

みどり市

Midori City



Outline

Midori City, located in the eastern part of Gunma Prefecture, has a total area of 208.23 square kilometers. In 2006, the city merged the towns of Kasakake in Nitta-gun, Omama in Yamada-gun, and Azuma Village in Seta-gun. Located approximately 100 kilometers from Tokyo, Midori City borders Kiryu City, Nikko City in Tochigi Prefecture, and 6 other cities in Gunma and Tochigi. To the north of Midori City lies the Ashio Mountain Range, home to the source of the Watarase River which flows through Midori City. In the heart of the city lies the Omama Delta, a fertile plain created by the pure waters of the Watarase River. The city's elevation is from 100 meters to 1,868 meters. As the seasons change, Midori City's abundant wealth of nature expresses itself in four distinct ways, each equally beautiful and full of character.

Attractions

◆ Konaka River



At the source of Konaka River flows a great scale of waterfall. During early to mid-April, katakuri (dogtooth violet) flowers can be seen in full bloom. Yashiotsutsuji azaleas and shakunage (rhododendron) trees can be appreciated in their full bloom during mid to late April. Lush, green foliage and the changing leaves of autumn are of exceptional beauty. From the parking lot, a 2 minute stroll along the promenade and through a short tunnel ends with the magnificent sight of a 51 meter step-grate suspension bridge. Walking across the bridge is quite thrilling, as one descends the 44%-grade suspended staircase and crosses the valley below, leading to the perfect spot for viewing the waterfall.

<Access>

- By Car: About 1hr 15min by car from Ota-Yabuzuka IC of Kita-Kanto Expressway

- By Train: About 2 hrs on foot from Konaka Station on Watarase Keikoku Railway



Odaira no Sato boasts attractions such as the Limestone Cave, the Botanical Gardens, camping grounds, and a riverside Public Park. Whether visiting with friends or family, please come and make many pleasant summer memories.

<Access>

- By Car: About 40 min by car from Ota-Yabuzuka IC of Kita-Kanto Expressway

○Shonyudo Koen (Limestone Cave Park)

This is a park along the path to the limestone cave.

In the park which two brooks run, about 70 of beautiful sarusuberi (crepe myrtle) trees are in bloom in summer. The 93 meter-long limestone cave was discovered in 1984 and has cave formation which is scientifically valuable. You can enjoy the mystery of nature in the cave, where keeps cool temperature even in summer.

Also in the park, hand-made soba and udon noodles can be enjoyed at "Mamianatei." "Fureaikan" provides you the chance to get souvenirs and local specialties.

○Botanical Garden

Lotus, iris, and skunk cabbage are among the 200 varieties of seasonal flowers, aquatic plants and countryside grasses that one can see at the Aquatic Botanical Gardens. From early spring to early summer, the breathtaking pheasant's-eye, kakkosou, and kurinsou flowers can be seen in bloom. The summer brings yamayuri, and dokudami (chameleon plant); autumn the hagi (blush clover); and winter, the beautiful wintersweet flowers.

○Camping Grounds

With large and small bungalows and cottages, tents for rent, a barbecue house and more, you can enjoy a genuine camping experience. Bring your favorite food to barbecue, or gaze upon the starry night sky while gathering around a campfire.

These camping grounds are a great place to enjoy the great outdoors.

○Riverside Park • Noguchi Water Wheel Museum

Enjoy playing in the clear waters of Odaira River, or make yourself comfortable on the lawn of the park. Little children love to play in the shallow, gentle river water and the playground and slide in the spacious park. One corner of the park boasts one of the largest indoor models of Noguchi Water Wheel. The Water

Wheel's power had been used for making polished rice and milling rice flour from 1910 to 1955, and it can still be seen today at the museum.

◆ Takatsudo Gorge



Takatsudo Gorge is called the "Yabakei" of the Kanto region, after the famous Yabakei valley in Kyushu. The Watarase Valley's picturesque scenery can be seen from the promenade which runs along it, notably "Gorilla Rock" (a large stone shaped like a gorilla's head) and the "Pothole," a creation in stone made by the river. The brilliant colors of the changing autumn leaves along both banks of Watarase River are a must-see.

<Access>

- By Car: About 20 min from Ota-Yabuzuka IC of Kita-Kanto Expressway
- By Train: About 10 min on foot from Omama Station on Watarase Keikoku Railway

◆ Sunlake Kusaki Hotel



Sunlake Kusaki Hotel is a Japanese-style inn overlooking Lake Kusaki with accommodations for 100 people. You can enjoy the garden-style open-air bath, and the bamboo-charcoal bath. After relaxing and warming yourself in the baths, please enjoy a food from Sunlake Kusaki where people adhere to local production for local consumption. There's also a shop where you can purchase various original goods.

<Access>

- By Car: About 1hr from Ota-Yabuzuka IC of Kita-Kanto Expressway
- By Train: About 20 min by bus from Godo Station on Watarase Keikoku Railway

◆ Katakuri and Cherry-Blossom Festival



Lovely purple katakuri flowers welcome in the spring season, while someiyoshino cherry blossoms bloom along the banks of Kanokawa Pond. A cluster of katakuri flowers grow in Iwajuku no Sato, which possesses Iwajuku ruins, recognized as a protected historical location by the Japanese government.

