

This area straddles the prefectures of Akita and Yamagata. View the setting sun from the walking path, a forest of bay trees and historic ruins.



At Dewa Futami, two rocks are bound by a sacred straw rope to pray for the safety of fishers at sea. A favorite photo spot in May and August, when the sun sets directly between the ropes; the sight ensures that viewers will be blessed with good fortune.

The Water of Kamiko



A UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage!
Mega, Takinoura and Torisaki, home of the amahage festival.



Chokai Blue Line Road

Jomon Period ruins preserved by spring water!



Koyamazaki prehistoric site

Communal washing basins at Mega. The first is for drinking water, the second for rinsing rice and cooling, the third for washing vegetables and seaweed, the fourth for laundry, the fifth for washing farm tools and the sixth for washing diapers.

Popular for its sacred atmosphere!

Onoso Shrine



Onoso Shrine



Baikamo flowers of Ushiwatari River

Best viewing June to July

Temple with a mysterious atmosphere



See p.18 for details

Kinomesawa Bridge

Skunk cabbage clusters



Skunk cabbage clusters



Stone Statues of the 16 Arhats

See p.18 for details

MAP 3 Mt. Chokai Touring the Springs

The waters of Mt. Chokai flow through the Gakko River to Fukura, the final destination for life-sustaining water. Springs and other attractions abound.

Fukura Area

Stone Statues of the 16 arhats



Sunset Jurokurakan



Dewa Futami



Nishihama Cottages & Campground



Chokai Onsen Yurari



Apon Nishihama



Torimitei



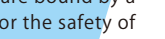
Soba Shop Tachikawa



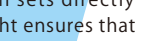
Roadside Station Chokai Furatto



ヤマサ鮮魚



Convenience store



At Furatto, you'll find food, souvenirs and fresh produce

Chokaizan Omonoimi-jinja Shrine Fukura Kuchinomiya



Former Fukura Elementary School



Sunset Jurokurakan



Dewa Futami



Nishihama Cottages & Campground



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Soba Shop Tachikawa



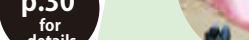
Roadside Station Chokai Furatto



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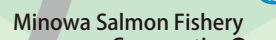


At Furatto, you'll find food, souvenirs and fresh produce

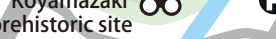
Maruikesama Pond



Ushiwatari River



Minowa Salmon Fishery Cooperative



Koyamazaki prehistoric site



Masukawa Salmon Fishery Cooperative



Masukawa Salmon Hatchery



Yosenji Temple



Masukawa Salmon Hatchery



Famous for cherry trees



Nakayama Riverside Park



In autumn, the rivers are filled with salmon



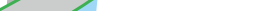
Yuza Chokai IC



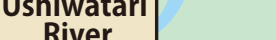
Nihonka-Tohoku Expwy



Takase River



Maruikesama Pond



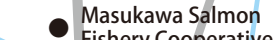
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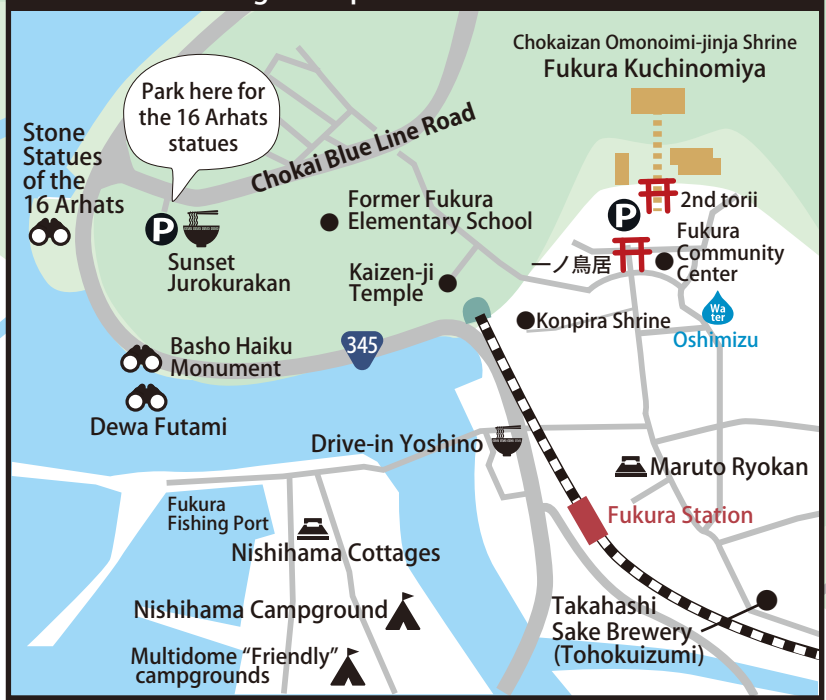
Nihonka-Tohoku Expwy



