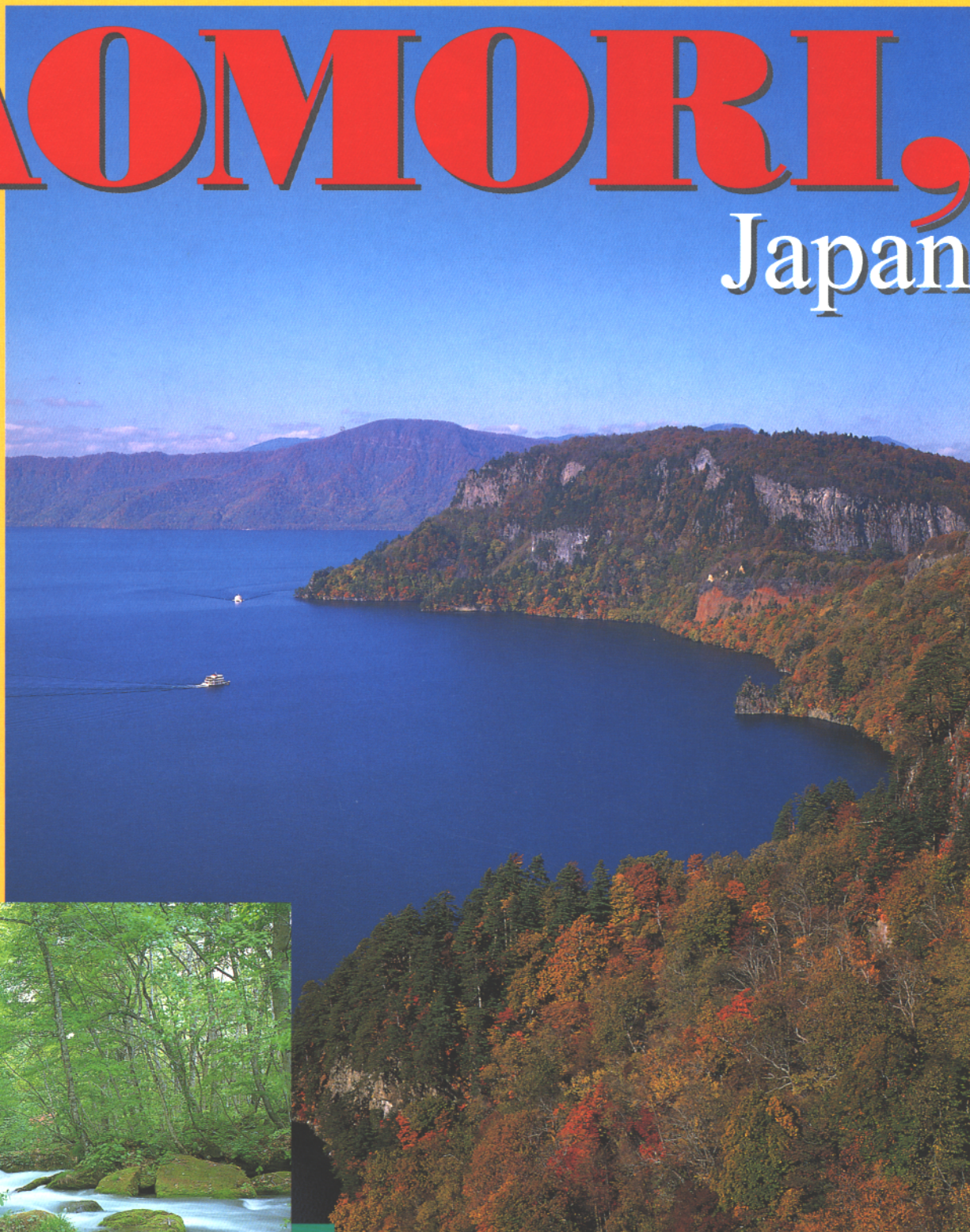


The Heart of the North

AOMORI, Japan



**A region-by-region introduction to
Aomori Prefecture**

- **TSUGARU:** Aomori and Hirosaki Area
- **NAMBU:** Hachinohe, Towada and Misawa Area
- **SHIMOKITA:** Mutsu Area

The sights, the sounds, the taste
Come to Aomori, the heart of th



決戦
関ヶ原
鹿内

名人位
鹿内一生制作



~ the true essence of Japan.
north!



Aomori Nebuta Matsuri
【青森ねぶた祭】

Aomori Nebuta Festival

*N*ebuta is a name which is known throughout Japan, even by people who have never set foot in Aomori Prefecture. It is a name which echoes with the pounding beat of the drum and the rhythmic cry of the crowd as it surges through the streets on a hot summer night. The origins of the summer festival - one of Japan's largest and certainly one of its most dynamic - are clouded in the mists of history. But every year, during the first week of August, the nighttime streets of Aomori are lit up by the huge illuminated floats called *nebuta*. As high as 4 or 5 meters, and equally wide, these handmade, illuminated floats depict stirring legendary scenes and are pulled through the crowded streets to the accompaniment of drums and flutes and the frenzied dancing of *haneto* dancers. All in all it is a spectacle which, once experienced, is never forgotten.

At the far north of the main island of Honshu lies a prefecture mostly unheard of outside of Japan. The prefecture is **Aomori**. It is our home and we believe it is the home of the true essence of Japan.

On the same latitude as New York, Madrid and Rome, Aomori Prefecture is marked by four distinctly different seasons: spring which brings a welcome green transformation after the white of winter; summer which is a little shorter than those further south, but which lacks the humidity of southern climates; autumn which lingers gloriously and colors the whole prefecture a golden russet; and winter which lasts nearly a quarter of the year and changes the landscape into a snowy wonderland.

As a result of its long history of isolation, both geographically and climactically, Aomori has developed and maintained a regional variety which has long disappeared elsewhere. The regions of **Tsugaru**, **Nambu** and **Shimokita** are distinct in their traditions. They retain to this day their own individual identity in their festivals and their folk crafts; they even have their own dialects of Japanese.

Even today, when Aomori is a mere one-hour flight from the nation's capital, visitors to Aomori can experience the sights, sounds and tastes of a Japan which many people thought had long vanished.

Yes, Aomori is the home of Japan's apple industry. Yes, Aomori is the gateway to Hokkaido and the North. However, Aomori is so much more.

We are proud of Aomori. Come and see for yourself; come to the heart of the North!

[front cover]

Towada-ko / Lake Towada
【十和田湖】

Oirase Keiryu / Oirase Gorge
【奥入瀬溪流】

The Different Faces of Aomori ~ TSUGARU



*Shirakami Sanchi /
Buna Genseirin*
【白神山地/ブナ原生林】

The Virgin Beech Forest of the Shirakami Mountain Range

The forest blankets the **Shirakami Mountain Range**, the world's largest virgin beech forest, is located in the southwestern corner of the prefecture. The area was recently declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, thus ensuring the untouched beauty of the forest for posterity.



Juni-ko 【十二湖】

'Juniko' Twelve Lakes Region

The name *Juni*, meaning "twelve," is taken from the twelve lakes which can be seen from the central vantage point of **Mt. Okuzure**. Actually, there are as many as 33 lakes and marshes nestled among the trees of this lovely forested area.



