

Thanks for picking up this “Fukushima Dreams - a quarterly publication of Fukushima City.”

Through this issue, we hope that you will learn more about, and be moved by the various charms that Fukushima city has to offer.

Fukushima is a city of around 290,000 people, surrounded by the beauty of nature. Due to its location, the city has a characteristic basin climate, and is famous as a fruit-producing area, producing many varieties throughout the seasons, including cherries, peaches, Asian pears, grapes, and apples.

We hope that through this edition, you'll come to appreciate even a little what Fukushima City has to offer.



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① Natural flowing “unadorned onsen”  
Takayu Onsen

② Takayu Onsen, located in Bandai-Asahi National Park, along the mountainside of Mt. Azuma, on the Takayu Onsen entrance side of the Bandai-Azuma Skyline, shines as the No. 1 overall most satisfying hot spring in all of Japan in the “2017 Jalan Popular Hot Spring Resort Ranking.” This famous onsen attracts large numbers of discerning onsen fans with its excellent water quality. We spoke to Tsuyoshi Konno, who acts as caretaker at the public bath, Attakayu, tending to the waters that have been flowing here since the Edo period.

③ Takayu Onsen is a sulfurous hot spring, known for its wealth of medicinal effects since ancient times. It has long been visited by the locals as a therapeutic bath for relieving fatigue and goes by the long-standing unwritten rule “no music shall be made,” meaning people refrain from boisterousness and they have continued to protect the onsen, a gift from nature, and its environment.



The nine sources boast a flow of over 3,000 liters of hot water every minute that has continued since the Edo period. The water that flows into each bathtub around the resort town is not heated, nor is any water added. This natural flow is a rare phenomenon, even in Japan. In 2010, Takayu Onsen became the first in Tohoku and the 8th in the nation to make the “direct flow from the source declaration” and pledged to provide the “unadorned onsen” flow as it has been for the last 400 years. The 53 bathtubs in total found at the nine hot spring resorts and one public bath all receive their flow of hot water directly from the source, even today.

Distributing the water flow directly from the source, as bestowed by nature without any modifications is a delicate process because the water temperature is influenced by season, numbers of people, and weather. At Takayu Onsen, there is a dedicated position called “yuban”. Mr. Konno is one of them. Yuban requires many years of experience to manage the finely tuned adjustments in order to bring comfortably hot water to the baths. Mr. Konno says, “Because the temperature of the bathtub water changes with the number of people bathing and the weather, when the temperature is low, I open the water gate on the water distribution box and increase the volume of hot water. When the temperature is high, I close it. Merely adjusting the volume of water that comes out of the pipes is a simple and delicate job.” Maintaining the 60-meter hot water trough that carries the water from the source to the water distribution box is also part of the yuban’s job. Opening and closing the water trough or using bricks kneads the water and adjusts the temperature to maintain comfortable bathing water throughout the four seasons. “The source water, which flows up at a constant temperature of 50.5°C with the power of nature alone, completely unaffected by typhoons or melted snow, is something of a miracle. As onsen water comes into contact with the air it continues to deteriorate. The distance from Takayu Onsen’s source to the bathtubs is short allowing you to enjoy onsen elements as they emerge fresh. People do not only come here for sightseeing, many come on a regular basis from the surrounding prefectures for therapeutic purposes because I think they can really feel the quality of the water.” Why not stop by on your way back from the Bandai-Azuma Skyline with its scenery that will captivate you from spring to autumn?

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① Unimaginable scenery awaits  
Paradise in the Sky, Jododaira

② Jododaira is just short of an hour’s drive from Fukushima City. It is at nearly the exact center of the Bandai-Azuma Skyline (hereafter referred to as the “Skyline”). The surrounding area is covered with small volcanic rocks from previous eruptions, however it is actually a treasure trove of alpine plants where a landscape, unimaginable from the city below, awaits. In this issue, we bring you the allures of the area surrounding Jododaira, an easily accessible paradise in the sky.



③ Elevation approximately 1600 m. Jododaira, surrounded by Mt. Higashi-Azuma, Mt. Issaikyo, and Mt. Azuma-kofuji, is sprinkled with wetlands, such as Okenuma and Kamanuma ponds, and has well-maintained paths for nature hiking and mountain climbing allowing this subalpine zone to be enjoyed with little effort.

The highlights of the Skyline, open from early April until mid-November, as explained by Shinichi Nishimura of the Jododaira Visitor Center are, “the alpine plants that bloom in clusters and the changing autumn leaves.” The rainy season in June is the long-awaited flowering season at Jododaira. Following the fringed galax that cover the mountainside in pink, are the Geum pentapetalum, cottongrass, and Veratrum stamineum clusters. July brings a tunnel of Rhododendron, and clustered gentian and other autumn flowers begin to bloom in August. The height of the autumnal leaves in the Jododaira area is at the end of September. Entering October, the autumnal leaves along the Skyline reach their peak. Around every turn, the landscape that appears is one you will want to go back and see again and again. Also, “in spring many visitors come to enjoy snow trekking in the remaining snow and summer offers the ultimate stargazing spot. There are not that many places easily accessible in the center of a national park with so many diverse activities on offer, which is why Jododaira is the treasure of Fukushima City,” says Mr. Nishimura.

When you want to dive into the great outdoors and feel at one with nature, trekking is a great way to do so. Along the Kamanuma course, which takes about two hours for one lap, in addition to the places where trees only grow leeward as a result of the westerly blowing winds, you can watch the snow thaw like glaciers splintering up close in spring, the rainy season brings flowers, and autumn brings the changing leaves, with different delights awaiting you in each season. In particular, the Sugadaira and Ubagahara areas offer amazing views, as there are few trees. Walking around here is invigorating. Please don't miss this paradise in the sky that changes with each season.

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① 1907 Fukushima City Hall immediately after becoming a municipality

② 1911 Bank of Japan, Fukushima Branch

③ 1918 Fukushima Racecourse

④ 1927 Fukushima Building (Fuku Bldg)

⑤ 1959 Bandai-Azuma Skyline

⑥ 1982 Opening of the Tohoku Shinkansen (bullet train)

⑦ 1995 50th National Sports Festival of Japan “Fukushima Kokutai”  
31st National Sports Festival for People with Disabilities  
“Utsukushima Fukushima Taikai” (Beautiful Fukushima Competition)

⑧ 2011 Opening of the new city hall annex, East Building

⑨ 2011 The Great East Japan Earthquake

⑩ 2013 Tohoku Rokkon Festival in Fukushima

⑪ 2016 Opening of the Tohoku-Chuo Expressway stretch between Fukushima Junction and Fukushima Ozaso Interchange

⑫ 2017 Ceremony commemorating the 110th anniversary of being a municipality



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① Eight winners were selected at the Fukushima Sweets Contest 2017

② The Fukushima Sweets Contest 2017 sought out sweets that use Fukushima City-grown peaches and baked confections that use Fukushima City-grown fruit. In total, 312 entries were received from around the country, and the final judging took place on August 20th. Eight winning entries were selected, including the grand prizes, from the two categories of “Namagashi Pastry” and “Pound Cake.” The winning entries will be available for purchase on a trial basis at the Fukushima Sweets Festa held in Fukushima City on September 16, with the aim of attracting businesses for future commercialization.

