

*The scenes, landscapes, experiences
and more
representing Minamiuonuma*



|||
COLOR
of minamiuonuma
Minamiuonuma, Niigata
JAPAN



SPECIAL

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cover
Historic Bokushi Street

This historic lodging town was restored and renamed Bokushi Street after the local author Suzuki Bokushi, famous for his Edo period best-seller *Snow Country Tales*. Paying a visit to this quaint neighborhood will feel as if you've traveled back in time, and you can wear kimono and taste traditional sweets as you explore the area. The covered walkways of Bokushi Street stand out as an example of unique Snow Country architecture and make an excellent background for photographs.

*2011 City Landscape Grand Prize, Hometown Architecture Prize
 2015 Asian Urban Landscape Award Grand Prize

秋に潤う
 夏はキラメキ
 春に咲き
 冬はトキメキ

After enduring the harsh winter
 A warm, mild spring begins to bloom
 Deep blues fill the summer sky
 And an abundant harvest arrives in autumn
 Before the enchanting winter season comes again.
 These are the many faces of Minamiuonuma
 that are sure to blow you away!

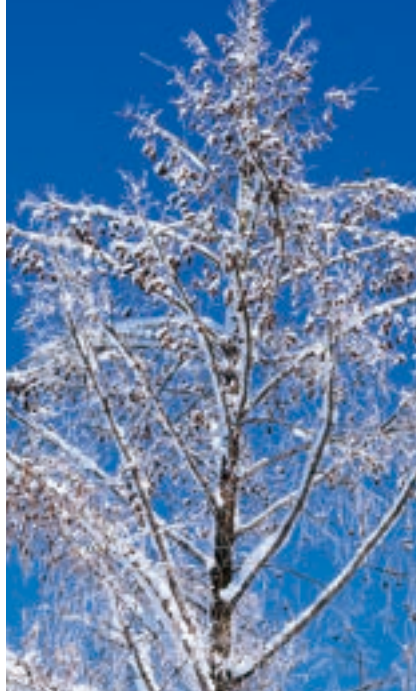




Enchanting Winter



Famous within Snow Country is the winter of Minamiuonuma. Snow falls from the sky, transforming the landscape into a world of pure white, and this elegant winter coat sparkles in the sunlight. The winter of Minamiuonuma, brimming with sights, flavors, and experiences unique to this region, is a season that fills everyone with awe.



Trees, mountains and rivers all cloaked in white are contrasted beautifully with the blue sky in this magical winter season.



The Many Faces of Winter

The winter of Minamiuonuma bears many faces. The first snow marks the arrival of winter, and in the high season snow falls magnificently. The snowy scenery sparkles brightly like diamonds at sunrise, while it is stained a warm red as the sun sets. And on cold, clear nights the vast starry sky fills the eyes of stargazers in town. Each new day displays a distinctly beautiful winter scene.



Enjoying a hot cup of coffee out above the snow. A special moment on a sunny morning in Snow Country.



Traditional New Year's decorations like *kadomatsu* and *shimenawa* are gathered and burned after the New Year in Japan to see off the Toshigami deity and receive its blessings.



Igloo

Igloos, or *kamakura* in Japanese, can be found in the Snow Country of Japan. The fun of building them together with friends, and the candles illuminating them warms the hearts of locals. When you come to Minamiuonuma, please give building one a try!



*White snow falls from above.
This gift from the sky
Will color the seasons of Minamiuonuma to come.*



The impressive snow plows and the professionals who operate them to maintain the roads help support the lives of locals. Snow plowing is hard work that must be done every day. Demonstrating the wisdom passed down in Snow Country, they go to work battling the forces of nature.



Life in the Snow

In the long, harsh winters of Minamiuonuma, walls of snow pile several meters high, as roads, gardens, and even buildings are buried in the copious snow... At times this weather can seem daunting even to locals, yet the snow is essential to Minamiuonuma because of the many gifts that it brings. Those who have inherited the skills for both living with and enjoying this snow best understand its importance. This is a season where the locals and snow exist in harmony.



The snow that poses a great burden at times also serves a role in preserving produce and aging Japanese sake. *Yukimuro* snow cellars that use natural snow for refrigeration throughout the year are scattered across the city.

Heavy Snowfall Zone

Why on earth does it snow this much! Winds carrying water vapor from the cold Sea of Japan crash into the mountains of Echigo like Mt. Hakkai and Mt. Makihata in winter, and this vapor condenses and falls as snow. Over two meters of snow accumulates in the city during an average winter in this mind-boggling heavy snowfall zone.

