



TOHOKU

DriveRoute

*Take a road trip
in search of
inspiring sights!*

Another Japan
**Scenic Drives
in Tohoku**

—Explore Tohoku's seasons and history—

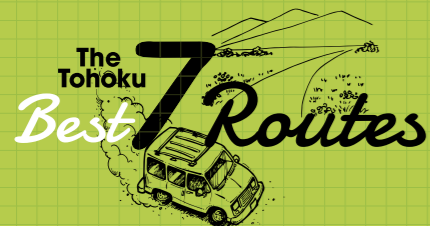
- Route 01** Tohoku Samurai Culture and Castles
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- Route 04** Tour of Spectacular Tohoku Scenery Across All Four Seasons
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Another Japan Scenic Drives in Tohoku

—Explore Tohoku's seasons and history—

Tohoku's greatest attraction is the beauty and magnificence of its natural scenery. Driving in Tohoku allows you to fully enjoy the sights you want to see and destinations you want to explore without time restrictions. These scenic drives cover a wide range of seasonal, historical, and other attractions. Which route do you want to take?



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Route 01 Tohoku Samurai Culture and Castles Route

This route focuses on the samurai culture of the Tohoku region. Travel to Aizuwakamatsu, known as the "Samurai City," and the site of Sendai Castle. Try on samurai armor at Shiroishi Castle, and visit Ouchi-juku, a town that has retained its historical character.



For more info:



Aizu Sazaedo

(Aizuwakamatsu City, Fukushima Pref.)
The only wooden building in the world with a three-story, hexagonal, double helical structure. A National Important Cultural Property of Japan.



Tsurugajo Castle

(Aizuwakamatsu City, Fukushima Pref.)
A beautiful castle with iconic red roof tiles that recreate how it would have looked at the end of the Edo period (1860s). One of Japan's Top 100 Castles.



Ouchi-juku

(Shimogo Town, Fukushima Pref.)
This town's main street is lined with thatched-roof houses that transport visitors back to the Edo period (1603-1868).



Shiroishi Castle Armor Wearing Experience

(Shiroishi City, Miyagi Pref.)
Don authentic armor and become a warrior of the Sengoku period, a time of continual warfare in Japan during the 15th and 16th centuries. You can also learn the proper way to draw and hold a katana.



Kaminoyama Castle

(Kaminoyama City, Yamagata Pref.)
This castle tower commands a panoramic view of the Zao mountain range and the city of Kaminoyama, and doubles as a museum of local history.



Equestrian Statue of Date Masamune

(Sendai City, Miyagi Pref.)
A statue of Date Masamune (1567-1636), one of Tohoku's most famous military commanders, stands on the site of Sendai Castle and overlooks the city of Sendai and the Pacific Ocean.

Itinerary

- Day 1:** Sendai / Fukushima Airport / Koriyama Station → Ouchi-juku → Aizuwakamatsu City (Tsurugajo Castle, martial arts experience, Aizu Sazaedo) → Higashiyama Onsen [Overnight stay]
- Day 2:** Higashiyama Onsen → Kitakata (sake brewery tour) → Yonezawa (Uesugi Shrine, Yonezawa City Uesugi Museum) → Takahata Winery → Kaminoyama Castle → Zao Onsen [Overnight stay]
- Day 3:** Zao Onsen → Okama Crater → Shiroishi Castle (armor wearing experience) → Sendai City (site of Sendai Castle, Zuihoden, Jozenji-dori Avenue) → Sendai Station / Sendai Airport



D
Kitayamazaki Cliffs
 (Tanohata Village, Iwate Pref.)
 This dynamic coastline consists of 200-meter-high cliffs spanning about eight kilometers. The view from the walking trail will take your breath away.



E
Hachinohe Yatai Mura (Food Stall Village) Miroku Yokocho
 (Hachinohe City, Aomori Pref.)
 Have your fill of local cuisine from Aomori and Hachinohe and delicious sake along this street lined with food stalls.

