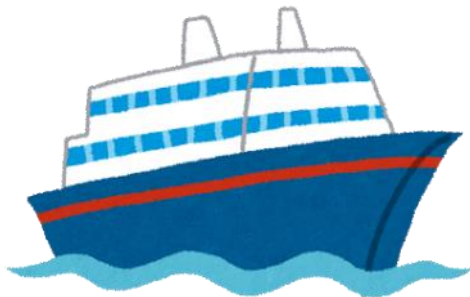


New International Tourist Tax

Thinking of travelling abroad? Chances are, you paid not just for your flight, but also a new tax!

From January 7th of this year, the Japanese government has started a new tax on travelers departing Japan, regardless of nationality. The tax, often called the “international tourist tax,” is 1000 yen per departure from Japan. This affects both travelers on airplanes and cruise ships leaving Japan. Your tax is automatically included in your flight/ship payment, so you don’t have to worry about paying for it separately!



Main Exemptions to the New Tax

1. You leave Japan within 24 hours.
2. The traveler is under 2 years old.
3. You bought the ticket before January 7th, 2019

There are many more rules and exemptions (for example, diplomats are exempted) but these are the main 3 rules that apply to most travelers.



Benefits for Everyone Visiting Japan

According the to National Tax Agency, the revenue will be used to:

1. Create a more comfortable, stress-free tourist environment
2. Improve access to information about a wide variety of attractions of Japan
3. Develop tourist resources taking advantage of the unique cultural and natural assets of respective regions.

As the tax collection has just started, we have yet to see the results of it. Some things we can look forward to more free wi-fi access, multi-language support, and cleaner/newer facilities.

Next time you fly out of Japan, don’t be surprised by the extra 1000 yen in your bill! Know it will go to make a better experience for future visitors to Japan.
良い旅を！ Yoi tabi wo Have a good trip!

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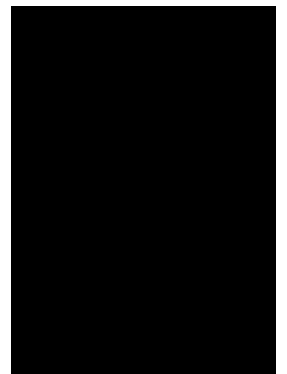
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International Festa, Obihiro Ice Festival (pg 3)



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Events at TIRC and in Tokachi and Obihiro

When	What	Where/Contact
2/9, 2/23 (Sat) 16:00-18:00	Japanese Conversation and Learning Table Improve your Japanese language skills in a friendly environment. TIRC Winter Garden Fee: Free of charge Organized by Tokachi International Association	Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihoro.hokkaido.jp
2/9 (Sat) 19:00-21:00	International Potluck Night (Sri Lanka) Meet local and international residents while enjoying a dish from around the world. This time, our guest from Sri Lanka will introduce you to Sri Lankan rice crepe, "Hopper". TIRC Kitchen Fee: Free of charge (no registration required) Please bring a dish or drink to share.	
2/13 (Wed) 19:00-21:00	International Mini-Volleyball Night Meet new friends from around the world while enjoying a fun and easy sport. Organized by Tokachi International Association	
2/16-17 (Sat-Sun) 10:00-15:00	International Festa in Tokachi 2019 Experience international exchange and cooperation through various activities. Join English conversation lessons for kids, tour JICA's facilities and participate in the hunt for clues to win prizes! TIRC and JICA Hokkaido (Obihiro) /Free of charge Organized by Tokachi International Association Co-organized by the City of Obihiro, JICA Hokkaido (Obihiro) With the cooperation of the Committee for Improvement of the City, Japan for UNHCR	
2/1-3 (Fri-Sun)	56th Obihiro Ice Festival 第56回おびひろ氷まつり The Obihiro Ice Festival will take place in the Midorigaoka Park. Various winter activities and ice displays will be prepared. Fire works and plenty of events are sure to "warm you up!"	Midorigaoka Park 緑ヶ丘公園一帯 帯広のまつり推進委員会 0155-22-8600 http://obihiro-icefes.com/
2/3 (Sun) 10:00-15:00	Children's Hall Winter Festival 児童会館冬まつり In cooperation with the Obihiro Ice Festival, the Children's Hall will be holding craft activities, science experiments and more!	Obihiro Children's Hall 帯広市児童会館 0155-24-2434
2/17 (Sun) 10:30-	35th Churui Nauman All Hokkaido Sled Race 第35回忠類ナウマン全道そり大会 Watch sleds made of cardboard show off their speed and designs.	Churui Hakugindai Ski Area 忠類白銀台スキー場 幕別町忠類支所地域振興課 01558-8-2111

International Festa in Tokachi 2019 国際フェスタ in とかち 2019

International Festa in Tokachi is back again!

