

# Obihiro Pioneer

Tourism and Goodwill Exchange Section Newsletter

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## Japanese New Year

## 日本のお正月



Happy New Year, pioneers! The festivities have subsided and the new year has officially begun! Did you enjoy the holidays Japanese style? The Japanese New Year, *oshōgatsu* (お正月) lasts from January 1-3. Like many other cultures, Japan looks forward to welcoming the new year with success and good will. Here are some customs in Japanese celebrations.

### Preparing the Home



Kadomatsu

Before the New Year holiday, it is customary for Japanese to clean both the inside and outside of their homes in order to purify them before the new year. Decoration also plays a big role as Japanese pine decorations called *kadomatsu* (門松) are set up on both sides of the entrance of the home. This tradition is a good luck charm for the New Year. In addition, the Japanese practice the custom of hanging a sacred rope or wreath made of straw and strips of paper at their door entrance called a *shimenawa* (しめ縄) and *shimekazari* (しめ飾り) respectively. They're believed to prevent evil spirits from entering their home.



Shimenawa



Shimekazari

### Nengajo—New Year Greeting Cards



Nengajo

Friends, family, and acquaintances often send post cards to each other and welcome in the New Year with New Year's cards called *nengajo* (年賀状). It is customary for the recipients of a *nengajo* to reply by January 7th. Collection at the post office starts in early December and the post office prides itself with delivering all cards in time for the new year.

### Gifts



Otoshidama

New Year's is a favorite holiday for children because they receive money from their parents. This New Year's gift is called *otoshidama* (お年玉). Relatives and close family members also bring *otoshidama* to the children and they are free to spend it however they want!

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Kagamimochi

## New Year's Dishes

What New Year's celebration would be complete without the mention of traditional foods! Some of the most traditional Japanese foods eaten during the New Year holiday include steamed rice that has been pounded into cakes and stacked called **kagamimochi** (鏡餅), vegetable dishes, dried persimmons, dried chestnuts, black peas, sardines, herring, roe, mandarin oranges, and a soup called **zōni** (雑煮). It is customary to serve ozōni for the first three days after the new year. People also prepare **osechi** (お節), a traditional Japanese style of cooking in which each food item has a special meaning related to the new year. Many people decide to create it themselves, but many opt to order it premade from grocery and department stores.



Zōni



Osechi



Joya no Kane

## Temple Bell Ringing

On New Year's Eve, Japanese wait up until midnight to hear the tolling of the bells at Japan's temples called **joya no kane** (除夜の鐘). Some can hear it from their homes, but many go directly to the temple to watch the bell being rung. Kyoto has one of the largest bells in the world, weighing 74 tons! Buddhists believe that a man has 108 sins and after hearing the bells toll for that number, he/she can be free from all of the sins from the previous year. On New Year's day, it is traditional for Japanese to spend the day worshipping miniature Buddhist and Shinto altars in their homes.



Hatsumōde

## First Shrine or Temple Visit of the New Year

During the 3-day holiday, it is customary for people to practice **hatsumōde** (初詣). This is when people dress in their finest clothes and kimonos and visit the shrines and temples to pray for good luck and prosperity for the New Year. During this time, people eat street food such as rice wine and sweet chestnuts. It is also customary for people to pull their fortune to decide their luck for the new year called **omikuji** (おみくじ). There are different levels of luck that you can receive and each is followed by an explanation in old text.



Omikuji



Daruma

## Making Wishes on Daruma

Some Japanese people also buy **daruma** (達磨) on New Year's. This doll is said to grant the wish of those who promise to fill in its eyes. The owner makes a wish and fills in one eye, and promises to fill in the other eye once the wish comes true. *Daruma* are returned to temples during the year and are burned collectively during early January.

Did you learn some new facts about Japanese New Year? There are many unique traditions found throughout Japan to experience! Whether you had a Japanese style new year or had one in your own style, we here at Obihiro Pioneer wish you a Happy New Year and best of luck in 2022. Make this year one to remember!



If you are new to Hokkaido, don't miss the opportunity to visit this world famous event! Due to the effects of COVID-19, this year's event will be held in a hybrid form with both in-person and online participation with a number of restrictions. Here is an idea of the changes to help you enjoy the event to its fullest this year!



