

To the Journey of Japanese Comfort

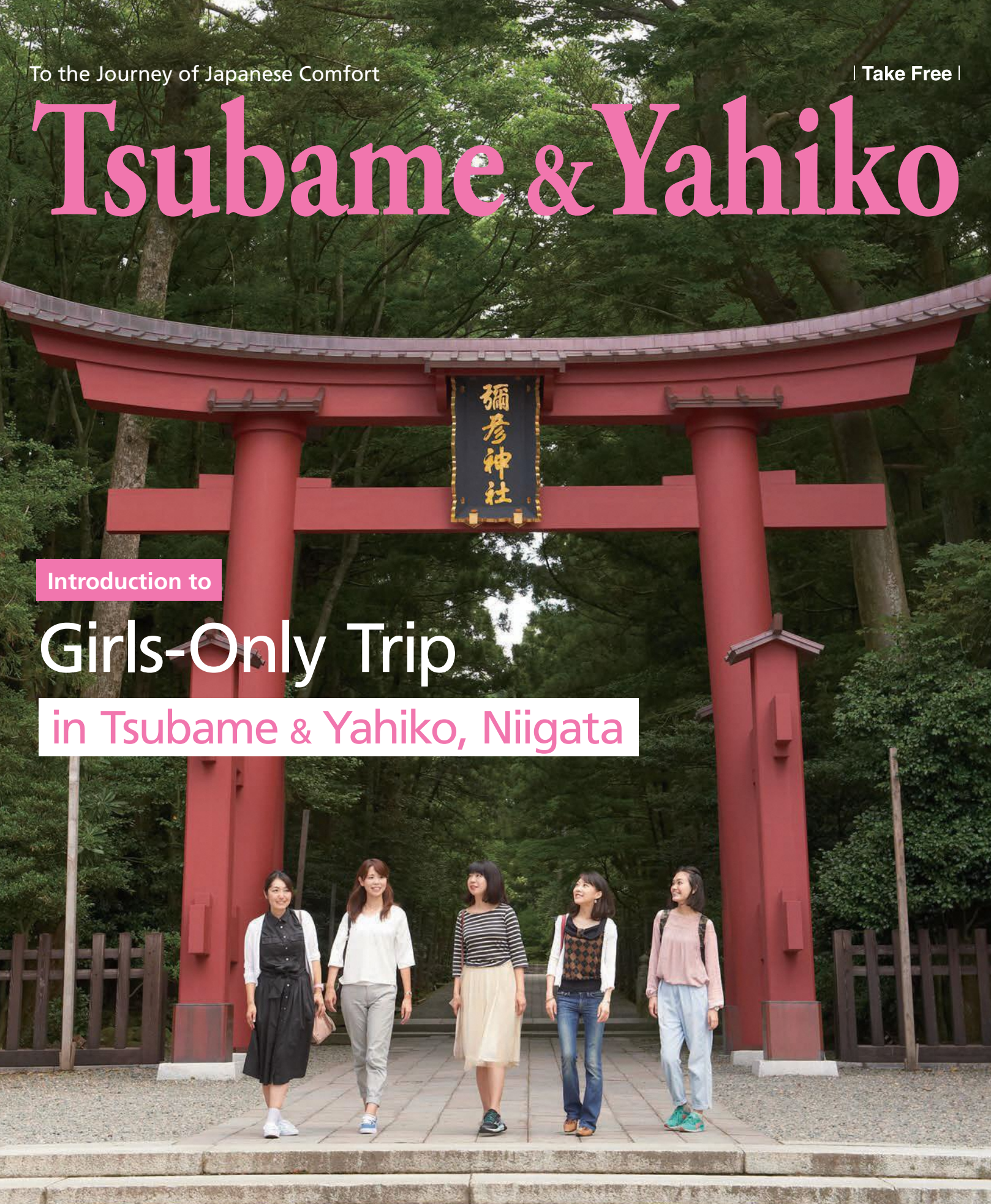
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Tsubame & Yahiko

Introduction to

Girls-Only Trip

in Tsubame & Yahiko, Niigata



Looking ahead to the next hot spots you'll want to visit

A Girls-only Trip to Niigata

Close to Tokyo, Niigata is a fantastic place for a quick trip. Tsubame city, renowned for its craftsmanship, and Yahiko village, filled with places where you can mend your spiritual power, are particularly noteworthy. Invite a few good friends and go on a girls-only trip, right now!



1 The demand for metal tableware grew with Japan's Westernization movement and the popularization of Western food during the Meiji period. In turn, cutlery production became one of the city of Tsubame's main industries. 2 Tour facility for the nation's leading factory manufacturing kitchen knives made of material composite in integrated production. **Tojiro Open Factory**; 9-5 Yoshida Higashisakae Town, Tsubame City; Tel: 0256-93-4195; 10 am-6 pm (factory closes at 5 pm); Closed Sun., hol. (Closed irregularly Sat.). 3 Hammering steel to adjust its viscosity and hardness. More than 10 years of training is required to become a master. 4 5 6 Presenting 400 years of Tsubame's metal processing technology through the latest imaging technology and actual object exhibitions. Offering a wide selection of attractive manufacturing experience programs include creating hammered patterns and spoon making. **Tsubame Industrial Materials Museum**; 4330-1 Omagari Tsubame City; Tel: 0256-63-7666; 9 am-4:30 pm; Closed Mon. (following day if hol.), day after hol. 7 8 The beautiful pieces created by Gyokusendo are the pinnacle of craftsmanship. 8 The vessel in front was created as an ashtray in the Taisho period. 9 Goro-san gave us a tour of Gyokusendo.



Photo: Mizuho Tadokoro

A town of craftsmanship which has been maintained by countless unnamed artisans

Located in almost the exact center of Niigata Prefecture, the city of Tsubame has long flourished as a leading center of craftsmanship and manufacturing. Metalworking got its start in Tsubame with the production of Japanese nails 400 years ago. In the late Edo period, the technique of hammered copperware Tsuiki copper ware production was introduced. With the passage of time, the form of metalworking changed, from Japanese nails pipes to Western tableware, and today Tsubame has attained global recognition as one of Japan's main production centers for metal tableware and housewares.

The ability of Tsubame's craftspeople and factories to meet every need from stunning handmade pieces to mass production is thanks to the efforts that have been made to pass down techniques and skills over the centuries. And it has been Tsubame's countless unnamed artisans who preserved these techniques and skills. Come to Tsubame and explore the craftsmanship they watched over.



The Tsubame-Sanjo Industry Calendar. Many events in Tsubame are scheduled based on the local industry calendar.

It reminded me how amazing Japanese craftsmanship is!



STOCK BUSTERS

At this factory outlet shop, you can purchase housewares and kitchenware from some 150 companies for cheap. STOCK BUSTERS also carries overstock from local factories and producers as well as "Made in Tsubame" items like kitchen knives and copperware. Come and see what bargains are waiting for you.

2-16 Butsuryo Center, Tsubame City; Tel: 0256-63-2511; 10 am-6 pm; Never closes



Upper right / lower right: The store is filled with things you'll use every day such as cutlery and cups! Left: There's so much stuff you'll have difficulty choosing!



The café's mascot Kurosuke.

Tsubame Coffee

A stylish café established next to a beauty salon. Tsubame Coffee roasts its high quality beans simply and strives to deliver its coffees as quickly and freshly as possible, creating a delicious brew that will satisfy even the most ardent coffee fan. The relaxing interior is sure to soothe away the fatigue of your trip.

2760-1 Yoshida, Tsubame City; Tel: 0256-77-8781; 11 am-6 pm; Closed Mon., Tue.



Left: The fashionable café is dominated by large bookshelves. Read a book or enjoy talk with friends - relax the way you want. Right: The adjoining shop carries lifestyle goods as well as exclusive items.

The workshop is filled with the satisfying rhythm of copper being hammered out.



It was so moving seeing craftsmanship that has been handed down for 200 years!



