

## Valentine's Day in Japan 日本のバレンタインデー

The days are getting longer, the flowers are starting to bloom and life is starting to flourish once again. Just kidding! It's still very cold in Tokachi and spring is a little while away yet. But the season of love doesn't wait on the weather and so Valentine's Day has come around once again.

Valentine's Day is widely celebrated in Japan on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February. In western countries, Valentine's Day is a time when both men and women buy gifts for their partners or treat them to a romantic meal etc., but Japan has created its own tradition that's a little bit different. In Japan, Valentine's Day is when women give chocolate to the people around them. This chocolate can be split into roughly three categories:

### Giri-choco 義理チョコ

This is chocolate that's required to be given to colleagues, though it's also often given to family or even exchanged between students and teachers. It's regarded as a token of thanks or appreciation, and is usually something small and somewhat inexpensive.

### Tomo-choco 友チョコ

Lately it has become popular among Japanese women to give chocolate to their friends whom they love in a non-romantic

way. While this kind of chocolate is probably nicer than giri-choco, it still pales in comparison to....

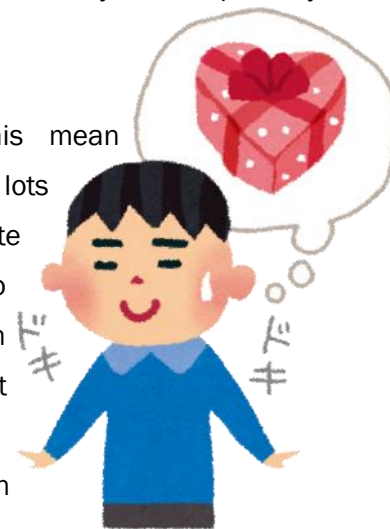
### Honmei-choco 本命チョコ

This is chocolate given to your "special someone" with the intent of conveying your feelings towards them. This chocolate is usually somewhat more expensive and extravagant, or may even possibly be homemade.

So does this mean that men get lots of chocolate and have to do nothing in return? Not quite!

While men get a free

pass for Valentine's Day, men are expected to return the favor and give chocolate to all those they received chocolate from on the 14<sup>th</sup> March, which is called "White Day". So if you're lucky enough to get some chocolate on Valentine's Day, make sure to take notes on who you got chocolate from and pay them back next month!



## Contents:

Valentine's Day in Japan **1**

Events **2**

International Festa Obihiro Ice Festival **3**

Movie Schedule Events Con't **4**



Valentine's Day in Japan (pg 1)



Events (pg 2, 4)



International Festa, Obihiro Ice Festival (pg 3)



Movies (pg 4)

We hope you and all your loved ones  
have a very happy Valentine's Day

# Events at TIRC and in Tokachi and Obihiro

When	What	Where/Contact
2/15 (Sat) 19:00-21:00	<b>International Potluck Night (Morocco)</b> インターナショナルポットラックナイト(モロッコ) Meet local and international residents while enjoying a dish from around the world. This time, our guest Imane from Morocco will introduce us to the Moroccan pot cuisine called "Tagine" (stew with prunes and almonds).  TIRC Kitchen Fee: Free of charge (no registration required) Please bring a dish and drink to share. Organized by the Committee for Improvement of the City	Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp
2/19 (Wed) 19:00-21:00	<b>International Mini-Volleyball Night</b> 国際ミニバレー・ナイト Meet new friends from around the world while enjoying a fun and easy sport. Organized by Tokachi International Association	
2/22 (Sat) 16:00-18:00	<b>Japanese Conversation and Learning Table</b> 日本語講座 Improve your Japanese language skills in a friendly environment. TIRC Winter Garden Fee: Free of charge Organized by Tokachi International Association	
2/1 (Sat) 2/15 (Sat) 10:00-12:00	<b>Walking Café</b> サンポカフェ Join this nature program designed for adults, and put on a pair of snowshoes to take a walk through a winter landscape. Look for animal tracks and observe the winter ecology of the flora and fauna. Afterwards, relax in the natural scenery while drinking warm drinks. <i>1000 Yen participation fee. Wear warm clothes and gloves.</i>	Tokachi Ecology Park 十勝エコロジーパーク 十勝エコロジーパーク財団 0155-32-6780 <a href="http://www.tokachi-ecopark.jp/">http://www.tokachi-ecopark.jp/</a>
2/1 (Sat)	<b>Roadside Station "Stella★Honbetsu" Winter Illumination</b> 道の駅「ステラ★ほんべつ」冬あかり Have a magical nighttime experience while viewing ice candles. Various events will also be provided for your entertainment.	Roadside Station "Stella★Honbetsu" 道の駅「ステラ★ほんべつ」 0156-22-5819
2/1-2/2 (Sat-Sun)	<b>39<sup>th</sup> Shibare Festival</b> 第39回しばれフェスティバル The Shibare Festival is all about celebrating the coldness of Japan's coldest town, Rikubetsu. There will be plenty of activities to delight both young and old and a bonfire to warm yourself up at afterwards.	Uenbetsu Event Center, Rikubetsu 陸別町ウエンベツ イベントセンター 0156-27-3990 <a href="http://www.shibare.com">http://www.shibare.com</a>
2/2 (Sun) 10:00-15:00	<b>Children's Hall Winter Festival</b> 児童会館冬まつり In cooperation with the Obihiro Ice Festival, the Obihiro 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