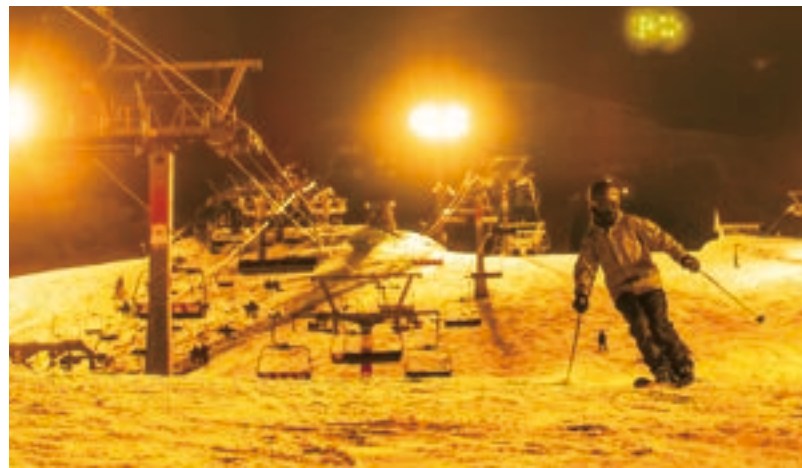


Ski Resorts

Capitalizing on the heavy snowfall and local terrain, there are numerous snow resorts in Minamiuonuma that countless skiers and snowboarders from across Japan and overseas come to visit. Ranging from bunny slopes to Japan's largest scale superpipe, these snow resorts have it all. Wouldn't you like to make some memories in Japan skiing on a fresh coat of powder at the resort right for you?



To get the most out of your ski vacation, night skiing can really come in handy! The atmosphere on the slopes is entirely different at night, and you'll be hooked on carving under the lights once you give it a try.



What's the mood for today?
Who should we invite?
Which ski resort to choose?



Enjoy a carefree moment up in the snowy mountains without the need for special gear or rentals. Welcome, your winter vacation awaits!



Enjoy some innocent fun with the kids on sledding hills at a number of snow resorts in town. Let's get out in the snow with the whole family!



LOCATIONS

Ishiuchi Maruyama Ski Resort / Ishiuchi Hanaoka Ski Area / Maiko Snow Resort / Mt. Granview Ski Area
Joetsu Kokusai Ski Resort / Chateau Shiozawa Ski Area / Muica Snow Resort / Itsukamachi Ski Area
Muikamachi Hakkaisan Ski Resort / Hakkai Sanroku Ski Area



For those seeking a little more thrill than cruising down the groomers, there are halfpipes and jump courses for advanced riders at several resorts in town.



Snow Refinement of Echigo-Jofu

On sunny days in March, woven fabrics are laid out above fields of white snow. The sun's rays melt the snow and as this water evaporates it passes through the fabrics, cleansing them of any stains. This natural bleaching process is an example of wisdom passed down in the Snow Country, and *yuki-zarashi* snow refinement is a key step in making luxury Echigo-Jofu hemp fabrics. This spectacle, said to signal the arrival of spring in Minamiuonuma, is something that you surely want to miss.

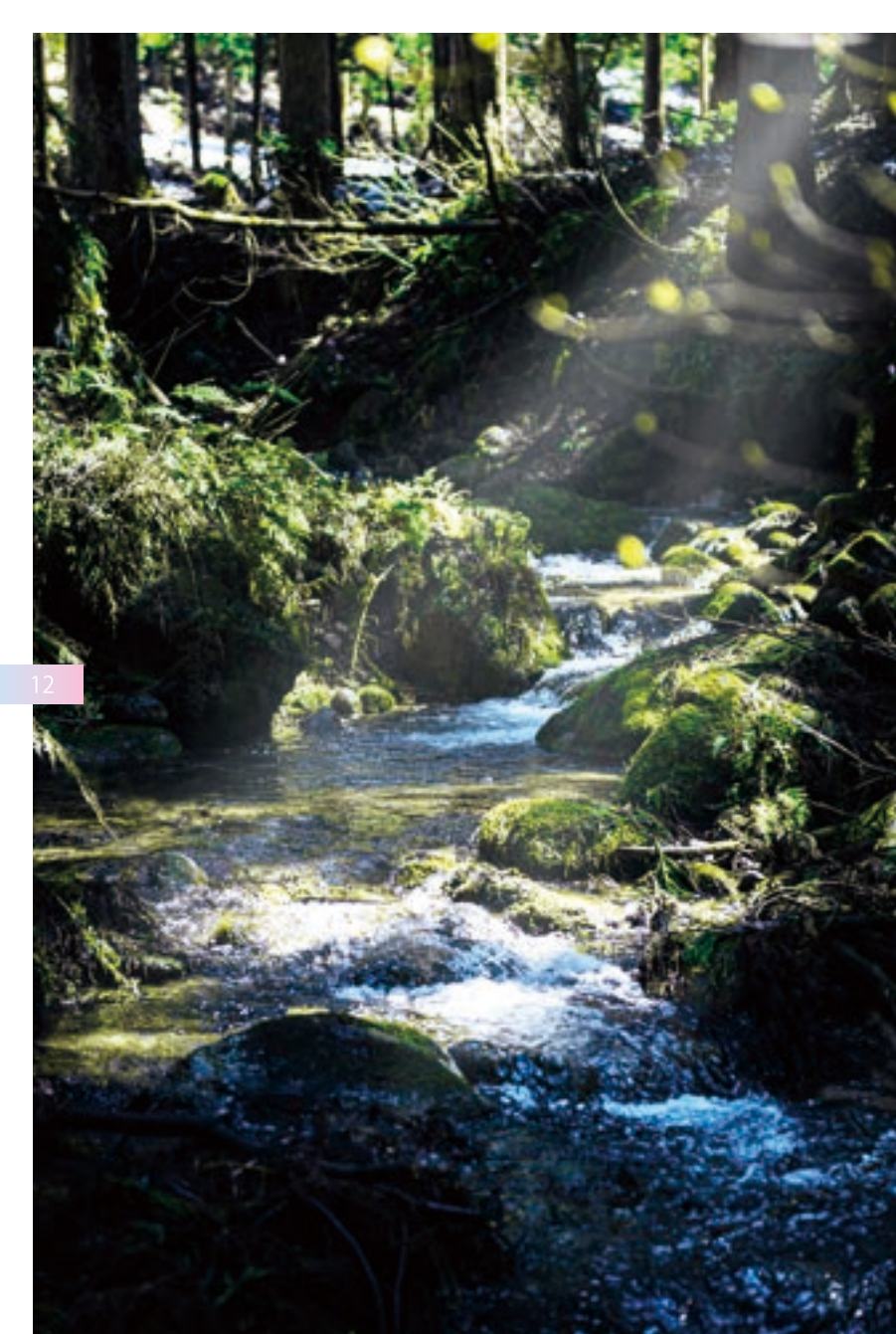
* Registered UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage



