



Culture Pot MITO

By our newsletter "Culture Pot MITO," we provide useful information for foreign residents living in Mito. It is our goal to build a happy and safe community for every citizen with a different nationality, culture and language.

Contents

- **Events Info.**
- **Spectacular First sunrise**
- **National Health Insurance**
- **Municipal & Prefectural Tax**
- **Income Tax & Income Tax Return**
- **Hospital and Garbage collection during holidays**
- **Japanese class Info.**
- nengajyo
年賀状
- **Eto the twelve signs of the Chinese zodiac**
- **"0-mikuji" and 縁起物** Engi-mono



▼ Photo: Japanese Culture Trip for Foreign Residents

Petit Japanese



How to say "It's cold" in Japanese.



Here are different expressions to talk about cold weather in Japanese!

- hadazamui
「肌寒い」 … It's chilly.
- sokobie
「底冷え」 … It's cold to the bone.
- kogoeru samusa
「凍える 寒さ」 … It's freezing.
- sasuyouna samusa
「刺すような 寒さ」 … It's biting cold.
- Kanmake
「寒負け」 … It's so cold to the point of physical illness.



You can view Culture Pot MITO on your smartphone or tablet.

【Online version】 <https://mitoic.or.jp/en/archive/culture.html>



Events



Mit o Geijutsu-kan
水戸芸術館
029-227-8111



“Resound through the streets of Mito!”

300 Singers perform Beethoven’s 9th Symphony 2023

A long-established seasonal tradition at the end of each year in Mito is the performance of Beethoven’s 9th Symphony, with more than 300 singers taking part in the chorus. Why don’t you go and enjoy the fantastic singing?

WHEN December 17th (Sun) 12:00 pm~ / 1:30 pm~

WHERE Art Tower Mito

(In case of rain, the event will be held in the Concert Hall)

Illuminations in the Streets From early December through

the end of January, illuminations can be seen throughout Mito.

Places ^{Ichō-zaka} 银杏坂 near Mito Sta., ^{Minami-machi} 南町 shopping area, etc.



Let’s go to 初詣

^{Hatsumoude} 初詣 is the New Year’s visit to a shrine or a temple.

Visits are made to appreciate the previous year’s peace, and to wish for the New Year’s peace or any other personal matters.



^{Tokiwa-jinja}
常磐神社
^{Mito-shi Tokiwa-cho}
水戸市 常磐町 1-3-1

^{Mit o Hachimangu}
水戸 八幡宮
^{Mito-shi hachiman-cho}
水戸市 八幡町 8-54

^{Mit o Toshogu}
水戸東照宮
^{Mito-shi Miya-cho}
水戸市 宮町 2-5-13

節分 (Setsubun Festival) Feb. 3rd (Fri.)

^{Setsubun} “節分” is the day in Japanese tradition when the season changes from winter to spring, and ^{Mame-maki} “豆まき”, a bean-scattering ritual is performed in many homes. In large Shinto shrines or Buddhist temples, Mame-maki events will be held.



Mito Plum Festival 2023 Feb.10th (Sat) - Mar.17th (Sun) ※To be announced

There are 3,000 plum trees in ^{Kairakuen} 偕楽園, a famous Japanese Garden in Mito, and they bloom in February. Many events will be held during the festival season.



Spectacular "First Sunrise" Spots

2023 2024



The sunrise on January 1st is called "^{Hatsu-Hi-no-De}初日の出(the first sunrise of the year)". There are spectacular spots for witnessing the "First Sunrise".

^{Kami-Iso} "神磯" beach of ^{Oarai Isosaki Jinja} "大洗 磯前神社" shrine

A famous spot for the first sunrise, with a rare sight of a "Torii" gate standing in the sea.



[Directions] Descend the stairs of the ^{Oarai Isosaki Jinja} "大洗 磯前神社" shrine and head to the coast.

JR Hitachi Station

A station building with glass walls. You can see the sea clearly from inside the building. This is also a famous spot for the first sunrise.



Mt. Tsukuba

Many people gather to see the first sunrise from the mountaintop.



Trivia



What is this? ~ 「^{Engi-mono}縁起物」 ~

There are many things called "^{Engi-mono}縁起物 (Lucky Charms)" in Japan. "^{Engi-mono}縁起物" are said to bring good fortune.



What are the "^{Engi-mono}縁起物" below? (See p.12 for answers.)

①



A cat-shaped figurine.

Often displayed at shops, restaurants and offices.

②



A wooden board with pictures and wishes are written on it. Often seen at shrines and temples.

