



From Sannomaru Project

Guidebook

Fukushima Museum













三の丸から
プロジェクト
From Sannomaru

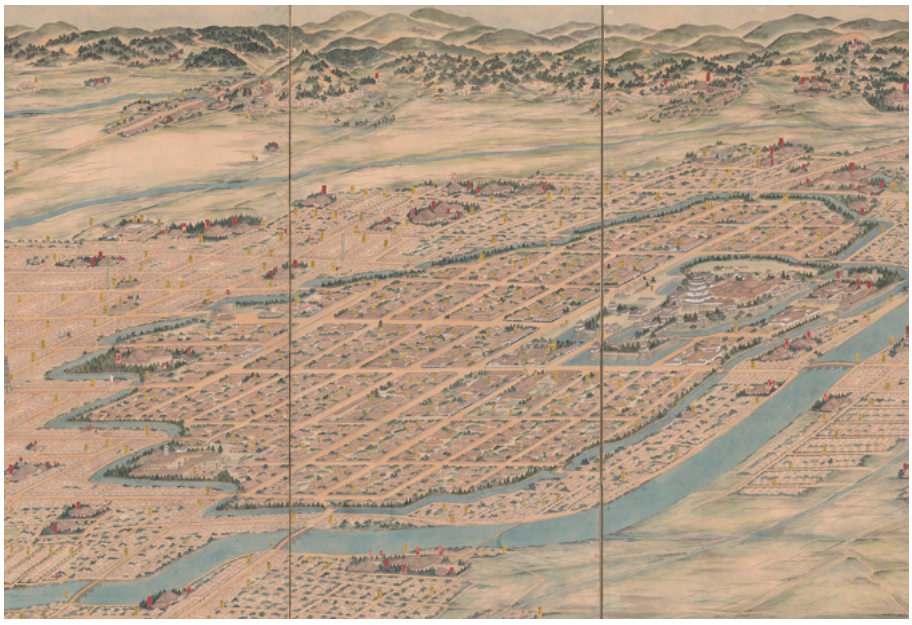
From Sannomaru:
A Gateway to Aizu Adventures

Aizu-Wakamatsu's famous Tsurugajo (Wakamatsujo) Castle comprises three main areas: the outermost *Sannomaru*, the central *Ninomaru*, and the innermost *Honmaru* enclosures. Each of these zones served distinct purposes deeply rooted in samurai life. *Honmaru*, where the active castle lord resided during feudal times, includes historical buildings like the castle keep, Tea Ceremony Room Rinkaku, and a bell tower, as well as no-longer extant buildings for the lord's use and government administration. *Ninomaru*, the smallest of the three areas, had storage facilities for rice, documents, and supplies, and was instrumental in the castle's defense, offering strategic vantage points for defenders to ambush attackers. Lastly, *Sannomaru* has been home to several samurai residences, an archery range, a military training ground, and places of worship throughout its history. Various public facilities like Fukushima Museum are now located there. The surrounding castle town was a hub for Aizu's samurai, artisans, and merchants alike, and many of its commercial elements exist to this day.

Even now, the cultural traditions of Aizu's samurai, merchants, and craftsmen, as well as the culture derived from living in Snow Country, remain strong. Around the castle, visitors can drink tea on the grounds of an authentic tearoom, enjoy Noh theatrical performances, and even request to observe iaido practice sessions. The streets of Nanukamachi and the surrounding commercial district offer glimpses into the lives of the working and middle classes of feudal Aizu, and visitors can try their hand at local crafts, tour sake breweries with centuries of history, and decorate traditional toys. Outside of Aizu-Wakamatsu proper, in more remote areas of Oku-Aizu, travelers can learn about *amikumi zaiku* basketry and karamushi textiles, originally created to survive and make a living in a snowbound world.

The From Sannomaru Project was launched in 2020 by Fukushima Museum and tourism organizations in Aizu to facilitate learning about the history and culture of the Aizu region, taking its name from the museum's location on the former site of *Sannomaru*. The project proposes three themed tour areas, centered on Aizu's samurai culture; the traditional arts, industry, and mercantile culture of the Wakamatsujo Castle Town; and Snow Country's creative culture, with the goal of having visitors learn about the region through special events and onsite visits to places described at Fukushima Museum.

The project actively hosts events in Japanese highlighting its three tour areas for the public at the renamed Nandabeya Multipurpose Studio. Sword lectures, tea activities, interactive Noh performances, and other similar events are available for those interested in Aizu's samurai culture, and there are workshops for Wakamatsujo Castle Town crafts like Aizu-Hongo ceramics, Aizu cotton, and *maki-e* lacquer decoration. There are even workshops that highlight *amikumi zaiku* basketry, karamushi textiles, and other crafts of Oku-Aizu Snow Country. These events are mostly family-friendly and are held throughout the year. See the Fukushima Museum website (https://general-museum.fcs.ed.jp) for program descriptions and details.



Folding Screen Map of
Wakamatsu Castle Town

Aizu's Samurai Culture Tour Area



Hoshina Masayuki
(Hanitsu Jinja Shrine collection)

Tsurugajo Castle—A Feudal Stronghold

The first fortification here was called Kurokawajo Castle, named after the surrounding town. Constructed in 1384 by Ashina Naomori, the castle was used by the Ashina domain as a military base for more than two centuries. In 1593, daimyo Gamo Ujisato had the main keep redesigned with seven stories, making it among the most impressive towers of its time. Under Ujisato, the town was renamed Wakamatsu, and the fortress was rechristened Tsurugajo (Wakamatsujo) Castle. After damage from an earthquake in 1611, the keep was rebuilt with five stories, reflected in the reconstruction seen today. Daimyo Hoshina Masayuki, founder of Aizu's ruling family, became castle lord in 1643. His descendants were permitted to use the shogunate family name Matsudaira, and their reign lasted nine generations.

