

Discover Another Japan

Northern Tohoku Sightseeing Guide Book

Route 40° North Latitude

Aomori Pref.

青森県

Iwate Pref.

岩手県

Akita Pref.

秋田県

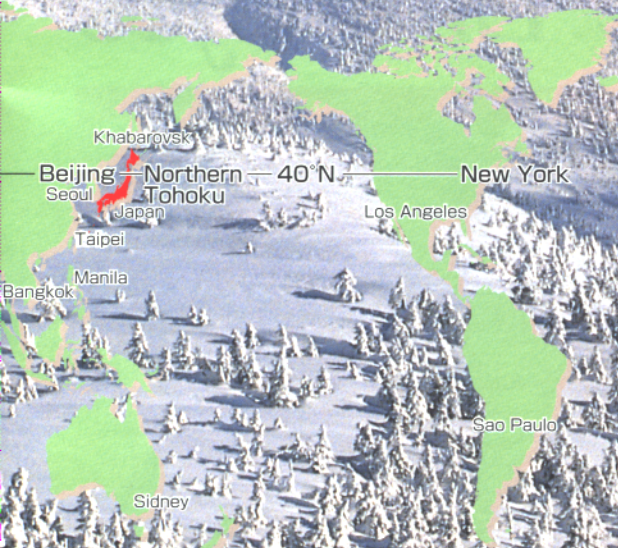


Route 40



- Legend**
- Theme Area: Dashed yellow line
 - Airport: Airplane icon
 - Shipping Line: Blue line with boat icon
 - National Road: Blue line with number
 - Shinkansen Line: Green line with double arrow
 - JR Line: Brown line with double arrow
 - Private Line: Grey line with double arrow
 - Expressway: Red line with double arrow
 - Toll Road: Red line with double arrow and 'Toll' label
 - National Park: Green dashed line

North Latitude MAP



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Experience the Lifestyle

Even in Japan, renowned for its beautiful seasons, the wide fluctuations in temperature and fresh, vivid colors of northern Tohoku stand out.

In winter, snowflakes float through the crisp, clean air and down onto the heads of passers-by. In spring, the plants awake from their winter slumber, erupting in a mass of color. Summer sees all nature basking in the sunlight. Then the ears on the rice plants turn golden yellow, and the green mountain leaves turn yellow and red, heralding the arrival of autumn.

In the midst of the beauty of the four seasons, life goes on for the people of northern Tohoku. The subtleties of the seasons and time old traditions long since lost from Japan's big cities, still flourish here—in the rice paddies beside the houses, in the mountain villages, in the deep forests, and in the coastal towns and villages. The many seasonal customs are reflected in the down-to-earth, honest ways of the local people.

Northern Tohoku is, in a sense, the true Japan. A visit to this land where family values remain strong and daily life is steeped in tradition is sure to be a heartwarming experience.





Emburi Dance (Aomori Prefecture)



Kanto Festival (Akita Prefecture)



Toramai Dance (Iwate Prefecture)

Discover Another Japan

Know the Customs, Feel the History

If you want to make the most of the first day of your trip, there is no better way than to head out on foot, map in hand. This way you are sure to appreciate the character of the area, so easily missed when taking the train or bus. Something as simple as flowers growing by the roadside can say so much. Feel the history of the people, the history of their town, the living history of the local artisans, and the vibrant atmosphere of the seasonal festivals.

To really experience the atmosphere of northern Tohoku, take a trip to see the local festivals and crafts. The beauty of the seasons is reflected in the bright costumes, the dances, and the music and rhythms of the taiko drums. All are part of the traditions and atmosphere of the local culture. In the local festivals these aspects all come together in a sudden explosion of energy.

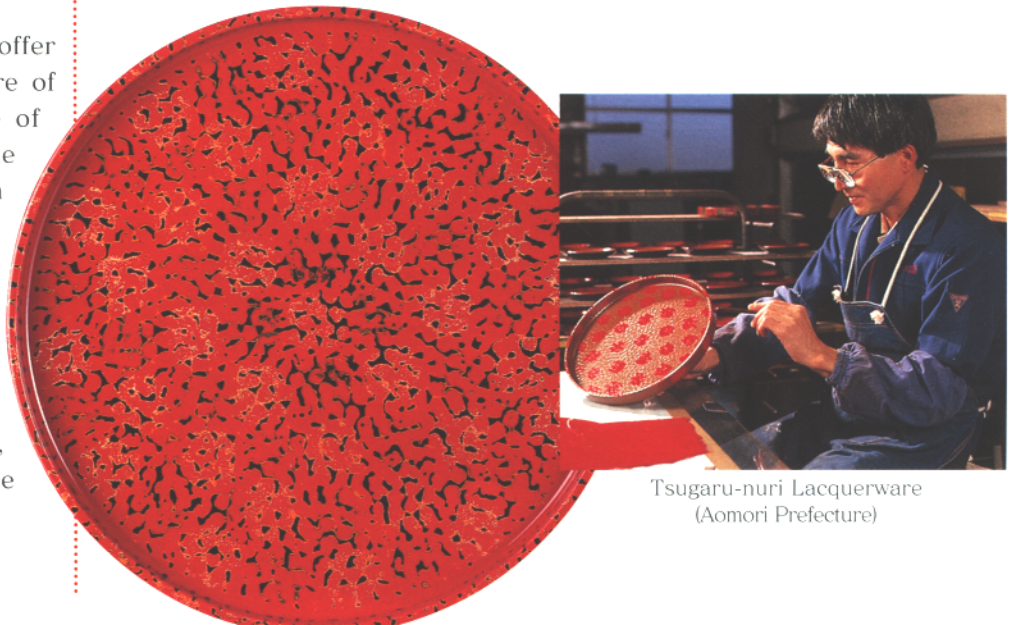
The traditional crafts also offer a window into the atmosphere of northern Tohoku. Each one of the dolls and every one of the tools and instruments used in daily life reflect the ways of artisans who honed their skills over a lifetime and passed on their legacy from generation to generation. Every piece captures the artisans' sense of beauty, skill, and above all their fierce pride.



Magewappa (Akita Prefecture)



Paper and bamboo umbrellas (Iwate Prefecture)



Tsugaru-nuri Lacquerware
(Aomori Prefecture)

Discover Another Japan

Taste the Gifts of Nature

The many colors of the four seasons, so visible in the surrounding nature, can also be found in the local cuisine.

Spring, when the earth comes alive; summer, when nature is in full cry; autumn, when nature's bounty is harvested; winter, when all is silent and covered in snow. Throughout the year the seas and mountains of northern Tohoku yield a countless variety of foods.

The local people have devised many ways of making such items a regular feature at mealtimes, accentuated by the artistic nuances that characterize their unique culinary culture.

The local food is likely to be one of your fondest memories of northern Tohoku. Visit the coastal towns to sample an abundant variety of fresh seafood. In the mountain towns, enjoy fresh mountain vegetables. And in the plains find the best of both worlds reflected in a variety of traditional foods.

Picture the scene in winter: the pure white snow glistens outside the window as you and your fellow travelers tuck into a pot of steaming nabe (a hot-pot style dish of various boiled ingredients). And the dinner table would not be complete without local sake. All areas of northern Tohoku engage in the traditional brewing of sake, making use of the pure water and quality rice found in the region. Northern Tohoku's sake is noted throughout Japan for its quality and taste.

Northern Tohoku cuisine, a blend of nature's gifts and local knowledge, is sure to be one of the most vivid memories of any trip to the region.



Kenoshiru Soup (Aomori Prefecture)



Kiritamponabe Stew (Akita Prefecture)

Route 40° North Latitude

Japan has a variety of natural landscapes and regional cultures scattered throughout its long, narrow territory. At the northern end of Honshu, the 40th parallel cuts through the three prefectures of the northern Tohoku region—Aomori, Iwate, and Akita. The landscapes change colors with the seasons—fresh green in spring, red and yellow leaves in autumn, and white snow in winter. Here lie traces of the ancient Jomon culture, the roots of modern Japan. Northern Tohoku is also home to the remains of the golden culture that once flourished with the region's gold mines; the "Kingdom of Hot Springs" with both famous and hidden hot spring resorts; and a local way of life which draws on the wisdom of past generations to face the harsh winters. All of these reflect the natural beauty and culture typical of northern Tohoku, a region famed for its festivals and steeped in folklore. In northern Tohoku we hope that you will discover another Japan, where the old and the new blend together. In this pamphlet we propose eight different sightseeing courses to introduce you to the charms and attractions of northern Tohoku. Half are seasonal while the rest can be enjoyed any time of year. In northern Tohoku you will discover "Another Japan," and your travel experience is sure to be an inspirational one.

Route 40° North Latitude 1~8

● Year-Round Routes

Route 40° North Latitude — 1

Discover Another Japan Route

A plan designed to enjoy "Another Japan" to its fullest. This trip highlights historical spots including the ruins of an ancient village and traditional architectural remains from both the golden culture and samurai society.

Route 40° North Latitude — 2

Wonders and Marvels Route

Discover the wonder of an area where culture and religion are enshrined in peoples' daily lives, as they struggle with the severe natural climate of northern Tohoku.

Route 40° North Latitude — 3

Japanese Homeland Route

Visit farming and fishing villages to see the rice fields, apple orchards, the fishing fires lit by the squid fishing boats, and traditional events of the region. This course will give you a nostalgic vision of old Japan.

Route 40° North Latitude — 4

Hot Springs Route

A trip through the "Kingdom of Hot Springs," from busy modern resorts to tranquil hot springs hidden in the mountains.

● Seasonal Routes

Route 40° North Latitude — 5

(approximately April to June)

Flowering Spring Route

A trip focusing on the beautiful cherry blossoms and other flowers that herald the end of the long, cold winter and the arrival of spring.

Route 40° North Latitude — 6

(approximately July to August)

Summer Festival Route

A course visiting a variety of summer festivals held throughout northern Tohoku. Experience the energy of the people who enjoy the short summer to its fullest.

Route 40° North Latitude — 7

(approximately September to November)

Autumn Colors and Apple Route

Enjoy the breathtaking mountain scenery around northern Tohoku during the most colorful season of the year by visiting spots famous for their foliage, such as the Shirakami Mountain Range, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Route 40° North Latitude — 8

(approximately December to March)

Snow Festivals and Winter Life Route

Experience the winter festivals and other traditional events of the region, characterized by its heavy snowfall. Enjoy the picturesque scenery of towns and mountains covered by a

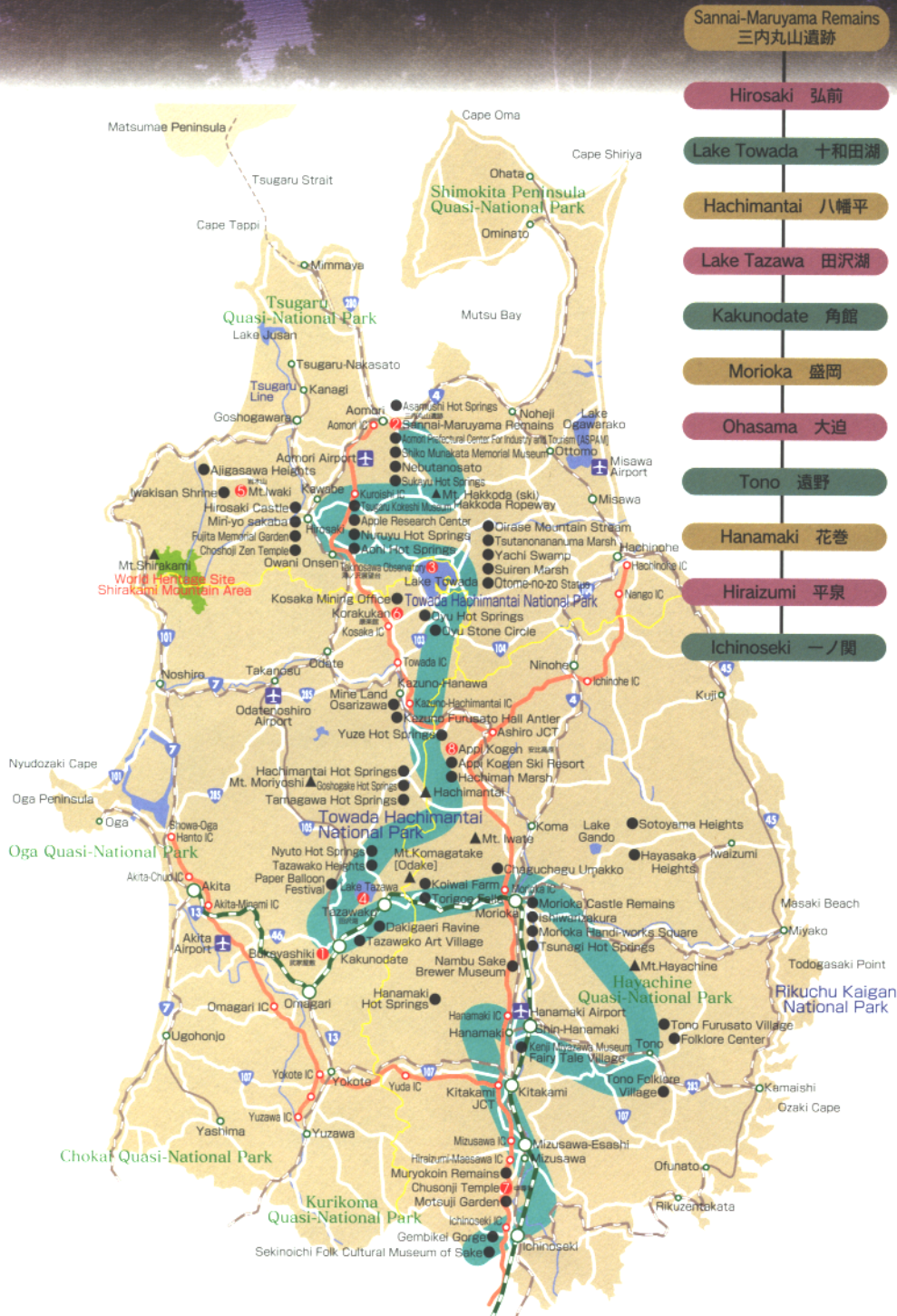


The autumn leaves of Lake Towada (Towadako Town/Kosaka Town) are famous throughout Japan. The double caldera lake, created by volcanic activity, is known for the mystical beauty of its surface. The lush green of spring and the brilliant white of snow-covered winter are also captivatingly beautiful.

Discover Another Japan Route

An affluent culture developed in the northern Tohoku region long before the cultures of Kyoto or Tokyo prospered. Their remains, which date back over 10,000 years, reveal the wisdom and skills of their inhabitants. The battles of the samurai society continued until modern times. On this route, trace the origins of Japan, while surrounded by the beauty of nature which changes from season to season.

Lake Towada in the evening



● The Jomon Culture 縄文文化

The Jomon Period (circa 8,000 BCE to 100 BCE) is the era when earthenware decorated with rope-like patterns was produced. Recently, due to re-examinations of ancient village remains, like those at Sannai-Maruyama, the Jomon Culture has been re-evaluated. It is now believed to have been a highly developed culture which utilized cultivation and farming, conducted cultural exchanges, and practiced sorcery. Many remains from the latter part of this period and various examples of earthenware have been found in the Tohoku region.



① Bukeyashiki (Kakunodate Town) 武家屋敷 (角館町)
 ● Kakunodate prospered as a castle town. The samurai houses line the town just as they did in the Edo period (from the 17th century to the middle of the 19th century).



② Sannai-Maruyama Remains (Aomori City) 三内丸山遺跡 (青森市) ● Successive discoveries of the remains of this large village from 4,000 to 5,500 years ago have contradicted general beliefs about this era. The jade, amber and other objects unearthed here reveal that the inhabitants had advanced skills and traded with distant places.

● Bukeyashiki (Old Samurai Houses) 武家屋敷

Castle towns were built around the castles where the lords of the manors lived during the 16th and 17th centuries. The towns were divided according to social rank with, for example, areas set aside for temples and artisans. Samurai lived in areas called bukeyashiki. Northern Tohoku has two representative bukeyashiki, Nakamachi (Hirosaki) and Kakunodate. Both were selected as Important Preservation Districts for Groups of Historic Buildings. The dark wall boards preserve the original atmosphere of the towns.



③ Lake Towada/Takinosawa Observation Area (Hiraka Town) 十和田湖・滝ノ沢展望台 (平賀町) ● The western approach to Lake Towada overlooks the lake, with an especially splendid view of the changing foliage in early summer and autumn.



④ Lake Tazawa (Tazawako Town, Nishiki Village) 田沢湖 (田沢湖町・西木村) ● A crater lake with a circumference of about 20 km. This 423 meter-deep lake is the deepest in Japan. The plateau by the lake is a resort with hot springs and a ski resort.



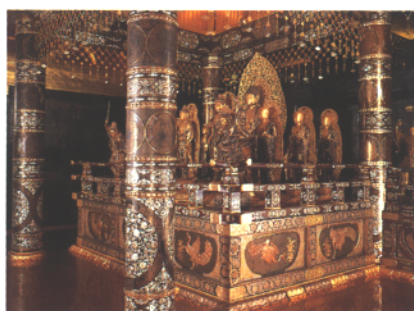
⑤ Mt. Iwaki (Iwaki Town) 岩木山 (岩木町) ● The graceful peak of Mt. Iwaki (1625 meters) towers over the Tsugaru region. At the foot of the mountain is a special production area for apples. In spring the lingering snow on Mt. Iwaki serves as a backdrop for the white apple blossoms.

● The Golden City 黄金の都

For approximately 100 years between the end of the 11th and 12th centuries, four generations of the Fujiwara family, beginning with Kiyohara Fujiwara, reigned over all of Tohoku (formerly known as Oshu). Hiraizumi, the best gold producing district at that time, served as their base. Supported by lacquerware production and horse breeding, the Fujiwara family used their economic strength and political abilities to create a high culture that surpassed that of the capital in Kyoto. Konjikido with its gold leaf and pillars studded with gold and silver balls, conveys the brilliance of the golden city, Hiraizumi.



⑥ Korakukan (Kosaka Town) 康楽館 (小坂町) ● The oldest wooden playhouse in Japan, slightly Western in style, was built in 1910. Now it features regular public performances and an annual kabuki play.



⑦ Konjikido (Hiraizumi Town) 金色堂 (平泉町) ● This National Treasure was completed in 1124. It is covered in gold leaf, and beautiful gold and silver balls stud the pillars. Four mummies, the feudal lords of the manor, lie here.



⑧ Appi Kogen (Ashiro Town) 安比高原 (安代町) ● A plateau of about 3,500 hectares around Mt. Maemori located on the 40th parallel. It features excellent facilities, including a ski resort, golf course, and horse riding club.

● Life Sketch

The People of Northern Tohoku

The winter is longer and harder in the northern Tohoku area than in most other parts of Japan. For generations the local people have endured the harsh climate to cultivate the land. They are known for their perseverance, diligence, and tenacity.



Wonders and Marvels Route

The appreciation of beauty is central to the culture, religion, and lifestyle of northern Tohoku, all of which have developed from the struggle with nature. Take a journey full of surprising discoveries in the living folk museum that is northern Tohoku.

Shiko Murakata Memorial Museum
棟方志功記念館

Mt. Osore 恐山

Hotokegaura 仏ヶ浦

Hachinohe 八戸

Sanriku coast 三陸海岸

Ryusendo Cave 龍泉洞

Jodogahama Beach 浄土ヶ浜

Kamaishi 釜石

Tono 遠野

Ohasama 大迫

Morioka 盛岡

World Heritage Site
Shirakami Mountain Area

Hachimantai 八幡平

Tazawako Art Village
たざわこ芸術村

Kakunodate 角館

Koiwai Farm 小岩井農場

Hanamaki 花巻

Hiraizumi 平泉

Ichinoseki 一ノ関

Jodogahama Beach (Miyako City)



①Kabushima (Hachinohe City) 燕島 (八戸市) ● This breeding ground of black tailed gulls has been designated as a Japanese Natural Monument. In May, when their numbers are greatest, about 40,000 gulls can be seen.



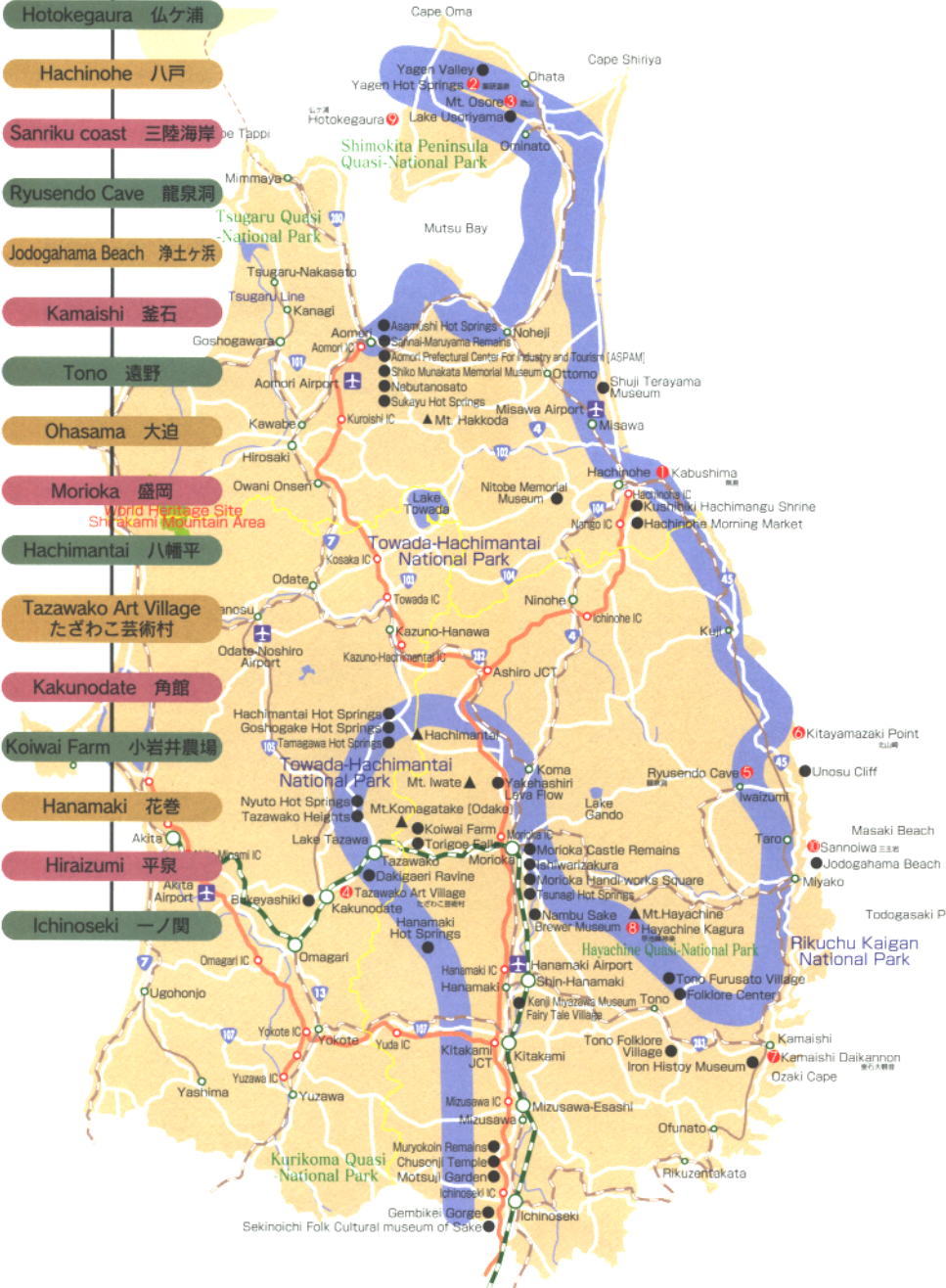
②Yagen Hot Springs (Ohata Town) 薬研温泉 (大畑町) ● These hot springs are located at the foot of Mt. Osore. From here the Yagen Mountain Stream, famed for its beautiful autumn colors, leads to Okuyagen Hot Springs. Enjoy a walk on the path beside the stream.