# International Festa in Tokachi 2020 国際フェスタ in とかち 2020

International Festa in Tokachi is back again!

On February 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, experience international exchange and cooperation through various activities. Join English conversation lessons for kids, tour JICA's facilities and join a free movie viewing and talk show!

This year's activities include:

- ◇ Movie viewing and talk show
- ◇ English lessons conducted by a international preschool based in Obihiro
- ◇ Showcase of international cuisine by foreign students featuring dishes from Indonesia, Egypt, Madagascar and more!
- ◇ Kids Corner  
Make your own African musical instrument called a "rain stick" and try out traditional musical instruments from around the world.

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!

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

## 57<sup>th</sup> Obihiro Ice Festival 第57回おびひろ氷まつり

Make the most of Obihiro's cold weather by heading to the 57<sup>th</sup> Obihiro Ice Festival being held in Midorigaoka Park!

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

January 31<sup>st</sup> to February 2<sup>nd</sup> @ Midorigaoka Park

<http://obihiro-icefes.com/> ←Check up on the 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](http://www.taiyogroup.jp/cinema/theater/_obihiro/movie.shtml)

	Title	Language	Dates
	Ford vs Ferarri	Jpn Sub	Until 20 <sup>th</sup>
	Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker (スカイウォーカーの夜明け/ <i>Sukai uōkaa no yoake</i> )	Jpn Sub/Dub	Until 27 <sup>th</sup>
	Cats	Jpn Sub/Dub	All Month
	Bad Boys for Life	TBD	All Month
	Parasite	TBD	From 14 <sup>th</sup> Until 26 <sup>th</sup>

## Events Continued

When	What	Where/Contact
2/8-2/9 (Sat-Sun)	<b>38<sup>th</sup> Kamishihoro Winter Balloon Meeting</b> 第38回上士幌ウインターバルーンミーティング Witness the magical contrast of colourful hot air balloons between the blue sky and snowy white ground. You can also ride in a balloon for a fee, and get a 360°	Kamishihoro Koukuu Park 上士幌町航空公園 北海道バルーンフェスティバル 組織委員会 01564-2-2111
2/14 (Fri) 15:00-20:30	<b>30<sup>th</sup> Ice Candle Night</b> 第30回氷灯夜 On the evening of Valentine's Day about 5000 ice candles light up the night in Memuro Town. An evening of fun is guaranteed not just for couples, but for families and everybody else as well.	Memuro Park 芽室公園内 芽室町 商工観光課観光物産係 0155-62-9736 s-kankou@memuro.net
2/15-2/16 (Sat-Sun) 10:00-15:00	<b>Nakasatsunai Snow Art Village 2020</b> スノーアートヴィレッジ なかさつない2020 Come play with the snow to your hearts content! This is a hands-on event where you can experience the most the Tokachi winter has to offer via tours and of snow art drawn on a large snowy field, activities such as dog sledding and snow tubes, and a snowy gym at Chikudai KIP. Admission is free!	Nakasatsunai Rural Holiday Village Feriendorf 中札内農村休暇村 フェーリエンドルフ 中札内村観光協会 0155-68-3390 <a href="http://www.facebook.com/tenwinters/">http://www.facebook.com/tenwinters/</a>
2/16 (Sun)	<b>37<sup>th</sup> Churui Nauman All Hokkaido Sled Race</b> 第37回忠類ナウマン全道そり大会 Come watch this special sledding tournament, where all the sleds are made of cardboard! Sleds are judged based on their speed and design, and winners are chosen for each category.	Churui Hakugindai Ski Area, Makubetsu 幕別町忠類白銀台スキー場 幕別町商工会忠類支所地域振興課 01558-8-2111 <a href="http://www.makubetsu.jp/kankobussankyokai/?p=4919">http://www.makubetsu.jp/kankobussankyokai/?p=4919</a>

**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](http://www.city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp) (click on "Information for Foreigners")

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