Iwaki-san to Ringo-batake 【岩木山とりんご畑】

Mt. Iwaki and its Apple Orchards

Often called "the Mt. Fuji of Tsugaru," **Mt. Iwaki** stands majestically in the center of the Tsugaru Plain. Rising from the lush apple orchards of its foothills to a height of 1,625 meters, the mountain provides both a geographical and symbolic focus for people throughout the Tsugaru area. Its distinctive contours make for a different silhouette depending on from where in the region it is viewed.

Stretching from the beech-forested border with Akita Prefecture in the south to the pounding waves of the Tsugaru Straits in the north lies the Tsugaru Plain. The seat of the Tsugaru clan in feudal times, the Tsugaru area has a rich historical and cultural tradition. The fertile fields of the Tsugaru Plain and the surrounding foothills are also home to 40% of Japan's apple orchards. Long-time residents of the area speak a colorful and friendly dialect known as Tsugaru-ben or "Tsugaru dialect."



Hakkoda-san 【八甲田山】

The Hakkoda Mountain Range

Just south of **Aomori City** looms the range of mountains collectively known as **Hakkoda-san**. A short drive or bus ride from the city, the Hakkoda Mountain Range offers not only some of the most spectacular views of the prefecture, but also a natural beauty and majesty of its own which changes dramatically with the turn of the seasons.

Nihonkai no Yuhi 【日本海の夕日】

Sunset on the Sea of Japan

Bordered on three sides by the sea, Aomori offers a vast coastline of varied and unspoiled beauty.



Hirosaki-jo 【弘前城】

Hirosaki Castle

Completed in 1611 as the stronghold of the feudal Tsugaru clan, the original five-storied castle was destroyed by fire. In 1810 the castle was replaced by the three-storied donjon which stands today in the heart of **Hirosaki Park** and is a must-see for visitors to this historic castle town.



Gongen-zaki 【権現崎】

Cape Gongen

Jutting out into the Sea of Japan at the northwestern tip of the Tsugaru Peninsula, the rugged cliffs of **Cape Gongen** tower 200 meters above the pounding waves.

The Different Faces of Aomori ~ NAMBU



Towada-ko【十和田湖】

Lake Towada

Whether you view the lake from one of the lofty mountain viewpoints, from the tree-lined shore, or from the deck of a sightseeing cruise ship, you will instantly see why **Lake Towada** continues to be one of Japan's major attractions, drawing countless numbers of visitors every year. While the gorgeous fall colors of the leaves are justifiably famous, Lake Towada is blessed with nature's charm throughout each distinct season.

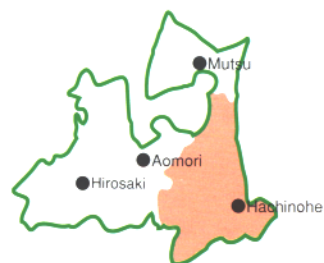
Oirase Keiryu【奥入瀬溪流】

Oirase Gorge

For 14 kilometers this babbling mountain brook twists and winds through some of the most beautiful woodlands in all of Japan. Artists with paint and easel are just a few of the people who follow the river as it flows over mossy rocks and tree roots and cascades down miniature waterfalls and rapids.



Occupying the southeastern portion of the prefecture, from the Iwate border to the start of the Shimokita Peninsula, the Nambu region boasts a tradition and character quite different from its westerly neighbor, Tsugaru. The region has its own commerce and folk crafts; its local dialect of Japanese which is quite distinct; and even the weather is different here in the eastern part of the prefecture, since most of the winter snow falls before crossing the huge natural divide of the Hakkoda Mountain Range.



Kabushima 【燕島】

Kabu Island

More of a promontory than an actual island, **Kabushima** is one of the most unique of **Hachinohe's** coastal attractions. The grass and rock-covered slopes are home to countless thousands of seagulls that circle overhead and fill the air with the sound of their cries. The swirl of color and din of noise combine with the smell and sound of the sea to make Kabushima an evocative viewpoint from which to look out over the Hachinohe waterfront.



Ogawara-ko 【小川原湖】

Lake Ogawara

Situated in the lowlands of the Nambu Plain and flowing from its northeastern corner into the Pacific Ocean is **Lake Ogawara**. Partly marshland, partly lake, its tranquil appearance belies the fact that it is in fact the eleventh largest lake in Japan. Recently it has become a popular site for summer water sports. In winter, fishing enthusiasts carve holes in the ice through which they can catch smelt.



Tanesashi Kaigan 【種差海岸】

Tanesashi Beach

Within easy reach of Hachinohe City, **Tanesashi Beach** stretches for a scenic five kilometers. Rolling dunes, covered with bracken and flowers, give way to sandy beaches studded with distinctively shaped rocks. Enjoy swimming and sunbathing on the beach, or stroll the hiking path across the grassy dunes.



Hoko-ji/Sanju-no-to

【法光寺/三重の塔】

'Hokoji' Temple and its Three-Storeyed Pagoda

Located on the lower slopes of **Mt. Nakui** in the town of **Nagawa**, **Hokoji** was one of Hachinohe's main temples in feudal days. In the lush cedar and pine groves behind the temple is a beautiful three-storeyed pagoda, the tallest of its kind in Japan.



Sakura no Towada-si Kanchougai

【桜の十和田市官庁街】

Cherry Blossoms at the Towada City Government Offices District

This district in **Towada City** includes a 1.1 km (0.7 mile) long street lined with cherry and pine trees. In the spring, there is a marvelous contrast between the pink of the blooming cherry blossoms and green pine needles.

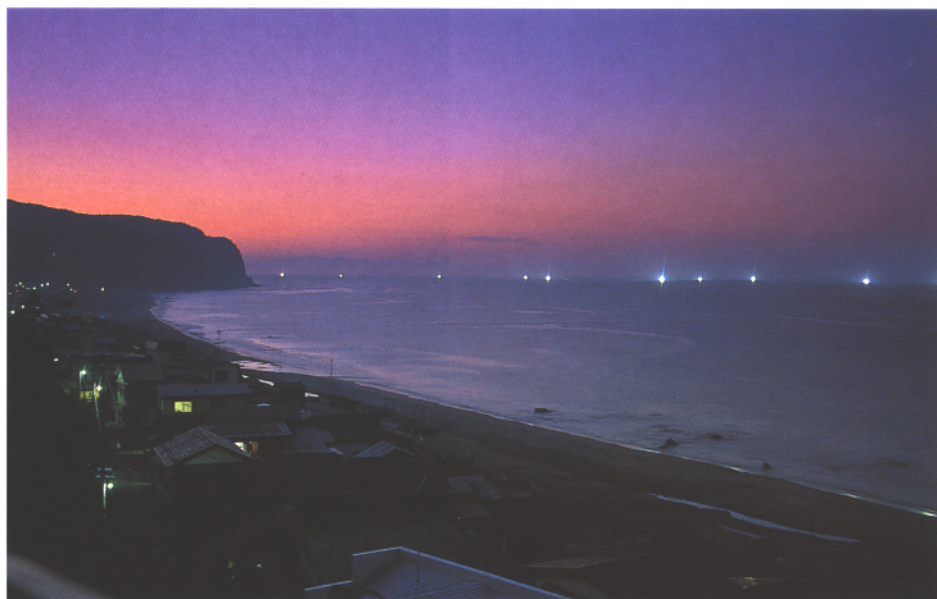
The Different Faces of Aomori ~ SHIMOKITA

Shimofuro Onsen/Isaribi

【下風呂温泉/漁火】

Shimofuro Hot Springs and the Glow of the Fishing Boats

The hot springs of **Shimofuro** can be found on the rocky northeastern coastline of the Shimokita Peninsula, halfway between **Ohata Town** and **Kazamaura Village**. Known during the olden days for its efficacy in healing sword wounds, the hot spring remains a popular spot for hot-spring lovers. At night the coastline is illuminated by the seemingly endless string of fishing boats in search of squid.