Warrior Cultural Practices

With each change in government, new developments emerged in Aizu samurai culture. The years leading up to the Edo period (1603–1867) marked a gradual shift from the rampant wars of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to a time of relative peace. During this time, the samurai discipline of iaido became increasingly popular as a way to preserve martial ability without initiating violence, and it continues to be practiced to this day. Soon after his installation as the ruler of Aizu, Ujisato responded to the death of tea master Sen no Rikyu at the decree of daimyo Toyotomi Hideyoshi in 1591. While Rikyu's death threatened the existence of the Sen family's tea ceremony tradition, it ultimately gave rise to three new houses of Japanese tea ceremony. Noh would make its Aizu debut almost a century later under the reign of daimyo Hoshina Masatsune. Masatsune arranged for the construction of a Noh stage within Tsurugajo Castle, and a tradition of Noh continues to this day.



Matsudaira Katamori
(private collection)

Matsudaira Rule

In 1862, the shogun appointed Matsudaira Katamori as Kyoto Military Commissioner. Taking charge of the Shinsengumi swordsmen, Katamori maintained public order in Kyoto. Katamori's position put Aizu at odds with Satsuma and Choshu sympathizers during the Boshin War (1868–1869), when the latter assumed the emperor's banner and waged a civil war, marking a pivotal moment in Japanese history that saw Japan's new imperial and former shogunate governments fight for control of Japan.

The Battle of Aizu

The Battle of Aizu started in October 1868, when the new government marched on Aizu-Wakamatsu, initiating a one-month siege on Tsurugajo Castle. Despite being surrounded and outgunned, some 5,000 people, comprising Aizu soldiers and their families, sheltered inside, fighting bravely until Aizu's surrender on November 6, 1868. Among them was Yamamoto (Niijima) Yae, a female sharpshooter who later distinguished herself as a nurse and university founder. The new Meiji government demolished the castle in 1874, and all that remained were the stone walls that can still be seen today. The larger war would end the samurai age along with the Edo period, setting the stage for the rest of the Meiji Restoration. In remembrance of Aizu's surrender in the ninth month of the old calendar, Aizu-Wakamatsu hosts the annual Aizu Festival in late September, ensuring that the history of the Boshin War is preserved for future generations.



Building Anew

The ruins of Tsurugajo Castle were designated a National Historic Site in 1934. The people of Aizu petitioned for its reconstruction, and it was largely restored to its Edo-period appearance by 1965. Red roof tiles were added in 2011, making this the only castle in Japan to possess the architectural feature.

Tsurugajo Castle Today

Tsurugajo Castle Park, home to a thousand cherry trees, can be toured daily. The keep is now a museum, open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (last entry at 4:30 p.m.). It has engaging displays, samurai artifacts, and information on Aizu's history. While adult admission into the keep costs 410 yen, or 520 yen with additional access to Tea Ceremony Room Rinkaku, a 630-yen Common Viewing Ticket can also be purchased, granting access to the keep, Tea Ceremony Room Rinkaku, and Fukushima Museum's Permanent Exhibitions (Main Exhibition Hall and Field-Specific Exhibitions).



Iaido



Training the Samurai Spirit: Iaido in Aizu

Iaido is a Japanese martial art that teaches how to draw a sword and slash an opponent in one swift motion before re-sheathing the weapon. It is performed through a variety of *kata*, or prescribed movements for specific battle situations. Not merely physical exercise but also a form of mental and spiritual discipline, iaido is rooted in Zen Buddhist philosophy, emphasizing humility, mental presence, and responsiveness. Originally a practical style of combat during the tumultuous Muromachi period (1336–1573), iaido later flourished as a discipline among samurai during the peaceful Edo period. It can be practiced by men and women from adolescence through late age.

Aizu's Iaido Traditions

In Aizu, multiple schools of iaido are popular today, namely *Muso Shinden-ryu* and *Hokushin Itto-ryu*. The former arose in the 1930s and starts with a silent movement followed by a swift and powerful cutting motion against an imaginary opponent. The latter is an intense fighting style with fast and violent movements, and it was favored by some Shinsengumi swordsmen. In addition to one-person *kata*, practitioners also actively engage in two-person *kumitachi* practice sessions. Elements of *Muso Shinden-ryu* and *Hokushin Itto-ryu* can be seen in modern iaido and the Japanese sword art of kendo, respectively.

The Nisshinkan and Butokuden Martial Arts Hall



Iaido was one of the martial arts taught to samurai children from around age ten at the Aizu Clan School Nisshinkan during the Edo period. The school was originally located along the outer edge of Tsurugajo (Wakamatsujo) Castle's West Bailey (*Nishi-demaru*). Students also took lessons in academics, etiquette, morals, and other subjects. The Remains of the Aizu Clan Nisshinkan Astronomical Observatory can still be visited today. In 1987, the Aizu Clan School Nisshinkan was reopened about nine kilometers north of the castle. It now operates as a tourist destination where visitors can experience samurai arts like archery, Zen meditation, and tea ceremony, as well as Aizu crafts.

