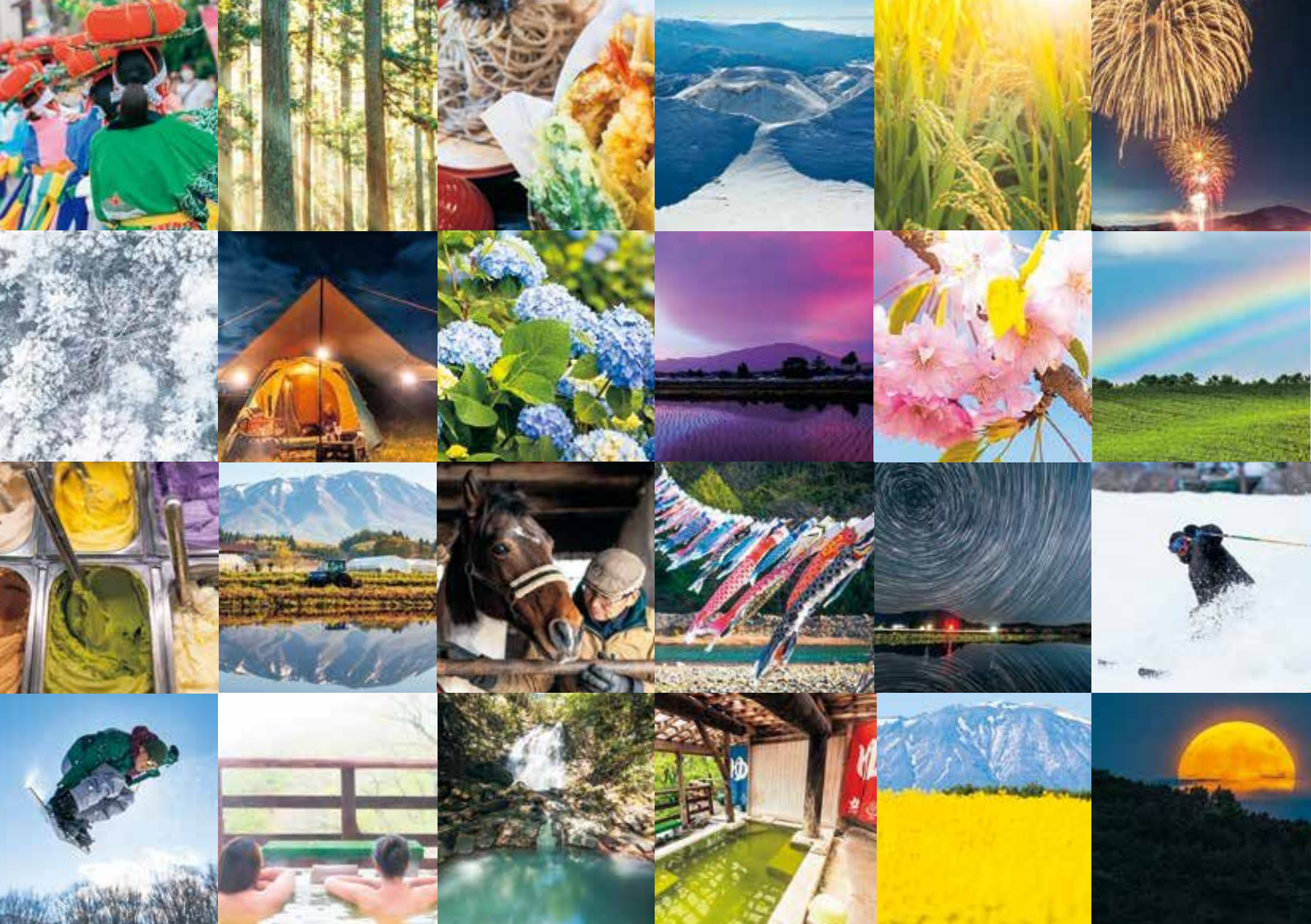




Shizukuishi Travel Brochure



DISCOVER
SHIZUKUISHI



Shizukuishi—a Destination for All Seasons

The town of Shizukuishi, located high in the mountains along the western border of Iwate Prefecture, offers a variety of tourist attractions throughout the year. It is perhaps best known as a mecca for snow sports, thanks to its proximity to Mt. Iwate and several other peaks, but there is certainly no shortage of activities to enjoy in the warmer months. Visitors can hike the region's trails and visit many picturesque nature spots. A variety of hot springs (*onsen*), outdoor activities, and traditional crafts attract visitors—along with locally grown farm products.