Shiozawa Textiles

Dating back more than 1200 years, the robust textile trade in Shiozawa is most famous for Echigo-Jofu hemp fabrics. Applying the unique weaving techniques of Echigo-Jofu to silk fabrics, refined textiles such as Shiozawa Tsumugi have also been developed. See how these dazzling garments are made at Shiozawa Tsumugi Pavilion and even try weaving them yourself. In the neighborhood reimagining the lifestyle and traditions of Snow Country, wearing one of these prized Shiozawa kimono can give you an even more authentic experience of the unique culture of Minamiuonuma.





Minamiuonuma
Niigata, Japan

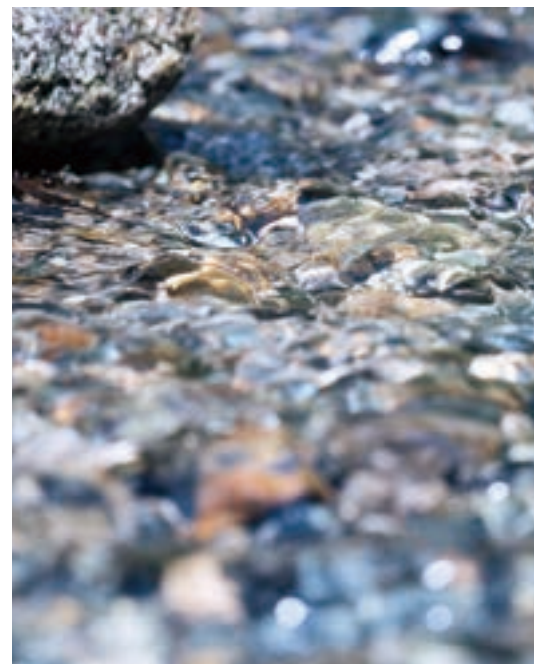
Signs of Spring

Just as the longest nights will turn to day, the dawn of a new season comes toward the end of the long winter. During this transition from winter to spring, signs of spring appear all over town as both people and nature begin to change. Fresh greenery begins to sprout from the earth, and sunshine warms the air in which it grows. Would you come have a taste of the fresh air in this season unique to Minamiuonuma?



Spring Water

As the snow starts to melt, spring begins in Minamiuonuma. The seemingly infinite snowfall from winter stops and is transformed into a pure spring water that flows throughout the city. This clear water from melting snow is the secret to the rich flavors found in Minamiuonuma Koshihikari Rice and Japanese sakes. This pure water from melting snow adds color to Minamiuonuma.



Wild Cherry Blossoms of Mt. Makihata

While the city is warmed by sunny weather in spring, elusive wild cherry blossoms begin to appear deep in the mountains still sporting a thick coat of snow. Waiting for visitors making the trek across a snowy plateau is an ephemeral show which can only be seen in the snowy mountains of Japan.



