

Seasons of Eastern Japan
(3-Day/2-Night Summer Trip)

August 2017 ARCHIVE

Aomori, Iwate, Akita,
and Miyagi



TRAIN SUITE
SHIKI-SHIMA

A Journey to Experience The Traditional Culture of The Japanese Summer

A very special trip to experience traditional culture unique to the Japanese summer.

The passengers watched Akita Prefecture's Nishimonai Bon Odori (Bon festival dance), which has been designated as an important intangible folk cultural asset of Japan, and also visited Hiraizumi, the Iwate Prefecture World Heritage site that is rooted in the thinking of Pure Land Buddhism.

The TOHOKU EMOTION, the restaurant train that runs along the Hachinohe Line, was also chartered for their use.

Wednesday August 16 to Friday 18, 2017

[Day 1] Nishimonai

[Day 2] The Tanesashi Coast, Kuji, and Naruko Onsen

[Day 3] Hiraizumi

Day 1

9:34 dep.

Ueno Sta.

20:49 arr.

Yuzawa Sta.

Excursion to
Nishimonai

Lunch

Onboard

Sushi for lunch, prepared by Yukiji Uzawa, head chef of Umihiko in Hotel Metropolitan Edmont

Yukiji Uzawa prepared nigirizushi from the freshest of ingredients for the first meal onboard the train.

Dinner

Onboard

Dinner prepared by Train Suite Shiki-shima chef Hitoshi Iwasaki

Dinner was prepared by Train Suite Shiki-shima executive chef Hitoshi Iwasaki. The passengers enjoyed some special moments onboard the train.



Off by bus on an excursion to Nishimonai

Sightseeing Excursion

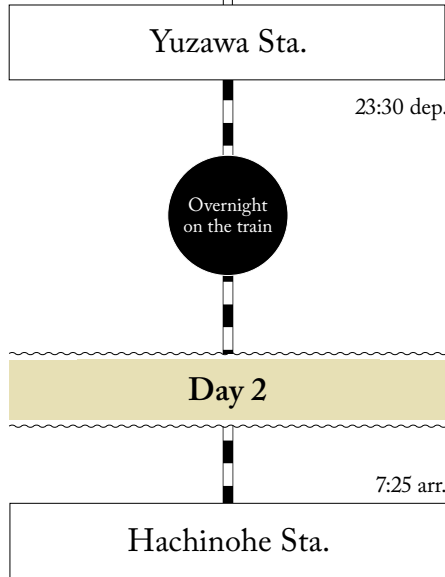
Excursion to Nishimonai

Ugo is an Akita Prefecture town nestled amongst the mountains that once flourished as the castle town of Onodera Shigemichi. Held in mid-summer, the Nishimonai Bon Odori is ranked as one of the top three Bon festival dances in Japan, and it attracts crowds of spectators every year.

Nishimonai Bon Odori

There is a dreamlike atmosphere at this charming festival, with its woven straw hats and beautiful attire, combined with elements such the lively, soul-stirring musical accompaniment and the dance for the dead. The passengers had gallery seats from which to enjoy the atmospheric beauty of this tradition that has been passed down through the generations.





Onboard

Lounge Komorebi (Car 5)

Relax over a drink at the end of the day, watching the beautiful scenery stream past the windows.

Off by bus on an excursion to the Tanesashi Coast

Sightseeing Excursion

Excursion to the Tanesashi Coast

This beautiful coastline was officially named Sanriku Fukko National Park in 2013. The passengers enjoyed the richly varied scenery, which includes an expanse of natural lawn, white sandy beaches dotted with pine trees, and knotty crags both large and small.

Tanesashi Coast Breakfast

Hachinohe Plaza Hotel head chef Tadayuki Suda prepared breakfast, which was served on the Tanesashi Natural Lawn, an iconic Tanesashi Coast landscape. The breakfast included fresh sea food, and the passengers could enjoy it in the refreshingly cool summer morning air on a wide expanse of natural lawn.

