

Historic Kakunodate

See samurai residences as they were 400 years ago.



Having survived floods and fires in its 400-year history, Kakunodate's bukeyashiki (samurai houses) exist much as they were hundreds of years in the past. Stroll through Kakunodate and see how the present has intertwined with its history-filled past. Founded in 1620, there were originally 250 samurai households which were in the northern section where trees have grown to great heights. 420 merchant households were located separately in the southern section. Since being controlled by the Ashina Clan 390 years ago, the samurai residential areas have remained largely unchanged. The width of the road through the Bukeyashiki residential area remains as it was during the time of the Ashina Clan.

Kakunodate Cherry Blossom Festival

Enjoy Kakunodate's wonderful cherry blossoms
One of the top 3 cherry blossom festivals in Tohoku

Whether you're relaxing on the grassy banks along the Hinokinai River or strolling through the historical samurai district, you'll be surrounded by luscious Somei-Yoshino weeping cherry blossoms. Want a memorable, picturesque photo? Look no further!

Spring

Dragon God Festival

Watch giant dragons in action!

Taiko drumming, fireworks and giant dragons (Princess Tatsuko & Hachiro Taro) in a tying-the-knot ceremony symbolize the Semboku region's mythology in this late July festival.

Summer



Fall foliage

Surround yourself in Semboku's Autumn splendor

From Tamagawa Hot Springs in the north to the Dakigari Gorge in the East to Kakunodate in the south to the length of the Nairiku Jukan Line in the west as well as Lake Tazawa in central Semboku, you'll have unfettered access to magnificent displays of autumn's colorful majesty. Regardless of where you go, you'll be able to enjoy the fall season's vivid and dramatic coloration.



Kami-Hinokinai Floating Lantern Festival

Amazing giant floating paper lanterns!

Where else can one go to see up to a hundred paper lanterns (up to 12 meters tall) decorated with various woodblock prints fly into the night sky? Bring your warm clothes as this amazing festival takes place annually on February 10th, so be prepared. Don't let the cold weather deter you as this is a must-see event!

Winter

Kakunodate

Aoyagi Samurai House

See actual samurai armor and weapons on display!

In the Armory, view armor, weapons and flags that were actually used from the 15th through the 19th centuries. See a rare triple-barrelled matchlock, double-breasted black-lacquered armor as well as folding armor. Try your hand at holding an authentic Japanese samurai sword or a Katana Yari (Japanese spear).



Rickshaws

Take a ride back in time

Would you like to experience riding in a rickshaw in the Kakunodate samurai district? Learn about local samurai history with a private historical tour (15 min., 30 min., 1 hour) while riding in rickshaws.

Nishinomiya House & Shops

Semboku's rich history on display

Here you can visit shops located in buildings from the Meiji and Taisho periods. Inside, you will find a café restaurant, storehouse, souvenir shop and a Taisho-era garden.



The Four Seasons of Kakunodate

Enjoy Kakunodate's unique four seasons

From the white of winter to the bright greens of spring and summer to the multi-colored hues of fall, see Kakunodate as it has been viewed since the days of the samurai.



Kakunodate Sanso Wabizakura

A 200-year-old exclusive chalet

Each room has both tatami mat and living room areas along with a private hot spring bath as well, combining both the East and the West. Futons and western beds are both available depending on your personal preference. A mere 10-minute drive from Kakunodate's samurai estates, Wabizakura is a very convenient luxury after a full day of enjoying the local history.



Kakunodate Yamagrouji Festival

A dramatic 3-day samurai festival dating back hundreds of years!

Designated as an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO, this 300+ years old tradition features large floats (Hikiyama) carrying drummers, flutists and dancers who perform endlessly even while the floats crash into each other, both attempting to win the right of way to continue onward on one-way roads. Who will prevail?