Itinerary

Day 1: Sendai / Iwate Hanamaki Airport / Ichinoseki Station → Hiraizumi (Chuson-ji Temple) → Kesennuma (Kesennuma Oshima Island) → Rikuzentakata (Miracle Lone Pine Tree, Iwate Tsunami Memorial Museum) → Ofunato (Kyassen Ofunato) → Kamaishi [Overnight stay]
Day 2: Kamaishi → Miyako (Jodogahama Beach) → Ryusendo Cave → Kitayamazaki Cliffs / Sappa Boat Adventures → Kuji (Kuji Amber Museum) → Hachinohe [Overnight stay] *Bar-hopping experience in Hachinohe
Day 3: Hachinohe → Oirase Gorge → Mt. Hakkoda (Sukayu Onsen) → Aomori (Nebuta Museum WA RASSE, Sannai Maruyama Site, Aomori Museum of Art) → Shin-Aomori Station / Aomori Airport

Route 02 **Tohoku Sanriku Coast and Marine Adventure** Route

Enjoy marine activities while touring the beautiful ria coast along the Pacific Ocean. This route will take you to waterfront adventures such as a boat cruise, fishing boat ride, and exploration of a refreshing, clear river.



B
Jodogahama Beach
 (Miyako City, Iwate Pref.)
 A beautiful beach with the unique scenery of green pine trees, unusual rock formations, and the crystal-clear sea.



A
Miracle Lone Pine Tree
 (Rikuzentakata City, Iwate Pref.)
 The only pine tree to have survived the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami of 2011. It now stands as a symbol of reconstruction.



F
Oirase Gorge
 (Towada City, Aomori Pref.)
 Oirase Gorge offers spectacular views no matter where you look. This is one of the most beautiful mountain streams in Japan, flowing along a distance of about 14 km from Lake Towada.

C
Sappa Boat Adventures
 (Tanohata Village, Iwate Pref.)
 Cruise on a small boat operated by local fishermen for an adventure that fully immerses you in nature.



C
Kakunodate Samurai District
 (Semboku City, Akita Pref.)
 Kakunodate preserves its Edo-period (1603-1868) townscape of samurai residences and rows of cherry blossom trees, and is known as the "little Kyoto of Michinoku (Tohoku)."



A
Bank of Iwate Red Brick Building
 (Morioka City, Iwate Pref.)
 This Western-style building with striking red bricks was built about 110 years ago, and was designed by the same architect as Tokyo Station.



E
Akita Inu Visitor Center
 (Odate City, Akita Pref.)
 A facility where you can interact with Akita Inu. This breed is a national treasure of Japan and the same breed the famous loyal dog Hachiko.



F
Hirosaki Castle
 (Hirosaki City, Aomori Pref.)
 About 2,600 cherry blossom trees bloom in this park. When the cherry blossoms fall, the moat transforms into a pink carpet of petals.

Route 03 **Tohoku Tour of Tohoku Towns and Relaxing Time with Akita Inu** Route

This route will take you on a tour of Tohoku cities that preserve historic buildings and samurai residences from times past. Each city evokes a different atmosphere, and exploring the streets on foot adds to the fun. You can also interact with cute Akita Inu dogs.



B
Lake Tazawa
 (Semboku City, Akita Pref.)
 The deepest lake in Japan with a depth of 423.4 meters. This "power spot" is linked to a local legend about a beautiful woman named Tatsuko.



D
Oga Godzill Rock
 (Oga City, Akita Pref.)
 A rock formed during a volcanic eruption, named for its silhouette that resembles the monster Godzilla.

Itinerary

Day 1: Sendai / Iwate Hanamaki Airport / Ichinoseki Station → Hiraizumi (Chuson-ji Temple) → Morioka (Morioka Castle Site Park, Bank of Iwate Red Brick Building, Morioka History and Culture Museum, Nanbu-tekki Ironware Tour) → Morioka Tsunagi Onsen [Overnight stay]
Day 2: Morioka Tsunagi Onsen → Lake Tazawa → Kakunodate (Samurai District) → Akita (Akita City Folk Performing Arts Heritage Center) → Oga (Godzilla Rock, Namahage Museum) → Oga Onsen [Overnight stay] *Live Namahage-Daiko performance at Gofu event hall
Day 3: Oga Onsen → Odate (Akita Inu Visitor Center) → Oyu Stone Circles → Hirosaki (Hirosaki Castle, Tsugaru-han Neputa Village) → Aomori (Nebuta Museum WA RASSE, Sannai Maruyama Site, Aomori Museum of Art) → Shin-Aomori Station / Aomori Airport