③Mt. Osore (Mutsu City) 恐山 (むつ市) ● Mt. Osore is one of the three main holy mountains in Japan. Stones piled up by the worshippers line the sacred area, creating a surreal atmosphere. Psychics attempt to summon the dead during Mt. Osore's main festivals held from April 20-24 and from October 9-11.

● Mt. Osore 恐山

There are many mountains dedicated to gods or Buddha in Japan. They are called *reizan*. Mt. Osore (Aomori Prefecture) is regarded as one of the three main *reizan* in Japan, along with Mt. Koya (Wakayama Prefecture) and Mt. Hiei (Shiga Prefecture). Worshippers believe that Mt. Osore is the place where souls of the dead reside. It is especially famous in Japan as a place where women called *itako* can summon the spirits of the dead. These spirits speak through the *itako* in a ritual known as *kuchiyose*. During the main summer and autumn festivals, many worshippers and tourists from all over Japan visit the mountain.





⑥Kitayamazaki (Tanohata Village) 北山崎 (田野畑村) ● Called the "Alps in the sea," Kitayamazaki is a 200 meter-high cliff that runs for 8 km, with reefs and giant rocks scattered throughout. There are six daily pleasure boat cruises that trace the full length of the cliff.



④Tazawako Art Village (Tazawako Town) たざわこ芸術村 (田沢湖町) ● A refreshing spot for mind and body led by "Warabiza," a theatrical company. There is a theater, accommodations, hot springs, an art hall, restaurants, and more.



⑥Ryusendo Cave (Iwaizumi Town) 龍泉洞 (岩泉町) ● One of Japan's three biggest limestone caves. Ryusendo's full length is supposedly 5000 meters (currently under exploration). The emerald water in the cave's lake is the most transparent underground water in the world.

● Rias Coast リアス式海岸

This jagged coastline was created when mountains sank and the sea level rose. The Sanriku Coast in Tohoku, the north-west part of Spain, the Maine Coastline in the United States, and the Brittany Peninsula Coast in France are all examples of Rias coastlines. Dotted with coves, peninsulas, and sheer cliff faces, the Sanriku Coast provides excellent views. However, the history of the Sanriku region has been fraught with disaster as the area is also susceptible to tsunamis and high waves.



⑦Kamaishi Daikannon (Kamaishi City) 釜石大観音 (釜石市) ● The great Kannon, 48.5 meters high, was built to honor the memories of people killed by tsunami and natural disasters in the Sanriku area. There is an observatory on the top floor.

● Tazawako Art Village たざわこ芸術村

Northern Tohoku is home to a great deal of traditional folk entertainment. You can experience the art and culture of northern Tohoku at the Tazawako Art Village in Tazawako Town. It's a new type of resort led by the theatrical company, "Warabiza." This company performs in Japan and abroad, presenting folk songs and traditions from various areas. Tazawako Art Village offers a theatre, hot springs, accommodations, a local food hall, a forest art hall, a folk art research institute, and more.



⑧Hayachine Kagura (Ohasama Town) 早地峰神楽 (大迫町) ● Hayachine kagura refers to the music and dancing performed in homage to Mt. Hayachine. The traditional performance has been handed down for generations by mountain priests and ascetics. (Performed during the Hayachine Shrine's Annual Grand Festival, and also from July 31-August 1, at the end of December, and from January 2-3)



⑨Hotokegaura Coastline (Sai Village) 仏ヶ浦 (佐井村) ● This beach, with strangely shaped rocks and stones, worn down by rains and rough waves, runs for 3 km. The rocks have Buddhist names, such as Gohyakurakan and Kannoniwa.



⑩SannoIwa (Taro Town) 三王岩 (田老町) ● Three strangely shaped rocks consisting of the drum-shaped TaikoIwa, the 50 meter-high Otokoiwa, and the nearby Onnaiwa. It is said that you will achieve good fortune if you can pass through Otokoiwa's cave, which was created by wave erosion.

● Life sketch

Folktales

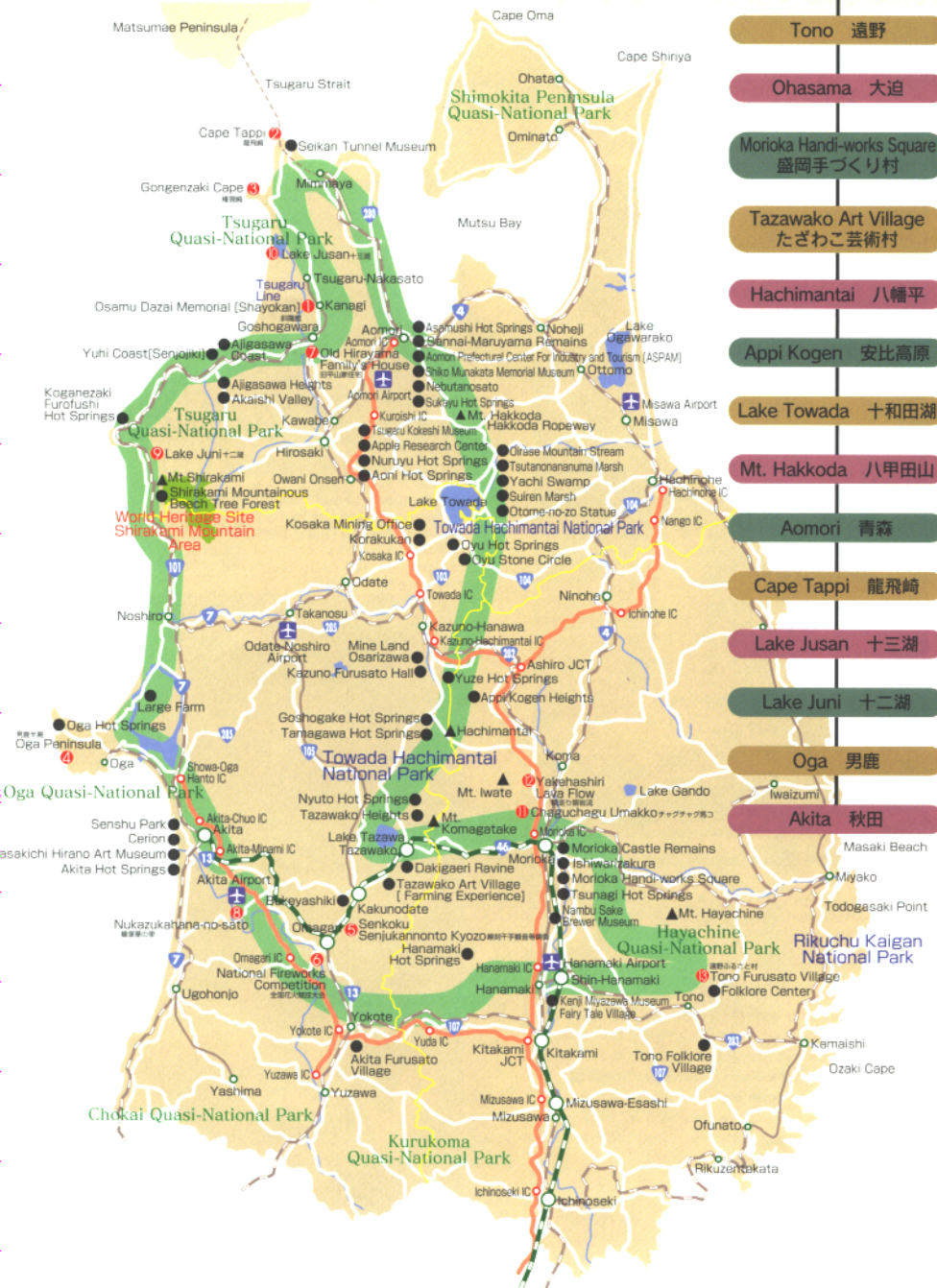
In days past, parents told old stories to their children sitting by the hearth. Though there are fewer opportunities to do so now, there are many folk tales and legends from northern Tohoku. Examples include the tales of Lake Towada's Ryujin and Lake Tazawa's Tatsukohime, who metamorphosed into a dragon. Tono City in Iwate Prefecture is famous all over the country as "the hometown of folk tales." Tono's simple scenery evokes the world of folk tales.



Japanese Homeland Route

Rice remains Japan's staple agricultural crop. The rural landscape with its combination of clear water and beautiful seasonal changes paints a uniquely Japanese scene, sure to leave a lasting impression on any visitor. While such scenery is commonplace, modern agriculture in northern Tohoku combines the latest technology with the wisdom of past generations.

Large farm (Ogata Village)



- Akita 秋田
- Yokote 横手
- Hanamaki 花巻
- Tono 遠野
- Ohasama 大迫
- Morioka Handi-works Square 盛岡手づくり村
- Tazawako Art Village たざわこ芸術村
- Hachimantai 八幡平
- Appi Kogen 安比高原
- Lake Towada 十和田湖
- Mt. Hakkoda 八甲田山
- Aomori 青森
- Cape Tappi 龍飛崎
- Lake Jusan 十三湖
- Lake Juni 十二湖
- Oga 男鹿
- Akita 秋田



●Shayokan (Kanagi Town) 斜陽館 (金木町) ● Birthplace of the great writer, Osamu Dazai (1909-1948). The house, made entirely of Japanese cypress, was built by his father, Gen'emon 'Tsushima. Now, the site is an important museum of his life and work.



●Cape Tappi (Mimmaya Village) 龍飛崎 (三厩村) ● Located at the tip of the Tsugaru Peninsula, the cape is windy year-round, and a power plant using windmills was built to take advantage of this natural resource. The Seikan Tunnel, the longest in the world, runs directly underneath the cape connecting Honshu and Hokkaido.



●Gongenzaki Cape (Kodomari Village) 権現崎 (小泊村) ● This peninsula juts into the Sea of Japan, forming a steep cliff face 229 meters in height. At its tip are two light houses along with a trail tracing the cape's edge.

● Rural Scenery 田園風景

Serving as important parts of the natural ecosystem, rice fields function as dams in the plains and support both Japanese agriculture and wildlife. The scenery, with its abundant clear water, is quintessentially "Japanese." The Tohoku region is one of the main grain storage areas in Japan and also offers picturesque views throughout the year.



④ Oga Peninsula (Oga City) 男鹿半島 (男鹿市) ● This peninsula projects into the Sea of Japan. Lots of strangely shaped rocks and stones line the coast, which is also a good fishing spot. The sunset from Nyudozaki, the northern tip of the peninsula, is especially beautiful.



⑤ Senkokusenjukannontokyozo (Nakasen Town) 線刻千手観音等鍔像 (中仙町) ● A bronze Buddhist engraving from the Fujiwara period (12th century). The surface is stippled and shows a standing Senjukannon. A National Treasure.



⑥ The National Fireworks Competition (Omagari City) 全国花火競技大会 (大曲市) ● The oldest and most prestigious event of its kind in Japan, drawing the best firework manufacturers from all over the country. 15,000 fireworks light up the summer sky. (Fourth Saturday of August)



⑦ The Hirayama Family's House (Goshogawara City) 旧平山家住宅 (五所川原市) ● This thatched-roof house, designated as a National Treasure, was built in the late 18th century by a rich farming family, who also brewed sake and ran a shipping company.



⑧ Nukazukahananosato (Yuwa Town) 糖塚華の里 (ダリヤ園交流館) (雄和町) ● A national dahlia farm garden comprised of plants from fourteen countries. It boasts 650 kinds of dahlias and a total of 7000 flowers. Both in terms of quality and scale, the garden ranks alongside the best in the world. The hill on which the garden is situated looks like a sea of flowers.



⑨ Lake Juni (Iwasaki Village) 十二湖 (岩崎村) ● The collective name for 33 lakes and marshes, including Aoike, with its cobalt blue water, and Keito-no-Ike, which is shaped like a rooster's head. There are also three walking courses.



⑩ Lake Jusan (Shiura Village) 十三湖 (市浦村) ● A lake whose fresh water is mixed with sea water. Visitors can gather shijimi clams. It prospered as one of Japan's prominent trade ports during medieval times.



