

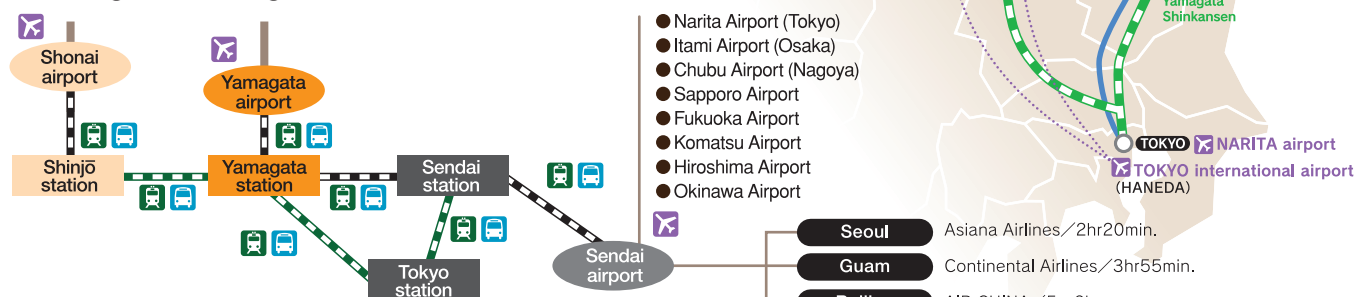
## Access Information

This transportation information was current before the earthquake on March 11, 2011.  
As schedules may have changed since then, please contact your transportation company for up-to-date information.

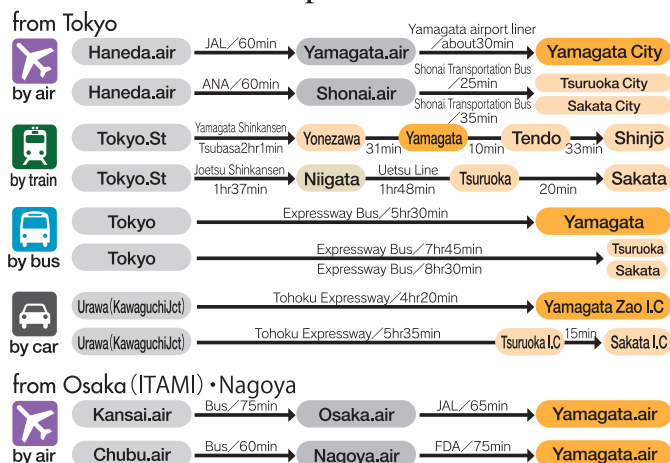
### Location of Yamagata



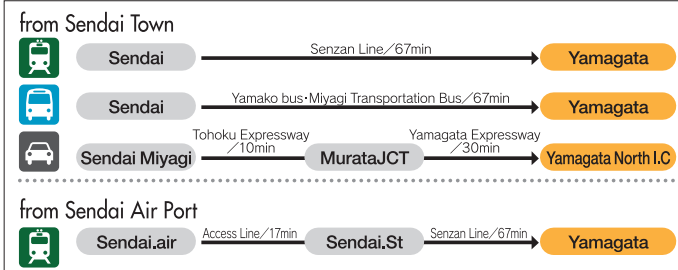
### Getting to Yamagata



### Travel access to Japan



Seoul	Asiana Airlines/2hr20min.
Guam	Continental Airlines/3hr55min.
Beijing	AIR CHINA/5~6hr.
Shanghai	AIR CHINA/2hr50min.
Taipei	Eva Airways/3hr5min.



\* Time required may be changed.  
Please inquire at each transportation facility for the latest information.

# YAMAGATA GUIDEBOOK

ENGLISH Yamagata in Japan

# 山形



さあ  
行こう

Welcome to Yamagata

# JAPAN

Let's go to Yamagata!



## Welcome to Yamagata

<http://www.yamagatakanko.com/english/>



Yamagata Tourism Information Center

Phone +81-23-647-2333  
West Exit of JR Yamagata Station (1 Fl., Kajo Central)  
1-1-1 Jonan-machi, Yamagata City, Yamagata Pref.

Yamagata Prefecture Inbound Tourism and International Exchange Promotion Division

Phone +81-23-630-2911  
2-8-1 Matsunami, Yamagata City, Yamagata Pref.