The Butokuden martial arts hall was constructed in 1934 within the castle's North Bailey (*Kita-demaru*) as a place for the community to practice martial arts, reflecting their popularity in the city. Almost a century later, local clubs and regional associations continue to use the Butokuden for iaido, kendo, karate, and *naginata* polearm drills. If they happen to be holding iaido training sessions, visitors are welcome to watch. Opening hours are from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. There is also a *kyudo* Japanese archery hall next door where this martial art is practiced.

Aizu Swords

Aizu has a strong sword-making tradition with generations of swordsmithing houses such as Miyoshi Nagamichi and Furukawa Kanesada producing excellent-quality blades for Aizu and samurai across Japan for centuries. Roughly 150 years ago, the eleventh Furukawa Kanesada family head forged a sword for Shinsengumi leader Hijikata Toshizo. Some of Aizu's swords have been designated Cultural Properties and are held in national museum collections. Fukushima Museum holds a sword exhibition annually, along with workshops where participants can handle actual swords. (Reservations required)



Aizu Clan School Nisshinkan Map





Steeped in History: Tea Ceremony Room Rinkaku

Tea Ceremony Room Rinkaku stands at the far end of the *Honmaru* enclosure of Tsurugajo (Wakamatsujo) Castle. Embodying tea master Sen no Rikyu's ideals of rustic simplicity, this modest structure with a thatched roof, tatami mats, and sunken hearths is a rare example in eastern Japan of Rikyu's "Soan" tearoom style. It is surrounded by a garden with sitting spaces for visitors to enjoy matcha with Japanese sweets.

Samurai Culture and the Tea Ceremony

Rikyu (1522–1591) played a key role in developing the modern Japanese tea ceremony (also called *chanoyu* or *sado*). His *wabi-cha* approach to preparing, serving, and drinking matcha emphasized muted beauty and quiet contemplation influenced by Zen Buddhism.

Chanoyu spread first among Buddhist priests, then warriors before reaching the public. The sixteenth-century ruler Oda Nobunaga politicized *chanoyu* by appointing official tea masters, including Rikyu. Daimyo Toyotomi Hideyoshi selected Rikyu as his personal tea master and relied on him as a confidant. However, Hideyoshi later became angry with Rikyu and ordered him to commit ritualized suicide, causing a crisis for the legacy of *chanoyu*.



Gamo Ujisato
(Saikoji Temple collection)

Gamo Ujisato and Sen Shoan

Gamo Ujisato (1556–1595), in addition to being an Aizu feudal lord and son-in-law of Nobunaga, was an accomplished *chanoyu* practitioner; he was even named one of Rikyu's "seven sages." Concerned that Rikyu's way of tea would die with its master, Ujisato protected Rikyu's adopted son Sen Shoan in Aizu until Hideyoshi pardoned the Sen family in 1594. Shoan continued Rikyu's legacy as a tea master, and his three grandsons would establish the three houses of Senke tea practiced today: Omotesenke, Urasenke, and Mushakoujisenke. Signboards for all three houses are hung at Tea Ceremony Room Rinkaku, an unusual feature for a Japanese tearoom.

Tea Ceremony Room Rinkaku at Tsurugajo Castle

Shoan is said to have built what would become Tea Ceremony Room Rinkaku at Tsurugajo Castle around the end of the sixteenth century. The original building was part of the Honmaru Palace and was supposedly used for secret discussions by political authorities. Notably, the Aizu domain practiced a samurai style of tea called *Sekishu-ryu*, created for the Tokugawa shogunate.

After the Boshin War ended in 1869, Tea Ceremony Room Rinkaku was slated for destruction along with Tsurugajo Castle. In an effort to preserve the historic tearoom, local tea enthusiast Zenbe'e Morikawa purchased its structural components from the government and carefully rebuilt it on his own property in 1872, preserving it there until 1990, when it was moved back to its original location at the castle for the 90th anniversary of Aizu-Wakamatsu.

Today, tourists can enjoy matcha at Tea Ceremony Room Rinkaku. It is open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with tea served until 4:00 p.m. General admission is 210 yen, or 630 yen for a Common Viewing Ticket that grants additional access to Tsurugajo Castle's keep and Fukushima Museum.

茶道

Sado



能楽

Noh

Aizu Noh Theatre: A Living Tradition

The Aizu Noh Theatre, located next to the Aizu Wakamatsu City Culture Center near Tsurugajo (Wakamatsujo) Castle, opened in 2009 with strong public support. This Noh theater is the only one in Fukushima Prefecture and organizations such as the Aizu Nohgaku Association hold performances there.

Noh Basics

The history of Noh (also called Nohgaku) goes back around 650 years. Originating from performance styles that came to Japan from China in the eighth century, its early forms of song and dance were enacted at shrines and temples as entertainment during religious ceremonies. Noh is characterized by chants with flute and drum accompaniment, stylized movements and dances with symbolic gestures, and elaborate costumes and masks. Its plays feature a lead and supporting character, as well as the occasional chorus. The stories frequently incorporate classical poetry and Chinese tales and may be realistic or supernatural. Noh performances require intensive training, often spanning decades.

