

What the history tells us

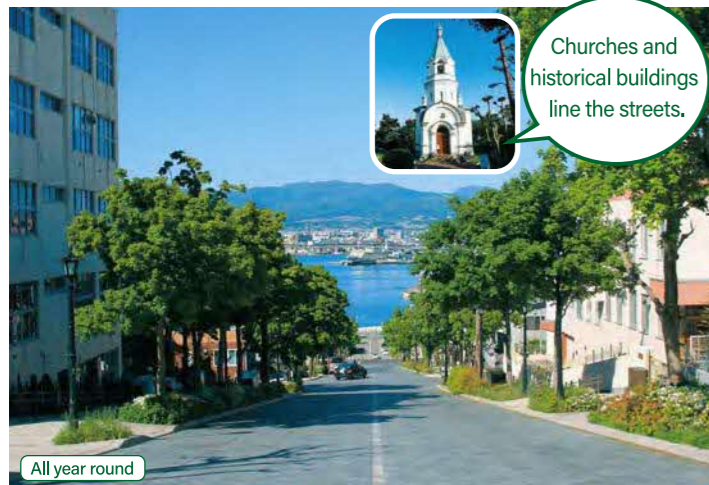
Southern Hokkaido retains many distinctive historical and cultural features. Follow in the footsteps of history, and reminisce on the past.



Hakodate Goryokaku special historic site

Goryokaku is a star-shaped fort. It is designated as a national special historic site, the former scene of the Hakodate War, the last battle of the Boshin War, and is famous for its cherry blossoms in spring and its illuminated moat in winter. In 2010, Hakodate Magistrate's Office was restored and opened.

● Inquiries: Cultural Properties Division, Hakodate City Board of Education Tel. 0138-21-3456 All year round



Churches and historical buildings line the streets.

All year round

Hakodate Motomachi area

Hakodate

Retro-looking buildings and churches line the cobblestone slopes, giving the area an exotic atmosphere. There are also many cafes and other facilities that have been created by renovating old private homes.



Apr. - Nov.

Matsumae Castle Museum (Fukuyama Castle)

Matsumae

The Matsumae Castle Museum is located in the designated Matsumae Castle (Fukuyama Castle) national historic site. The castle tower welcomes many visitors as the Matsumae Castle Museum.

● Inquiries: Matsumae Castle Museum, Tel. 0139-42-2216



All year round

Ikarinkan (Kikonai Town Museum)

Kikonai

This museum exhibits artifacts excavated from ruins in the town, as well as tools used in agriculture, forestry, and fishing, which were used to be the main industries of the town. An anchor presumed to have belonged to the great ship Kairin Maru, dating to the end of the Edo period, was pulled up from the waters off Cape Saraki in Kikonai Town, and is also on display while research about it continues.

● Inquiries: Ikarinkan, Tel. 01392-2-4366



Apr. - Nov.

Pirika Paleolithic Culture Museum

Imakane

In addition to viewing the exhibited valuable stone tools excavated from the Pirika Site, visitors can also learn about the environment and culture of the Paleolithic period through explanatory panels and videos, and experience making stone tools and various accessories.

● Inquiries: Pirika Paleolithic Culture Museum, Tel. 0137-83-2477



Apr. 10 - early Nov.

Matsumae Clan Residence

Matsumae

In the days of the feudal government, Matsumae was said to be livelier than Edo (Tokyo) in May. Products and culture travelled along the sea route of the Kitamae-bune cargo ships, creating a rich and prosperous town on the northern frontier. A total of 14 buildings recreate the Matsumae of those days. Enjoy a time slip back to the Edo period.

● Inquiries: Matsumae Tourism Association, Tel. 0139-43-2439



Mar. 17 - Nov. 30

Yokozuna Chiyonoyama & Chiyonofuji Memorial Museum

Fukushima

Fukushima is the birthplace of the 41st and 58th yokozuna (grand champion) sumo wrestlers, Yokozuna Chiyonoyama and Yokozuna Chiyonofuji, respectively. Visitors can learn about the history of these two great yokozuna and the culture of sumo wrestling. There are many valuable exhibits, such as the trophies received for winning the championship and Chiyonofuji's ginkgo-leaf-shaped topknot cut off when he retired from sumo.

● Inquiries: Yokozuna Chiyonoyama & Chiyonofuji Memorial Museum, Tel. 0139-47-4527



All year round

Yakumo Town Bear Woodcarving Museum

Yakumo

Wooden carved bears, which originated in Yakumo, are on display, demonstrating designs from the first to recent works. The exhibition also features works from Switzerland and other parts of Hokkaido, giving visitors an overall view of wood-carved bears. It also includes a folk museum.