Gyokusendo

Founded 200 years ago, Gyokusendo is a renowned traditional crafts and hammered copperware shop in Tsubame that has been in operation since 1816. Gyokusendo's copperware, hammered from single sheets of copper, grow more beautiful with use. Visitors can tour the shop's workshop without reservations if visitors are 4, or less. Making it easy to see craftsmanship up close and personal.

2-2-21 Chuo-dori, Tsubame City; Tel: 0256-62-2015; 9 am-12 pm, 1 pm-5 pm; Closed Sun., hol.



Lower right: Only Gyokusendo possesses the skills needed to hammer a kettle out of a single sheet of copper without seams. Left: It's also fun to see Gyokusendo's buildings, which are registered Tangible Cultural Properties.



Right: At first glance, polishing may look easy, but it requires a lot more effort than expected. Left: Polishing improves the quality of a piece.

Tsubame-shi Migakiya Ichibankan

For a great variety of metal products, it is the final process of polishing that determines its quality and value. Visitors to Tsubame-shi Migakiya Ichibankan can participate in a metal polishing class for beginners. Come in contact with true craftsman skill and experience how amazing Tsubame polishing is.



3633-7 Koike, Tsubame City; Tel: 0256-61-6701

Girls-only Trip Spots in Tsubame

There were countless discoveries awaiting you in this artisan town! Participate in classes and demonstrations that will sharpen your sensitivities and hone all five senses.



The portions were huge, but I ended up eating every bite!

Koushu Hanten

Tsubame is also a mecca for *seabura ramen*. In 1930's, cutlery production flourished in Tsubame, and the simple meal that is *ramen* was a favorite of those who worked in the cutlery factories. Today, *seabura ramen* remains as popular as ever and has become a Tsubame specialty. And Koushu Hanten is one of the most popular *seabura ramen* restaurants in the city. Even if you have to wait in line, you won't regret dining here!

49-4 Tsubame, Tsubame City; Tel: 0256-64-3770; 11 am-2:30 pm, 5 pm-7:50 pm Note: Closes when supplies run out; Closed Mon. (following day if hol.; closed 1 Tue. per month)



Top: The shop's filling gyoza are also a perennial favorite. Gyoza (4 pieces) ¥800. Bottom: *Seabura* pork back fat adds just the right amount of body to the rich soy sauce-based soup. The flavor is surprisingly clean and simple. Chuka Soba ¥850.

Yahiko 弥彦

A visit to the “Oyahiko-Sama” shrine, a favorite destination since ancient times, to receive good fortune in matchmaking.

Sacred Mt. Yahiko towers in the center of the Echigo Plain. There, our intrepid travelers visited Yahiko Shrine to ask for guidance from the gods. Nicknamed “Oyahiko-Sama” since ancient times, the shrine is a familiar presence to locals. There are many historical anecdotes about the shrine, and even today there is an unending stream of visitors to it and the Yahiko Hot Spring in front of it.

Another source of Yahiko Shrine’s popularity is its reputation for bringing good luck in matchmaking. Take the Mt.Yahiko Ropeway to the Sancho (Summit) Station and walk further 10 minutes to reach the sanctuary where the shrine’s god Ame-no-kagoyama-no-mikoto and goddess Umashihoya-hime-no-mikoto are enshrined, then make a prayer for good fortune in romantic relationships.

The Sea of Japan as seen from the top of the mountain is also a highlight of visiting the shrine. Forget the passing time, let yourself relax, and experience the vastness of “Oyahiko-Sama.”



Every day at 7 am offerings such as rice, sake, and salt are made to the gods (Onikkusai). Attendees are given lucky rice.

Panorama Tower

A viewing platform and elevator that rotates 360 degrees as it ascends. Sit down and relax as you slowly spin and rise some 100 meters into the air. Enjoy your time in the sky as the view of the Sea of Japan and the Echigo Plain grows ever more expansive.

2898 Yahiko, Yahiko Village, Nishikanbara-gun;
Tel: 0256-94-4141;
9 am–5 pm; Adults (12 and over) ¥650

It feels like you’re floating on the clouds!