Shiriya-zaki / Kandachime

【尻屋崎/寒立馬】

Cape Shiriya and the 'Kandachime' Winter Horses

The promontory of **Cape Shiriya** juts ruggedly out into the Pacific Ocean at the eastern tip of the Shimokita Peninsula. The rocks and jagged coastline give way to rolling grass-covered downs, which are the home and grazing grounds for horses, even in the frozen depths of winter.

Hokugen no Saru

【北限の猿】

The World's Northernmost Monkeys

Shimokita is home to the northernmost members of Japan's indigenous monkey family. In fact, nowhere in the world do monkeys live in a more northerly habitat than Shimokita, although these long-haired monkeys seem oblivious to the long, harsh winters. They are currently protected under the conservation laws.



The distinctive shape of the Shimokita Peninsula (nicknamed the "Axe Peninsula" for its shape), juts out at the northeastern tip of the prefecture and is sandwiched by the waters of **Mutsu Bay** to the west and the Pacific Ocean to the east. Geographically isolated until relatively quite recently, Shimokita still feels like a whole different world: a world where wild monkeys live in the forests, where horses graze knee-deep in the winter snow, a world where you can visit one of the holiest places in Japan – **Osorezan** – and commune with the dead and departed.



Hotoke-ga-ura

【仏ヶ浦】

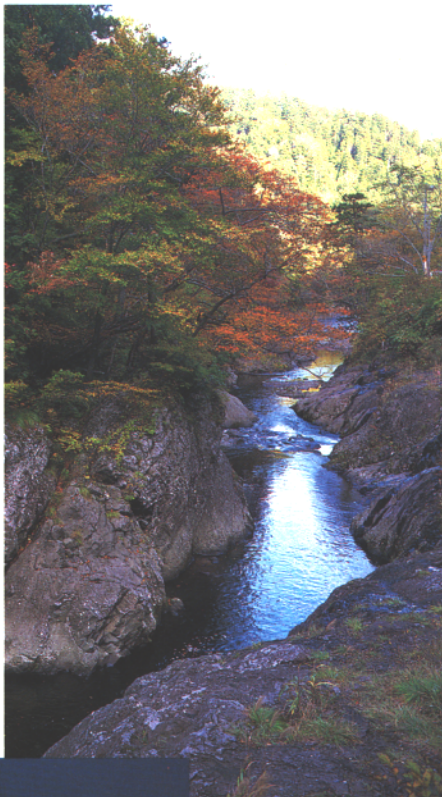
Hotokegaura Coastline

This three-kilometer stretch of coastline at the western edge of the Shimokita Peninsula is marked by its towering cliffs (over 100 meters high) which are naturally carved in intricate patterns said to resemble statues of Buddha.

Yagen Keiryu 【薬研溪流】

Yagen River Valley

Wooded slopes line the river on both sides as it wends its way to the Tsugaru Straits. An idyllic setting for a day's fishing, the valley is also a nature lover's delight, particularly in autumn when the glorious colors of the leaves bring visitors from near and far.



Kamafuse Yama / Mutsu-shi Yakei

【釜臥山/むつ市夜景】

Mt. Kamafuse/Night Skyline of Mutsu City

The unique features of **Mt. Kamafuse** rise up from Mutsu Bay to stand watch over the city of Mutsu and the whole Shimokita Peninsula. By day, the mountain affords a priceless view of the peninsula and the Pacific Ocean. By night, it provides the perfect place from which to observe the twinkling lights of Mutsu City.



Osore-zan / Osore-zan Taisai

【恐山/恐山大祭】

Mt. Osore and its Annual Grand Festival

Seated in the crater of a dormant volcano, abutting the vividly colored waters of **Lake Usoriyama**, Osorezan resembles a lunar landscape. Wisps of sulfur vapor escape from fissures in the misshapen and discolored rocks; ravens caw from their perches; and in accord with local beliefs, stones and rocks are piled in small mounds and decorated by grieving parents with the toys or clothing of departed children. It really is a mysterious and almost spooky place. At the end of July each year, people come to the Grand Festival in hopes of communicating with the dead and departed through the medium of an *itako* – aged and sometimes blind, holy women.

Local Arts and Crafts



Kogin-zashi 【こぎん刺し】 1

Kogin Embroidery

This beautiful and complex style of hand embroidery dates back to feudal days in Tsugaru, when the lower classes were not allowed to wear cotton. The art has been handed down from generation to generation and kogin tablecloths, neckties and many other products remain among the most popular souvenirs of a visit to Tsugaru.

Tsugaru Tako-e 【津軽風絵】 2

Tsugaru Kite Painting

Kites have a long history in Tsugaru, both as toys and as an art form. The powerful and very distinctive style of decorative painting features warriors



locked in combat, and has a lot in common with the depictions used in Hirosaki's *Neputa* festival

Nambu Hime-mari 【南部姫鞠】 3

Nambu 'Himemari' Woven Balls

These beautiful ornaments start out as left-over strands of wool which are wound around a spherical core. Next, brightly colored strands of cotton are wound again and again to form a geometric design. The finished result is an exquisite and intricately patterned silk ball which is then further decorated with silk tassels.

Tsugaru-yaki 【津軽焼】 4

'Tsugaru-yaki' Ceramics

Typically featuring a dark, glazed enamel surface with a splash or streak of white running through it, the finished effect is often likened to the winter appearance of Tsugaru itself.

Yawata Goma 【八幡駒】 5

Yawata Horse

This highly decorative small horse takes its name from Hachinohe's *Yawata Shrine*. Associated with the annual summer festival at the shrine, the brightly colored wooden horse is now a year-round symbol of the Nambu area.

Emburi Ningyo 【えんぶり人形】 6

Emburi Doll

These dolls feature the elaborate and striking garb worn by the traditional dancers in Hachinohe's

ancient *Emburi* festival, celebrated in February.

Akebi-zuru Zaiku

【あけび蔓細工】 7

Akebia Vine Weaving

Like so many northern handicrafts, the enduring appeal of *akebi*-ware lies in its blend of practicality and beauty. These light but sturdy baskets remain one of Aomori's most popular souvenirs.

Tsugaru-nuri 【津軽塗】 8

'Tsugaru-nuri' Lacquerware

A collective term for the various local styles of lacquerware, *Tsugarunuri* has a 300 year pedigree and is renowned throughout Japan. The smooth surface glaze of the finished lacquerware disguises the incredibly painstaking care which goes into their creation.



Zuguri Koma

【ずぐりコマ】 9

'Zuguri Koma' Cone-Shaped Tops

Traditionally featuring an inverted cone with a number of brightly colored ridges, the top also has ridges carved in its underside, originally designed to prevent it from sinking into the winter snow.

