

International Festa (国際フェスタinとかち2015)

On Saturday 2/14 and Sunday 2/15 we will be holding the “International Festa in Tokachi 2015” at the Tokachi International Relations Center and JICA International Center.

We are planning to have teachers from an area English school to help us with “Let’s play in English” lessons aimed a children, a free movie viewing about fair trade and a booth about fair trade run by JICA, cultural introductions by Obihiro University International Students, and various international exchange and cooperation organizations will also be in attendance.

We will also have a special rally for toddlers, as well as free English story books for children younger than elementary school age.

The event will be from 10:00 to 15:00 and entry is free.

We are also looking for volunteers to help at the event so if you are interested please contact us.

For more information and inquiries please contact the Tokachi International Association office at the Tokachi International Relations Center at 0155-34-0122.



Event Details

Date: 14 February—15 February 2015
Place: Tokachi International Relations Center and JICA International Center
Fee: Free
Organized by: Tokachi International Association

2月14日～2月15日、森の交流館・十勝及びJICA北海道国際センター(帯広)で行う国際フェスタinとかち2015に皆様のご来場をお待ちしております。

Obihiro Ice Festival (おびひろ氷まつり)



Every year the city of Obihiro holds the Obihiro Ice Festival where master sculptors from all over come together and build beautiful ice and snow sculptures. There are also stage shows and plenty of hot food to keep you warm during the coldest time of the year. This year’s Ice Festival will be held from 2/6—2/8 at Obihiro Midorigaoka Park, Hirokoji, and north of JR Obihiro Station.

2月6日～2月8日、3会場で氷まつりが開催されますので、ぜひご来場をお願いします。

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Events at TIRC and in Tokachi and Obihiro

