

AIZU WAKAMATSU INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION MONTHLY ENGLISH NEWSLETTER

SynthesAizu

January 2021
Volume 1 Issue 1

Association News

Nola's Craft Corner

Valentine's Brownies!

Join us in early February for our next craft corner event! This time, we'll be making some festive Valentine's brownies. Come bake a sweet treat for your special someone, or for yourself! *design subject to change
Instructions will be in English with Japanese support available.
Keep an eye on social media for more details!

Date: February 13th, Saturday **Time:** 10:00~12:30

Place: Aizu Wakamatsu City Learning Center
Cooking Studio 1F

Aizuwakamatsu-shi, Sakaemachi, 3-50

Please contact the AWIA by phone or email to sign up!



Free Stuff!

As part of our end-of-year purge and cleaning, the AWIA is **giving away** some of our books, children's toys, and trinkets. If you'd like to peruse the items available, feel free to drop in during open hours **through January 10th!**



After that day, we'll be donating whatever is left to a consignment store, so don't snooze on this chance to claim dibs on something good!

Board Game Festival - Enjoy board games from around the world!

In lieu of our annual New Year's potluck event, this year the AWIA will be hosting a winter boardgame bonanza! Come enjoying playing classic board games from around the world with fellow AWIA members! Our game lineup will include classics like mancala and UNO, as well as lesser-known games such as Dutch Blitz and Rubik's Race! We've chosen games that are easy to learn and quick to play, so board game beginners and children are also encouraged to participate!

Date: January 31st, (Sun)

Time: 13:00 - 16:00

Place: Aizu Wakamatsu City Learning Center,
Multipurpose Hall 1F
Aizuwakamatsu-shi, Sakaemachi, 3-50

If you'd like to add a game to the event, or if you are willing to assist as a volunteer, please join us for our volunteer's meeting on Sunday, January 24th at 13:00. The meeting will be held at the AWIA. Volunteers will get to test out the games and practice playing them.



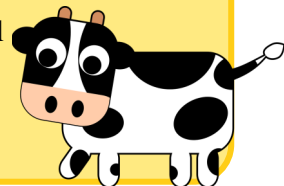
会津若松市国際交流協会

AIZU WAKAMATSU INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Happy 2021, the Year of the Cow!

Happy 2021! Here's to a brand new year, and hopefully a better one than last year. As you probably know, 2021 is the year of the cow in zodiac mythology. Since the zodiac years are based on the lunar calendar, the year of the cow will truly begin on February 12, 2021 and end January 31, 2022. The year of the cow is the second in the 12-year zodiac cycle, and is sometimes represented by an ox or a water buffalo in other cultures.

According to old zodiac mythology, a great race was held to determine the order that the 12 years in the zodiac cycle would be named. Twelve animals were called together by a great deity, and asked to participate in the race. The finish line for the race was located on the far bank of a deep river, which the animals had to swim across to reach. The cow, who was strong and compassionate, offered to carry the small rat across the river on its back. Just as the cow was about to cross the finish line, the ungrateful rat leapt off the cow's back to reach the riverbank first. The rat placed first in the race, and the cow second. As such, the year of the cow is the second year in the zodiac cycle. It's said that people born in the year of the cow are hardworking, honest, reliable, and kind.



Shinmei-dori New Year's Market

Aizu's annual New Year's Market is scheduled to take place on January 10th. Due to COVID-19, the market will be limited to Shinmei-dori this year.

Market Hours: January 10th, 8:00 - 22:00
(Set-up will begin January 9th, at 13:00)

*Please note that Shinmei-dori will be closed to vehicle traffic on the day of the market.

Art Exhibit: "Mucha to Manga"

"Mucha to Manga - The Magic of Line

Koriyama City Art Museum

December 12, 2020 - March 7, 2021

Adults: ¥1500, Students: ¥900

**Free admission for Junior high students and under*

(The Museum will be closed December 28th - January 4th)

From now until March 7th, the Koriyama City Art Museum will feature this special Mucha exhibition. According to the museum website, "This exhibition features posters and other graphic art by Alphonse Mucha (1860-1939). Also on display, the exhibition showcases illustrations in literary magazines from the Meiji era, graphic arts that swept over the US and UK in the 1960s to 1970s, and modern works of Japanese manga creators and artists that display influence from Mucha's works."

How to Onsen When You've Got Ink

For many onsen fans, winter is the best time to enjoy a trip to the hot springs. Nothing beats the experience of relaxing in an outdoor bath, surrounded by a thick blanket of snow. What's not so relaxing however, is trying to visit an onsen when you have tattoos. Sometimes it can be a hassle to find an onsen that will embrace your ink, so here are three tips to help our tattooed friends find their dream winter oasis.

1) Search for a Tattoo-friendly Onsen Online

The easiest way to find an ink-friendly onsen is to search "Tattoo Friendly," an English database of hot springs all over Japan. They have information not only on onsen, but tattoo-friendly gyms and beaches as well. You can find their site at the address below.

<https://tattoo-friendly.jp/>

2) Ask Ahead

As many people know, the stigma against tattoos in Japan stems from old associations with Japanese mafia members, who often got tattoos to prove their resolve. While this stigma is still prevalent in Japan, more and more people are starting to become aware of tattoo traditions in other cultures. Now, some onsen are willing to bend their tattoo rules for non-Japanese natives if you call ahead and ask.