Rainbows are a frequent sight in Shizukuishi, lighting up rows of iconic cherry trees in the spring or adding color to pristine winter snowscapes as they arch over Mt. Iwate. This inspired the town's whimsical catchphrase: "Rainbows look good on Shizukuishi."

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Photographer / Pete Leong William Quinlan Faris IWANE DAISUKE





Trekking in Shizukuishi

The northwest side of Shizukuishi is part of Towada-Hachimantai National Park, and the town encompasses several mountains connected by various trails. Visitors can explore a variety of places from this convenient location, including Mt. Iwate, Mt. Eboshidake, and the regions of Mt.

Akita-Komagatake and Mt. Mitsuishi. Everyone from experienced mountaineers to those who prefer leisurely walks will find plentiful opportunities to appreciate the beauty of the region on foot. This section introduces some of the main trekking courses in Shizukuishi, followed by some tips for making the most of a stay in the region.

A visit to the Amihari Visitor Center is highly recommended when planning outdoor adventures in Shizukuishi. The center, located within Towada-Hachimantai National Park, offers comprehensive information on recreational activities as well as the nature and history of Mt. Iwate and the other mountains within the national park area. It was renovated in 2020 and now makes use of interactive technology such as augmented reality to present information in several languages, including topographical maps that show hiking routes.

Mt. Iwate

The southwestern foothills of Mt. Iwate, the highest mountain peak in Iwate Prefecture at 2,038 meters, are in Shizukuishi. Over the centuries, people of the region came to view the mountain as a sacred place, and a tradition of mountain worship developed there. Two major routes, the Omisaka Trail and the Amihari Trail, go up Mt. Iwate from Shizukuishi. Both are challenging.



Mt. Mitsuishi

Mt. Mitsuishi offers two attractive courses: the Takinoue Trail, a somewhat challenging hike along a gorge, and the Okusando Trail, which is shorter and more popular. Mt. Mitsuishi is widely considered to be the first place on Japan's main island of Honshu where visitors can see the fall foliage each autumn.



Mt. Eboshidake

Eboshidake offers the challenging Takinoue Onsen Trail that passes through Senshogahara, which means "field of 1,000 marshes." As suggested by the name, Senshogahara contains more than 900 pools, as well as various alpine flowers.



Mt. Akita-Komagatake

The Kunimi Onsen Trail that leads up Mt. Akita-Komagatake is of medium difficulty. It is well known for the many alpine flowers and other plants that grow there in the summer months.



Amihari Forest

This lovely forest, consisting mostly of Japanese beech and oak trees, spreads over the southern foot of Mt. Iwate. It can be explored via the Amihari Forest Nature Trail, which is accessible in any season and suitable for all levels of fitness. It takes about an hour to complete the circular trail, making it an ideal introduction to the beauty of the area for those with limited time. The forest is well worth a visit in any season, but particularly when the leaves change color in autumn. The Amihari Nature Forest Trail is also recommended for snowshoe hikes in winter. Traditional oval-shaped wakanjiki shoes and modern snowshoes are available for rent at the Amihari Visitor Center.



Torigoe Waterfall and Outaki Waterfall

These landmark waterfalls are especially beautiful in early summer, when they are surrounded with fresh green foliage, and during the autumn when the leaves are changing color.

Torigoe, a waterfall

Torigoe, a waterfall with a 30-meter drop, is located along the picturesque Kakkonda Gorge on the outskirts of Shizukuishi. The falls are close to the Takinoue Onsen hot-springs area, and visitors may see clouds of white steam rising up from the bright green water in the pool at the base. Takinoue Onsen welcomes day visitors, so a trip to the falls can be combined with a relaxing bath. Note that the road that leads to the area is closed in winter.

Outaki

Outaki is smaller than Torigoe, but visitors can get very close to this series of pretty cascades, which is located in the Oushuku Onsen village. These falls are an easy walk from most accommodations in the village.



Amihari Visitor Center

The Amihari Visitor Center, located within Towada-Hachimantai National Park, offers comprehensive information on recreational activities, nature, and the history of Mt. Iwate and other mountains within the national park area. The center, which was renovated in 2020, uses interactive technology such as augmented reality to present information in several languages, including topographical maps that show hiking routes.

Amihari is a gateway for trails linking five mountains: Mt. Iwate, Mt. Eboshidake, Mt. Akita-Komagatake, Mt. Mitsuishi, and Mt. Hachimantai. The staff can offer advice on trail conditions and make recommendations based on visitors' needs and preferences. Popular activities at the visitor center include firefly watching in the summer and snowshoe trekking in the winter (rental snowshoes are available). The center is the starting point for the circular Forest Nature Trail, which is accessible in any season and suitable for all levels of fitness.