When	What	Where/Contact
2/7 (Sat) 9:00-12:00	Cross-Country Ski Lesson (在住外国人向けクロスカンリースキー講習会): Learn the basics of cross-country skiing. Participation is free. Skis and poles will be provided. Maximum 20 participants. Please come in warm winter clothing.	Obihiro no Mori Hagukuumu 帯広の森はぐくむ For registrations, contact: Tokachi International Relations Center TEL 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp
2/14-2/15 (Sat - Sun) 10:00-15:00	International Festa in Tokachi 2015 (国際フェスタinとかち2015): Experience international exchange and cooperation through various activities including English lessons for children, film showing, culture corner, panel exhibits, and more. Entrance is free.	Tokachi International Relations Center and JICA Hokkaido International Center 森の交流館・十勝 及びJICA北海道国際センター 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp
2/18 (Wed) 19:00-21:00	International Mini-Volley Night (国際ミニバレーナイト): Meet friends from all over the world while enjoying a fun and easy sport!	Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp
2/21 (Sat) 19:00-21:00	International Potluck Night (ポットラックナイト): Bring a dish or drink to share and enjoy food from all over the world. This time, you can enjoy Indonesian sweet rice balls called "klepon".	Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp
2/25 (Wed) 19:00-21:00	Tenipon Meetup (テニボン交流会): Let's play tenipon, a hybrid sport between tennis and pingpong that originated in Hokkaido. Organized by Dandelion.	Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp
2/6-2/8 (Fri-Sun)	52nd Obihiro Ice Festival (第52回おびひろ氷まつり): Enjoy ice sculptures, ice slides, winter fireworks, stage attractions, food stands, and many more.	Obihiro Midorigaoka Park 帯広市緑ヶ丘公園 0155-22-8600
2/7-2/8 (Sat-Sun)	33rd Winter Balloon Meeting (第33回上士幌ウインター・バルーンミーティング): Watch hot air balloon teams compete in a task flight. There will also be a balloon ride experience and food stands	Kamishihoro Aviation Park 上士幌町航空公園 01564-2-4291 www.kamishihoro.jp/sp/balloonmeeting
2/7-2/8 (Sat-Sun)	34th Shibare Festival (第34回しばれフェスティバル): Enjoy this festival of frost in Japan's coldest town, with fireworks, stage shows, horse riding, prize raffle, and more.	Rikubetsu Shibare Event Ground 陸別町しばれイベント会場 0156-27-3990 www10.ocn.ne.jp/~shibare/
2/8 (Sun)	28th Meakan Onsen Ski Hiking (第28回雌阿寒温泉スキーハイキング): Enjoy the nature of Akan National Park and Lake Onneto by cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.	Ashoro Town Meakan Onsen 足寄町 雌阿寒温泉発着 0156-25-6131
2/14 (Sat)	Memuro Ice Candle Night (氷灯夜): See over 5,000 ice candles, a fireworks show, and many other attractions in this annual Valentine's Day event.	Memuro Park 芽室公園 0155-66-6522
2/15 (Sun)	32nd Churui Naumann Sled Derby (第32回忠類ナウマン全道そり大会): Watch various teams compete with homemade cardboard sleds. There will also be games where anyone can join.	Churui Shiroganedai Ski Resort 忠類白銀台スキー場 01558-8-2111
11/1-3/31 (Sat-Tue)	Winter Fest in Ecopark (ウインタフェスinエコパ): Enjoy snowshoe walking, snow raft tours, a foot spa, and other fun winter activities.	Tokachi Ecology Park 十勝エコロジーパーク 0155-32-6780 www.tokachi-ecopark.jp
Early December to Late February	Shintoku Welcome Illumination (いらっしやいしんとくイルミネーション): JR Shintoku Station, the gateway to Tokachi and Eastern Hokkaido, will be lighted up in various colors.	JR Shintoku Station JR新得駅前 0156-64-0522
12/1-2/15 (Mon-Sun)	Tokimeki Illumination (ときめきイルミネーション): Around 20,000 bulbs will light up the highway 236 leading up to the town hall.	Sarabetsu Village Exercise Square 更別村運動広場・農村公園 0155-52-2115
1/24-3/1 (Sat-Sun) 19:00-21:00	Tokachigawa Swan Festival "Sairinka" (十勝川白鳥まつり「彩凜華」): Come to a romantic world with a fantasy show of lights and sounds. There will be a free foot spa and other attractions.	Otofuke Town Tokachigaoka Park 音更町十勝が丘公園 0155-32-6633
1/24-3/22 (Sat-Sun)	2015 Shikaribetsu Lake Ice Village (2015然別湖コタン): Come to this ice village built on top of the frozen lake, with an onsen, ice bar, ice theater, cross country skiing, and more.	Shikaribetsu Lake, Shikaoi Town 鹿追町 然別湖 0156-69-8181

Culture & Cuisine Corner (カルチャー&キューズコーナー)

Hokkaido in February is a frigid place to be, but far from being a forlorn prefecture, it's actually filled with fun winter festivals for everyone to fancy. Here in Obihiro, there's the Obihiro Koori Matsuri or Obihiro Ice Festival, one of the "big three festivals" in the city (along with the Heigen Festival in summer and the Chrysanthemum Festival in autumn). Now in its 52nd year, the Ice Festival will be held over three days from February 6th to 8th, Friday to Sunday, with the theme of "Ari no mama no Tokachi" or "Tokachi as it is".

For the first time ever, the festival will be held over three venues inside the city. The traditional venue at Obihiro Midorigaoka Park will feature the ice and snow sculpture concours, giant ice slides, and stage event with plenty of performances and fun programs. This year's highlight is a "Let It Go" singing competition, where competitors will sing out the Japanese version of the hit song from "Frozen". Also don't miss the winter fireworks show, starting from 6 PM on Friday and Saturday.



The second venue is at the Hirokōji arcade in downtown Obihiro. There will be an ice sculpture competition, and you can watch the sculptors start working on their masterpieces from Tuesday, February 3rd, with the completed works on display until the end of the festival. The traditional "ice masks" made by elementary school children will also be on display here. For adults who want to enjoy the nightlife, there's the Obihiro Machikon, a meetup event that starts on Saturday from 6 PM. You can meet people while enjoying drinks and buffet dinner at various restaurants in Hirokōji. Tickets are priced at 6,000 yen for guys and 4,000 yen for girls.

