



Culture Pot MITO

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1min. History - the story of Mito City, Hikone City, Takamatsu City

▼ Photo: Saturday Salon "Niihao! China" (basically held every 4th Saturday at Mito City Int'l Center)



"Culture Pot MITO" is a monthly newsletter published by the Mito City International Association which aims to share various living information with the city's foreign residents. In its title, Mito city is likened to a pot stuffed with various cultures which resembles a multicultural city loved by every citizen. We are hoping that this newsletter will be useful in your daily life and that you will feel more attached to Mito City in the near future.

E V E N T S info

The Doll Festival of Makabe (真壁のひなまつり)

Traditional Hina Dolls back from Edo Period until now will be on display. Hina Dolls are believed to protect girls from misfortune.

WHEN Feb. 4th, Sat - March 3rd, Sat. Approx. 10am - 5pm

WHERE Shops and houses in Makabe area of ^{Sakura-gawa} 桜川 city.
(some shops are closed on Wednesdays)



FREE!

[ACCESS GUIDE]

^{Mito} 水戸 station ⇒ (Joban line 14mins) ⇒ ^{Tomobe} 友部 station ⇒ (Mito Line 26mins) ⇒ ^{Iwase} 岩瀬 station

Bus service from ^{Iwase} 岩瀬 station is available on the following days.

Service schedule

Month	Days
Feb.	4,5,11,12,18,19, 25,26,27,28,29
Mar.	1,2,3

^{Iwase} 岩瀬 st. → Makabe(25mins)	Makabe → ^{Iwase} 岩瀬 st. (35mins)
AM/ 9:40,10:30,11:30	AM/ 10:10,11:00
PM/ 12:30,1:30,2:50, 3:30,4:30	PM/ 12:10,1:00,2:00, 3:20,4:00,5:00



☎ 0296-55-1111 / ^{Sakura-gawa-shi} 桜川市観光協会

Food Festival by previous castle towns (水戸藩! 味な城下町まつり)

Cities and towns located in the area of Mito Domain will hold specialty food festival.

WHEN Feb. 18th, Sat. 9:30am - 3pm

WHERE Mito Art Tower, ^{Mito} 水戸芸術館

[ACCESS GUIDE]

Take bus from ^{Mito} 水戸 station north exit, bus terminal #4~#7

⇒ get off at "泉町1丁目" (Some buses do not stop here, so ask the driver when boarding)

Wanna try these stuff??

Catfish Rice-bowl (Namegata city),
Whitebait gyoza dumplings(Oaraimachi)
Mizuho beef croquette burger
(Hitachi-Omiya city), etc.

☎ 029-226-2354 / ^{jikko-iinkai} 実行委員会 (executive committee)

Trial Fitting of the "Juni-hito-e,"

Try on the gorgeous kimono worn by women of Heian Period!

WHEN Feb. 25th, Sat. 10am - 12noon

Numbered tickets will be handed out at the information desk from 9:30am.
First come first served, 20 persons maximum.

WHERE Ibaraki Prefectural Museum of History, ^{Ibaraki-kenritsu} 茨城県立歴史館

FREE!



[ACCESS GUIDE]

Take bus from ^{Mito} 水戸 station north exit, bus terminal #4

⇒ get off at "歴史館偕楽園入口" (Some buses do not stop here, so ask the driver when boarding)

☎ 029-225-4425 / ^{Ibaraki-kenritsu} 茨城県立歴史館

FREE!

This Month's "Saturday Salon," 12:30pm-2pm (gathering for foreign & Japanese residents)

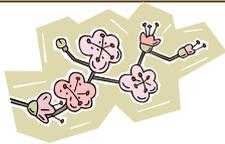
■ English Smoothie (in English) / Feb.4th, Mar.3rd

■ Tokoton Kankoku (in Korean or Japanese) / Feb.18th

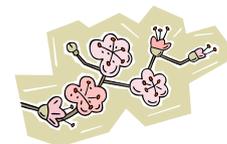
■ Nii-hao! China (in Chinese or Japanese) / Feb.25th

WHERE Mito City Int'l Center
see map on Tweet/History page

☎ 029-221-1800 / MCIA



The Plum Blossom Festival



Feb. 18th (Sat) ~ Mar.31st (Sat), 2012

You can enjoy the superb view of 3,000 plum trees of about 100 varieties. Lots of tourists as well as Mito citizens visit here. Various events will be held as well.