Outdoor Activities

Shizukuishi is beautiful in any season. Spring brings delicate new green leaves and pink cherry blossoms, giving way to deeper green foliage and alpine flowers on the mountain trails around the town in summer. There are plenty of places to see colorful leaves in the autumn before the snow arrives and turns the area into a winter wonderland. The following are some options for visitors wanting to experience the great outdoors in Shizukuishi.

Campgrounds

Camping is a way to experience Shizukuishi's nature at close range. There are two well-equipped campgrounds in the town, both of which include *onsen* (hot springs).



Shizukuishi Aneko Roadside Station (Michi-no-Eki) Campground

This spacious campsite is conveniently located next to a well-appointed *michi-no-eki* roadside station, allowing campers to make use of facilities such as the Hashiba Onsen hot spring, as well as the restaurants and shops. The campground is primarily used by people traveling by car or motorcycle, but there is also a separate section for those without private transportation. The campground is next to a river with a safe water-play area for children, and there is plenty of room for youngsters to run around on the grass.

The word *aneko*, from which the facility takes its name, is used in local dialect to refer affectionately to a young woman.

Amihari Onsen Campground

This campground, located 770 meters above sea level, is part of the Kyukamura Iwate-Amihari Onsen Hotel complex. Campers can make use of the hotel's facilities as well as the adjacent Onsenkan Yakushi-no-Yu hot spring. Sites are divided into two categories: "woodland sites" nestled among the trees and "lawn sites" that are out in the open. Those who are new to camping or do not have equipment can take advantage of a convenient plan where tents are already set up and all the equipment and food is provided on arrival. The campground is next to the Amihari Forest Nature Trail, which is suitable for all ages and levels of fitness.



Snowshoe Trekking

Snowshoeing is a great way to take to the trails when there is snow on the ground. People of all ages can enjoy the wintertime scenery and searching for the footprints of animals in the snow. The Amihari Forest Nature Trail is highly recommended for snowshoe trekking. Traditional oval-shaped *wakanjiki* shoes and modern snowshoes can be rented at the adjacent Amihari Visitor Center. Staff there can answer questions about the trail and about the plants and animals that can be spotted in the area. Koiwai Farm also offers snowshoe trekking. Experienced staff take guests up to the pristine backcountry areas surrounding the farm for snowshoeing on trails that are easy even for beginners.

Rent Snowshoes at the Amihari Visitor Center

During January and February, the Amihari Visitor Center offers snowshoe rentals for hiking up to a nearby summit called Kamakuramori. The trail is usually clear, so it's a great chance to try snowshoe hiking up a steep slope. For a more relaxing day, you could just snowshoe around the forest directly north of the Visitor Center without climbing toward the summit.



Green Tourism and Agricultural Experiences

The Shizukuishi region, blessed with high-quality water and fertile soil, has a long history of farming. Rice cultivation probably started here as early as the Kofun period (ca. 250–552), and the area's agricultural and livestock industries continue to thrive in the present day. Shizukuishi welcomes visitors who would like to get to know life in rural Japan on a deeper level through farming and interacting with area residents. Culinary experiences, such as making soba (buckwheat noodles) by hand, can also be arranged. Although it might not be possible to provide complete foreign language support, the residents of Shizukuishi who participate in green tourism programs are committed to helping all visitors make the most of their experience.



Snow Sports

Skiing and snowboarding draw many visitors to Shizukuishi in the winter. There are three resorts in the area, all located on the southern base of Mount Iwate. Visitors can choose the resort that best suits the needs of their group, or try out all three if time permits. After a long, hard day on the slopes, soaking in one of the many hot springs (*onsen*) in Shizukuishi is the perfect way to relax tired muscles and refresh the spirit.

Shizukuishi Ski Resort

Top-quality powder snow, activities for all, and the "ski in, ski out" convenience of being located next to Shizukuishi Prince Hotel combine to make this resort an ideal base for a wintertime stay in Shizukuishi. In 1993, it became the first place in Asia to host the Alpine Ski World Championships. The resort features 11 ski trails with panoramic views of Mt. Iwate, including one trail that runs for 4.5 kilometers. Another notable option is "cat skiing"—a form of guided backcountry exploration where skiers are taken out beyond the usual trails to untouched snow via a truck-sized vehicle called a snowcat. Both hotel guests and day visitors can enjoy a soak at the Shizukuishi Takakura Onsen hot spring.