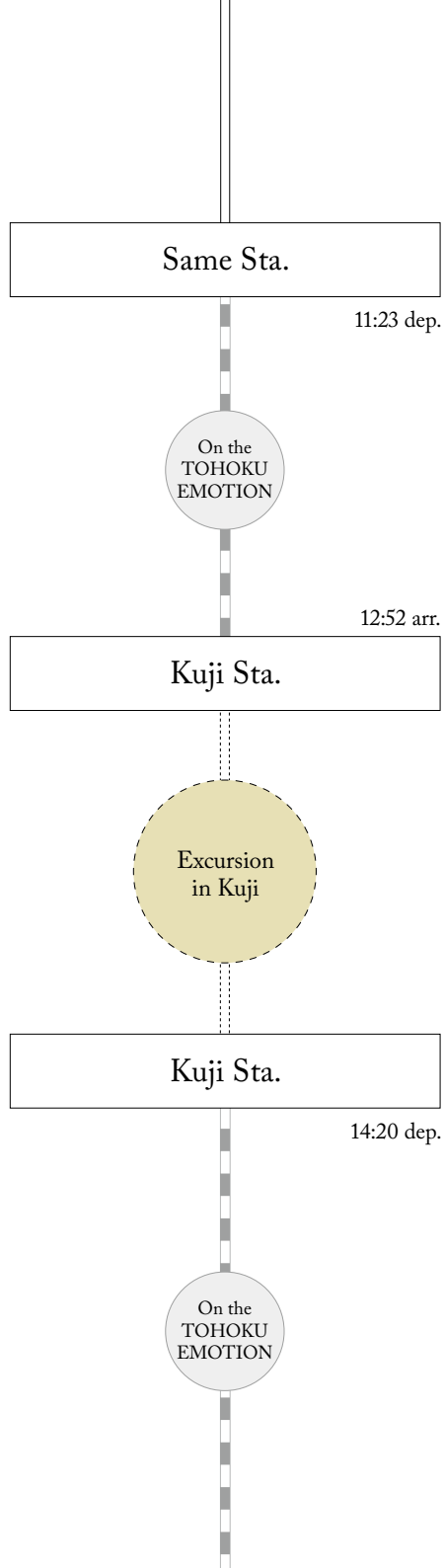


Kabushima Shrine

This shrine is dedicated to Benzaiten, who has been venerated since olden times by the local people as a goddess who protects fishermen and makes businesses prosper. The chief priest gave us a guided tour of the shrine and its grounds, giving the passengers the opportunity to learn about the history of Kabushima, which is famous throughout Japan as a breeding ground for the black-tailed gull, and about the roots of this much-loved local shrine.



Excursion to the Tanesashi Coast



Lunch | On the TOHOKU EMOTION

Lunch on the TOHOKU EMOTION restaurant train

The TOHOKU EMOTION, the restaurant train that runs along the Hachinohe Line, was chartered for lunch. While gazing out on the summer Sanriku coastline scenery streaming past the train windows, the passengers enjoyed a lunch prepared exclusively for Train Suite Shiki-shima by Hotel Metropolitan Morioka head chef Hitoshi Takahashi.