Takase River



Enlarged Map of the Fukura Area



Merry Bokujo Farm



Has a wood-fired oven



Boulangerie NAO



See p.22 for details

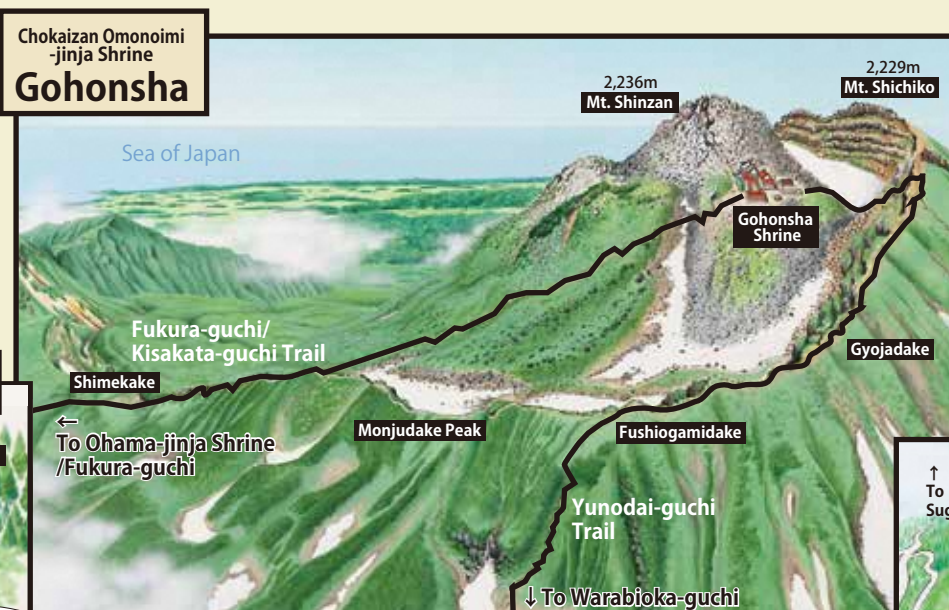
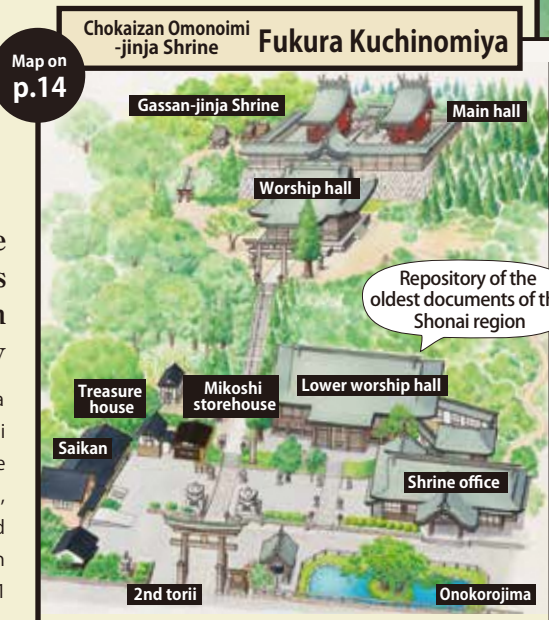




Mt. Chokai has also been worshipped as the Omonoimi deity since antiquity. Local worship culture here centers on three shrines.

