

Noshiro Harbor Fireworks Festival

During the annual fireworks display in Noshiro, around 15,000 pyrotechnics are launched into the summer sky as part of a huge 90-minute show. The event takes place over the city's harbor area on the third Saturday in July, after the end of the rainy season. Four Akita-based companies supply the fireworks, and they compete to deliver the most spectacular effects.

The bulk of the display consists of “star-mines.” Each is a computer-controlled series of fireworks launched in rapid succession that burst into a variety of colorful patterns accompanied by auditory effects and a musical soundtrack. The largest of these fireworks are *sanjaku-dama*, 91-centimeter shells that create explosions of light up to a kilometer in diameter. The Noshiro display is the only one in the Tōhoku region that features *sanjaku-dama*.

The first harbor fireworks display was held in 1958, but the shows were halted in 1979 over safety concerns related to a large amount of timber stored at a nearby wharf. The festival was relaunched in 2003 as the Noshiro Harbor Fireworks Festival (*Minato Matsuri Noshiro no Hanabi*).

Tickets bought in advance range from ¥1,000 to ¥4,000, and tables for two, three, and four people are available for ¥11,000, ¥12,000, and ¥14,000, respectively. Tickets are sometimes on sale the day of the festival, but advance booking is advised since the event usually sells out. Advance arrangements for accommodation and transportation are also recommended.