3) Consider Reserving a Private Bath

This method is for only the most dedicated onsen fans, as it usually costs quite a bit. Still, reserving a private bath is by far the safest way to avoid ruffling the feathers of any tattoo-hating bathers. Private baths also provide a luxurious opportunity for those who are understandably shy about disrobing in front of their neighbor's grandma.



January Around the World

New Year's Around the World

Russia



In Russia, one way to bring good fortune for the new year is to write a wish on a piece of paper, burn it, and pour the ashes into a glass of champagne. At the stroke of midnight, friends and family toast the new year, and drink their champagne ashes and all. In the past, New Year's in Russia was celebrated on January 14th according to the Russian Orthodox calendar. Now, most festivities are held during the "new" New Year on January 1st, but many people still observe the "old" New Year by spending the day with their families on January 14th.

China



China celebrates the Lunar New Year, which typically occurs between late January and early February, according to the lunar calendar. There are a wide array of traditional New Year's festivities in China, such as eating *nian gao* (year cake) or *jiaozi* dumplings, setting off fireworks, and watching traditional dances. One of the most spectacular traditions of the Lunar New Year is the lantern festival, which is held in cities and towns all over China. Ornate and colorful lanterns of all shapes and sizes light up the night as people ring in the new year.



Spain



One of the most popular ways to ring in the new year in Spain is to eat 12 grapes at the stroke of midnight. It's believed that if you can eat one grape for every chime of the 12 o'clock hour, your wish for the new year will be granted. It might sound easy, but when was the last time you tried fitting 12 grapes in your mouth at once? Aside from grapes, Spain is home to a variety of unique new year's traditions and superstitions. For example, it's believed that wearing red underwear on new year's eve will grant good luck in finding love during the coming year.

Denmark



In Denmark, people save up broken and unused plates throughout the year, and toss them at their friend's doorsteps on New Year's eve. Although it may seem like an odd form of vandalism, this tradition is a way show affection for friends and family. Waking up on New Year's day to a huge pile of broken plates on your doorstep is considered a sign of popularity.



Israel

Jewish communities in Israel and around the world observe the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashana. Rosh Hashana usually takes place over two days in September, and celebrates the day God created the earth. Jewish people often celebrate by reflecting on the past year, eating sweet foods like fruit and honey, and blowing a special horn called a shofar.

Events in January

1	FR	Closed
2	SA	Closed
3	SU	Closed
4	MO	Closed
5	TU	
6	WE	
7	TH	
8	FR	
9	SA	
10	SU	10:00 Children's Nihongo Hiroba Aizu Wakamatsu New Year's Market
11	MO	Closed
12	TU	13:30 Nihongo Salon
13	WE	
14	TH	
15	FR	
16	SA	
17	SU	Closed
18	MO	Closed
19	TU	13:30 Nihongo Salon
20	WE	
21	TH	
22	FR	
23	SA	
24	SU	10:00 Children's Nihongo Hiroba 13:00 Game Festival Volunteer Meeting
25	MO	Closed
26	TU	13:30 Nihongo Salon
27	WE	
28	TH	
29	FR	
30	SA	13:30 Newsletter Release Preparation
31	SU	13:00 Board Games of the World Festival

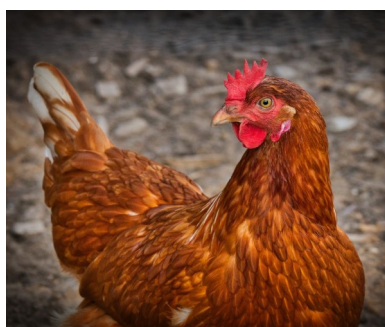
Other Information

Aizu's "Shoku no Jin" Winter Theme

Aizu's "Shoku no Jin" is a year-round food festival that challenges restaurants and businesses to highlight local products by following a menu "theme" for each season. The theme for winter is "Aizu Chicken."

Starting January 1st and running through the end of March, 74 local restaurants, shops, and hotels will be offering limited-time menu items that feature locally-raised Chicken.

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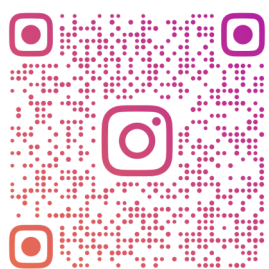


Visit the Shoku no Jin homepage (Japanese) for details about participating shops and menu offerings:
<https://aizu-shokuno-jin.jp/>

Message from the Editor

Happy New Year everyone! Thank you very much for reading the first official issue of our new English newsletter, "SynthesAizu"! I've greatly enjoyed working on the newsletter so far, and I hope to bring in even better content throughout the year ahead! With everything that's happened in the past year, it feels nice to have a fresh start and I'm looking forward to seeing what 2021 brings. Recently, we've seen a few parts in the clouds with the first COVID vaccines being administered, and talk of life potentially returning to normal sometime in early summer. Until then, please take care, stay warm, and don't forget to wash your hands!

-Nola



We're on Instagram!
Follow us for photos and news about our upcoming events!



AWIA_PHOTO

<http://facebook.com/awiajp>



Visit our Facebook page for the latest updates in multiple languages!

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