Spring has Come

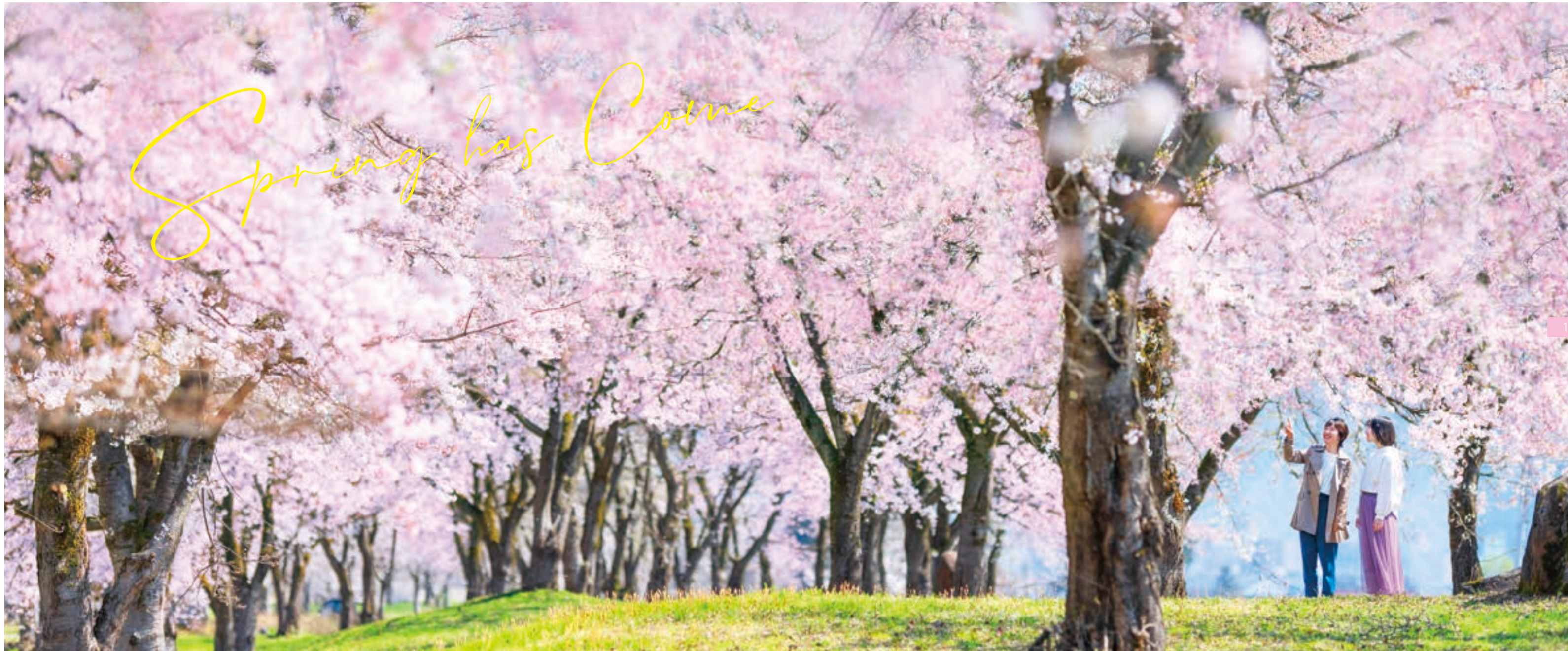
春

The people of Minamiuonuma rejoice at the arrival of spring. After enduring the cold of winter, the spirits of people, plants, and wildlife begin to dance. Filled with this same energy, an abundance of flowers bloom in full glory during the delightful spring of Minamiuonuma.



Kamakura Cherry Blossom Hills

Rows of cherry trees, their blossoms a bona fide symbol of spring, extend for over 700 meters as they bloom all at once. When the cherry blossoms reach peak season, you can be immersed in spring as you walk through this park and lose track of time marveling at the extraordinary scenery.



Spring has Come



*Spring
Ephemeral*

||| Dogtooth Violets

The flower of Minamiuonuma that announces when spring has begun is the dogtooth violet. Patiently enduring winter within the ground, thousands of these delicate flowers bloom together once the snowmelt seeps into the earth. The official flower of Minamiuonuma City, the dogtooth violet is a spring ephemeral that sprouts in large patches proclaiming "spring has sprung!"

|||
Spring
in Full Bloom

Fresh greenery and flowers fill the city with color. The trees waking up from their hibernation are clad in a lush green, while spring flowers and cherry blossoms bloom beautifully in great numbers. These many flowers put smiles on local faces, and the warmth from people and fair spring weather overflows. Bright hues spread throughout the entire city.



Osaki Dam Park Running along the branches of cherry trees, handmade koi-nobori windsocks gracefully swim through the sky celebrating the Children's Day holiday in May.



Zenibuchi Park A Japanese garden park adorned with seasonal flowers throughout the year. A cherry blossom viewing event is held in spring which draws many visitors to this favorite outdoor spot among locals.



||| Rapeseed Flower Fields

Rapeseed flower fields dye sections of the landscape an electrifying yellow. The flowers' eye-catching color attracts many viewers and perfectly suits the bright aesthetic of Minamiuonuma in spring. The flower field is on the Hakkaisan Brewery campus Uonuma no Sato and different flowers are planted here every season.



||| Reflections in Rice Fields

The rice fields that make up most of the Uonuma Basin are flooded with water as seedlings of Minamiuonuma's famous Koshihikari rice are planted. At this time of year, the surrounding landscape is immaculately reflected on the water's surface. The reflections of snow-capped mountains and deep blue skies in the rice fields may be yet another secret to growing such delicious Koshihikari rice.