Kakunodate Tourist Map



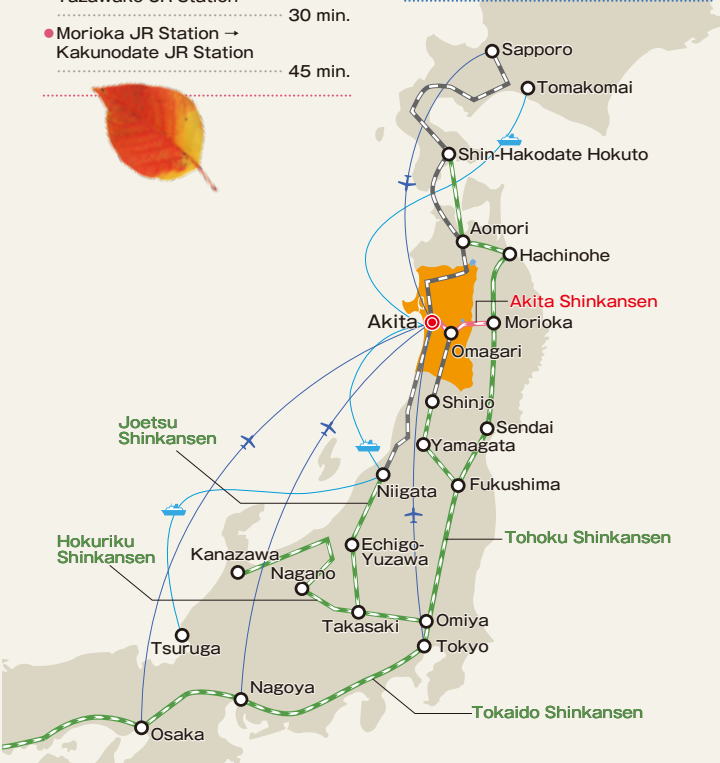
Transportation Guide

Access via Akita Shinkansen

- Tokyo JR Station → Tazawako JR Station 2 hrs, 50 min.
- Tokyo JR Station → Kakunodate JR Station 3 hrs.
- Sendai JR Station → Tazawako JR Station 1 hr., 15 min.
- Sendai JR Station → Kakunodate JR Station 1 hr., 30 min.
- Morioka JR Station → Tazawako JR Station 30 min.
- Morioka JR Station → Kakunodate JR Station 45 min.

Access via Airplane

- ⇒To Akita Airport from:
 - Tokyo (Haneda Int'l) 1 hr., 10 min.
 - Sapporo (Chitose Int'l Airport) 1 hr.
 - Osaka (Itami Int'l Airport) 1 hr., 30 min.
 - Nagoya (Chubu Int'l Airport) 1 hr., 25 min.
- ⇒To Odate-Noshiro Airport from:
 - Tokyo (Haneda Int'l) 1 hr., 15 min.



Tourist Information

- Tazawako Tourist Information Center (Folake) ☎0187-43-2111
- Semboku Tourist Information Center (Kakunodate Ekimae) ☎0187-54-2700
- Nishiki Tourist Information ☎0187-42-8480
- Semboku City Rural Experience Association ☎0187-43-2277



Nyuto Hot Spring Village

Are you ready to relax?

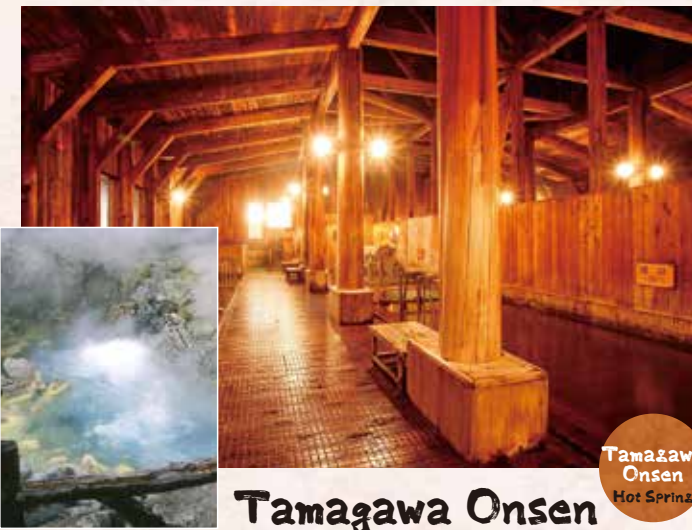
Along the foothills of the Towada-Hachimantai National Park lie 7 hot springs, collectively known as Nyuto Hot Spring Village. Of the seven hot springs, each has its own private geothermal source which is not shared as is with most other hot springs. In the Nyuto area, there are more than 10 different kinds of hot springs, each having its own specific properties.