These seaside shrines have worshipped the deities Omonoimi and Gassan since the 9th century

The main deities venerated at Fukura Kuchinomiya are Omonoimi of Mt. Chokai and Gassan of Mt. Gassan. Main halls for the deities sit side by side inside the shrine, which also holds documents designated important cultural properties. The main halls, lost to fire in 1706, were rebuilt in 1711 by the Sakata family of the Shonai domain.



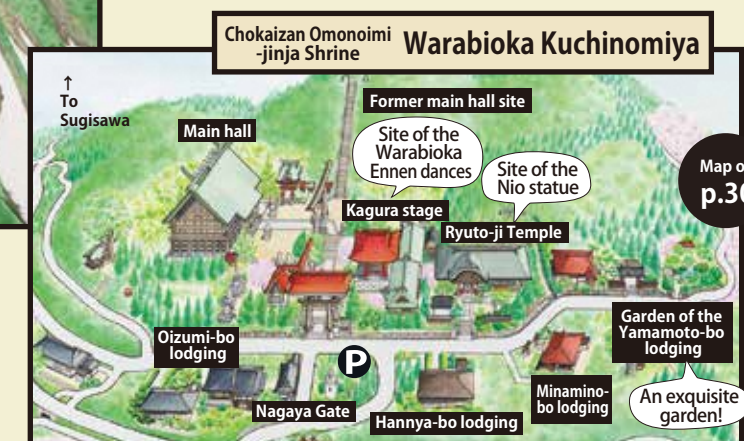
The shrine's rank rose whenever the volcano erupted. In the Middle Ages, it was also a center for Shugendo mountain worship

Chokaizan Omonoimi-jinja Shrine is a complex of three shrines just below the summit: Gohonsha, Fukura Kuchinomiya and Warabioka Kuchinomiya. A lodging is attached to Gohonsha, for climbers and pilgrims during the season. Like the famous Ise-jingu Shrine far to the south, Gohonsha is reconstructed every 20 years.



Old postcard "Gohonsha on Mt. Chokai"

These were the most powerful of the shrines lower down Mt. Chokai on the worship route



Warabioka Kuchinomiya, retaining its character as the site of old-fashioned pilgrim lodgings, is in the Kami-Warabioka district. Through the Zuishin Gate, the kagura sacred dance stage is visible on the right. Further up the hill past the third torii stands the shrine's splendid main hall, relocated to its present site in 1953.

Illustrations: Yukiko Kiyama

Fearsome deity of volcanic activity

Mt. Chokai itself has long been worshipped as the deity Omonoimi. A chronicle from 838 describes Omonoimi as an oracle capable of predicting major events affecting the nation. The imperial court viewed Omonoimi as the fearsome deity of volcanic rumblings.

Shugendo mountain worship grew in popularity in the Middle Ages, and settlements sprang up at six trailheads on Mt. Chokai. But due to different interpretations in various groups' teachings, there were frequent disputes over the trails, which culminated in a clash between rival feudal domains in 1704. In the end, the summit was awarded to the Shonai domain and is today part of Yuza.

Worshippers thronged the two shrines lower down the mountain

Warabioka, with Ryuto-ji Temple as its head, was once the most influential shrine, with 33 pilgrim lodgings. Meanwhile, Mt. Shogatake was the place of worship for Fukura, with 25 lodgings and 3 families of shrine priests, and was not involved in the dispute over Mt. Chokai's summit.

Dramatic changes occurred in the late 19th century: the government ordered the separation of Shinto and Buddhism and Shugendo was outlawed and went into decline. The prohibition against women climbing the mountain was repealed and pilgrimages to pray for good harvests became popular. After purifying themselves at their lodgings, pilgrims would follow guides up to the summit. After descending the mountain, they would

stop at Yunota hot springs at Fukura-guchi, a popular spot to rest and refresh themselves. But in the 1970s, people suddenly stopped their pilgrimages, and today Mt. Chokai welcomes visitors who come to enjoy nature.

