

# Annual Events and Seasonal Highlights

## \* Cherry Blossom Viewing

### March-April

Cherry blossoms, Japan's foremost special ties of springtime, can be enjoyed all over the country from late March through April.



- **Chidorigafuchi, Kitanomaru Park** Tokyo
- **Ueno Park** Tokyo
- **Shinjuku Gyoen** Tokyo
- **Inokashira Park** Tokyo
- **Meguro River** Tokyo
- **Kamakura** Kanagawa Pref.
- **Hakone** Kanagawa Pref.
- **Odawara Castle Park** Kanagawa Pref.
- **Yokohama Sankeien** Kanagawa Pref.
- **Kitakami Tenshochi** Iwate Pref.
- **Temples and shrines in Kyoto City and Arashiyama** Kyoto Pref.
- **Yoshinoyama** Nara Pref.
- **Osaka Mint Sakura Tunneling** Osaka Pref.

## \* Fireworks Festival

### July-August

Many firework displays are held in July and August across Japan. However, many firework festivals may be cancelled or the dates are yet to be announced due to Olympics this summer. There are many festivals held nearby Tokyo where you can enjoy firework events.



- **Sumida River Fireworks Festival** Tokyo
- **( Jingu Gaien Fireworks Festival** Tokyo )
- **( Tokyo Fireworks Festival-EDOMODE-** Tokyo )
- **Tsuchiura All Japan Fireworks Competition** Ibaraki Pref.
- **Omagari Fireworks** Akita Pref.
- **Nagaoka Fireworks** Niigata Pref.
- **PL Fireworks Exhibition** Osaka Pref.

\*Dates for the firework festivals in parentheses are to be announced.

Jan.	<b>1~3 New Year Holidays</b> A time when people eat "osechi-ryori" (special New Year's dishes) with ingredients representing longevity and good health. Hatsumode is the term for the first shrine or temple visit of the year, when people pray for wellbeing for the coming year. 	<b>7 Star Festival (Tanabata)</b> Bamboo trees are decorated with small pieces of paper with wishes written on them. 	Jun.
Feb.	<b>3 Bean-throwing Festival (Setsubun)</b> Soybeans are thrown on this day to get rid of evil and bring in good fortune. It is said that if you eat the same number of beans as your age, you will not catch a cold.	<b>1~31 Gion Festival (Highlight 14th-17th)</b> <b>11 Sumida River Fireworks Festival</b> <b>14 Nachi Fire Festival</b> <b>25 Tenjin Festival</b> <b>2~7 Aomori Nebuta Festival</b> <b>3~6 Akita Kanto Festival</b> <b>5~7 Yamagata Hanagasa Festival</b> <b>6~8 Sendai Tanabata Festival</b> <b>9~12 Yosakoi Festival ( Jingu Gaien Fireworks Festival )</b> <b>12~15 Awa Odori</b>	Jul.
	<b>1/31~11(2020) Sapporo Snow Festival</b> <b>14 Valentine's Day</b> On this day in Japan, women give chocolate to confess their love to men. Recently, giving out "giri-choco" (obligation chocolate) to male co-workers has become a common practice as well.	<b>13~16 Obon</b> A Buddhist festival for honoring one's ancestors, when people visit family graves.	
Mar.	<b>1~14 Shunie Ceremony (Omizutori)</b> <b>3 Doll Festival (Hinamatsuri)</b> On this day, the wellbeing and growth of girls is wished for and celebrated. Dolls which are meant to carry ill fortune in place of one's daughter are put on display in homes. 	<b>1~3 Owara Kaze-no-bon</b> <b>11~13 Okinawa Zento Eisa Festival</b> <b>19~20 Kishiwada Danjiri Festival</b> <b>7~9 Nagasaki Kunchi</b> <b>9~10 Takayama Festival (autumn)</b> <b>22 Jidai Festival</b>	Sep.
Apr.	<b>14 White Day</b> A day when men may give a gift in return for chocolate received on Valentine's Day. Gifts of white chocolate and marshmallows are common.	<b>15 Shichi-Go-San</b> A day when the health and growth of girls aged 3 and 7, and boys aged 5, is celebrated. 	Oct. Nov.
	<b>End of April to beginning of May Golden Week</b> With 4 consecutive national holidays, Golden Week is one of the biggest vacation periods in the year when many take the whole week off.	<b>2~3 Chichibu Yomatsuri (night festival)</b> <b>25 Christmas</b> As it is not a national holiday in Japan, Christmas is often celebrated on Christmas Eve. Few people attend church services, but towns and cities are beautifully decorated with Christmas lights and ornaments.	Dec.
May	<b>14~15 Takayama Festival (spring)</b> <b>3~4 Hakata Dontaku</b> <b>3~5 Hamamatsu Festival</b> <b>15 Aoi Festival</b> <b>(Odd years only) Kanda Festival</b> <b>3rd weekend of May Sanja Festival</b>	<b>31 New Year's Eve (Omisoka)</b> It is traditional to eat soba noodles ("toshikoshi soba") with one's family during the night to wish for longevity. At midnight, the temple bell is struck 108 times to mark the end of the old year and the beginning of the new one.	

## \* Kouyou (Fall Foliage)

### October-Early December

The fall leaves colored in bright red, orange and yellow create dazzling views from October through early December.

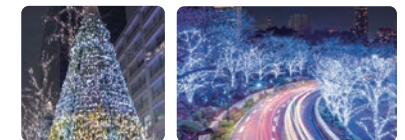


- **Jingu Gaien** Tokyo
- **Rikugien** Tokyo
- **Koishikawa Korakuen** Tokyo
- **Mt. Takao** Tokyo
- **Hakone** Kanagawa Pref.
- **Kamakura** Kanagawa Pref.
- **Mitake Shosenkyo** Yamanashi Pref.
- **Nikko** Tochigi Pref.
- **Kamikochi** Nagano Pref.
- **Temples and shrines in Kyoto City, Arashiyama, Kurama** Kyoto Pref.
- **Tanzan Shrine, Hasedera Temple** Nara Pref.
- **Miyajima** Hiroshima Pref.

## \* Winter Illumination

### December-February

Marvelous spectacles of light can be seen during the wintertime, in many cities with different themes and designs each year.



- **Marunouchi** Tokyo
- **Roppongi** Tokyo
- **Showa Kinen Park** Tokyo
- **Yomiuri Land** Kanagawa Pref.
- **Yokohama** Kanagawa Pref.
- **Sapporo White Illumination** Hokkaido Pref.
- **Sendai Pageant of Light** Miyagi Pref.
- **Osaka Hikari Renaissance** Osaka Pref.
- **Kobe Luminarie** Hyogo Pref.