



Toyama Shimotsuki Festival



Festivals in Iida

Iida City in Southern Nagano is called a “treasure-box of folk arts” because of the many old festivals they have preserved.

The Shimotsuki Kagura, which are held in the coldest months of winter (December-January) are festivals to pray for the revival of all living things. These festivals include the Toyama Shimotsuki Festival in Iida, and the Sakabe Winter Festival in Tenryu Village, which have continued for over 800 years.

In the summer month of August, Bon festivals are celebrated to welcome Shinto and Buddhism gods and the spirits of ancestors. Niino Bon Dance in Anan Town is especially famous.

These old festivals are held deep in the mountains, supported by piety and prayers of the people living in such harsh environments.

In the Edo Period (1603-1867), puppet shows and Kabuki were introduced to the Iida area, and were soon performed during local festivals. They served to help people escape from their daily lives, and gave them renewed energy.

In the Meiji Period (1868-1912), shishi-mai (lion dance) became popular. Unique shishi-mai dances were dedicated at various shrines, and have been handed down to the present day.

The largest local festival is the Oneri Festival, which is held once every 6 years. The highlights of the festival are Daimyo-gyoretsu, a reenactment of an Edo Period feudal lord’s procession, and Higashino Oshishi, a Shishi-mai dance by a giant lion more than 20 meters long.



Tokimata Floating Lantern Festival



