

EVENT SCHEDULE 3・5

March May

ALL MAP



Scan here for the maps

April / 9 Tue - 17 Wed

NAGAHAMA HIKIYAMA FESTIVAL



This festival is held every year in April, along with the grand festival at NAGAHAMA-HACHIMANGU Shrine. This year the following four floats will be parading: Tokiwazan, Kujakuzan, Okinazan, and Banzairou. On the stage of *hikiyama* floats, a children's *kabuki* plays will be performed by boys, consisting of a 40 minutes musical program with a theme unique to Nagahama. The *shagiri*, musical accompaniment of Japanese flutes and cymbals in *kabuki*, is also not to be missed.

DATE Nagahama Hikiyama Festival: From Tue., April 9th, 2019 to Wed., April 17th, 2019
Children's *kabuki*: From Sat., April 13th, 2019 to Tue., April 16th, 2019
TIME Children's *kabuki*: 13th (Sat.) from evening onwards, 14th (Sun.) in the morning, 15th (Mon.) and 16th (Tue.) all day.
*Time will be decided in the *kujitori-shiki* (ceremony to determine the order of floats) on the 13th
PLACE Nagahama Town (Otemon-dori) area, NAGAHAMA-HACHIMANGU Shrine
ADMISSION Free
TEL 0749-65-3300 (Hikiyama Museum)
WEB <http://www.nagahama-hikiyama.or.jp/foreign/eng.html>

ENGLISH BROCHURE

April / 12 Fri - 15 Mon

SANNO FESTIVAL



Biwako Visitors Bureau Public Interest Incorporated Association

HIYOSHI-TAISHA Shrine is the head of more than 3,800 HIE-JINJA and HIYOSHI-JINJA Shrines in Japan, and the annual festival is registered as an intangible cultural heritage of Otsu city. The bold and florid events that take place in the festival are a must-see. *Uma no Jinji* (Festival of the horse day) is a festival in which 2 *mikoshi* (portable shrines) are carried into the *Higashi Hongu* (eastern main shrine). In Yomiya Otoshi, the *mikoshi* is shaken vigorously, and in *Mikoshi Togyo* parade, 7 *mikoshi* are moved towards Lake Biwa.

DATE Fri., April 12th, 2019 to Mon., April 15th, 2019
TIME 12th (Fri.) from 6:30pm, 13th (Sat.) from 1pm, 14th (Sun.) and 15th (Mon.) from 10am
PLACE Sanno Sohongu HIYOSHI-TAISHA Shrine (5-1-1 Sakamoto, Otsu, Shiga)
ADMISSION Entrance and viewing on April 12th and 14th is free.
TEL 077-578-0009 (HIYOSHI-TAISHA Shrine) **WEB** <http://hiyoshitaisya.jp/event/sanno>

HIRAHAKKO



The theme is connecting mountain and lake, giving prayer to the water. In addition to HIEIZAN ENRYAKU-JI Temple's standard classical events, such as *ogomaku* ceremony, *okaji* prayer, and *fukumochimaki* (throwing *mochi* rice cakes), in the Omatsuzaki area, you should be sure to see the procession of *yamabushi* and *soryo* priests, and other attractions of this lakeside temple.

DATE Tue., March 26th, 2019
TIME 10am-12:40pm
*Cancelled in case of heavy rain. Course and other details may be subject to change depending on the weather or other factors.
PLACE Omatsuzaki (Omi-Maiko) area, Otsu, Shiga
ADMISSION Free (Gomagi horns stick and charms will be sold)
TEL 090-4031-4944 (Eastern bank)
WEB <http://www.hira-hakkou.net>

HACHIMAN FESTIVAL



Biwako Visitors Bureau Public Interest Incorporated Association

The *yomiya* festival (eve of the festival) features more than 30 blazing torches and a wonderful fireworks display to light up the spring night sky. And in the main festival, giant *taiko* drums, relocated from each village to the HIMURE-HACHIMANGU Shrine, are carried through the town. Each village has its own style of playing the drum, passed down through the generations and hearing how each of them differs is one of the pleasures of this more than 1000 years old festival.

DATE Sun., April 14th, 2019 and Mon., 15th
TIME 14th (Sun.) from 7pm, 15th (Mon.) from 10am
PLACE HIMURE-HACHIMANGU Shrine (257 Miyauchi-cho, Omiachiman, Shiga)
ADMISSION Free
TEL 0748-33-6061 (Omiachiman Station North Exit Tourist Information)
WEB <https://www.omib8.com/matur/hachiman.htm>

KOREI TAISAI (TAGA FESTIVAL)



An important annual event of the TAGA-TAISHA Shrine that even features in historical records from the Kamakura period (1185-1333). The proceedings are led by a *batonin*—influential figures from the local communities mounted on horseback. Behind lines of *mikoshi* portable shrines, *noren* carriages, and *batonin*, around 400 people and another 40 horses proceeding in a *watarishinji* is a spectacle to be seen.

