

Fukushima Dreams – a quarterly publication of Fukushima City — JANUARY 2021

Thank you for picking up this quarters' "Fukushima Dreams – a quarterly publication of Fukushima City".

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

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

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



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① The Home of Onsen Fukushima

② Gazing upon the snow-capped mountains while bathing in a Japanese hot spring called an onsen, is one of the unique joys of winter. This issue brings you a fantastic feature on what might be called the treasure of Fukushima City, its three main Onsen resorts. Take pleasure in comparing the color and feel of the different onsen waters, said to be a gift from Mother Earth, step out into the onsen towns and tour the public bathhouses, or enjoy some delicious meals. All of these options are conveniently located within a 30-minute drive from Fukushima Station. Please come out and experience them for yourself.

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① Iizaka Onsen

② This onsen resort is considered one of the three famous onsens of Oshu. It is conveniently located about 25-minutes from JR Fukushima Station on the Fukushima Transportation Iizaka Line and offers a slightly different way of having fun that will take you back into the past with its communal bath that is treasured as an important part of local life and other nationally registered tangible cultural properties.

③ Communal baths frequented by the locals, including the beautiful Sabako-yu

Iizaka Onsen is a resort town with a rich history that is said to have been visited by the poet Matsuo Basho in the mid-Edo period. It is located a 10-minute drive from the Fruit Line where orchards offering fruit-picking experiences stretch for miles. Starting in early summer, for more than half the year, you can taste fresh cherries, peaches, pears, grapes, and apples.

In this onsen town there are nine communal baths, each with their own unique atmosphere, that are visited by the locals from the time they were children, becoming a part of their everyday lives. The warm interactions with the people at these baths will add another element of fun to your time in Iizaka. The water is a simple alkaline hot spring. The colorless, odorless water has several sources, all of which are characterized by their abundant volume of hot water. The water is said to be effective at relieving neuralgia, muscle pain, fatigue, and at improving overall health. The beautiful Sabako-yu communal bathhouse is a reproduction of Japan's oldest wooden bathhouse and is made from Hiba cypress, zelkova, and Hinoki cypress, among other woods. For those who don't like their baths too hot, we recommend Hako-yu, which sits along the Surikami River near the Totsuna Bridge. It houses two baths; one with the hot water Iizaka is known for flowing directly into it, and the other with tepid water that has been adjusted.



Architecture and a retro feel that tell the history of the onsen

There are five nationally registered tangible cultural properties found throughout the town at Iizaka Onsen. Experiencing the atmosphere that remains from a time gone by is one of the town's charms. The former Horikiri residence once belonged to a wealthy farming and merchant family and is open to the public at no charge. There is also the steel-arch Totsuna Bridge, which is highly-acclaimed as a valuable civil engineering legacy, the Nakamura Ryokan, which is a Japanese-style inn whose Edo and Meiji buildings are registered tangible cultural properties, the Oku-no-Ma (an inner room) of Iizaka Hotel Juraku's former Hanamizu building, and the former Saishin-do liquor store where one can get a feel of what life was like for a merchant during the Meiji period. Make sure to also try dipping your feet in the foot baths or visiting one of the onsen resort's popular cafes and tasting the radium eggs, sweets, or gyoza dumplings that originated in Iizaka Onsen and remain well-loved among the locals.

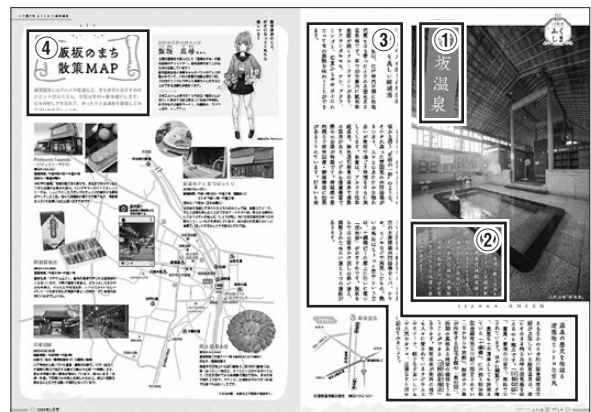
④ Iizaka Town Walking Map

Iizaka Onsen is filled with recommended spots to stop at while strolling through the town, such as delicious dining establishments and foot baths. Here we will introduce just a few. Forget the chaos of your busy everyday life and take a leisurely stroll through this onsen town.