★For details, see <http://www.mitokoumon.com/maturi/ume/ume01.html> (Japanese)

029-224-0441 / Mito Tourist Association

DATE	TIME	EVENTS	PLACE
Feb. 19th (Sun) Feb. 26th (Sun) Mar. 4th (Sun) Mar. 11th (Sun)	12am~3pm 10am~3pm 10am~3pm 10am~3pm	Open air tea ceremony	Kai-raku-en 偕楽園
Feb. 19th (Sun)	11am~12noon	Ancient court music ^{Gagaku} (雅楽) & dance of Shintoism ^{Kagura-mai} (神樂舞)	Tokiwa-Jin-ja 常磐神社 Noh-gaku-den (能楽殿)
Feb. 26th (Sun) Mar. 3rd (Sat)	11am~12noon 10:30am~12noon	Floating hina dolls ^{Hina-nagashi} (ひな流し) Float hina dolls to wash away bad luck	Kai-raku-en 偕楽園
Mar. 3rd (Sat)	6pm~9pm	Night Plum Festival The festival where you can enjoy candle illumination, tea ceremony, food stalls, fireworks and so on.	Kai-raku-en 偕楽園・ Tokiwa-Jin-ja 常磐神社 Noh-gaku-den (能楽殿)
Mar. 4th (Sun)	11am~12noon	Noh chanting ^{Utai} (謡) & Noh dancing ^{Shi-mai} (仕舞)	Tokiwa-Jin-ja 常磐神社 Noh-gaku-den (能楽殿)
Mar. 10th (Sat)	6pm	Lion dances ^{Shishimai} (獅子舞) The Japanese traditional performance by one or two lion figures accompanied by bamboo flutes and drums.	Kai-raku-en 偕楽園
Mar. 11th (Sun)	10am~3pm	Open air ^{Koto} 琴 performance enjoy the harmony of traditional atmosphere and beautiful sound of Japanese harp	Kai-raku-en 偕楽園



【ACCESS GUIDE】

- ① Take the bus for 「偕楽園」 from Mito sta. North exit bus terminal #4 to “偕楽園前”
- ② Take the bus for 「偕楽園」 from Mito sta. North exit bus terminal #6 to “偕楽園”
- ③ Take the Joban line down train to “偕楽園臨時駅”

NOTE: “偕楽園臨時駅” will operate only on the following time & dates.

9:10am~3:30pm.

Feb. 18th(Sat), 19th(Sun), 25th(Sat), 26th(Sun), Mar. 3rd(Sat), 4th(Sun),
10th(Sat), 11th(Sun), 17th(Sat), 18th(Sun), 20th(Tue)



Child Allowance (子ども手当) ^{Kodomo-te-a-te} ~ Haven't applied yet? Do it NOW!

The Child Allowance system has been revised last October, and the currently running system that covers the allowance for Oct.2011 to Mar.2012 will come to an end this spring. (from April onwards, there will be a new system which will be explained in a later issue)

Q. What is Child Allowance?

A. The allowance(money) provided to parents to backup their child rearing.

Q. Is there an age limit?

A. Yes. 0 years old ~ first March 31st after turning 15 years old.



Difference between previous system and current system

1. The amount of allowance have changed. See below for updated information.

age 0~2	age 3~end of elementary school	junior high school
¥15,000/month	1st & 2nd child ¥10,000/month	¥10,000/month
	3rd child+ ¥15,000/month	

2. Children living abroad are no longer covered. However there are applicable cases if s/he is abroad for the purpose of studying. For details, consult the Children's Affairs Division (子ども課) of the city office.

You will basically be eligible for child allowance from the month after the month you applied.

Example If you apply in December, you will receive the cumulative amount for January, February and March.

If you apply in January, you will receive the cumulative amount for February and March. The faster the better !



A) Were you registered for child allowance at the point of late September? (2011)

B) Was the address on your Alien Registration Card "Mito city" as of Sept. 30th 2011?

If yes for A) or B), you are entitled to receive the cumulative amount for October-March (6 months) if you reapply/apply by March 31st, 2012.

C) Have you recently given birth or moved into Mito city?

If yes, refer to the chart below and make your application as soon as possible.

Month of birth/moving in	Month of applicatio	Allowance you will receive
January	February (within 15 days of birth/moving in)*	Feb. & Mar.
	February (after 16+ days of birth/moving in)	Mar.
February	February	Mar.
	March (within 15 days of birth/moving in)	Mar.
	March (after 16+ days of birth/moving in)	none
March	March	none

* within 15 days/after 16+ days; include the date of birth/moving when counting.