Tsurunoyu Onsen

Feel 350 years of history at this well-hidden hot spring!

Established in the Edo period (1600's), Tsurunoyu is Nyuto's oldest hot spring. Each rustic room has a sunken fireplace which is rarely seen elsewhere nowadays. Tsurunoyu has 4 different types of hot springs, one of which is a world rarity in which you can bath in the actual geothermal source!



Tamagawa Onsen

The Earth lives! See an onsen like you've never seen before

Inside, you have access to hot springs with the highest P.H. levels (1.2) in Japan! Outside, prepare for a visual treat as you come close to highly active thermal vents blasting out steam at high volume in what looks to be a lunar landscape.



Taenoyu Onsen

Enjoy a mixed bath onsen next to a mountain stream

For those foregoing the outdoor mixed bath, Taenoyu is unique in that it rotates their baths so that everyone has a chance to experience the 2 different types of springs on hand.



Ogama Onsen

Enjoy a leisurely bath at this historic, wooden former school

Previously a school, Ogama has a distinctive flavor all its own. Outside, footbaths await weary hikers while inside, one can enjoy unique spring water resembling green tea.



Magoroku Onsen

A small village of huts greet you here

Nestled in the bottom of a gorge, enjoy being surrounded by trees, mountains and a sparkling stream. Enjoy "onsen huts" that differ from other hot springs.(Autumn 2024 Grand Reopening)



Ganiba Onsen

Surrounded by nature!

Founded in 1846, Ganiba was named after crabs (kani/gani) in the river next to the hot springs.

Kuroyu Onsen

An old-fashioned onsen nestled in the mountains

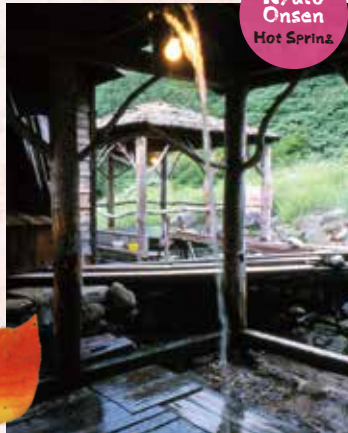
Known for its black-colored eggs boiled in hot spring water, Kuroyu also offers medicinal hot spring, a traditional method of healing. Long-term stays are available here.



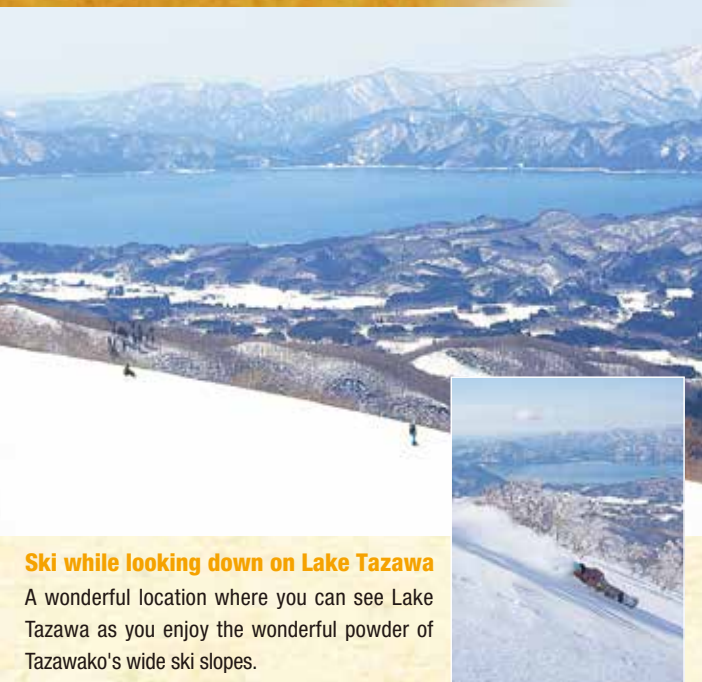
Kyukamura Nyuto-Onsenkyo

The only local onsen surrounded by a beech forest

Enjoy a relaxing hot spring soak while surrounded by beech trees after taking a hiking tour of the Towada-Hachimantai wilderness. .