Right: The top of Mt.Yahiko is the same elevation as Tokyo Skytree – 634 meters – and the tower rises above that! Left: The view from above is sure to have all sorts of unexpected surprises!



Girls-only Trip Spots in Yahiko

Visit the scared power place of Yahiko for good luck and prepare both body and mind for finding love!

Talking with the shop staff was so much fun!



The liquor shop is a 200 year-old private home that was moved and rebuilt here. German architect and Niigata resident Karl Bengs designed the rebuilt structure.



1239-4 Yahiko, Yahiko Village, Nishikanbara-gun;
Tel: 0256-94-5841;
1st floor 8:30 am–6:30 pm
2nd floor 8:30 am–6 pm

Sakaya Yayoi

This Japanese-style liquor shop is located on the road leading to Yahiko Shrine. Enjoy selections of locally brewed Niigata sake in the tasting room on the 2nd floor. The building is an old Japanese-style home which was moved to Yahiko Village; make a few memories for your trip in the comfortable interior.

Café Gallery Yoin

The old architecture is the former residence of a priest named Suzuki and was originally constructed in 1802. Minister Tomomi Iwakura also stayed here when Emperor Meiji toured the Hokuriku region. The restored structure is now used as a gallery space and café. Yoin is filled with things to look at, including its elegant ceiling, sliding screen paintings, and historical artworks.

1190 Yahiko, Yahiko Village, Nishikanbara-gun;
Tel: 090-7275-9207 (Nabeshima);
Only open Sat., Sun., and hol.; 11 am–4 pm;
Closed Dec.-Mar.

The place is filled with rare treasures!



Right: This household shrine is 211 years old and has even been used by Yahiko Shrine priests. Left: A sliding screen covered with gold leaf painted by the famed artist Maruyama Okyo.



Yahiko Shrine

The deity enshrined here is Ame-no-kagoyama-no-mikoto, great-grandson of the goddess Amaterasu-Omikami. The Emperor at that time called Jinmu ordered Ame-no-kagoyama-no-mikoto to govern the land of Echigo. Accordingly, since ancient times the shrine has been given the reverent nickname “Oyahiko-Sama.” Just visiting the shrine which stands at the foot of the scared Mt.Yahiko will ease the tension of your mind and soul.

2887-2 Yahiko, Yahiko Village, Nishikanbara-gun;
Tel: 0256-94-2001



Top: Yahiko Shrine has a rich and long history – its name is even inscribed in the ancient *Man'yōshū* poetry anthology. Lower right: Yahiko Shrine is also famous for good luck in matchmaking; be sure to offer a prayer at the shrine's sanctuary at the top of the mountain. Lower left: The “Heavy/Light Wishing Stones” will tell you if your wish will come true. Bow twice, clap four times, and pick up the stone – if it is light, your wish will come true; if it is heavy, you will need more effort to make it.

There’s still so much to see and do in Tsubame and Yahiko!

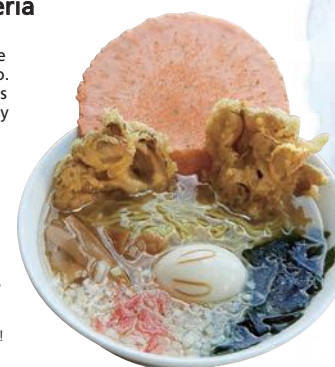


Mt.Yahiko Ropeway Observing Cafeteria

This cafeteria is located on the viewing platform at the ninth station on Mt. Yahiko. Just the view from its tables is a treat. Also be sure to try the restaurant’s numerous unique mountain cuisine dishes!

2829 Yahiko, Yahiko Village, Nishikanbara-gun;
Tel: 0256-94-4141;
9 am–5 pm;
Closed Dec.-Mar.

Right: It’s 45 centimeters tall! The flavor is somehow nostalgic. Tree parfait ¥700. Left: The Yahiko Shrine rabbit motif egg is so cute! Sun Setting on the Sea of Japan Ramen ¥920.



The fatigue of your trip will be blown away!