Tourism Information Center

Phone +81-3-3201-3331  
1 Fl., Shin Tokyo Bldg., 3-3-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo



The origins of the name "Yamagata" can be traced

2016.7

access ~ via a cell-phone [cellular phone, mobile(-phone)]







夏



冬



春

# Introduction to Yamagata Prefecture

Yamagata Prefecture is home to diverse and abundant nature, including mountains, rivers, and the ocean. It is located in the northeastern region of Japan known as Tohoku.

It is impossible to adequately describe Yamagata's appeal in just a few words. Among other things, it home to the snow monsters of Mt. Zao. This is a unique natural phenomenon where trees are so covered in snow and ice that they look like surreal beasts sculpted from the snow. Also, famous mountains like Mt. Chokai, Mt. Nishiazuma, and the three sacred mountains of Yamagata known as the Dewa Sanzan are also found in Yamagata.

A distinct culture cultivated by this rich natural environment with unique hot springs villages that can be found throughout every region of the prefecture is another facet of life in Yamagata. On a map, you can see that shape of Yamagata Prefecture resembles of the side view of a smiling face. We are excited to meet you in Yamagata, where we will greet you with warm hospitality and a smile!



秋



Let's go to Yamagata!



# The Traditional Culture 文化



## Mt. Haguro

The Three Sacred Mountains of Yamagata **C-2**

The three mountains of Mt. Haguro, Mt. Gassan, and Mt. Yudono that are located in the center of Yamagata are called the Dewa Sanzan. They are well known as mountains that have been part of religious ascetic training since ancient times. At these mountains, you can visit both the Five-Story Pagoda on Mt. Haguro that has been designated as a National Treasure and also the Cedar Tree Path of Mt. Haguro that is designated as a Natural Monument. It is also possible to take part in a Yamabushi training course, where participants can experience the strict spiritual training regimen of the sect of Dewa Sanzan mountain ascetics known as the Yamabushi.

<http://www.dewasanzan.jp/english/info.html>



## Sankyo Warehouses

**B-2**

Shonai is one of the leading rice producing regions of Japan, and these agricultural warehouses have been in use since they were built over 100 years ago. The combination of these warehouses and the adjacent street lined with zelkova trees creates a quaint atmosphere. Some of these warehouses are now used as a market for local produce and as a museum.

<http://www.sakata-kankou.gr.jp/>



## Chido Museum

**C-2**

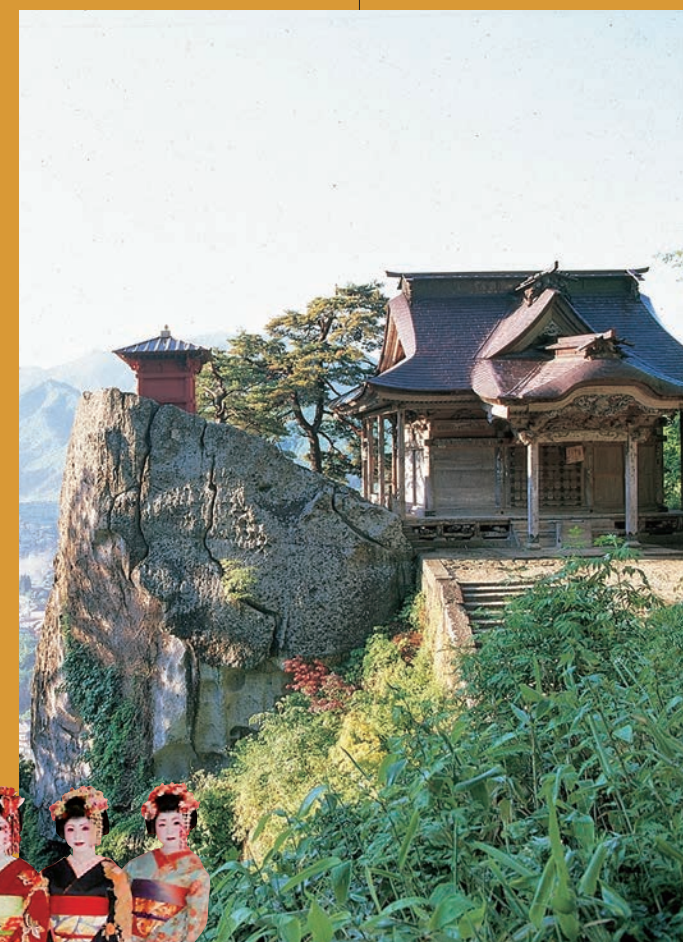
The residence of the Sakai family that ruled over the Shonai Clan is on display at this museum, where you can see historical buildings from Tsuruoka. Nearby Tsuruoka Park is known as a great place to view the spring cherry blossoms.

