

Tokachi's Biggest Summer Festival

As we reach the peak of summer in Tokachi, Obihiro welcomes the largest summer festival in Tokachi. In this issue of Obihiro Pioneer, we will introduce this summer festival, as well as share highlights of the events and activities that you can participate in.

Obihiro Heigen Festival

Boasting a 71 year tradition, the Obihiro Heigen Festival is the largest summer festival held within Hokkaido's Tokachi region.



Heigen Matsuri

Obihiro Heigen Festival is a 4-day celebration that starts from August 13th every year and ends on the night of the 16th.

The festival is filled with a multitude of smaller events, such as charity bazaars, cosplay gatherings and musical performances.

Highlights of the Festival

What is a festival without performances?



Omikoshi (Portable Shinto Shrine)

Participants can enjoy multiple performances, such as the Heigen Taiko Performance and Street Performances at Kita no Daichi.

Performances such as Omikoshi and Bon Dance (together with Bon Dance for Kids) actively recruit participants to join in the dance (or to carry the portable shrine)! The Bon Dance even accepts walk-in participants!

Bon Dance



Bon Dance

As part of our cultural exchange promotion efforts, Obihiro City's International and Domestic Relations Section is recruiting international residents in Tokachi to participate in this year's Bon Dance on August 15th. Yukata rental is free and will be provided on a first-come-first-serve basis!

Please contact Tokachi International Relations Center via Facebook or send an email to tirc@city.obihoro.hokkaido.jp for more information by **August 3rd**.

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Events at TIRC and in Tokachi and Obihiro

When	What	Contact
8/8 (Wed) 19:00-21:00	International Mini-Volleyball Night 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 the Tokachi International Association	Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihoro.hokkaido.jp
8/11, 8/25 (Sat) 16:00-18:00	Japanese Conversation and Learning Table 日本語講座 Improve your Japanese language skills in a friendly environment. TIRC Winter Garden Fee: Free of charge Organized by the Tokachi International Association	
8/25 (Sat) 19:00-21:00	International Potluck Night (Indonesia) インターナショナル・ポットラック・ナイト(インドネシア) Meet local and international residents while enjoying a dish from around the world. This time, our guest from Indonesia will introduce an Indonesian meatball dish called “Bakso” and a black soup called “Rawon.” 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	
8/10 (Fri) - 8/12(Sun)	45th Hokkaido Hot Air Balloon Festival 第45回 北海道バルーンフェスティバル Catch the wondrous sight of over 20 colorful hot air balloons filling up the summer sky in Kamishihoro. Participants have a chance to hop onto these hot air balloons for a flight, as well as try out various local cuisines sold by vendors!	Kamishihoro Commerce, Industry and Tourism Section 上士幌町商工観光課 01564-2-2339
8/11 (Sat) - 8/12(Sun)	Ainu Cultural Exhibit (in lieu of the International Day of the World’s Indigenous People) 世界の先住民の国際デーアイヌ文化交流会 Explore different aspects of Ainu culture at this exhibit. Traditional Ainu craft, panel exhibitions detailing Ainu culture and history, as well as documentary on the Ainu will be on show. Visitors will also be able to attend workshops that teaches traditional Ainu craft such as embroidery and wood carving.	Obihiro City Social Welfare Section 帯広市役所社会課 0155-65-4146
8/19 (Sun)	Bakkansai (Wheat Harvest Festival) 2018 麦感祭(ばっかんさい)2018 The “Bakkansai” is held at Otofuke, Japan’s top wheat producing region (by production volume). Explore (and taste!) the food made with locally produced wheat!	Bakkansai Planning Committee (NPO Owls) 麦感祭実行委員会 (NPOあうるず) 0155-67-6305

