



October 9th & 10th

TAKAYAMA

AUTUMN FESTIVAL

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Kaguratai Hoteitai Kimpotai Daihachitai Kyuhosha Jimmatai

TAKAYAMA AUTUMN FESTIVAL



Sennintai Gyojintai Hojutai Homeitai Ho'tai

The Takayama Autumn Festival is the annual festival of Sakurayama Hachimangu Shrine, honoring the guardian deity, known affectionately as Hachiman-sama, of the northern side of Takayama's castle town. As such the festival is commonly known as the Hachiman Festival.

The festival is thought to have its origins in the latter half of the 16th century or early 17th century. The main ceremonies of the autumn festival are performed by locals on October 9 and 10 each year. It started as a ceremony to offer gratitude to the gods for bumper harvests.

The spring and autumn festivals of Takayama are counted among the three most beautiful festivals in Japan along with Kyoto's Gion Festival and Saitama's Chichibu Night Festival. Indeed, the Takayama Festivals are designated by the government as an intangible folklore cultural asset. The main attractions of the festival are the ornate yatai and traditional ceremonies. The yatai-gumi groups who own the yatai of the Takayama Festival take immense pride in maintaining their area's yatai, each handed down from generation to generation. Once the autumn festival is over, Takayama prepares for the long, snowy winter.



If it rains, all festival ceremonies and performances will be canceled.

Goshinko Procession



The deity Hachiman-sama usually resides in the shrine, but the Goshinko Procession marks the two days in which he travels around the town. The mikoshi (portable shrine in which Hachiman-sama rides) takes centre stage, and surrounding it are serenading musicians, lion dance performers purifying the streets and ridding them of evil spirits, tokeiraku players banging gongs, and escorts dressed in ceremonial samurai garb keeping an eye on proceedings. The procession departs the Sakurayama Hachimangu Shrine on October 9 and weaves through the town, and returns to its home the following day.
On October 9 and 10

Gathering of the yatai



The eleven Hachiman Festival yatai are usually kept in their storehouses, and are only displayed together once a year. With intricate wooden structures, exquisite carvings, drapes, metal ornaments and other decorations, yatai are indeed a collection of traditional Japanese craftsmanship. In fact, the yatai featured in the Takayama Festival have been designated by the government as tangible folklore cultural assets. You will find the Hoteitai float in the shrine's main courtyard, and the other ten yatai lined up on the approaching walkway as well as other areas.
On October 9 and 10

Yatai parade

Four yatai are towed through the town in this procession.
On October 9

Karakuri Performance



In the square in front of the shrine, the Hoteitai float is the stage for a one-of-a-kind karakuri marionette performance dedicated to the deities. The karakuri doll characters are the deity Hotei as well as a boy and girl. The children leap onto a swing and then onto Hotei's shoulders. Just then, his fan splits open and a banner appears bearing the message "Flaunt not your high virtues and knowledge; share with the masses". The dolls are controlled by dozens of strings with incredible skill by highly experienced puppeteers.
Twice a day (morning/afternoon) on October 9 and 10 in front of Sakurayama Hachimangu Shrine

Night Festival



Another wonderful attraction of the Takayama Festival is the Night Festival held on the night of October 9. Around dusk, eleven yatai are decked with some hundred lanterns and then, hauled by their respective yatai-gumi teams, they weave their way around the town with lanterns alight. And having completed their rounds, the yatai are serenaded back into their storehouses with a special tune, unique to Takayama and sung only at the night festival. The atmosphere created by the music rouses feelings of anticipation towards the coming autumn.
From approx. 18:00 on October 9

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