FILE YOUR INCOME TAX RETURN between Feb.16th and Mar.15th if...

- you received employment income from 2 or more sources last year (January-December 2011).
- you had an income of more than ¥200,000 last year, aside from employment/retirement income.
- your total employment income exceeded ¥20,000,000 last year.
- your income tax is not withheld at source.
- your workplace did not conduct a year-end adjustment
- you would like to file an income deduction.

By filing an income deduction, the "untaxable portion" will increase, meaning that the amount of income tax you pay will be REDUCED.

Examples of applicable cases

- you have paid premiums on life insurance or earthquake insurance
- you have a dependent family other than your spouse
- you had a lot of medical fee to pay

[Consultation/Document Submission]

- Documents are accepted from Feb.16th
- We recommend that you ask a Japanese acquaintance to accompany you.

9am - 4pm, Weekdays Feb.9th - Mar.15th
9am - 4pm, Feb.19th • 26th

PLACE: department store "mimo" 4F, near Central Post Office.

Income Tax Return

Filing an income tax return is important for calculating your last year's total income, a step necessary for calculating the amount of income tax you are subject to pay.

What to do

1. Gather necessary documents

Documents vary depending on person, so ask the Mito Tax Office for detail. Below are example of things you may need.

- Certificate of income and withholding tax (源泉徴収票 Gensen Cho-shu-hyo)
- Receipts of medical payments
- Certificates of insurance premium payments

2. Fill in the form (確定申告書 kakutei shinkoku-sho)

It can be obtained at Mito Tax Office or "mimo" - see left.

 **029-231-4211** / Mito Tax Office
Automated voice service
→select 1 (call center)
→select 1 (income tax)

NEW ! RECEIVE INFORMATION in your own language <FREE> *any telecommunication fees that may arise will be of your responsibility

Sign up for the new mobile phone service and receive e-mails containing various information of Ibaraki.

[HOW TO REGISTER]

- ① Send a blank email from your mobile phone address.
- ② After receiving a computer-generated reply, access the URL in the e-mail and enter your nationality & residing municipality.



Registering for more than one language?

Be sure to complete the procedure for one language before sending a blank mail for the next one.

English	eng@ia-ibaraki.org	Tagalog	tgl@ia-ibaraki.org
Chinese	chi@ia-ibaraki.org	Korean	kor@ia-ibaraki.org
Portuguese	por@ia-ibaraki.org	Spanish	spn@ia-ibaraki.org
Thai	tha@ia-ibaraki.org	Indonesian	ind@ia-ibaraki.org

 **029-241-1611** / Ibaraki International Association (different from Mito City International Association)

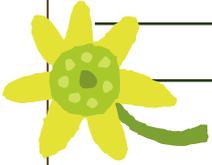
National Health Insurance; Deadline for 2011* February payment is Feb.29th.

Please take the payment notice to a nearby bank or a convenience store and make the payment.

In Japan, every resident is required to have health insurance. If you do not belong to a workplace health insurance program, you should sign up for the National Health Insurance. Foreign residents who have made the alien registration and are entitled to stay in Japan for one year or longer are applicable.



 **029-232-9166** / Mito City office “kokuho-nenkin-ka 国保年金課” *2011 = in fiscal year (April 2011 - March 2012)



Have fun indoors!