11 The Sea of Japan as seen from Mt. Yahiko. On sunny days you can see all the way to Sado Island. 12 The Tako Zekova Tree is a tree believed to be 1,000 years old. 13 The “Spring of Monk Shinran” is said to have gushed forth when Shinran, founder of the Jodo-Shinshu Sect of Buddhism, planted his cane here. 14 Niigata’s distinctive rural landscape stretches away below. 15 One of the many treats you can find while exploring the town. “Yahiko Musume” Green Soybeans with minced squid croquettes are ¥150 each. 16 The setting sun seen from the top of Mt. Yahiko will stun with its beauty and vastness. 17 An old fashioned tunnel in Yahiko Park. 18 19 20 Yahiko Hot Spring wells up from the ground in front of the gates to Yahiko Shrine. The streets are lined with hot spring hotels such as Nadaiya, renowned for its cuisine. 21 Nakamura’s hot spring steamed buns were awarded the gold prize at the Niigata Exhibition. ¥80 each. 22 Bunsuido’s soft Panda Cake. Sweet bean paste ¥150. Edamame (Yahiko Musume: Green Soybeans) paste ¥160.

燕 Tsubame & 弥彦 Yahiko So much to see and do!Walking Spots

FACTORY FRONT

As you might expect, this card case specialty shop carries a massive variety of card cases – in addition to standard metal ones, you can find popular leather card cases and even wood cases, a rarity in Japan! The shop also offers a selection of choice Tsubame-Sanjo items. Selling nothing but the most shining examples of design and quality, mgnet is the perfect place to find a gift.

14-3 Higashiota, Tsubame City;
Tel: 0256-46-8720;
9 am–7 pm;
Closed Mon., hol.

Get your hands on “Made in Tsubame” card cases made with a variety of metals including magnesium, titanium, and brass.



Michi-no-Eki Kugami

This roadside station is located at the foot of Mt. Kugami, a location connected with the history of the famous Zen monk Ryokan, and makes the perfect base for sightseeing in Tsubame. The station contains various shops selling fresh local products and souvenirs. Once a month a “Kugami soba day” is held during which visitors can buy soba made with local buckwheat flour. The station's onigiri rice balls, made with 100% Koshihikari rice, are also popular and a frequent purchase for locals as well.

5866-1 Kugami, Tsubame City;
Tel: 0256-98-0770;
9 am–6 pm; Closed Mon. (Varies by facility)

The roadside station's Temari-no-yu hot spring and Shuten-doji-no-yu free hot spring footbath – one of the largest in the prefecture – are also popular attractions! Kugami is the perfect place to take a break during a trip.



Omotenashi Hiroba

Located between Yahiko Shrine and JR Yahiko Station, this multi-purpose facility has a variety of offerings which will make your visit to Yahiko much nicer. Among these are: a farmer's market selling local vegetables; a food court selling such meals as *udon* especially *agodashi* stock, and *kushiyaki* (skewered meat and seafood); a coffee shop where Yahiko *geisha* serves delicious drinks.

1121 Yahiko, Yahiko Village, Nishikanbara-gun;
Tel: 0256-94-3154 (Yahiko Tourist Association);
10 am–4 pm;
Open all-year around

There are two natural hot spring foot baths under the traditional arcade that surrounds the facility. Enjoy the view of sacred Mt. Yahiko that rises up in front of you as you savor the hot water of Yahiko Yu Shrine Hot Spring, with its sure-fire skin-beautifying properties.



Yoshidaya

A Japanese restaurant renowned for its special “Wappa Meshizen,” a Niigata specialty. The lavish amounts of salted salmon and salmon roe brought in from the nearby fishing harbor on top of steaming hot rice makes Yoshidaya’s “Wappa Meshizen” a visual as well as culinary delight.

941-2 Yahiko, Yahiko Village, Nishikanbara-gun;
Tel: 0256-94-2020;
10 am–3 pm, 5 pm–8:30 pm;
Closed irregularly

Yoshidaya also offers innumerable other fresh treats such as seasonal sashimi and wild rock oysters. The restaurant carries a diverse selection of local sake, including Koshi no Kanbai and Secchubai.