Noh plays usually take place on a roofed wooden platform. Aizu's stage made of Japanese cypress is surrounded by a series of tall doors removed for practices and performances. The protruding main stage is connected to a backstage room by a rectangular platform that serves as an entry and exit for performers, as well as a symbolic path linking the real and spiritual worlds. On the back wall of the main stage is a painting of a stately pine tree, the *oimatsu*, in which gods reside. Aizu's *oimatsu* was painted by local artists.

Warrior Dramas

There are various ways to categorize Noh plays, but in terms of composition, they can be divided into god plays, warrior plays, woman (or wig) plays, "crazed" plays, and demon plays. Warrior plays often tell stories of battles from the twelfth-century Genpei War. Noh grew popular with the ruling warrior class during the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries, flourishing with the support of powerful leaders like Ashikaga Yoshimitsu and Toyotomi Hideyoshi. During the Edo period, the Tokugawa shogunate made Noh the government's official ceremonial art form, employing its own Noh actors and granting them samurai status.

The Aizu lord Hoshina Masatsune had a Noh stage built in the outermost *Sannomaru* enclosure of Tsurugajo Castle in 1677. Aizu Noh struggled to survive after the domain was effectively sent into exile following the Boshin War in the late 1800s, but thanks to robust local enthusiasm still seen today, it lives on as a beloved art form.

See a Show

The Aizu Nohgaku Association holds around three Noh performances at the Aizu Noh Theatre each year, which are open to the public and free of charge. There is open seating outdoors, which accommodates around 200 viewers.

The language and historical references of Noh plays can be difficult for beginners to understand, so reading the synopsis beforehand is recommended. Fukushima Museum also holds Noh-related events.









Traditional Arts, Industry, and Mercantile Culture of the Wakamatsujo Castle Town

The rich history of Aizu's traditional crafts dates back to the sixteenth century. The daimyo of that time were the driving force behind the development of three of Aizu's most notable local crafts: lacquerware, ceramics, and cotton textiles. The support of the local lords helped to usher in the technological advancements that birthed these industries, followed by the adoption of large-scale production methods in the twentieth century. Even today, Aizu's traditional crafts continue to grow and evolve to meet modern demands.

Aizu Nuri Lacquerware

Aizu nuri is a traditional style of lacquerware produced in the Aizu region. Lacquerware has been made in the region for over half a millennium, but in 1590 new production methods were introduced from Ōmi Province (modern-day Shiga Prefecture), improving the quality of the pieces. Aizu nuri lacquerware is functional, long-lasting, and environmentally friendly.

The process of creating Aizu nuri starts with woodcarving. Since the early twentieth century, woodworkers have used special metal templates called a surigata. Such templates can be used to easily create hundreds or even thousands of identically shaped bowls, plates, and cups. Aizu nuri lacquerware was traditionally made from locally sourced wood and lacquer, and the lacquering process creates products that are durable and waterproof. The lacquer used to coat these pieces is collected from Japanese lacquer trees: small notches are cut into the bark, and the sap is drained over time. The lacquer is applied in three coats, the last of which is traditionally a glossy red or black lacquer. With proper care, Aizu nuri pieces can last for decades of everyday use.

One of the defining features of Aizu nuri is a type of decoration called maki-e. After the lacquer is applied and dried, additional lacquer is used to draw designs on the vessel. These still-wet designs are then brushed or sprinkled with gold, silver, and other metallic powders, creating multi-colored gradients.







Aizu Nuri

会津塗

会津木綿

Aizu Momen

Aizu Cotton Textiles

Aizu cotton is a traditional cotton textile woven in the Aizu region that is known for striped patterns that are associated with different regions. Aizu cotton was woven by hand until the early twentieth century, when belt-powered Toyoda automatic looms revolutionized the industry. In Aizu-wakamatsu, weavers of Aizu cotton have continually used the same looms for almost a century.

Aizu is the northernmost area of Japan where cotton can be grown, and the cold climate produces thicker fibers. Textiles made from cotton grown in the region are therefore durable and warm enough to be worn even during the region's harsh winters. One of the defining features of Aizu cotton textiles are their striped patterns. Aizu weavers record these patterns down to the number of individual threads in each stripe. Towns and districts in the Aizu region were each associated with specific striped patterns, and many of these patterns still bear the names of their associated regions and are still produced today.

Faced with changing tastes and an ever-evolving market, weavers of Aizu cotton have adapted this traditional craft to new mediums, creating Aizu-cotton aprons, purses, magnets, and more.







Aizu-Hongō Ware Ceramics

Aizu-hongō ware is the collective term for traditional styles of pottery from the Aizu region of Fukushima Prefecture. Ceramic production in the region began in the seventeenth century, when potters were invited to the region by the local daimyo. His patronage, and that of future daimyo, spurred the development of a rich variety of styles of earthenware and, later, porcelain. Local kilns typically specialize in either porcelain or earthenware, but some more recently founded kilns produce both.

Although no single style defines Aizu-hongō ware, all Aizu potters employ masterful techniques to create products that are enjoyable to use. Everything, from the materials used to the shape and texture of each vessel, is designed to heighten the user's experience. Potters shape their teacups to surround the nose and amplify the tea's aroma, or taper the thickness of a container's walls to make it surprisingly light and pleasant to hold.