Tsugaru Kokeshi

【津軽こけし】 10

'Tsugaru Kokeshi' Wooden Dolls

The Tsugaru *Kokeshi* still retains its popularity, as much a household decoration now as a child's plaything. The cylindrical wooden doll is carefully fashioned on a lathe and then elaborately painted in bright colors. *Kokeshi* dolls of all shapes and sizes can be viewed in the *Kokeshi Museum* in **Kuroishi City** the traditional home of this folk craft.

The Flavors of Aomori



Gyokai-rui 【魚介類】

Seafood

Surrounded on three sides by the waters of the Sea of Japan, **Tsugaru Straits** and the Pacific Ocean, Aomori enjoys a natural wealth of fish and seafood. Hachinohe is one of the largest fishing ports in Japan, and cultured scallops from Mutsu Bay are exported around the world. The Pacific Coast also abounds in squid.



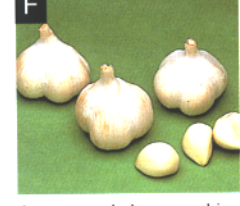
Suisan Kakohin 【水産加工品】

Seafood Products

The cities of Hachinohe and Aomori in particular are home to major fish processing industries, which produce a wide range of seafood products for both local and nationwide markets.

Sake 【鮭】 Salmon

Salmon has long been an Aomori favorite. The salmon are hatched in local rivers and grow to full size in coastal waters. A number of salmon hatcheries also help complement this natural process.



Ke-no-shiru 【けの汁】 A 'Kenoshiru' Stew

Another traditional dish which owes its origin and popularity to Aomori's cold northern winter, *Kenoshiru* features various mountain vegetables, stewed in a *miso* broth.

Jappa-jiru 【じゃっぱ汁】 B 'Jappajiru' Cod Soup

A winter favorite among Aomori dwellers, this *miso*-flavored soup is made from locally caught cod. Almost every part of the fish, from head to tail, is used.

Hotate Kai-yaki 【ほたて貝焼】 C Grilled Scallops on the Half-Shell

What better way to sample one of Aomori's best-known shellfish! Grilled on the half-shell over an open flame, with a dash of *miso* flavoring, they offer a taste of Aomori that will linger long after the last bite of scallop melts in your mouth.

Ichigo-ni 【いちご煮】 D "Strawberry" Soup

Don't be misled by the name! There are no strawberries in this soup. It is a combination of local sea urchin and

abalone, so named because when warmed, the sea urchin curls up into a round shape resembling a wild mountain strawberry.

Nagaimo 【ながいも】 E 'Nagaimo' Japanese Yams

The *Nagaimo* is one of the several varieties of yams originally introduced to Japan from China. Aomori yams account for 40% of the national crop.

Ninniku 【にんにく】 F Garlic

Currently 70% of Japan's garlic is produced in Aomori, mainly around the area of **Sannohe**.



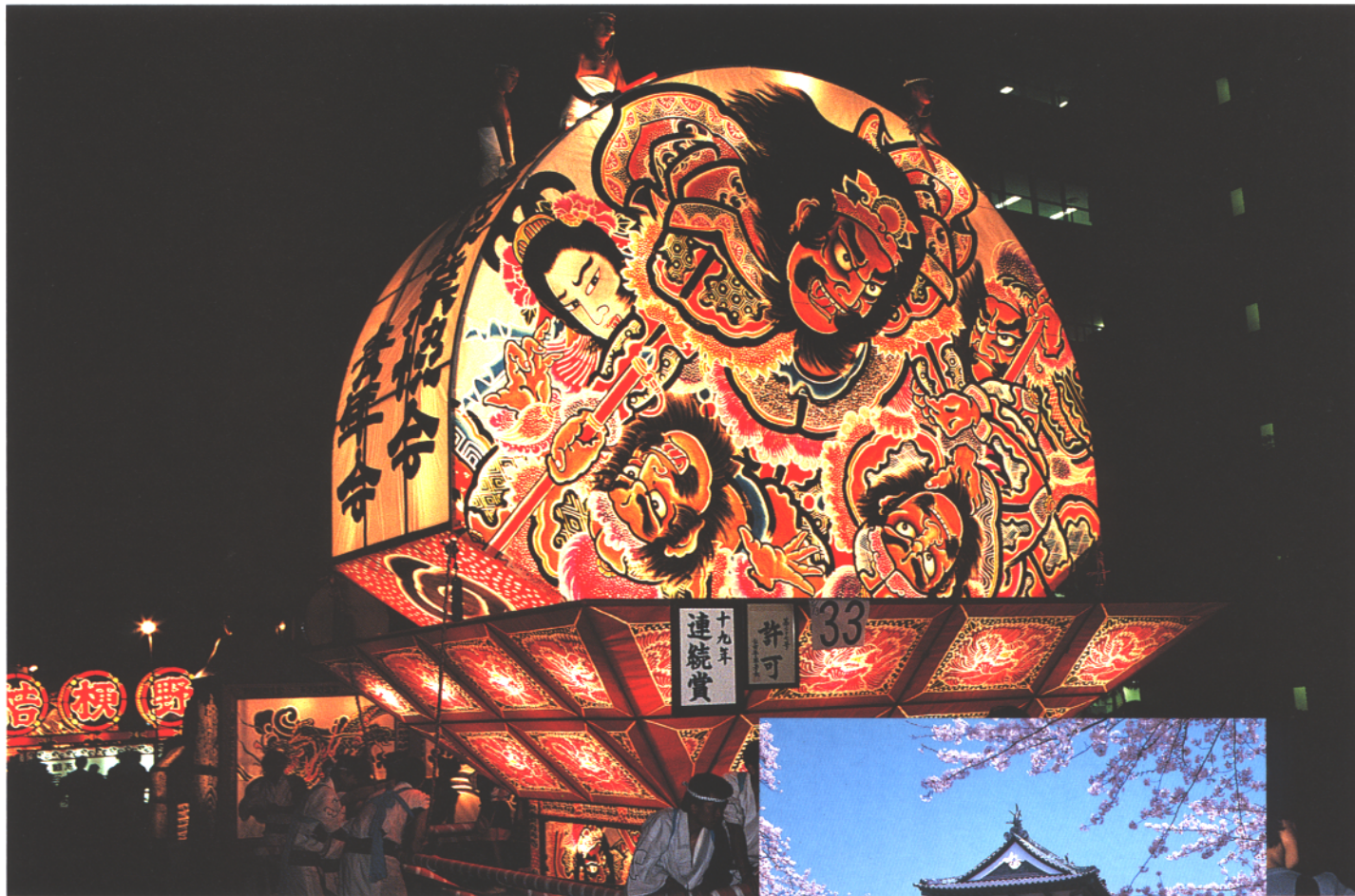
Nosan Kakohin 【農産加工品】

Processed Agricultural Products

Aomori leads the nation in production of apples, yams and garlic. The prefecture is also rich in rice, vegetables and livestock. In recent years a sizeable processing industry has grown up around these agricultural resources. Aomori apple juice, in particular, accounts for 60% of Japan's production and can be found on supermarket shelves throughout the country.