	In-Person	Online
Dates	February 5th (Saturday) - February 12th (Saturday)	February 5th (Saturday) - February 28th (Monday)
Location	Sapporo Odori Park 札幌市中央区大通西1~7丁目	<a href="http://www.snowfes.com">http://www.snowfes.com</a>
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Displays will be divided by street:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1-3 chōme: Illumination</li> <li>4-6 chōme: Illumination and small/medium snow sculptures</li> <li>7 chōme: main sculpture and small/medium sculptures</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Snow sculpture / scenery stream</li> <li>Online photo contest participation</li> <li>Online shop for local brands</li> </ul>

1/19: This year's in person events have been cancelled and will be held online

## Changes and Cancellations

- Food, drink, and vendor stalls will not be present at the in-person event
- The Citizen's Sculpture and International Snow Sculpture Contest will not be held
- Both the Tsudome and Susukino locations will not be open for this year's event

※Information provided by the Sapporo Economics and Tourism Bureau, Tourism and MICE Promotion Section

## Movies @ Cinema Taiyo, Obihiro

Not all movies are listed. Times and movies are subject to change.  
To confirm, call or check online at: [www.taiyogroup.jp/movie/obihiro](http://www.taiyogroup.jp/movie/obihiro)

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

Title	Genre	Lang	Dates
<b>Venom: Let There Be Carnage</b> <i>Venomu: Retto Zea Bī Kāneiji</i>	action	EN/JP	Until 13 <sup>th</sup>
<b>The Matrix Resurrections</b> <i>Matorikkusu Rezarekushonzu</i>	sci-fi/ action	EN/JP	Until 27 <sup>th</sup>
<b>The Boss Baby: Family Business</b> <i>Bosu Beibī Famiī Misshon</i>	comedy	JP	Until 27 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Spider-Man: No Way Home</b> <i>Supaidāman: Nō Wei Hōmu</i>	action	EN/JP	From 7 <sup>th</sup>
<b>The King's Man</b> <i>Kingusuman Fāsuto Ējento</i>	action	EN	From 21 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Resident Evil: Welcome to Raccoon City</b> <i>Baiohazādo: Werukamu Tu Rakūn Shiti</i>	horror/ action	N/A	From 28 <sup>th</sup>




Spider-Man: No Way Home

KEY: JP = Japanese voice EN = English voice with Japanese subtitles

## Events in Tokachi

Please be aware that these and other events may be affected by COVID-19. To find out if these events are still running, please contact the respective organizers or check out their webpages online.

When	What	Where/Contact
1/8 (Sat) 18:30-20:00	<p><b>International Talk (Vietnam)</b> インターナショナル・トーク(ベトナム)</p> <p>Learn more about the countries of the world. This month's theme is "Vietnam". This time our guest is Ngoc, Obihiro's newest Coordinator for International Relations! She will introduce her country and share facts and interesting information about Vietnamese culture, lifestyle and more. Participants can interact with the guest through a presentation and Q&amp;A session.</p> <p>Location: TIRC Winter Garden Fee: Free of charge (no registration required) Participants: Junior high school students and older</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp</p>
1/15 (Sat) 10:30-12:00	<p><b>Kid's Playground (Vietnam)</b> キッズ・プレイグラウンド(ベトナム)</p> <p>Come with your children to learn and play while meeting local families. This month's theme is "Vietnam". This time our guest, Ngoc from Vietnam, will interact with the children through song, dance and arts and craft.</p> <p>Fee: Free of charge Participants: Children 0-6 years old and their parents/guardians. Limited to 40 participants (decided by raffle) Notes: Register by contacting TIRC or through the QR code on the right. The registration period is from 12/17(Fri) to 1/7(Fri)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>
1/23 (Sun) 10:00-14:00	<p><b>Nakasatsunai Winter Festival</b> 中札内冬まつり</p> <p>Come enjoy the winter festival with you family! There will be snow rafting, an ice slide, a snowy treasure hunt, a stamp rally, and much more!</p> <p>Fee: Each activity has a different associated fee</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Michi no Eki Nakasatsunai 中札内村観光協会 0155-68-3390</p>
1/28-1/30 (Fri-Sun)	<p><b>59th Annual Obihiro Ice Festival</b> 第59回おびひろ氷祭り</p> <p>Obihiro's annual ice festival will be held in Midorigaoka Park with the motto of "enjoying warmth and happiness in the north country". There will be ice sculptures, an ice slide, and much more!</p> <p>Fee: Free of charge</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Midorigaoka Park 帯広のまつり推進委員会 0155-22-8600</p>
	<div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <p>1/19: The Ice Festival has been cancelled for 2022</p> </div>	

**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) (search for "Obihiro Pioneer").

**Obihiro Pioneer** is a newsletter published monthly by the Obihiro City Tourism and Goodwill Exchange 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 Tourism and Goodwill Exchange Section or the City of Obihiro. Questions? Contact the Editing Team at:  
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