会津本郷焼

Aizu Hongōyaki



Snow Country's Creative Culture Tour Area

Life in Snow Country

The Oku-Aizu (Inner Aizu) district consisting of seven towns and villages (Yanaizu Town, Mishima Town, Kaneyama Town, Tadami Town, Showa Village, Minami-Aizu Town, and Hinoemata Village) in western Fukushima Prefecture is a mountainous land with snowy winters caused by moist air from the Sea of Japan. As a display featured in the Field-Specific Exhibitions (Folk Culture) at Fukushima Museum shows, Tadami once saw over 590 centimeters of snow cover.

With this snowbound lifestyle, locals have developed a culture of unique food, clothing, tools, and festivals. Each season is spent in preparation for the next, and, traditionally, people made what they needed for daily life from natural resources in their villages. In winter, communities organized snow-clearing teams, and villagers dressed in items like straw-made *fukagutsu* long boots or *kanzenbushi* hooded cloaks before heading out into the snow. Winter was also a time for crafts, including weaving and basket making.

Life in Oku-Aizu is punctuated by spiritual and celebratory occasions such as lion dances and the *Sai no Kami* festival, in which an effigy of the god of the New Year is burned. Folk toys like pinwheels, *Akabeko* cows, and *Okiagari-Koboshi* dolls also bring cheer to the seasons. Hinoemata Kabuki performances take place in May in the village of Hinoemata, the furthest part of Oku-Aizu from Aizu-Wakamatsu.

The culinary culture of Oku-Aizu reflects its geography. With no direct access to the sea, preserved and pickled foods played crucial roles in the local diet. Soba noodles, *natto* fermented soybeans, and frozen rice cakes are all popular local fare. *Kozuyu* is a clear soup made with broth from dried scallops that often contains ingredients such as taro, carrot, and konjac noodles. Although it is not made in Showa Village, western parts of Minami-Aizu Town, Tadami Town, or Hinoemata Village, it is enjoyed throughout the rest of Aizu under various names. On special occasions, it is served in bowls decorated with Aizu lacquer. *Nishin-no-sansho-zuke*, dried herring pickled with pepper leaves, is traditionally prepared in Aizu-Hongo ceramic dishes. *Nishin-no-su-zuke*, made in the former village of Nango in Minami-Aizu Town, is a particularly well-known variant of the dish. Regional foods such as these can be enjoyed at restaurants all over Aizu.













Oku-Aizu Amikumi Zaiku Basketry in Mishima: Crafting a Close-Knit Community

The scenic splendor of Mishima, an Oku-Aizu town named one of the "Most Beautiful Villages in Japan" in 2012, includes the world-famous Daiichi (No. 1) Tadami River Bridge. This is a site well-worth seeing, but no visit would be complete without experiencing another Mishima treasure: Oku-Aizu Amikumi Zaiku Basketry, which has been designated a traditional Japanese craft by the national government like Showa's Karamushi Textiles.

Thanks to a locally led revival movement started in the 1970s, around 10% of Mishima's population of about 1,600 are *kojin*, or "makers of things" who practice *amikumi zaiku* handwoven basketry using local wild plants. This environmentally friendly custom is thought to go back to prehistoric times, and baskets and other woven products (held by Fukushima Museum) from roughly two to three millennia ago were found in the area. Like many Snow Country crafts, basketry is a living tradition that started with people spending the long winter months at home making practical items for daily life.

Oku-Aizu Amikumi Zaiku Basketry uses three main kinds of local plants: *Hiroro* sedge grass (*Carex multifolia*) is twisted into cords to form baskets and bags woven with subtle patterns; *Yamabudo* crimson glory vine bark is a tough, curvy material plaited into robust baskets, bowls, and bags that take on a leathery appearance over time; *Matatabi* silver vine is harvested for its water-resistant woody insides that make excellent kitchen utensils like strainers. Eco-friendly yet stylish shoulder bags and purses are just a few examples of the modern designs also available, which include practical, day-to-day items like lunch boxes.

To see (and even bring home) some superb works of Oku-Aizu Amikumi Zaiku Basketry, stop by the Living Crafts Center. This facility explains the processes and history of the craft, the traditional lifestyles of Mishima, and the town's efforts to keep its basketry alive and share it with the world. One display highlights Mishima's exchange program with Taiwan, which has craft traditions similar to its own.

The shop offers a wide selection of *amikumi zaiku* handwoven products like bags, baskets, and ornaments. At the Kojin no Yakata (Kojin Hall) next door, people work on their own crafting projects in a friendly, cooperative environment. There are two workshops dedicated to *amikumi zaiku*, where participants can make *yamabudo* straps or *hiroro* coasters. There is also a woodworking workshop where participants can craft their own chopsticks. Reservations are required at least a day in advance for all workshops and they each cost 1,200 yen. Depending on the type of workshop, the duration can range from 40 minutes to 2 hours.

Mishima's basketry continues to attract tourists from across Japan. The town holds craft classes and exhibitions throughout the year, and each June, it hosts the Furusato Aizu Kojin Matsuri. This market launched in 1986 features 150 exhibitors from around the country who sell basketry, pottery, glassware, and more, drawing as many as 20,000 visitors.