● Inquiries: Yakumo Town Museum and Bear Woodcarving Museum, Tel. 0137-63-3131



Late Apr. - Oct. 31

Okushiri Island Tsunami Memorial Hall

Okushiri

Okushiri Island was hit by a tsunami generated by the 1993 Southwest-off Hokkaido Earthquake. The facility is designed to preserve the memories and lessons of that disaster for future generations and to express gratitude for the reconstruction assistance received from all over Japan. There are seven exhibition spaces that tell the story of the disaster and the recovery process.

● Inquiries: Okushiri Island Tsunami Memorial Hall, Tel. 01397-3-1811



All year round

Esashi Oiwake Museum/Esashi Yama Museum

Esashi

Visitors can enjoy the Esashi Oiwake folk song and other local performing arts here. In addition to a hands-on Esashi Oiwake class, performances of Oiwake and Hokkaido folk songs are held three times a day from the Golden Week holidays through the end of October. Two of the 13 floats that parade through the town during the Ubagami Daijingu Togyo Festival are on display at the adjacent Esashi Yama Museum.

● Inquiries: Esashi Oiwake Museum/Esashi Yama Museum Tel. 0139-52-0920

Hokuto Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance Our Lady of the Lighthouse Abbey (Trappist Monastery)

This is Japan's first Cistercian Trappist monastery for men. It was founded in 1896. Since its founding, the monks have been active performing reclamation, farming, and cattle raising, while Trappist butter-based cookies and soft-serve ice cream (sales suspended during winter) produced in the monastery have become popular products.

● Inquiries: Our Lady of the Lighthouse Abbey Shop, Tel. 0138-75-2108 All year round

The idyllic landscape lined with avenues of Japanese cedar and poplar trees



Jomon

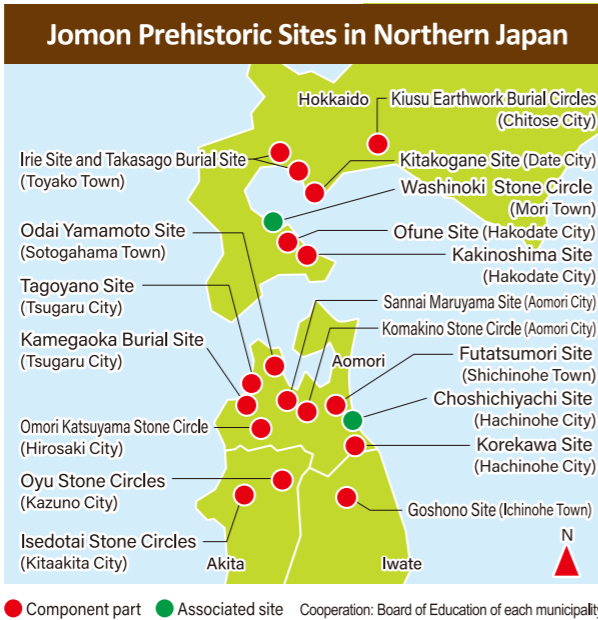


World Cultural Heritage Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan

The Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan were registered as a World Cultural Heritage site in 2021. They consist of 17 component parts and 2 associated sites in Hokkaido and 3 Tohoku prefectures. The Ofuna and Kakinoshima Sites, which are component parts, and the Washinoki Stone Circle, which is an associated site, are located in Oshima Subprefecture.

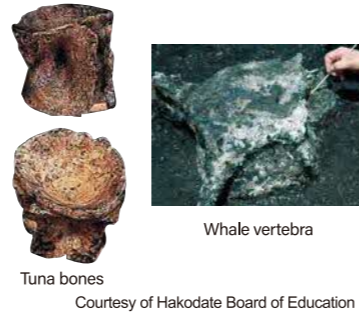
A 10,000-year story that continues into the future

The Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan convey an exquisite and rich spiritual culture that continued for more than 10,000 years and was based on hunting, fishing, and gathering. Each of the ruins, clay figurines, and pottery pieces that remain in Oshima demonstrates the richness of a culture that walked closely with nature.



In these areas, people survived for **more than 10,000 years** by gathering, fishing, and hunting, against a backdrop of forests of beech, chestnut, walnut, and other nuts, and rich seafood nurtured by the waters where warm and cold currents meet. View the ruins and beautifully decorated pottery and clay figurines, and ponder the lifestyle and culture of those times.

Examples of excavated artifacts



Tuna bones
Whale vertebra
Courtesy of Hakodate Board of Education



Source: JOMON ARCHIVES

Kakinoshima Site (historic site, component part) Hakodate

This site situated adjacent to the Jomon Culture Center is one of the constituent parts. The settlement here must have served as a regional center for as long as 6,000 years, from the early through the late Jomon period. Visitors can observe one of the largest mounds in Japan and the remains of pit buildings. Explanations of the site are given regularly, and visitors can also experience the excavation process.