Amihari Onsen Ski Resort

Serious skiers say that this resort has the best powder snow in the area. It is located on the slopes of Mt. Inukura in Towada-Hachimantai National Park and is surrounded by primary-growth forests. In autumn, visitors take the chairlift to admire the colorful foliage. The Kyukamura Iwate-Amihari Onsen Hotel, conveniently located nearby, offers five different baths. Those who are not planning an overnight stay can use the Onsenkan Yakushi-no-Yu facility, which includes an outdoor bath with panoramic views from a height of 760 meters.



Iwate Kogen Snow Park

Iwate Kogen Snow Park is another smaller resort with a variety of slopes, a ski school, and a children's area. Of the three ski resorts in Shizukuishi, this one is particularly popular with snowboarders due to the long, smooth slopes. It also features a well-equipped mogul area and "freestyle course/snow park," where snowboarders can try tricks using the specially maintained "snow bumps." Although no lodgings are available adjacent to the resort, there are a number of Japanese and Western-style options in the vicinity.

Jiyuya Summer Slope (Water Jump Park)

Most people come to Shizukuishi for snow sports in the winter, but Jiyuya offers the opportunity to try skiing or snowboarding in the snowless seasons—with a water landing at the end. The owner, an enthusiast and certified instructor in snow sports, wanted to offer something different for skiers and snowboarders in the warmer months. This innovative facility has become popular with both local residents and visitors. There are three different slopes of varying degrees of difficulty. First-timers can start out on the easiest slope and gradually work their way up to the more challenging jumps as they develop confidence.

Children can participate from the age of four; in fact, youngsters often master the slopes more quickly than older family members. Jiyuya is open rain or shine, except when there are strong winds or storms. In addition to the three water-jump slopes, the facility includes a skateboarding area. Showers and changing rooms are available on site as well.



Shizukuishi Yu-Yu Farm and Horseback Archery (*Yabusame*) Experience

Yu-Yu Farm is all about horses—in fact, it is the only facility in Shizukuishi providing horse riding and trekking services. Horses were once indispensable to the agricultural communities of Iwate Prefecture, where they were used for farm work and transportation and considered to be important members of the family. The heritage of care and respect for these animals lives on today at Yu-Yu Farm.

Visitors to the farm can try *yabusame*, Japanese horseback archery. The farm's owner draws on his experience in *yabusame* competitions to help even complete beginners enjoy this ancient art of archery in which a rider mounted on a running horse shoots arrows at wooden targets.



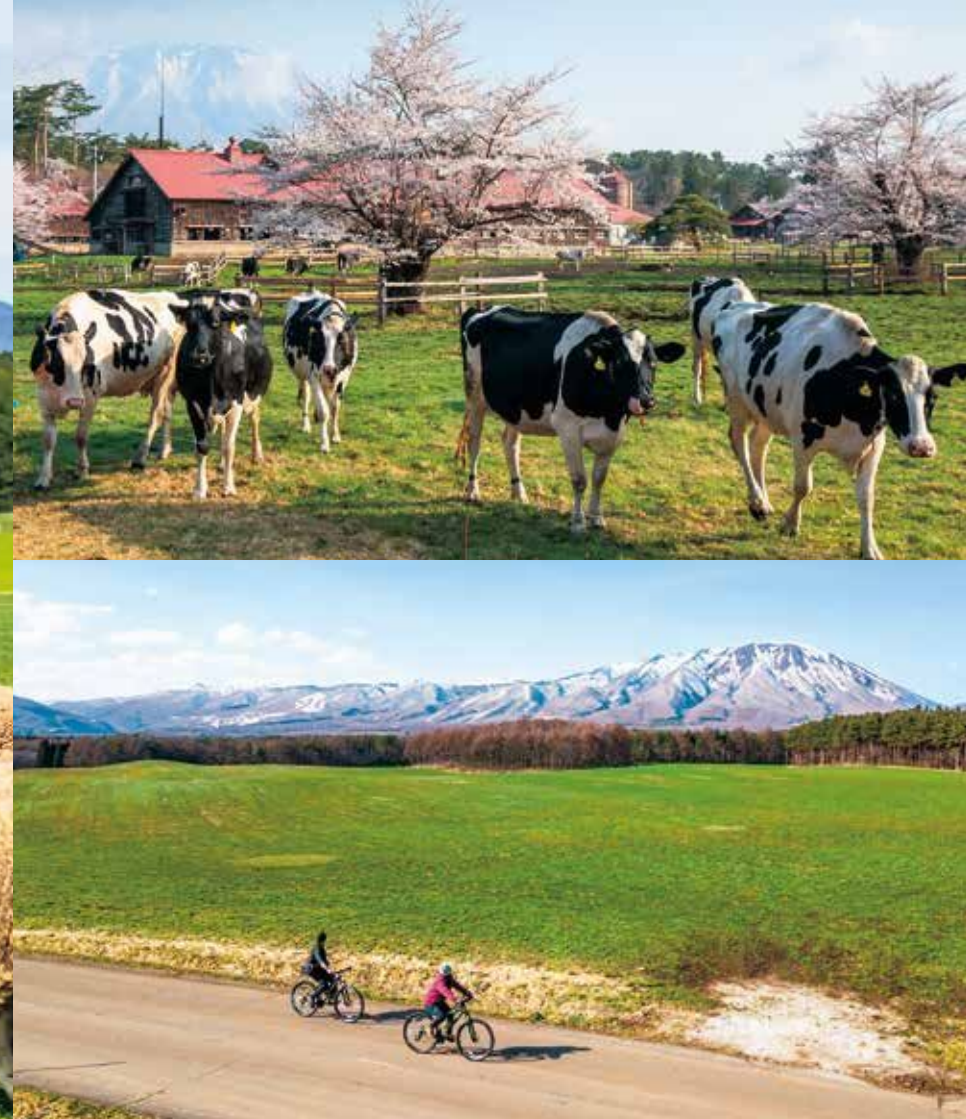
For those wanting to take a longer ride, Yu-Yu Farm guides will take visitors on a trek through the picturesque fields and mountains of Shizukuishi's countryside. Young children or anyone unfamiliar with horses can still experience the fun of riding in safety, led around the farm by one of the staff. There is a large indoor riding area, so *yabusame* practice and riding lessons can take place even in wet weather.