Sensational Summer

夏

The basin landscape of Minamiuonuma offers a sensational summer. Surrounded by mountains sporting a staggeringly different appearance from winter, the summer in this countryside is teeming with heat and energy. The dense verdure, cold river water, and sounds of cicadas are all part of a nature that can be closely sensed and will remind you of the sounds and colors of summers past. The wind and spirit of Minamiuonuma shine in summer.



Noborikawa Riverside Park

This outdoor park is frequented by families and large groups in summer. A cycling course runs along the river, and there are camping areas and BBQ sites inside the park too. The flow of the river filled with melting snow blows the summer heat away, and the sounds of children at play will echo in your mind for days.

Sensational Summer



Under the starry sky



How will you spend today?
Go for a hike?
Or maybe play in the river?
What will you do?

Enjoy camping deep in the mountains at the Ikazawa Campgrounds. Falling asleep under thousands of twinkling stars and waking up to the sounds of songbirds in the forest are some particularly refreshing appeals. And whether you'll stay overnight or just unwind for the day, the choice is yours. Have an exhilarating time giving SUP a try on Lake Shakunage, and find amusement outdoors in the cool rivers that eclipse the heat of summer. What will you do this summer?



||| The Great Outdoors

Camping, glamping, water play, BBQ, stargazing, fireworks... while the heat and humidity of summer can be exhausting, there are just so many fun things to do! For having fun with friends, relaxing on your own, and making time for family bonding, the summer of Minamiuonuma has countless activities to enjoy.



*Gracious! Delicious!
Precious! Ambitious!*

The Maiko Plateau is your new glamping destination for a luxurious getaway from the city. Stay in stylish shelters and enjoy dinner outside looking over the verdant landscape. There are free campsites too, while ground golf and disc golf courses are part of an extensive activity line-up. BBQs are a fun and delicious way to spend time with friends, and wearing traditional yukata for the jaw-dropping fireworks displays can make for a fun and memorable experience.



Natural Healing

||| Beech Forest

Stretching up to the skies of Minamiuonuma are the tall & slender beech trees in Ushiroyama. The pure air in this fortress of green makes it the perfect location for forest therapy, and rays of light shining through the dense canopy can help to sooth one's spirit. The shiny dark greens of summer suit this forest well, but the autumn foliage here must also be superb.



Yairo Watermelon



The Yairo plains are exceptionally fertile farmland. Surrounded by the Echigo Mountains, there is a sheer drop in temperature from the sweltering daytime heat at night. This temperature difference helps nurture the sweetest watermelons in Japan. Basking in the warm sunlight, the flavor in these fruits is condensed turning them bright red. The sweet taste and crystal-like texture of the Yairo Watermelon is a blissful summer treat.



Yairo Shiitake



7 varieties of mushroom are grown in Minamiuonuma and they each have their own delicious flavor. Pushing the boundaries of shiitake size and quality, the substantial and complex Yairo Shiitake is one of these varieties. Employing special greenhouses for planting, the mushrooms are cultivated year-round and can be eaten fresh at any time. These shiitakes are great for a summer BBQ or hearty winter hotpot and more.



Bountiful
Autumn

秋

When autumn arrives the mountains are filled with color. In Minamiuonuma, it is a season of harvests, a season of arts, a season of sports, and a season of appetites. While making preparations for the approaching winter, colorful mountains and lustrous rice fields captivate visitors. Thanks to the gifts from nature, the land and people's spirits grow rich in the autumn of Minamiuonuma.

Autumn Colors of the Uramakihata Ravine

Encounter a once in a lifetime autumn scenery in the Uramakihata Ravine! The contrast between sheer cliffs and dense forests is the highlight of this famous trekking spot that traces the Ikazawa River. This magnificent natural landscape will surely impress all those who see it.

Awesome Autumn





Uramakihata Ravine

Trekking along a wild hiking course carved into rocky cliffs, breathtakingly vibrant autumn foliage spreads out before your eyes. In the heart of the ravine a powerful waterfall awaits, sending echoes throughout the river valley as it crashes into a pool of emerald green.



Autumn Colors

The surrounding mountains explode with red and yellow colors. Japanese maples and ginkgo trees wear their autumn coats, and the season of autumn can be sensed from anywhere in town. The warm colors decorating the rural landscape create a seasonal charm unique to Minamiuonuma.



Uonuma Skyline

As its name would imply, driving along this scenic road feels like soaring through the sky. The route can be accessed from neighboring cities as well, and there are many observation decks that offer panoramic views of the Snow Country.



Hakkaisan Ropeway

Take a walk in the clouds by riding on this gondola ropeway. As the most convenient way to access the sacred peak Mt. Hakkai, this ropeway is relied on by mountain climbers, sightseers, and winter sport enthusiasts throughout the year.



