

Fukushima Dreams – a quarterly publication of Fukushima City — OCTOBER 2024

Thank you for picking up this quarter's "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 280,000 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 Support Fukushima City with a Hometown Tax Donation (Furusato Nozei)! Genki Fukushima Hometown Donation

Please Support Community Development in Fukushima City!

It has been 13 years since the Great East Japan Earthquake. Thanks to everybody's generous support, reconstruction is progressing steadily, although we still have a way to go toward full recovery due to various obstacles, including persistent harmful rumors and other factors. Fukushima City is drawing on the lessons of the disaster and utilizing the challenges we have faced as a springboard for forward-looking changes and progress, while working toward the realization of a new stage of community development for the future. We want to become a city that all our citizens are proud of and want to continue to live in with a sense of attachment. In addition, we are committed to becoming a "city that sends encouragement to the world" by widely publicizing our progress towards recovery as a disaster-stricken area.

What is Hometown Tax?

Hometown Tax (Furusato Nozei in Japanese) is a system that allows you to donate to your hometown or to any municipality you wish to support. By making a Hometown Tax donation, you will receive a tax credit to reduce the inhabitant tax paid to the municipality in which you currently reside for the year following the year of donation. In addition, when you make a Hometown Tax donation, you can receive gifts such as local specialties or accommodation vouchers from the municipality to which you donated.

② Choose How You Want the Municipality to Spend your Hometown Tax Donation!

Fukushima City Support Menu

1. Agriculture in the "Fruit Kingdom of Fukushima"
2. Hanamiyama and its Beautiful Environment
3. Building a Disaster-Resilient City
4. Building a City Overflowing with Music and Culture
5. A City that Nurtures Children's Dreams
6. A Society that is Friendly to Everyone
7. Creating a Lively Prefectural Capital
8. Developing a City with a Focus on Sports
9. An Animal-friendly City
10. ICT and City Branding
11. Fukushima City Still Progressing Toward Recovery

③ A City that Nurtures Children's Dreams—An Example of How We Use Hometown Tax Donations!

The entire community is supporting children's development based on the Children's Smiles Ordinance!

Projects Utilizing Hometown Tax Donations

- Project to promote the elimination of waiting lists for daycare
- Project to promote distinctive early childhood education and child care
- Project to promote Fukushima-style school lunches
- Subsidies for the use of facilities that provide free preschool education and child care

Promotion Package of Measures to Eliminate Child Care Waiting Lists

Through collaboration between the public and private sectors to secure child care workers and increase the number of children accepted at facilities, we have achieved the goal of zero children waiting for admission for four consecutive years.

Distinctive Early Childhood Education and Care Project

We support the distinctive initiatives of facilities that nurture children's creativity and sensitivity through nature, art, culture, sports, and more.

Winner of the Japan Child Care Advocate Grand Prize 2023 (Municipality Category)!

Fukushima City became the first municipality in the Tohoku region to be awarded this prize in recognition of its community-wide culture of caring for children. We will continue to promote the creation of a warm, children-first community in order to make Fukushima City a truly great place for raising children!

④ Hometown Tax Return Gifts Ranking in 2023

1st Place

Fruit Regular Delivery

The most popular combination is peaches, pears, grapes, and apples. The finest seasonal fruits are delivered regularly.

2nd Place

Akatsuki Peaches

Fukushima Prefecture is the largest producer of Akatsuki peaches in Japan! Enjoy the springy texture and sweet juice that seeps out.

3rd Place

Canon Inkjet Printer

A must for remote workers! A printer made by Canon, a specialty of Fukushima City and a world-class product.

4th Place

Takayu Onsen Accommodation Plan

Enjoy a blissful vacation experience at Takayu Onsen, a secluded hot spring where you can relax and unwind while bathing in the cloudy waters that flow directly from the hot spring source.

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① Introducing a Wide Variety of Return Gifts!

Fukushima City, which is easily accessible from the Tokyo metropolitan area, is filled with attractions such as exquisite fruits, Japanese sake, wine, hot springs, flowers, and music. Here we introduce some of the diverse return gifts you can receive when you make a Hometown Tax donation to the city. In this way, you can enjoy some of the charms of Fukushima City while supporting its development.

② Kanno Fusakichi Shoten Ltd.

Hidemi Kanno

③ Enjoy Four Types of Fruits from the Fruit Kingdom of Fukushima in an Reasonably Sized 1 kg Box!

As a seller, we respect growers who take pride in their work, and we carefully select and distribute each of the fruits we receive from them.

The most appreciated return gift from our company, which ships a variety of Fukushima specialties to people all over Japan based on our commitment to courteous customer service, is the Fukushima Fruit Regular Delivery 4 Times Course. People like the fact that they receive four deliveries of outstandingly delicious fruit in a reasonably sized 1 kg box. Some of our customers even use the return gifts as gifts for other people.