Entry to Yu-Yu Farm is free, but there is a fee for *yabusame* and the other horse-riding activities for which advance reservations are recommended.



Koiwai Farm

Koiwai Farm, located at the base of Mt. Iwate, is one of the largest privately owned farms in Japan, covering some 3,000 hectares, and dates from 1891. Visitors to this working dairy farm enjoy family-friendly activities and learn about the history of the dairy industry in Shizukuishi, while visiting original farm buildings that are government-designated cultural assets. Dairy products from Koiwai Farm, which are sold nationwide, are featured in the various dishes served at the farm restaurant.



Dairy Farming Then and Now

Japan has a relatively short history of commercial dairy farming compared to other nations. Koiwai Farm was built on principles of sustainability and environmentally friendly practices almost a century before these became mainstream trends in business. The buildings on this property were all constructed between 1898 and 1936, and most are still in use today. A number of them, including the two oldest silos in Japan and five cowsheds, have been designated National Important Cultural Properties.

The Kamimaru Cowshed area offers the opportunity to learn about the running of the dairy farm today and see the dairy cows and calves close up. At the museum, visitors can delve into Koiwai Farm's history, learning about the founding of the farm and viewing exhibits of agricultural machinery, photos, and other artifacts dating from more than a century ago.

In Harmony with Nature

Koiwai Farm is a year-round attraction, and there are things to see and do in every season. Spring is a popular time to visit, as the cherry trees blooming against the backdrop of Mt. Iwate make for a wonderful photo op. One tree—the so-called Solitary Cherry Tree, which has been standing in a pasture for more than a century—has become a tourist attraction in its own right. Originally planted to serve as shade for some of the first cows on the farm, the tree is now 20 meters high.

While most visitors come for the farm experience, Koiwai maintains an extensive forest as part of its complex, with the aim of preserving habitat for animals and humans alike. Programs are offered for schools and other groups to experience nature activities in the forest, while learning about the importance of protecting and preserving the environment for future generations.





Shizukuishi's Hot Springs (*Onsen*)

The Shizukuishi region has a wide variety of *onsen* (hot springs). Taking a soak is delightful at any time of year, but it can be especially enjoyable in winter after a long day of skiing or snowboarding. Some of the following onsen are located inside hotels and inns (*ryokan*), while others are standalone facilities. Most of them welcome day visitors as well as overnight guests.

Amihari

Located at the Kyukamura Iwate Amihari Onsen Hotel, this facility sits at the base of Mount Iwate, making it very convenient for skiers who come to the nearby slopes. There are several baths, including an outdoor one with panoramic views from an altitude of 760 meters.



Oushuku

This small *onsen* village has been popular as a hot-spring destination for more than 450 years. There are a variety of places to stay, ranging from modern hotels to traditional family-run inns. According to legend, the hot springs were discovered during the late sixteenth century, when a man saw a Japanese bush warbler soaking its injured leg in the water.

Minami Amihari Arine

Day visitors are welcome at this *onsen* in the Yukotan no Mori Inn. The baths were designed to blend in with the surrounding forests.

