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# WELCOME TO IIYAMA



**ONE-STOP IIYAMA  
SCHOOL TRIP BOOKING  
SERVICE**

[www.iiyama-ouendan.net/en/](http://www.iiyama-ouendan.net/en/)  
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# WHY Iiyama?

## Greetings from Masanori Adachi, Mayor of Iiyama



“Renowned as one of the snowiest regions in Japan, Iiyama, with its untouched nature, can be at times harsh. But it also brings out the beauty and vibrance of each season.

Throughout the year, we can witness each season at its best: an explosion of cherry blossoms in spring, dancing fireflies in summer, a display of fiery-colored leaves in fall, and a sheer white landscape in winter.

Iiyama’s culture is that of a snow country: its people have the warmth of those who coexist with snow and untainted mountain scenery, and who enjoy lavish local produce nurtured by pure, fresh water.

We welcome all to come and experience food, people, and scenery that can only be encountered here.”

足立正剛

Shin'etsu Naturescape

自然共生圏

信越自然郷

shinetsu shizenkyo



**R**ich in nature and steeped in tradition, Iiyama City in Nagano Prefecture allows students to experience coexistence with nature and immersion in aspects of Japanese culture that the region has nurtured and protected for centuries.

Iiyama celebrates its status as “Japan’s hometown,” showcasing the natural side of Japanese culture. While many rural regions have been industrialized to keep up with the times, the environment in Iiyama remains largely untouched by industry. Visitors are greeted with Japan’s lush green foliage in summer and stunning wonderland of snow in winter. In Iiyama, each season brings its own, distinctive charms.

Because the environment impacts the lifestyle in Iiyama, locals adopt an approach to socializing and communicating that’s more in tune and connected with the natural way of things—the essence of Japanese culture.

Interacting with Iiyama residents can therefore allow for a stimulating discussion and exchange of ideas, giving students the chance to hone communication skills that are essential tools in life. Furthermore, this can help them become more aware of the natural factors that unify people.

Because of its academic and social merits, Iiyama serves as an ideal location for school trips. We have created programs that allow students to experience “the power of living.”

In the 20 years since we started the experiential learning program, which allows city-dwelling children to visit and experience Iiyama, we have received a wealth of positive feedback from participating schools. This has resulted in a growing number of participants.

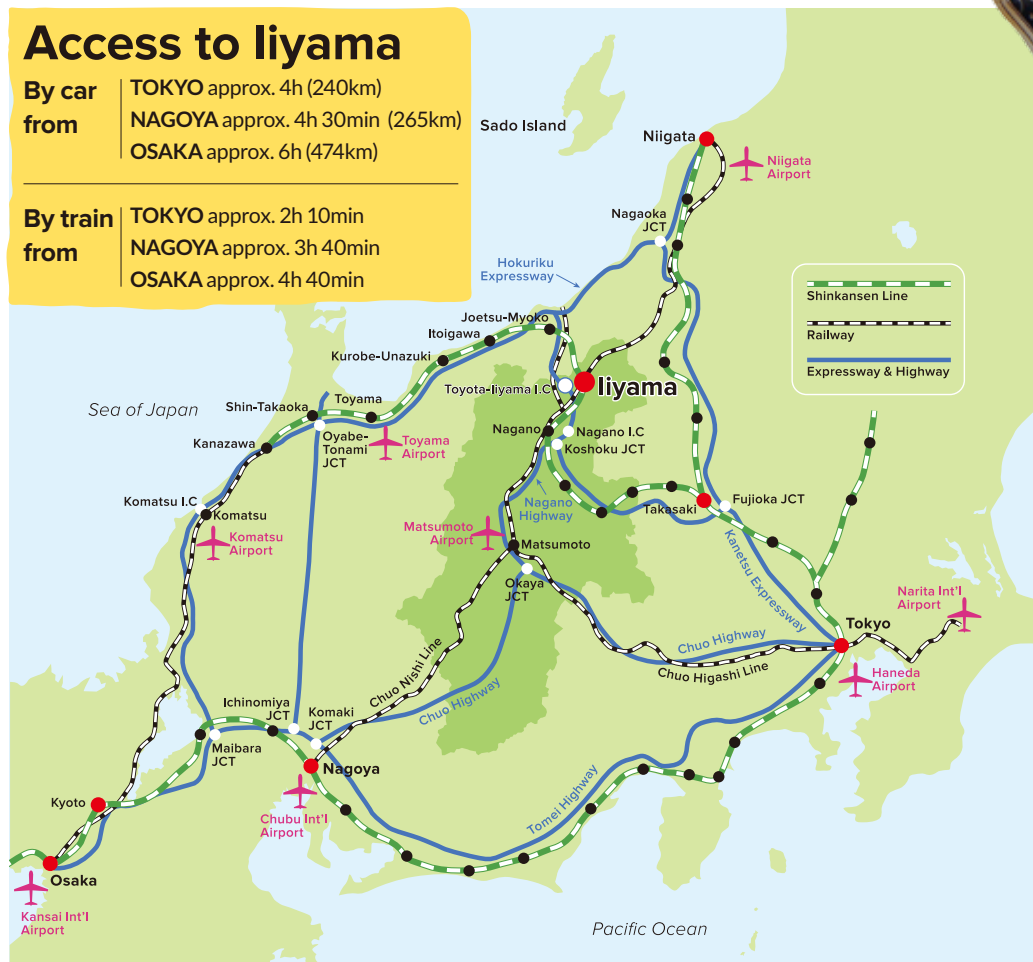
The Shinshu-Iiyama Tourism Bureau has worked tirelessly to create these one-of-a-kind programs to ensure students emerge with essential tools for both academic and daily life.