Festivals



Hirosaki-jo Yuki Doro Matsuri 【弘前城雪灯籠まつり】 *Hirosaki Castle Snow Lantern Festival*

This yearly event is a popular fixture on the winter calendar in Hirosaki. Originating as an opportunity for community interaction and exercise during the long, cold winter, the present-day festival showcases exquisite snow sculptures and features attractions and events to interest and entertain the whole family.



Hirosaki Sakura Matsuri 【弘前さくらまつり】

Hirosaki Cherry Blossom Festival

As spring approaches, the “cherry line” moves gradually northward across Japan as the cherry trees bloom in the warming temperatures. When the cherry line reaches Hirosaki – usually right around Golden Week, an extended holiday at the beginning of May – Hirosaki Park becomes, for at least two or three weeks, the most beautiful place in Japan. The moats and terraces of the castle grounds are lined with thousands of cherry trees which all spring into blossom as if in response to some unspoken command. The effect, whether by day or by night, when the trees are illuminated, is captivatingly beautiful. Hundreds of thousands of visitors come to witness the spectacle and to experience for themselves this quintessentially Japanese paradigm of life’s beauty and transience.

Hirosaki Neputa Matsuri
【弘前ねぶた祭】

Hirosaki Neputa Festival

During the first week of August, while dancing revelers are crowding the streets of Aomori for the annual *Nebuta* Festival, some 45 kilometers south in Hirosaki another summer festival is taking place—one far more different than the similarity of the name would suggest. The 50 or more floats which are paraded through the streets are made in the distinctive *ogi* fan shape. Dramatically painted in front with warriors from legend and myth, the reverse side features scenes of beauty and elegance which slowly fade out of view, like the fleeting northern summer itself.



Hachinohe Sansha Taisai 【八戸三社大祭】

Hachinohe Grand Festival

For the first three days of August, thousands of people line the streets of Hachinohe to watch the city's most spectacular festival, *Sansha Taisai*. Huge floats are paraded through the streets, representing a procession of lord and retainers from feudal times.

Tanabu Matsuri 【田名部まつり】

Tanabu Festival

Aomori's string of summer festivals comes to a close with Shimokita's largest annual event – the *Tanabu* Festival. Held during the third week of August, the festival features five gigantic floats which are pulled through the streets and which, on the third and final night, converge at Tanabu's central crossroads. The young men who pull the floats exchange cups of *sake* and promise to meet again at next year's festival.

【えんぶり】

Emburi

Dating back to ancient fertility rituals, *Emburi* is still celebrated in the Hachinohe area. From February 17 to 20, the city's streets are the stage for colorful and ritualistic folk dances, which represent the rice growing process from the planting of the seedling until the harvesting of the mature crop.



History and Culture



Sannai-Maruyama Iseki

【三内丸山遺跡】

Sannai-Maruyama Historical Site

Voices from the distant past. Since the first artifacts were unearthed, by chance, at the *Sannai-Maruyama* site on the outskirts of Aomori, the insights and implications which unfold with each new discovery have thrilled the whole country. Dating back some 5,000 years to the middle of the Jomon period, *Sannai-Maruyama* is the largest site of its kind in Japan. Its sheer size, coupled with its excellent preservation, has offered us an unparalleled glimpse of daily life during this rich period of prehistoric Japan. Indeed, as if our ancestors were speaking directly to us across the vast gulf of time, the increasing evidence of cultural and technical advancement has overturned many long-held academic assumptions. What further secrets lay buried in the soils of *Sannai-Maruyama*? What further messages from our ancient forebears are waiting to be unearthed?



Korekawa Iseki 【是川遺跡】

Korekawa Historical Remains

These historical remains actually comprise three archeological sites around Hachinohe City. Wooden and earthenware artifacts uncovered at these sites date back several thousand years to the neolithic Jomon period and are of great interest to researchers. This area has been designated a national historical site.



Aomori Kenritsu Kyodo-kan
【青森県立郷土館】

Aomori Prefectural Museum

The Prefectural Museum opened its doors to the public in 1973. From regular display cases to elaborate three-dimensional dioramas, the museum features local exhibits of historical, cultural and social interest.



Saisho-in / Goju-no-to

【最勝院/五重の塔】

'Saishoin' Temple and its Five-Storyed Pagoda

From its vantage point in the temple grounds of *Saishoin*, the five-storyed pagoda looks out over Hirosaki City. Construction of the temple can be traced back to 1656, when the feudal lord at that time hoped to appease the spirits of the warriors who perished in the bloody struggle for the unification of the Tsugaru region. *Saishoin* remains a spiritual focus for the people of Hirosaki, and midnight on New Year's Eve brings a huge crowd of people thronging to the temple to usher in the new year.

Seigan-ji / Sanmon

【誓願寺/山門】

'Seiganji' Temple and its Temple Gate

Hirosaki's *Seiganji* dates as far back as 1596. While the main temple building was destroyed by fire on several occasions, the beautiful gate – known as *Tsurukame-mon*, or "Crane and Turtle Gate" – has survived intact and has been designated an important cultural asset.



Munakata Shiko Kinen-kan 【棟方志功記念館】
Shiko Munakata Memorial Museum

Located in Aomori, this attractive museum showcases the career and works of one of the city's most prominent citizens, Shiko Munakata (1903-1975). A multi-talented artist, Munakata's work in the medium of wood-block printing brought him national and international acclaim.



Nitobe Kinen-kan 【新渡戸記念館】
Nitobe Memorial Museum

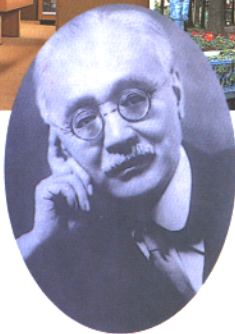
This private museum in Towada City contains memorabilia and displays which recount the history of the Nitobe family, whose 19th-century forefather, Tsutou, constructed the irrigation system which opened the entire area up to agriculture.



【新渡戸稲造】

Inazo Nitobe (1862~1933)

Although best known today as the face on Japan's ¥5,000 note, Inazo Nitobe was an author as well as a scholar of agriculture. As Assistant Director of the League of Nations, Nitobe worked actively to improve international relations.



【青函トンネル記念館】

Seikan Tunnel / Tunnel Museum

Linking Aomori with its northern neighbor Hokkaido, the Seikan Tunnel opened for service in March 1988. At 53.85 kilometers (33.46 miles), it is the longest undersea rail tunnel in the world, linking the two islands in 45 minutes. At **Tappi**, near the Aomori entrance to the tunnel, is the Seikan Tunnel Museum.



Nebuta no Sato

【ねぶたの里】

Home of the Nebuta

A short drive from Aomori City, in the foothills of the Hakkoda Mountains, is *Nebuta no Sato*, a museum dedicated to Aomori's famed summer festival. Visitors can view several larger-than-life *nebuta* floats as well as many other displays and exhibits.



Tsugaru-han Neputa-mura

【津軽藩ねぶた村】

Neputa Village

The distinctly different beauty and charm of Hirosaki's own summer festival, *Neputa*, can be appreciated year-round here at the *Neputa Mura* facility. In addition to the impressive *Neputa* exhibits, there are displays of local arts and crafts and areas where visitors can try their hand at Traditional Tsugaru folk craft.