DATE Mon., April 22nd, 2019
TIME 8:30am-5pm
PLACE TAGA-TAISHA Shrine (604 Taga, Taga-cho, Inukami-gun, Shiga)
ADMISSION Free
TEL 0749-48-1553 (Taga Sightseeing Association)
WEB <http://www.tagataisya.or.jp/>

KAIZU FESTIVAL (KAIZU RIKISHI FESTIVAL)



A regularly held spring festival of the KAIZUTEN-JINJA Shrine in which youngsters wearing brightly colored *kesho mawashi* (a decorative belt and apron) carry the *mikoshi* portable shrine. *Kesho mawashi* are normally reserved for high-ranking sumo-wrestlers, hence this festival is also called "Kaizu Rikishi Festival," with *rikishi* being the word for wrestler. Illuminated by torches at night, the *mikoshi* is carried through the streets in a parade called *Oneri*, drawing great crowds of spectators.

DATE Mon., April 29th, 2019
TIME 1pm-8pm
PLACE KAIZUTEN-JINJA Shrine (1253 Kaizu, Makino-cho, Takashima, Shiga)
ADMISSION Free
TEL 0740-28-0051 (KAIZUTEN-JINJA Shrine)

KENKETO FESTIVAL



Oda Nobunaga fought in Minakuchi, and the local people fought at his side. It is said that the performers' costume in this festival comes from the outfit of the locals after they removed their armor. The participants dress in vibrant *Yuzen Moyo* (dyed silk) kimonos (representing the clothing of the local people) and dance with long *naginata* halberds. The name, *Kenketo*, comes from the chant that accompanies the dancing.

DATE Fri., May 3rd, 2019
TIME From 2:40pm
PLACE SUGINOKI-JINJA Shrine (3560 Yamanoue, Ryuo-cho, Shiga)
ADMISSION Free
TEL 0748-58-3715 (Ryuo-cho Tourist Information)
WEB <https://ryuochu.org/gyoji-matsuri/kenketo-matsuri/>

OOMIZO FESTIVAL'S 400TH ANNIVERSARY



A traditional spring festival of the HIYOSHI-JINJA Shrine in which 5 festival floats featuring *taiko* drums and cymbals are paraded through the streets. The sight of the floats, embellished with decorative curtains and further adorned with lanterns, being drawn through the streets might just take your breath away.

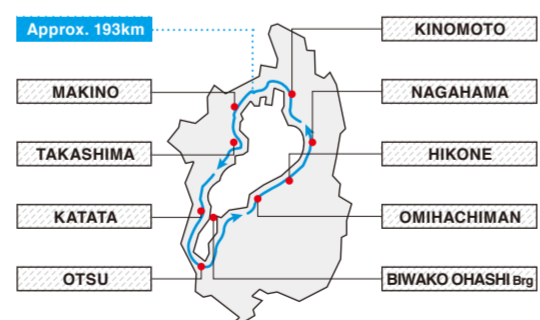
DATE Fri., May 3rd, 2019 and Sat., 4th
TIME Fri., May 3rd from 6pm, Sat., May 4th from 10am
PLACE HIYOSHI-JINJA Shrine (2166 Katsuno, Takashima, Shiga)
ADMISSION Free
TEL 0740-33-7101 (Biwako Takashima Tourist Association)
WEB <https://oomizomatsuri.jp/english.html>

BIWAICHI -Cycling around Lake Biwa-



BIWAICHI is cycling around Lake Biwa. For those wishing to experience even more of Lake Biwa, we recommend the cycling and cruise package. On the Hikone to Makino route operated by Ohmi Marine, the ferries have a special rack so you can hop on board and store your cycle with ease. The ferry also stops by Chikubu Island, so you can enjoy first-hand the mysteries this ancient and sacred island has to offer. *Not all ferries have cycle storage. Reservation required.

OHMI MARINE
TEL 0749-22-0619 **WEB** <http://www.ohmitetudo.co.jp/marine/>



BIWAKO VISITORS BUREAU
<https://en.biwako-visitors.jp>



BIWAICHI RENTAL CYCLE
<http://biwaichi-cycling.com/en/>

BIWAICHI BEST SHOT!!