## Access to Iiyama

**By car**  
**from** TOKYO approx. 4h (240km)  
 NAGOYA approx. 4h 30min (265km)  
 OSAKA approx. 6h (474km)

**By train**  
**from** TOKYO approx. 2h 10min  
 NAGOYA approx. 3h 40min  
 OSAKA approx. 4h 40min



信越自然郷

shinetsu shizenkyo







# Iiyama FARMSTAY

style



**W**ith the emergence of ski sites in the area, Iiyama's farming families began operating "minshuku" (bed-and-breakfast-type lodgings) for the influx of visitors, in the 1950s. Over time, the city established student villages for summer use, to cater for visitors drawn by Iiyama's year-round charms.

These farmstays have been a key component in the experiential learning programs we've designed, which have garnered us acclaim from many schools. Our programs provide students with the chance to stay at farmhouse minshuku in the Togari area, and to experience being part of the family, with whom they make lifelong memories.

The programs allow for various lengths of stay, but we recommend a minshuku stay of two nights or more.

Each minshuku can accommodate groups of up to 30 students at once. Students can also be divided into smaller groups to stay with Japanese families at minshuku. Hotel accommodation is available for schools that would prefer to reserve an entire building. A single night's stay at a hotel or pension is also an option.

Our programs are flexible; we can make adjustments to suit the school's needs.

We have an extensive range of programs that offer a wide variety of experiences, from sports activities to hands-on farming.



Harvesting fresh vegetables in the garden of a minshuku



Shojuan Temple



I had a great time with the community, especially hiking, visiting local schools, and rice paddy farming.  
*Mary (teacher)*



We had a great time meeting Japanese students ... I had fun in our walk by the river.  
*Alexa (age 14)*





Getting a kimono makeover



Putting out futon



We tried food we've never eaten, such as squid, tuna, and fish egg, which were all good and very fresh.  
Misty (teacher)



Welcome ceremony



Preparing sasazushi (sushi wrapped in a bamboo leaf), a local delicacy



A tour of the ski jump sites



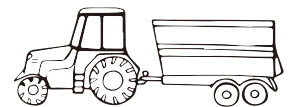
Lunch time; modifications can be made for those with allergies or religious dietary restrictions



Welcome to our minshuku in Iiyama!



Enjoy our delicious Japanese dishes!