- 416-4 Usujiri-cho, Hakodate
- Hours
Apr. - Oct.: 9:00 - 17:00
Nov. - Mar.: 9:00 - 16:00
- Closed: Dec. 29 - Jan. 3

Clay tablets with child footprints

It is believed that clay tablets with footprints of deceased children were buried as a memento of the children at the time of their parents' death.



Source: JOMON ARCHIVES (photo by Hakodate Board of Education)

Hakodate Jomon Culture Center

Hakodate



This museum permanently exhibits the Hollow Clay Figure, a national treasure of Hokkaido. Many artifacts from the adjacent Kakinoshima Site as well as the Ofuna Site and other Jomon sites in the area are on display. Here is the first step to learn more about the Jomon culture of Oshima.

- 551-1 Usujiri-cho, Hakodate
- Inquiries: Tel. 0138-25-2030
- Hours
Apr. - Oct.: 9:00 - 17:00
Nov. - Mar.: 9:00 - 16:30
- Closed: Mon. (or the following weekday if Monday is a national holiday), last Friday of each month, year-end and New Year holidays
- Admission: 300 yen for adults, 150 yen for students, free for preschool children

An example of exhibits



Red lacquered spouted pottery

A teapot-like spouted pottery vessel of about 12 cm high. It is from the end of the late Jomon period, and has two coats of red lacquer over a layer of black lacquer.

Courtesy of Hakodate Board of Education

Ofuna Site (historic site, component part) Hakodate

This is a large-scale settlement site dating from the middle Jomon period and is one of the component parts. Jomon no Niwa, which recreates the lifestyle of the Jomon culture, and the remains of a large pit dwelling of over 2 m deep and 10 m in diameter are located here. In addition to marine resources such as whales, tuna, and fur seals, forest resources such as chestnuts, and Japanese barnyard millet seeds have also been unearthed, providing insight into the lifestyle and settlements of the time.

- 575-1 Ofuna-cho, Hakodate
- Hours
Apr. - Oct.: 9:00 - 17:00
Nov. - Mar.: 9:00 - 16:00
- Closed: Dec. 29 - Jan. 3



Located on a hill overlooking the ocean, it is a very pleasant place to visit on a sunny day. The Jomon people of that time might have looked out at the sea in the same way.



Source: JOMON ARCHIVES

Hollow Clay Figure (national treasure)

One of the largest clay figures in Japan with a height of 41.5 cm
Nickname: Kakkuu

Hollow Clay Figure: Hokkaido's only national treasure
The nickname "Kakkuu" was derived from the combination of "Kaya" for Minamikayabe, the place where it was excavated, and "Ku," which describes the hollowness of the clay figure (Chuku-Dogu). It is the largest hollow clay figure in Japan. It was discovered by accident during farming activities in a potato field on high ground, and was later designated as Hokkaido's only national treasure.

Courtesy of Hakodate Board of Education

Hands-on program

There is also a hands-on program to create Jomon-era accessories such as *magatama* (comma-shaped beads) and *kumihimo* (braided string) straps. Try it.



Walnut soft serve ice cream, a specialty of the roadside rest area

This soft-serve ice cream contains walnuts, which Jomon people are also believed to have eaten in their time. It is available at the Jomon Roman Minamikayabe roadside rest area adjacent to the center.



In principle, the Washinoki Stone Circle is closed to the public. Artifacts from the Washinoki Stone Circle are on display at the Mori Town Office for Archaeological Excavation and Research.
Source: JOMON ARCHIVES (photo by Mori Town Board of Education)

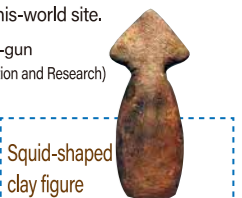
Washinoki Stone Circle (historic site, associated site) Mori

It has been confirmed that people had been living in Mori Town since approximately 8,000 years ago. A stone circle from the late Jomon period was discovered and has been designated as a national historic site. Currently, it is positioned as an associated site of the World Heritage Site. During excavations to build an expressway, the largest stone circle in Hokkaido was discovered, and it was decided to preserve it as a nationally designated historic site. To preserve the stone circle, the expressway was built under the ruins, creating an out-of-this-world site.

- 292-24 Morikawa-cho, Mori, Kayabe-gun (Mori Town Office for Archaeological Excavation and Research)
- Hours: 9:00 - 16:00
- Closed: Sat., Sun. and national holidays



Washinoki Iseki Tunnel as seen from the Expressway. There is a stone circle above the tunnel.



Squid-shaped clay figure

Squid-shaped clay object excavated at the Washinoki Stone Circle. An uncanny connection can be felt since the shape is exactly the same as that of *ikameshi*, a specialty of Mori Town.

Collection of the Mori Town Board of Education