Mt. Chokai folk beliefs endure today

Although folk beliefs related to Mt. Chokai have faded, Chokaizan Omonoimi-jinja Shrine remains one of the highest-ranking in Dewa. Omonoimi, the deity worshipped, has the power to purify and drive out evil and is reputed to be able to draw out innate talent. While the shrine at the summit requires full-scale climbing equipment and is not easily accessible, the two shrines lower on the mountain are easy to get to and are worth a visit.

Warabioka retains much of its historic character,

with the shrine's main hall, Ryuto-ji Temple, former pilgrims' lodgings and a delightful garden. At Fukura, the main hall is up a steep slope, but the lower worship hall is at the foot of the stairs, for those lacking the stamina to climb. The shrine's goshuin stamp can be obtained at the shrine office. The mystical Maruike-sama Pond is a 5-minute drive from here.

To receive a goshuin stamp at Chokaizan Omonoimi-jinja Shrine

Goshuin for Fukura Kuchinomiya, Warabioka Kuchinomiya, Maruike-jinja Shrine, and Gohonsha and Mihama-jinja Shrine out of climbing season available at Fukura Kuchinomiya.

Open daily: 9:00–12:00, 13:00–16:30

Fukura Kuchinomiya



May 4,5: Fukura Dengaku

On the evening of May 4, dancers wearing hats decorated with kerria and double-petaled cherry blossoms perform by the light of a bonfire. On festival day, May 5, they wear hats covered in bright red flowers. As the dance reaches its climax, the hats are flung into the crowd, who vie to catch them for the blessings they bring.



July 14: Ohamaide Ritual

Mikoshi palanquins bearing the deities Omonoimi and Gassan are paraded from Fukura Kuchinomiya to Nishinohama. Bonfires are lit in 5 places in and around Mt. Chokai to pray for good harvests and plentiful catches.

Don't miss these sights in Fukura



Map on p.13

Yosen-ji Temple

An ancient temple on the flank of Mt. Chokai dating back to the 7th century. The temple's impressive buildings house numerous cultural artifacts. A memorial tower to a retainer of a lord of the Yamagata domain stands on the grounds. Admission free of charge, but prior arrangements to visit should be made by calling 0234-77-2122.



Map on p.14

Stone Statues of the 16 Arhats

The collective name for 22 stone statues. These Buddhist statues, completed in 1868, were carved by priest Kankai of Kaizen-ji Temple in memory of those who had lost their lives at sea fishermen and to pray for safety at sea. They are the largest such carvings on the Sea of Japan coast and are of historical importance. They are illuminated every summer.



Map on p.29

Garden of the Yamamoto-bo Lodging

The garden of the Torinoumi family, which operated 33 pilgrim lodgings at Warabioka. Cherry trees, camellias and skunk cabbage bloom in spring, and white lilies flower in early summer. The garden, at 100 m elevation, offers splendid views. Admission free of charge.



Nio Hall at Ryuto-ji Temple

After Shinto and Buddhism were separated in the late 19th century, Ryuto-ji Temple remained the only Buddhist temple in the area. This Nio statue at the entrance was moved from Warabioka Kuchinomiya to the temple at that time.



The two lower shrines retain traces of Mt. Chokai Shugendo and perpetuate the spirit of local folk beliefs in festivals and rituals.

May 3: Warabioka Ennen

In the past, boys born into Shugendo families in Warabioka would be initiated and participate in ritual dances from a young age. At 16, they would shave their heads and take part in their first ascetic practice at Mt. Chokai. Only after learning various dances were they allowed to take part in more ascetic rituals, including a 10-month stretch of grueling privations. Warabioka Shugendo combined dance and ritual practices in this way, with practitioners progressing through various rites of passage. At the shrine festival on May 3, dancers perform eight ritual dances, including three by children, as offerings to the shrine.