Beautiful natural phenomenon



Sea of Clouds

Sea of clouds is a rare natural phenomenon that can be difficult to see, but there are several places in Minamiuonuma where you have a good chance of encountering this amazing sight. With the city submerged in a low cover of clouds, Mt. Rokumangi and Mt. Sakado appear as islands floating in a sea of clouds. The phenomenon can only be seen when conditions are right, but the sunlight shining over this gift from nature at daybreak appears magical and out of this world.



A golden harvest fills everyone with joy.



Minamiuonuma Koshihikari

Pure and abundant natural spring water flows through the Uonuma Basin irrigating this arable land, and the unique climate further improves local growing conditions. As a blessing from Mother Nature, farmers use the natural environment to passionately grow the region's pride and joy, Minamiuonuma Koshihikari Rice. A fixture on the dinner tables of locals, this rice is the secret to happiness and good health in the Snow Country.



Glistening, freshly-steamed white rice takes the lead role at the table and in bento lunches in Minamiuonuma. This crop has assembled the best qualities short-grain rice can offer with the perfect firmness, a refined sweetness and richness, and an intoxicatingly pleasant aroma when steamed. Of course it's delicious freshly cooked, but even cold Minamiuonuma Koshihikari is still a cut above the rest.



Majidon®



The Minamiuonuma Majidon Campaign began as a way to increase the brand recognition of Minamiuonuma Koshihikari and give more people the opportunity to enjoy its delicious taste. To serve generous portions of this delicious and precious rice, local chefs are called on to each create their idea of the ultimate rice bowl that highlights the quality of this famous rice. Enjoy one of several dozen unique Majidon creations to celebrate the rice harvest in autumn each year.



Golden Trip in Minamisonobu



Golden Countryside

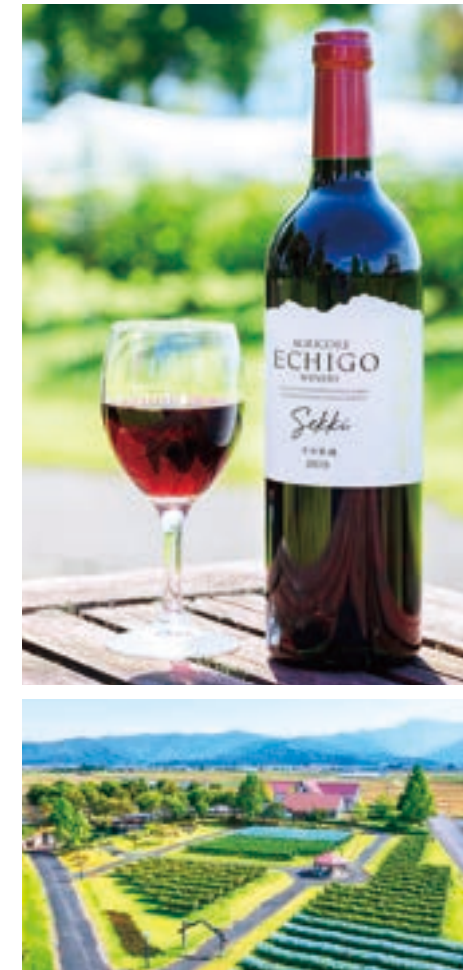
The entire Uonuma Basin turns gold in the season when Koshihikari crops are patiently awaiting the harvest. Linking Tokyo and Niigata, the Joetsu Shinkansen traces the path of this golden trip. Visible only briefly after the rice fields change color before harvest, this is a special sight for a special trip. Look out over the countryside from your window. Look! Fields of Koshihikari rice plants bowing their heads as if to welcome you here.



三 Sake

Coupled with the skill and passion of artisan brewers, abundant nature, pure water, and the finest quality rice come together to create delicious Japanese sake. There are 3 breweries in Minamiunuma each working to brew Japanese sakes that will delight sake fans around the world. Gifts from the natural environment and the tireless work of dedicated brewers ultimately yields this exquisite beverage.

- Aoki Shuzo Co. LTD
- Takachiyo Shuzo Co. LTD
- Hakkaisan Brewery Co. LTD



三 Wine

In the peaceful Yairo countryside, numerous wine grape varieties are meticulously grown in a vineyard irrigated by melting snow. And embracing the climate of Snow Country, the mellow, full-bodied wines are matured in a *yukimuro* wine cellar that regulates temperature and humidity using natural snow. With just one sip of these wines you can taste the love for Snow Country that the winemakers bear.

- Agricore Echigo Winery Co., Ltd



Temples



Kankoji

This Rinzai school temple boasts roughly 600 years of history and bears connections to feudal lord Ueda Nagao and the Uesugi Clan. In its heyday, the temple oversaw over 300 branch temples across Japan. "Have you tasted the miso of Kankoji?" During the Siege of Odate in 1578, precious volumes of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra were stored in the temple's miso paste to protect them from war fires. Ever since, it's been said that one can receive great blessings from eating this miso of legend.



