

■FESTIVALS

Canceled Event

KANGETSUKAI (Moon Viewing Festival) In Yokaichi, Uchiko-cho

Sep. 1 BOSAI-NO-HI (Disaster Prevention Day)

Disaster Prevention Day was established in 1960 in order to remind us Japanese of the serious consequences of disasters caused by typhoons, tidal waves, earthquakes, tsunami etc., and to prepare ourselves to cope with them. The week from August 30 to Sept. 5 is called Disaster Prevention Week, during which disaster drills are held in many districts. It is also a time to make sure we have emergency supplies in our homes and that we know where the closest evacuation center is.

July 1–Sept. 20 UKAI (Cormorant Fishing) on the Hiji-kawa (river) Ozu City

In Japan the tradition of fishing with cormorants goes back at least a thousand years. In Ozu it started as a tourist attraction in 1957 and now the Hiji-kawa is one of the three most famous ukai spots in Japan, including the Nagara-gawa in Gifu Prefecture and the Mikuma-gawa in Oita Prefecture. The fishing is done from a boat called ubune, which is lit by torches as it sails down the Hiji-kawa, which runs through Ozu. Cormorant fishermen called usho beat the sides of the boats to encourage trained cormorants to catch fish. They are drawn by long strings attached to rings around the birds' necks, which prevent them from swallowing the fish. When a cormorant makes a catch, a fisherman pulls the bird in and has it spit out the fish on the boat. You can watch it from special sightseeing boats called yakatabune. On the Hiji-kawa ukai is done in the rare way called awase-ukai that ubune and sightseeing yakatabune sail down the river side by side. You can order a bento to eat on board or just ride the boat and watch, and some hotels offer a special ukai package. It will be canceled if the weather is bad. Prices range from ¥4,000 to ¥20,000. You need to make a reservation in advance at Ozu Machinoeki Asamoya. (Tel. 0893-57-6655)

<http://www.oozukankou.jp/02ukai.html>

Transportation: Take an Iyotetsu bus bound for Yawatahama from Shieki, gate #4, and get off at Ozu Honmachi, a 90-minute ride. Or take a JR express train from Matsuyama and get off at Ozu, a 40-minute ride. From the station take a taxi or walk for 30 minutes.

Sept. 4 YUYAKE (Sunset) PLATFORM CONCERT 16:50–19:10 At JR Shimonada station in Futami-cho, Iyo City

This year the concert will be held without audience. (Video distribution Service)

<https://iyokankou.jp/>

Sep. 11–Next Year Feb. 13

The 26th NATIONAL EXHIBITION OF KAMABOKO-ITA –NO–E 9:00–17:00

(closed on Tuesday)

At GALLERY SHIROKAWA in Shirokawa-cho, Seiyō City

The national exhibition of paintings on kamaboko (fish-paste) boards started more than twenty years ago. The exhibition was canceled last year to prevent spread of the novel coronavirus infection. 12,493 paintings including last-years were sent from all over the country and abroad. The painting which won the first prize is titled “Ippo mae (one step forward)”. It was painted by Hino Tsutomu from Imabari city, Ehime, representing a muscular and powerful foot of a Nioh statue which stands in Zenko-ji temple in Nagano Prefecture. (Tel. 0894-82-1001)

Sept. 20 KEIRO NO HI (Respect-for-the-Aged Day) National Holiday

Respect-for-the-Aged Day was instituted in 1966 as a national holiday to express thanks and respect for older people and pray for their health. In Japan, as in China, people celebrate their longevity as well as their health on the 60th and 70th birthdays. The Japanese have even more celebrations for ages 77, 88 and 99 because double numbers are favored in the belief that luck also doubles in those years.

Sept. 23 SHUBUN-NO-HI (Autumn Equinox) National Holiday

Shubun-no-hi is the central day of Higan week (20th–26th). According to Buddhist custom, it is the week people visit their family graves, clean them and offer incense and food. It is believed that on this day one can meet one's ancestors. The symbol of Higan is higan-bana, a cluster amaryllis that blooms at this time in the fields and the countryside. It has no leaves at first, just flowers, and the root is poisonous.

TSUKIMI or KANGETSU (Moon Viewing)

Autumn is the season of Moon Viewing. Mangetsu, the full moon (harvest moon) in autumn is the largest and clearest of the year and so it is special in Japan. We call it chushu no meigetsu (the full moon of August 15th by the lunar calendar). This year the full moon is on the night of September 21st. In many homes, a small table is set on the south side of the house where the moonlight pours in. On the table Japanese pampas grass (susuki), which is said to invite the gods, is arranged. Anything round, like the moon, is offered, such as sweet dumplings (tsukimi dango), green soybeans (edamame), grapes or taro (sato imo). It is said that the custom of moon viewing was introduced from China in the 8th century. In the Heian era (792~1180) the imperial court appreciated the beautiful moon and competed in composing waka poetry. It was in the Edo era (1600~1867) that this custom spread among common people.

The autumn season is also favored because of the cooler evenings when singing insects give full voice amid the tall autumn grasses and flowers.

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