⑪ Chaguchaguumakko (Takizawa Village) チャグチャグ馬コ (滝沢村) ● Over a hundred farming horses, wearing bells and ornate costumes, parade over a 15 km course. (June 15)



⑫ Yakehashiri Lava Flow (Nishine Town) 岩手山焼走り熔岩流 (西根町) ● This lava flow from a great eruption in 1719 spreads out over an area 1.5 km wide and 4 km long.



⑬ Tono Furusato Village (Tono City) 遠野ふるさと村 (遠野市) ● See the buildings, sample the food, and experience traditional village life at this re-creation of a mountain village.

● Life Sketch

Traditional Arts and Crafts

Many traditional arts and crafts can still be found throughout northern Tohoku. An ever increasing number of places allow tourists to experience these arts and crafts. For example, you can try painting a kokeshi doll at Tsugaru Kokeshikan in Kuroishi City, Aomori. You can bake Nambu Senbei (rice crackers) and create bamboo artwork at the Morioka Handi-works Square in Morioka City, Iwate. You can also try your hand at creating Itaya artwork and birch bark artwork at Akita Furusato Village in Yokote City, Akita.



Itaya artwork

● The Open Markets 市場

At the markets, dealers buy and sell crops and marine products brought by local producers for auction. Some markets sell directly to the public, offering fresh products and inexpensive prices. There are many markets that specialize in marine products, mainly in the port towns of northern Tohoku. Famous markets can be found in Aomori City, Hachinohe City, Akita City, and Miyako City. The restaurants inside the markets are good eating spots where you can enjoy local foods made from fresh ingredients.

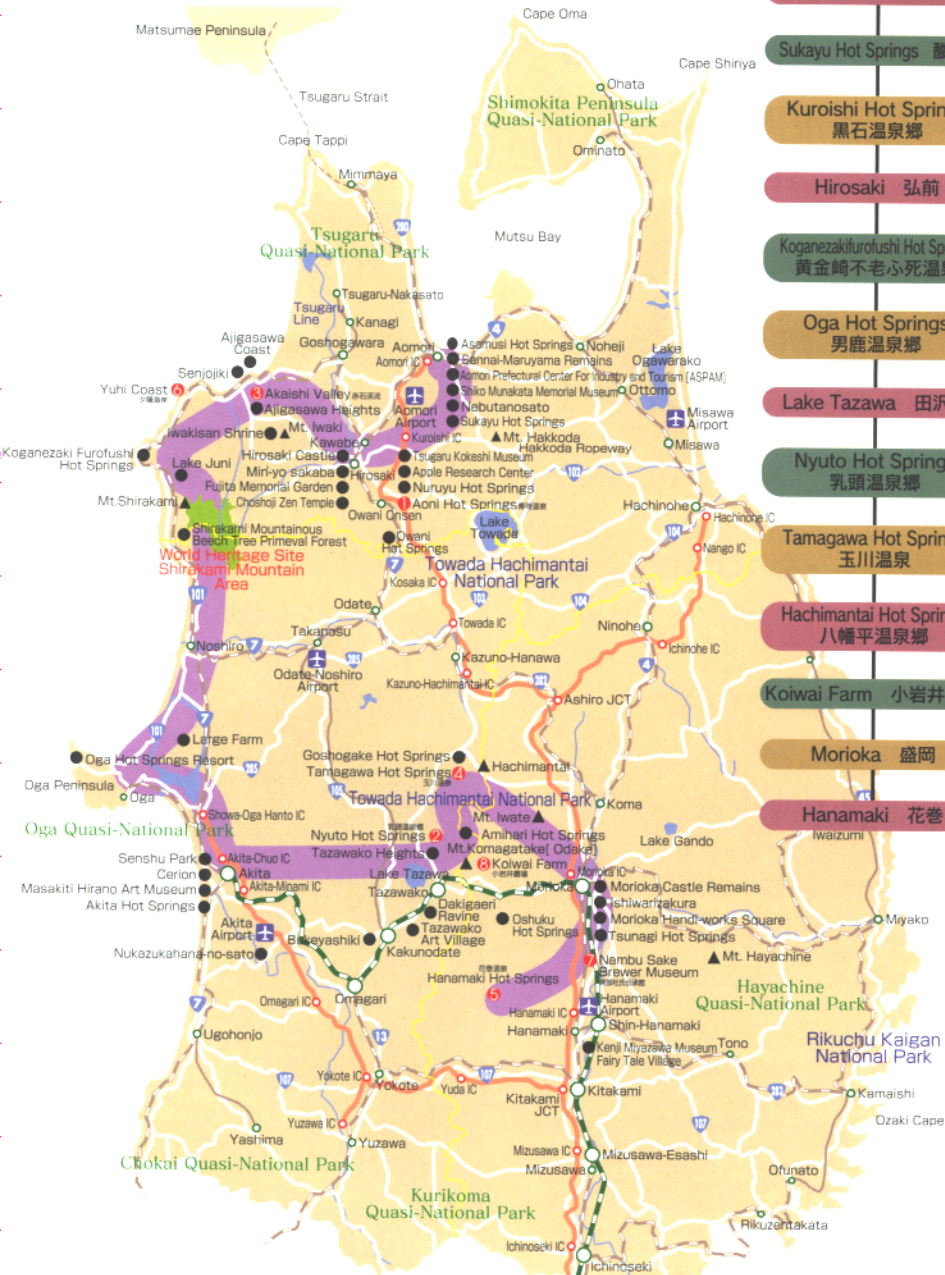
● The Sea of Japan and the Pacific Ocean 日本海と太平洋

Japan is an island country, surrounded by the Pacific Ocean on the east and the Sea of Japan on the west. Naturally, fishing ports developed everywhere, and fish has been a precious food source since the Jomon Era. The fishing grounds in Tohoku are one of the three largest in the world, with a prime location in the center of the north-western Pacific Ocean. The area's large catches yield various kinds of fish. Numerous fish dishes have been created, reflecting the skills of fishermen and the economy of consumption.

Hot Springs Route

Hot springs offer physical and mental therapeutic benefits for many and also serve as a place where the usual social barriers disappear. In this busy modern age people have little time for building friendships. In response, many people seek to heal themselves at "hidden" hot springs, many of which can still be found in northern Tohoku. People also come to enjoy the traditional Japanese scenery.

Koganezaki Furofushi Hot Springs (Fukaura Town)



- Aomori 青森
- Mt. Hakkoda 八甲田山
- Sukayu Hot Springs 麓ヶ湯
- Kuroishi Hot Springs 黒石温泉郷
- Hirosaki 弘前
- Koganezaki Furofushi Hot Springs 黄金崎不老心死温泉
- Oga Hot Springs 男鹿温泉郷
- Lake Tazawa 田沢湖
- Nyuto Hot Springs 乳頭温泉郷
- Tamagawa Hot Springs 玉川温泉
- Hachimantai Hot Springs 八幡平温泉郷
- Koiwai Farm 小岩井農場
- Morioka 盛岡
- Hanamaki 花巻

● The Benefits of Hot Springs 温泉の効用

Hot springs impart a wide range of benefits and are recommended for individuals who suffer from such conditions as arteriosclerosis, hypertension, diabetes, burns, poor circulation, and gynecological disorders. Conversations with strangers at hot springs allow individuals to open up and connect with others, unburdened by the usual baggage of social class. Researchers have established scientific proof affirming the benefits of bathing in terms of soothing the mind and relieving fatigue.



① Aoni Hot Springs (Kuroishi City) 青荷温泉 (黒石市)
 ● These "hidden" hot springs are near the Aoni Valley. The inn is famous throughout the country for the magical atmosphere created by its gas lamps. In winter, the inn offers a snowmobile transport service.



② Akaishi Valley (Ajigazawa Town) 赤石渓流 (鯉ヶ沢町)
 ● This clear stream runs from the Shirakami Mountain Range through the Akaishi River Valley and is home to much beautiful wildlife. The 85-meter-high Kurokuma no Taki Falls is a branch of this stream and is noted as one of Japan's one hundred treasured waterfalls.



③ Yuhi Coast (Fukaura Town) 夕陽海岸 (深浦町) ● This area features many scenic spots from which to view the evening sun as it sinks into the Sea of Japan, making it famous as the coast of the evening sun.



④ Nyuto Hot Springs (Tazawako Town) 乳頭温泉郷 (田沢湖町) ● Comprised of seven country style hot springs, this hot springs village at the foot of a mountain appeals particularly to women.



⑤ Tamagawa Hot Springs (Tazawako Town) 玉川温泉 (田沢湖町) ● This rare water, with its strong acidic quality, is potent enough to bring a tingling sensation to the skin. Many visitors from far away come to enjoy the water's therapeutic effects for numerous illnesses and conditions.



⑥ Nambu Sake Brewer Museum (Ishidoriya Town) 南部杜氏伝承館 (石鳥谷町) ● This hall was built to convey the history and skills of the Nambu sake brewer, one of the three great sake brewers in Japan. An old sake storehouse has been relocated and reconstructed here.



⑦ Koiwai Farm (Shizukuishi Town) 小岩井農場 (磐石町) ● Established over 100 years ago, Koiwai Farm is the largest private general-purpose farm in Japan. Among its many attractions, you can observe the operations of the dairy, try your hand at archery, and enjoy star gazing at night.



⑧ Hanamaki Hot Springs (Hanamaki City) 花巻温泉郷 (花巻市) ● There are twelve distinct hot springs, ranging from a simple spring discovered in the 14th century, to a luxury resort hotel.

● The History of Hot Springs 温泉の歴史

The fact that earthenware and stoneware were found near hot springs attests to the possibility that Japanese people have been using hot springs since ancient times. Hot springs healed the wounds of injured samurai and tired farmers suffering from the physical and mental stress of heavy labor. The bathers offered their thanks to the gods at the hot spring. There are many historical hot springs in northern Tohoku that feature shrines.

● The Secret Treasures of Hot Springs 秘湯の宝庫

As Japan is a chain of volcanic islands, hot springs exist in every region of the country. Northern Tohoku is known as the "Kingdom of Hot Springs" because of the abundance of hot springs in the region. Northern Tohoku also has many "hidden" hot springs which flow from the depths of the valleys. Their steamy scenery continues to attract city dwellers. Surrounded by primeval forest, many of these hot springs have no electricity and use gas lamps for lighting.

● Life Sketch

The Hot Springs Cure

In the Edo period (from 1700) people, mainly farmers, began the custom of visiting hot springs in the off-season to recover from fatigue and promote health. There remain many such old-fashioned hot springs in northern Tohoku. Many people enjoy two or three weeks of the Japanese resort life, spending their time resting, relaxing in the hot springs many times a day, and chatting with other bathers.



Flowering Spring Route

Katakuri Flowers [Dogtooth Violets] (Nishiki Village)



Ichinoseki 一ノ関

Cherry Blossoms in the Gembekai Gorge
巖美溪の桜

Nambu Sake Brewer Museum
南部杜氏伝承館

Ishiwazakura 盛岡石割桜

Cherry Blossoms in Kakunodate
角館の桜

Lake Tazawa 田沢湖

Katakuri (Dogtooth Violets) in Nishiki Village
西木村カタクリの花

Ani Folklore Center
阿仁伝承館

Takanosu Great Drum Museum
鷹巣大太鼓の館

Apple Road (Apple Tree Blossoms)
アップルロード (リンゴの花)

Cherry Blossoms in Hirosaki
弘前の桜

Aomori 青森

Misawa 三沢

Cherry blossoms, which burst into full bloom for just a few short weeks, rouse the festive spirits of the Japanese people.

The cherry blossom season starts in the south of Japan and makes its way slowly north, reaching its dramatic climax in northern Tohoku, where people welcome the blossoms with a huge release of festive energy.

In the valleys, castle towns, and samurai districts, the cherry blossoms spring to life delighting many tourists and providing a fitting end to the short cherry blossom season.



● Shuji Terayama Museum (Misawa City) 寺山修司記念館 (三沢市) ● This is a memorial to commemorate the 47-year life of Shuji Terayama who was born in Aomori Prefecture in 1936. He was a genius active in the fields of drama, film, poetry, and critique.