Lastly, there's the Yume no Kitahiroba venue at the north side of JR Obihiro Station. The area will be decorated in lights and various wooden art pieces for you to enjoy. There will also be an ice café, where you can enjoy hot drinks inside a structure made of ice. The venue's highlight is a human curling competition on Saturday and Sunday afternoon, where competitors wearing wetsuits will endure the cold as they slide themselves on inflated tire tubes along a specially-made track.



Parking areas near the venues will probably be full all day, so the organizer recommends drivers to park at the Obihiro Horse Race Track, then take the free shuttle bus going around all three venues. For more information about the festival, you can check the official homepage at <http://obihiro-icefes.com> (Japanese only)



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
Annie	English	Ends 27th
Exodus: Gods and Kings	English	All Month
Gone Girl	English	Ends 20th
Mortdecai	English/Japanese	Starts 6th
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	English/Japanese	Starts 7th
Fifty Shades of Grey	English	Starts 13th
American Sniper	Undecided	Starts 21st
Big Hero 6	Japanese	Ends 27th
Yokai Watch: Tanjo no Himitsu da Nyan!	Japanese	All Month

Chinese Corner (中国語コーナー)

二月份北海道迎来了各大冰雪节，同时在一海之隔的中国，人们也在忙碌地为一年中最重要的节日——春节做准备。春节是农历的第一天，通常比阳历晚一个月。对中国人来说春节是新一年的开始，是家里所有的成员相聚的时刻，就像西方的圣诞节一样。春节期间全国休假七天，远在外地的人们都会利用假期返乡团聚，这期间交通系统处于一年最繁忙时期，机场，火车站和长途汽车站挤满了回家的人们。春节有许多风俗，比如阴历腊月初八喝腊八粥，腊月二十三被称作“小年”，这一天要祭拜灶神。小年以后，人们开始准备年货，翘首迎新年。所买东西不仅包括食用油，大米，面粉，鸡鸭鱼肉，还有水果，糖果和各种坚果。尤为重要是每人一套新装和给亲朋好友的礼物。人们在新年到来前会做一次大扫除，并在室内外装饰上营造喜庆和欢乐氛围的对联、“福”字、灯笼等。新年的前一晚被称作除夕，这一天，所有的家庭成员会一起吃团圆饭。团圆饭会比以前更加丰盛。饭后，全家人会坐在一起聊天和看中央电视台举办的春节联欢晚会，类似日本的红白歌会。春节后的前五日是拜访亲戚，朋友，同学，同事互致问候，互送礼物和悠闲聊天的好时候。不仅每一个家庭，而且街道上和小巷里都弥漫着春节喜庆热闹的氛围。一系列的庆祝活动例如舞狮，灯节和庙会将会持续几天。当灯展进入尾声的时候，春节也就结束了。

I'm so excited that ice & snow festivals are coming to Hokkaido in February. Also in February in China people are very busy preparing for Chinese New Year, which is the most important festival for Chinese people. It falls on the 1st day of the 1st lunar month, often one month later than the Gregorian calendar. The holiday lasts for 7 days. People use the holiday to return to their hometowns and get together with their family. Many customs accompany the New Year. Some are still followed today--on the 8th day of the 12th lunar month, many families make laba porridge, and the 23rd day of the 12th lunar month is called Preliminary Eve, at this time, people offer sacrifice to the kitchen god. After the Preliminary Eve, people begin preparing for the coming New Year. They have to buy not only materials such as edible oil, rice, flour, meat, fruit, and candies, but also new clothes, shoes, and gifts. Before the New Year comes, people completely clean their homes and begin decorating their rooms to create an atmosphere of rejoicing and festivity. The day before the New Year is called "chuxi", all family members eat dinner together at night. The meal is more luxurious than usual. After the dinner, they will sit together, chatting and watching the Spring Festival party broadcast on CCTV, which is like Kouhaku in Japan. The first five days after the New Year are a good time for relatives, friends, and classmates as well as colleagues to exchange greetings, gifts and chat leisurely. The lively atmosphere not only fills every household, but permeates to the streets. A series of activities such as lion dancing, lantern festivals and temple fairs will be held for days. The New Year celebration then comes to an end when the Lantern Festival is finished.

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.