, about 25 minutes on foot from Tokamachi Station on the JR and Hokuhoku Lines

Nagaoka Yukishika Festival

There are lots of popular winter events going on which both children and adults can enjoy such as the Wanpaku Hiroba where you can enjoy fun in the snow with the jumbo snow slide and climbing the snow wall, and also there is the food market for food and drink and the Yukishika Market for souvenirs.

① Held on Saturday and Sunday mid-February every year, Venue: around Hive Nagaoka and Senshugahara Furusato Forest, about 15 minutes by car from Nagaoka IC on the Kanetsu Expressway, about 10 minutes by car from Nagaoka Station on the JR Joetsu Shinkansen Line



Tsunan Snow Festival

A festival to celebrate the end of winter and the coming of spring. As well as having lots of things and events going on which can be done only in the snow, when night falls hundreds of lanterns are released into the night sky creating a magical atmosphere and picture to behold.

① Held mid-March every year, Venue: New Greenpia Tsunan, Tsunan Town and other places, about 40 minutes by car from Shiozawa Ishiuchi IC on the Kanetsu Expressway, about 50 minutes by car from Echigo-Yuzawa Station on the JR Joetsu Shinkansen Line



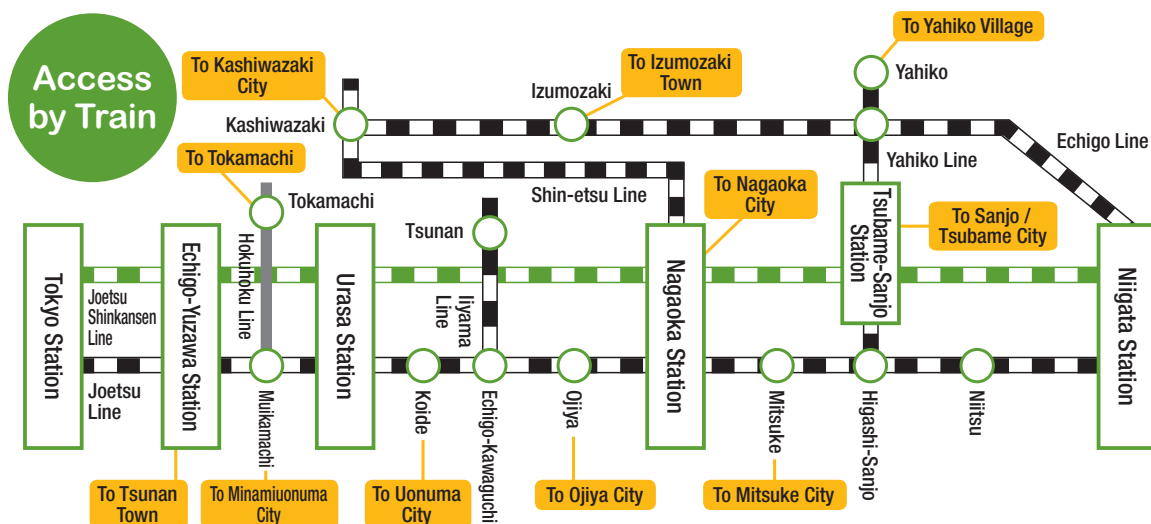
In Niigata where it is not uncommon for areas to have more than 400cm of snow in the year, winter traditional events rooted in the lives of the people who have lived with the snow are still being passed on and a lot of new events inspired by snow are sprouting up too.

The Tokamachi Snow Festival boasts a history of nearly 70 years and is known as the birthplace of the modern snow festival, and is also the largest winter event on the coast of the Sea of Japan. Other events include the Ojiya Balloon Festival which sees hot air

balloons competing over the snow, the Hadaka Oshiai Taisai (naked jostling festival) which has been going on since 1,200 years ago, and the Lantern Festival with all its lanterns magically floating in the winter night sky. All of these festivals in the Chuetsu area are winter attractions which can be enjoyed by all regardless of age.

These days more and more new activities to do on the snow are being dreamed up following on from skiing and snowboarding, such as snowshoes, snow bikes and air boards, etc.

Access to the Chuetsu Region from the Metropolitan Area



Approximate Travelling Time Required from Tokyo to the Major Cities, Towns and Villages

Izumozaki Town	Take the Echigo Line from Niigata Station on the Joetsu Shinkansen Line. 3 – 4 hours	Tsubame City	Get off at Tsubame-Sanjo Station on the Joetsu Shinkansen Line. Approx. 2 hours and 30 minutes
Uonuma City	Take the Joetsu Line from Urasa Station on the Joetsu Shinkansen Line. Approx. 2 hours and 20 minutes	Tokamachi City	Take the Joetsu or Hokuohoku Line from Echigo-Yuzawa Station on the Joetsu Shinkansen Line. Approx. 2 hours
Ojiya City	Take the Joetsu Line from Nagaoka Station on the Joetsu Shinkansen Line. Approx. 2 hours and 30 minutes	Nagaoka City	Get off at Nagaoka Station on the Joetsu Shinkansen Line. Approx. 1 hour and 30 – 55 minutes
Kashiwazaki City	Take the Shin-etsu Line from Nagaoka Station on the Joetsu Shinkansen Line. 2 hours and 20 – 40 minutes	Mitsuke City	Take the Shin-etsu Line from Nagaoka Station on the Joetsu Shinkansen Line. Approx. 2 hours – 2 hours and 30 minutes
Sanjo City	Get off at Tsubame-Sanjo Station on the Joetsu Shinkansen Line. Approx. 2 hours and 30 minutes	Minamiuonuma City	Take the Joetsu Line from Echigo-Yuzawa Station on the Joetsu Shinkansen Line. Approx. 2 hours
Tsunani Town	Take a bus from Echigo-Yuzawa Station on the Joetsu Shinkansen Line. Approx. 2 hours and 20 minutes	Yahiko Village	Take the Yahiko Line from Tsubame-Sanjo Station on the Joetsu Shinkansen Line. 2 hours and 30 minutes – 3 hours

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The information regarding facilities in this publication is as of March 2017. As some information may have changed, it is recommended visitors confirm the information directly by phone, etc. in advance of visit.