On **February 16 and 17th**, experience international exchange and cooperation through various activities.

Join English conversation lessons for kids, tour JICA's facilities and participate in the hunt for clues to win prizes!

This year's activities include:

- ◇ Stamp Rally (collect stamps to win prizes)
- ◇ English lessons conducted by a international preschool based in Obihiro
- ◇ Cooking classes (International Cuisine) by foreign students featuring dishes from South Korea, Thailand, Madagascar and more!
- ◇ Kids Corner
Play a traditional African game, try African drums, and make your own African musical instrument. Samples of African products such as chocolate and coffee will also be available.

The JICA Restaurant has also prepared a special, International Festa exclusive item on their menu just for the event!

Head down to Tokachi International Relations Center and JICA Obihiro to enjoy the event!

56th Obihiro Ice Festival



Make the most of the cold weather by checking out this year's Obihiro Ice Festival! This year's festival will take place at Midorigaoka park.

Enjoy daily fireworks, local food, beautiful ice sculptures and events to warm you up this cold February!

February 1st to 3rd @ Midorigaoka Park

<http://obihiro-icefes.com/> ←Check up latest info on their homepage!

Movies At Cinema Taiyo, in Obihiro

(Nishi 3, Minami 11)
Tel: (0155) 20-1525

Times and movies are subject to change! (for space reasons not all movies are listed)
To confirm, call or check online at: http://www.taiyogroup.jp/cinema/theater/_obihiro/movie.shtml

Title	Language	Dates
Mary Poppins Returns	Jpn Sub	All Month
Aquaman	Jpn Sub	From 8th
First Man	Jpn Sub	From 8th
A Star is Born <i>Alii Suta Tanjou</i>	Jpn Sub	From 22nd

Events Continued

When	What	Where/Contact
2/14 (Thur) 15:00-20:30	28th Ice Candle Night 第28回 氷灯夜 On the evening of Valentine's Day in Memuro Town, about 5000 ice candles light up the night. An evening of fun will be prepare for of course couples, but also for families and all.	Memuro Park 芽室公園内 第29回氷灯夜実行委員会事務局 0155-66-6522 https://memurokankou-hyoutouya-hy.jimdo.com/
2/2, 16 (Sat) 9:45-12:00	Walk Café サンポカフェ Talk a walk through the Tokachi Ecology Park in snowshoes. This event is only for adults. 1000 yen fee, wear warm clothes and gloves.	Tokachi Ecology Park 十勝エコロジーパーク 0155-32-6780 www.tokachi-ecopark.jp
1/26-2/24 (Sat-Sun)	Tokachigawa Swan Festival "Sairinka" 十勝川白鳥まつり「彩凜華」 Come and enjoy a fantasy show of lights and sounds, snow rafting, walking in the forest of lights and so much more!	Tokachi Gaoka Park 十勝が丘公園 音更町十勝川温泉観光協会 0155-32-6633 http://www.tokachigawa.net/
1/26-3/22 (Sat-Fri)	Lake Shikaribetsu Kotan (Village) しかりべつ湖コタン "Kotan" is the Ainu word for "village." Seen only in the coldest time of year, you can come and experience an entire village made of snow and ice. Try dipping in a hot spring made of ice!	Lake Shikaribetsu 然別湖 しかりべつ湖コタン実行委員会 0156-69-8181 http://www.nature-center.jp/kotan/index.html

Obihiro Pioneer can be found at the following locations: Obihiro City Hall, Tokachi International Relations Center, Obihiro University International Center, Obihiro Tourism and Convention Center inside the Obihiro JR Station, Obihiro Public Library, Tokachi Plaza, Cinema Taiyo, Joy English Academy and online at www.city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp (click on "Information for Foreigners")

"Obihiro Pioneer" is a newsletter published monthly by the Obihiro International and Domestic Relations Section for residents of the Tokachi District and related parties. The contents of this newsletter do not necessarily represent the official views or opinions of the International and Domestic Relations Section or the City of Obihiro. Questions? Tel (0155) 65-4133 or send e-mail to the Editing Team at international@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp.