



GIRLS' FESTIVAL (HINA-MATSURI) ON MARCH 3RD

Hina-matsuri is often called “Doll’s Festival” or “Girls’ Festival” in English. It’s a celebration for the health and happiness of the girls in the household and it’s said that *hina-ningyou* take away bad luck from the girls who own them. Hina dolls depict the imperial court and represent the Emperor, Empress, their servants, etc., with the dolls dressed in Heian period court costumes. The dolls used to be placed on a stand with several levels like descending stairs in old days. Today, the doll sets are smaller with fewer dolls and as few as just one level to be suitable for Japanese houses. However, the doll sets must be put away as soon as *Hina-matsuri* is over, as it is believed that if people put away the hina dolls too late, the girl will get married late in the future.



The doll sets are also displayed together with *hishimochi* (rice cakes colored pink, white and green) and *shirozake* (rice wine) and peach flowers.

BOYS' FESTIVAL AND CHILDREN'S DAY ON MAY 5TH



Though both holidays are celebrated on the same day, each has its own meaning.

Boys’ festival is for wishing healthy growth and success for the boys in the family. On the other hand, Children’s Day is for wishing happiness for children, respecting their personality, and appreciating their mothers.

On Boys’ Festival, carp-shaped streamers called *koinobori*, samurai warrior helmets called *kabuto*, and armed samurai dolls called *gogatu-ningyo* are displayed in the houses which have boys in their family in order to wish for success in their lives and protection from accidents, diseases and disasters. There is also traditional food for Boys’ Festival such as *kashiwa mochi*, sticky rice cake with red bean filling wrapped in oak leaves, and *chimaki*, carrot-shaped smooth white rice dumplings in bamboo leaves.

Kashiwa mochi is eaten for prosperity of descendants, and *chimaki* is eaten for protection against misfortune.



SAKURA HISTORY ~History of Sakura and Hanami parties in Japan~

Nowadays, thanks to their popularity and that cherry blossoms only tend to last for about two weeks, sitting under cherry blossom trees and having *hanami* parties with food, drinks and friends has become a massively popular past-time in Japan during early spring. But where did this popularity come from?

Hanami parties are a centuries-old practice in Japan, and are said to have started during the Nara period (710-794). However, during this time, it was actually *ume* (plum tree blossoms) that were adored, not *sakura*, the cherry blossoms most commonly associated with *hanami* nowadays. This change from *ume* to *sakura* happened during the Heian period (794-1185) thanks to poetry. Nature is a common theme in Japanese poetry, as mentioning seasonal elements is one of the rules for creating a *haiku* poem. During this period, the word *hana* (“flower”) and thus, *hanami*, literally meaning “flower-viewing,” became equal to *sakura*.

In traditional Japanese religions like Shinto, gods/spirits called *kami* manifest in things such as rocks, trees, rivers, animals, places, and even people. Thus, *hanami* was originally a festival where people made offerings of food and *sake* to the *kami* in the trees. Parties were held by members of the Imperial Court underneath the trees where people consumed the offerings. The restrictions were then lifted to include *samurai* and then eventually the general public during the Edo period. As *hanami* began to become more inclusive, the parties gradually lost their religious significance and become more similar to those of today. This can be observed through the Japanese proverb 「花より団子」 (“*dango* rather than flowers”). *Dango* is a snack of three *mochi* balls stacked on a stick, commonly offered at festivals, giving an impression that for many people the main attraction of *hanami* was the food.

Sakura have gained a strong symbolism in Japan. The shortness of the blossoms exemplifies the Japanese concept of *mono no aware* that emphasizes the awareness of impermanence or transience of all things. As the flowers tend to bloom together, their white and pink blossoms are also associated with clouds. Imagery of *sakura* is prevalent in consumer goods and *irezumi* tattoos, and was used to invoke Japanese spirit during WWII. The blossoms also have culinary uses— though be careful of eating too many *sakura* sweets because the blossoms are toxic in large doses!

The Japanese fiscal and school years start in April, around the same time that the flowers begin to bloom, so for many *sakura* also signify reproduction and new life and beginnings. In this sense, after the devastation of the March 2011 tsunami, cherry blossoms were used as a symbol of hope during the recovery.