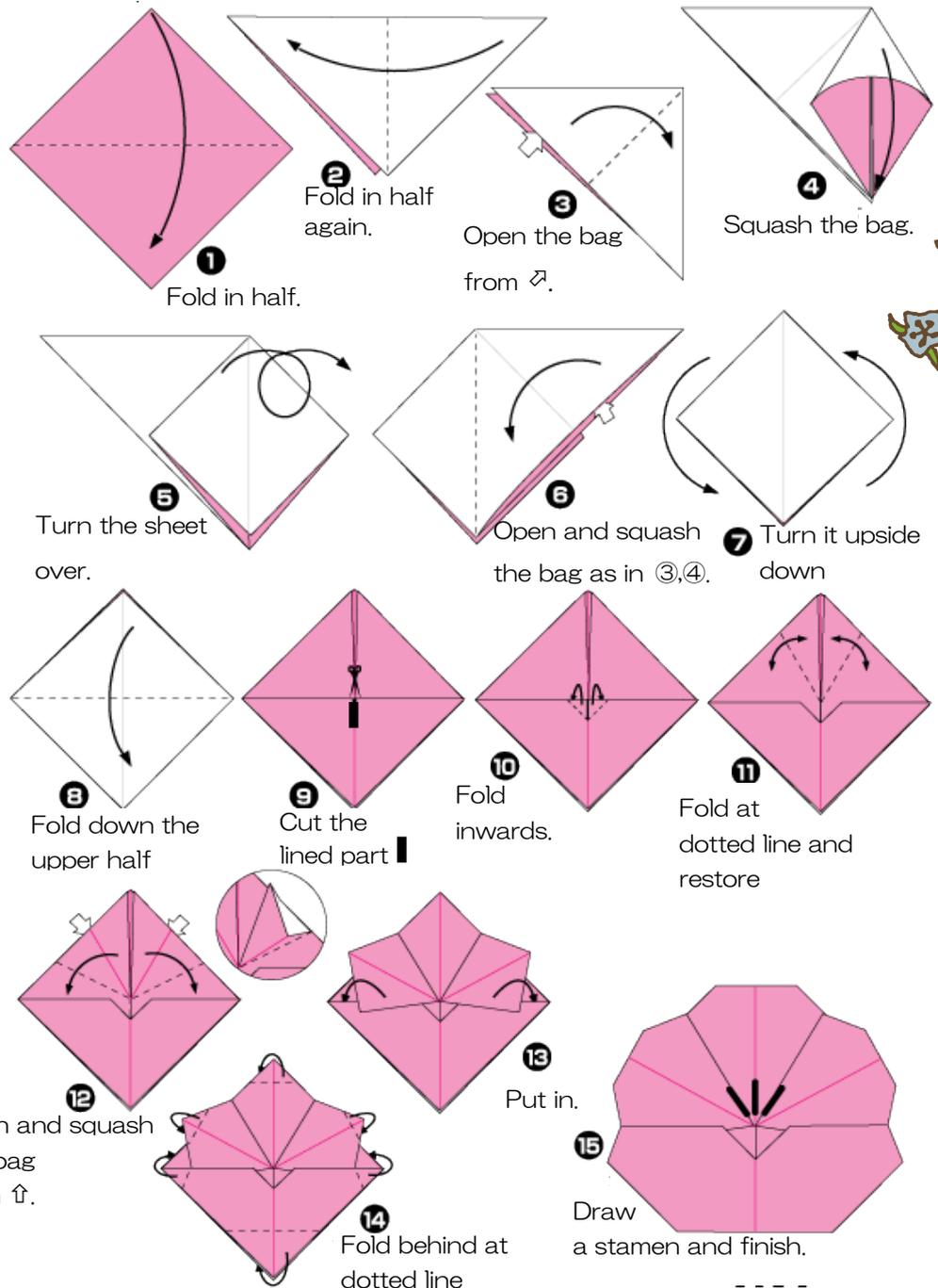
It is getting severely cold as February starts. How do you make it through when it is cold in your country? This time, we would like to introduce some indoor activities you may enjoy in winter. This is part of Japanese culture, so how about trying them?

●Origami

Origami is Japanese traditional art of folding papers into shapes of animals, plants, daily necessities etc. New ways of paperfolding are still being introduced every now and then, many of which have become highly artistic and complex nowadays.

UME

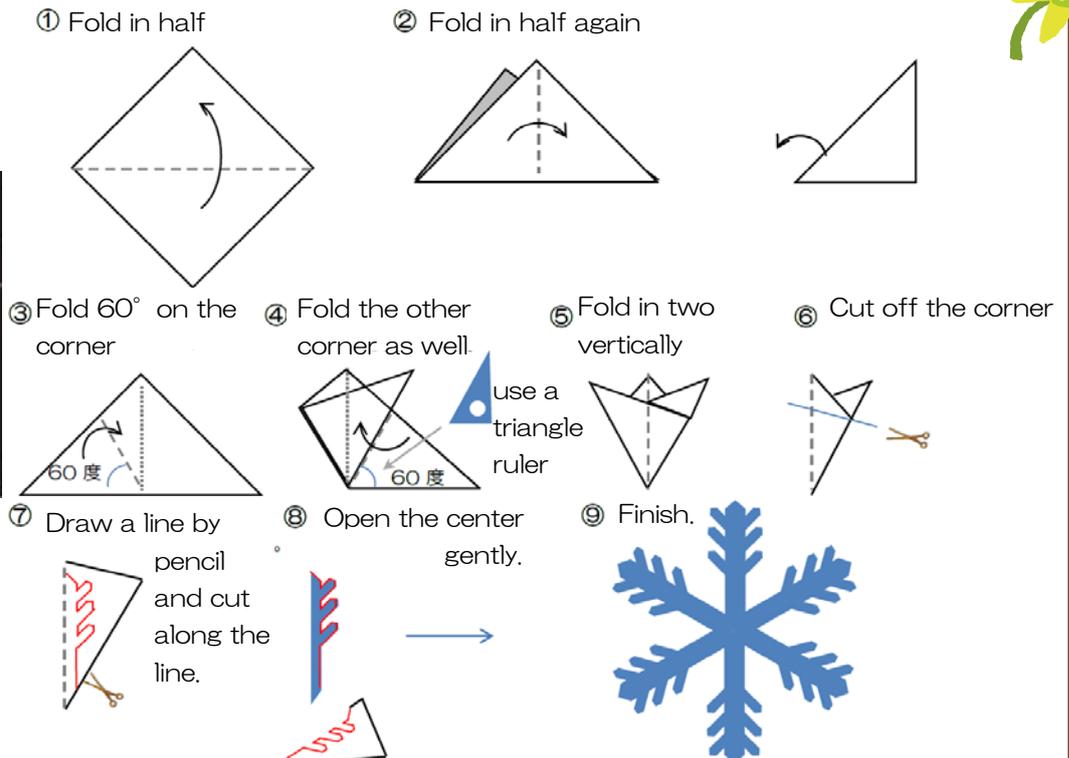
(Japanese plum blossom)