August 6, 15 and 20: Sugisawa Hiyama

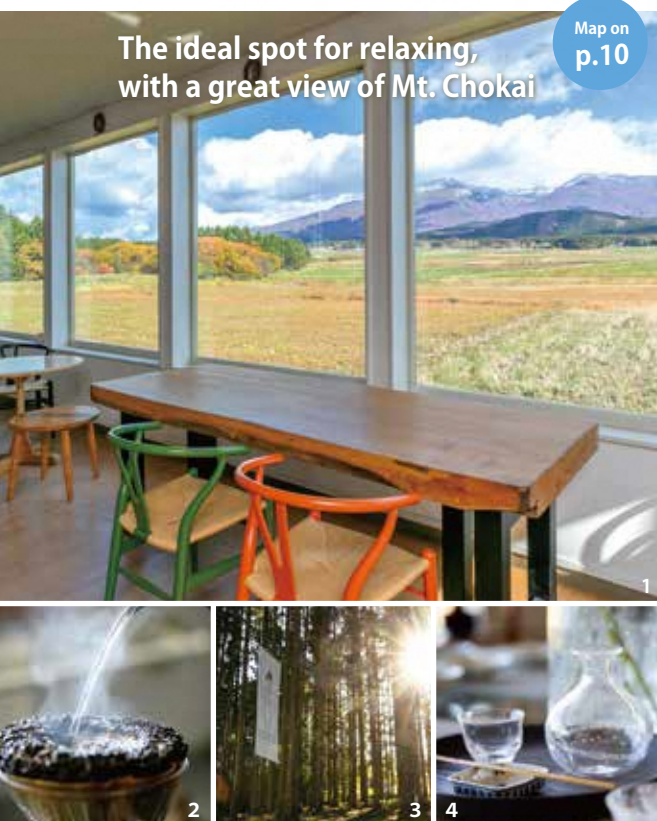
At Kumano-jinja Shrine, Sugisawa

The Hiyama dance is performed in Sugisawa, further inland. As Shugendo in the area went in and out of popularity, village people came to replace the Shugendo priests as dancers. This distinctive dance, combining skits, sorcery and traditional music, has historical value and was designated an intangible folk culture asset in 1978. Seeing this dance, heroic, solemn and comic in turn, performed under the stars is a unique experience.

Warabioka Kuchinomiya



Many people have been attracted to Yuza's charms and established businesses here. They invite you to sample their dining options and spend time relaxing.



The ideal spot for relaxing, with a great view of Mt. Chokai

Map on p.10



Drop in for a light meal at this renovated traditional home

Map on p.29

In search of clean air and water, the owners moved from Yokohama to this stunning site in view of Mt. Chokai. Wanting to share their spot's riches, they opened a café and gallery. The menu and gallery items displayed reflect their tastes. Recently installed benches in their garden and the nearby woods allow customers to enjoy the outdoors too. A great place to relax and savor nature and art.

This is the first business opened under a town project to revitalize abandoned homes. The lovingly restored interior adds a distinctive touch to make this a welcoming place to relax. The décor evokes the four seasons and is a great setting for enjoying toasted oyaki cakes featuring seasonal ingredients. Takeout available too.

Recommended points

- ① A superb view of Mt. Chokai
- ② Path for strolling in the woods next door
- ③ Deck and benches offer a great view; customers can eat and drink here!

Gallery & Tearoom Sui
68-2 Yoshida Aza Fukurochi, Yuza-machi

← Latest business information here

Recommended points

- ① Tastefully renovated traditional home
- ② The oyaki lunch plate includes 2 oyaki cakes, salad and beverage
- ③ House-made amazake drink made from fermented rice

Farmhouse Café Wadaya
3-5 Yoshida Aza Wada, Yuza-machi

← Latest business information here



Stop here for bread crafted with care

Map on p.13

At Boulangerie NAO, the bread is made from Hokkaido-grown flour and homemade yeast, baked to perfection in a French brick oven and an Egyptian oven. Owner Naomi moved here and opened up shop after joining her husband and being bowled over by the scenery from the Mt. Chokai foothills. Her bread, crafted with careful attention to wholesomeness, is baked in a kitchen open for all to view.