Off by taxi on an excursion in Kuji

Sightseeing Excursion

Excursion in Kuji

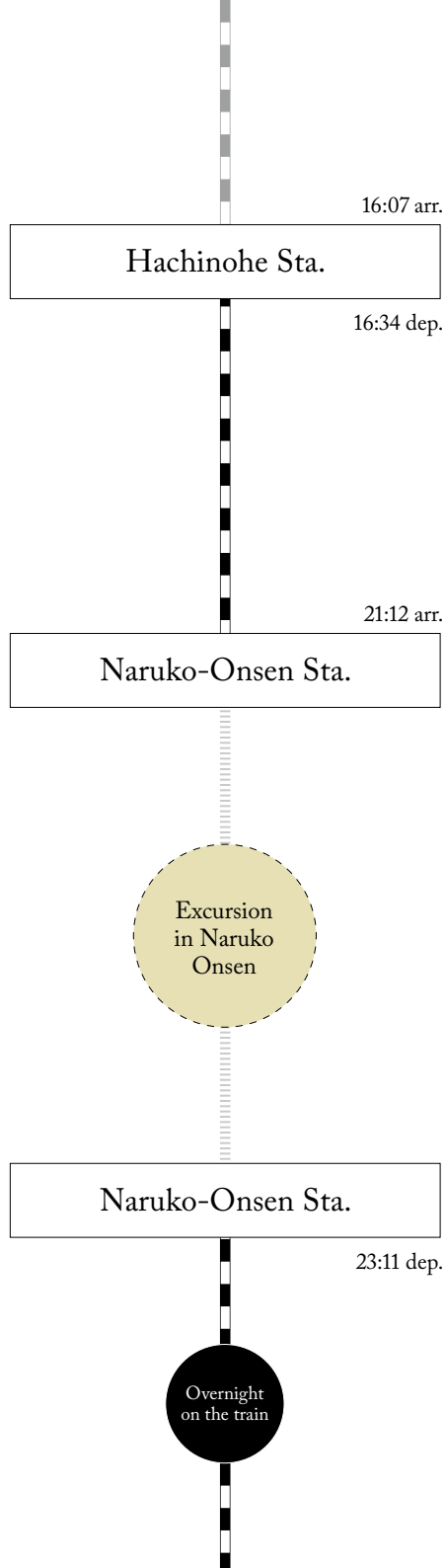
Kosode Ama Center

The Kosode Coast, located on the northern part of the Rikuchuu coastline, has an abundance of luxury foodstuffs such as sea urchin and abalone, and is a fishing zone for 'ama' (female divers). At the Kosode Ama Center, the passengers learned about the history, work and lifestyle of the female divers, and watched these 'northernmost ama' free dive in search of shellfish.

On the TOHOKU EMOTION

Dessert on the TOHOKU EMOTION restaurant train

On the way back to Hachinohe, the passengers enjoyed a leisurely dessert and afternoon tea onboard the TOHOKU EMOTION, a fascinating train which utilizes tableware that encapsulates traditional Tohoku skills and beauty, and is decorated with interior designs and artworks based around the motif of traditional handicrafts of the Tohoku region.



Dinner Onboard

Dinner prepared by Ryohei Ikemi, the owner and chef of Casa del Cibo in Hachinohe

Mr. Ikemi wants his guests to taste a varied range of delicious foods, and the passengers enjoyed his Italian dishes made from fresh Hachinohe fish, as well as such treats as handmade pasta and special desserts made from locally sourced ingredients.

Off for a stroll around Naruko Onsen

Sightseeing Excursion

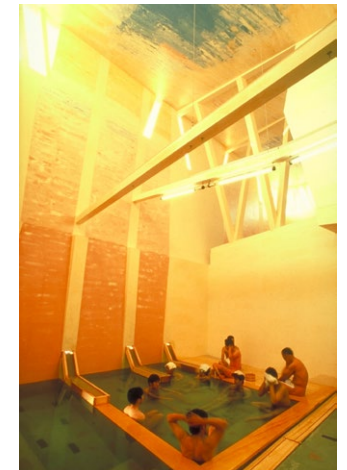
Excursion in Naruko Onsen

Naruko Onsen is one of Japan's most famous hot spring resorts. Onsen enthusiasts often say, "Beppu in the west and Naruko in the east."

The passengers enjoyed this leading Tohoku hot spring health resort, popular from time immemorial for its healing waters.

