

【Winter Events】

Tōkamachi's winters can be long and oppressive, with several months of heavy snowfall. Numerous events are held each year to lift people's spirits.

Tōkamachi Snow Festival (Mid-February)

The Tōkamachi Snow Festival began in 1950 after Hirohito, the Shōwa Emperor (1901-1989), suggested that an activity be established to help local residents enjoy the winter and appreciate the beauty of snow. During the festival, local residents create gigantic snow sculptures and hold various events to promote the region, such as a kimono show, live music shows, and a fireworks display.

Echigo-Tsumari Fireworks (Early March)

The Echigo-Tsumari Fireworks and "Gift for Frozen Village" event is a breathtaking visual spectacle and the highlight of the Snow Art Festival. A firework display is held over a snowfield scattered with colored LEDs called the "seeds of light." Spectators can savor local delicacies served at food stalls while enjoying the crystalline snowscape illuminated by the largest fireworks display in the region.

Snow Carnival Nakasato (Second Weekend in March)

The Snow Carnival Nakasato opens with the lighting of 20,000 candles laid out across a snowy field, many of which are decorated by the attendees. Some of the carnival's events include snow-soccer, tubing, and a fireworks display. The event culminates in a procession of torches carried by skiers through the massive, sprawling field of lights.

Echigo-Matsudai Fuyu no Jin (Mid-March)

The Fuyu no Jin, or "winter campaign," is a two-day festival held every year in the spirit of conquering the snow and making it fun. The festival's climax is the "Snow Iron Man Race," in which 500 participants race to reach the Matsudai Castle ruins and reclaim them from the "Shogun of Winter." The 3-kilometer course crosses a variety of obstacles and climbs 200 meters in elevation. The winner receives 150 kilograms of locally grown rice and is made the honorary lord of Matsudai Castle for one year.