# GREEN SEASON



## Vegetable Harvest PICK VEGETABLES WITH YOUR HOSTS

Each family in the minshuku of the Togari Onsen area grows vegetables and rice for their personal use. Step outdoors and help the minshuku families with the farming and harvesting, generally from May through November. You'll taste the difference of local produce by eating freshly picked vegetables, such as tomato, cucumber, and eggplant, as well as fruits such as strawberry, from the field. The minshuku families will show you how to enjoy true Iiyama cuisine.



## Sasazushi (Bamboo Leaf Sushi) Making LEARN ABOUT A NATURAL PRESERVATIVE

Sasazushi is the local cuisine of Iiyama. The bamboo leaves have antibacterial properties, making them suitable for preserving food. They also serve as organic packaging, allowing the sushi to be carried with ease. Consequently, sasazushi has become a staple in the Iiyama region. Work together with the minshuku families as you combine shiitake mushrooms, wild mountain vegetables such as royal ferns, walnuts, and other locally grown ingredients with vinegared rice to make delicious sushi.



## Handmade Chopsticks MAKE MEALTIMES MORE MEMORABLE

Undoubtedly you'll be using chopsticks quite often during your time in Japan, so why not make your own? This program allows you to work with a local craftsman to make beautiful chopsticks, which can be used while you are staying in Iiyama. Learn how to craft them using bamboo and then use them to enjoy delicious Iiyama cuisine. This activity is perfect for both children and adults, and the chopsticks make a great souvenir to take home. You'll never look at chopsticks the same way again!



## Kimono Dressing Experience BE DRESSED IN JAPANESE CLOTHING

Western clothing has been only worn by most of the general public in Japan since around the 1930s; prior to then, Japanese people mainly wore traditional garments, such as kimono. Although Western clothing is prevalent today, you can find people wearing kimono on occasion. The women of the minshuku are happy to help you put on a kimono, which is nearly an art in itself. This is a rare opportunity, and you'll have some amazing photos to show on your return home!



## Making Washi (Japanese Paper) LEARN FIRST-HAND ABOUT A TRADITIONAL ART

Iiyama people have made Uchiyama Paper, a type of traditional Japanese paper known as washi, for more than 400 years. Since farming is impossible during the winter months, families throughout the ages have made washi during these hard times. Locals use "yukizarashi," a technique distinct to snowy regions that takes advantage of how snow reflects UV rays. On sunny days, artisans lay the raw material, paper mulberry, on the snow to whiten it. You can create your own original postcards out of the resultant washi!



## Fruit Harvest TRY YOUR HAND AT PICKING FRUIT

Nagano's cold winters and mild summers provide the ideal conditions to produce Japanese apples. Fruit picking is a popular pastime in Japan and apple picking in Iiyama is offered from September until the end of November, the best time of the year! There is no time limit and all tools are provided. Find out from the owner about the growth and harvest of Japanese apples; how different types of apples are grown; and the details of the operations—all while eating delicious Nagano apples.

# WHITE SEASON



## **Skiing/Snowboarding** **EXPERIENCE SOME OF JAPAN'S FINEST SNOW!**

Iiyama's location in the north of Nagano makes it one of the best places to enjoy snow: within Iiyama you can choose from three ski locations. Madarao Kogen Ski Resort offers visitors the chance to enjoy powder snow and tree-run skiing. Togari Onsen Ski Resort combines excellent runs and beautiful scenery with a special overnight experience that is unique to Japan: staying in a minshuku. Hokuryu Onsen Family Ski Resort, which is smaller in size, allows patrons to enjoy a relaxing getaway.



## **Snowshoeing** **WALK IN A WINTER WONDERLAND**

Trekking through Iiyama on snowshoes is a great way to enjoy snowy woodlands at a leisurely pace. Listen to the wind blowing through the trees, guess which animals left tracks in the snow, and marvel at breath-taking panoramic views. Nabekura Highland boasts open landscapes and stunning scenery. At Madarao Highland you can even walk directly on top of a lake, which is covered in snow. Guided tours are also available, to explain the inner workings of the forest and history of the land.