③



A spherical doll with no limbs. The model of this doll is an Indian prince who spread Buddhism.



INCOME TAX

Around this time of the year, you may often encounter the word “所得” or ^{Shotoku-zei} “所得税”.

^{Shotoku} 所得 = **income**

Income is earned doing full time or part time work. Income includes money from other sources such as prizes, refunds, investments, etc.

^{Shotoku-zei} 所得税 = **income tax**

Taxes paid on salary earned during the year.

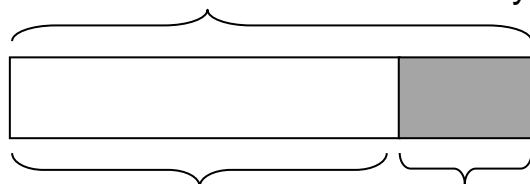


▼Who needs to pay income tax?

Everyone who lives in Japan and has income.

▼How is the income tax calculated?

A : Your taxes are based on the amount of income earned in one calendar year (Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2023)



Income Tax = (A - B) × tax rate
rate: 5%~45%, depending on the amount of income

Taxable portion

B : Untaxable portion (= ^{Shotoku Kojo gaku} 所得控除額)

※ See the back of this page for an explanation of ^{Shotoku Kojo gaku} 所得控除額 ⇒ ⇒ ⇒

※ A tax called ^{Fukko Tokubetsu Shotoku-zei} 復興特別所得税 to help the victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake is also imposed. Please note that 2.1% of the amount of your income tax will be deducted together with the income tax.

▼How do you pay income tax?

In most cases, your employer deducts (= ^{Gensen Choshu} “源泉徴収”) from your monthly wage in accordance with Japanese law, and pays tax to the Japanese government.


However, the actual amount of your income tax cannot be determined until the total of B (untaxable portion) is calculated at the end of the year. At year-end, your actual amount of income tax needs to be calculated and adjusted if necessary.

→ deducted amount > actual amount of income tax … you will receive a tax refund

→ deducted amount < actual amount of income tax … you will need to pay the shortfall

▼ How to adjust tax

(Those living in Japan or planning to stay in Japan continuously for one year or more are eligible to adjust their income taxes.)

If you have worked for **only one** employer in the year 2023, your
 **年末調整** (Year-end Adjustment)
 can be made through your employer.

When: December 2023

How: Fill in the form that is distributed by your employer.



If you have worked for **two or more** employers in the year 2023, you must be file a ^{Kakutei Shinkoku} **確定申告** (Final Income Tax Return). Include any overseas income if you are a Permanent Resident in Japan.
When: February~March 2024
How: Go to the tax office and follow necessary procedures. Consult below for details.



Mito Zeimu-sho
MITO TAX OFFICE (水戸税務署)

Address: ^{Mito-shi Kitami-cho} 水戸市 北見町 1-17 (near Ibaraki Prefectural Library at ^{San-no-maru} 三の丸)

Inquiry: automated voice service 029-231-4211 (in Japanese only)

→ select 1 (call center) → select 1 (income tax)

or National Tax Agency telephone support: 03-3821-9070 (Available in English on Monday-Friday, 9 AM – 5 PM, excludes holidays)

▼ ^{Shotoku Kojo gaku} 所得控除額 ~ **UNTAXABLE PORTION** ~

In the following examples, your untaxable income amount will increase.

This means that the **amount of income tax you pay will be REDUCED.**

1. You have paid premiums of life insurance, earthquake insurance and such
2. You have paid premiums of social insurance (health, nursing care, pension)
3. Your spouse has a yearly income of ¥480,000 or less
4. You have a dependent family member(s) other than your spouse
5. You have paid high medical fees

Certificates called ^{Kojo Shomei-sho} 控除証明書 (for examples 1 & 2) or receipts (for example 5) will be necessary to include in your Year-end Tax Adjustment or Filing of Final Income Tax Return. Relevant ^{Kojo Shomei-sho} 控除証明書 will be sent to your home by the end of the year, so be careful to keep them in a safe place. **DO NOT THROW THEM AWAY by mistake!**

※Remember all documents to be submitted to your employer or tax office will need to include your “My Number” (Individual Number).

File Your Income Tax Return between Feb 16 – Mar 15, 2024



When filing your income tax return, it is important to calculate your total income for the last year. This step is necessary to finalize the amount of income tax you must pay.

Q. Who needs to file an income tax return?

- Those who received employment income from **two or more sources** during January-December 2023, including foreign income as a Permanent Resident
- Those who had an **income of ¥200,000 or more in 2023, independent employment / retirement income**
- Those whose total **employment income exceeded ¥20,000,000 in 2023**
- Those whose **income tax is not withheld at source**
- Those whose **workplace did not conduct a year-end adjustment for 2023**
- Those who **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**.