There are actually over 200 cultivars of cherry blossom and similar *hanami* festivals are a big part of cultures in other Asian countries like Taiwan, Korea the Philippines and China. Cherry trees can be found all along the temperate zone of the Northern Hemisphere, from North America to the Middle East and Southeast Asia. However, Japan’s trees have generally been bred for looks, so they tend not to bear fruit like cherry trees might in other countries. Thanks to their beauty and meaning, Japan has often gifted the cherry blossoms to other countries, including the US, Brazil, Korea, Italy and Finland. Nowadays *hanami* festivals and the beauty of *sakura* are celebrated around the world every spring. With such a long history and cultural significance, it’s no wonder why the *sakura* is considered Japan’s second unofficial national flower along with the chrysanthemum.

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES IN TOWN

MARCH

10 (SUN) 1:00pm-4:00pm

21st JAPANESE SPEECH CONTEST FOR FOREIGNERS

The contest will be held at the city's Youth Hall in Jyukkenzaka (in front of Umeda Junior High School).

24 (SAT) and 25 (SUN) 10:00am-5:00pm

6th GOTOCHI-KYRA PARTY IN CHIGASAKI

The party will take place at Lusca Chigasaki. Many local characters, including Eboshimaro from Chigasaki will gather together.

25 (SUN) 9:30am-5:30pm

Yanagishima Sports Park Opening Ceremony

The Opening Ceremony and some sport events will be held at the new Yanagishima Sports Park.



APRIL

21 (SAT) and 22 (SUN) 10:00am-4:00pm

CHIGASAKI INDUSTRIAL FAIR 2018

Many local companies will display their products in front of the Universal Gymnasium.

22 (SUN)

SPRING CITIZEN FESTIVAL 10:00am-5:00pm

The festival will be held at Chuo Park. Many groups will sell food, beverages, flowers, plants, handicraft products, and on the stage, many groups will perform dances or play musical instruments.

OOKA ECHIZEN-SAI FESTIVAL

You can watch a big parade including marching bands, baton twirlers, portable shrine and people wearing Edo-era costumes in the procession around JR Chigasaki Station from 1:00 to 3:00pm.

28 (SAT) and 29 (SUN) 10:00am-4:00pm

SHONAN FESTIVAL

The festival will take place within Chigasaki's Southern Beach district. Live music and hula dancing will be performed in the area and various foods, beverages and handicrafts will be sold.

MAY

12 (SAT) and 13 (SUN) 9:00am-5:00pm

CHIGASAKI ALOHA MARKET

The market will take place at the former Nishihama parking lot. Many Hawaiian goods such as aloha shirts, beverages, trinket will be sold.

6TH GOTOCHI-KYARA PARTY IN CHIGASAKI

Date & Time: March 24 (Sat.) - 25 (Sun.), 10:00-17:00

Place: Lusca Chigasaki [Chigasaki Station Building]

Do you know Eboshimaro, the official character of Chigasaki? He is a Chigasaki City Tourism Ambassador.



In Japan there are many official characters to introduce the local products and attract travelers and customers. Eboshimaro and his friends are going to gather in Chigasaki in March. A memorial ceremony, a gathering for a photos and a performance on the stage will be held. The characters' items will also be sold throughout the event.

Come and see them and take photos with them! They'll surely look great with you on your social media! For inquiry, contact Chigasaki City Tourism Association at 0467-84-0377.

SHONAN FESTIVAL 2018



The Shonan Festival 2018 will be take place at Chigasaki's Southern Beach on April 28 (Sat) and 29 (Sun) from 10:00 to 16:00, rain or shine.

Based on its concept, which is to create enjoyable seaside activities, various beach-themed events will be held.

On the stage, hula dancing, live music and the Shonan Girl Contest will be performed. Clothes and trinkets will be sold in the flea market area. In the booth area, over fifty stalls will sell various things, including food and beverages. In addition, sports events including a beach soccer tournament and paddle race contest, are also scheduled.