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① Tsuchiyu Onsen

② Tsuchiyu Onsen is characterized by its many different types of water quality and plentiful volume. The onsen town, where you can see the steam rising from the onsen waters, has newly completed facilities built under the revitalization and



reconstruction project after the great earthquake and tsunami, and the way in which they blend with the nostalgic atmosphere of the onsen town has created a new attraction.

③A variety of colorless, gentle hot springs

Tsuchiyu Onsen, which is said to have been established in the Heian period, sits at an elevation of 450m and its environs are designated as part of Bandai Asahi National Park. There are a group of hot spring sources located about 2km from the onsen town deep in the mountains along the headwaters of the Arakawa River flowing continuously at a rate of roughly 1400L per minute.

The onsen water is a colorless, clear, and gentle simple alkaline hot spring, but some local inns also have their own hydrogen carbonate springs. In addition, there is an area with the feel of a secret hideaway! Tsuchiyu-toge onsen resort, which is located in a virgin beech forest at an elevation of 1200m, is dotted with 6 inns where you can enjoy onsens with different colors and odors, such as sulfur, iron, and aluminum. Soaking in a tub filled with hot spring water rich in nourishing properties is pure bliss. Forget the hustle and bustle and revitalize your body and soul.

Recently completed new sights offer a new way to relax and enjoy the onsen town

Touring the newly completed facilities at Tsuchiyu onsen offers a new way to enjoy the town. The town revitalization center, Yurakuza, and the tourism information center, Yumebutai, were created in the hope of revitalizing the area after the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. Yurakuza houses sightseeing information and a café and restaurant in addition to selling souvenirs and daily necessities. The public bathhouse Nakano-yu stands on the opposite side of the road. Tsuchiyu Onsen is known as one of the three major birthplaces of kokeshi dolls in the Tohoku region, and it is characterized by the kokeshi objects that can be found throughout the onsen town. At Yumebutai, where you can enjoy the magnificent views from the observation deck, you can also try your hand at painting a kokeshi doll. Tsuchiyu Onsen is also working to revitalize the area after the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and Tsunami with renewable energy sources, such as hydroelectric power generation and binary power generation that uses the heat of the hot springs. Tsuchiyu Onsen is a fusion of the remaining old-style buildings and new symbols of the city, giving it a new appeal.

④Introducing two new spots!

The town of Tsuchiyu Onsen continues to evolve with new projects. Here we'll introduce you to two new centers of activity enlivening the town of Tsuchiyu.

⑤Community Café & Shrimp Fishing Pond

Orara-no-Komise

This café recently opened in August 2020. It has an eye-catching modern, stylish, and spacious interior that can be seen through its glass-walled exterior, which blends well with the atmosphere of the onsen town. In one corner of the café, you can try your hand at shrimp fishing, an activity unique to the Tsuchiyu area where shrimp are cultivated through the secondary use of the hot water used in binary power generation.

Orara-no-Komise was created based on the concept of a small shop building a community. Pop in for a visit and enjoy this interactive space while making use of the café and experiencing shrimp fishing.

⑥Onsen Information & Delicious Sake

Orara-no-Saka BAR, Junjogura

Orara-no-Saka BAR, Junjogura is located just a meters down the street from Orara-no-Komise. Doburoku sake using Yume-no-Kaori sake rice grown in the prefecture and a cider made from apples grown by local farmers will be released in December 2020. This unique approach of combining an onsen town and sake brewery, an unusual phenomenon in Japan, is attracting a lot of attention. The large glass windows at the brewery make it possible for visitors to observe the rarely seen brewing process. Tsuchiyu offers pleasures that can only be experienced here.