[http://www7.ocn.ne.jp/~chido/e\\_main.htm](http://www7.ocn.ne.jp/~chido/e_main.htm)

## Homma Museum of Art **B-2**

This site of this museum is a house previously owned by the Homma family, once incredibly wealthy Japanese landowners who lived in the Sakata area. In addition to displaying items owned by the Homma family, there is also a garden that is beautiful throughout all four seasons.

<http://www.sakata-kankou.gr.jp/>



## Yamadera and The Narrow Road to the Deep North **E-4**

Renowned Edo Period (1603-1868) haiku poet Matsuo Basho traveled through Yamagata and composed numerous poems while writing his major work titled The Narrow Road to the Deep North. During his travels, Matsuo Basho visited Yamadera, also known as Rissshakuji Temple. Yamadera was founded approximately 1200 years ago, and its eternal flame has continued to burned brightly from the time of the temple's founding to this day.

<http://www.kankou.yamagata.yamagata.jp/djst/ymdr/>



## Maiko(Yamagata Maiko) (Sakata Maiko)

**E-3**

**B-2**

Yamagata has a long history of trade with Kyoto and Osaka, and through this relationship much of the culture from that region came to Yamagata as well. Thanks to this history, you can see traditional performances by maiko dancing girls in both Yamagata City and Sakata City.

<http://www.yamagata-cci.or.jp/maiko/>

<http://www.somaro.net/>



# Culture

Since ancient times, Yamagata has been revered as a land that is home to a culture of profound spirituality, and this can be seen in Yamadera Temple and the three sacred mountains of Yamagata known as the Dewa Sanzan. Additionally, elements of culture from Kyoto and central Japan made their way to Yamagata as a result of the large numbers of people who traveled to and from Yamagata due to the area's once thriving safflower trade, leading to the creation of Yamagata's own unique culture. Fragments of that became the historical cornerstone of Yamagata's culture, which continues to be passed down to this day.



# Nature

# The Nature 自然



## Cherry Blossoms

There are many fantastic locations to see the spring cherry blossoms in Yamagata Prefecture. There are walking paths along rivers lined with cherry blossom trees, and there are places to relax and enjoy simply viewing the majestic sight of cherry blossoms in bloom on a giant, ancient trees over 100 years old.

[http://www.yamagatakanko.com/flower/fl\\_spr.html](http://www.yamagatakanko.com/flower/fl_spr.html)



## Autumn Leaves

When fall begins in earnest, the temperature in Yamagata quickly and suddenly drops, and it is said that this causes the changing colors of the autumn leaves to be particularly vibrant. Depending on the location, it is possible to enjoy viewing the fall foliage from late September at the earliest until late November at the latest.

<http://www.yamagatakanko.com/kouyou/index.html>



## Terraced Rice Paddy Fields

Yamagata is home to three terraced rice paddy field areas chosen for the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries' listing of The Best Terraced Rice Fields in Japan.

Whether you view them from above or below, these offer a different type of scenery than a standard rice field.

## Zao Okama Crater

E-4

The Okama of Mt. Zao is a lake created by rainwater built up in a volcanic crater on Mt. Zao's Kattadake peak on the border between Yamagata and Miyagi Prefectures. It is also known as the Goshiki Numa, which means five color marsh, because the color of the water appears to change based on the weather and the angle of sunlight.

