

## ■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. 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. In Matsuyama the hina-doll festival is celebrated a month later, on April 3rd. Hina-matsuri exhibitions are held in many places.

### -March 27 TOBE-YAKI (Porcelain) HINA-MATSURI-TEN

At Tobe-yaki Dento-sangyo-kaikan (Traditional Industrial Center) 1F Lobby

9:00-17:00 Closed on Mondays

Tobe-cho, Iyo-gun

Tobe-yaki hina-dolls, e-zara (painted plates), and toban (painted pottery boards) made by potters of Tobe-yaki kilns are on exhibit and on 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)

### -April 24 EXHIBITION OF HINA DOLLS AND HINA FURNISHINGS

9:00-17:00 Closed on Mondays At Uwajima Date Museum Uwajima City

Hina dolls and furnishings

On tiers of shelves about 7.5 meters long yusoku-bina are displayed. These dolls wear the same costumes as those of kuge, court nobles in the Heian era. Hina dolls and hina chodo (furnishings) were brought by Miyo-hime (the wife of Munetada, the 7th lord of the Date clan) as part of her trousseau about 200 years ago.

Ko-bina (miniature furnishings)

Ko-bina made of silver which were brought by Takako (the wife of the 10th lord) as the marriage property are displayed. They are elegant, delicate, and very rare.

Admission: Adults 500 yen High sch. & College Students 400 yen  
Elementary & Jr. High sch. Students 250 yen (Tel. 0895-22-7776)

### HANA-MI (flower viewing)

Sakura, the cherry blossom, is the national flower of Japan and in spring many Japanese go outdoors and enjoy 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

The area near Izumi-machi and Muro-machi is a recommended spot. There are grassy areas on the riverside where we can relax.

### Dogo Park near Dogo-onsen

The hill top area has a good command of the whole park in full bloom.

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 19 DOGO-ONSEN MATSURI (Hot Spring Festival) (Tel. 089-943-8343)**

Only Yu-kito (a prayer to the God of Dogo Hot Spring) is held at Dogo-onsen Asuka-no-yu. The other events are canceled.

## **March 21 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.**