FREE MAR - MAY 2019 vol.3

COOL SHIGA

CULTURAL INFORMATION GUIDE

NAGAHAMA HIKIYAMA FESTIVAL

A Festival with 450 Years of History

NIHONSHU

Quality Sake from Nature's Bounty

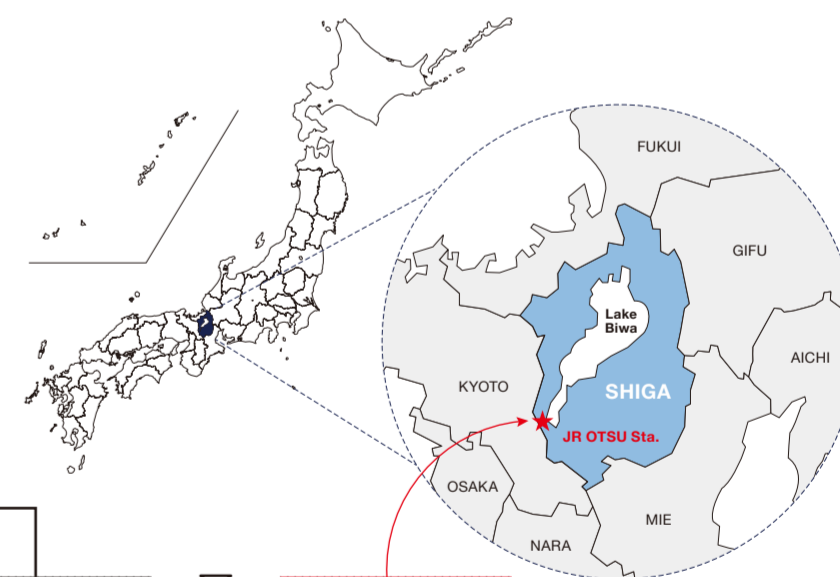
SAKAMAI — RICE FOR SAKE

The Cultivation of 6 Types of Perfect Rice Blessed by Quality Underground Water Sources

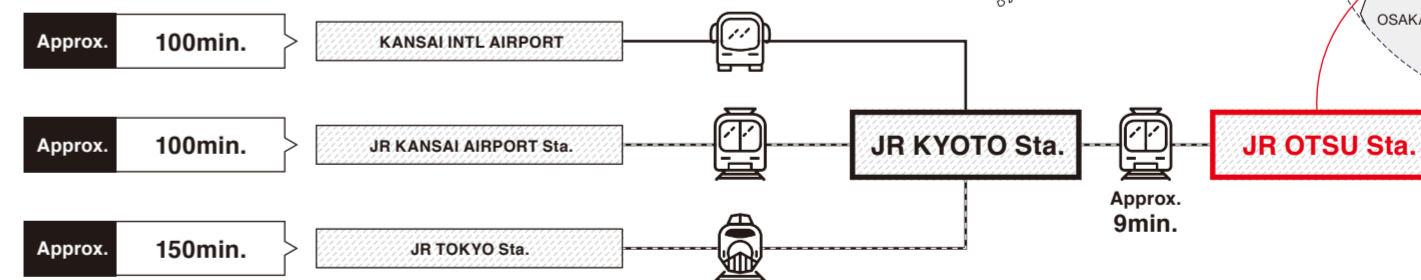
LOCAL CUISINE EVENT

ABOUT SHIGA

As Shiga prefecture is located in almost the exact center of Japan, and blessed with the largest lake, Lake Biwa, there are plenty of places to see and things to do. Visiting the temples and shrines, the old *Kaido* road, and the historical buildings and streetscapes gives you a chance to get a taste for the varied culture of Shiga. And the cultural landscape and food culture created from the harmony between the plentiful water resources and lifestyle of the people are sure to impress any visitor. Let's discover Shiga together.



ACCESS to SHIGA



OMI MAI RICE

Blessed with clear waters and fertile earth

Shiga is Japan's leading rice-production region, thanks to the abundance water from Lake Biwa (Japan's largest lake) and the surrounding mountains, and the nutrient-rich, fertile soil. Shiga also strives for quality improvement and environmental conservation through reduced pesticide and organic farming, with the catchphrase, "Eat Eco Shiga" (By eating food cultivated in an environmentally friendly way, you protect Lake Biwa.) Among the varieties of rice, the brand *mizukagami* stands out as an original of Shiga prefecture. With its characteristic moderate stickiness and mellow sweetness, it is in receipt of high praise from across Japan.