● Komaki Hot Springs (Rokunohe Town, Misawa City) 古牧温泉 (三沢市・六戸町) ● There are five Japanese style hotels on the huge site with an area of 66,000 m². The largest baths in Japan, a tea-ceremony room, and old-fashioned private houses can be found here.



● Towada City Government Office District (The Koma Highway) (Towada City) 十和田市官庁街通り=駒街道 (十和田市) ● In addition to the four rows of pine and cherry trees, the street is lined with flower beds that bloom year-round. With horse sculptures arranged on the sidewalk and an artificial stream modeled after the Oirase Mountain Stream, the whole area resembles an outdoor gallery. Cherry blossoms can be seen from the end of April to the beginning of May.

● The Cherry Blossom Front 桜前線

Cherry blossoms have been cherished by Japanese people since ancient times. The "blossoms" in Japanese waka or haiku poetry refer to cherry blossoms. They bloom in the spring, but since Japan is long and narrow, stretching from south to north, three months separate the beginning and end of the cherry blossom season. TV news programs and newspapers often report the movement of the "cherry blossom front" as the flowering area moves from south to north.



④Ishwarizakura (Morioka City) 石割桜 (盛岡市) ● A cherry tree grows from a huge rock 21 meters around and 1.7 meters in height. The tree's root is 4.3 meters around, and it is thought to be 350 years old. Cherry blossoms can be seen from the middle to the end of April.



⑥Mt. Moriyoshi and Lake Taihei in Moriyoshi (Moriyoshi Town) 森吉山と太平湖 (森吉町) ● Mt. Moriyoshi is 1454 meters high. The surrounding area contains various waterfalls and a forest of beech trees. The sightseeing boat Moriyoshi-maru sails Lake Taihei, an artificial lake created by Moriyoshi Dam.



⑨Hokuonomori Park (Aikawa Town) 北欧の杜公園 (合川町) ● The site features a huge park of 200 hectares, with lawns, an observatory for bird watching, a park center, an auto-camping ground, and a plaza for kids. More facilities will be added in the future.



⑦Hirosaki Castle (Hirosaki City) 弘前城 (弘前市) ● Established in 1611, Hirosaki is one of the seven greatest castles in Japan. The remains of the castle have been arranged to create Hirosaki Park, which is one of the most beautiful spots for viewing cherry blossoms. Cherry blossoms can be seen from the end of April to the beginning of May.



⑩Kimimachizaka (Futatsui Town) きみまち坂 (二ツ井町) ● A group of giant rocks which tower over a mountain stream. Beautiful in all seasons, it is famous as an excellent location for painting and taking landscape photographs. Cherry blossoms can be seen from the end of April to the beginning of May.



⑪Former Foreign Residence (Ani Town) 異人館 (阿仁町) ● A colonial building which used to be the official residence of German engineers invited to the Ani Mine in the Meiji period. Designated as an Important Cultural Asset. Its underground passage leads to the Denshokan Folklore Center.



⑤The Cherry Blossoms along the Hinokinai River (Kakunodate Town) 檜木内川の桜 (角館町) ● The Hinokinai River runs along the outskirts of the bukeyashiki (old samurai houses). There are about 400 cherry trees stretching for 2 km along the river bank. The peak time for viewing is the end of April. Cherry blossoms can be seen from the end of April to the beginning of May.



⑧Gembikei Gorge (Ichinoseki City) 巖美深 (一関市) ● Well known in Japan as both a Natural Monument and a place of scenic beauty, Gembikei Gorge is a 2 km-long valley located around the Iwai River. With both banks eroded by the powerful stream, numerous waterfalls, and swirling rapids, the scenery is beautiful.

● Patches of Katakuri (Dogtooth Violets) カタクリ群生

Katakuri is a perennial plant in the lily family. The underground stems were once used to make starch called katakuriko. The 15 cm-high plant has flowers with light violet petals. Because of its lovely appearance, the flower has come to symbolize first love. Katakuri patches are scattered throughout northern Tohoku, and many people enjoy the light violet flowers that spring from the ground after the snow melts.

● Ringo no Michi (Apple Road) リンゴの道 (アップルロード)

Aomori Prefecture is the biggest apple production area in Japan. Known as Apple Road, the drive between Route 7 (near the Owani-Hirosaki interchange) and Iwaki Town offers a pleasant view of numerous apple orchards. In the fall you can enjoy the panorama of colored apples, while spring provides views of the white apple blossoms.

● Life Sketch

A Culture of Flower Viewing

In Japan, *hanami* means observing cherry blossoms at their peak time. At a typical *hanami* party, people spread a mat underneath the cherry trees, sit in a circle, and enjoy a meal together. Adults often exchange cups of sake. People also enjoy nighttime viewing of cherry blossoms emerging in the moonlight. The cherry blossoms illuminated by lights are also beautiful.



Autumn colors and Apple Route

Broad-leaved tree forests made up mainly of beech trees have supported the wildlife of northern Tohoku since ancient times. The pure water that nurtures life flows through the forests, which undergo a sudden and dramatic transformation in autumn, creating a sea of rich colors. The diverse natural scenery that characterizes northern Tohoku flourishes in the abundant forest surrounding the Shirakami Mountain Range, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Apples (Aomori City)



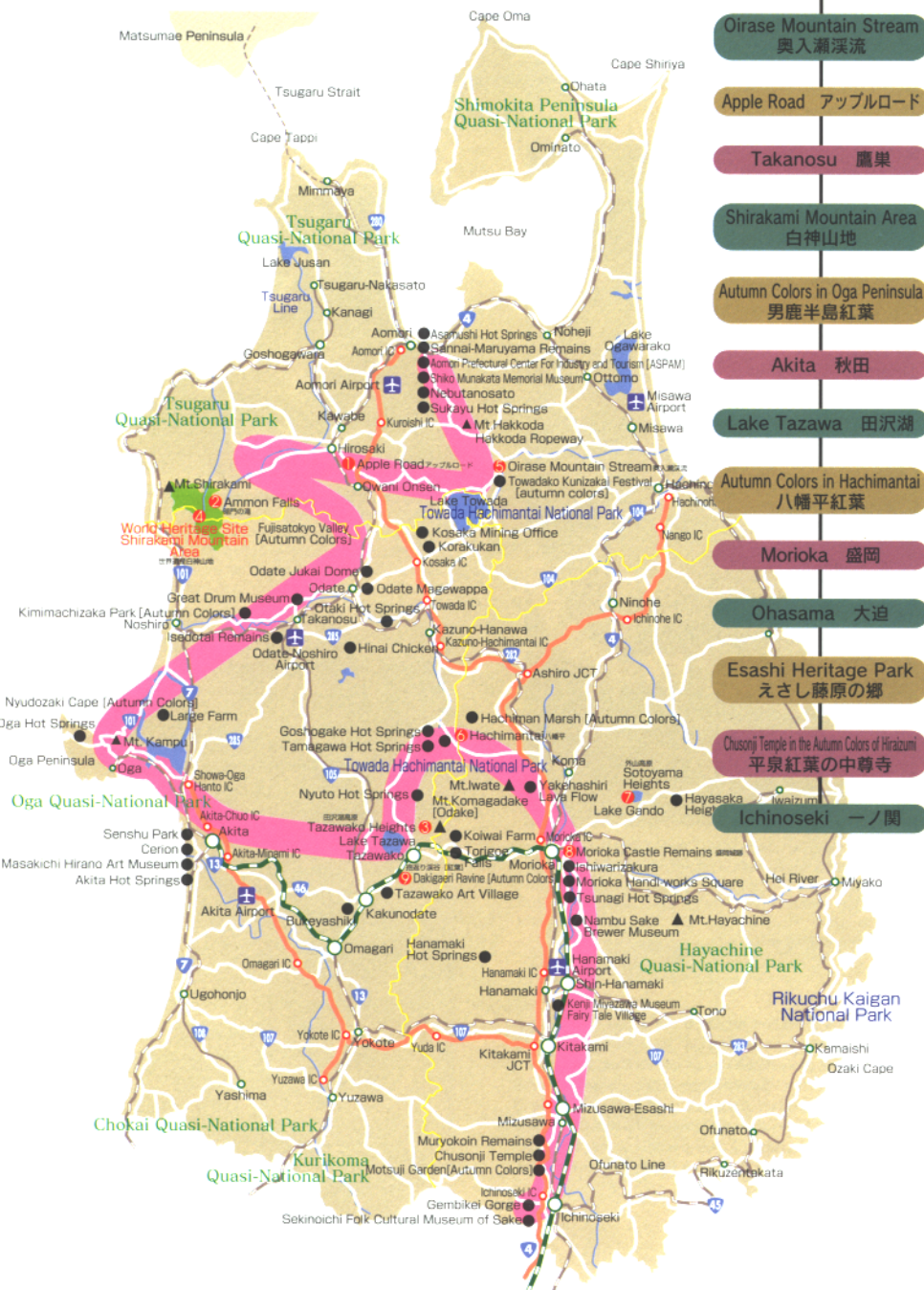
① Apple Road (Hirosaki City) アップルロード (弘前市)
● This road, running from Route 7 (near the Owani-Hirosaki interchange) to Iwaki Town, is surrounded by apple orchards, providing the perfect scenery for a drive, especially during harvest time. (From the end of September to the beginning of November)



② The Ammon Falls (Nishimeya Village) 暗門の滝 (西目屋村)
● Within the World Heritage Site, Shirakami Mountain Range there are three waterfalls. These are well-known scenic spots. Many tourists visit here from spring through autumn to enjoy the hour-long hiking course between the falls. (From the middle to the end of October)

● Viewing Autumn Foliage 紅葉狩り

The temperature in northern Tohoku differs greatly from season to season, and the stark climatic contrasts provide picturesque landscapes year-round. Late autumn, when the leaves turn yellow and red, is the most colorful season of year. The term *koyo* in Japanese refers to the leaves' change in color. Many people visit the mountains and meadows to enjoy the vibrant landscapes.



- Aomori 青森
- Mt.Hakkoda 八甲田山
- Oirase Mountain Stream 奥入瀬渓流
- Apple Road アップルロード
- Takanosu 鷹巣
- Shirakami Mountain Area 白神山地
- Autumn Colors in Oga Peninsula 男鹿半島紅葉
- Akita 秋田
- Lake Tazawa 田沢湖
- Autumn Colors in Hachimantai 八幡平紅葉
- Morioka 盛岡
- Ohasama 大迫
- Esashi Heritage Park えさし藤原の郷
- Chusonji Temple in the Autumn Colors of Hirazumi 平泉紅葉の中尊寺
- Ichinoseki 一ノ関



④The Shirakami Mountain Area: A UNESCO World Heritage Site (Fujisato Town, Akita Prefecture; Ajigasawa Town, Fukaura Town, Iwasaki Village, Nishimeya Village, Aomori Prefecture)世界遺産・白神山地 (秋田県/藤里町、青森県/鯉ヶ沢町・深浦町・岩崎村・西目屋村) ●A mountain area which displays a great diversity of scenes with every change in the seasons. The primeval forest of beech trees is the largest of its kind in the world. A treasury of precious fauna and flora. (From the middle to the end of October)



⑤The Oirase Mountain Stream (Towadako Town) 奥入瀬溪流 (十和田湖町) ●This is the only clear stream flowing out of Lake Towadako. The 14 km-long stream flows through various landscapes and is famous throughout Japan as a great spot to enjoy autumn colors and waterfalls. (From the middle to the end of October)



⑥Tazawako Heights (Tazawako Town) 田沢湖高原 (田沢湖町) ●Lake Tazawako is located slightly below this plateau, which stretches out among the Komagatake Mountains. It is a resort area with hot springs, a ski resort, and luxury hotels. (From the middle to the end of October)



⑧Hachimantai (Kazuno City, Matsuo Village) 八幡平 (鹿角市・松尾村) ●The area is rich in volcanic topography, so hot springs are abundant. It is known for the primeval forest, upper swamps, and alpine plants. There is a road to the summit and a hiking path. (From the end of September to the middle of October)

● The Shirakami Mountain Range: A UNESCO World Heritage Site 世界遺産・白神山地

This forest of thick and tall deciduous beech trees holds enough water to be called a "natural dam." This area, referred to as the Shirakami Mountainous District, spreads out over Aomori and Akita Prefectures. Covered with primeval forest, this region is home to a range of flora and fauna. In 1993, 17,000 hectares out of the area's 130,000 hectares were registered as a Natural Heritage Site under the World Heritage Treaty.

