

## Spring Celebrations Around the World!

### How Spring is Celebrated in Japan

As the knee-high snow starts to slowly disappear, we anticipate the change to a warmer season. The blossoming of cherry blossoms, along with the pleasant weather in spring is symbolic in Japan. It signifies the beginning of things and marks the start of a new fiscal year.



Cherry blossom viewing in a park space

In Japan, spring is symbolized by *hanami*. The *hanami* (cherry blossom viewing) custom started in the Heian period (late 8<sup>th</sup> century-12<sup>th</sup> century) when Emperor Saga adopted the practice of making offerings to cherry blossom trees. The trees were believed to contain deities who would, in turn, bless the country with a bountiful harvest.

Although such flower-viewing parties were only available to the upper aristocratic society, it slowly spread throughout Japan when Tokugawa Yoshimune, the eighth shogun of the Tokugawa shogunate of Japan, planted large areas of cherry blossom trees to encourage this practice.



Freshly made *dango*

The popular Japanese proverb, 花より団子 *hana yori dango* or “dumpling over flowers” originated as a jab to the *hanami* tradition, as people were more often interested in the food and drinks accompanying cherry blossom viewing rather than the cherry blossoms.

### How Spring is Celebrated Outside Of Japan



Holi

Did you know that *Color Run* was inspired by the traditional Hindu festival, *Holi*?

Holi, also known as the festival of colours, is a national holiday in India and Nepal which celebrates the beginning of spring. Traditionally, the festival celebrated agriculture and commemorated bountiful spring harvests and fertile land. To many Hindus, Holi marks the beginning of the new year.

Incidentally, Holi typically falls in March!



Falles

Falles is derived from the Latin word ‘torch’ and is a traditional celebration held in commemoration of Saint Joseph in Valencia, Spain. The festival is a continuous street party that lasts 5 days and nights.

During this period, everyone from small children to elderly people can be seen throwing fireworks and noisemakers in the streets. This builds up to the finale, La Cremà – where the falla (huge constructions pictured above) are burned.

Apparently, Falles has origins in the Latin custom of lighting fires to welcome spring!

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## Some Flowery Japanese Proverbs to go Along with Hanami!

らっかえだにかえらず、はきょうふたたびてらさず  
落花枝に返らず、破鏡再び照らさず

Literal meaning: Fallen blossoms do not return to the branches, a broken mirror does not reflect again.  
Meaning: What is lost is lost.

みぬがはな  
見ぬが花

Literal meaning: Not seeing is a flower.  
Meaning: Reality cannot compete with imagination.

たかねのはな  
高嶺の花

Literal meaning: Flower on a cliff  
Meaning: A Pisgah sight, something out of one's reach

## Hanami in Hokkaido

	City/Town & Place Name	Number of Trees	Full Bloom Date
Southern Hokkaido Area			
	Matsumae Town, Matsumae Park	10,000	5/1
	Hakodate City, Goryokaku Park	1,600	4/30
	Noboribetsu City, Sakura Namiki Road	2,000	5/8
	Shin-Hidaka Town, Shizunai Nijukken Road	3,000	5/5
	Urakawa Town, Yushun Sakura Road	3,000	5/5
Central Hokkaido Area			
	Sapporo City, Moerenuma Park	3,500	5/8
	Sapporo City, Hokkaido-jingu	1,400	5/7
	Otaru City, Otaru Park	1,000	5/5
	Bibai City, Tomei Park	2,000	5/12

	City/Town & Place Name	Number of Trees	Full Bloom Date
Northern Hokkaido Area			
	Asahikawa City, Asahiyama Park	2,400	5/6
	Furano City, Asahigaoka Park	3,000	5/8
	Shibetsu City, Tsukumoyama	2,000	5/7
Eastern Hokkaido Area			
	Obihiro City, Midorigaoka Park	780	5/2
	Shintoku Town, Shintokuyama	2,300	5/5
	Akkeshi Town, Nenohi Park	1,200	5/5
<p>Do note that the expected full bloom dates can deviate by a week or two due to the unpredictability of nature . We recommend you keep tabs on the local weather news for up-to-date information.</p> <p>Happy cherry blossom viewing!</p>			

# Events at TIRC and in Tokachi and Obihiro

When	What	Where/Contact
4/11 (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. TIRC Multipurpose Hall Organized by Tokachi International Association	Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp
4/14, 4/28 (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	
4/21 (Sat) 19:00-21:00	<b>International Potluck Night (Madagascar)</b> インターナショナル・ポットラック・ナイト(マダガスカル) Meet local and international residents while enjoying a dish from around the world. This time, our guest from Madagascar will introduce you to a coconut milk-based chicken dish, Akoho sy voanio. TIRC Kitchen Fee: Free of charge (no registration required) Please bring a dish or drink to share. Organized by the Committee for Improvement of the City	
4/15 (Sun)	<b>30th All Japan Menko Championship</b> 第30回 オールジャパンパッチ選手権大会 A battle where competitors, aged 20 and above, fight it out over the traditional Japanese game, <i>Menko</i> . <i>Menko</i> is a children's game in which a thick card is slapped down on the ground to overturn an opponent's card and is similar to Pogs (often called milk caps).	Rikubetsu Town Trade Promotion Division 陸別町役場産業振興課 0156-27-2141 <a href="http://www.rikubetsu.jp/kanko/event/nissan_cup">http://www.rikubetsu.jp/kanko/event/nissan_cup</a>
4/22 (Sun) 10:00-11:00	<b>Fish Day</b> 魚の日 Every month in Hiroo town, there is "Fish Day", during which fish and other ingredients taken from the sea are used to make healthy dishes native to the north. A variety of products are on sale during the event.	Hiroo Fisheries Cooperative Food Division 広尾漁協食品部 (広尾郡広尾町会所前2丁目 79番地先) 01558-2-3202

# 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
Black Panther	Eng Sub	Until 12th
Coco (Remember Me)	Jpn Dub	All month
Pacific Rim: Uprising	Eng Sub	From 13th
Ready Player 1	3D Jpn Dub/ 2D Eng Sub	From 16th
Avengers: Infinity War	TBD	From 27th

## Events Continued

When	What	Where/Contact
4/29 (Sun) 14:00-15:00	<b>Kuni's Song Plaza</b> クニさん歌広場 Enjoy music making with singer-songwriter Kuni Kawachi. Bring your own instruments!	Tokachi Ecology Park 十勝エコロジーパーク 0155-32-6780 <a href="http://www.tokachi-ecopark.jp">www.tokachi-ecopark.jp</a>
4/29 (Sun) 10:00-12:00	<b>60th Children's Reading Week</b> <b>Mobile Library Nauman in Children's Hall</b> 第60回 こどもの読書週間事業 「ナウマン号 in 児童会館」 In accordance with the 60th Children's Reading Week, mobile library Nauman will make an appearance at the Children's Hall and loan out story books.	Obihiro City Library 帯広市図書館 0155-22-4700 <a href="https://www.lib-obihiro.jp/">https://www.lib-obihiro.jp/</a>
4/30 (Mon) 11:00-11:40	<b>60th Children's Reading Week</b> <b>Special Tales</b> 第60回 こどもの読書週間事業 「スペシャルおはなし会」 Have a fun day with Ohisama daycare centre with activities such as picture book storytelling and flannel graph!	

**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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