

Culture: Warm Up the Japanese Way

Happy new year! All over Tokachi we have been experiencing less snow than usual, but that doesn't stop the winter cold from coming! In this Obihiro Pioneer we will introduce the Japanese hot spring, or 温泉 *onsen*, and how to properly use it to warm up all year round!

Prep: Ready Your Onsen Basket!

Unless you're going to an onsen hotel, prepare to bring your own soap! Most local onsens don't have shampoo or body soap available. Even if they do, it would be nice to have your preferred soaps. Using a small basket with holes on the bottom (for drainage) keeps all of your bathing goods together while you're at the onsen! And don't forget your towels! It would be a good idea to have a standard bath towel as well as a

smaller towel to bring into the bathing area. The smaller towel is often used as a modesty towel (to cover yourself).



Step 1. Get Naked!

After paying for your entrance fee, head to your respective bathing area, marked by their kanji character. The women's bath is marked with 女 *onna* or woman and the men's is 男 *otoko*. There are usually color coded curtains (women-red, men-blue) to help guide you! Once inside, find an open locker for your things. You shouldn't bring anything into the bath/shower area, besides your onsen basket and small towel.

Step 2. Wash Up

The hot springs are shared by many people everyday. Do your part to keep it clean, by cleaning yourself first! Before getting into the bath, wash yourself in the shower area. For those with long hair, tie up your hair so it doesn't hit the water in the bath.

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Events at TIRC and in Tokachi and Obihiro

When	What	Where/Contact
1/9 (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.	Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp
1/12, 1/26 (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	
1/19 (Sat) 18:30-20:00	71th International Talk (Malawi) 第71回 インターナショナル・トーク: マラウイ Learn more about the countries of the world and exchange ideas with other participants. This month, let's learn about Malawi, "The Warm Heart of Africa" with Chandiona, an international student from Malawi. Come and enjoy the international exchange through a game and fun talk. TIRC Winter Garden Fee: Free of charge (no registration required) For junior high school students and older.	
1/26 (Sat) 10:00-11:30	51st Kids Playground 第51回 キッズ・プレイグラウンド Come with your children to learn and play while meeting local families. This month, you can enjoy playing "Bingo", as well as learn English through storytelling and songs taught by English teachers from Learn-a-Lot. Come and have fun with everyone! 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	
1/5 (Sat)	Michi no Eki Pia 21 Shihoro New Spring Sale Event 「道の駅ピア21しほろ」大新春まつり2019 For the first open day of 2019, Michi no Eki Pia 21 Shihoro will be holding a special event with a special menu, games and more!	
1/6-13 (Sun-Sun)	IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championships 2019IIHF女子U18アイスホッケー世界選手権 This year's women's ice hockey under 18 (years old) championship will take place in Obihiro! Watch the world's top U18 ice hockey teams in the week-long championships. Please check with the Japan Ice Hockey Federation for specific times for matches.	Obihiro no Mori Ice Arena 帯広の森アイスアリーナ 日本アイスホッケー連盟 03-3481-2404

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Step 3. Enjoy the Hot Springs (finally!)

After getting yourself nice and clean, warm up and relax in the hot springs. Many onsens offer a variety of baths and even a sauna for their guests to enjoy. Some of the common baths you may encounter are:

電気風呂 *denki buro* Electric Bath

The bath is lined with small metal conductors to send electric pulses throughout the water. It is believed to help with muscle pain. If you have a heart condition, you should avoid using this bath!

水風呂 *mizu buro* Cold Water Bath

水 is translated to just “water” in English, but hot water is 湯 *yu* in Japanese! This is also why you’ll see the hiragana ゆ *yu* all around the hot springs. You might regret jumping into the 水風呂 thinking it was warm! The cold water bath is usually located next to the sauna. The cold water would feel great after a hot stay in the sauna, but don’t jump in just yet! Rinse off that sweat first! Again, to keep the baths clean, do your part in keeping your body clean before entering the baths. Also, it might be a little TOO cold to jump in! Feel free to use the buckets in the shower area to slowly pour cold water on yourself.

露天風呂 *rotenburo* Open-air Bath

Get some fresh air by heading outside to the 露天風呂! Although it might seem like a bad idea to head outside naked in winter, but after warming up indoors it would be a nice balance to have some cool air in your system. Many open-air baths are constructed to mimic a



Photo credit: Wikipedia user Nekosuki

natural scenery, providing a tranquilizing experience.

Step 4. Post-bath

After trying out all of the baths, you’re probably pruney and ready to go home. You might want to wash up again before going home, but don’t! The hot-spring waters are believed to have many health benefits, so washing that all away is considered a waste! Instead, rinse off with かけ湯 *kakeyu*. Located near the entrance to the shower area, there is usually flowing hot water (sometimes in a large pot or sink). This is かけ湯 which literally means water to pour on yourself. This is fresh hot spring water that you can use to rinse yourself off without losing the benefits of the hot spring waters.

Tips!

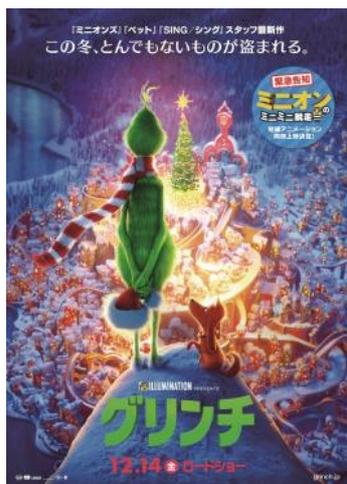
- ◇ Drink water before and after bathing. The heat can cause you to sweat and become light-headed.
- ◇ If you have tattoos, check if it is okay to enter. There is a stigma against tattoos because the Japanese mafia (yakuza) are associated with them.
- ◇ Don’t be shy and enjoy yourself! You may feel vulnerable being naked, but everyone is naked! Relax and enjoy the hot springs.

The Tokachi area is filled with great onsens, so get out there and enjoy them this winter!

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
Fantastic Beasts	Jpn Dub	All month
The Grinch	Jpn Dub	All month
Dragon Ball Super: Broly	Japanese	All month
Ralph Breaks the Internet (Sugar Rush Online)	Jpn Dub	All month
Godzilla: The Planet Eater	Japanese	11th–24th

Events Continued

When	What	Where/Contact
1/6 (Sun) 10:00-15:00	Winter Break "Waku Waku" Classroom 冬休みわくわく教室 Make use of the long winter break and take your children to Obihiro's Children's Hall! They will have a chance to do some fun experiments, make crafts and more. Registration is required. Participation is free.	Obihiro Children's Hall 帯広市児童会館 0155-24-2434
1/19 (Sat)	37th Children's Winter Festival 第37回こども冬まつり Enjoy winter at Kamishiro's Children's Winter Festival! There will be a giant slide and snow rafting alongside the attractions and events. Warm up with hot milk and miso soup!	Kamishihoro Town Child Center 上士幌町認定こども園 上士幌町教室委員会生涯学習課 01564-2-3024
1/26 (Sat) 18:45~	Urahoro 120th Anniversary Fireworks うらほろ冬花火 2019 marks the 120th year of Urahoro Town's founding! Watch a firework show in the winter night sky to celebrate.	Urahoro Town Baseball Field 浦幌町民球場 浦幌小観光協会 015-576-2181
1/26-3/21 (Sat-Thu)	Lake Shikaribetsu Kotan (Village) 2019 2019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! Please refer to the homepage for more information.	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

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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