



Northern Honshū (Tōhoku)

Includes ➔

Niigata	495
Sado-ga-shima	497
Fukushima Prefecture	507
Bandai Plateau	510
Yamagata	513
Dewa Sanzan	517
Akita	521
Aomori	529
Hirosaki	533
Towada-ko	536
Morioka	541
Tōno	546
Sendai	552

Best Onsen

- ➔ Nyūtō Onsen (p528)
- ➔ Aoni Onsen (p539)
- ➔ Sukayu Onsen (p538)
- ➔ Zaō Onsen (p515)
- ➔ Akiu Onsen (p553)

Best Hikes

- ➔ Dewa Sanzan (p517)
- ➔ Hakkōda-san (p538)
- ➔ Iwaki-san (p536)
- ➔ Akita Komaga-take (p527)
- ➔ Oirase Keiryū (p537)

Why Go?

Tōhoku (東北; 'northeast') is Japan's rugged north, a land of hulking volcanic massifs, remote hot springs, ancient folklore and unique customs born of centuries of isolation.

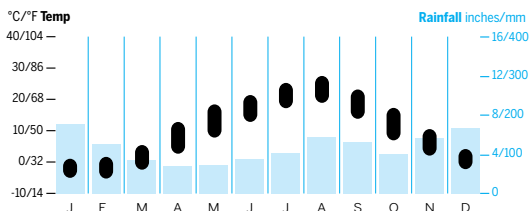
This was a land where, aside from the dramatic and beautiful passage of the seasons, nothing much changed, until the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami changed everything, levelling many coastal communities in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures. Today, new life emerges slowly, with trepidation and courage from the devastation.

The undamaged landscapes of Niigata, Yamagata, Akita and Aomori prefectures are as dramatic and rewarding as ever, home to vibrant festivals and traditions, sensational snow resorts, healing hot springs, mountain hikes along ancient pilgrimage routes, and samurai-era villages.

There's never been a better time to explore Japan's culturally diverse, stunningly beautiful, rugged, great north, and your visit can really make a difference.

When to Go

Aomori



Dec–Feb Skiing galore, winter festivals and *yukimiburo*: onsen snowgazing.

Jun–Aug Mild summers come to life with spirited festivals and magnificent greenery.

Sep–Oct A brief but intense autumn is marked by spectacular displays of foliage.

Northern Honshū (Tōhoku) Highlights

- 1 Following the footsteps of the *yamabushi* (mountain priests) through the sacred peaks of **Dewa Sanzan** (p517).
- 2 Making pilgrimage to the mountaintop temple of **Yamadera** (p519), as poet Matsuo Bashō once did.
- 3 Soaking away your worries at **Nyūto Onsen** (p528), in the mountains above pretty Tazawa-ko.
- 4 Escaping the mainland crush on scenic **Sado-ga-shima** (p497) island.
- 5 Venturing back to a time of samurai, on the streets of **Kakunodate** (p525).
- 6 Dodging the 'ice monsters' at **Zaō Onsen** (p515).
- 7 Opening your heart along the tsunami-ravaged **Sanriku Kaigan** (p549).
- 8 Contemplating life at other-worldly Ozore-san on the **Shimokita Peninsula** (p539).
- 9 Frolicking around the verdant shores of **Towada-ko** (p536).