Untoan

A Soto school Zen temple founded at the base of Mt. Kinjo. As children, feudal lord Uesugi Kagekatsu and samurai Naoe Kanetsugu studied at this famous temple. "Have you stood on the soil of Untoan?" Individual characters from the Lotus Sutra were buried under the stone walkways of these temple grounds, and it is said that visitors who walk along these paths will receive great blessings.



Toyama Yasuo Wildflower Art Museum

In this modest art gallery inside a traditional Japanese countryside house, the watercolor paintings of seasonal wildflowers by artist Yasuo Toyama are displayed throughout the year together with live specimens of each flower. The traditional architecture and watercolor paintings create a nostalgic and welcoming atmosphere as you look around the gallery.



Museums



Imaizumi Memorial Hall Art Station

An art museum exists in the center of the Minamiuonuma Roadside Station. The exhibits are made up of roughly 40 paintings from the city's extensive collection, which includes an impressive 144 pieces by artist Shiko Munakata.



Ikeda Art Museum

Looking out over the majestic Mt. Hakkai and Mt. Echigo Komagatake from Yairo no Mori Park, this art museum houses exhibits centered on the three pillars of art, sports, and literature. There is an excellent view from the large windows of the museum café where you can take a moment to rest and appreciate the scenery.



Tomioka White Art Museum

Artist Soichiro Tomioka (1922 – 1994) spent decades capturing snowy landscapes on the canvas in Japan and around the globe for his World of White series. His peculiar black and white oil paintings are mesmerizing to visitors of this gallery.



Community Institutions



Minamiuonuma Roadside Station

The Minamiuonuma Roadside Station is made up of several different facilities that can enhance your travel experience. A restaurant serves Minamiuonuma Koshihikari Rice, while a farmer's market stocks its shelves with local produce and souvenirs. There's a bouncy castle and jungle gym in the outdoor park, and you can get all the best sightseeing info at the Minamiuonuma Tourist Information Center inside the Imaizumi Memorial Hall.



An important vegetable in the Minamiuonuma diet, *Kagura Nanban* peppers are used to make the popular local specialty *Kagura Nanban Miso*.



Minamiuonuma City Business Incubation Center MUSUBI-BA

A new home-base for start-up development and business growth in Minamiuonuma that opened in 2022. The interior of this co-working space was outfitted with Snow Peak camping gear creating a vastly different aesthetic from the standard Japanese office. The space can be rented out for meetings and events or visited for drop-in use at any time.



Minamiuonuma City Library

The Minamiuonuma City Library is located just in front of Muikamachi Station. It houses a collection of over 160,000 books and the interior wood architecture using Echigo Cedar makes it a warm and inviting space. This is an especially popular spot among locals that everyone is welcome to use.



Minamiuonuma Skate Park

This concrete skate park was built in 2017 and is among the largest in Niigata. It's separated into 8 areas that can be enjoyed by skaters of all skill levels from beginner to pro and can also be used for BMX and rollerblading too.



Yairo no Mori Park

Yairo no Mori Park features almost everything you could want in an outdoor nature park and is an amazing venue for all sorts of recreational activities. What's more, a vineyard, winery restaurant, and art museum are also located within park grounds.



Ohara Sports Park

Only 5 minutes from the Shiozawa-Ishiuchi IC, the fresh air and natural scenery of the Maiko Plateau make this sports complex an excellent setting for athletics. Tennis courts, soccer fields and the impressive Baseball Magazine Stadium are all equipped with field lights making night games possible too.



Minamiuonuma Training Center

Bouldering walls, trampolines, basketball courts and weight machines are all set up in this one-stop athletics training center. Spending a rainy day here with your kids or practicing tricks on the trampolines and doing some weight training in the off-season are all great ways to use this multipurpose facility in Snow Country.

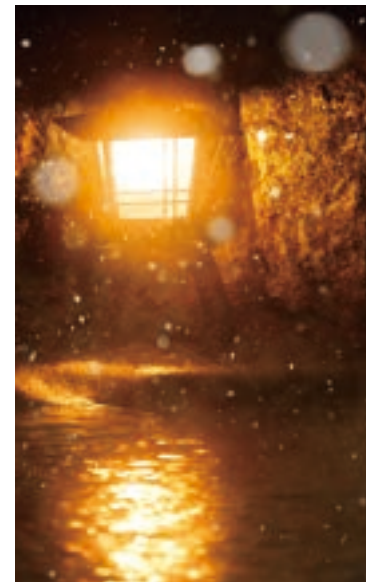


Sports & Activity Facilities



Onsen

Onsen can be found all over Minamiuonuma and there are several different types which vary in color, temperature, and feel. It's possible to appreciate the changing seasons by trying different hot springs throughout the year, and in addition to traditional onsen ryokan, day-use spas and footbaths are other ways to experience the unique Japanese bathing culture. Let the onsen of Minamiuonuma melt away the stress and fatigue of everyday life.