NAGAHAMA HIKIYAMA FESTIVAL

A FESTIVAL WITH 450 YEARS OF HISTORY

Traditional Japanese Arts and Crafts Survive in Nagahama

The prefecture of Shiga has many ancient festivals, but the Nagahama Hikiyama Festival is one of the oldest and biggest. It is held each year in April to coincide with the spring festival at NAGAHAMA-HACHIMANGU Shrine, home to the guardian deities of Nagahama. Numerous similar festivals featuring a procession of floats parading through the town are held all over Japan, of which 33, including the Nagahama Hikiyama Festival, were registered in 2016 as a UNESCO World Intangible Cultural Heritage, under the designation “Yama, Hoko, Yatai float festivals in Japan.” Together with the Gion Festival of Kyoto and the Takayama Festival of Gifu, the Nagahama Hikiyama Festival is known as one of “Japan’s big three float festivals.” Its *hikiyama* floats are a “moving museum” showcasing ornamental metal work,

sculpture, and other traditional Japanese crafts, and stages for performances of *kabuki* plays by children aged 5 to 12 are the highlight of the festival. There are 13 *hikiyama* floats of distinctive shapes and decorative style, most of them dating back to the mid Edo period (1700s). They have been preserved from generation to generation, their decorative elements remade and repaired. All the floats except the *Naginatayama* float (i.e., 12 out of 13 floats) have their stage at the front. Year by year, four of these are paraded in turn, with the boys of each float team dedicating their *kabuki* performances to the gods. The magnificence of the floats and the *kabuki* performances have attracted large numbers of spectators through the ages.

A Festival Lovingly Preserved by the People of Nagahama

The Nagahama Hikiyama Festival originated some 450 years ago. After Hashiba Hideyoshi (later Toyotomi Hideyoshi) was granted rulership of the province surrounding Nagahama by Oda Nobunaga, he constructed NAGAHAMA-JO Castle. At the same time, Hideyoshi developed the town of Nagahama and restored the NAGAHAMA-HACHIMANGU Shrine, which had been destroyed by war. To mark the occasion, Hideyoshi held a festival featuring a procession of warriors, in imitation of the triumphant return from war of Minamoto no Yoshiie, a famous military commander of the late Heian period (1039-1106). At least this is one explanation of the festival’s origin. The procession has been passed down to the current festival in the form of warriors and sumo-wrestlers called a *tachiwatari*. According to another theory of the event’s origin, the first floats were created using gold dust gifted to the townsfolk by Hideyoshi out of joy on the birth of his first son. This explanation has little historical credibility, however. It may be little more than a rumor spread amongst the people of Nagahama out of their affection for Hideyoshi, due to his favorable treatment of craftsmen—he exempted them from various duties and from paying annual tribute.

It is unclear when exactly the current *hikiyama* floats and *kabuki* performances by children were incorporated into the festival. But it is said that some towns began to create *hikiyama* floats in 1700s, and with regard to children’s *kabuki* plays, a performance script from 1742 and written records from as early as 1769 show that, at that time, floats were being built in different towns and that children were performing *kabuki* plays on float-mounted stages. The idea of children’s *kabuki* plays were presumably inspired by *kabuki* performed by adults and *yoruri* puppet theater arts that flourished widely at the time. There are several other festivals in Japan featuring *kabuki* performed on stages atop *hikiyama* floats, but the Nagahama Hikiyama Festival is undoubtedly the earliest festival of this type. The oldest historical record of the 13 floats is a mention of repairs on the Takasagozan float from 1745, proving that work was done to decorate and improve floats after their initial construction. Nagahama, which evolved first as a castle town, long flourished as a relay station on the northern highway and an important port for lake transport, and it continued to enjoy its exemption from annual tribute right up until the Meiji Restoration. The wealth of the townspeople and

their refined esthetic sensibilities are evident in the sumptuousness of festival floats. The skilled craftsmen who worked on the town’s distinctive Buddhist altars, called Nagahama Butsudan, and Shinto shrines, such as the sculptor Fujioka Izumi of the early Edo period (1600s), contributed greatly to the construction and development of *hikiyama* floats.

While the Nagahama Hikiyama Festival has been registered as an intangible cultural asset by UNESCO, the *hikiyama* floats have also been designated as a tangible folk cultural property by the prefecture of Shiga. To this day, the floats are preserved and restored by a host of traditional craftsmen, including carpenters and sculptors who specialize in temples and shrines, lacquer painters, and the metal carvers who create the ornamental elements. The Nagahama Hikiyama Museum gives visitors a close-up look at the floats being readied for the next festival. There is even a booth for observing the repair and restoration work in progress.