## **Snowman Making** **MAKE YOUR OWN SNOWMAN!**

You're never too old (or too young) to make a snowman. Open up your creative side and enjoy making a snowman with Iiyama's soft, powdery snow. Your hosts in the local minshuku will prepare carrots for the nose of your creation, giving you the opportunity to create a truly memorable snowman. Iiyama earned a Guinness World Record, in 2015, when more than 600 people helped make 1,585 snowmen by hand. All the creations were more than 91cm tall and included facial features as well as arms!



## **Sledding** **ZIP THROUGH IIYAMA'S SOFT POWDER**

Indulge your inner child and try your hand at a sledding experience unique to a snow country. Iiyama's excellent quality of snow and open spaces make it a terrific area for sledding. You can use typical plastic snow sleds to experience the thrill of a smooth downhill run, but Iiyama also offers a more ecological option made from recycled material. Ride hand-crafted sleds made out of fertilizer bags and zip through your own sledding courses!



## **Mochi Making** **POUND AND KNEAD YOUR OWN MOCHI**

Traditionally, mochi is made using a large wooden hammer to pound and knead mochi rice into a sticky paste. This paste is then flavored or combined with fillings to make traditional sweets. You can try pounding the mochi yourself, and then eat it right on the spot! With locals from the minshuku, you can taste various flavors of mochi during this experience, which is offered throughout the year.



## **Eating Inside a "Kamakura" (Snow Hut)** **EXPERIENCE A TRULY UNIQUE WINTER CUSTOM!**

January and February are the heart of winter in Iiyama. Every year during this time the locals create "kamakura" (traditional Japanese snow huts or igloos). The structures range in size from giant ones that can host 10 adults to tiny ones. Join locals and huddle inside these unusual structures to eat a traditional Japanese meal of local food boiled in a large pot. Enjoy lunch and dinner with a group (50 people maximum).

## MADARAO KOGEN

LIFE  
IS BETTER  
AT THE TOP

Yamagata's Madarao Kogen is an all-season resort town that features over 70 hotels, pensions, and shops. At an altitude of 1,000 meters, and set amidst stunning scenery that includes picturesque mountain fields enveloped by a backdrop of magnificent mountains, Madarao Kogen offers plenty to enjoy in both the winter and green seasons.

### Take Your Pick of Pensions and Hotels

Madarao Kogen offers a tremendous variety of accommodation for guests, boasting nearly 50 pensions and hotels each with individual character. Facilities can be largely classified into two types: pensions and small boutique hotels that are family-run businesses accommodating up to 30–50 people; and large hotels that can sleep 100–300 guests. Guests can select rooms that are Western style, Japanese style, or even a fusion of both. Meals available also reflect the diversity and characteristics of each particular facility.



The cozy Madarao Kogen Hotel, surrounded by nature



Comfortable Western-style hotel rooms



Refreshing Japanese hot spring in a hotel



Feast on fresh local foods



# RELAX IN A SERENE FOREST HOUSE

**M**ake your stay in Iiyama truly special with a relaxing stay at Mori-no-ie located in the Nabekura Kougen Heights. Situated at an altitude of 550 meters, Mori-no-ie, meaning “forest house” in Japanese, takes its name from the old and well-preserved beech forest just outside the guest cottages. This serene facility allows guests to enjoy the beautiful surrounding nature.

## About the Cottages

Mori-no-ie has 10 cottages for guests, each of which can accommodate 5–7 people. It is located next to a beautiful beech forest. There are three types of cottage available: western style with western beds, Japanese style with tatami matting and a kotatsu (a special heated table for use in winter), and rustic. Each cottage has a loft with Japanese futon and is fully equipped with a wide range of cooking supplies, tableware, a refrigerator, and a microwave.