LOCATIONS

Hatsukaishi Onsen / Maruyama Onsen / Uwano Kosen / Osawa Onsen
Maiko Onsen / Kabansawa Onsen / Tochikubo Onsen / Uenohara Plateau Onsen
Azechi Onsen / Ikazawa Onsen / Muikamachi Onsen / Urasa Onsen



Information

CONTACT

【Travel Inquiries】

Minamiuonuma City Resort Tourist Association

855 Shimohitoichi, Minamiuonuma,
Niigata 〒949-6363
Minamiuonuma Roadside Station
Imaizumi Memorial Hall



TEL.025-773-6665 [English]

Access

Joetsu Shinkansen

- Tokyo ~ Echigo Yuzawa 75 minutes
- Tokyo ~ Urasa 90 minutes
- Niigata ~ Urasa 40 minutes

Joetsu Line・Hokuhoku Line

- Echigo Yuzawa ~ Muikamachi 20 minutes
- Muikamachi ~ Urasa 10 minutes

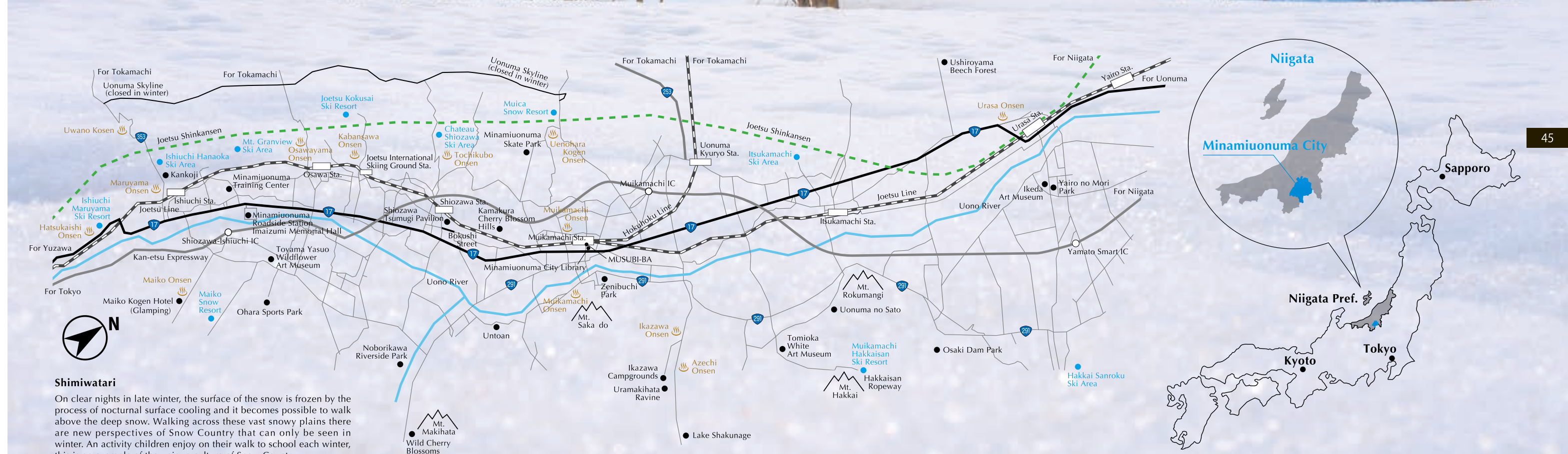
Kan-etsu Expressway

- Nerima IC ~ Muikamachi IC 187 km
- Niigata-Nishi IC ~ Muikamachi IC 111 km

Highway Bus

- Tokyo・Ikebukuro ~ Muikamachi IC 3 hours 15 minutes

*The information in this pamphlet was updated in February 2023.



Shimiwatari

On clear nights in late winter, the surface of the snow is frozen by the process of nocturnal surface cooling and it becomes possible to walk above the deep snow. Walking across these vast snowy plains there are new perspectives of Snow Country that can only be seen in winter. An activity children enjoy on their walk to school each winter, this is an example of the unique culture of Snow Country.



VOIDE
Discover the stories of Minamiuonuma. The Minamiuonuma sightseeing media VOIDE introduces the legends, traditions, and historic sites of this region through videos, stories, photo galleries and more.



POP GUIDE
A Minamiuonuma travel guide app that displays various tourist spots on a digital map and features short narrated stories about each location.



An aerial photograph of a valley in winter. The landscape is covered in a thick layer of snow, with dark evergreen trees scattered throughout. In the background, a range of mountains is visible, their peaks also covered in snow. The sky is a mix of deep blue and bright orange, indicating a sunset or sunrise. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the scene.

Colors of Minamiuonuma brighten your journey

The flow of time is constant, and it seems the seasons always circle back to winter.
The scenery you've grown used to changes in the blink of an eye, and suddenly it's winter.
On the other side of its harshness is the generous nature of locals and beautiful scenery that words cannot describe.
In the season blanketed in snow, and the other seasons too, this community always warmly welcomes and fascinates its guests.
Won't you have Minamiuonuma add color to your trip?



Color of minamiuonuma



Minamiuonuma City Commerce & Tourism Promotion Division
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