You are eligible for income deduction if during Jan. – Dec. 2023:

- you paid life insurance or earthquake insurance premiums
- you paid social insurance (health/nursing/pension) premiums
- your spouse’s annual income is ¥480,000 or less
- you have a dependent family member(s)* other than your spouse
- you paid high medical fees

Q. What do I need to do?

1. Gather all necessary documents

Documents to submit vary depending on your situation, so you should confirm with Mito Tax Office for details. Below are examples of documents you may need.

- Certificate of income and withholding tax (源泉徴収票 Gensen choshu-hyo)
- Receipts of medical payments • Certificates of insurance premium payments
- My Number Card or document containing your individual number, etc.

2. Fill in the form (確定申告書 Kakutei shinkoku-sho) available at Mito Tax Office or Consultation

【Document Submission】

Mito Tax Office / Mito City Hall / Civic Centers (Only on certain days)

*Consultation is available at Mito Tax Office. Reservation required. (in Japanese only)

【Inquiries】 - in Japanese only

Mito Tax Office 029-231-4211 (automated voice service)

press① [call center] press① again [income tax]

*Documents to be submitted by those with dependent family members **abroad** are required. For details, please ask during consultation or visit National Tax Agency website: <https://www.nta.go.jp/publication/pamph/gensen/gaikokugo/02.htm>

Hospitals/Clinics during Year-End and New Year Holidays

Many hospitals are closed during year-end and New Year holidays (Dec. 29th~Jan. 3rd), as well as in the evening. If you happen to fall ill at these times, please visit these designated hospitals/clinics.

Hospital	Open	Reception Time	Pediatrics	Internal Medicine	Surgical	Dental
Mito City Emergency Clinic (Holidays and Nights) Mito, Kasahara-cho 993-13 ☎029-243-8825 ☎029-243-8840 (Dental) ※in Japanese only	Holiday (Sun, National Holiday, Dec.30-Jan.3) ※1/1 only afternoon	9:00am-11:45am 1:00pm-3:15pm	○	○	○	○
	Every evening	7:30pm-10:15pm	○	○	—	—
Hitachinaka City Holiday/Night Clinic Hitachinaka, Ishikawa-cho 20-32 ☎029-274-3240 ※in Japanese only	Holiday (Sun, National Holiday, Dec.31-Jan.3)	9:00am-5:00pm	○	○	○	—
	Evening (Sun, National Holiday, Dec.31-Jan.3)	7:00pm-9:00pm	○	○	○	—



When your nearby hospitals/clinics are closed:

◇Around-the-clock consultation via phone or hospital/clinic search

Ibaraki Kodomo Kyukyu Denwa Sodan
 「茨城 子ども 救急 電話 相談」(Ibaraki Children's Emergency Call Center) ※Age 14 or below
 ☎ #8000 / 03-5367-2367 (in Japanese only)

Ibaraki Otona Kyukyu Denwa Sodan
 「茨城 おとな 救急 電話 相談」(Ibaraki Adults' Emergency Call Center) ※Age 15 or above
 ☎ #7119 / 03-5367-2365 (in Japanese only)

◇Hospital/Clinic search on internet in multiple languages

Ibarakiken Kyukyu Iryo Joho System
 「茨城県 救急 医療 情報 システム」(Ibaraki Urgent Medical Care Information System)
<https://www.qq.pref.ibaraki.jp/> (available in Japanese and 15 other languages)

◇Consultation on the internet (in Japanese only)

Zenkokuban Kyukyu Jyushin Application Suke
 全国版 救急 受診 アプリ「Q助」(Emergency Consultation App "Q-suke," National Version)
<https://www.fdma.go.jp/mission/enrichment/appropriate/appropriate003.html>

Kodomo no Kyukyu
 こどもの 救急 Children's Urgent Medical Care (ages between one month and six-years old)
<http://kodomo-qq.jp>



Garbage Collection during Holidays

From **December 30th to January 3rd**, garbage collection services are suspended. Do not leave your garbage at any collection point during that period.

If you wish to welcome the New Year with a big house cleaning, make sure to put your garbage out by the last designated day in your area.



Mito 水戸	December										January					
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Tsunezumi 常澄																
Uchihara 内原	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
Mon Thu			○				○	No Collection Service					○			
Tue Fri				○			○									



Please do not leave your garbage!