A private cottage that gives a sense of relaxation



Experience the woods from inside the cottage



Stroll through a beautiful beech forest



Enjoy a wide variety of fun activities, such as crafts

# THE JAPANESE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE



There is no finer way of understanding the daily life of Iiyama's people than visiting one of the local schools. Students of all ages are keen to welcome visitors and enjoy lunch together. This is a great opportunity to learn about the Japanese school system and the wide variety of extra-curricular activities students enjoy.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES



### Mayumi Takahashi Museum of Doll Art IMMERSE YOURSELF IN CULTURE

The dolls on display at this charming art museum depict the lifestyle of the people in Iiyama. Through these figures and their expressive faces, you can learn about the lives of residents and the snow country. The celebrated dolls in the museum were skillfully and meticulously handmade one by one, by artist Mayumi Takahashi, who lives in Iiyama City.



### Local Festivals PARTY IT UP

Whatever the season, you can enjoy some of Japan's most vibrant and colorful festivals held throughout the villages of Iiyama. Every year, there are different festivals according to the season; this means that there is likely to be a festival whatever time of year you visit. So come along not only to watch, but also to take part in these cultural extravaganzas!



### Michi-no-Eki/Hana-no-Eki/Chikumagawa GET A TASTE OF IYAMA

A facility that includes a farmers' market, local souvenir shop, and cafe, Michi-no-eki has recently become popular among locals and tourists, as the local products, which can be bought from farmers, are fresh and affordable. You can learn about sales of the region's agricultural products and even purchase special local sweets found only in Iiyama.



**Zipline**  
**ZIP THROUGH THE TREES LIKE TARZAN**

Zip-lining might be the most thrilling way to experience Madarao Kogen in summer. It's a unique type of aerial tour. Soaring through the forest using wire ropes and a harness, you'll feel like a modern-day Tarzan. Head out with a guide for this exciting and yet completely safe adventure that includes a total of six courses.

**Rafting**  
**RAFT DOWN JAPAN'S LONGEST RIVER**

The Chikuma River is the longest in Japan, making it perfect for a rafting adventure. The river's current is very gentle, which allows children from age three to enjoy this experience. This program helps students develop solidarity through teamwork and concludes with a visit to Iiyama Yutaki Onsen, a hot spring facility.

**Hiking**  
**STROLL AND EXPLORE IN BEECH FOREST**

In warmer months, the nearby beech forest is green and lush, making it perfect for a stroll. There are numerous trails ideal for walking and hiking. From June to early July, you can go on night hikes and spot fireflies flickering around. Hire a local guide and learn about this natural area, the cycles of the snow country, and more.

# YOUR ONE STOP FOR SCHOOL TRIP BOOKINGS

The Shinshu-Iiyama Tourism Bureau is a licensed Japanese travel organization, happy to help in the process of planning school trips to Iiyama.

## Shinshu-Iiyama Tourism Bureau

\*Travel Agent Registration:  
No.2-492 Certified by Governor of Nagano Prefecture Anta Partner

TOGARI  
TOURIST  
ASSOCIATION

MADARAO HIGHLAND  
RESORT TOURIST  
ASSOCIATION

JAPANESE RED CROSS SOCIETY  
IIYAMA HOSPITAL  
HOKUSHIN GENERAL HOSPITAL  
IIYAMA POLICE STATION

NABEKURA  
KOGEN HIGHTS  
MORI-NO-IE

NAGANO  
PREFECTURE  
IIYAMA CITY

### SAMPLE ITINERARY

## Three days in Iiyama City during summer



DAY  
1



- Arrive at Iiyama City around noon
- Welcome ceremony; meet with Japanese "host family" at minshuku
- Lunch
- Activity 1: Make chopsticks by hand
- Activity 2: Trek
- Dinner

DAY  
2



- Breakfast
- Activity 1: Harvest vegetables
- Activity 2: Make sasazushi (bamboo leaf sushi)

- Lunch: Harvested vegetables and sasazushi
- Bus ride
- Activity 3: Make washi (Japanese paper)
- Visit the Mayumi Takahashi Museum of Doll Art
- Visit Michi-no-Eki (market, shop, and cafe)
- Return to minshuku
- Dinner and farewell party

DAY  
3



- Check out and depart

### SHINSHU-IIYAMA TOURISM BUREAU

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