Hot spring bath at Waseda Sajiki Yu

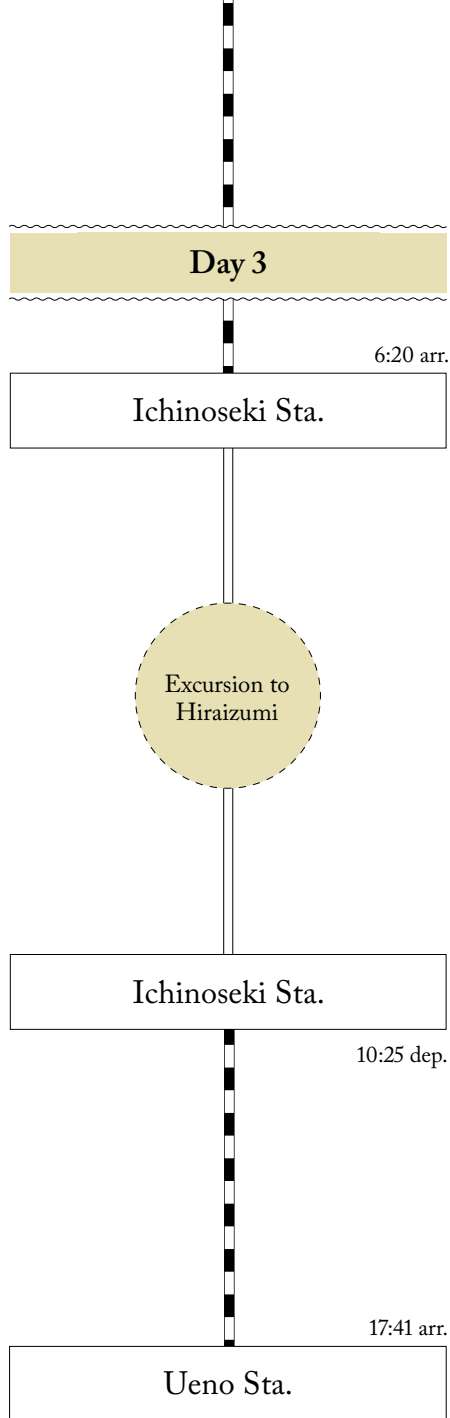
This particular hot spring was excavated by students on a field trip just after the war. The passengers soaked away any fatigue from their journey in its iron-rich dark indigo water. They also took a look at the building's avant-garde yellow facade.



Onboard

Lounge Komorebi (Car 5)

Relax over a drink at the end of the day, watching the beautiful scenery stream past the windows.



Off by bus on an excursion to Hiraizumi

Sightseeing Excursion

Excursion to Hiraizumi

Even now, 900 years after the Heian Era, many historic sites based on the Northern Fujiwara clan's vision of Pure Land Buddhism still remain in Hiraizumi. The passengers enjoyed a leisurely visit to some of its temples amidst the solemn mood engendered by the morning stillness.

Chūson-ji Temple: Konjikidō Golden Hall

An early morning visit to Konjikidō, the symbol of the golden age of Hiraizumi culture. Train Suite Shiki-shima passengers enjoyed a leisurely private viewing of this hall, glittering with gold, that is a spectacular integration of ancient crafts and skills.

Chūson-ji Temple: Kanzantei

Breakfast

Located in the grounds of Chūson-ji Temple, this restaurant is just beyond the torii (Shinto gateway) of Hakusan Shrine. Its windows offer a view of Mount Yakeishi in the distance, and of the rural landscape of Oshu's Koromogawa spread out before it. In this lovely location, the passengers enjoyed a special breakfast prepared from local ingredients by Bellino Hotel Ichinoseki head chef Yuya Sugiyama.

Chūson-ji Temple: Hondō Main Hall

One of Chūson-ji's core temple buildings, the current main hall was reconstructed in 1909. In its grounds, one of the monks explained about the history of Chūson-ji and gave a Buddhist sermon.

Lunch

Onboard

Lunch prepared by Train Suite Shiki-shima chef Hitoshi Iwasaki

The final meal of the journey was onboard the train. The passengers enjoyed exquisite French cuisine while gazing out at the scenery rolling by.





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Route Map

* The photos are all for illustrative purposes only.

* The map on the left is of the route that was followed. Only the main stops are shown.