

秋田 Akita



I haven't heard of Akita, but I know Akita-inu.

"Akita-inu" is now famous around the world and is a highly regarded, popular breed among dog lovers. There is even a film "Faithful dog, Hachiko" about the best known Akita dog. The Akita dog's home country, Akita prefecture, lies in the north-west of Japan's main island, Honshu, and can be reached by plane from Tokyo in about one hour.



a

Akita prefecture is blessed with a beautiful natural environment; a prime example is the Shirakami Sanchi mountain range, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Throughout Akita there are onsen hot springs known for their 'secret' waters, such as Tsuru no Yu (crane hot spring) [photo c]. This beautiful environment might also have something to do with Akita being famous for Akita Bijin (beautiful women of Akita), traditionally considered to rival Kyoto Bijin.

In all Japan, it is Akita which has the highest number of nationally designated intangible folk cultural properties with 17 in total. Among them are the Kanto Festival and Namahage* [d & e]. The prefecture is also home to three of the thirty-three 'Yama, Hoko, Yatai float festivals' inscribed last year on the UNESCO representative list of intangible cultural heritage of humanity.

Akita is a leading rice producer in Japan, and there are many fermented and other food products made from rice that have been passed down through the ages. Sake [b] is one of them and has flourished since ancient



b

times. The third oldest sake brewery in Japan has a history of more than 500 years and is found in Akita. Akita sake brands now include top prize winners in international contests.



e

As more Japanese sake takes

its place on the international stage, the world's top sportspeople are coming to Akita. Top professional skiers are discovering Akita's ski fields and praising the quality of the snow. Tazawako Ski Resort was the location of Mogul Skiing World Cup, and from its ski fields, visitors overlook beautiful Lake Tazawa, Japan's deepest lake [a].

Cherry blossoms, the fresh green leaves of summer, autumn colour and snow-covered scenery – in Akita you can enjoy the best that each season has to offer. Please come to Akita the next time you're in Japan.

CONTRIBUTED BY Akita Prefecture Food Product Sales Division
Department of Tourism, Culture and Sports

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c



d

* The **Kanto Festival** (early August) is a type of *tanabata* celebration and one of the three great festivals of the Tohoku region. It involves people balancing many illuminated lanterns on bamboo poles—Kanto means 'pole lantern'.

Namahage are associated with New Year festivities. These scary deities go around houses in the neighbourhood and must be reassured that family members are working hard.

Akita-ken's most famous Akita?

WHEN A DELEGATION FROM AKITA RECENTLY VISITED SYDNEY TO PROMOTE THEIR PREFECTURE AND ITS PRODUCTS, THE CHARMING AKITA DOG (AKITA-INU) WAS DOING ITS BIT.

PROBABLY JAPAN'S MOST FAMOUS DOG IS HACHIKO, AN AKITA DOG. TODAY A STATUE OF HACHIKO SITS OUTSIDE TOKYO'S SHIBUYA STATION. HACHIKO HAD THE CUSTOM OF MEETING HIS MASTER'S TRAIN AFTER WORK EACH DAY. AFTER HIS MASTER'S SUDDEN DEATH, FOR ALMOST TEN YEARS, HACHIKO CONTINUED TO WAIT FAITHFULLY FOR HIS RETURN. HACHIKO'S HOMETOWN IN AKITA, ODATE, HAS A MUSEUM DEDICATED TO HIM.



Akita-inu
front and centre



TSUNTO