三島町

Mishima

昭和村

Showa

Karamushi Textiles: A Sustainable Craft Practice

The village of Showa is home to a farming and textile-making practice continued for some 600 years. Oku-Aizu Showa Karamushi Textiles, officially designated a traditional craft by the Japanese government, are woven from the fibers of ramie plants (*karamushi* in Japanese) that are grown, harvested, and prepared in Showa—the only place in mainland Japan where ramie is commercially cultivated. The village prides itself on this nature-based practice, as it is rare for textiles to be produced from plant to finished fabric in one place. Showa's karamushi has also been used for *Echigo-jofu* and *Ojiya-chijimi*, both examples of fine linens made in Niigata Prefecture that are on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list and have been registered as Important Intangible Cultural Properties of Japan. Karamushi textiles are ideal for summer clothes as they are said to be "light as the wind and cool as water."

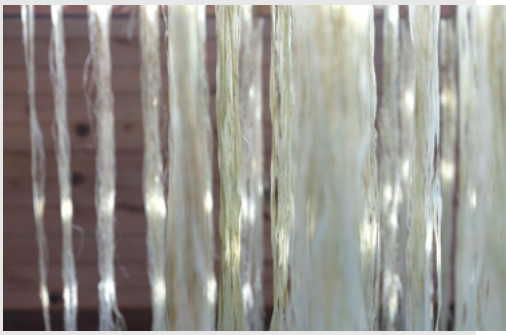
Showa's karamushi production, an industry promoted by Aizu lord Hoshina Masayuki in the seventeenth century, occurs from May through November. Ramie is planted and cultivated before being harvested in late-July to mid-August. Its stalks are trimmed, soaked in water, and peeled to extract luminous white fibers that are hung up to dry and bundled before being spun into thread and woven on looms. Showa has been bringing people to the village since the 1990s to train them in karamushi farming and textile making, helping to ensure these practices live on.

Karamushi fibers and fabrics can be seen at Fukushima Museum, but anyone interested in learning more should head to Showa. The Karamushi Craft Museum Showa introduces the history and techniques of karamushi production along with the people who have passed down this local tradition for generations. Exhibits include farming and weaving equipment, dioramas, photographs, and examples of karamushi fabrics. Some English information is provided. Don't miss the karamushi ceremonial belt for a Yokozuna sumo champion at the entrance. The museum is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and general admission is 300 yen.

If you'd like to try karamushi weaving yourself, visit the Orihime Community Square inside Michi-no-Eki Karamushi Ori-no-Sato Showa (Roadside Station), next to the museum. Weaving experiences are held on Fridays, weekends, and national holidays, and they cost 1,540 yen per person. Staff will teach you how to make your own karamushi coaster using a loom in an enjoyable 20-minute activity, and they will send you the finished coaster after minor adjustments. For international shipping, please consult with the staff. Reservations are necessary for groups of 4 or more, and they can be arranged by emailing info@karamushi.co.jp. Details can be found at https://www.karamushi.co.jp/michinoeki.html.

The Roadside Station also sells karamushi products like clothing and bags as well as other handicrafts, plus fresh produce, local foods, and *kasumi-so* baby's breath (a flower grown in Showa). The station is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The next-door restaurant Choma'an serves lunches featuring regional cuisine from April to November.



















Gearing Up for Winter: Snow Country Essentials

The Tadami Museum of Folklore and History is a fascinating place for getting to know more about the Oku-Aizu district. Opened in July 2022, it boasts an impressive collection of museum pieces, including the Aizu Tadami Production Tools and Workwear Collection, which consists of 2,333 objects donated by locals since the 1960s. This expertly curated and archived collection, which can be toured with staff by inquiring at the front desk, has been designated an Important Folk Cultural Property by the national government. Residents felt it was especially important to preserve the region's heritage after the village of Tagokura was engulfed by a lake formed by the construction of the Tagokura Dam in 1959.

The museum's displays and special exhibitions attest to the area's snowy climate and agrarian lifestyle, providing a look at Oku-Aizu through the objects historically used to survive and thrive there. Visitors can try on clothing items similar to those featured in the Field-Specific Exhibitions (Folk Culture) at Fukushima Museum in Aizu-Wakamatsu, such as *mino* coats and *kanjiki* snowshoes made with plant materials. There are even *yukifumi-dawara* boots specifically for stamping down fresh snow to clear paths. Other highlights include forestry items like enormous saws and various sleds—some sleds were horse-drawn, while others had brakes and rudders for steering. Logging shipments were once concentrated in February and March, when the snow hardened and these sleds could be used to full effect.

The museum gives an overview of Snow Country home life, as well. A recreated living room for a traditional Japanese house features an *irori* sunken hearth, which family members would gather around to warm themselves, heat food, and work on household tasks like handicrafts. Actual items from residences in the area include large wooden sculptures of genitalia called *hibuse*, which were installed on roof beams as talismans for protection and good fortune. Filmed footage of local festivals and folk traditions can be viewed in the Community Hall.

The Tadami Museum of Folklore and History is open from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and is free of charge. The museum is closed on Mondays (open if Monday is a public holiday and closed the following day) and from December 29 to January 3.





Fukushima Museum

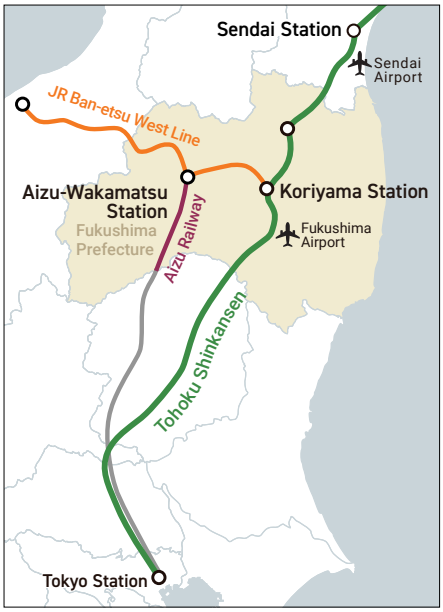
Museum hours:
9:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. (Last entry at 4:30 p.m.)