Route 04

Tohoku Tour of Spectacular Tohoku Scenery Across All Four Seasons Route

The Tohoku region is blessed with incredible natural beauty, including the mountains, ocean, mountain streams, and lakes. This route will take you to see Tohoku's best views in each season: cherry blossoms, verdant greenery, autumn colors, and snowy landscapes. Please visit our website to see what each season offers.

For more info:



Hachimantai Dragon Eye

(Semboku City, Akita Pref.)

From late May to early June, this mystical sight appears at Kagami-numa (mirror pond) near the summit of Mt. Hachimantai.



Michinoku Coastal Trail

(Hachinohe City, Aomori Pref.)

A long trail that stretches along the magnificent Pacific Ocean from Hachinohe City, Aomori Prefecture, to Soma City, Fukushima Prefecture.



Lake Towada

(Towada City, Aomori Pref. / Kosaka Town, Akita Pref.)

This lake is located in the northern highlands but never freezes over. The beauty of the four seasons, including the autumn leaves, will leave you spellbound.



Oirase Gorge Ice Falls

(Towada City, Aomori Pref.)

The beautiful icefalls that form along this clear river appear to be frozen in time. Recommended by the Michelin Green Guide.

Itinerary

Day 1: Sendai / Iwate Hanamaki Airport / Morioka Station → Morioka (Morioka Castle Site Park, Iwachu Tekkikan Museum) → Mt. Hachimantai summit (Hachimantai Dragon Eye) → Michi-no-Eki Kazuno Antler → Oyu Stone Circles → Lake Towada [Overnight stay]
Day 2: Lake Towada → Oirase Gorge → Towada Art Center → Hachinohe (Hike the Michinoku Coastal Trail along the Tanesashi Coast, Hachinohe Art Museum) → Asamushi Onsen [Overnight stay]
Day 3: Asamushi Onsen → Hirosaki (Hirosaki Castle, Hirosaki Museum of Contemporary Art, Western-style architecture tour) → Goshogawara (Tachineputa Museum) → Aomori (Aomori Museum of Art) → Shin-Aomori Station / Aomori Airport

Route 05

Tohoku Tour of Tohoku Spiritual Culture and Natural World Heritage Sites Route

Many nature-centric folk religions have spawned in the Tohoku region. This route offers a fascinating glimpse of the beliefs and customs that have endured here in different forms since ancient times, such as mountain worship and the Namahage, deities that make a ritual visit on New Year's Eve.

For more info:



Yamadera (Hojusan Risshaku-ji Temple)

(Yamagata City, Yamagata Pref.)

An ancient temple situated up high on a mountain comprising oddly shaped boulders and rocks. A spectacular view awaits those who climb all 1,015 stone steps to the top.



Shirakami River Trekking

(Fujisato Town, Akita Pref.)

This special experience takes you trekking in the pristine river that flows from the vast beech forest of the Shirakami-Sanchi UNESCO World Heritage site. Summer only.



Live Namahage-Daiko performance at Gofu event hall

(Oga City, Akita Pref.)

A new take on an old local performing art unique to Oga that combines the Namahage of Oga (an Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property of Japan) with wadaiko, or Japanese drums.



Five-storied Pagoda of Mt. Haguro

(Tsuruoka City, Yamagata Pref.)

The 29-meter high five-storied pagoda, a National Treasure of Japan, is said to have been rebuilt about 600 years ago. The approach to the pagoda is lined with cedar trees that add to its beauty.