Recommended points

- ① German rye Campagne is a sure-fire hit!
- ② Delectable pizza piping hot from the oven
- ③ Enjoying bread purchased at the shop while admiring the view of Mt. Chokai

Yuza Wood-fired Oven Bakery Boulangerie NAO
29-6 Kitame Aza Ienomae, Yuza-machi

← Latest business information here



Soba and grilled herring are a perfect combination

Map on p.14

A first visit to the Aoyama Residence (see p. 26), former home of local notable Tomekichi Aoyama, who made his fortune with herring, made a strong impression on Yasuaki. He recalled preparing soba with herring when he worked as a chef in Tokyo and decided that his shop would honor Aoyama with that signature dish. The featured menu item is soba with grilled herring and a snowy white topping of grated yam, a locally grown specialty. Many other soba dishes on the menu are accompanied by fresh seasonal produce.

Recommended points

- ① Other soba with in-season ingredients is also available.
- ② Fresh soba is also available for takeout and for shipping throughout Japan.
- ③ The regular portion is 200 grams, enough to satisfy the hungriest diner.

Soba Shop Tachikawa
2-52 Fukura Nishihama, Yuza-machi

← Latest business information here



Buy

Popular souvenirs
of your trip
for family and friends



**Boil-in-the-Pouch
Yuza Curry**
Makes a great souvenir!



Salmon Roe

Salmon roe harvested
from salmon in the
Gakko River

Map on
p.13-14

【Masukawa Salmon
Fishery Cooperative】

【Minowa Salmon
Fishery Cooperative】

Sweet potato
shochu

Kosaku-kun

Made from
Yuza-grown sweet
potatoes and rice



Buy local products at
**Roadside Station
Chokai Furatto**
See pp. 29–30 for
more information

Made from local
rice and pure
mountain water

Doburoku
unrefined sake

(Yuza brewery,
Sakata Hakko Co. Ltd.)



Nakaya's Various Sweets

A popular,
long-established shop

Map on
p.29



Green Store Fruit Sandwiches

Fresh in-season
fruit and whipped
cream between
soft bread slices

Map on
p.29



Online store

Map on
p.29

Breads from Komugi Bakery

2nd property
renovated under
town project



Sake brewery
of Warabioka
Sugi Isami Warabioka
Sake Brewery

Sugi Isami

Map on
p.29



Map on
p.30

Sake brewery of Fukura
Takahashi Sake Brewery

**Tohoku
Izumi**

Map on
p.13



Yuza Curry

Mild, pure Yuza Curry
is a local specialty.

Shops serving
Yuza Curry

【Yuza Curry main store】

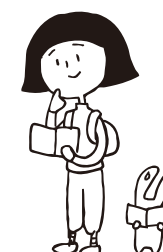
In Yuza Station. 10 varieties of
curry available.

Map on
p.29

【Restaurant Torimitei】

Next door to the Apon
Nishihama baths. Serves set
meals and noodle dishes too.

Map on
p.14



Kanamata Soba

Mt. Chokai soba, made from
the mountain's water and
locally-grown buckwheat



Shops serving
Kanamata soba

This soba, made from all local ingredients,
is a well-kept secret.

【Forestry and Fishing Industry
Hands-on Experience Base Sanyu】

Map on
p.09

Mitsunomata Kanamata soba served Sat/Sun only. Light meals
available on weekdays. (Closed Wed) Also sells local products.

Prepared with delicious pure
Mt. Chokai water

Yuza Ramen

Map on
p.13-14

Fukura / Takase area

【Ramen Aji-no-eki】
In Roadside Station
Chokai Furatto

【Sunset Jurokurakan】

【Drive-in Yoshino】

【Shichiro Ramen】



Yuza / Warabioka area

【Ken-chan Ramen Yuza shop】

【Sakaeken】

【Tokaen】

【Maruki Shokudo】

【Aodaisho】

【Chidori】

Map on
p.29

For Chidori

Map on
p.30

Enjoy the bounty
of Mt. Chokai
at restaurants
with plenty of
delicious foods



Dining Options

Wild Oysters

Underground water flowing from Mt. Chokai
nourishes these oysters to perfection!



Restaurants
serving oysters

June to early August only

【Genkina Hama-ten】

At Roadside Station Chokai Furatto.
Grilled silver flounder is delicious too.

Map on
p.14

【Yamasa Fish Shop】

Near Roadside Station Chokai Furatto.
Also operates an online shop.

Map on
p.14