

Culture: Japanese New Year's Food お節料理

Happy new year! In the last Obihiro Pioneer, we learned about the consequences of partying a little too much then driving drunk. In this month's Obihiro Pioneer, we will take it easy and talk about an essential part of Japan's new year: お節料理 *osechi ryouri*!



What's 「osechi ryouri」?

The kanji for 節 *sechi* refers to a period of time, in this case the first few days of the year. 料理 *ryouri* means cooking. Together, it refers to the cuisine made only for the beginning of a new year. First introduced in the Heian period, *osechi ryouri* mainly consists of food that is able to last at room-temperature for several days (often including a large amount of sugar and vinegar). This is because it is made before the end of the previous year.

What's so special about it?

Besides the fact that it is only eaten once a year, each dish has a meaning! Let's learn about some of the classic dishes you're bound to find in most *osechi* sets!

黒豆

Kuromame

Simply, black beans. The word “*mame*,” meaning bean, sounds like another Japanese word meaning “hard work and good health.”



海老 *Ebi* Shrimp

Shrimp in *osechi* sets are left shell and all.



Their long antennae and curved body is a symbol of longevity. It's often said as you grow older, your back will curve like a shrimp's!

The *osechi ryouri* list goes on and on! Be sure to try it if you get a chance this new year!

Contents:

Culture: Japanese New Year's Food	1
Events	2, 4
Living Tokachi: Snow Safety	3
Movie Schedule Events Con't	4



Events (pg 2, 4)



Living Tokachi: Staying Safe in the Snow!
(pg 3)



Movies
(pg 4)

Events at TIRC and in Tokachi and Obihiro

When	What	Where/Contact
1/10 (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	
1/20 (Sat) 10:00-11:30	45th Kids Playground (Sri Lanka) Come with your children to learn and play while meeting local families. This month you can enjoy Sri Lankan crafts, storytelling and much more. Come and interact with our Sri Lankan guest! TIRC Multi-purpose Hall Fee: Free of charge (no registration required) For children 0-6 years old and their parents/guardians. Organized by the City of Obihiro	
1/20 (Sat) 18:30-20:00	65th International Talk (South Korea) Learn more about the countries of the world and exchange ideas with other participants. This month, the theme is "Japan from the perspective of a Korean exchange student". Our guest, an exchange student from South Korea, will introduce his country to us and share his views about Japan and Japan-Korea relations. TIRC Winter Garden Fee: Free of charge (no registration required) For junior high school students and older. Organized by the City of Obihiro	Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihoro.hokkaido.jp
1/27 (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	
1/6-7 (Sat-Sun)	Michi no Eki Pia 21 Shihoro New Spring Sale Event 道の駅ピア21しほろ新春初売りイベント For the first open day of 2018, the new Michi no Eki Pia 21 Shihoro will be holding a special event for the weekend.	Michi no Eki Pia 21 Shihoro 道の駅ピア21しほろ 01564-5-3940 http://shihoroinfo.com/
1/13 (Sat) 19:30	Sarabetsu Village GOOD! Festival 2018 さらべつ村GOOD！フェスティバル2018 Jiro Oma, drummer of the group 「Off Course」 will be performing live at the Sarabetsu Welfare Center. There will be an appearance by the village mayor and Sarabetsu Kashiwa Taiko Drum group. Advance tickets will be 2000 yen and 3000 yen for same-day tickets.	Saranetsu Welfare Center 更別村社会福祉センター 十勝さらべつ熱中小学校 0155-66-4554 http://songood.info

Living Tokachi: Staying Safe in the Snow!

Residents of Tokachi are no strangers to below freezing temperatures. This winter has arrived earlier with much more snow than past years. In this month's "Living Tokachi," we will go over some tips and advice to keep in mind over the new few snowy months.



Fresh Snow is Not the Best Snow!

By January, everywhere in Hokkaido has had at least some snow. Here in Tokachi, we're thankful to have so much sunshine, but this leads to the unwelcome danger of black ice (often called ブラックアイスバーン *burakku aisu baan*). The snow that melted during the day, quickly freezes as it gets darker and colder. Roads are particularly dangerous immediately after snow begins to fall onto slippery ice. Be extra cautious if you need to go out especially at the beginning of snow fall!

Watch Your (Car's) Behind!

It isn't a bad idea to watch your own behind, but for drivers it is especially dangerous if you forget about your car. Most drivers tend to leave their cars idling while



shopping during winter. Make sure that the area around the muffler is clear! If the gas produced by the idling vehicle doesn't have an outlet, it will flow back into the vehicle. In the last couple of years, there have been incidents of drivers dying of carbon dioxide poisoning during snow storms right here in Obihiro.

Be Visible!

Make yourself more aware to drivers as you're trekking outside into the cold. Snow removed from roads and sidewalks tend to pile up, making it difficult for vehicles and pedestrians to see each other. Even if it is your right of way to cross, make sure to check for turning vehicles. With poor road conditions, drivers need enough time and space to stop. Wear bright-colored clothing and invest in reflective bands (which can be purchased at most 100 yen shops).

Look for 反射材 *hanshasai* to make sure it's reflective (and not just a brightly colored material!).



Take Your Time

While it may be the most simple and obvious piece of advice, it might just be the most important. Better to arrive late and safe, rather than not at all. Stay safe this new year!

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
Justice League	Eng Sub	Until 12th
Star Wars: The Last Jedi	Eng Sub/Dub	All month
Kingsman: The Golden Circle	Eng Sub	From 5th
It (2017) R15+	Eng Sub	From 13th
Geostorm	2D Eng Sub	From 19th

Events Continued

When	What	Where/Contact
1/27 (Sat) 17:30-21:00	Ecology Park Night Café エコパ☆ナイトカフェ Realign your mind and body with 「relax yoga」. Café hours: 17:30-21:00 Event time:19:30-21:00 Registration is required. 1500 yen per person, up to 20 persons. Participants should bring comfortable clothes to do yoga in, water, a blanket (or large towel). Yoga mats are available for rental (200 yen each).	Tokachi Ecology Park 十勝エコロジーパーク 0155-32-6780 www.tokachi-ecopark.jp
1/28 (Sun) 14:00	Hokkaido Farmers String Orchestra 24th Concert 北海道農民管弦楽団 第24回定期演奏会 Featuring the classic "Ode to Joy," the Hokkaido Farmers String orchestra will be putting on a concert in Shimizu Town. Admission: pre-sale: 2000 yen for adults, 1000 yen for high school students and under. 2500 yen for same-day tickets.	Shimizu Town Culture Hall 清水町文化センター大ホール 北海道農民管弦楽団清水演奏会 実行委員会事務局 0156-62-5115
1/27-3/21 (Sat-Wed)	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
1/27-2/25 (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/

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")

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