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①Takayu Onsen

②Sitting at an elevation of 750 meters, this onsen resort has a feel of total seclusion and specific methods and rules for bathing that have been handed down by word of mouth since ancient times. Visitors come from within and outside the prefecture seeking the therapeutic effects of these sulfuric, cloudy white waters.

③All of the baths abide by using pure onsen flows only

This onsen resort was established 410 years ago. The hot spring water of Takayu Onsen is the result of a 30-year process in which the rain and snow falling on the Azuma mountain range seep into the ground and are heated by the underground magma pools. The water then gushes forth above ground once again. Therefore, regardless of the weather, the onsen source maintains a constant temperature of 50.5 °C. There are currently nine hot spring sources boasting a flow volume of more than 3,000 liters every minute. The freshly spouting onsen water is drawn to each facility's bathtub completely naturally without heating or adding any water.

In 2010, the area was the first in the Tohoku region to announce it will only use the natural flow of onsen water. The natural flow of onsen water is a very simple method of hot water supply where only the onsen water that has been put into the tub is thrown out. However, in recent years, the number of onsen resort areas and inns adopting this method have decreased because the method requires a lot of effort to maintain. Mineral deposits attach to the pipes carrying the onsen water and must be cleaned once a week. Also, in poor weather conditions or if there are a large number of bathers, the temperature of the water drops. At the public bathhouse, Attaka-yu, the temperature of the water is measured every hour, and onsen water is either added or removed to maintain the proper temperature. The most distinctive feature of Takayu Onsen is that this procedure is carried out for each of the 53 baths in total located at Takayu's seven inns and one public bathhouse.

Medically verified and proven onsen efficacy

Takayu Onsen has many other appealing aspects. One of those is the fact that the rule to make no noise has been abided by from the time the onsen was established. The onsen provides soothing relaxation and heals visitors with its sense of seclusion created by its surrounding lush natural scenery and tranquility. The bathing method "one bath every three days, three baths in 10 days" has been passed down for generations here. The ancestors of the area had a good understanding of the onsen's efficacy and utilized its benefits. In 2015, an experiment based in medical science was conducted to prove the efficacy of the hot spring waters, as the only proof was anecdotal before then. Mr. Nagayama says the results determined that the onsen water itself had the power to improve the body. The onsen water that gushes from the ground in the form of regenerated water in an oxygen-free state removes active oxygen from the body and effectively rejuvenates the body and prevents disease. This is the season when the air is crisp and clear offering plenty of opportunities to appreciate the beautiful winter scenery. Why not visit Takayu Onsen and enjoy the perfect combination of cloudy white waters rich in efficacy, white snow, and blue skies.



① Digging deeper into fermented foods for health

② Fermented foods are attracting attention for their beneficial effects on the body, such as improving immunity and resistance and maintaining health and beauty. Fukushima City, surrounded by lush natural scenery, has a long tradition of fermenting numerous foods. Our Person of Interest in this issue is Mr. Tomoyuki Horikiri of the long-established Marutaki miso and soy sauce brewing factory which has undertaken various efforts in the name of health. We'll also introduce Fukushima's fermentation culture and how to easily incorporate fermented foods in your life.

③ Inheriting the traditional miso-making methods at age 26

Marutaki was founded in 1889 and is located in Iizaka Town in Fukushima City. Mr. Horikiri was born and raised in the long-established brewery. In light of the recent popularity of fermented foods, when we asked him what is distinct about Fukushima's fermentation culture he said "I guess it's the fact that people aren't too particular about it." "Actually, Fukushima City has the largest annual expenditure on natto (fermented soybeans) in all of Japan, but people don't pay much attention to that," said Mr. Horikiri with disappointment. He spoke passionately about his particularness about eating natto with green onions or kimchi, and how he feels that contributes to his health on a daily basis. "But despite that, when I took over the family business, I wasn't really the type to think much about health," he says smiling wryly. He told us, "It didn't occur to me at the time, but now I'm glad that I inherited the traditional method of making miso that uses microbial activity to age the miso over a long period of time bringing out its natural flavor and umami."



