



April 14th & 15th

TAKAYAMA

SPRING FESTIVAL

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高山祭

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TAKAYAMA SPRING FESTIVAL

The Takayama Spring Festival is the annual festival of Hie Jinja Shrine, honoring the guardian deity, known affectionately as Sanno-sama, of the southern half of Takayama's castle-town. As such the festival is commonly known as the Sanno Festival.

The festival is thought to have its origins in the latter half of the 16th century or early 17th century. The main ceremonies of the spring festival are performed by locals on April 14 and 15 each year. It heralds the coming of spring to Takayama, a small, snow-bound city nestled between mountains; not only do the people bask in the joy of spring, but through the festival they also beseech the gods for good harvests and peace for the year.

One of the main attractions of the festival is the yatai (festival floats) and the various traditional arts surrounding them. The yatai are symbolic of Takayama's past economic might, and each one is a display of Japanese traditional craftsmanship. The spring festival is a major drawcard that attracts people to Takayama in droves from throughout Japan and around the world.

Gojunko Procession



The deity Sanno-sama usually resides in the shrine, but the Gojunko Procession marks the two days in which he travels around the town. Indeed, it is a major parade of several hundred people. The mikoshi portable shrine in which Sanno-sama rides in takes centre stage, surrounded by serenading musicians, lion dance performers purifying the streets and ridding them of evil spirits, tokeiraku players banging gongs, and escorts keeping an eye on proceedings. The procession departs Hie Jinja Shrine on April 14 and weaves through the town, and returns to its home the following day. Each participant strides along in the unique garb of yesteryears, and the procession allows the observer to peek into the Japan of the past.

On April 14 and 15

Karakuri Performance



Japanese deities are brought forth from their shrines to rest at the Otabisho. At the intersection in front of it, dedicated karakuri marionette performances are held. The three yatai (Sambaso, Shakkyotai and Ryujintai) each put on a different performance. These displays enact old Japanese legends and other tales, and the karakuri dolls virtually come alive in intricate dances set to Noh drama librettos. The dolls are controlled by dozens of strings with incredible skill by highly experienced puppeteers.

Twice a day (morning/afternoon), on April 14 and 15 In front of Otabisho



If it rains, all festival ceremonies and performances will be canceled

Gathering of the yatai



Yatai are only on display during festivals. With intricate wooden structures, exquisite carvings, drapes and other textiles, lacquer-work, metal ornaments and other decorations, yatai are indeed a collection of traditional Japanese craftsmanship. In fact, the yatai featured in the Takayama Festival have been designated by the government as tangible folklore cultural assets. Do not miss this opportunity to see yatai up close and marvel at their delicate adornments. You will find Kaguratai, Sambaso, Shakkyotai and Ryujintai in the square near Otabisho, and the other eight yatai lined up on the town's streets.

On April 14 and 15

Night Festival



On the night of April 14, twelve yatai are festooned with some 100 lanterns for the night festival. The spectacle of the ornate yatai floating their way through the evening with gently swaying lanterns alight is truly a sight to behold. And having completed their rounds, the yatai are serenaded back into their storehouses with a special tune, unique to Takayama and sung only at the night festival. Spectators are treated with the fantastical scenery of wonderful yatai drifting through the historical heart of Takayama.

From approx. 18:30 on April 14

SUPERVISOR: Takayama City Office INFORMATION: Hida Takayama Tourist Information Office TEL 0577-32-5328 FAX 0577-33-5565 <https://www.hida.jp/english/>



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October 9th & 10th

TAKAYAMA

AUTUMN FESTIVAL

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Kaguratai

Hoteitai

Kimpotai

Daihachitai

Kyuhosha

Jimmatai

TAKAYAMA AUTUMN FESTIVAL



Sennintai

Gyojintai

Hojutai

Homeitai

Ho'otai

The Takayama Autumn Festival is the annual festival of Sakurayama Hachimangu Shrine, honoring the guardian deity, known affectionately as Hachiman-sama, of the northern side of Takayama's castle town. As such the festival is commonly known as the Hachiman Festival.

The festival is thought to have its origins in the latter half of the 16th century or early 17th century. The main ceremonies of the autumn festival are performed by locals on October 9 and 10 each year. It started as a ceremony to offer gratitude to the gods for bumper harvests.

The spring and autumn festivals of Takayama are counted among the three most beautiful festivals in Japan along with Kyoto's Gion Festival and Saitama's Chichibu Night Festival. Indeed, the Takayama Festivals are designated by the government as an intangible folklore cultural asset. The main attractions of the festival are the ornate yatai and traditional ceremonies. The yatai-gumi groups who own the yatai of the Takayama Festival take immense pride in maintaining their area's yatai, each handed down from generation to generation. Once the autumn festival is over, Takayama prepares for the long, snowy winter.

Goshinko Procession



The deity Hachiman-sama usually resides in the shrine, but the Goshinko Procession marks the two days in which he travels around the town. The mikoshi (portable shrine in which Hachiman-sama rides) takes centre stage, and surrounding it are serenading musicians, lion dance performers purifying the streets and ridding them of evil spirits, tokeiraku players banging gongs, and escorts dressed in ceremonial samurai garb keeping an eye on proceedings. The procession departs the Sakurayama Hachimangu Shrine on October 9 and weaves through the town, and returns to its home the following day.

On October 9 and 10

Karakuri Performance



In the square in front of the shrine, the Hoteitai float is the stage for a one-of-a-kind karakuri marionette performance dedicated to the deities. The karakuri doll characters are the deity Hotei as well as a boy and girl. The children leap onto a swing and then onto Hotei's shoulders. Just then, his fan splits open and a banner appears bearing the message "Flaunt not your high virtues and knowledge; share with the masses". The dolls are controlled by dozens of strings with incredible skill by highly experienced puppeteers.

Twice a day (morning/afternoon) on October 9 and 10 in front of Sakurayama Hachimangu Shrine



If it rains, all festival ceremonies and performances will be canceled.

Gathering of the yatai



The eleven Hachiman Festival yatai are usually kept in their storehouses, and are only displayed together once a year. With intricate wooden structures, exquisite carvings, drapes, metal ornaments and other decorations, yatai are indeed a collection of traditional Japanese craftsmanship. In fact, the yatai featured in the Takayama Festival have been designated by the government as tangible folklore cultural assets. You will find the Hoteitai float in the shrine's main courtyard, and the other ten yatai lined up on the approaching walkway as well as other areas.

On October 9 and 10

Yatai parade

Four yatai are towed through the town in this procession.

On October 9

Night Festival



Another wonderful attraction of the Takayama Festival is the Night Festival held on the night of October 9. Around dusk, eleven yatai are decked with some hundred lanterns and then, hauled by their respective yatai-gumi teams, they weave their way around the town with lanterns alight. And having completed their rounds, the yatai are serenaded back into their storehouses with a special tune, unique to Takayama and sung only at the night festival. The atmosphere created by the music rouses feelings of anticipation towards the coming autumn.

From approx. 18:00 on October 9

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