



ConsuLink

October 2022 Newsletter

Keeping you updated on Japan-related news in Michigan and Ohio

Japan's Autumn Festivals Feature Special Foods and Performances



As in the U.S. Midwest, autumn is the time of harvest in most parts of Japan. While some Japanese festivals in October have a harvest theme, the focus of two October festivals in Shiga and Saitama Prefectures are decorated wooden floats that are pulled through the streets in the daytime and evening, often carrying live performers, puppets, and figurines.

At the Otsu Festival in Michigan's sister-state of Shiga, 13 elaborately decorated *hikiyama* floats (pictured above left) are pulled through the streets, stopping periodically for the *karakuri* mechanized puppets they carry to give performances of fables and folklore for the crowds.

The Kawagoe Festival in Ohio's sister-state of Saitama features 29 decorated floats (pictured above right), each of which has a lifelike figure from history or mythology on top, and live performers on a stage below who engage in music "battles" with neighboring floats, using flutes, drums, bells, and so on.



Like most Japanese festivals, these events include special types of food for sale, often from temporary booths, called *yatai*, set up along the streets. In addition to the usual festival foods mentioned in our [YouTube video](#), such as *takoyaki* (grilled octopus hush puppies), *yakisoba* (stir-fried noodles), and *okonomiyaki* (cabbage pizza), these autumn festivals have developed an extensive selection of treats over their almost 400-year-old history.

At the Kawagoe Festival, one may find *noshi-ika* dried squid strips, *fukuresen* puffy rice crackers (pictured above left), giant *fugashi* fried dough sticks, *osatsu* sweet potato chips, and *sake* served in a square wooden cup. Those at the Otsu Festival may indulge in *Chimakichi sembei* rice crackers (named after the festival mascot, Chimakichi), as well as *kara-age* fried chicken, *banana-choco* chocolate-covered bananas, and *jaga-bataa* buttered potatoes (pictured above right). Visitors to the [Novi Japan Festival](#) in Novi, MI, will have a chance to try Japanese festival foods on Sunday afternoon, October 2nd!

Michigan and Shiga Governors Reaffirm Sister-State Relationship at Midwest Japan Conference



Photo credits: Mr. Yuta Matsubara, Shiga Visiting Official

In mid-September, the governors of Michigan and Shiga met for the first time in person at the 52nd Annual Conference of the Midwest U.S.-Japan Association in Chicago. Gov. Whitmer and Gov. Mikazuki (pictured above left) signed a joint agreement reaffirming the sister-state relationship that Michigan and Shiga have enjoyed since 1968.

RECENT CONSULATE ACTIVITIES

Saginaw Japan Festival Delights All Ages



On September 18, the Saginaw Japan Festival took place under sunny skies at the Japanese Cultural Center, Tea House, and Gardens of Saginaw. According to Center Director, Ms. Masumi Azu-Boles, this is the 15th time the festival was held in person. This annual celebration of Japanese culture opened with remarks by Consul General Shindo and Saginaw Mayor Brenda Moore.

The festival featured performances by Ensemble Hanabi, Great Lakes Taiko, and Miyabi, demonstrations of martial arts by the Detroit Kendo Dojo, and tea ceremony presented by the JSD Women's Club. Festival attendees had the opportunity to admire displays of bonsai, ikebana, and pottery, and to try their hands at origami, calligraphy, and traditional children's games. Visitors traveled from as far as Ann Arbor, Mt. Pleasant, and even Toledo to take part in the event. Congratulations and thank you to all who helped make this year's festival a success!

SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL RESEARCHER IN JAPAN

Justin Yantus in Fukuoka on MEXT Research Scholarship



Since April, Justin Yantus of Ypsilanti, MI (pictured above right, and with other scholarship recipients above left), has been conducting research at Kyushu University in Fukuoka, as a recipient of the 2022 MEXT Research Student Scholarship. Working in collaboration with scholars in Japan, his research is about robots and robotic devices designed to help people with disabilities.

Justin reports that one thing he has learned so far is the importance of making contacts and friends, and establishing solid communication with those networks, as soon as possible. Adjusting to a new culture can be challenging, but Justin has begun to embrace the local customs.

He loves *tonkotsu* ("pork bone") ramen, one of Fukuoka's famous noodle dishes, and is excited about his university being located so close to a famous ramen restaurant which began in Fukuoka decades ago and has now expanded into a well-known international chain. Justin is also looking forward to the Hakata Gion Yamakasa Festival, and its famous races of huge floats through the streets.



ConsuLink is the official newsletter of the Consulate-General of Japan in Detroit

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[CGJ Website](#)

CALENDAR Exhibits & Events

Through February 2023:
[Netsuke and the Art of Little Wonders](#) @ Dayton Art Institute, Dayton, OH

Sat., October 1
[Vicksburg Regional Open Go Tournament](#) @ Vicksburg, MI

Sun., October 2
[Novi Japan Festival](#) @ Novi, MI

Tues., October 4
[OSU-IJS Lecture on US-Japan-Taiwan](#) @ Columbus, OH

Sat., October 8
[7th Annual Conference of Midwest Japan Student Associations](#) @ Ann Arbor, MI

Sat. & Sun., October 8-9
[Cranbrook Ikebana Exhibition & Demos](#) @ Bloomfield Hills, MI
[Hinoki Foundation Japanese Cultural Booth](#) @ Tollgate Farm Pumpkinfest, Novi, MI

Thurs., October 13
[Hofu-Monroe Book Club](#) @ online platform
[JASGC Autumn Ikebana Workshop](#) @ Cincinnati, OH

Thurs., October 20
[UM-CJS Lecture on Japan's Film Industry](#) @ Ann Arbor, MI & online

Sat., October 22
[Anime Afternoon](#) @ Ellet Branch Library, Akron, OH

Fri., October 28
[Van Buren District Library Anime/Manga Club](#) @ Covert, MI

Fri.-Sat., October 28-29
[Yoimono-ichi Artisan Fair](#) @ Columbus, OH

QUICK LINKS

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan](#)



[Kizuna: The official magazine of the Government of Japan](#)

Digital publication reporting on a variety of topics, promoting stronger links between Japan and the world.

[Consulate General of Japan in Detroit](#)



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