Digging deep into health after the earthquake and tsunami

It was the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and Tsunami that inspired him to start thinking about health. The demand for miso and soy sauce dropped sharply. Meanwhile, he started receiving requests from health-minded people to teach them miso-making, so he started holding homemade miso making lessons. At the same time, Mr. Horikiri started to think seriously about the meaning of food and changed his approach to a small quantity but large variety of products in order to meet people's various needs. As he reduced the volume of miso he produced, the production process also changed slightly. They started boiling the soybeans in the same water they soaked them in to incorporate all of the nutrients of the soybeans. This added depth to the flavor of miso and made it even more delicious.

Contributing to health with fermented foods in the age of the 100-year life span

As Mr. Horikiri began to delve deeper into fermented foods for the sake of health, he learned more about their benefits and the best ways to eat them. He says, "Eating fermented foods improves the intestinal environment because various substances, such as dietary fiber, are easier to absorb after they have undergone fermentation. Bowel movements improve, which leads to various favorable effects, including aesthetic improvements." It is important to maintain a good balance of the various bacteria in your intestines making it vital to continue to eat a variety of fermented foods that contain malt, yeast, lactic acid, and other bacteria. "Use well-aged miso for miso soup with lots of vegetables and other ingredients, or cut up old pickles and add them to natto. It's best to be conscious about eating a variety of food." He also told us that lactic acid bacteria does not multiply in the body, so we have to continue eating lactic acid bacteria-rich foods to enrich our intestinal bacteria.

It will soon be 10 years since the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, which was the turning point for Mr. Horikiri. He hopes to continue contributing to people's health in this age of the 100-year life span through the fermented foods he carefully prepares, such as miso and amazake. We hope that you will also try eating a diverse variety of fermented foods for the sake of your own health.

① Yuji Koseki's hometown Fukushima City

The final episode of the TV series "Yell" broadcast on November 28, 2020. We hope to continue carrying on the legacy of "Yell" in Yuji Koseki's hometown, Fukushima City.

② Installation of Yuji Koseki Melody Boxes

Press the button on a Yuji Koseki melody box and one of Koseki's melodies will play. Two of these boxes have been installed on Yuji Koseki Street (Renga-dori) and one has been installed in Comcom, the education and culture facility complex. The tunes on each box are different. We hope you enjoy these Koseki melodies that remain well-known even today.

③ Bamboo Café

The set of Bamboo Café that appears on "Yell" has been reproduced in the rest area at the plaza in front of Yuji Koseki Memorial Hall. There are props used in the series as well as panels explaining the show on display. *The Bamboo Café exhibition is scheduled to run until the end of March.

④ "Yell" Fan Appreciation Day in Fukushima

On November 10, 2020 at Comcom, the "3 Crows of Fukushima," Masataka Kubota (who plays Yuichi Koyama), Aoi Nakamura (who plays Tetsuo Murano), and Ikusaburo Yamazaki (who plays Hisashi Sato) held an open recording titled, "Yell" Fan Appreciation Day in Fukushima." They told anecdotes about filming "Yell" and discussed the highlights to look out for in the episodes not yet broadcast.

⑤ University students develop hometown tax thank you gifts!

Fukushima City is hiring university students whose part-time job income has decreased due to business closures, as part of the fourth phase of COVID-19 emergency measures. Among them, six university students were divided into three groups: Iizaka, Tsuchiyu, and Takayu, to take part in a project for developing hometown tax thank you gifts that make use of the strengths of each of the famous onsen resorts. As a result of their efforts, their ideas were presented recently. They proposed a total of six thank you gifts from their youthful university student perspective, including a pastry-making experience under the guidance of a local pastry chef using fruits from local orchards. Currently, development continues as they work to commercialize the thank you gifts, and they will be announced as they become available. We hope you will enjoy our unique Fukushima City hometown thank you gifts!