Sakura no Yu

Fed with the waters of the Yahiko Sakuraigo Hot Spring welling up at the foot of sacred Mt. Yahiko, Sakura no Yu is the perfect place to stop by and soak up Japanese hot spring culture. Sakura no Yu has a full range of facilities, including a free flowing large outdoor bath fed directly from the spring, stone sauna, and massages. The on-site restaurant offers delicious cuisine made with local ingredients.

1970 Oaza Fumoto, Yahiko Village, Nishikanbara-gun;
Tel: 0256-94-1126;
10 am–10 pm; Closed irregularly

You can bathe in the sun on the foot bath terrace and relax while gazing out at the garden. The stones in the bath stimulate the pressure points on the soles of your feet.



Yahiko Keirin Velodrome

The only public Keirin track in Japan operated by a village. A 400 meter lap, the fierce competition on the straight after the final corner is exciting! Admission is free, so feel free to come and see exciting Keirin racing.

2621 Yahiko, Yahiko Village, Nishikanbara-gun;
Tel: 0256-94-2066;
Business days vary by races;
Closed irregularly

The all glass SpiSta studio broadcasts the track's races live over CS and the Internet.



Yu Shrine

Located among the mountains in Yahiko Park, Yu Shrine is a subordinate shrine to Yahiko Shrine and is dedicated to Onamuchi-no-mikoto and Sukunahiko-na-no-mikoto. Known to many as Ishiyakushi-Daimyojin, a shrine which aids in the healing of illness, Yu Shrine is also famous as the source of the Yahiko Hot Spring.

Yahiko, Yahiko Village (inside Yahiko Park);
Tel: 0256-94-3154 (Yahiko Tourist Association);
Open all-year around
Entry free

Shrouded by trees, Yu Shrine is one of Yahiko's famous scared power place. The shrine is said to bring good fortune in business, success in school, recovery from illness, and peace and prosperity in the home.



Yonouduya

This sweet shop sells seasonal traditional Japanese confections which have won numerous awards in National Confectionary Exposition, such as the “Kumogakure (Hidden in Clouds).” A café corner is located in the shop where visitors can enjoy a relaxing café break enjoying the Yonouduya's elegant garden.

2935-5 Yahiko, Yahiko Village, Nishikanbara-gun;
Tel: 0256-94-1823;
8:30 am–5 pm;
Closed irregularly

There are two shops in Tsubame – the main shop and shop on the national route – as well as two shops in Yahiko. Yonouduya is famous for the flavors of its confections, crafted by artisans who take the greatest care making them one by one.

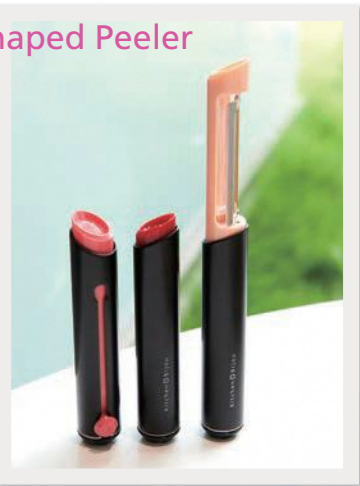


Kitchen Bijou’s Lipstick Shaped Peeler

Vegetable peelers tend to be cold and merely functional, but not this cute lipstick-shaped version. Not only does it look fun, it's also designed to be easy to use even with long nails. This one's a given if you're getting a souvenir for any women in your life.

Tojiro Open Factory
55-18 Yoshida Higashisakae Town Tsubame City;
Tel: 0256-93-4195;
10 am–6 pm;
Closed Sun., hol. (Closed irregularly Sat.)

You'll feel more trendy just putting it in your kitchen! ¥1,500 (Plus tax) each.



Sasa Dango from Kameya



Niigata is famous for its *Sasa Dango*, a traditional Japanese sweet. And Kameya is famous for its *Sasa Dango*, so much that people ask for them in Yahiko. Still hand-made one by one. Enjoy this simple and unchanged flavor.