<Location> Iwajuku no Sato (1790-1 Azami, Sasakake-cho, Midori-shi, Gunma)

<Access>

- By Train: About 20 min on foot from Iwajuku station on JR Ryomo Line
- By Car: About 15 min from Ota-Yabuzuka IC of Kita-Kanto Expressway

<Period> Late March to early April

*On the weekend during the festival, you can enjoy the sales of local products.

◆ Omama Gion Festival



This event features a parade of portable shrines and traditional folk dance, the marching of a sacred horse, and much more. Catching goldfish in the traditional Japanese game of kingyosukui, and visiting the many shops that fill the streets during festival season will invite you to the atmosphere of Japan's traditional festival. Simply walking through the shopping district on the main street is a delightful experience which is amplified during the festival season. The use of the name "Gion" for Omama's festival originated over 380 years ago, and Omama Gion Festival is proudly considered one of the three largest traditional festivals in Gunma prefecture.

<Dates> 1-3 August

<Location> Honchodori (main street) in Omama-machi

◆ Kusakiko Festival



Kusakiko Festival is a festival celebrating the completion of Kusaki Dam in 1977. It is held once a year, with a wish for the former residents of Kusaki Village to enjoy a festival in the place of their former homes. Fireworks, one of the main events, are launched from directly below Kusaki Dam. The sound of the fireworks echoing off the surrounding mountains is one of the festival's many charms.

<Date> 15 August

<Location> Eastern Athletic Park

◆ Kasakake Festival



As the population of the Kasakake district has been increasing in recent years, the summer festival has become a center of cultural exchange between its old and new residents. On the stage, townspeople of all ages dance to the Yagibushi Folk Song, to the sounds of Japanese drums filling the air. As the highlight of the festival, young members of the Kasakake Chamber of Commerce and Industry carry the "koorimikoshi," a special portable shrine crafted from ice, on their shoulders, creating a mysterious, cooling atmosphere during the otherwise hot summer.

<Dates> Saturday in mid or late August

<Place> Kasakake Playground

◆ Sunflower Garden Festival



While sunflowers normally blossom in summer, 120,000 of slightly smaller sunflowers are in bloom from late September to mid October. In the blooming season, Sunflower Festival is held with various events including the sale of local products.

<Season> Late September to mid-October

<Dates> Late September to early October

<Location> Fukiage area of Kamishikada, Kasakake-cho,

◆ Kanto Region Chrysanthemum Convention



This is an exhibition of about 1,300 chrysanthemums with various styles including "bonyogiku" and "bonsaigiku" (large chrysanthemums, displayed in threes in a single pot), "kengaigiku," and "ozukurigiku." As spectators walk through the festival, the smell of chrysanthemums fills the air. Dolls dressed in traditional Japanese costumes made with chrysanthemums make for a gorgeous atmosphere. An additional festival is held in early November, where local products are sold.

<Date> Late October to Late November

<Location> Nagame Park

◆ Iwajuku Ruins • Iwajuku Museum



The historical ruins of Iwajuku were discovered in 1946 by local researcher Tadahiro Aizawa. The origin of the Japanese people was believed to have taken place after the Jomon Period (Neolithic Era). By discovering Iwajuku ruins, Aizawa proved that the origin of Japanese people actually took place during the Paleolithic Era. Iwajuku Museum holds an exhibition showing the origin of humanity in Japan 350,000 to 130,000 years ago.

<Access>

- By Car: About 15 min from Ota-Yabuzuka IC of Kita-Kanto Expressway

- By Train: About 15 min on foot from Iwajuku Station on JR Ryomo Line

◆ Omama Museum (Conodont Museum)



An abundance of natural and historical objects related to Omama's history and culture can be found on display at the Omama Conodont Museum. The building which formerly was Omama Bank was constructed in 1921, and was renovated and re-opened in April 1988, as Conodont Museum.

<Access>

- By Car: About 20 min from Ota-Yabuzuka IC of Kita-Kanto Expressway
- By Train: About 5 min on foot from Omama Station on Watarase Keikoku Railway

◆ Tomihiro Art Museum



Nestled in the causeway of Lake Kusaki, lies an art museum displaying the works of Azuma-cho's local artist and poet Tomihiro Hoshino. The museum was newly renovated and reopened in April 2005. The square building is composed of 33 cylindrical rooms of various sizes. In addition to the exhibition rooms, there is a video room, a book corner, a gift shop, a café, and more. Please enjoy the works of Mr. Hoshino, who continually speaks on the preciousness of life and kindness, in the tranquil atmosphere of his museum, and enjoy the breathtaking view from the café of Azuma-cho.

<Access>

- By Car: About 55 min from Ota-Yabuzuka IC of Kita-Kanto Expressway
- By Train: About 10 min by bus from Godo Station on Watarase Keikoku Railway