

Nagaoka City

Nagaoka is the second-largest city in Niigata Prefecture and is situated along the Sea of Japan, across the strait from Sado Island. The city has been a center of agriculture and manufacturing for centuries, with a focus on rice farming, sake brewing, and fermented food production. It is known for its variety of historic shrines and temples, tasty regional food, breathtaking landscapes, hot-spring inns, cultural events, and a world-class fireworks festival.

History

Nagaoka was established as a domain under the Tokugawa shogunate in the early seventeenth century. Local history is usually traced to the time when the warlord Hori Naoyori (1577–1639) began to build Nagaoka Castle in the area now occupied by Nagaoka Station. In 1618, the Makino family took over construction, and successive generations of the family ruled Nagaoka as daimyo lords for over 250 years.

During the chaotic Boshin War (1868–1869), Nagaoka allied with pro-shogunate domains and suffered defeat against the pro-imperial forces of the new government. Nagaoka was devastated in the aftermath but underwent a rapid reconstruction period in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During World War II, heavy firebombing again reduced much of the city to rubble, but it rallied once more to rebuild and flourish.

Natural Beauty

The terrain within the city limits of Nagaoka is remarkably diverse, encompassing fields, mountains, forests, and coastline. Vast rice fields, winding rivers, coastal fisheries, lush forests, steeply terraced fields and ponds, snow-capped mountains, and vibrant maple-tree-filled gardens are just some of the sights to enjoy throughout the seasons.

Cuisine

Nagaoka has long been a renowned center of sake production, and 15 sake breweries currently operate in the city. The Settaya district is known for fermented food production and its many traditional breweries, while the Teradomari area is famous for the fresh seafood sold at Teradomari Fish Market Street.

Ramen lovers may appreciate the distinct regional style of ginger and soy sauce ramen, which was developed in Nagaoka to help people withstand the frigid weather. Other famous local specialties include *hegi soba* (a variety of buckwheat noodles), *tochio aburage* (thick, deep-fried tofu), and *sasa dango* (mugwort-infused sweets filled with red bean paste and wrapped in bamboo leaves).

Land of Fireworks

On August 2 and 3, the Nagaoka Fireworks Festival lights up the night sky over the Shinano River with a brilliant display of over 20,000 fireworks.

The show, which lasts nearly two hours, attracts more than a million people

each year and is considered one of the top fireworks festivals in the country.

Access

Nagaoka is located a mere 1 hour and 40 minutes away from Tokyo on the high-speed Joetsu Shinkansen. Limited Express trains also allow visitors to access Nagaoka easily from major cities throughout the country.