

The colorful festivities start on the first day at around 7.30 pm with a fireworks display, followed by the lantern procession, which features the lamps attached on large poles and carried through the streets from the public bath house Juodo no Yu to Yuzawa Shrine via Oyu-dori Street. Don't miss the performance of Sarutohiko no Mikoto, a Shinto deity who carries out a purifying ritual known as *shimekiri*. The deity rhythmically swings a large lit torch before cutting a ceremonial rope with a *katana* sword. Since this unique spectacle usually lasts until midnight, stay sated with some tasty local snacks, which are sold at stalls along the street.