Itinerary

Day 1: Akita Station / Akita Airport → Akita (Akita City Folk Performing Arts Heritage Center) → Mt. Chokai (Chokai Blue Line) → Sakata (Somaro, Sankyo Soko Storehouses) → Yunohama Onsen [Overnight stay]
Day 2: Yunohama Onsen → Tsuruoka (Kamo Aquarium) → Dewa Sanzan Shrine (Mt. Haguro) → Sasagawa Nagare Coastline → Murakami (Iyoboya Kaikan) → Niigata Jizake Premium SAKE KURA → Tsukioka Onsen [Overnight stay]
Day 3: Tsukioka Onsen → Niigata (Hakusan Park) → Yahiko Shrine → Tsubame Sanjo (Tsubame City factory tour/workshop) → Niigata Station / Tsubame-Sanjo Station / Niigata Airport

Route 06

Tohoku Sunsets and Scenic Coastal Drives Route

This route runs southward along the Sea of Japan from Akita to Niigata via Yamagata. Take in magnificent views of the ocean below during the drive. Then, enjoy the luxury of soaking in hot springs while watching the sun set over the Sea of Japan.

For more info:



Yunohama Onsen

(Tsuruoka City, Yamagata Pref.)

The beach is known for its stunning sunset, counted among Japan's 100 best sunsets. We recommend watching the sunset from an open-air bath at your accommodation.



Sasagawa Nagare Coastline

(Murakami City, Niigata Pref.)

This coastline continues for about 11 kilometers with varied views of unusual rock formations and caves that will take your breath away. The sunset is also worth seeing.

Mt. Chokai

(Yuza Town, Yamagata Pref.)

An iconic standalone peak that rises 2,236 meters above sea level. This magnificent scene can be enjoyed from the driving route at the foot of the mountain.

Sankyo Soko Storehouses

(Sakata City, Yamagata Pref.)

Built in 1893, these rice storehouses are still in use today. Rows of zelkova trees make for a striking sight against the black walls.

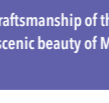


Route 07

Tohoku Traditional Craftsmanship and History Route

This route provides opportunities to experience the history and traditional craftsmanship of the Tohoku region and Niigata in particular. In addition to hands-on workshops, you can enjoy the scenic beauty of Matsushima in Miyagi Prefecture, which is counted among the three most iconic views of Japan.

For more info:



Aizu-nuri lacquerware

(Aizuwakamatsu City, Fukushima Pref.)

Aizu-nuri is a tradition that can be traced back over 400 years. Using Maki-e, a technique unique to Japan, gold and silver metal powders or colored powders are sprinkled on the lacquerware to create beautiful decorations.



Tsubame City manufacturing workshop

(Tsubame City, Niigata Pref.)

Try making a personal, one-of-a-kind tumbler in a city with a 400-year history of industrial craftsmanship.



Miyagi Zao Kokeshi dolls

(Zao Town, Miyagi Pref.)

Kokeshi are wooden dolls that emerged during the Edo period (1603-1868), originating from Miyagi Prefecture. The dolls' shapes and expressions vary from region to region, giving each a distinct character.

Niigata Jizake premium SAKE KURA

(Shibata City, Niigata Pref.)

Niigata Prefecture is home to the largest number of sake breweries in Japan. At this facility, you can taste carefully selected sake from all of these breweries in one place.



Itinerary

Day 1: Shin-Aomori Station / Aomori Airport → Aomori (Sannai Maruyama Site, Nebuta Museum WA RASSE) → Hirosaki (Hirosaki Castle, Hirosaki Apple Park) → Shirakami-Sanchi (Beech Forest Trail) → Ajigasawa [Overnight stay]
Day 2: Ajigasawa → Senjojiki Coast → Koganezaki Furofushi Onsen → Shirakami-Sanchi Juniko Twelve Lakes / Aoike Pond Trail → Fujisato Town (Shirakami River Trekking) → Oga (Namahage Museum) → Oga Onsen [Overnight stay] *Live Namahage-Daiko performance at Gofu event hall
Day 3: Oga Onsen → Akita (Akita City Folk Performing Arts Heritage Center) → Dewa Sanzan Shrine / Five-storied Pagoda of Mt. Haguro → Yamadera (Hojusan Risshaku-ji Temple) → Yamagata Station / Yamagata Airport