Chigasaki Story Marché

~OMOIYARI & KODAWARI NO SHINA~

There's a unique event being held on the second Saturday of every other month at the Matsuo Construction office site on Yuzo Street. The Chigasaki Story Marché, is a market-style event which operates with a theme of *omoiyari*, "being considerate," and *kodawari*, "being particular." The organizer of the event, Mr. Aoki, through his line of work has met many people with hidden talents of making high-quality products of various items and realized they needed a place to introduce them. Based on the event's theme, he meets with each person, or the business owners introduced to him through family or friends, who has a story to tell about their products which they want to share with others. The title of the event, with "Story" meaning the story of each retailer, and "Marché" meaning "market" in French is where name originates from.

Story Marché has been held 28 times since 2014. It started with few participants, but now through a strong bond between family and friends there are over 20 retailers of different products in the group. There are many high-quality items offered, such as flavored green tea, herbal tea, homemade pickles and organic vegetables. Beautifully handmade crafted knitted handbags, children's hats and unique handmade accessories are available. You can also enjoy several dining outlets offering food such as different exotic curry, Japanese "suiton," pita bread sandwiches and Hawaiian lunch plates. Not to forget homemade pastries and for those with a sweet tooth, homemade confectioneries are available, too.

The next Chigasaki Story Marché will be held on March 10th from 9:00am to 2:00pm. The event is a little different each time with new recruits and different participants within the group attending on different months. They are currently planning to organize Chigasaki Story Marché on the second Saturday of every month instead of every other month due to the popularity of event. Take a stroll down towards the ocean on Yuzo Street on the second Saturday of the month and if you see a mob of people gathered at a tented area on the left, that's where the Marché is at. There's always a little something for everybody at each event, but most importantly it's a gathering place for everyone and place to meet new friends.

MEET CHIGASAKI BREEZE HERO MOKICHI KUMAZAWA

Local insight – Kumazawa Brewing the only brewery in area

“I’m 6th generation. It’s young in the sake industry.” said Mokichi Kumazawa, as he talked about the history of Kumazawa Brewing established in 1872. Mokichi was his grandfather’s name, from whom he succeeded his sake brewery business after he returned from university in the U.S. Since then, the young owner has developed new initiatives one after another.



“The brewery had produced relatively affordable sake. I wanted to make the best sake brand in area. I discussed with our Toji many times but he did not accept my new concept. So I decided to replace him.” Toji is the head of brewers. From ancient times, sake is made in winter, the best season for yeast to work in the process of fermentation. Breweries gather seasonal workers mostly from the northern part of Japan who farm in their villages in summer. The leader of seasonal brewers is called Toji. Toji have gained great power in brewing since they have high expertise in brewing and power to recruit workers from their village. It was the tradition that breweries give Toji all authority in brewing, and do not interfere in his work. It must have been a hard decision to make. Mokichi got through this by trying a new approach. “I started to build my own team, hiring young graduates from agricultural universities with great passion.” Tensei 天青 was created in this new attempt. As its name suggests, it tastes as bright as blue sky. “I put a focus on matching up with local food. Sake produced in Niigata tastes dry and goes well with salty food. I think Tensei is great for a variety of local dishes in Shonan.”



Shonan Beer has been the most popular craft beer brand in the area since 1996. Mokichi went into beer brewing because “we needed to do something in summer.” The owner with great passion flew himself to Germany to learn beer brewing. He even invited a German brewer to launch a new brewing facility. Some other sake breweries started local craft beer just by buying the manufacturing package from beer giants. “I thought it would taste the same. I wanted to pursue our own taste.” Now, Shonan Beer is one of the most prominent craft beer brands, winning the World Beer Cup 5 times.

CB asked him what he is into now. “Historically, sake brewery was a center of community, where people gather and exchange produce. I hope Kumazawa Brewing can support our community.” CB found an art gallery in the brewery, exhibiting local artist works. There is held a green market where local fresh vegetables are available for sale. We can see his strong commitment to the community as the only brewery in Shonan.

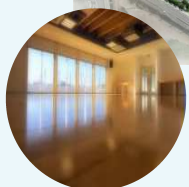


Yanagishima Sports Park

The opening ceremony of the newly constructed Yanagishima Sports Park will be held at the Park from 9:30 to 11:00am on March 25, Sunday.

In the park, there is the athletic field, tennis courts and a club house.

A performance from the brass band from Nakajima Junior High School and cheerleading from Chigasaki High School will be done at the ceremony. After the ceremony, a celebration of the 70th anniversary of Chigasaki City will be held from 11:00am to 5:30pm for citizens to participate in.



