

## ■FESTIVALS

### March 3 HINA-MATSURI (Hina-doll Festival)

Hina-matsuri is held to celebrate girls' growth, health, and happiness. The origin is thought to be joshi-no-sekku or Kegare-barai held in the Heian era more than 1,000 years ago, when people floated dolls made of paper down the river so that they would drive away ill fortune. This custom is known as Nagashi-bina (floating dolls), and can still be observed in some parts of the country. At most homes ceremonial dolls hina ningyo are displayed on tiers of shelves called hinadan covered with a scarlet carpet himosen. These dolls are dressed in the costume of the ancient Heian court. A full set of dolls usually consists of 15 dolls: the Emperor and Empress (dairi-bina), two ministers (zujin), three court ladies-in-waiting (kanjo), five musicians (hayashi) and three guards (eji). It was believed that the dolls protected people from sickness or ill fortune. It is a traditional hina-matsuri custom to offer to the dolls sweet rice wine shiro-zake, and three-layered (white, green, and pink colored), diamond-shaped rice cakes hishi-mochi. The white layer symbolizes snow, the green is for new growth and the pink is for peach flowers. A popular saying is that hina doll sets, usually put up about one month before the festival, should be put away as soon as possible after the festival in the belief that the longer one waits to put them away, the longer the girl will have to wait to get married. It may be a lesson that you should take good care of hina dolls to keep them beautiful. You can see hina dolls for sale at department stores or doll shops. In Matsuyama hina-doll festival is celebrated a month later, on April 3rd. Hina-matsuri exhibitions are held in many places.

### Feb. 6-March 21 TOBE-YAKI (Porcelain) HINA-MATSURI-TEN 9:00-17:00

Closed on Mondays At Tobe-yaki Dento-sangyo-kaikan

(Traditional Industrial Center) 2F Tobe-cho, Iyo-gun

Tobe-yaki hina-dolls, some of which are in the shape of cow, the zodiac sign for this year, e-zara (painted plates), and toban (painted pottery boards) made by potters of Tobe-yaki kilns are on exhibit and sale.

Admission: Adults 300 yen Seniors (over 65), High sch. & College Students 200 yen

Elementary & Jr. High sch. Students 100 yen

(Tel. 089-962-6600)

### Feb. 27-March 31 TOBE-YAKI HINA-MATSURI-TEN 6:00-23:00

At Dogo-onsen Bekkan (Annex) Asuka-no-yu 1F Entrance ▪Special Bathroom

This event is held for the first time in Dogo-onsen. Tobe-yaki hina-dolls made by Yamada Hiromi in the fashion of Japanese traditional arts and crafts are on exhibit, producing spring warmth. In the

bathrooms for men and women visitors admire paintings on the Tobe-yaki pottery boards on the walls. The paintings are made by Yamada Hiromi, who is only one woman Tobe-yaki traditional craftsman, presenting an ancient world of waka poems describing Dogo-onsen.

Fare: Entrance- Free / Bathroom- from 610 yen

27th, 28th 10:00-15:00 Challenge Tobe-yaki etsuke (painting) In the court of Asuka-no-yu

Fare: 1,200 yen

Further information: Dogo-onsen Consortium (Tel. 089-932-1126)

## Feb. 20-April 11 HINA DOLL EXHIBITION

**Closed on Mondays At Uwajima Date Museum Uwajima City**

On tiers of shelves covered with red cloth about 7.5 meters long, yusoku-bina, which consist of 17 dolls and 210 chodo (furnishings), are displayed. The dolls wear the same costumes as those of kuge, court nobles. They were made by Oki Heizo, a famous doll artisan in Kyoto in 1923. (Tel. 0895-22-7776)

Other exhibitions

1. Hina dolls and furnishings They were brought by Miyo-hime the wife of the 7th lord of Date clan Munetada as part of her trousseau about 200 years ago.
2. Ko-bina (miniature furnishings) made of silver They were originally owned by the 14th Shogun Tokugawa Iemochi and handed down to Takako, the wife of the 10th lord Munenobu. They are elegant and very rare.
3. Mitsuore-ningyo These dolls can be bent at the hips, knees, and ankles so that they can stand, sit, or be held in our arms. They were brought as marriage property by Tomiko, the second daughter of the 9th lord Muneo.

Admission: Adults 500 yen Seniors (over 65), High sch. & College Students 400 yen

Children (Jr. High sch. Students or younger) Free Disabled persons Free

**Transportation:** Take the JR express train bound for Uwajima and get off at Uwajima station. It takes 25 minutes on foot to get to the museum.

### HANA-MI (flower viewing)

Sakura, the cherry blossom, is the national flower of Japan and in spring most Japanese love to go outdoors seeing sakura in full bloom.

Popular hanami spots are:

#### Matsuyama Castle

Matsuyama Castle is one of the 100 national beautiful sakura spots, where about 200 cherry trees attract us in addition to the fantastic view of the castle against the clear blue sky.

### Ishite-gawa Riverside Park

There are about 1,100 cherry trees. Especially the area near Izumi-machi and Muro-machi are recommended spots. Between Ichitsubo bridge and Tachibana bridge are some grassy areas where we can feel relaxed.

### Dogo Park near Dogo-onsen

There are about 400 cherry trees of someiyoshino and Tsubaki-kan-zakura. The hill top area has a good command of the whole park in full bloom.

In addition we can enjoy hanami downtown.

From the windows of the street car we can appreciate sakura along the moat in Horinouchi.

Well-known cherry trees in temples in Matsuyama are Usuzumi-zakura in Saiho-ji in Shimoidai-cho, Mikaeri-no-sakura in Ishite-ji, and Uba-zakura in Taiho-ji in Minamiedo, all of which are designated Matsuyama City Natural Monuments, and have interesting legends related to sakura.

## March 20 SHUNBUN-NO-HI (The Vernal Equinox Day) National Holiday

On this day, day and night are the same length and the sun sets directly in the west. According to Buddhist cosmology, paradise, or the land of happiness, is located in the west. During the week of the equinox called higan, people visit their family graves and offer incense sticks o-senko to pay respect to their ancestors. The higan rites are based on Buddhist ideas, but they have been followed by Japanese people regardless of their religious faith. This custom is said to have been started in the 7th century by Prince Shotoku. After World War II, in 1948 the Vernal Equinox day was designated as a national holiday to admire nature and love living things. A favorite food on this occasion is ohagi, soft rice-balls covered with sweet azuki bean-paste. Higan is also referred to as a change of hot or cold season and there is an old saying, "Hot or cold weather ends with the equinox (Atsusa samusa mo higan made)".

**NOTES: Events might be canceled or postponed to prevent spread of the novel coronavirus infection. Please check the latest information.**