Tazawako Ski Area



Ski while looking down on Lake Tazawa

A wonderful location where you can see Lake Tazawa as you enjoy the wonderful powder of Tazawako's wide ski slopes.

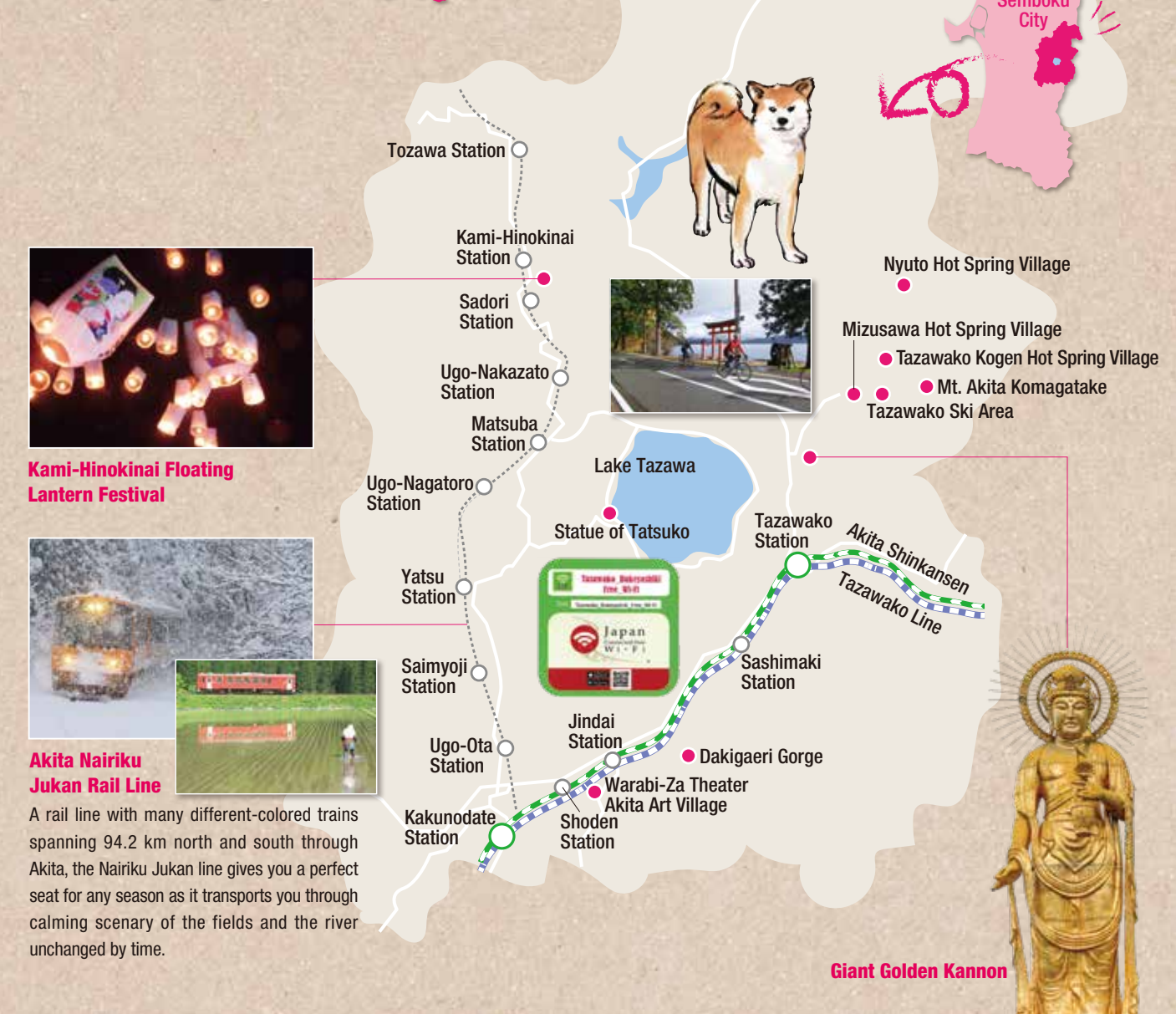


Dragon Eye

"Visit this yearly natural phenomenon See the giant eye of a dragon!"