Itinerary

Day 1: Niigata Station / Niigata Airport → Yahiko Shrine / Yahiko Park → Tsubame Sanjo (Tsubame City manufacturing workshop) → Murakami (Iyoboya Kaikan) → Niigata Jizake Premium SAKE KURA → Tsukioka Onsen [Overnight stay]
Day 2: Tsukioka Onsen → No. 1 Tadami River Bridge → Ouchi-juku → Aizuwakamatsu (Tsurugajo Castle, Aizu Sazaedo, Aizu-nuri lacquerware) → Lake Inawashiro → Urabandai [Overnight stay]
Day 3: Urabandai → Goshikunuma → Bandai-Azuma Skyline → Fukushima (Fruits Line, Hanamiyama) → Miyagi Zao Kokeshi dolls → Sendai (site of Sendai Castle, Gyutan (dish made from beef tongue)) → Matsushima Bay → Sendai Station / Sendai Airport

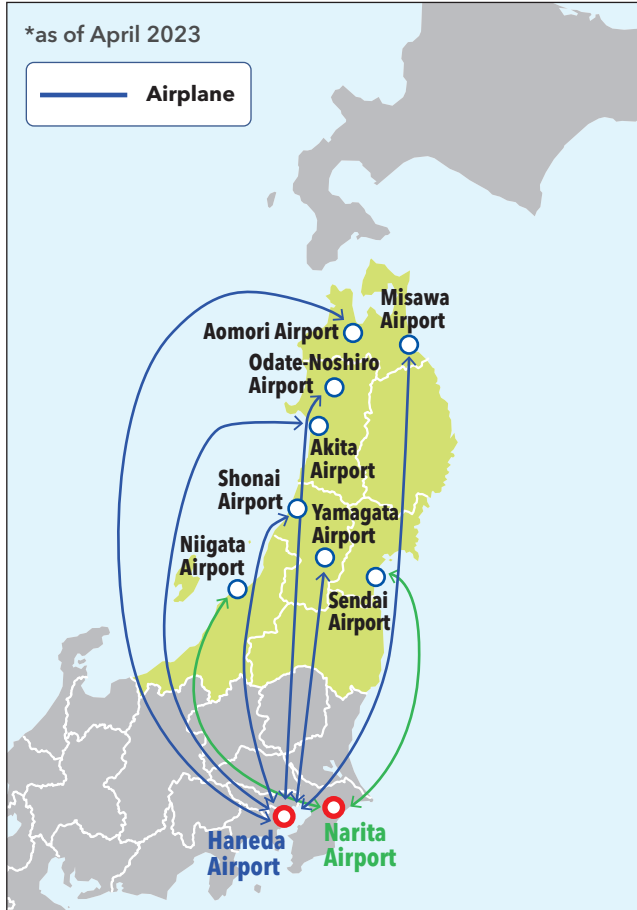
Getting to Tohoku



From Tokyo



By Air



Airplane

[Haneda Airport]

- Aomori Airport** 1h15min (6 flights/JAL)
- Misawa Airport** 1h20min (4 flights/JAL)
- Odate-Noshiro Airport** 1h10min (3 flights/ANA)
- Akita Airport** 1h5min (9 flights/JAL,ANA)
- Shonai Airport** 1h (5 flights/ANA)
- Yamagata Airport** 1h (2 flights/JAL)

[Narita Airport] *Suspended

- Sendai Airport** 1h (2 flights/ANA)
- Niigata Airport** 1h5min (1 flight/ANA)



By Train



Tohoku & Hokkaido Shinkansen

- Shin-Hakodate-Hokuto St.**3h57min
- Shin-Aomori St.**2h58min
- Akita St.**3h37min
- Morioka St.**2h10min
- Yamagata St.**2h26min
- Sendai St.**1h30min
- Fukushima St.**1h21min

Joetsu Shinkansen

- Niigata St.**1h29min

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Tohoku area >>



Niigata area >>



TOHOKU HIGHWAY BUS TICKET



Tohoku Expressway Pass



Tohoku Tourism Promotion Organization

November 2023

[Cover photo] Top: Okama Crater on Mt. Zao (Zao Town, Miyagi Pref.) / Bottom: Oirase Gorge (Towada City, Aomori Pref.)