【メモリアルシップ八甲田丸】

Hakkoda-Mar Memorial Ship

The opening of the Seikan Tunnel in 1988 marked the end of an era for the passenger ferries which were once such a familiar sight in the waters of Aomori Harbor. One of these vessels, the *Hakkoda-maru*, is now permanently berthed in the Aomori waterfront as a floating museum to commemorate almost a century of transportation history.

Recreation and Relaxation



① Hakoda Ski Course 【八甲田スキー場】



⑥ Owani Hot Spring 【大鱒温泉】



② Ajigasawa Ski Course 【鱒ヶ沢スキー場】



③ Owani Ski Course 【大鱒スキー場】

Skiing 【スキー場】

Aomori Prefecture has kept pace with the growth of skiing into the major winter pastime that it is today. Aomori boasts a large number of ski areas, some of which are full-fledged resorts offering a whole range of amenities and services. Since snow is a natural resource that Aomori has in abundance, it is only natural that there are so many great places to enjoy winter sports.

Skating

【スケート場】

While other parts of the prefecture are associated with skiing, the Nambu area, centered on Hachinohe, is known throughout Japan for skating. Hachinohe has even produced a number of international level skaters. Many people try to follow their example every winter on the indoor and outdoor rinks that can be found in Hachinohe as well as in Aomori.



④ Aomori Public Skating Rink 【青森県営スケート場】



⑤ Nagane Skating Rink 【長根スケート場】



⑦ Hakkoda Hot Springs
【八甲田温泉】



⑧ Yagen Hot Springs 【葉研温泉】

Onsen 【温泉】

Hot-Springs

Aomori is a paradise for lovers of *Onsen*, Japan's hot springs. Throughout the prefecture, hidden away in mountain valleys or nestled among the shops and offices of a city street, there are hot springs of every shape, size and style. Flowing straight from the ground beneath, *onsen* waters are rich in minerals and promise the bather any number of physical benefits. Even for those with no aches or pains, there are few finer ways to relax!



●=Hot Springs
●=Ski Course ●=Skating Rink



ASPAM and the Aomori Bay Bridge 【アスパム/青森ベイブリッジ】

The distinctive triangular shape of the Prefectural Center for Tourism and Products, familiarly known as ASPAM, lends a unique character to the Aomori City waterfront. Inside, visitors will find information, crafts and local products from all four quarters of the prefecture. The revolving fourteenth-story-restaurant provides a breathtaking view of Aomori and its harbor. An equally eye-catching addition to the developing waterfront district is the recently opened Aomori Bay Bridge, which does a lot to ease east-west traffic congestion as well as create a striking waterfront silhouette.



