

■FESTIVALS

HINA DOLL EXHIBITIONS IN EHIME

-April 11 Exhibition of Hina-dolls & Hina chodo (furnishings)

Uwajima Date Museum Uwajima City (Tel. 0895-22-7776)

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. (More detailed information is in the March issue.)

HANA-MI (flower viewing)

Popular hanami spots in Matsuyama

Matsuyama Castle

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

Ishite-gawa riverside

The area near Izumi-machi, Muro-machi, and the area between Ichitsubo Bridge and Tachibana Bridge are recommended spots.

Dogo Park near Dogo-onsen

About 400 trees of somei yoshino and tsubaki kanzakura are lit up till 22:00 during the hanami season. The hill top area has a good command of the whole park in full bloom.

Well-known cherry trees at temples in Matsuyama are Usuzumi-zakura in Saiho-ji in Shimoidai-cho, Mikaeri-no-sakura at 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 cherry blossoms.

April 3-4 MATSUYAMA SPRING FESTIVAL (CASTLE FESTIVAL)

Light-up Castle Park

Cherry trees in Honmaru (main tower) Square --- March 20th - April 18th from sunset to 20:50

Paths up to the castle hill --- April 2nd -April 18th from sunset to 20:50

Spring Festival events like Yakyuken, Iyobushi, and Daimyo Musha Gyoretsu are canceled.

4 SHINONOME-NOH Shinonome-jinja shrine at the north end of Ropeway-gai St.

This year it is held on a smaller scale than usual.

Once Shinonome-noh was a core event of the Matsuyama Spring Festival. It was revived after a 13-year interval by the local people who love Matsuyama traditional noh culture.

Further information: Watanabe Tel. 090-4784-5847

April 8 HANA MATSURI (Buddha's Birthday)

Most temples celebrate Buddha's birthday. A statue of the newborn Siddhartha (who became Buddha) is on display and sweet tea is poured over it. The statue depicts the baby with one hand pointed at the sky and the other at the ground, symbolizing that he would be the lord of heaven and earth. At temples sweet tea is served to visitors.

TOBE-YAKI FESTIVAL is canceled this year.

April 25–May 15 MT. TOMISU TSUTSUJI (Azalea) FESTIVAL

On Mt. Tomisu Park, Ozu City

About 63,000 plants of azaleas are in bloom on top of Mt. Tomisu about this time of the year. Mt. Tomisu is well known in east Japan for its azalea blossoms. (Tel. 0893-24-2111)

Transportation: Take the bus bound for Yawatahama from Matsuyama Shieki bus stop #4 and get off at Ozu Honmachi. It takes one hour and 20 minutes. Or from JR Matsuyama station take the JR express train bound for Uwajima and get off at Ozu. It takes 40 minutes. From the station it takes 15 minutes by taxi to get to the park. Combine this with Garyu-sanso villa and Ozu Castle for a full day of sightseeing.

GOLDEN WEEK (April 29–May 5)

The string of holidays starting on April 29th and ending on May 5th is called Golden Week. Since it is a popular time to travel, all means of transportation are very crowded. If you want to take a trip you need to plan well in advance to get reservations.

NINOMIYA CHUHACHI MEMORIAL FLIGHT FESTIVAL is canceled this year.

April 29 SHOWA-NO-HI (National Holiday)

The Showa era lasted from 1927 to 1989. This day commemorates the Showa era.

KASHIMA SPRING FESTIVAL in Kashima Island, Hojo, Matsuyama City

It has not been announced yet whether the event will be held on schedule or not.

It was held in May 3–4 in 2019 but canceled last year.

This festival is famous for Kaineri-odori (see below), which is designated as a Prefectural Intangible Cultural Folk Asset, and Oshimenawa-no-harikae (see below), both of which are done on the sea.

Kaineri Odori

A prayer dance for succeeding in battle and a celebratory dance for victory, are performed. Boats are decorated with bamboo and flowers. Men row the boats and boys perform dances on board, re-enacting

famous sea battles using oars. It recalls the tradition of the Iyo Suigun, powerful marine guards who patrolled the sea near here in ancient times.

Oshimenawa no Harikae (Replacing the Sacred Rope)

A 45m long and 30cm thick shimenawa (sacred rope) that links the two small islands Meoto-iwa (couple rocks) near Kashima is replaced on the sea. The old one is taken down and the new one is put in place. (Tel. 089-992-1423)

May 3 KENPO-KINENBI (Constitution Day) (National Holiday)

The present constitution was promulgated on May 3rd, 1947. This day commemorates the event and it is also a day for us to reaffirm hope in national growth.

May 4 MIDORI-NO-HI (Greenery Day) (National Holiday)

This holiday was established in 1989 for people to admire nature, give thanks for its blessings, and to cultivate love for all living things on the earth.

May 5 KODOMO-NO-HI (Children's Day) (National Holiday)

Traditionally, this was Boys' Day, but after World War II it was changed to Children's Day. Now it is a day to pray for healthy growth of children. Koinobori (carp streamers) are flown which, according to Chinese legend, symbolize vigor and strength. Chimaki (rice dumpling wrapped in bamboo leaf) and kashiwa-mochi (rice cake wrapped in an oak leaf) are the traditional treats of the day.

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