Nagahama Hikiyama Museum

TEL 0749-65-3300 ADDRESS 14-8 Motohama-cho, Nagahama, Shiga
OPEN 9am-5pm (Last entry 4:30pm)
CLOSED Dec.29-Jan.3 *May be closed on other days, e.g., when changing exhibitions.
ADMISSION Adults ¥600 (¥480) Children ¥300 (¥240) *Prices in brackets are for groups of 20 or more.
SMOKING No WEB <http://www.nagahama-hikiyama.or.jp/foreign/eng.html>
ENGLISH BROCHURE



Hadaka-mairi (“naked shrine visit”)



Kujitori-shiki (lot drawing ceremony)



NAGAHAMA-HACHIMANGU Shrine



Children’s *kabuki* play



Biwako Visitors Bureau Public Interest Incorporated Association



NIHONSHU

Quality Sake from Nature’s Bounty

Since time immemorial, *Nihonshu* (Japanese sake), has been used by shrines and temples during their ceremonies and festivals. This has led to a deep connection between the people and culture of Japan, and *nihonshu*. In Shiga prefecture, which is important for its interaction between water and land thanks to Lake Biwa, there are many sake breweries near the lakeside towns, and inns along the *Tokai-do* and *Nakasen-do* roads. Within the prefecture, there are over 30 breweries, and those with histories spanning back 100 to 300 years are easily found. The main ingredients of *nihonshu* are water and rice. There is a Japanese saying, “Where there is good water, there is good sake” and Shiga is no exception — with its pure water, and soil perfect for growing delicious rice. It is blessed with everything it needs to make delicious, top-quality *nihonshu*. Taking Japan’s largest and oldest lake, Lake Biwa, as the center, to the east are the Ibuki and Suzuka mountain ranges and to the west are the Hira and Hiei mountain ranges — all surrounding the Shiga basin. It is home to a great many breweries that take their water from underground run-off from the various mountains. Another reason for the popularity of sake brewing in Shiga is the abundance of good quality rice required for the production of delicious sake. Within Shiga, 6 varieties of rice for sake production are cultivated. Being able to take advantage of their individual characteristics to create sake of varying flavors and tastes is yet another feature of Shiga’s sake. Each brewery is working tirelessly in pursuit of *nihonshu* that perfectly highlights the depth of flavor of their brand.

SAKAMAI — RICE FOR SAKE

The Cultivation of 6 Types of Perfect Rice Blessed by Quality Underground Water Sources

The rice that was developed for making sake is known as *shuzo kotekimai* (ideal rice for brewing). It features larger-sized grains than the regular rice you eat, and those considered of even better quality are softer when steamed and the center is a milky white known as *shinpaku*. Blessed with quality underground water sources, Shiga is home to 6 cultivations of wine rice: the legendary Shiga Wataribune No. 6 (which was saved from near extinction), Shiga-original Gin Fubuki, and Tamasakae, Nipponbare, Yamada Nishiki, and Miyama Nishiki, which are popular nationwide. At the hands of skilled brewers, using techniques passed down through the generations, they are polished and processed into various delicious *nihonshu*.



BREWERIES OPEN FOR TOURS

Check out Your Favorite Breweries!

The rice and water used, the climate of the region, and methods of preparation, etc., each brewery has its own characteristics. In addition to trying freshly made *nihonshu* on brewery tours, you can also taste limited edition brands and purchase original items in some breweries. Take the trip out to your favorite brewery — of the 14 in Shiga that hold tours, see below for 6 that offer English guidance.

- 1 Fujiihonke
- 2 Fujimoto Brewery Co., Ltd.
- 3 Kawashima Sake Brewery, Ltd.
- 4 The OMI Sake Brewery Co., Ltd.
- 5 Tomita Shuzo Inc.
- 6 Yoshida Shuzo

*For locations of the breweries in Shiga prefecture, scan the QR code on the reverse.

3rd OMI NO SHINSHU KIKIZAKEKAI (TASTING EVENT)

@ Lake Biwa Otsu Prince Hotel

|2F Convention Hall “Oumi” |Thu., March 21st, 2019

Reception for alcohol, food and drink vendors from 12:30pm, opens 1pm to 2:30pm

Reception for members of the public from 2pm, opens 2:30pm to 5pm

A gathering of 33 of members of Shiga Pref. Sake Brewers’ Association will attend. Come and taste more than 300 kinds of sake freshly prepared last fall. You can even buy and take home anything that takes your fancy! And taste the crystal clear waters that each brewery uses in a special event!



Shiga Pref. Sake Brewers’ Association
Shiga sake is gaining more and more attention each year. See here for information on Shiga prefecture’s sake breweries.
only Japanese



Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association
First, just learn about *nihonshu* and enjoy yourself! See here for basic information about sake.