Asamushi Suizoku-kan

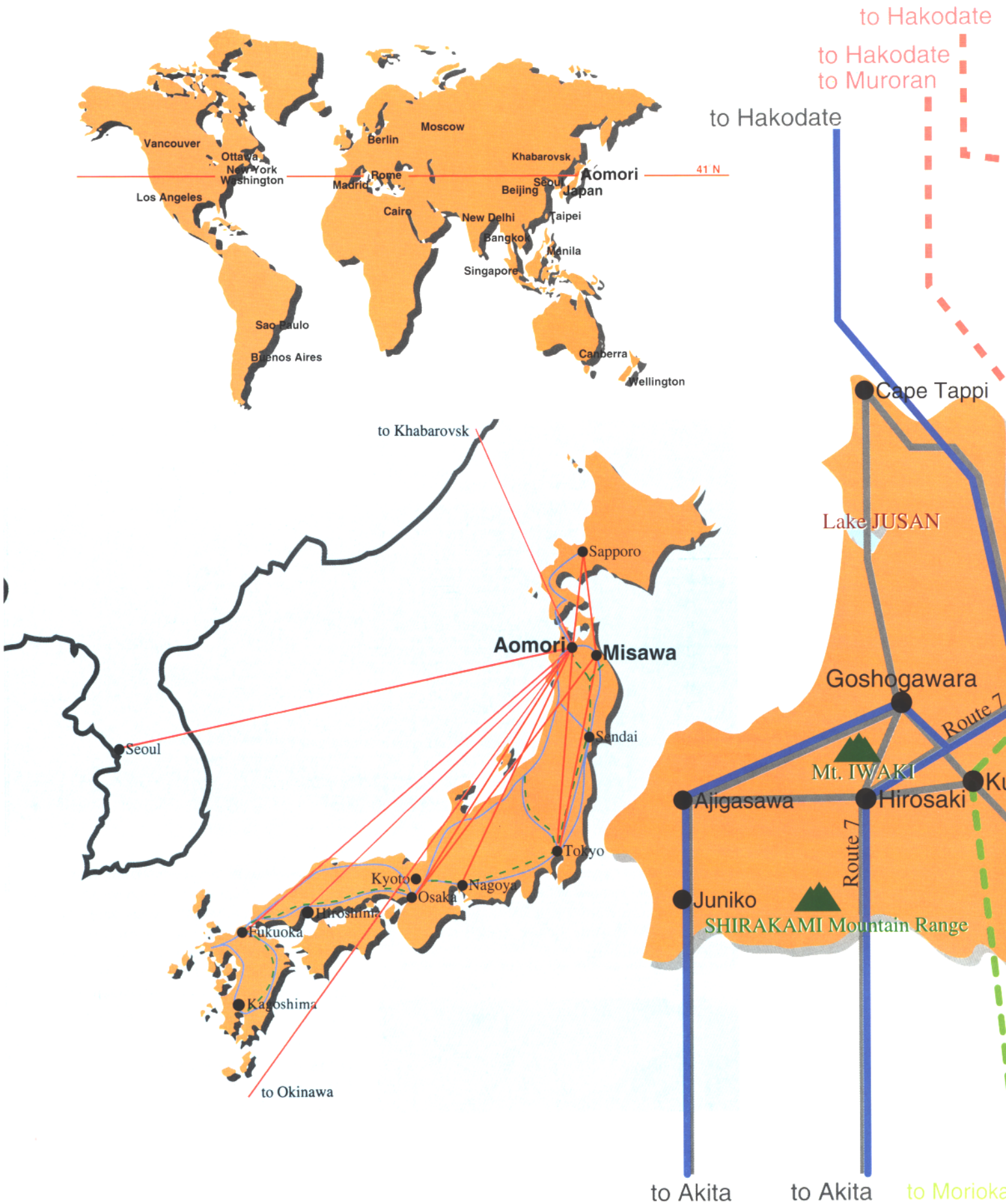
【浅虫水族館】

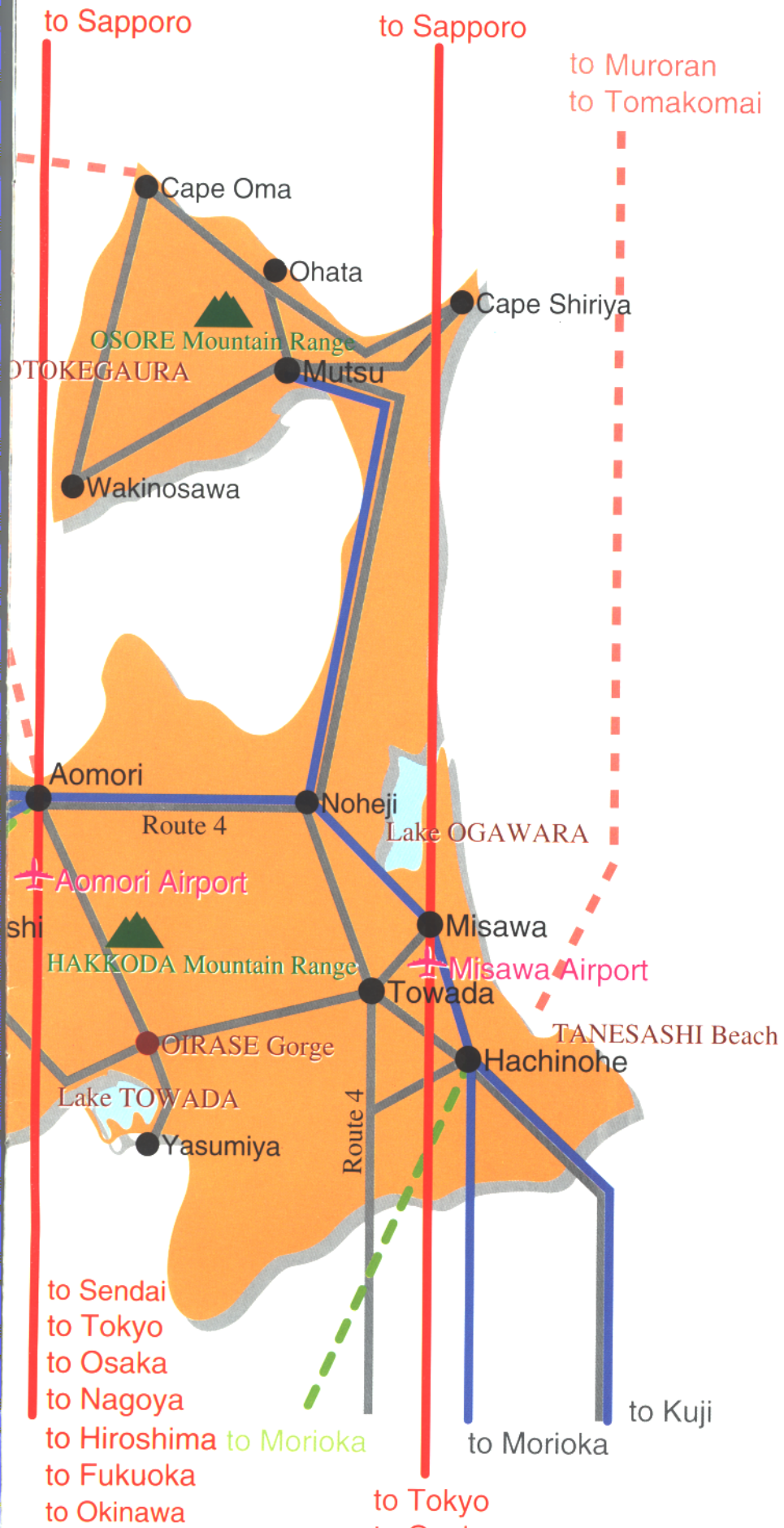
Asamushi Aquarium

Over 400 species of marine life are creatively displayed in attractions such as the glass walk-through tunnel

where visitors are literally surrounded by fish. The dolphin and seal show remains a perennial favorite for all family members. Don't sit in the front row unless you're ready to get wet!

Access to Aomori Prefecture





By Plane

To Aomori Airport, from:

Tokyo (Haneda)	8 flights/day, 1 hour 10 minutes
Osaka (Itami)	2 flights/day, 1 hour 20 minutes
Osaka (Kansai)	1 flight/day, 1 hour 35 minutes
Nagoya	3 flights/day, 1 hour 20 minutes
Sapporo (Chitose)	2 flights/day, 45 minutes
Fukuoka	4 flights/week (Mon, Wed, Fri, Sun), 2 hours
Hiroshima	3 flights/week (Tue, Fri, Sun), 1 hour 35 minutes
Sendai	3 flights/day, 50 minutes
Okinawa	(Availability pending)
Seoul	3 flights/week (Wed, Fri, Sun), 2 hour 40 minutes
Khabarovsk	2 flights/week (Wed, Sun) (subject to change), 2 hour 15 minutes

To Misawa Airport, from:

Tokyo (Haneda)	4 flights/day, 1 hour 10 minutes
Osaka (Itami)	1 flight/day, 1 hour 30 minutes
Sapporo (Chitose)	1 flight/day, 45 minutes

By Railway

To JR Aomori Station, from:

Tokyo	Super Express Tohoku Shinkansen and Limited Express Hatsukari 4 hours 29 minutes
Osaka	Limited Express Nihonkai (Sleeper) 14 hours 13 minutes
Sapporo	Limited Express (by Seikan Tunnel) 5 hours 18 minutes
Hakodate	Express Kaikyo (by Seikan Tunnel) 1 hour 49 minutes

By Ferry

To Aomori, from: (the following Hokkaido locations)

Hakodate	3 hours 40 minutes
Hakodate	2 hours (by high-speed ferry)
Muroran	7 hours

To Hachinohe, from:

Tomakomai	8 hours 30 minutes
Muroran	8 hours

To Oma, from:

Hakodate	1 hour 40 minutes
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By Highway Bus

To Aomori Terminal, from:

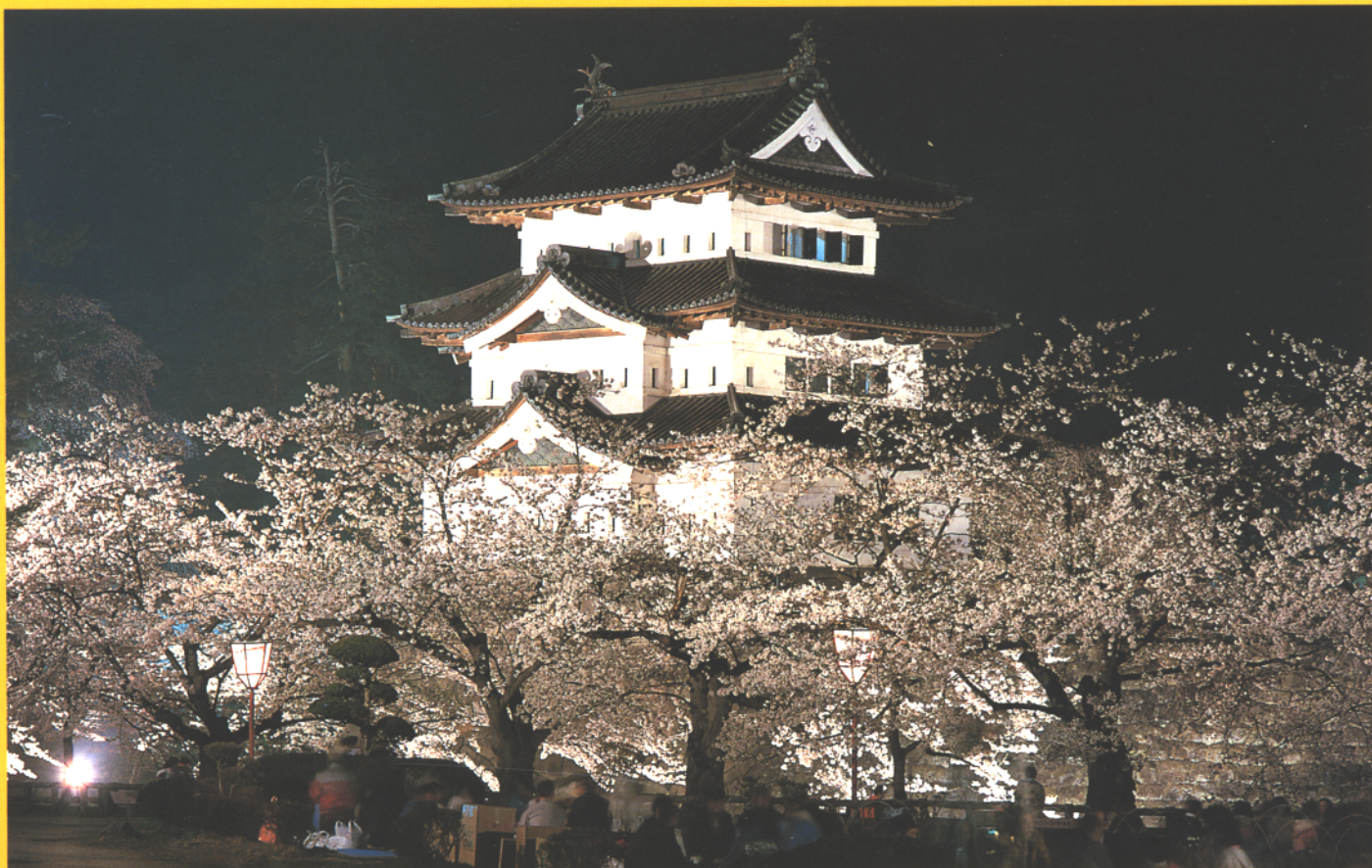
Morioka	2 hours 58 minutes
Sendai	4 hours 50 minutes
Tokyo	9 hours 30 minutes