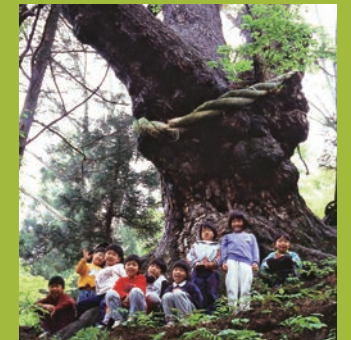
<http://www.zao-spa.or.jp/english/index.html>



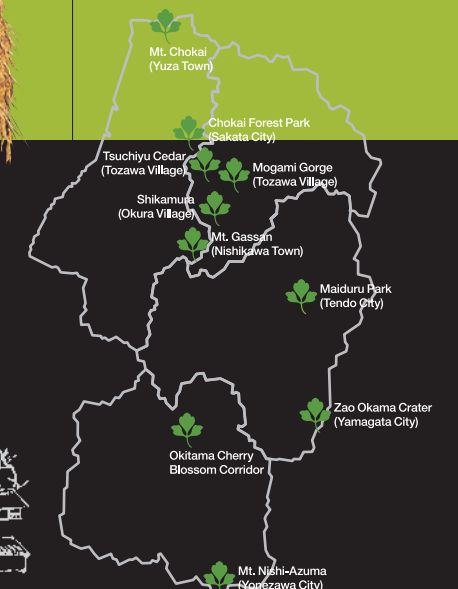
## The Giant Trees of Mogami

There are numerous giant trees in Yamagata that are over 100 years old, particularly in the northern region known as Mogami. Visiting these towering trees that still stand after all these years provides a chance to rejuvenate yourself and escape from the hustle and bustle of modern life.

<http://www.yamagatakanko.com/tree/index.html>



Bordered on the east by the Ou Mountain Range crowned by Mount Zao, Yamagata Prefecture is home to the vast Dewa, Asahi, and Iide mountainous regions which shelter a succession of basins and plains through which the Mogami River treads its way. Blessed with beautiful nature, every area of the prefecture offers many things to see and leisure activities to enjoy throughout the year.







# Experience



## Zao Hot Springs Ski Resort

E-3

In January and February, you can see the Ice monsters of Mt. Zao, which are trees so covered in snow and ice that they begin to look like surreal snow sculptures of monsters. The Ice monsters are a rare natural phenomenon made possible by the alignment of very specific climate and geographic conditions. The Zao Hot Springs Ski Resort is proud to be one of the most expansive in the country, with courses that both beginners and experts can enjoy. The zao hot springs at the foot of the mountain are believed to give those bathe in them beautiful skin.

<http://www.zao-spa.or.jp/english/index.html>



## Mt. Gassan Summer Skiing

D-2

Starting in April, you can go skiing on Mt. Gassan. When it warms up, you can even ski while wearing a t-shirt! It is also possible to do mogul skiing beginning in May.

<http://www.gassan-info.com/>



## Kamo Aquarium, Tsuruoka City (Jellyfish Dream Building)

C-1

Yamagata Prefecture's only aquarium, with its biggest attraction being the world's largest jellyfish tank of 5m across. In addition, the aquarium prides itself in having the most types of different jellyfish on display in the world, and has been officially recognized in the Guinness Book of World Records.

<http://kamo-kurage.jp/>

# Experience 体験

## Trekking

E-4

Six Yamagata mountains are listed in the influential book 100 Famous Japanese Mountains by mountaineer Kyuya Fukada. The maintains in Yamagata have beautiful scenery during all four seasons, including alpine plant life and clear streams.

<http://www.yamagatakanko.com/trekking/>



## Traditional Arts and Crafts

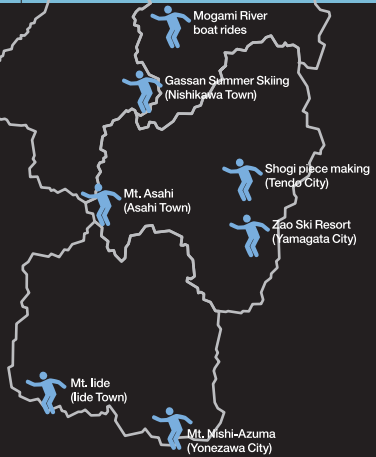
D-4

Many traditional arts and crafts have long been passed down in Yamagata. Examples include shogi (Japanese chess) piece making in Tendo City, metal casting, and Sasano Ittoubori wood carving. There are even opportunities to make your own unique work of art by participating in a traditional arts and crafts experience.