※ Garbage disposal methods in Mito

Please check Mito City website.

<https://www.city.mito.lg.jp/site/gomi/1774.html>

Shop Operation during Holidays



At the end of the year and on New Year's Day, many shops are closed.

However, shopping malls, supermarkets and convenience stores will most likely be open. During the holidays, hours of operation and closure days will vary depending on shops. Check in advance to be safe!

National Health Insurance/Municipal and Prefectural Tax

National Health Insurance

The 6th, 7th, and 8th phase payments for FY 2022 are due on **Dec. 25th, 2023**, **Jan. 31st, 2024**, and **Feb. 28th, 2024**, respectively.

Municipal & Prefectural Tax:

The 4th phase payment is due on **Jan. 31st, 2024**.

※For details, please read Culture Pot MITO online version 2022 Summer Issue at: (<https://mitoic.or.jp/jp/archive/culture.html>)

Japanese Language Class

Day	Name of Group	Class Levels
Tue	Orbis	Beginners, Intermediate, Conversation, Hiragana, Kanji
Wed	Friendly Neighbor	Beginners, Intermediate, Upper Intermediate
	MESA Friendship	Kanji, Hiragana, Katakana, Simple Daily Conversation
Thu	Sophia	Beginners, Beginners' Intermediate
	Nihongo Mito-no-Heya [※] (Evening Class)	Conversation, Support for School Studies
Fri	MESA Friendship	Beginners, Intermediate, Upper Intermediate
Sat	L'avenir	Beginners, Intermediate, Advanced

TIME: 10am – 12pm (2 hours) FEE per class: ¥100~¥500

(※Nihongo Mito-no-Heta TIME: 4pm - 5:30pm (for elementary school to high school students), 6:30pm - 8pm (for adults) / FEE: free)

●Schedule from December to February●

12月 DEC.

日	月	火	水	木	金	土
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					①	②
3	4	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
10	11	⑫	⑬	⑭	⑮	⑯
17	18	⑰	⑱	⑳	㉑	㉒
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

1月 JAN.

日	月	火	水	木	金	土
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	⑩	⑪	⑫	⑬
14	15	⑯	⑰	⑱	⑲	⑳
21	22	㉓	㉔	㉕	㉖	㉗
28	29	㉘	㉙			

2月 FEB.

日	月	火	水	木	金	土
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				①	②	③
4	5	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩
11	12	⑬	⑭	⑮	⑯	⑰
18	19	⑳	㉑	㉒	㉓	㉔
25	26	㉖	㉗	㉘		

○ ⇒ Class open (Dec. 21: Evening class only)



Nengajo 年賀状



We send special postcards “年賀状”^{nengajo} to exchange New Year greetings.

Postcards issued by Japan Post are most popular, because each has a lottery number printed on the address side. The New Year’s postcard lottery is held by Japan Post every year - next year on Jan 15, 2024 - offering nice prizes.

Various designs of new year postcards are available at convenience stores, super markets, etc. as well as post offices. You can also send your own original postcards.

How to send ^{nengajo}年賀状

1. Write a phrase to celebrate the new year.
2. Express gratitude for the past year, hope for continuous friendship and so on.
3. Write the year (^{Reiwa nen}令和6年 = 2024) and date (^{gantān}元旦 = Jan. 1)
4. Draw an illustration of the animal of the year (^{eto}干支), or any auspicious illustration to please your recipients.

^{eto}干支 is a set of twelve zodiac animals which are used to represent calendar, time and directions in ancient China.



The *eto* for 2024 is **Dragon!**

<Front>



④
^{eto}干支

^{Akemashite omedetou gazaimasu}
明けましておめでとうございます

Happy New Year! ①

^{Kyunen-chu wa o-sewa ni narimashita}
旧年中は お世話になりました

Thank you for your kindness during the last year. ②

^{Kotoshi mo yoroshiku onegai itashimasu}
今年もよろしくお願いいいたします

I look forward to your continued goodwill in this year.