● The Apple Kingdom リンゴ王国

Apples are very popular in Japan. Over 600 varieties are produced. Northern Tohoku is famous as an apple-producing district, and Aomori Prefecture is proud to have the largest yield in the country. Many events are held to celebrate this important crop, including the Apple Marathon, a civic marathon where athletes run through apple orchards; and the Apple Party, an event featuring apple cuisine.



⑦Sotoyama Heights (Tamayama Village) 外山高原 (玉山村) ●Created by construction of a dam, Lake Gando offers fishing and ice fishing for small fish called wakasagi. A campground has also been established. The nearby highland region, including Sotoyama Heights and Hayasaka Heights, is representative of the Kitakami Mountains. The region has been designated as a Prefectural Park.



⑨Morioka Castle Remains (Morioka City) 盛岡城跡 (盛岡市) ●The remains of a castle that was completed in the Edo period. Now only the stone walls and ponds remain. It is located in the center of Morioka City and now serves as the site of Iwate Park.



⑨Dakigaeri Ravine (Tazawako Town, Kakunodate Town) 抱返り溪谷 (田沢湖町・角館町) ●A valley which stretches along the Tamagawa River, whose beautiful water surface is bright blue. There are lots of scenic spots with waterfalls, dams, and suspension bridges. It is also known for its autumn colors. (Until the end of October)

● Life Sketch

Orchards

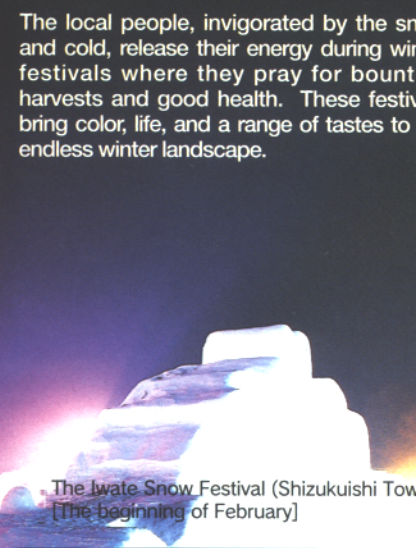
The fruits common in Tohoku are those which prosper in cooler climates, such as apples, cherries, and grapes. Many orchards allow people to observe fruit on the tree before it is shipped to grocery stores. Tourists can also speak with producers and pick their own fruit for a small fee.



Snow Festivals and Winter Life Route



- (Sapporo Snow Festival) (札幌雪まつり)
- Aomori Winter Festival 青森冬まつり
- Frosted Trees of Mt. Hakkoda 八甲田山樹氷
- Hirosaki Castle Snow Lantern Festival 弘前城雪燈籠まつり
- Owani Hot Springs 大鰐温泉
- Lake Towada Winter Stories Festival 十和田湖冬物語
- Oga Namahage 男鹿なまはげ
- Bukeyashiki in the Kakunodate Snow 角館雪の武家屋敷
- Yokote Kamakura 横手かまくら
- Chusonji Temple in the Hirazumi Snow 平泉雪の中尊寺
- Ichinoseki 一ノ関



The Iwate Snow Festival (Shizukuishi Town) [The beginning of February]

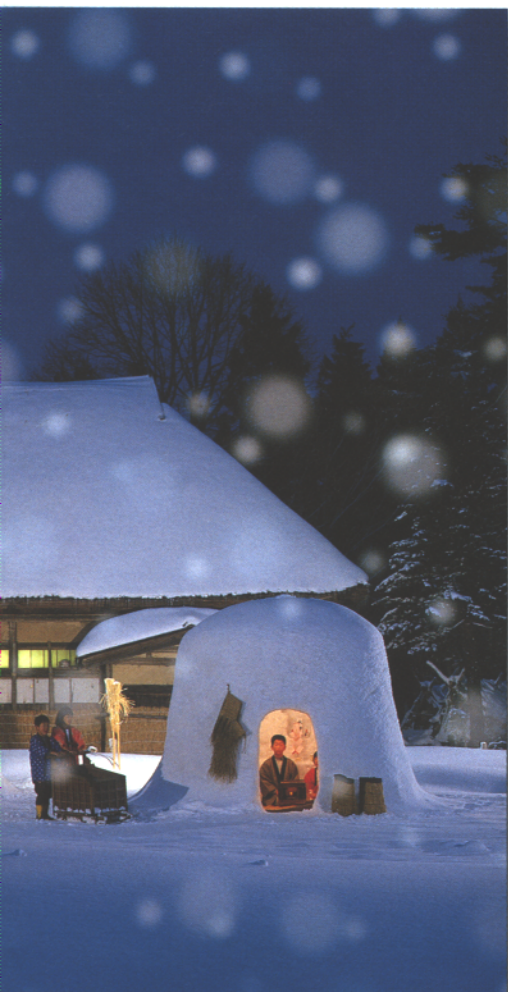


● **Seven Types of Snow 7つの雪**

In Japanese, snow can be roughly divided into four types. *Shinsetsu* (new snow) is fresh-fallen snow; *koshimari-yuki* (slightly hardened snow) is snow that has become slightly hardened over a short period of time. *Shimari-yuki* (hardened snow) is snow that has been compressed by its accumulated weight, and *zarami-yuki* (granulated snow) has become rough as it melts with the rising spring temperatures. In the Tsugaru region of western Aomori Prefecture, the people feel a deep affinity towards snow. Hence, there are seven types of snow, including grain, cotton, granulated, watery, hard, icy, and powder.



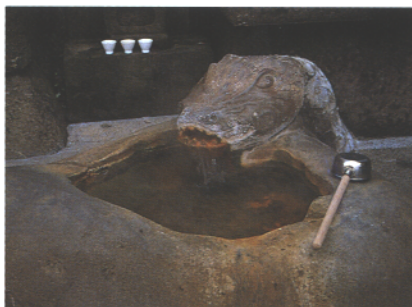
❶ Hirosaki Castle Snow Lantern Festival (Hirosaki City) 弘前城雪燈籠まつり ● During the festival, approximately 200 ornamental snow lanterns and 300 snow huts fill the park around Hirosaki Castle. Seen from the castle tower they present an enchanting sight. (Until the beginning of February)



❷ Kamakura (Yokote City) かまくら (横手市) ● This Lunar New Year festival honors Suijinsama, the god of water. Inside the snow huts constructed for the festival, children enjoy grilling mochi (rice cakes) and warming amazake (a sweet drink made from rice) using the hibachi brazier. (February 15 and 16)

❸ Jifubuki 地吹雪

Usually snow falls vertically from the sky, but in northern Tohoku, especially in the Tsugaru region, winds from Siberia stir up the snow. At times the snow swirls in great drifts along the ground. Occasionally, even rough, icy snow is blown about, making it difficult to walk or even open your eyes. Tours for experiencing this so-called jifubuki are available.



❹ Owani Hot Springs (Owani Town) 大鱈温泉 (大鱈町) ● Owani Town, approximately 20 minutes by car from Hirosaki Park, has a history as a prosperous hot springs region. There are 20 hotels or inns with hot springs, as well as a ski slope nearby.



❺ Hachinohe Emburi Dance (Hachinohe City) 八戸えんぶり (八戸市) ● This folk dance was originally performed to teach farming techniques. At this festival it is performed to pray for a bountiful harvest. The dancing at the Great Bonfire Festival, Okagaribi-matsuri, is also spectacular. (February 17-20)



❻ Amekko Market (Odate City) アメッコ市 (大館市) ● People offer Mizuki Tree branches decorated with candy at their family shrines. If you eat the candy on these days, it is said that you will not catch a cold. Various types of candy are sold at street stalls. (February 11-12)



❼ The Namahage-sedo Festival (Oga City) なまはげ柴灯まつり (男鹿市) ● People dance to the powerful Namahage drums in front of the Sedo bonfire as it rages into the night sky. The sight of the Namahage emerging from the darkness carrying torches is not to be missed. (February 13-15)

❽ Playing in the Snow 雪遊び

In the cold and snowy winter, adults often stay inside their warm houses, while children enjoy playing outside in the snow. Common winter activities include sledding, skiing, making snowmen, building small snow huts, and snow ball fights. Northern Tohoku offers numerous ways to enjoy playing in the snow—a pleasure missing in the larger cities.



❹ Hinaitori no Ichi (Hinai Town) 比内とりの市 (比内町) ● In Hinai Town, the home of Hinai Roosters, various events are held, including the Hinai Rooster Derby and a competition to crow like a rooster for as long as you can. (the last Saturday and Sunday of January)



❺ Chusonji Temple (Hirazumi Town) 中尊寺 (平泉町) ● This temple is the symbol of Hirazumi which served as the political and cultural center of the Tohoku area from the 11th to the 12th century. Including Konjikido, there are over 3,000 National Treasures and Important Cultural Assets here.

● Life Sketch

Yukikaki (Snow Removal): Past and Present

In northern Tohoku, snow begins to fall in December. By January, the snow begins to accumulate around the cities and towns. In places where the snow is particularly heavy, yukikaki (snow removal) is often required. Snow plows often work through the night to remove the snow in residential areas. Yukikaki tours are available.





Discover Another Japan
Route 40° North Latitude — Resorts

SKIING, GOLF & HOT SPRINGS

This region has many recreation areas with the latest facilities, in beautiful natural settings.

Compared to other resort areas in Japan, northern Tohoku has the highest concentration of ski resorts and golf courses with natural hot springs nearby. Here, you can enjoy a luxurious holiday, stay in resort hotels, enjoy outdoor sports, and relax in natural hot springs. Easy access from the airports and the Tohoku Expressway interchanges is also a plus for tourists. Northern Tohoku is an ideal resort area full of attractions, where you can enjoy your holiday to the fullest at any time of year.



Discover Another Japan Route 40° North Latitude — Resorts

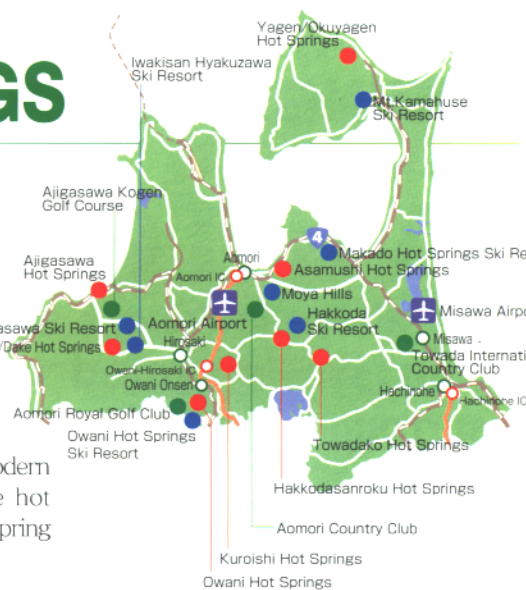
SKIING, GOLF & HOT SPRINGS

Aomori 青森

An ideal location near downtown Aomori with easy access from the airport and expressway.

Aomori Airport and the Tohoku Expressway offer easy access to many ski resorts, golf courses, and hot springs. Many of the ski resorts and golf courses in the area are internationally renowned. Using the natural terrain, they offer simple images of nature, together with the latest facilities and course designs. There are also a variety

of hot spring facilities, ranging from modern resorts to traditional Japanese-style hot spring hotels. Enjoy relaxing in a hot spring bath after skiing or golfing.



Owani Area (Owani Town)

大鰐エリア (大鰐町)

● Owani Onsen Ski Resort ● Aomori Royal Golf Club ● Owani Hot Springs

The Owani Kokusai and Ajara Heights make up the two ski resort areas, with slopes to suit all levels of skiers. Aomori Royal Golf Club is known for a range of course features, and is easily accessible not only from Owani Onsen Resorts but also from the airport and other resorts.