<http://www.yamagatakanko.com/gurume/05miyage.html>



Mt. Chokai (Yuza Town)



## Mogami River Boat Ride

C-3

The Mogami River that flows through Yamagata Prefecture has a long history as an important trade route, contributing to the development of culture in the area surrounding the river. Today, it is possible to ride a boat down the Mogami River from Tozawa Village, viewing the beautiful scenery of the Mogami River Valley during any of the four seasons.

<http://www.blf.co.jp/>

<http://www.mogamigawa.jp/>





# 祭 Festivals



**Sakata Festival** B-2  
May 19th-21st (Yearly)  
Main Festival Events: May 20th

This festival began 400 years ago, and through this festival you can still get a taste of the luxuriant era when trade flourished in this region. Some say that the floats in the procession at this festival are so tall that they touch the sky. You can also see representations of lion heads said to protect against evil, which are the symbol of Sakata.  
<http://www.sakata-kankou.gr.jp/cgi/kf/klinfo.cgi>

**Yamagata Hanagasa Festival** E-4  
August 5th-7th (Yearly)

The Hanagasa Festival held throughout the prefecture in August is an important summer tradition in Yamagata. At this festival, there are parades where participants perform a dance using a hat with floral decorations that is known as a "hanagasa." The Hanagasa Festival held over a three day period on one of the main streets in Yamagata City attracts approximately 10,000 dancers, making it the largest and most exciting version of the festival in terms of both participants and spectators. There are even opportunities for spectators to participate in the dance.  
<http://www.mountain-j.com/hanagasa/>



**Yonezawa Uesugi Festival** F-3  
April 29th-May 3rd (Yearly)

This major festival that occurs at the height of spring is held by the shrine of the Uesugi family, which ruled over Yonezawa City in southern Yamagata during the Edo period (1603-1868). The highlight of this festival is the chance to view a thrilling reenactment of the Battle of Kawanakajima, which was fought during the warring states period (1476-1573).  
<http://uesugi.yonezawa.info/>



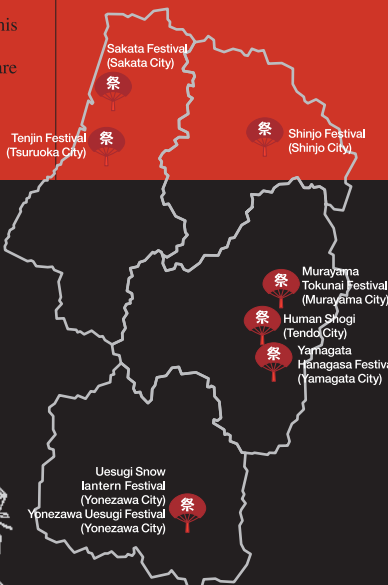
**Murayama Tokunai Festival** D-4  
Mid-August to Late-August (Yearly)

This is the most exciting festival in Yamagata. With small wooden clappers known as naruko in hand, dancers perform an exhilarating dance to the up-tempo rhythm of traditional Japanese music.  
<http://www.murayamatokunai.jp/>



**Shinjo Festival** C-3  
August 24th-26th (Yearly)

This festival to pray for an abundant harvest began 250 years ago in Shinjo City, located in northern Yamagata. This festival's parade of floats and the portable shrine (mikoshi) procession are said to be the best in Japan, and they bring summer in Yamagata to an extravagant end.  
[http://www.sjcci.or.jp/iinkai/maturi\\_top.htm](http://www.sjcci.or.jp/iinkai/maturi_top.htm)



## Festival Calendar

Uesugi Snow Lantern Festival	(Yonezawa City) A Saturday and Sunday in February
Human Shogi	(Tendo City) A Saturday and Sunday in April
Yonezawa Uesugi Festival	(Yonezawa City) April 29th - May 3rd
Sakata Festival	(Sakata City) May 15th - 21st
Tenjin Festival	(Tsuruoka City) May 25th
Yamagata Hanagasa Festival	(Yamagata City) August 5th - 7th
Murayama Tokunai Festival	Mid-August to Late-August
Shinjo Festival	(Shinjo City) August 24th - 26th



# Fruitful

# Produce and Cuisine 特産

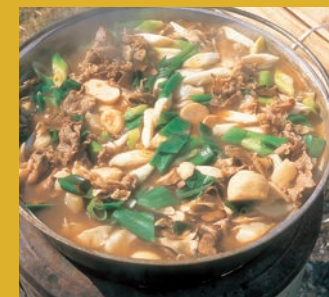
## Wine

Yamagata grape production is 3rd in Japan, and so it is also known as a major producer of wine, which uses grapes as a main ingredient. The wine made in Yamagata is created entirely from grapes grown in Yamagata.