●Kamikiri (paper cutting craft)

Kamikiri is one of the Japanese traditional arts of cutting a paper by scissors and making shapes. There are classical ones in the motif of objects believed to bring good luck (such as daruma dolls and beckoning cats) as well as general animals or characters of an animated cartoon.

SNOW CRYSTAL



Feb. 11th: National Foundation Day

February 11th is the National Foundation Day of Japan. This is the day set to *celebrate* the foundation, and NOT the day on which Japan was *actually* founded. On this day of 660 BC. (= Jan.1st in the old calendar), Emperor Jinmu*assumed the Imperial Throne.

※The Emperor Jinmu ... Japan's first emperor who appears in "日本書紀"^{Nihon-shoki}, the second oldest book of classical Japanese history.

Message Board

There is the Message Board at MCIA on which you can post an ad or see that of others. Make the most of it if you want to find someone you can learn Japanese from / teach your mother language / make friends to share hobbies etc...



You need the permission to post your ad on the board. So please come to our office and show it to the staff before you post it.



Tweet from Mito City International Center

Tweet from staff



Mr. Wang (Chief Secretariat)



How time flies! The new year already started. Last year, after the Great East Japan Earthquake and nuclear power plant radioactive contamination, many foreigners have left Japan. I pray that this will not happen again in this year. Mito City International Association is planning a lot of activities this year and I am looking forward to meeting you at Mito International Center.

Tweet from a foreign resident in Mito

Brian Lynchehaun <Ireland>

I came to Japan from Canada in April of 2011. Life in Mito is very different from life in Vancouver. Everyone imagines that Canada is cold in the winter, but Mito is much colder than Vancouver. I'm not Canadian (I'm Irish), but I share their views on life: my goal is to be happy, and to try to increase the happiness/welfare of the people around me. I hope to contribute to life in Mito.



History of Mito

Mito city Hikone city Takamatsu city
 ~ 水戸市 と 彦根市・高松市

Aside from the sister city relationship with Tsuruga city (Fukui pref.), Mito city has friendship city relationship with the 2 following cities.

① Hikone city (Shiga pref.) • • • since 1968

In the late Edo period, chief minister Ii Naosuke from the family line of Hikone Domain lord pressed forward the idea of ending national isolation, but was avenged by a masterless samurai of Mito Domain and others who opposed to the reopening (=Sakuradamon Incident). 100 years later, the 2 cities took the opportunity and concluded a friendship city agreement through the mediation of Tsuruga city.

② Takamatsu city (Kagawa pref.) • • • since 1974

Matsudaira Yorishige, the older brother of Mitsukuni Tokugawa from Mito Domain, happened to be the first lord of Takamatsu Domain. As such, Mito Domain and Takamatsu Domain had historically established a close relationship. The 2 cities concluded a friendship agreement with the mediation of Hikone city.

Mito City International Association

Tuesday-Sunday, 9am-9pm

(Closed : Mondays, National Holidays)

Bizen-machi 6-59, Mito City, 310-0024

Mito International Center

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mail mcia@mito.ne.jp

HP <http://www.mitoic.or.jp>

Please forward us any opinions or suggestions you may have!