Located in the Hachimantai area, this giant dragon eye appears every year for just a short period in the middle of May to the middle of June. As it's highly weather-dependent, no one knows exactly when to visit. If you go and are able to see it in its full glory, you're said to be very lucky! Due to its beauty as well as mysteriousness, it's a highly recommended place to visit.

Semboku Area Map



The Legend of Tatsuko

The beautiful woman who transformed into a dragon and still lives in Lake Tazawa

There once was a young woman of renowned beauty from the Tazawa region. She wanted to preserve her beauty forever, so she prayed at a temple at the base of Mt. Okura every night for 100 days. On the 100th evening, the goddess of mercy bade her to drink from a magical spring far to the north.

Not wishing to worry her mother, as she set out, she said she was going to search for some wild vegetables. After passing through numerous mountain passes, at long last, she reached the spring. Doing as she had been instructed, she drank from the mountain spring. However, she became ever more thirsty the more she drank, eventually sticking her whole face in the water drinking until the spring went dry. At this point, she realized she had become a dragon and returned to Lake Tazawa.

Tatsuko's mother, grief-stricken upon learning of her daughter's transformation, threw her torch into Lake Tazawa. The blackened torch became what we now call Nishimasu (Black Kokanee) which live in Lake Tazawa to this day.

Yama-no-Hachimitsurya (Honey Shop)

Honey on a pizza? Yes! Enjoy Semboku's special honey products

Enjoy many special honey flavors and the numerous locally-produced goods made from those honeys. Try out our aromatic coffee with honey-flavored sweets as well as honey ice cream topped with bee-shaped chocolates. Surrounded by majestic nature, you can also feast your eyes as well.

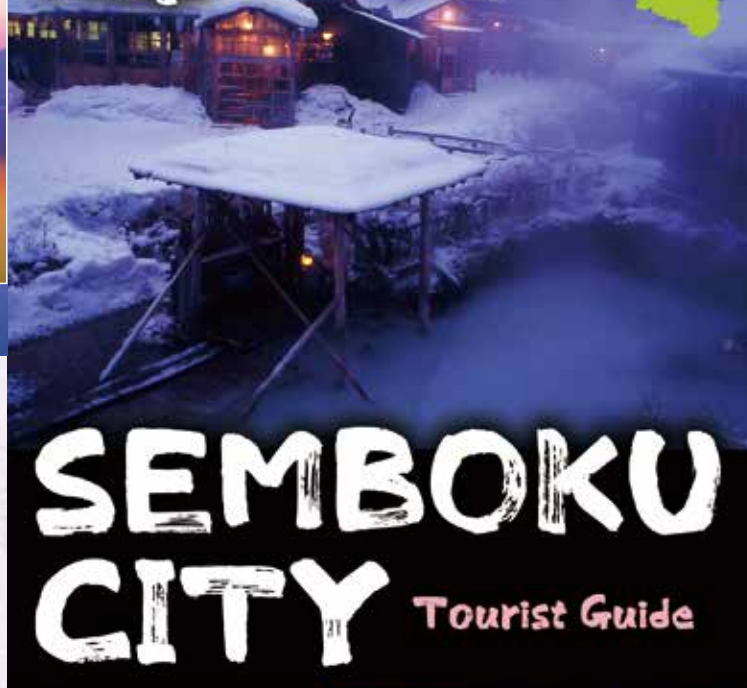


The Sister Lake

Not a sister city, but a sister lake!

Commemorating their sister lake agreement with Kaohsiung in 1987, Semboku sent a statue of Tatsuko to Taiwan, where it now stands next to Cheng Ching Lake.