Shizukuishi Takakura

Located at the Shizukuishi Prince Hotel, this *onsen* welcomes day visitors as well as hotel guests. The outdoor bath offers impressive views in all seasons, while a pond with colorful Japanese carp next to the baths adds to the ambience.



The following two hot-spring areas are closed in the winter months due to heavy snow:

Kunimi

Two Japanese-style inns in this *onsen* area, Ishizuka Ryokan and Morisanso, are open to day visitors. The ravine location is not accessible to tour buses and there is no cell phone service, making it ideal for anyone seeking solitude. The mineral-rich water is an unusual emerald-green color.



Hashiba

This facility is for day visitors only; there is a campground next door. It is part of the Shizukuishi Aneko Roadside Station (Michi-no-Eki) complex, which also houses several restaurants and gift shops. Guests may choose either Japanese- or Western-style baths.

Genbu

This tranquil hot-spring complex is near the Kakkonda River, and the water is unusually mild. Several of the accommodations are open to day visitors.



Takinoue

This secluded *onsen* at the Ryukanso Inn welcomes day visitors. It is surrounded by a beech forest and is close to the impressive Torigoe waterfall.



Shizukuishi's Food Culture

Many of Shizukuishi's residents are farmers, and local people are proud of the high-quality food produced in the area. Below are some recommendations for visitors who would like to experience Shizukuishi's food culture.

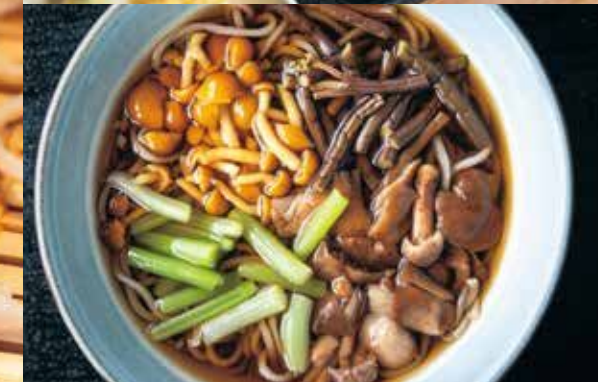
Kei Truck Market

In this monthly open-air market held from May through November, compact flat-bed trucks are converted into little shops. This event is unique to Shizukuishi and offers all manner of items. Visitors can find fresh locally harvested vegetables, snacks, handicrafts, and all kinds of other items for sale on Yoshare Street. This is a great opportunity to experience local culture and peek into the daily lives of Shizukuishi residents.



Soba (Buckwheat Noodles)

In premodern times, rice was the staple crop in most parts of Japan, but it was difficult to grow in northern regions such as Iwate Prefecture, where summers were cooler. As a result, people looked for alternative grains that were more resistant to the cold. One of these was buckwheat, the main ingredient of the noodles known as soba. Clean, fresh water is required for the production of good-tasting soba, and Shizukuishi has this in abundance.





Dairy Products

Shizukuishi is famous as a center of Japan's dairy industry. The high quality of its dairy products is reflected in two family-run businesses that use the fresh local milk to make their specialties. Both are well worth visiting on a trip to Shizukuishi.



Cheese

Various types of artisanal cheese and yogurt can be purchased at the Shizukuishi Cheese Factory, where the husband-and-wife team uses fresh milk sourced directly from a neighboring farm to make their products. After honing his skills working for Koikai Farm, Shizukuishi's major dairy company, the owner began producing and selling handmade cheese at this business in 2014. The shop started off specializing in fresh cheese, but product lines have gradually expanded to include semi-hard types, as well as soft-serve ice cream in the warmer months.



Chicago and Detroit Style Pizza

Soul Kitchen offers exquisite Chicago-style deep dish pizza, Detroit style pizza, and more. This little shop is not only famous among the local community, but also draws diners from as far away as Tokyo. If you're ready for a break from Japanese food, this is the place to satisfy your craving!



Gelato

The handmade gelato at Matsubokkuri Homemade Ice Cream Barn is so well known that people regularly drive here from other prefectures to purchase it. After working in the dairy farming industry for more than 30 years, the owners decided to try their hand at gelato-making, and have since gone on to make Matsubokkuri a popular local landmark. Among the flavors on offer are the uniquely Japanese wasabi (Japanese horseradish) and *goma* (sesame). After purchasing gelato, customers can relax on the spacious deck or go up to the second floor for a birds-eye view of the surrounding countryside.

Matsubokkuri means "pine cone" in Japanese, and the name is well suited to a shop built on the edge of a small forest.