Events Continued

When	What	Where/Contact
8/19 (Sun)	Honbetsu Meat Festival 2018 ほんべつ肉祭り2018 Beef produced in Tokachi (Ikeda, Honbetsu, Ashoro etc.) will be on sale at Honbetsu Meat Festival 2018. Barbecue grills will be rented out for free so event participants can enjoy barbecue on the spot!	Honbetsu Meat Festival Planning Committee (Committee President: Ogasawara Tooru) ほんべつ肉祭り実行委員会 (実行委員長:小笠原 徹) 090-8271-0262
8/19 (Sun) 16:00-19:30	Shiho Rock シホロック Shihoro's first music festival, Shiho Rock brings together local bands as well as Copernix, a band from Sapporo, for a great show.	Shiho Rock Planning Committee Office シホロック実行委員会 事務局 01564-5-5212
8/13(Mon) - 8/16(Thurs)	71st Obihiro Heigen Festival 第71回おびひろ平原まつり Tokachi's biggest summer festival, the Obihiro Heigen Festival draws in huge crowds with festive performances such as "Yumefuruya," "Bon dance" and "Taiko" performances.	Obihiro Festival Promotion Committee 帯広のまつり推進委員会 0155-22-8600 https://www.tonxton.com/heigenfes
8/25 (Sat) 16:00-20:00	Shihoro Beef Festival しほろ牛肉祭 Savour Shihoro-produced beef at Shihoro Beef Festival. There will be barbecue corners and vendors selling beef dishes. A firework show is also planned for this event!	Shihoro Beef Cattle Promotion Committee 士幌町肉牛振興会 (士幌町農協畜産課) 01564-5-5712 https://www.ja-shihoro.or.jp/shiohorogyu/index.html
8/31(Fri) - 9/2(Sun)	Tokachi Marche とかちマルシェ Tokachi Marche is one of Tokachi's biggest food and music event, filled with stage performances and dozens of stores selling food produced locally.	Tokachi Marche Management Committee とかちマルシェ運営協議会 0155-25-7121 0155-65-4169 https://www.tokachimarche.com/

Recruitment for Free Japanese Lessons

Registration for free Japanese language lessons will start on Aug 15th, 2018!

Lesson details are as follow:

Registration period: Aug 15th— Sept 4th, 2018

Date and time: 18:30 ~ 20:00, every Wednesday from Sep. 12th (10 sessions)

Available level: Beginners level 1 and Beginners level 2

Class capacity: Up to 10 people per class

Contact Miss Ning from Obihiro City International and Domestic Relations Section for more information!

Tel: 0155-65-4133 or 0155-34-0122

Email: international@city.obihoro.hokkaido.co.jp or tirc@city.obihoro.hokkaido.co.jp

*Details of the lessons might be subjected to changes.



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
Mamma Mia!	TBC	From 24th
Incredibles 2	Dubbed	From 1st
Mission: Impossible— Fallout	Jpn Subtitles	From 3rd
Solo: A Star Wars Story	Dubbed and Subtitles	Until 16th
Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom	Dubbed and Subtitles	All month

Trivia: Origins of Obon

Bon *odori*, or bon dance, is considered one of the greatest summer attraction for tourists visiting Japan. Awa Dance Festival, the largest dance festival in Japan, brings in over 1,300,000 tourists every year and numbers are only growing.



Awa Dance Festival
Photo credit: autan @ flickr.com

Locals perform the Bon dance only during Obon, a traditional Japanese custom. This tradition stretches back to more than 500 years ago. Today, Obihiro Pioneer will introduce the origins of Obon.

Obon is a Japanese Buddhist custom to honor the spirits of one's ancestors. Obon celebrations last for 3 days and traditionally includes a dance, the Bon dance. Modern day Japanese celebrate Obon by returning to their hometowns and cleaning their ancestors' grave.

Obon (お盆) is derived from the contraction of Ullambana (盂蘭盆会 urabon'e, or Sanskrit for "hanging upside down") and implies great suffering in Japanese Buddhist belief.

Story has it that Buddha's disciple, Mokuren, made offerings to Buddhist monks in order to relieve his deceased mother's suffering in the Realm of Hungry Ghosts. The offerings to the Buddhist monks, who had just completed their summer retreat, were made on the fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month. Thus, Obon is now celebrated on the same day.

These offerings helped to free Mokuren's mother and allowed him to see her selflessness and the sacrifices she made on his behalf. Filled with gratefulness towards his mother and joy at her release, Mokuren danced what became known as Bon dance.

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.