



Winter festivals and events in Japan



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During Japan's final and coldest month of winter a variety of exciting festivals, events and tours will take place across the country.

Hokkaido

Sapporo Snow Festival

When: February 6-12
Where: Odori Park, Susukino, Sapporo Satoland
Access: JR Sapporo station

Now in its 58th year, the Sapporo Snow Festival is one of Japan's largest and most famous winter festivals. The Odori Park site will host the International Snow Statue competition and will be illuminated until 10:00pm each night during the festival. The Susukino site is best seen at night, with illumination lasting until midnight, except on the last day when it will last until 10:00pm. The Satoland site will have sculptures and snow slides - perfect for the kids - and will be open 9:00am - 5:00pm daily.

www.snowfes.com/english/index.html

Asahikawa Winter Festival

When: February 8 - 12
Where: Asahi Bridge Riverside, Tokiwa Park, Heiwadori Shopping Park, Asahikawa City
Access: JR Asahikawa station

Attractions include snow sculptures, ice carving contest, snow illumination festival, snowball fight competition and fireworks displays.

Day tours from Niseko

JTB are offering a variety of day tours from the Niseko ski fields to Sapporo and Otaru during the Sapporo Snow Festival and Otaru Snow Light Path Festival.

Otaru Snow Light Path tour

When: February 9-18
Duration: 7.5 hours
Cost: 7500 yen (child 6000 yen)

Tour participants can enjoy sake tasting at the Tanaka Sake Brewery, fine food at the Hotel Hilton Otaru, spectacular night views of Otaru from Mt. Tengu, and the Otaru Canal illuminated with floating snow candles during the Otaru Snow Light Path Festival. Tours depart daily at 3:30pm from the Niseko Hirafu Ski area.

Sapporo Snow Festival bus transfer

When: February 6-12
Cost: 3000 yen (child 2000 yen)

JTB will operate bus transfers to and from the Odori Park site of the Sapporo Snow Festival. The transfer service departs daily at 1:00pm from the Niseko Hirafu Ski area.

Sapporo Otaru Sightseeing tour

When: February 6-12

Duration: 10 hours
Cost: 9500 yen (child 7500)

This tour visits famous sites around Sapporo including the Clock Tower, former Hokkaido government office building, and the Sapporo Snow Festival Odori Park site, and in the evening Otaru's Mt. Tengu. Tours depart daily at 8:15am from the Niseko Hirafu Ski area.

Reservations for the above JTB tours can be made through hotels/pensions in Niseko, Sun Support Hokkaido, the Grand Hirafu Welcome Centre and online at www.jtbgmt.com/sunrisetour/.

For Hokkaido tourist information please visit www.visit-hokkaido.jp/en/

Honshu

Kamakura Festival

When: February 15-16
Where: Yokote City, Akita Prefecture
Access: JR Yokote station

Inside igloo-like snow huts, children toast rice cakes and warm up sweet rice brew which they offer to passersby as well as enjoy themselves. At night the snow huts are illuminated with candles.

Hirayu Frozen Waterfall Festival

When: February 15 - 25
Where: Hirayu, Gifu Prefecture
Access: Bus from Takayama to Hirayu Onsen

Sub zero temperatures cause the 64 metre high and 6 metre wide grand waterfall at Hirayu to freeze during winter. The frozen waterfall is illuminated for eleven nights each February from 6:00pm-9:00pm.

Winter Illumination of Hida Folk Village

When: until March 4
Where: Takayama City
Access: JR Takayama station

The snow covered farm houses at the Hida Folk Village are illuminated from 5:30pm until 9:00pm. Admission is 300 yen. Every weekend and national holiday (February 12) between 1:00pm and 3:00pm until March 4, Hida Folk Village will be offering visitors complimentary toasted rice cakes made from the rice grown at the Village.

All information is subject to change without notice.

Japan National Tourist Organization - Sydney
www.jnto.go.jp/syd/