Kameya 2918 Yahiko, Yahiko Village, Nishikanbara-gun;
Tel: 0256-94-5471;
9:30 am–5 pm;
Closed irregularly

Filled with ever-so-slightly-sweet bean paste, the chewy rice cake is flavored with Japanese mugwort. ¥700 for 5 (1 bag).

Narisawa Shoten’s Curry Beans



Perfect for snack time or with a glass of beer! Narisawa Shoten deep fries broad kind of beans in oil and covers them with a savory, sweet, and spicy flavorings – once you start, you won't stop!

Narisawa Shoten
1298 Yahiko, Yahiko Village, Nishikanbara-gun;
Tel: 0256-94-2025;
8 am–7 pm;
Never closes

This popular treat from a favorite local confectioner is now a Yahiko specialty! ¥500 for one 350 g bag.

Tsubame & Yahiko

Souvenirs

After you’ve enjoyed a fun-filled trip, be sure to share mementos with family and friends

Iyahiko Tama-Usagi – An offering worthy of Yahiko Shrine



The origin of these traditional sweets lies in the tale of the lucky rice cakes (Usa mochi) which were presented to the gods of Yahiko in ancient times. *Rakugan* sweets made with rice flour are the standard, and other variations are colored cakes and cakes filled with sweet bean paste.

Echigomisonishi Yahiko – Sasaya shop
1239 Oaza Yahiko, Yahiko Village, Nishikanbara-gun;
Tel: 0256-77-8562;
9 am–5 pm;
Closed irregularly

Iyahiko Tama-Usagi are made with *wasanbon* Japanese refined sugar and *mijinko* rice flour. Elegant and just slightly sweet, they melt in the mouth. ¥500 (plus tax) for 25.

Original *tenugui* hand towels from the Okamikai Yahiko Hot Spring Association

The design for these traditional *tenugui* hand towels was chosen via a contest run by the Okamikai Yahiko Hot Spring Association and bear a motif based on the *torii* gate at the Yahiko Shrine. Carry the good fortune of Yahiko Shrine with you wherever you go.

Available at Yahiko Hot Spring inns, hotels, and souvenir shops.

Made by Fujioka Somekojo (Echigo Kamekon-ya). Note the red torii. Comes in two colors – navy and pink. ¥1,200 each



Tsubame and Yahiko Access Map



■ By Air

1 hr. 5 min. from Narita
1 hr. 5 min. from Osaka
55 min. from Nagoya

■ By Train

2 hrs. by Shinkansen
from Tokyo Sta.

■ By Car

4 hrs. by expressway
from Tokyo



Tsubame and Yahiko Event Information

Bunsui Oiran Dochu



The origin is said to be a fancy-dress parade put together by the locals during the 1920's. The extravagant parade, held along a route with many cherry blossom trees, is overwhelming.

Date: 3rd Sunday in April

Location: Jizodo Honcho-dori Avenue and Oookozo Bunsui Sakuranamiki (row of cherry blossom trees), Tsubame City

Yahiko Lantern Festival



This solemn and mystical festival is designated a national Important Tangible Folk Cultural Property.

Date: July 24-26

Location: Yahiko Shrine, Yahiko Village; other locations

Yahiko Chrysanthemum Festival



Held at Yahiko Shrine, this festival is one of the largest chrysanthemum exhibitions in Japan.

Date: November 1-24

Location: Yahiko Shrine, Yahiko Village

Inquiries

Tsubame City Tourist Association (General incorporated foundation)

4330-1 Omagari, Tsubame, Niigata Prefecture (inside Tsubame Industrial Material Museum)
Tel: 0256-64-7630

Yahiko Tourist Association (Yahiko Tourist Information Center)

971-4 Yahiko, Yahiko Village, Nishikanbara-gun, Niigata Prefecture Tel: 0256-94-3154

Executive Office, Tsubame-Yahiko Area Tourism Coordination Association (in the Commerce and Industry Promotion Section, Tsubame City Office)

1934 Yoshida Nishiota, Tsubame City, Niigata Prefecture Tel: 0256-92-1111