## Sake

Yamagata is one of the major rice producing regions in Japan, and so it is also known as a major producer of sake, which uses rice as a main ingredient. There are sake breweries throughout Yamagata, where it is possible to taste many different kinds of sake.



## Imoni Stew

Imoni is a stew made from taro root, meat, and vegetables in broth flavored with either soy sauce or miso paste. This dish is eaten throughout the northeastern region of Japan known as Tohoku. The flavoring and ingredients used in imoni varies from somewhat region to region within Yamagata. Gathering by the river around an imoni pot cooked by a fire with friends and family is an important fall tradition in Yamagata.

## Yonezawa Beef

Yonezawa beef raised in the southern region of Yamagata called Okitama is famous throughout Japan. Known for its thin and extensive marbling and high quality fat, it tastes great when eaten in meals like steak or sukiyaki.



## Tsuyahime

For 10 years the rice brand known as Tsuyahime has been the pride of Yamagata Prefecture. Its unique features include its prominent whiteness, luster, and sweetness.

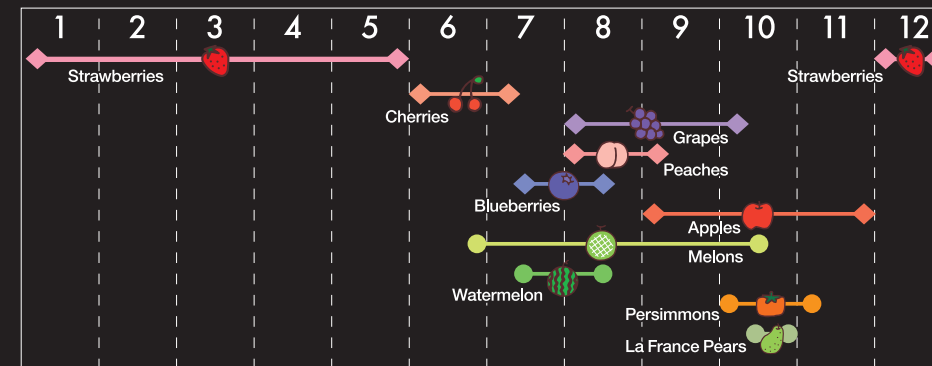


## Fruits

Yamagata grown fresh fruits are available all year long. If just eating these delicious fruits isn't enough, it is even possible to participate in a fruit picking experience. It is possible to pick fruits in any season, from the cherries that Yamagata produces the most of in all of Japan, to other fruits like grapes and La France pears.



## Fruit Calendar



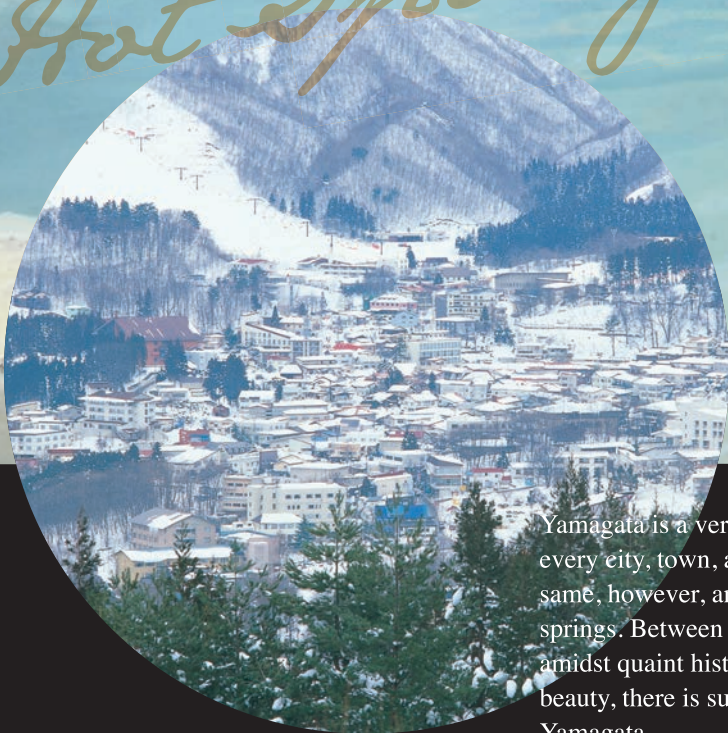
◆ Fruit Picking and Purchasing Season  
● Purchasing Season