Kikunotsukasa Sake Brewery

Kikunotsukasa, founded more than 250 years ago in 1772, is the oldest active sake brewery in Iwate. They moved their brewing facility from Morioka to Shizukuishi in 2022, and offer tours and tastings by reservation. Visit to learn about the brewing process and taste fresh sake made with water from Mt. Iwate.





Shizukuishi History and Folklore Museum

This small but well-appointed museum featuring history, culture, and local traditions is suitable for visitors of all ages. Inside are exhibits of artifacts dating from prehistoric times, while outside is a farmhouse that is a particularly fine example of a traditional *magariya* dwelling where horses lived under the same roof as people. This practice reflected how much families relied on horses for transport and agriculture in olden times. The oldest objects on display in the museum are stoneware items from the Paleolithic period. They were excavated from sites in the area and are thought to be more than 32,000 years old. There is also an impressive collection of artifacts from the Jomon period (10,000 BCE–300 BCE), when

Japan's ancient people lived in a hunter-gatherer and fishing culture. Pottery, tools, and various kinds of crafts from this period offer a glimpse into the lives of the first farmers to settle in the region. Other sections of the museum feature clothing, documents, tools, and everyday items from later periods up to the modern era. Of particular note is a display about the regional weaving technique known as *kikko-ori* (tortoiseshell weaving). The farmhouse next to the museum is a *magariya*, which literally means "bent house." Its L-shaped form contained a stable for horses and an earthen floor work area attached at the side of the family's main living area.



Horses were considered valuable members of the family in an agricultural region like Shizukuishi, and the *magariya* design allowed farmers to care for and protect them during the harsh winters. This well-preserved *magariya* is thought to be more than 100 years old. It has a traditional thatched roof and a sunken hearth (*irori*), which would have provided heat, light, and the means. The farmhouse was moved next to the museum due to changes in local land use. It is the only remaining *magariya* in Shizukuishi to have been carefully preserved in this way.





Tortoiseshell Weaving (*Kikko-ori*) and Shizukuishi Asa-no-Kai

Japan has a rich weaving tradition and various styles have developed around the country. One unusual textile, *kikko-ori* (tortoiseshell weaving), comes from Shizukuishi. This intricate technique is used to create fabric from hemp fibers. The name is derived from the raised hexagonal pattern, resembling the shell of a tortoise, that is produced on the fabric. Even in its heyday (the late nineteenth to early twentieth century) *kikko-ori* was not widely produced in the region due to the time and skill that it required. As a result, a limited number of weavers became proficient in making *kikko-ori* fabric. Around the turn of the twentieth century, manufacturing methods that could produce other fabrics with greater ease were introduced, bringing about the decline of *kikko-ori*. In recent decades, however, efforts to reestablish it as a local tradition have led to a renewed appreciation for this unique style of weaving. The craft was awarded special status as an important historical technique in 2005. Current members of the Shizukuishi Asa-no-Kai continue to preserve and pass on their skills.

Kikko-ori is woven using a backstrap loom—another unusual aspect of the craft. In most areas of Japan, this style of loom was replaced by easier-to-use floor looms, which appeared in the late nineteenth century. In this sense, the weaver uses her entire body, so both physical strength and a high level of skill are required.

Today the Shizukuishi Asa-no-Kai carries out demonstrations and workshops for locals and visitors at the Shizukuishi Agricultural Training Center.



1.

Koiwai Farm<https://www.koiwai.co.jp/makiba/>

2.

Takinoue Hot Springs and Torigoe no Taki Waterfall

3.

Oushuku Hot Springs and Outaki

4.

Amihari Visitor Center<http://amihari17.ec-net.jp/>

5.

**Amihari Hot Springs
Amihari Onsen Ski Resort
Amihari Onsen Campground**<https://www.qkamura.or.jp/iwate/>

6.

Minami Amihari Arine Hot Springs<https://www.yu-kotan.jp/>

7.

Iwate Kogen Snow Park<https://iwatekogen.jp/>

8.

**Shizukuishi Takakura Hot Springs
Shizukuishi Ski Resort**<https://www.princehotels.co.jp/shizukuishi/>

9.

Genbu Hot Springs

10.

Kunimi Hot Springs

11.

Hashiba Hot Springs<https://www.anekko.co.jp/>

12.

Jiyu Summer Slope<https://jiyu-ya.amebaownd.com>

13.

**Shizukuishi Yu-Yu Farm and
Horseback Archery**<https://yu-yu-farm.com>

14.

**Shizukuishi History and Folklore
Museum**

15.