Closings:
• Mondays (Closed the following Tuesday if Monday is a public holiday)
• Days following a public holiday (except for Saturdays and Sundays)
• December 28 through January 4
Other temporary closings, such as days for exhibition preparations

Admission Fees
• Permanent Exhibitions:
400 yen for adults and university students (230 yen per person for groups of 20 or more)
Free for high school, junior high, and elementary school students
• Special Exhibitions: Fees vary

Tsurugajo Castle, Tea Ceremony Room Rinkaku, and Fukushima Museum Common Viewing Ticket Fee: 730 yen
*This ticket offers access to the permanent exhibitions at Fukushima Museum.

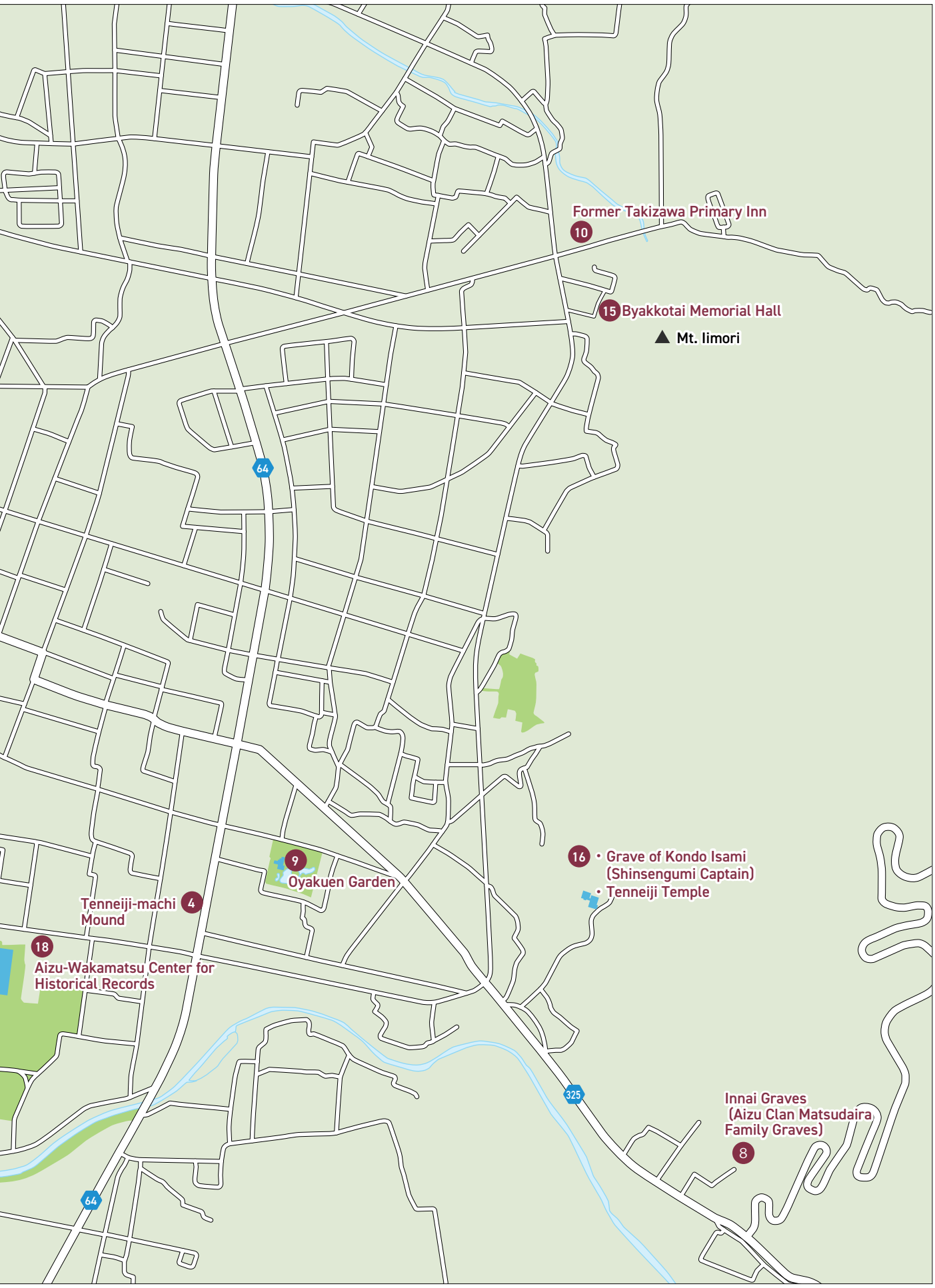
Shokudō Tsukinai (Former Café)
Set Menu:
• Aizu Kuruma-fu Cutlet Never-ending Blessing Meal Set (Vegan Menu)
• Aizu Kuruma-fu Cutlet Curry