Our current wish is to raise awareness of the Fruit Kingdom of Fukushima. We want to spread the word throughout Japan that Fukushima City's basin climate, with its large temperature difference between day and night, makes it ideal for growing fruit, and that we can grow a wide variety of fruit here. In this respect, Hometown Tax donations can be handled by intermediaries like our company, working together with growers or producers and the local government, in a unified public-private effort. If people who have experienced the deliciousness of Fukushima City's fruits through return gifts come to the city and visit its farms and stores, and if such exchanges increase in future, I am sure that everyone will be happy.

④ Kinsuicho Sake Brewery Co. Ltd.

Wakuo Saito

⑤ Fukushima City's Only Sake Brewery Brews Sake Using Locally Grown Rice and the Best Water in Japan.

Founded in Matsukawa-machi, Fukushima City in the Meiji era (1868–1912), Kinsuicho Sake Brewery is the only sake brewery in the city. After overcoming three disasters in 2011, 2021, and 2022, respectively, we opened Kinsuicho Shiki-no-kura as a brewery that also operates a direct sales store, in March of this year in Arai, Fukushima City. As its name suggests, the new brewery is capable of brewing sake all year round. As a junmai (or pure rice) sake brewery, Shiki-no-kura uses only high-quality local rice, including the Fukushima Prefecture's original Yume-no-kaori and Fuku-no-ka varieties, which are ideal for sake brewing, and carefully brews sake using the prefecture's own yeast and water from the Arakawa River, a local first-class river that has been recognized as possessing the highest water quality in Japan for 14 consecutive years. By changing from ultra-soft water to medium-soft water, our sake brewed only with rice and water has become even more aromatic.

The most appreciated return gifts include Chibi Momo, a sake that pops if shaken before opening the bottle and delivers a harmonious combination of slight carbonation, the sweetness of peaches, and the flavor of sake, Junmai Daiginjo ShiwarimaYonwari-migaki (40% polished), and Junmai Daiginjo Koseki Melody, named after Fukushima City-born composer Yuji Koseki. Sales of Koseki Melody are currently suspended, but are scheduled to resume soon.



⑥ Kuruma Orchard
Takashi Sato

⑦ Aiming at Large Fruit and Sweet Juice that Fills the Mouth, We Cultivate Grapes with a Focus on Flavor.

We currently grow 15 varieties of grapes and we are planning to add about eight more within the next three years. I like to create beautifully shaped grapes, and although I am not a craftsman, it is in my nature to pursue the ideal. I've been growing Shine Muscat grapes for 16 or 17 years, and my ideal is for each grape to be large and firm. I try to keep the skin as thin as possible so that when you eat grapes with the skin on, no skin remains in your mouth. I am particular about many things including pruning, fertilizers, and gibberellin treatment, but in deciding what to do and how to do it in each year, I have put my main emphasis on flavor. In deciding when to harvest, deliciousness is a priority.

Thanks to the many people who have learned about us through our return gifts, the Instagram account started by my wife and daughter has also become very popular. More and more people are coming to buy our grapes after seeing our latest information and applications for limited time grape picking are also increasing. This year, we purchased a refrigerator exclusively for grapes, and we are discussing the possibility of selling grapes during the Christmas season in addition to as return gifts.

⑧ Adachiya
Nobuyuki Kanno

⑨ Bathe in Milky, Free-flowing Spa Water and Enjoy Gourmet Cuisine at a Steadily Evolving Hot-spring Hotel.

We want our guests to thoroughly enjoy Adachiya, which has continued to evolve over its 420-year history, as the place it is today. One aspect of the hotel's evolution is a new interior space in the shape of a stately lounge on the mezzanine floor. Here, from check-in until just before dinner, our staff serve complimentary draft beer, highballs, and other beverages to refresh the guests after their baths; and after 7 pm, a paid menu of drinks including Scotch whiskey, Japanese sake, and wine is also available. The course meals we serve are Fukushima delicacies that are totally coordinated by our sommelier, who pairs local ingredients with local sake and wines from the city's only winery.

Guests can enjoy the milky spring water, considered to have the third highest acidic concentration in Japan, in the hotel's communal indoor baths or large private baths. Also, once the construction work on the new large bath and the renovation of the 40-meter-long open-air baths for men and women are completed, you will be able to enjoy bathing while surrounded by the great outdoors. In recent years, we have been receiving an increasing number of repeat visitors who tell us they are glad they chose to stay here.

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⑩ An "Only-in-Fukushima" Trip to Get to Know Azuma Goyomatsu and Sake

A Story of Azuma Goyomatsu White Pine Trees and Versatile Sake Brewing Nurtured by the Bounty of Nature in Bandai-Asahi National Park

① Fukushima City is conveniently located just 90 minutes from the Tokyo metropolitan area by Shinkansen bullet train.