To Hirosaki Terminal, from:

Morioka	2 hours 20 minutes
Sendai	4 hours 20 minutes
Tokyo	9 hours 15 minutes

To Hachinohe Terminal, from:

Morioka	2 hours 20 minutes
Sendai	4 hours 10 minutes
Tokyo	9 hours 5 minutes



Hirosaki-jo no Yozakura
【弘前城の夜桜】
Hirosaki Cherry Blossom Festival
at Night

For a few brief weeks in spring, the trees of Hirosaki Park transfix its viewers through its beauty which is all the more exquisite for its effervescence. This cherry blossom festival, unmatched in Japan, expresses a timeless Japanese metaphor of life which never fails to captivate visitors from near and far.

Visitor Information

★ **Aomori**

ASPAM, 1st. Fl., 1-1-40 Yasukata, Aomori 030-0803
 Tel: 0177-34-2500

★ **Aomori Airport Tourist**

Information Center
 1-5 Aza Kotani, Otani, Aomori 030-0155
 Tel: 0177-39-4561

★ **Hirosaki**

Hirosaki Kankokan, 2-1 Shimo Shirogane-cho
 Hirosaki 036-8356
 Tel: 0172-37-5501

★ **Hachinohe**

Hachinohe Yu-To-Rii, 1-9-22 Ichiban-cho,
 Hachinohe 039-1102
 Tel: 0178-27-4243

★ **Mutsu**

Mutsu Masakari Plaza, 1-10-25 Yanagi-machi,
 Mutsu 035-0031
 Tel: 0175-22-0909

Morioka

JR Morioka Station, 2nd Fl., Morioka, Iwate 020-0034
 Tel: 019-625-2090

Aomori Prefectural
Government Tourist Division

1-1-1 Nagashima, Aomori 030-8570
 Tel: 0177-34-9386

Tourist Information Centers
(TICs) of the Japan National
Tourist Organization (JNTO)

★ **TIC/Tokyo Office**

B1Fl., Tokyo International Forum, 3-5-1, Marunouchi,
 Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0005 Tel: 03-3201-3331

TIC/Kyoto Office

1st Fl., Kyoto Tower Bldg., Shichijo-Karasuma sagaru,
 Shimogyo-ku, Kyoto 600-8216 Tel: 075-371-5649

International Tourism Center of Japan

TIC/New Tokyo Int'l Airport Office

Arrival Fl., Passenger Terminal 2 Bldg., New Tokyo Int'l Airport,
 Chiba 282-0004 Tel: 0476-34-6251

TIC/New Tokyo Int'l Airport Branch Office

Arrival Fl., Passenger Terminal 1 Bldg., New Tokyo Int'l Airport,
 Chiba 282-0011 Tel: 0476-30-3383

JAPAN TRAVEL-PHONE®
(Toll-Free service)
Tel: 0088-22-4800

JAPAN TRAVEL-PHONE is a nationwide telephone service for those in need of English language assistance and travel information.

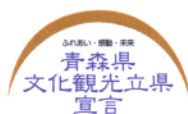
Dial 0088-22-4800 (toll-free outside Tokyo and Kyoto).
 Service hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily
 When calling within the Tokyo (area code 03) or Kyoto (area code 075) city limits, dial 3201-3331 or 371-5649 respectively. The charge for your call is ¥10 per minute.

The Aomori Welcome Card

- The Aomori Welcome Card offers strong support to travelers from abroad.
- By simply showing your Aomori Welcome Card at approximately 170 member shops and facilities within the prefecture of Aomori including hotels, restaurants, gift shops and sightseeing spots – you get on-the-spot reductions.
- Cards can be obtained at no charge at any of the starred (★) locations on this page.
 Eligible: Foreign visitors staying in Japan for less than a year.
 Valid: One year from the date of issue.

- ★ Aomori City Tourist Information Center (JR Aomori Station): 1-1-1 Yanagawa, Aomori 038-0012 Tel: 0177-23-4670
- ★ Hirosaki City Tourist Bureau: 2-11 Omote-machi, Hirosaki 036-8096 Tel: 0172-32-0524
- ★ Misawa Airport information Center: 83-198 Aza Shimotazawa, Misawa, Aomori 033-0000 Tel: 0176-53-3900
- ★ Lake Towada Information Center: 16 Aza Towada, Okuse, Towadako-machi, Aomori 018-5501 Tel: 0176-75-2506
- ★ Japan Tours System Michinoku: 1-4-10 Hashimoto, Aomori 030-0823 Tel: 0177-22-0200
- ★ UNIA Tourist: 4-22-13 Nagashima, Aomori 030-0861 Tel: 0177-32-5252
- ★ Nakasan Department Store (Aomori): 1-7-1 Shin-machi, Aomori 030-0801 Tel: 0177-77-3131
- ★ Nakasan Department Store (Hirosaki): 49-1 Dote-machi, Hirosaki 036-8182 Tel: 0172-34-3131
- ★ Nakasan Department Store (Goshogawara): 25 Hon-cho, Goshogawara 037-0071 Tel: 0173-34-3131
- ★ Hoshi to Mori no Romantopia Soma: 113-2 Aza Sakurai, Mizukizaike Soma-mura 036-1505 Tel: 0172-84-2288

It's easy to get an Aomori Welcome Card!



NEW ERA OF AOMORI BRILLIANCE-
KASSAI AOMORI

