

Now that it is spring, the wild sakura trees of Aizu will be in full bloom. There are 5 famous trees spread throughout the Aizu area:

Ishibe Zakura (Aizuwakamatsu)

Usuzumi Zakura (Isasumi Shrine, Aizumisato)

Tora no Ozakura (Hoyoji Temple, Aizumisato)

Oshika Zakura (Iwahashi Shrine, Inawashiro)

Sugi no Ito Zakura (Yakuoji Temple, Aizubange)

Together, these trees are known as the Aizu Gozakura.

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JTF

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International Association News

Cherry Blossom Potluck Party

Come celebrate the end of winter at one of Aizu's most beautiful spots for cherry blossom viewing, Kotokuji Temple! The AWIA invites you to come chill out, eat great food, and drink sake under the blooming cherry blossoms with us. Come make new friends and have fun during one of Japan's oldest pastimes. Feel free to bring your family and friends.



DATE AND TIME: Saturday, April 22nd; 12:00pm to 3:00pm

PLACE: Kotokuji Temple (behind the AWIA)

ADDRESS: 2-12 Sakae-machi, Aizu Wakamatsu (会津若松市栄町2-12)

FEE: 100 yen

Please apply with the AWIA by Friday, April 21st

✳ Because it is a potluck party, we ask that everyone bring one dish (anything is fine, and it doesn't need to be handmade). The AWIA will provide non-alcoholic drinks. Those who would like to drink alcohol are invited to BYOB.

Support the AWIA: Renew Your Membership in 2017-2018

The end of winter means the beginning of another great fiscal year here at the AWIA. We hope you enjoyed last year, and are looking forward to all of the fun events we have planned for 2017-2018. Now is your chance to support the AWIA, by renewing your registration with us. We also welcome your feedback and support as we continue to provide programs and events here in Aizu. Also, please let us know if there are any changes to your contact information.

We are always accepting new members, so please spread the word about the AWIA!

The Japanese Class For You!

The AWIA runs a variety of Japanese classes. If you or anyone you know is interested in studying Japanese, send them our way! Check out the three classes below, or inquire with the AWIA today!

JAPANESE SPACE FOR KIDS (*Kodomo Nihongo Hiroba*)

The *Kodomo Nihongo Hiroba* is for kids with roots in foreign countries who want help with everyday Japanese or with school work.

The *Hiroba* is run at the AWIA on Sundays, from 10:00 to 12:00pm. The participation fee is 1,000 yen for one year. The parent or guardian must be a member of the AWIA.

SPRING JAPANESE CLASSES (April through June)

There are 2 courses available, one in the morning on Fridays, from 10am and one during the evening on Thursdays, from 6:30pm.

Each course is 4,000 yen for AWIA members, and 6,000 yen for non-members. Classes are held at the Aizu Keikodo.

NIHONGO SALON (year-round)

Want to practice speaking in Japanese? This class is for those who want to practice their Japanese conversational skills!

Nihongo Salon is run every Tuesday, from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm, at the Aizu Keikodo. The participation fee is 2,000 yen for one year.



The Aizu Juraku Markets

The Juraku markets are back! The market is recreation of the Aizu Juraku markets from 400 years ago, during the time of Gamo Ujisato. It began as a way to increase industry here in Aizuwakamatsu, paying special attention to the regional sake and lacquerware industries.

This year, there will be several special features, including historically accurate food, games, craft events, tea, and traditional storytelling.

DATE AND TIME: April 8th to May 7th: Saturdays, Sundays, and national holidays; 10:00am to 4:00pm

WEBSITE: <http://aizu-jyuraku.jp/>



Tsurugajo Sakura Tea Ceremony



An outdoor tea ceremony demonstration will be held at the castle. If you stop by, you'll be able to see a variety of tea techniques. You can also enjoy some tea yourself, under the cherry blossoms.

DATE AND TIME: Sat. April 22nd and Sun. April 23rd: 10:00am-3:00pm

LOCATION: Tsurugajo Honmaru

PRICE: 500 yen per cup
(price includes Japanese sweets)



Sake Brewing Course



Come make your own sake from start to finish with this year-long Aizuwakamatsu sake brewing class.

YEAR SCHEDULE:

- Sunday, May 21st: Rice Planting
- Early October: Rice Harvesting
- Sunday, February 4th, 2018: Sake Bottling
- Saturday, March 24, 2018: Sake Tasting Event

PRICE: 20,000 yen

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Sunday, May 7th

WEBSITE: <http://aizu-gt.jp/members/02-horomui.html>

Other Events at Tsurugajo during Sakura Season

Plenty of events will be going on during April at Tsurugajo Castle. Come out and enjoy spring with the rest of Aizuwakamatsu.

Castle Light-Up

The castle will be lit up for the hanami season, to give everyone a few more hours to enjoy the sakura.

DATE AND TIME: April 7th to May 7th, from sunset until 9:30pm each night (if only a few trees are in bloom, the light up will last until 8:30pm.)



Sake Tasting Event

Sake stalls will be set up in the Ni-no-maru for a sake tasting spring event. Sake Tasting Sets start at 500 yen. If you purchase your ticket ahead of time, you will be entered into a lottery.

DATE AND TIME: Saturday, April 22nd: 4:30pm to 8:00pm



Virtual Reality Theater at Tsurugajo Castle's Kuroganemon Gate

This April will see the start of a new exhibit at Tsurugajo castle. A Virtual Reality video will be on display at the Kuroganemon gate, depicting the castle and town as it appeared during the late Edo period. (admission fees apply)

DATE AND TIME: Beginning April 1st; 8:30am~5:00pm daily (10 minutes per screening)

Also: As of April 1st, users of a dedicated smartphone app. will be able to view animated sights and historical persons affiliated with the Aizu domain at various locations, including Tsurugajo, the Nisshinkan, and Imoriyama. Users can also take selfies with the animated historical characters using the app.



Aizu Wakamatsu International Association

965-0871 Fukushima-ken, Aizu Wakamatsu-shi,
Sakae-machi 2-14, Leo Club Garden Square 5th FL

TEL (0242) 27-3703 | FAX (0242) 27-3704

<http://www.awia.jp>

If you have any recommendations, or questions about the newsletter, let us know!