To the west of the city are the Azuma Mountains, which rise in Bandai-Asahi National Park and boast a wealth of tourist resources, many of which are unique to Fukushima, including stunningly beautiful nature, Fukushima's three famous hot springs, a rich history, and a distinct cuisine.

Azuma Sanroku, the area encompassing the foothills of the Azuma Mountains, is characterized by the Azuma Goyomatsu white pine trees that grow on the mountain slopes and the brewing and winemaking industry that uses snowmelt water from the mountains as a raw material for making a wide variety of alcoholic drinks.

Both the wood and the water are "only-in-Fukushima" attractions and gifts of nature.

Focusing on the people who make the area what it is, we will take you on a journey to deepen your understanding of the essence of this attractive and unusual place.

Visitors to Azuma Sanroku can experience the beauty of nature and stories that are unique to this area. Why not take a trip there and get acquainted with the unique charms of Fukushima nurtured by nature?

② Azuma Goyomatsu White Pine Trees

The Azuma goyomatsu white pine (*Pinus parviflora*) is a subspecies widely distributed around the Azuma Mountains that is commonly used for bonsai. It is one of the three most famous goyomatsu in Japan along with the Shikoku goyomatsu and Nasu goyomatsu. The sight of these pine trees growing naturally on the mountainsides, enduring harsh winds and winter snow, can only be seen in the Azuma Mountains.

Local bonsai artists have been fascinated by the robust growth of the Azuma goyomatsu white pines and expressing the landscape of these mountains in the form of bonsai for generations.

"I am the rain, the wind, and the snow of the Azuma Mountains," says Daiki Abe, a bonsai artist and the third-generation proprietor of Bonsai-ya Abe, using his two hands to reflect "the very landscape of the Azuma Mountains" through his bonsai creations.

When you see his bonsai, you will discover yet another attraction of the Azuma Mountains. We hope you will visit the area and view it from a new perspective.

③ Versatile Brewing and Winemaking

This spring, five breweries and wineries that produce a variety of alcoholic beverages including sake, wine, two types of local beer, and doboroku, gathered in this area.

The question is, "Why do they make alcoholic beverages in this place?"

There are five brewers and winemakers here, who produce various types of alcoholic beverages. All of them are fascinated by the natural bounty of the area and they share similar aspirations about making beer, wine and sake.

Alcoholic beverages made with groundwater derived from the melting snow of the Azuma Mountains are "treasures that can only be found in this region."

We invite you to experience firsthand the passion of these brewers and winemakers for crafting their products and go on a journey in search of the answer to the question, "Why do they make practice their craft in this particular place?"

④ Beer

Yellow Beer Works

Craft beer brewed by local rice farmers

Unrefined Sake

Orara-no-sakaba Junjogura

Doburoku made from Fukushima's finest Yume-no-kaori rice produced in-house for sake brewing

Wine

Winery Azuma Sanroku

Wine made using water drawn from the beautiful clear streams in the foothills of the Azuma Mountains

Beer

Michinoku Fukushima Beer

Craft beer made with natural water from the melting snow of the Azuma Mountains

Sake

Kinsuicho Shiki-no-kura

Sake made from rice grown in Fukushima at the city's only sake brewery

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① Fukushima City's Iino-machi, the Home of UFOs (UFO-no-sato)

Iino-machi in Fukushima City has long been known for its many UFO sightings and for its mysterious and romantic atmosphere. The town hosts the only facility in Japan dedicated to UFOs, the International UFO Lab. In this article, we introduce the development of this town as a mysterious UFO sanctuary.

② UFO Festival

Saturday, November 9/Sunday, November 10, 10:30-16:00

Iino-machi Event Square, Iino-machi Shopping Street, Senganmori

The UFO Festival is the largest event in Japan dedicated to UFOs and aliens! Approximately 2,000 human participants from all over Japan and around the world will gather in Iino, and the streets will also be filled with extraterrestrials.

Dress up as an alien and take part!

Alien Parade & Contest

Go with UFO Lab Director Takeharu Mikami!

Uncovering the Mysteries of UFOs

Senganmori Mystery Tour

A huge gathering of specialties and local gourmet foods!

Iino de Umaino (It's Good and Delicious in Iino)

And more...

③ New Home of UFOs Creation Project

Mission 1: Creating Local Sake in the Home of UFOs

Brewed by Fukushima City's only sake brewery, Kinsuicho Sake Brewery, this slightly milky nigori sake was inspired by the Milky Way. It uses Yume-no-kaori sake rice grown in Iino-machi and Utsukushima Yume Yeast, a sake yeast from Fukushima Prefecture that was sent into space and returned.

Two types of sake—freshly squeezed (for a limited time only) and fire-aged (pasteurized) will be available from around the middle of December in 4-go (approx. 720ml) bottles. The precise timing has not yet been decided, but reservations are available.

Why not try a taste of space with a sake unique to UFO-no-sato?

