



Iwate, A Mystical Trip

Digital Guidebook for **Hiraizumi**, **Hanamaki** and **Tono**

平泉

The golden culture of ancient Japan
A trip to world heritage Hiraizumi

Hiraizumi Area

— Digital book —

The Appeal of Hiraizumi

— Play video clip —



花巻

Traditional performing arts and a mystical land
To the hot spring town of Hanamaki

Hanamaki Area

— Digital book —

The Appeal of Hanamaki

— Play video clip —



遠野

“Tono Monogatari (The Tono Tales)” and home of
mythical creatures
See indelible scenes of Japan

Tono Area

— Digital book —

The Appeal of Tono

— Play video clip —





Discover My Japan

In the 12th century situated a long way from the capital of Kyoto, a unique golden culture blossomed in Hiraizumi in Oshu, also known as Michi no Oku. A number of temples, gardens and historic ruins which still remain today were built here to pray for the repose of souls of the people who died in the civil wars and for peace for all living things. Come and visit Hiraizumi to discover another side to Japan.





Experience the four seasons of Iwate

The pink colour of the cherry trees signals the arrival of spring in the snow country of Iwate. Refreshing breezes blow through the green land of summer. Autumn is dyed in the red and yellow colours of all the plants and trees. In winter, the whole land is blanketed in snow. In Iwate with its very different scenery in each of the seasons, the food and people's lifestyles change with the seasons too. Which season would you like to come and visit in?





The true Japan waits here for you

Experience the traditional rural festivals, the simple folk crafts unique to the area, the folk tales and old legends, the traditional houses and the rural lifestyle. Being able to experience the charm of old Japan in person is the highlight of a trip to Iwate. Meeting the people of Iwate with their gentle, earnest nature and heartfelt hospitality will become a memory of your trip here.



Experience the appeal of Iwate with your five senses

Iwate has lots of hot springs and is known as one of the foremost hot spring destinations in Japan. Hot springs that were frequented for treating illnesses and for good health long ago are now popular tourist locations. The abundant foods and local dishes of Iwate are another unmissable highlight of a trip here. Make the most of the blessings of nature and the sense of space and freedom here.





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World Heritage

Chuson-ji Temple (Kojikido Golden Hall)

This Buddhist temple was built by the Fujiwara family who ruled Hiraizumi. The Konjikido Golden Hall decorated with its gold leaf and mother-of-pearl inlay symbolized the desire for peace of the Hiraizumi culture during periods of war.





The Jodo garden and the traditional culture of Hiraizumi



World Heritage

Motsu-ji Temple (Pure Land Garden)

This Buddhist temple was said to have been the most splendid in Japan in the time of the Fujiwara family. The Jodo garden here was made incorporating various ocean, river and other natural scenes into the design and still remains today.



Motsu-ji Gokusui no En

(held every year on the 4th Sunday in May)
This is a reenactment of a game of the Heian era where people dress in robes, sit along the river in the garden and recite classic Japanese poems.

Ennen no Mai Dance

(Motsu-ji 20th Night Festival Jan 20)
This is a traditional New Year event that has continued for 800 years since Motsu-ji was founded. This graceful dance is performed to pray for longevity.





World Heritage

Muryoko-in Ato

These are the remains of a temple built by the Fujiwara family that was modelled on the Byodoin Temple at Uji near Kyoto that is depicted on 10 yen coins. The remains of the foundation stones and the garden still survive today.

World Heritage

Kanjizaio-in Ato

These are the remains of a temple that was built by the Fujiwara family in their golden age. You can see the almost perfect remains of the Jodo garden that is used today as a public park.

World Heritage

Mt. Kinkeisan

This mountain is located midway between Chuson-ji Temple and Motsu-ji Temple. It's a cone-shaped mountain like a pyramid and it has a symbolic existence as the reference point for the town's development.

Tour around the heritage assets of world heritage Hiraizumi and their related facilities

Takkoku no Iwaya Bishamondo Temple

This temple was built before the Fujiwara era about 1,200 years ago. The temple is built into the rock face of a cliff and a large image of Buddha carved into the rock face can be seen.



Hiraizumi



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Hiraizumi Cultural Heritage Center

You can view artifacts here that have been excavated from Hiraizumi's historic sites and exhibits that explain the history and culture of world heritage Hiraizumi.





Hiraizumi



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Fujiwara Festival

This festival is held every year in spring (May 1-5) and autumn (November 1-3). The spring festival is a huge event where historical scenes of Hiraizumi are recreated and you can see Yoshitsune's Eastern Flight Procession.



Chuson-ji Lotus

This ancient lotus blossomed from a single 800-year-old seed which was discovered in the Konjikido Golden Hall.



Motsu-ji Iris Festival

(June 20 – July 10)

This festival takes place in the Jodo garden of Motsu-ji Temple. The best time to see the flowers is early summer.

The Four Seasons And Festivals Of Hiraizumi



Cherry Blossoms

The cherry trees lining the road that joins Chuson-ji and Motsu-ji temples signal the arrival of spring.



Motsu-ji Hatsukayasai Festival (January 20)

Worshippers bearing torches parade around the temple grounds and pray for the New Year. There is also a performance of the Ennen no Mai longevity rites.



Hiraizumi Mizukake Mikoshi Festival

Participants parade a mikoshi (portable shrine) around the town of Hiraizumi as onlookers splash them with purifying water. The festival is held in the middle of July.



The Autumn Scenery

From midway through October you can see the autumn colours around the temples of Hiraizumi.

Rental of Audio Guide Pens

Audio pens that can be used in 7 different languages are available for rental making them very useful when seeing the sights of Hiraizumi. You can borrow them from Hiraizumi Tourist Information, Chuson-ji Temple or Motsu-ji Temple for ¥500 each. Languages available are English, Chinese, Korean, French, German, Spanish and Japanese.



The Winter Scenery

The snows pile up in winter and you can experience completely different scenery to the other seasons.





Mochi Food Culture

Mochi dishes are one of the Japanese foods served at celebratory occasions. Eating small pieces of mochi of a variety of flavours is the style of Hiraizumi.



The Foods of Hiraizumi



Iwate Minami Beef

This is a finely marbled, distinctive high-grade beef that is produced in the south of Iwate Prefecture.

Experience the vivid, colourful, traditional food dishes of Hiraizumi



Moridashi Wanko Soba

A variety of foods including soba noodles and tempura are served in a number of small traditional handcraft wooden lacquerware bowls to enjoy.





Video clip

Hidehira-nuri Lacquerware

These are lacquered wooden bowls and dishes with a distinctive diamond-shaped gold leaf design. They get their name from Hidehira, the third ruler of the Fujiwara dynasty.



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Arts of Hiraizumi

Come and see the craftsmen skills that helped create the golden culture of Hiraizumi



Give it a try!

Ceramic Painting Experience

Experience Hidehira-nuri lacquerware painting, a traditional craft of Hiraizumi. Make your own piece of work by painting a picture on a lacquered object such as chopsticks.



Ksitigarbha figures (Nanbu Cast Ironware)

Hiraizumi Souvenirs

Traditional crafts of Iwate including Nanbu ironware, glass handicrafts and Japanese-style folk crafts are recommended as a souvenir of your trip here.



Nanbu Cast Ironware



Glass