Shizukuishi Asa-no-Kai**For the location not have each site, visit the following URL**<https://www.shizukuishi-kanko.gr.jp/>

DISCOVER SHIZUKUISHI

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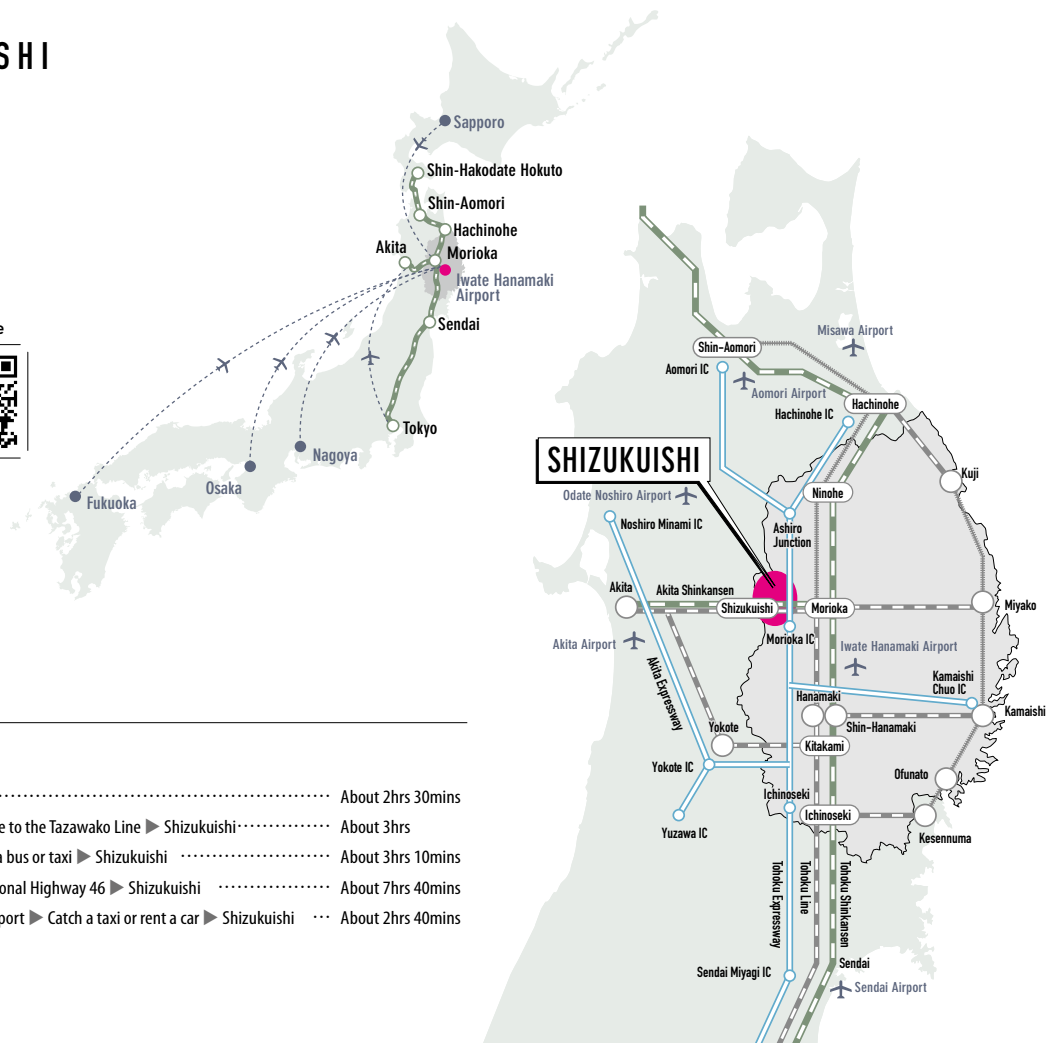
official web



instagram



youtube



ACCESS INFORMATION

From Tokyo

Akita Shinkansen (Komachi)	Tokyo ▶ Shizukuishi	About 2hrs 30mins
Tohoku Shinkansen (Hayabusa)	Tokyo ▶ Morioka ▶ Change to the Tazawako Line ▶ Shizukuishi	About 3hrs
	Tokyo ▶ Morioka ▶ Catch a bus or taxi ▶ Shizukuishi	About 3hrs 10mins
Tohoku Expressway	Tokyo ▶ Morioka IC ▶ National Highway 46 ▶ Shizukuishi	About 7hrs 40mins
Airline (JAL/ANA)	Haneda Airport ▶ Akita Airport ▶ Catch a taxi or rent a car ▶ Shizukuishi ...	About 2hrs 40mins