Owani Onsen Ski Resort



Aomori Royal Golf Club



Owani Hot Springs (Aomori Royal Hotel)

Ajigasawa Area (Ajigasawa Town)

鱒ヶ沢エリア (鱒ヶ沢町)

● Ajigasawa Ski Resort ● Ajigasawa Kogen Golf Club ● Ajigasawa Kogen Hot Spring ● Ajigasawa Hot Spring

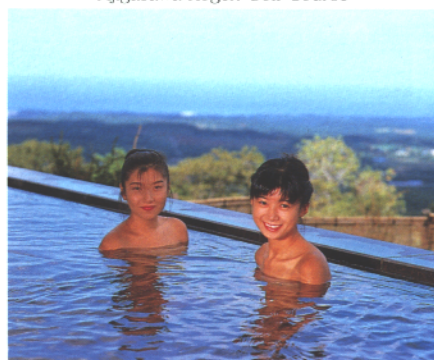
A four season resort located at the foot of Mt. Iwaki with a wide range of facilities. In winter, enjoy the long runs at the Ajigasawa Ski Resort; in summer, enjoy golfing in the heights district. There are modern resort hotels, as well as easy access to traditional hot spring facilities.



Ajigasawa Ski Resort



Ajigasawa Kogen Golf Course



Ajigasawa Kogen Hot Spring (Ajigasawa Prince Hotel)

Aomori Country Club (Aomori City)

The nearest golf course from the city center, Aomori Country Club has three courses with 27 holes and is only a 15 minute drive from Aomori Airport.



Lake Towada International Country Club (Rokunohe Town)

Due to relatively little snow, this 18-hole course opens earlier than other golf courses in the prefecture.



Ajigasawa Hot Spring (Hotel Grand-Mere Sankaiso)

SKIING, GOLF & HOT SPRINGS

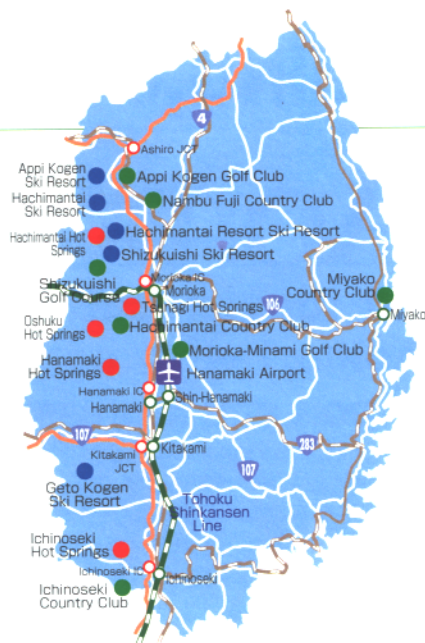
Iwate 岩手

An all-year resort area for international tourists, situated in beautiful natural surroundings.

Iwate is the largest of the three northern Tohoku prefectures, where many ski resorts, golf courses, and hot springs are located amidst beautiful natural scenery. The main resorts have good access from the airport and the expressway, and road networks make for easy travel between facilities.

Iwate also has a wide variety of skiing

and golf courses, and hot spring resorts to satisfy a wide range of desires. Design a vacation tailored to your own needs in the international resort facilities or the traditional local hot spring resorts crowded with local people.



Appi Area (Ashiro Town, Matsuo Village) 安比エリア (安代町・松尾村)

- Appi Kogen Ski Resort ● Appi Kogen Golf Club
- Hotel Appi Grand

With slopes covering 282 hectares, the Appi Kogen Ski Resort is the largest in the northern Tohoku area. The

adjacent Appi Kogen Golf Club, with 36 holes, is internationally renowned.

Accommodation capacity in this area totals 10,000 beds with facilities ranging from the Hotel Appi Grand, which is directly connected to the skiing ground, to pensions and guest houses, most of which have hot spring baths in which you can relax after skiing.

Shizukuishi Area (Shizukuishi Town) 雫石エリア (雫石町)

- Shizukuishi Ski Resort ● Shizukuishi Golf Course ● Shizukuishi-Prince Hotel ● Kenji World

The 5 km-long ski runs are among the longest in Japan. Shizukuishi Ski Resort, where the World Alpine Skiing Championships were once held, is located adjacent to Shizukuishi Golf Course. Both offer a range of facilities, catering to all ability levels.

Shizukuishi Prince Hotel is an excellent resort hotel. You can also take a short trip to other ski resorts such as Amihari and Hachimantai, and an indoor theme park, "Kenji World" with hot springs and a wave pool. Shizukuishi is a unique resort area with skiing, golf courses and hot springs with unique characteristics.



Appi Kogen Ski Resort



Shizukuishi Ski Resort



Appi Kogen Golf Club



Shizukuishi Golf Course



Kenji World



Takakura Hot Spring (Shizukuishi Prince Hotel)

Discover Another Japan
Route 40° North Latitude — Resorts

SKIING, GOLF & HOT SPRINGS

Akita 秋田

Excellent golfing.

Relax in a hot spring to end an active holiday.

Around the beautiful waters of Lake Tazawa, the deepest lake in Japan, are a wide variety of ski resorts and hot spring resorts. Akita has many tourist attractions, such as beautiful sightseeing spots around the lake, ideal places for outdoor sports like skiing, cycling, hiking, and fishing. Akita also offers many types of facilities for tourists, including resort hotels, pensions, hot spring hotels, and restaurants, which

form a large-scale resort area. An expressway runs across the prefecture, providing good access between the airport, skiing and golf courses, and hot spring resorts. Have a stylish vacation, enjoying local dishes using seafood from the Sea of Japan and tasty rice and vegetables grown in the region.



Tazawako Area (Tazawako Town) 田沢湖エリア (田沢湖町)

● Akita Prefecture Tazawako Ski Resort ● Tazawako Kogen Ski Resort ● Mizusawa Hot Springs ● Tazawako Kogen Hot Springs ● Nyuto Hot Springs

The ski resorts, overlooking Lake Tazawa, are characterized by their wide courses and a variety of slopes for skiers of all levels.

Around the ski areas, there are many hot spring facilities, from resort hotels and pensions to traditional Japanese style hot spring hotels. Nyuto Hot Springs Resort is about 10 minutes from the ski grounds by car. It attracts tourists with a simplicity typical of the northern Tohoku region and the quality water. Other places feature wooden hot spring hotels.

Moriyoshi / Ani Area (Moriyoshi Town / Ani Town) 森吉・阿仁エリア (森吉町・阿仁町)

● Moriyoshi Ski Resort ● Moriyoshi Hutte ● Ani Ski Resort ● Moriyoshi Lodge

Moriyoshi Ski Resort is relatively new. Hooded quad lifts there are the longest ones in Japan. Its long courses are attractive, and the snow is excellent. It is located about 30 minutes by taxi from the nearest Akita Shinkansen station or the nearest Akita Nairiku Jukan railway station.



Akita Prefecture Tazawako Ski Resort



Moriyoshi Ski Resort



Moriyoshi Lodge



Mizusawa Hot Spring



Akita Country Club (Akita City)

Easily accessible from JR Akita Station, approximately 20 minutes by car. Facing the Sea of Japan, this country club features 3 courses and 27 holes.



Akita Tsubakidai Country Club (Yuwa Town)

27 holes situated in a wide, hilly area. It is located approximately 30 minutes from JR Akita Station by car and 10 minutes from Akita Airport.

Travel Guide-Quick Tips

Outline of Aomori Prefecture

● Prefectural Office / 1-1-1 Nagashima, Aomori City, Aomori Pref. 030-8570
Phone: 017-734-9386

- Area / 9,606 km²
- Population / 1,508,353 (March 31, 1997)
- Households / 518,608
- Number of cities, towns, and villages / 8 cities, 34 towns, 25 villages
- Aomori Prefecture is number one in Japan for its apple yield (477,330 tons) and its rape blossom field (200 hectares). It is number one in the world for the largest beech forest (World Heritage Site—12,627 hectares), longest undersea tunnel (Seikan Tunnel—53.85 km), and the longest row of cherry blossom trees (6,700 trees-20km).

Outline of Iwate Prefecture

● Prefectural Office / 10-1 Uchimaru, Morioka City, Iwate Pref. 020-8570
Phone: 019-629-5574

- Area / 15,275 km²
- Population / 1,430,331 (March 31, 1997)
- Households / 463,786
- Number of cities, towns, and villages / 13 cities, 30 towns, 16 villages
- Iwate Prefecture is number one in Japan for the oldest stratified mountain (Mt. Hayachine); number of chief sake brewers (Nambu-ji 1,422); amount of tofu consumed annually (per household 112 blocks); largest private general-purpose farm (Koiwai Farm 3,000 ha); and the largest wooden Kannon (Fukusen-ji 17 m, 2.5 t).

Outline of Akita Prefecture

● Prefectural Office / 4-1-1 Sanno, Akita City, Akita Pref. 010-8570
Phone: 018-860-2265

- Area / 11,613 km²
- Population / 1,218,620 (March 31, 1997)
- Households / 390,589
- Number of cities, towns, and villages / 9 cities, 50 towns, and 10 villages
- Akita Prefecture is number one in Japan for the amount of sake consumed; rate of flow of a Hot Spring (Tamagawa Hot Springs 9,000/minute); deepest lake (Lake Tazawa 423.4 m); and the tallest Japanese cedar (in Futatsui Town 58 m). Akita also has the world's largest drum (Tszureko, 3.71 m in diameter, Takanosu Town).



Climate of Northern Tohoku

The Ou Mountains run through the center of Northern Tohoku from north to south, dividing the region and creating distinctions in climate between the Pacific side and the Sea of Japan side. The differences in temperature between the northern and southern areas of the region are also great. In winter, seasonal winds from the north-west are dominant, bringing dry and fine weather to the Pacific side and a lot of snow to the Sea of Japan side. In summer, warm wind blows from the south, which warms the air; the daily high temperatures reach approximately 30°C and the climate is quite comfortable. The region is hardly touched by Japan's humid rainy season.



Coping with the Snow and Cold

In northern Tohoku, temperatures are low in the winter season from November to March and often drop below freezing in January and February. Snowfall increases from mid-December, and sometimes a foot (30 cm) of snow falls overnight. In such weather you should wear anti-slip boots and thick winter clothes such as down jackets. However, most buildings are heated and you can stay comfortable indoors.



Drinking Water

Northern Tohoku, blessed by abundant forests and clear rivers, is a place where ample spring water exists. This famous and high-quality water moistens the ground and enriches the soil, which contributes to the production of sake and fine agricultural products. Of course, ordinary tap water is perfectly safe to drink. In fact when compared to water consumed in large cities, the ordinary tap water of northern Tohoku seems like mineral water.



Northern Tohoku Dialects

Dialects and slang exist in every part of Japan, and this is amplified in the northern Tohoku region. The dialects here are a reflection of the down-to-earth and honest people living here.



Onsen (Hot Spring) Manners

Compared with the rest of the world, Japan has many hot springs that are popular among all generations, not only for healing but also for relaxing. In some countries people wear bathing suits in hot springs; however, bathing in Japan is done naked. Washing is done outside the bath, and once you are clean you may soak in the relaxing waters. Bring a towel with you to use as a wash cloth, but be careful not to dip it in the water. In traditional onsen resorts with "hidden" hot springs, there are sometimes larger baths for mixed bathing, but the same basic manners apply.



Local Bus Services

Along with the highway bus services that connect the main cities, all three prefectures are covered by networks of local bus services. Most terminus stops are located in the capital cities of each prefecture, but there are also many services that connect other towns and villages. However, service in smaller towns and villages is sometimes limited.



Credit Card

In major cities, most department stores and other shopping facilities accept credit cards. But in smaller towns and villages, the use of credit cards is limited and cash payment is the norm at small private shops. In bigger cities and towns, ATMs are available in many places such as department stores.

Please note !

Discounts are available to make your journey to northern Tohoku more enjoyable.

Aomori Welcome Card

At approximately 170 facilities in Aomori Prefecture, including hotels & ryokans, sightseeing spots, restaurants & bars, and souvenir shops, various services and discounts will be provided to card holders. Discounts are available from 10%, and some tourist facilities are available free of charge. The application is simple. Just show your passport to the Tourist Information Center staff in Aomori Prefecture. Apply today!



