

Snow Lantern Festival

The Snow Lantern Festival is one of the highlights of the year in Miyama, which often receives heavy snowfall in winter. The weeklong annual festival takes place in the Kayabuki no Sato village of thatched-roof houses, beginning on the last Saturday in January. Anyone is welcome to take part in building the snow lanterns among the village's houses. They are lit with candles or LEDs in the evening. Simple lanterns can be made by overturning buckets of snow and hollowing out the middle. In contrast, some participants go the extra mile, designing abstract-looking tealight holders that seem to come to life when lit up or lanterns that double as sculptures depicting popular animated characters. There are food and drink stalls in the village during the festival. Some of the houses continue to light their lanterns through late February.

In February, the town of Miyama organizes a separate snow festival at a sports field across the Yura River from Kayabuki no Sato. The program includes family-friendly events such as snow sculpture contests, sledding, and playful snow sports tournaments. Participation is free, and there are direct shuttle buses to the venue from central Kyoto and back.