To access the park, the routinely-run buses for Hamamidaira complex from the JR Chigasaki Station are available. In addition, a special bus for the park will be run from the south exit of JR Chigasaki Station. Please check the detailed schedule which will be announced on the City Hall’s website in March.

If driving, your car should be parked at the ULVAC’s parking area and then you will be transported to the park by shuttle bus.

For your reference, the reservation of each facility of the park had already started from February 1st and they will be available for public use from April 1st.

CROWDING OF CHIGASAKI CITY HALL EXPECTED AT THE END OF MARCH

The counters of Chigasaki City Hall will be crowded at the end of March due to the end of the fiscal year. Please take the following precautions to avoid long waiting:

1) Avoid peak day and time

If possible, early March is recommended. Check the estimated crowd calendar attached. Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays will be crowded, with between 11:00 and 14:00 expected to be the most crowded.

2) Extra counters will be set up on March 24, 31 and April 1 from 8:30 to 17:00.

Attention: The Disability Welfare Section will only be open on March 31 and April 1.

3) Convenience store grant service

If you have a "My Number Card" with an electrical certificate of "Basic Resident Registration," you can print certificate copies of residence and seal registration at the convenience stores that have a multi-copier such as Seven-Eleven, Lawson, Circle-K, Sunkus, and Family Mart.

4) Use branch offices

Branch offices are available for certificates of residence, family registers, seal registration and income tax.

Visit the city website for more information about branches.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
2018 Mar.	5	6	7	8	9	10 (AM)	11
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Mar/ April	26	27	28	29	30	31	1
April	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Remarks:

	Slightly crowded
	Crowded
	Very crowded
	Closed

REMEMBER 3.11

This is a report from Minamisanriku-cho about the current status of disaster areas.

Minamisanriku-cho is a town in the northeastern corner of Miyagi Prefecture. Its east area along the Pacific Ocean consists of 2 large bays with its other areas surrounded by mountains. Because of this geography, the town is blessed with nature.

On March 11 2011, a magnitude 9.0 undersea megathrust earthquake occurred at Sanriku-oki. Minamisanriku-cho suffered from great damage due to the powerful tsunami with an immersion depth of up to 23.9m triggered by the seismic intensity 6 earthquake.

In Minamisanriku-cho, out of the population of 17,666 (as of the study in February 2011), 620 people died and 212 people remain missing. Tsunami waves reached inside the town and destroyed 58% of all the houses in the town.

The tsunami also gave serious damages to highways and JR Kesenuma lines along the coast so that many districts were isolated. The traffic confusion disrupted the delivery of relief goods and conducting safety confirmation. The number of missing persons was allegedly 10,000 immediately after the disaster.

Soon after the disaster, with much support, Minamisanriku-cho embarked on a reconstruction plan which aimed to immediately provide housing to the residents who lost their homes. Currently, the construction of housing is finished and many people have started their new lives.

Since April 2012, Chigasaki City has dispatched 10 workers to Minamisanriku-cho to support reconstruction and revitalization in town for its residents to rebuild their daily lives.

Still now, construction planning of the fishing port and coastal breakwater is underway, with much support of official workers from all over Japan.



[The office building of disaster control After the disaster]



[The city where reconstruction is progressing]



[Opening ceremony for SANSAN shopping street]

Takami-san, an officer of Property Administration Section in the Minamisanriku-cho Town Office.

"That was when I was in the 8th grade and I had finished preparation for a graduation ceremony for the next day when the big earthquake hit us. I evacuated to the schoolyard where many people gathered because it was designated as an evacuation place, but the tsunami reached to the schoolyard. I felt it was dangerous so I ran to the cliff at the back of the school. From the cliff, I saw the tsunami was swallowing the school and heard car horns keep on beeping.

For these last 7 years since the earthquake disaster, on the way to school and work, I've seen the town undergoing reconstruction. I'm glad that Minamisanriku-cho has become a new town, but at the same time I feel a bit sad that the Minamisanriku-cho before the disaster will be forgotten. I will not forget Minamisanriku-cho as of before the disaster, and I'll keep dedicating my hard work to support reconstruction and revitalization in town"

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