Available at the Tourist Information Centers on page 31 marked with ※

Tourist Information Center List

Tourist Information Center

※ Aomori Welcome Cards Available at these Information Offices

Name	Location	Phone	Facsimile number
Aomori Prefecture Tourist Information Center ※	In Aomori Tourist Center "ASPAM" 1-1-40 Yasukata, Aomori City	+81-17-734-2500	+81-17-734-2501
Aomori Airport Tourist Information Center ※	1-5 Aza-Kotani, Otani, Aomori City	+81-17-739-4561	+81-17-739-5909
Hirosaki City Tourist Bureau ※	2-11 Omote-machi, Hirosaki City	+81-172-32-0524	+81-172-36-6394
Hirosaki City Sightseeing Information Center ※	2-1 Shimo Shirogane-cho, Hirosaki City	+81-172-37-5501	+81-172-39-6243
Aomori City Tourist Information Center ※	JR Aomori Station, 1-1-1 Yanagawa, Aomori City	+81-17-723-4670	+81-17-777-8639
Lake Towada Information Center ※	16 Aza-Towada, Okuse, Towadako Town	+81-176-75-2506	+81-176-75-2427
Hachinohe Tourist Information Center ※	Hachinohe Regional Industry Promotion Center, 1-9-22 Ichiban-cho, Hachinohe City	+81-178-27-4243	+81-178-23-4772
Mutsu-Shimokita Tourist Center (Masakari Plaza) ※	1-10-25 Yanagi-machi, Mutsu City	+81-175-22-0909	+81-175-22-0070
Northern Tohoku Tourist Information Center	JR Morioka Station, 1-48 Morioka Ekimae-dori, Morioka City	+81-19-625-2090	+81-19-625-2091
Ichinoseki Tourist Information Center	1 Ekimae, Ichinoseki City	+81-191-23-2350	+81-191-23-2350
Lake Tazawa Tourist Information Center	68 Aza-Otokozaka, Obonai, Tazawako Town, Semboku-gun	+81-187-43-0307	+81-187-43-2077
Akita City Tourist Information Center	JR Akita Station	+81-18-832-7941	+81-18-832-7941
Tourist Association of Akita, Towada, and Hachimantai (Antler)	Hanawa, Kazuno City	+81-186-23-2019	+81-186-23-7715
AKITA Marugoto Plaza	Atrion, Naka-dori, Akita City	+81-18-836-7835	+81-18-836-1784

Tourist Information Centers

- Tokyo Office: Tokyo Kokusai Forum B1,3-5-1 Marunouchi Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0005 +81-3-3201-3331
- Kyoto Office: Kyoto Tower Bldg. 1F, Higashi Shiokojimachi, Shimogyo-ku, Kyoto 600-8215 +81-75-371-5649

JAPAN TRAVEL-PHONE (Toll-Free service)

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.

Dial 3201-3331 when calling from within Tokyo (area code 03) or 371-5649 when calling from within Kyoto (area code 075).

The charge for your call is ¥10 per minute (within Japan).

Japan National Tourist Organization-Overseas Offices

● Seoul	10th fl., Press Center Bldg., 25 Taepyongno 1-ga, Chung-gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea	(82)2-732-7525
● Beijing	Chang Fu Gong Office Bldg., No.26, Jianguomenwai Daije, Chaoyang-qu, Beijing, 100022. People's Republic of China	(86)10-6513-9023
● Hong Kong	Suite 3704-05, 37/F., Dorset House, Taikoo Place, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong, People's Republic of China	(852)2968-5688
● Bangkok	19th fl., Ramaland Bldg, No. 952, Rama IV Road, Bangkok District, Bangkok 10500, Thailand	(66)2-233-5108
● Sydney	Level 33, The Chifley Tower, 2 Chifley Square, Sydney, N.S.W. 2000, Australia	(61)2-9232-4522
● London	Heathcoat House, 20 Savile Row, London. W1X 1AE, UK	(44)171-734-9638
● Paris	4-8, rue Sainte-Anna, 75001 Paris, France	(33)1-42-96-20-29
● Frankfurt	Kaiserstrasse 11, 60311 Frankfurt am Main, Germany	(49)69-20353
● New York	One Rockefeller Plaza, Suite 1250, New York. NY 10020, U.S.A.	(1)212-757-5640
● Chicago	401 North Michigan Ave., Suite 770, Chicago, IL 60611, U.S.A.	(1)312-222-0874
● San Francisco	360 Post St., Suite 601, San Francisco, CA 94108, U.S.A.	(1)416-989-7140
● Los Angeles	515 South Figueroa St., Suite 1470, Los Angeles, CA 90071, U.S.A.	(1)213-623-1952
● Toronto	165 University Ave., Toronto, Ontario, M5H 3B8, Canada	(1)416-366-7140
● Sao Paulo	Av. Paulista, 509-S/405, 01311-000, Sao Paulo, S.P., Brazil	(55)11-289-2931

Japan Tourist Association Taiwan Branch

● Taipei	15F-3B., NO.49, Min Sheng E, RD. Sec.3, Taipei, Taiwan	(02)2506-4228
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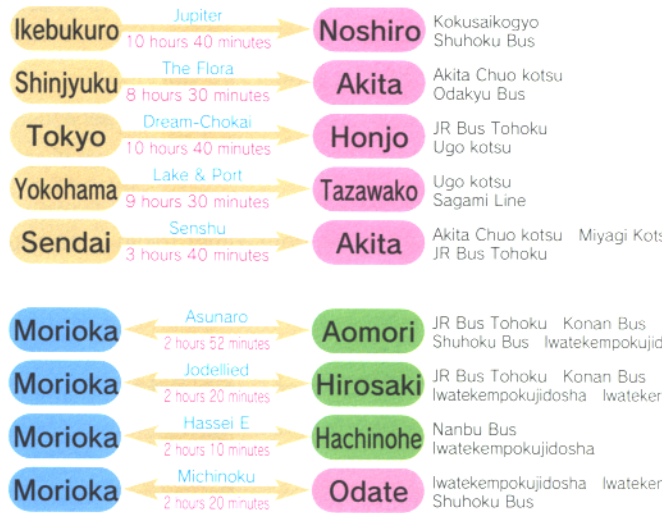
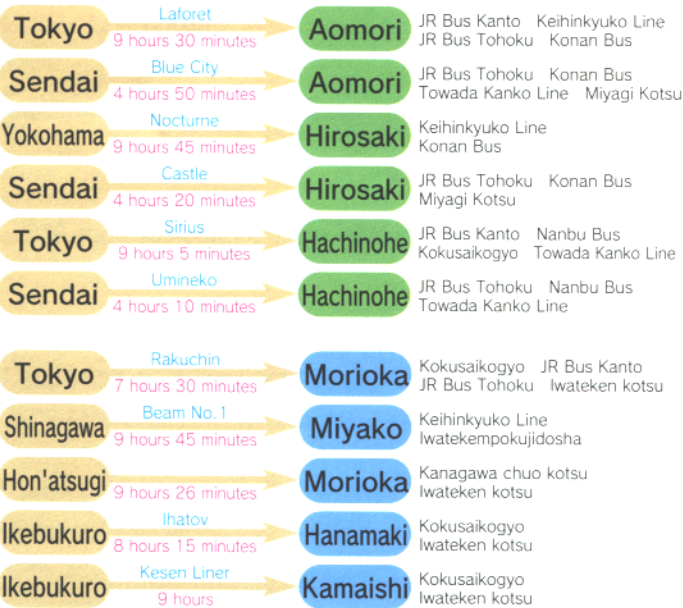
Transportation Information

by airplane

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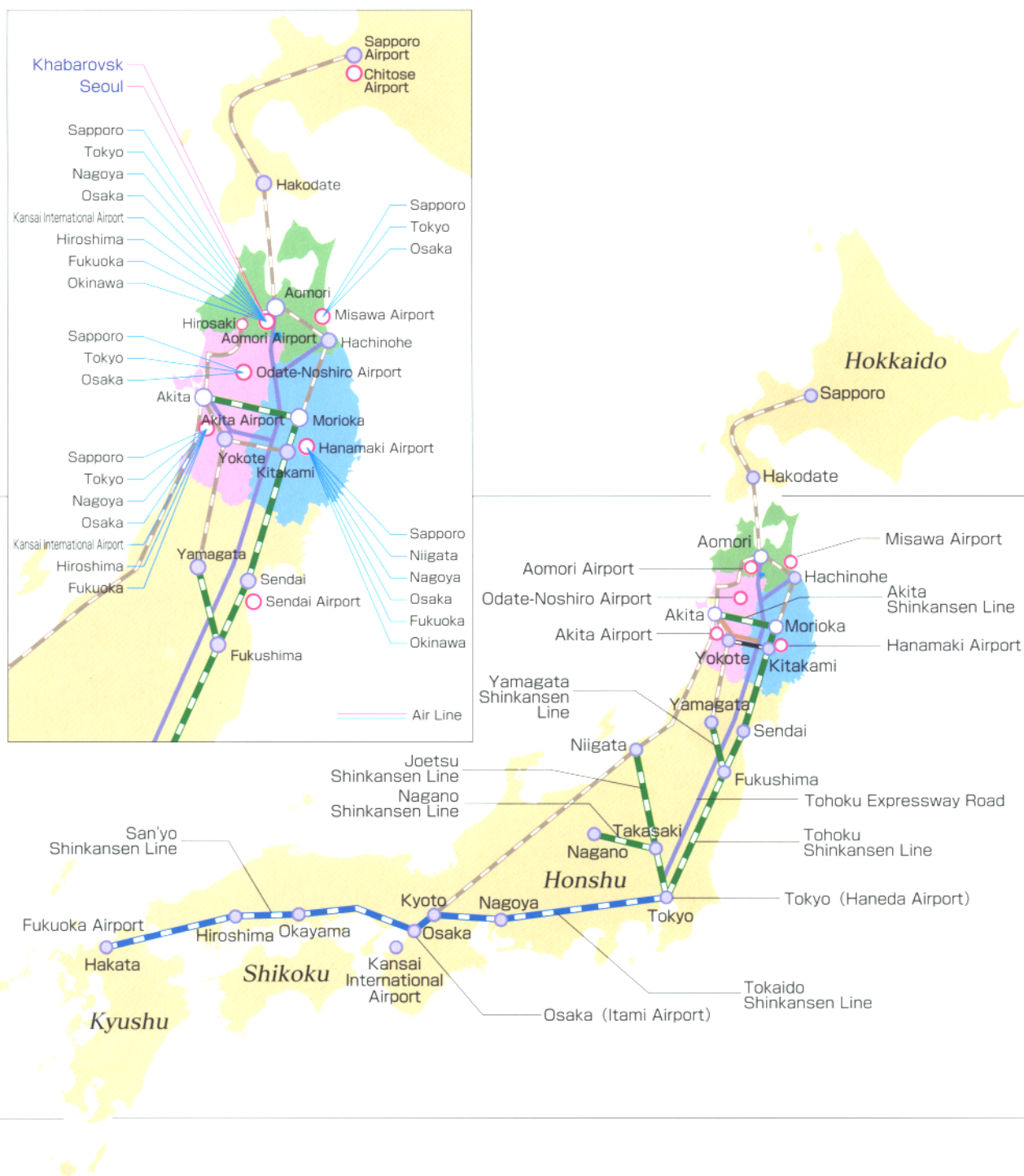


by highway bus



by train







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Phone:+81-17-734-9386 Fax:+81-17-773-2691

<http://www.pref.aomori.jp/>

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10-1 Uchimaru, Morioka City, Iwate Pref. 020-8570

Phone:+81-19-629-5574 Fax:+81-19-629-5597

<http://www.pref.iwate.jp/~kanko/>

Akita Prefectural Government Tourism Division

4-1-1 Sanno, Akita City, Akita Pref. 010-8570

Phone:+81-18-860-2265 Fax:+81-18-860-1719

<http://www.HANAMARU.AKITA.AKITA.JP/>

● Participating Municipalities:

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Goshogawara City
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Misawa City
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