^{Reiwa nen gantan}
令和6年 元旦 ③
January 1, 2024

<Back>



¥63
2024
年賀

310-0024

Bizen – machi 6-59, Mito City

Mr. Kokusai Taro ⑤

Chuo 1-4-1, Mito City ⑥

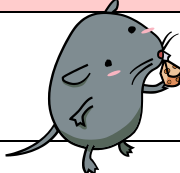


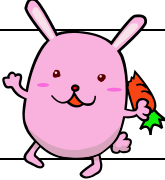

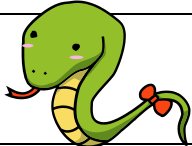


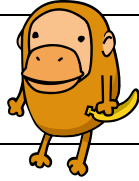
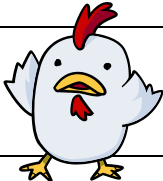
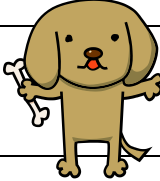

Mito Hanako

310-8610

5. Write your recipient’s name and address.
6. Write your name and address.

えと (じゅうにし) 千支 (十二支)

Eto - The Twelve Signs of the Chinese Zodiac -

とし 年/year		えと 千支/eto	どうぶつ 動物/animal
2020	2032	ね 子/ne	ねずみ 鼠 /rat 
2021	2033	うし 丑/ushi	うし 牛/ox 
2022	2034	とら 寅/tora	とら 虎/tiger 
2023	2035	う 卯/u	うさぎ 兔 /rabbit 
2024	2036	たつ 辰/tatsu	りゅう 龍 /dragon 
2025	2037	み 巳/mi	へび 蛇/snake 
2026	2038	うま 午/uma	うま 馬/horse 
2027	2039	ひつじ 未 /hitsuji	ひつじ 羊 /sheep 
2028	2040	さる 申/saru	さる 猿/monkey 
2029	2041	とり 酉/tori	にわとり 鶏 /rooster 
2030	2042	いぬ 戌/inu	いぬ 犬/dog 
2031	2043	い 亥/i	いのしし 猪 /boar 

"O-mikuji" and "Engi-mono" 縁起物 

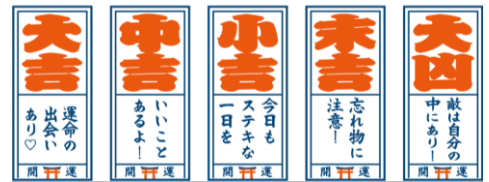


O-mikuji

O-mikuji, literally "fortune lot" is used to tell your fortune. They are sold at Shinto Shrines and Buddhist Temples. Additionally, there are non-religious, application-based or online O-mikuji.

Words representing good or bad fortunes are written on each O-mikuji slip.

^{Dai-Kichi}「大吉」=best fortune, ^{Kichi}「吉」=better fortune, ^{Chu-Kichi}「中吉」
^{Sho-Kichi}「小吉」=a bit good fortune, ^{Kyo}「凶」=bad fortune



Would you try telling your fortune for the new year?

Engi-mono 縁起物 *Answers to the quiz on p. 3



^{Maneki Neko} ①[招き猫]: "Beckoning Cat"

A figurine of a cat with a paw raised in a beckoning gesture. That is believed to bring good luck. A cat with its right paw raised brings good luck with money, and a cat with its left paw raised brings customers.



^{E ma} ②[絵馬]: Wooden tags to write a wish on

Small wooden boards for writing wishes, sold at Shinto Shrines or Buddhist Temples. Write your wishes on "Ema" and hang them on the place called "Ema-kake".

^{Daruma} ③[だるま]: Dolls for making wishes

At first, both eyes of this doll are white. Draw the left eye making your wish, and draw the right eye if your wish come true.



Mito City International Association (MCIA)
Tuesday-Sunday, 9am-9pm

(Closed: Mondays, National Holidays, Dec.29 - Jan.4)

Add 〒310-0024 ^{Mito-shi Bizen-machi} 水戸市 備前町6-59
 Mito International Center

Tel 029-221-1800
Fax 029-221-5793
Email mcia@mito.ne.jp
HP <https://mitoic.or.jp>

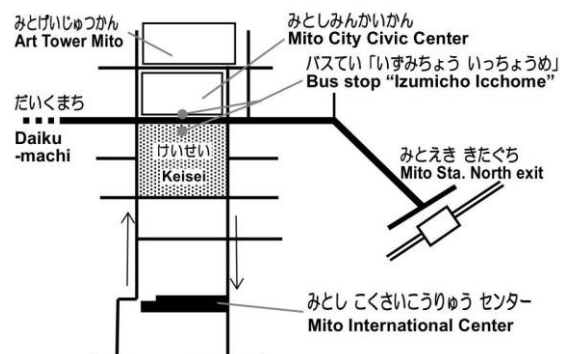
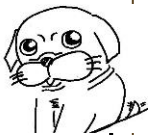



Our website!!

Please forward us any opinions or suggestions you may have!



Feel free to drop by!



Take a bus from Mito Station North Exit, bus terminal #4~7 ⇒ 5mins ⇒  Izumicho Icchome, 泉町一丁目