

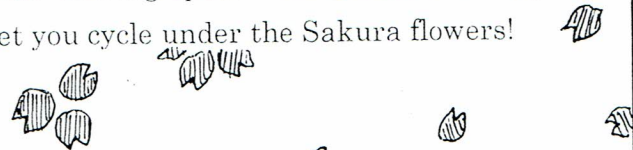
Held on the 14th and 15th April each year, TAKAYAMA SPRING FESTIVAL is deservedly considered one of the most beautiful festivals in the whole of Japan. It is essentially a celebration of the arrival of Spring after the long, harsh Hida winter, in which the locals express their desire for a plentiful harvest in the coming year. Known locally as the Sanno Festival, the event belongs to the Hie Shrine, in the southern half of Takayama, and its history stretches back over 400 years

For the cultural aficionado, one of the festival's main attractions is its 12 floats, each with a different theme, showing off their intricately-carved sculptures, paintings and marionettes. Interestingly, it is believed that floats did not form part of the festival at its inception, until rich local merchants provided the necessary finance to build these exceptional works of art, which became a means of displaying their own wealth and largesse.

Just a short trip north and a few days later, on April 19th and 20th, the FURUKAWA FESTIVAL takes centre stage. Some elements, such as floats, lion dances and an abundance of festival food and drink, are shared with its Takayama cousin, but come the evening of April 19th the difference becomes clear with OKOSHI DAIKO (The Rousing Drum). Utterly dynamic in contrast to Takayama's more stately vibe, this event is a riot of sights and sounds involving half-naked men, beating drums, athletic balancing on poles, exquisite lanterns and a cacophony of song. You have to see it to believe it!



In April, you would be forgiven for believing that the whole of Japan is in the grip of an obsession: a SAKURA obsession. In fact, there is even a cherry blossom forecast on TV, charting the blooming of these lovely flowers throughout the archipelago. Cherry blossom viewing as a tradition dates back to at least the 8th century, with Japanese people seeing the beauty and yet transience of the blooms as a somewhat melancholy metaphor for life itself. In Hida, due to the altitude and climate, the Sakura tend to bloom a little later than elsewhere. Why not ask at our SATOYAMA EXPERIENCE tour desk for advice on the best viewing spots? Our guides certainly will let you cycle under the Sakura flowers!



**CAFÉ  
TAKAYAMA**

Find out more at  
**SATOYAMA EXPERIENCE**

iCafe Takayama Tour Desk

(Opening Hours from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm)

*Let's make the most of your Hida trip!*