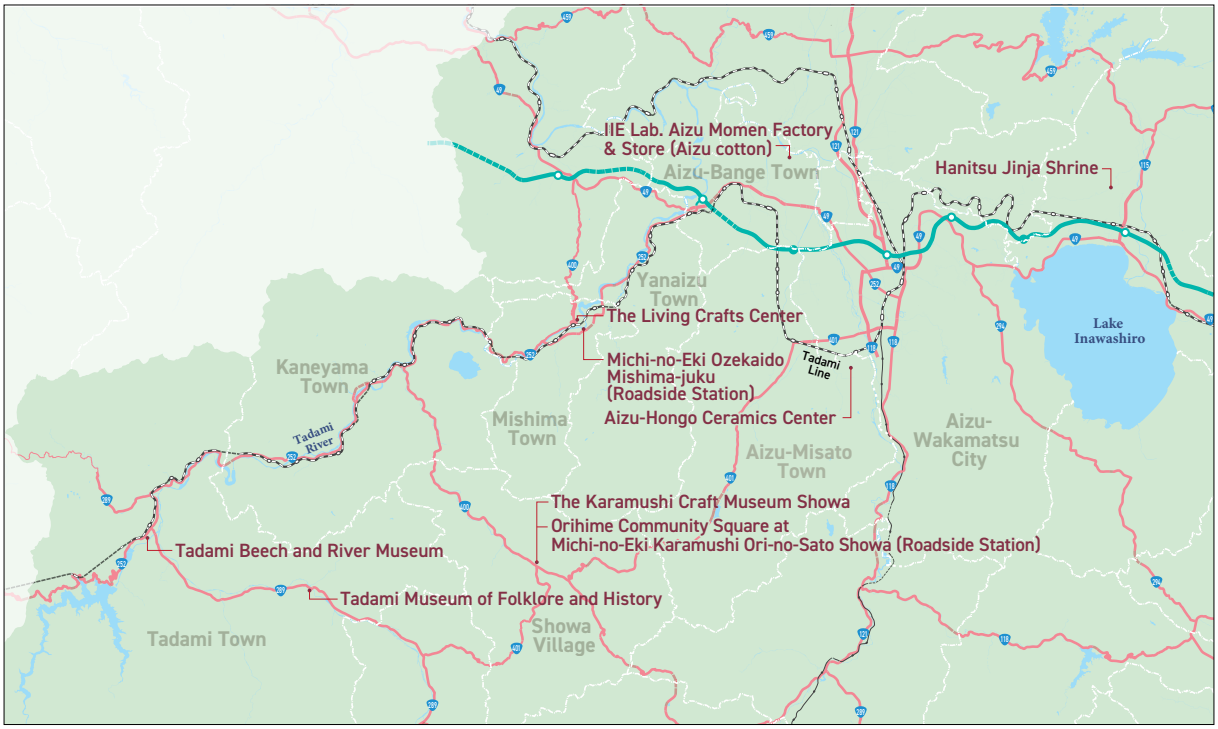







Aizu-Wakamatsu Station
121
152
252
Omachi Street
Chuo Street
Nanukamachi Station
Yamada Momen Orimoto Company (Aizu cotton)
22
13
• O-sangai ("Three Floors of the Honmaru Palace")
• Graves of the Boshin War's Eastern Forces
• Grave of Saito Hajime (Shinsengumi Captain)
• Amidaji Temple
• Shirokiya Lacquerware Museum
• Shirokiya Lacquerware
Nanokamachi Street
19
21 Suzuzen Lacquerware
20
Suzukiya Rihei
24 Taketou (bamboo crafts) & Taketou Cafe
Suehiro Sake Brewery Museum Kaeigura
25
The Fukunishi Honten Shop
26
• Grave of Gamo Ujisato
• Kotokuji Temple
14
3 Remains of Kogamachiguchi Gate
328
17 Chomeiji Temple
59
Shinmei Street
Kita-demaru Street
59
23 HARAPPA Co., Ltd. (Aizu cotton)
Hakuro Garden 12
11 Site of Saigo Tanomo's Samurai Residence
5 Butokuden (Martial Arts Hall) 6
328
Remains of the Aizu Clan Nisshinkan Astronomical Observatory
Tsurugajo Castle 1
Fukushima Museum
2 Tea Ceremony Room Rinkaku
121
211
Aizu Noh Theatre 7


Former Takizawa Primary Inn
10
15 Byakkotai Memorial Hall
Mt. Iimori
64
9
Oyakuen Garden
16 • Grave of Kondo Isami
(Shinsengumi Captain)
• Tenneiji Temple
Tenneiji-machi
Mound
4
18
Aizu-Wakamatsu Center for
Historical Records
325
Innai Graves
(Aizu Clan Matsudaira
Family Graves)
8
64



This digital guidebook was created by the Fukushima Museum Cultural Tourism Hub Facility Enhancement Project (a.k.a. the "From Sannomaru Project") as part of the Agency for Cultural Affairs' larger initiative to promote cultural tourism in regions centered on cultural tourism hub facilities.
It was written for overseas travelers to Japan based on "How To Prepare Multilingual Explanatory Texts" and "Writing and Style Manual: English for Sightseeing Destinations around Japan" by the Japan Tourism Agency and "Aizu-Wakamatsu City Multilingual Guidelines for Proper Nouns" by Aizu-Wakamatsu City.
Written content is based on onsite visits in December 2021 and December 2023.

Photographers: Yuki IWANANI (pp.1, 3 , 5, 9-11, 13)
Hiromichi FUKUTA (pp.1, 7, 8)

Created and edited by Fukushima Museum.