Nyuto Hot Spring Village



Tazawako Ski Area



Dakigaeri Gorge



Magical blue waters and a mountain waterfall

Dakigaeri Gorge is called the Yabakei (famous gorge in Oita Prefecture) of northeast Japan. With virgin forests on both sides of a magnificently-hued powder blue river as well as a mountain waterfall tucked away in the forest, you'll have several chances to make your Instagram account shine with the photos you can take here. The view from the bridge that you first see when arriving at Dakigaeri (called the Stone Bridge of the Gods) is wonderful!

Rural Tourism

Enjoy a local country experience!



Take your pick of numerous B&Bs, lodges and local farm houses and enjoy "Green Tourism" by becoming part of a family with a homestay experience unique to Semboku!

Recommended Itineraries

Kakunodate Area	History	Ishiguro Samurai House
		Aoyagi Samurai House
		Iwahashi Samurai House
		Matsumoto Samurai House
	Participatory	Kawarada Samurai House
		Odano Samurai House
		Ando Jyozo
		Nishinomiya House
	Scenic	Kabazaiku Denshokan (Cherry Bark Woodcraft Heritage Center)
		Rickshaws
		Tatetsu House (Try on a Kimono!)
		Samurai Residence Street
	Food	Hinokinae River
		Dakigaeri Gorge
		Okaribayaki
		Inaniwa Udon Noodles
Lake Tazawa Area	History	Goza-no-Ishi Shrine
		Cycling
		Canoeing
		Lake Swimming
	Scenic	Statue of Tatsuko
		Inaniwa Udon Noodles
		Hot Springs
		Hot Spring Tour
Nyuto Onsen	Participatory	Yama-no-Imo Nabe (Local hot pot favorite)
		Akita Nairiku Jukan Rail Line
		Hot Springs
		Tamagawa Hot Springs
Nishiki Area	Other	Dragon Eye

Transportation Details

Station	Time required
From Kakunodate JR Station to:	The Samurai District (15 min. walk)
	Tazawako JR Station (Tazawako JR Line, 20 min.; by Shinkansen, 13 min.)
	Tazawako JR Station (by car, 30 min.)
	Dakigaeri Gorge (by car, 15 min.)
From Tazawako JR Station to:	The Statue of Tatsuko (by car, 30 min.)
	Kakunodate JR Station (Tazawako JR Line, 20 min.; by Shinkansen, 13 min.)
	Kakunodate JR Station (by car, 30 min.)
	The Statue of Tatsuko (by shuttle bus - get off at Katajiri, 35 min.)
From Yatsu Station to:	The Nyuto Onsen area (by shuttle bus - ~50 min. depending on each hot spring)
	Dakigaeri Gorge (by car, 20 min.)
	Tamagawa Onsen (by car, 1 hr.)
	Kakunodate JR Station (via the Nairiku Jukan Rail Line, 15 min.)

For Active People (via car rental)

1st Day	Arrive at Tazawako JR Station, rent vehicle
	Lake Tazawa canoeing & cycling experience
	Stay overnight in the Tazawako area
2nd Day	Visit Dragon Eye (seasonal), Mt. Akita Komagatake (Other seasons)
	Experience Tamagawa Hot Springs
	Stay overnight at Tamagawa Hot Springs
3rd Day	Scenic walk through Dakigaeri Gorge
	Visit Kinpo Shrine
	Walk through Kakunodate's Samurai District

For History Buffs

1st Day	Arrive at Kakunodate JR Station
	Try on a Kimono
	Ride in a rickshaw
2nd Day	Experience the Kakunodate area
	Stay overnight in the Kakunodate area
3rd Day	Visit the Statue of Tatsuko
	Visit the Goza-no-Ishi Shrine
	Take a scenic walk through Dakigaeri Gorge
4th Day	Watch Warabi-Za Theater
	Stay overnight in the Tazawako area
5th Day	Take a tour of several Nyuto-area hot springs
	Hike around beech forest

For Those Interested in Rural Tourism / Farm Homestays

1st Day	Arrive at Kakunodate JR Station
	Walk through historic Kakunodate
	Help harvest at a local farm
2nd Day	Local farm homestay
	Work in the fields of a local farm
	Canoeing & swimming at Lake Tazawa
3rd Day	Stay overnight in the Tazawako area
	Sight-see and bathe at Tamagawa Onsen
	Walk around Tamagawa Nature Research Road