

What's Up Aichi

— Timely Tourist Information On Aichi Prefecture And The Surrounding Central Japan Region —

Aichi Offers A Lot For The Winter Time Visitor

Nagoya Celebrates 400 Years

2010 marks the 400th anniversary of when Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu created a city center in Nagoya. Since its creation Nagoya has remained an influential city for hundreds of years. Starting on January 1st 2010 there will be yearlong celebrations of Nagoya's long and dynamic history.

The year starts with a Countdown and other New Year's celebrations at Nagoya Castle. The theme from January 1 to March 31st is "A Dream Begins." Visitors can also enjoy appearances of Hachimaru, Nagoya's lovable 400 year old mascot.

*Hachimaru and Wishing Star,
Feeling fine at 400'*



Nagoya Castle for the First Time

There is a lot to see at Nagoya Castle even if you have visited before. Many new events and exhibitions are coming for the 400th anniversary. Inside and out there is something new for even the seasoned traveler.

Inside the castle priceless historical relics and pieces of art are on display. You can also tour the castle gardens. Watch as workers use traditional building methods for reconstruction of Honmaru Palace. No matter what season the gardens are always blooming. February and March is the flowering season for hundreds of Japanese Plum trees. It is an excellent way to relax and take in the beauty of the castle and surrounding area.

The two golden Kinshachi that sit atop the main keep are also a major part of Nagoya Castle. In Japanese "kin" means Gold and the Shachi is a mythological animal. Traditionally they were a symbol of the feudal lord's authority but after the Reconstruction era they came to symbolize Nagoya's emergence as a major part of the Japanese economy.



*Nagoya Castle circa 1880, Honmaru Palace in the foreground
www.nagoyajo.city.nagoya.jp/13_english/*

Enjoy a Traditional Taste of Nagoya

Uiro (ういろ) is a steamed cake made from sugar and rice flour. The Original recipe, introduced by the Chinese, was prescribed as medicine. By the 14th century Japanese merchants started their own production of medicinal uiro. However by the 17th century uiro had changed into a sweet compliment for bitter medicines. Today uiro is enjoyed as a sweet compliment for unsweetened teas in much the same way.

Uiro can be bought at many department stores and souvenir shops in and around Nagoya. Or take a break from shopping and sightseeing and visit some of the more traditional uiro shops in the area. Uiro served with tea and enjoyed in the traditional setting is a great way to re-energize and plan the rest of your day.



Located in the Osu area, just a short trip from Nagoya Station and Nagoya Castle, take the time to visit some famous confectioner's shops.

Osu Uiro: www.osu-uiro.co.jp

Aoyagi Uirou: www.aoyagiuirou.co.jp

*websites are in Japanese

Hadaka Matsuri

Stripping Down..Outside..in February

As most of us get bundled-up and winter proof our homes the brave and loyal step outside and get naked.



Yes, they throw water on the crowd

The Hadaka Matsuri, or Naked Festival, began in the year 767AD and draws hundreds of thousands of participants and festival goers hoping to dispel the misfortunes of the previous year and summon the spring.

Every year someone is chosen to be the shin otoko, literally "god man," on whom all of the year's sins and misfortunes will be cast. Completely naked he makes his way towards Konomiya Shrine a horde of men dressed in mere loincloths and headbands all vying to touch (or hit) him in order to drive away the year's troubles and gain good fortune.

The next Hadaka Matsuri will be held on February 26, 2010. Konomiya Shrine and Inazawa city welcome overseas visitors to the Hadaka Matsuri. Just 30 minutes away from JR Nagoya Station this is a must see! This is "Inappi," Inazawa city's mascot, wearing a traditional loincloth.



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