# Hot Springs



Yamagata is a veritable kingdom of hot springs. There are hot springs in every city, town, and village in Yamagata. Not every hot spring is the same, however, and Yamagata is home to many unique types of hot springs. Between hot springs surrounded by abundant nature, hot springs amidst quaint historical buildings, and hot springs that are said to increase beauty, there is surely a hot spring that can suit your taste perfectly in Yamagata.

<http://www.yamagatakanko.com/english/hotspring/>

## Zao Hot Springs

E-4

Said to have been discovered in 110 AD, the Zao Hot Springs are famous as the oldest of the three great hot springs of Japan's Northeastern Tohoku region. This hot spring is known for its high acidity, and it is called both "The Princess Hot Spring" and "The Fountain of Beauty" due to its reputation for healing both skin conditions and gastrointestinal disorders. The famous Zao Open Air Hot Spring (roten buro) is just a short distance away from the Hot Springs Resort area. There, you can enjoy the liberating sensation of open air bathing surrounded by the beauty of nature. This Open Air Hot Spring is popular with tourists and locals alike!



## Shirabu Hot Springs

G-3

The grass thatched roofs of the traditional ryokan (traditional Japanese style inns) in this area can make you truly feel the 700 year history of this hot spring village. Outdoor sports enthusiasts who trek and ski on the Tengendai Highlands and Mt. Azuma are also known to gather at the Shirabu Hot Springs.



## Yunohana Hot Springs

C-1

Yunohana is a hot springs resort along the coast. Warming yourself up with a soak in this hot spring after swimming in the ocean and playing water sports on a beach of white sand and clear blue skies is an truly unique experience. Because this hot spring is along the ocean, the seafood is exquisite. After you're done enjoying the hot spring, you can have a romantic evening eating delicious seafood while watching the sun set into the ocean.



## Ginzan Hot Springs

C-4

This hot springs (onsen) village evokes the atmosphere of old Japan. Three and four story traditional Japanese inns built during the Taisho and early Showa eras stand side by side, surrounding the quietly flowing Ginzan River. The gas lamps create unforgettable evening scenery, casting reflections on the surface of river and lighting up the winter snow.



## Kaminoyama Hot Springs

E-3

The Kaminoyama Hot Springs area, located 30 minutes by car from Yamagata City, is composed of 6 different hot springs villages throughout Kaminoyama City. All of the Kaminoyama Hot Springs promote a campaign encouraging people to wear yukata, an informal kimono commonly worn after bathing, throughout the area from April to September. There are a variety of special services and benefits offered to visitors who wear yukata during this period.

## Hijiori Hot Springs

C-3

You can experience the atmosphere of ancient Japan at the Hijiori Hot Springs, where people riding rickshaws or taking a pleasant stroll wearing yukata on streets lined with traditional Japanese inns are a common sight. This hot spring has an over 1200 year history. It gained reputation long ago as a therapeutic bath, and to this day there is still no end to people who come seeking its curative effects.

## Atsumi Hot Springs

C-1

Located in the mountains next to a beautiful stream flowing into the nearby ocean, the Atsumi Hot Springs have an over 1000 year history. These hot springs are famously popularly as a spot for therapeutic bathing. From April to early December, there is also a morning farmer's market with an over 260 year history at Atsumi Hot Springs. This market is packed with fresh vegetables and sea food, as well as other seasonal produce.



## Sagae Hot Springs

D-3

The Sagae Hot Springs are renowned for their unique baths that make use of Sagae City's famous roses. These elegant rose petal baths are said to give people more beautiful skin, and the beautiful aroma of roses is deeply soothing.





# Map of Yamagata

