

Gunma Events

December 2018

Udon wheat noodle



Yakisoba fried noodle



Okkirikomi hot pot noodle



Yakimanju roasted buns



ぐんまの粉食文化 Gunma-no Konashoku Bunka (Gunma's delicious wheat flour cuisine)

Because of used-to-be very active volcanoes like Mt. Akagi and Mt. Haruna, Gunma was not suited to grow rice. Long sunshine hours and dry air in winter, however, enabled farmers to harvest two crops a year, making it an ideal condition to grow wheat.

In Gunma, wheat flour dishes were regularly put on dinner table. Specifically, they are “Okkirikomi pot noodle”, “Soba buckwheat noodle”, “Udon wheat noodle”, “Manju sweet azuki buns, etc.”

At a farming household, the wife's work is never done. During the day, she goes out to work on the fields with her husband and other family members. She is also responsible for the chores around the house, including cleaning, laundry, fixing three meals a day, and taking care of children. Since the end of the Samurai Government (1868), sericulture was added to the list of responsibilities.

After a hard day's work on the field, she came home to fix dinner for the entire family. Hungry children were waiting. Naturally, she had to whip up quick but very delicious supper. This is how a wheat flour dish called Okkirikomi was born. It's a farm-to-table hot-pot dish with lots of vegetables and wheat noodles in either miso or shoyu soup.

It's a hot meal, very delicious, and with ingredients varied by locality and by season. The prefectural government has been promoting the Okkirikomi dishes throughout Gunma. Many restaurants now serve Okkirikomi.

Nutritionally, Okkirikomi dishes are rich in carotene and high in fiber. Manju sweet azuki buns are for snacks. Yakimanju roasted buns with salty-sweet sauce is a bi-product of home-brewed Japanese sake. Here are some of the brand dishes of Gunma-no Konashoku or wheat flour cuisine.

Yakisoba fried noodles have a different origin. It is said to have come from the northern prefecture of Akita. During WWII, workers came to an aircraft factory in Ota & Oizumi from all over Japan. People from Akita ate their local food, Yakisoba, which quickly spread to fellow factory workers because the food was very easy to prepare. Mizusawa Udon is a brand name and is one of the three most famous Udon noodles in the country. Himokawa Udon in Kiryu area is a different type of noodle, which is extremely wide. Bunbuki Chagama no Kamatama Udon from Tatebayashi and Kimtoma Yakiudon in Fujioka are new arrivals invented to attract out-of-town visitors.

Watch [“Gunma-chan's internship at a Yakimanju Shop”](#)

[Lake Haruna Illumination Festa 2018](#)

At 1,084 meters above sea level, winter on Lake Haruna is freezing, yet it's worth the trip to see all the illumination displays and laser beam shows, even fireworks display on some evenings.

When: Dec. 7 (Fri.) – 26 (Wed.) 17:00 - 22:00

(This year, fireworks displays are scheduled for 7th, 10th, 13th, 17th, 20th, 24th, and 26th at 20:30 hours)

Where: Near Visitor Center on Lake Haruna
(Harunako-machi, Takasaki) [MAP](#)

Contact: 027-374-5111

[2018 Iseaki City Illuminations @Kezoji Koen](#) [Kezoji Koen Illuminations, Romantic-shi-Night](#)

Iseaki City's illuminations will be held at Kezoji Koen Park like last year.

The park's original illumination is called “Romantic-shi-Night” (from Dec. 1 thru 25, except for Dec. 3,4,11 & 18), during which five rides, including Ferris wheel, marry-go-round, etc. will be open until 9 p.m.

When: Dec. 1 (Sat.) – 25 (Tue.) 16:30-21:30

Where: Kezoji Koen Yuenchi (Amusement Park)
(1 Kezoji-machi, Iseaki) [MAP](#)

Contact: 0270-25-4478

Gunma Illuminations 2018-2019 [PDF](#)

Takasaki



Iseaki



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[Festival of Food and Illuminations in Ota 2018](#)

Ota

A wide range of fun events will be held. Sale of local produce and the famous Aomori apples (Hirosaki City, Aomori Prefecture is Ota's sister city.), food stalls, stage performances, events for children (cotton candy machine, popcorn maker, etc.) are among them. Illuminations start at 17:30 and will last until 22:00. (No parking fees will be charged on this day.)

When: Dec. 1 (Sat.) 10:00-19:00

Where: Hachiojiyama Koen Park (aka *Hokubu Undo Koen*)
(2079-3 Kamigodo-cho, Ota) [MAP](#)

Contact: 0276-37-3434



[The 28th Maebashi International Party](#)

Maebashi

As the year 2018 is coming to an end, how about meeting people from different national and cultural backgrounds while enjoying multinational cuisine? Maebashi International Association will hold its annual international party. For details, contact the number below.

When: Dec. 9 (Sun.) 13:30-16:00

Where: 1st Floor Hall, Maebashi Genki Plaza 21
(2-12-1 Hon-machi, Maebashi) [MAP](#)

Contact: 027-243-7788



[The 27th Ota International Friendship Party](#)

Ota

Attractions include multinational dance & music and international cuisine. Bring your family, and enjoy meeting people from other foreign countries besides your own. There will be a raffle, too.

When: Dec. 2 (Sun.) 18:00-

Where: Quattro Stagioni Marryell Ota
(601 Nishiyajima-cho, Ota) [MAP](#)

Contact: Ota International Association (11th floor of Ota City Hall)
0276-48-1001



[Gemini Meteor Shower Observation Event at Gunma Astrophysical Observatory](#)

Takayama-mura, Agatsuma-gun

As you can see in the right photo, you can bring your own blue plastic sheet (commonly known as blue sheet at DIY stores, etc.) so that you can lie down and comfortably watch the meteor shower.

When: Dec. 14(Fri.) 18:00 -

Where: Gunma Prefectural Observatory
(6860-86 Nakayama, Takayama-mura) [MAP](#)

Fees: JPY300 for adults JPY200 for High School & college students
Free admissions for junior high school pupils and under

Contact: 0279-70-5300



*Please check the observatory website linked above for specific information.

[Candle Road in Morinji Temple](#)

Tatebayashi

Approx. 2,500 candles will be lit on both sides of the temple approach & temple ground for the year-end & the New Year observation. *Amasake* sweet fermented rice drink will be given away for free to visitors on a first-come-first-served basis.

When: Dec. 31 (Sun.) - Jan. 1 (Mon.) 22:00 - 02:00

Where: [Morinji Temple](#)
(1570 Horiku-cho, Tatebayashi) [MAP](#)

Contact: 0276-73-0632



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[Ski & Snowboarding Resorts in Gunma 2018-2019 Season](#)

In Gunma, you can enjoy onsen after skiing & snowboarding at pretty much any ski resorts. Quality of snow is excellent, and slopes come in great many varieties to your satisfaction.

This year, however, there have been delays in opening ski/snowboarding slopes, as we are experiencing light snowfall in Gunma.

When: From mid-December to end-March/early April,
depending on the snowfall

Contact: 027-243-7273



Ski & Snowboarding Resorts 2018-2019 Season [PDF](#)