

# LIVING GUIDE MORIOKA

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## Let's enjoy Cherry Blossom Viewing!

Now the cold is letting up and spring is coming along. In Japan, spring is an exciting time of growth and renewal. Plants revive and animals become active, and especially everybody is happy when the cherry blossom season begins. Japanese people have cherished the cherry blossoms since ancient times and have planted cherry trees throughout the country. Surely you can enjoy the cherry blossom viewing here in Morioka.

### \* What is "Hanami" (Cherry Blossom Viewing)?

- Many people enjoy having parties under the cherry trees in full bloom and drinking sake. (In some spots you cannot have parties, only viewing the blossoms is allowed.)

## Popular Hanami Spots in Morioka

Explanatory notes:

- ☆ parties are not allowed, Keep Fire Away      ★ parties are allowed, Keep Fire Away
- ◇ the typical timing for best viewing in the average year

### ☆ Ishiwari-zakura (Rock-splitting cherry tree) (Uchimaru)

◇ Mid to late April

This famous cherry tree is unique in appearance. It has grown in the crack of a huge granite boulder and is a designated National Natural Monument. The cherry tree is 11.2 meters tall, 4.6 meters wide around the trunk, and of the Edo-higan variety. It is estimated to be over 360 years old, standing outside the Morioka District Court. This is one of the earliest cherry trees to reach full bloom in the city.



### ★ Morioka Castle Site Park (Uchimaru)

◇ Late April to early May



This park is in downtown Morioka and one of the most popular cherry blossom viewing spots in the city. There used to be Morioka Castle on this site and you can enjoy remaining beautiful stone walls of the castle even now. A view from the former castle highest point is spectacular, especially when you look down the cherry trees in full bloom on the side of the Shimono-hashii bridge. The pink sea of cherry blossoms will never fail to impress you. This park is one of the venues of "The Morioka Sakura (Cherry Blossom) Festival". During the festival, trees are lit up in the evenings. Night viewing of illuminated trees is just fantastic.

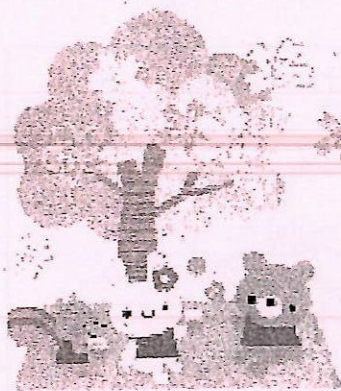
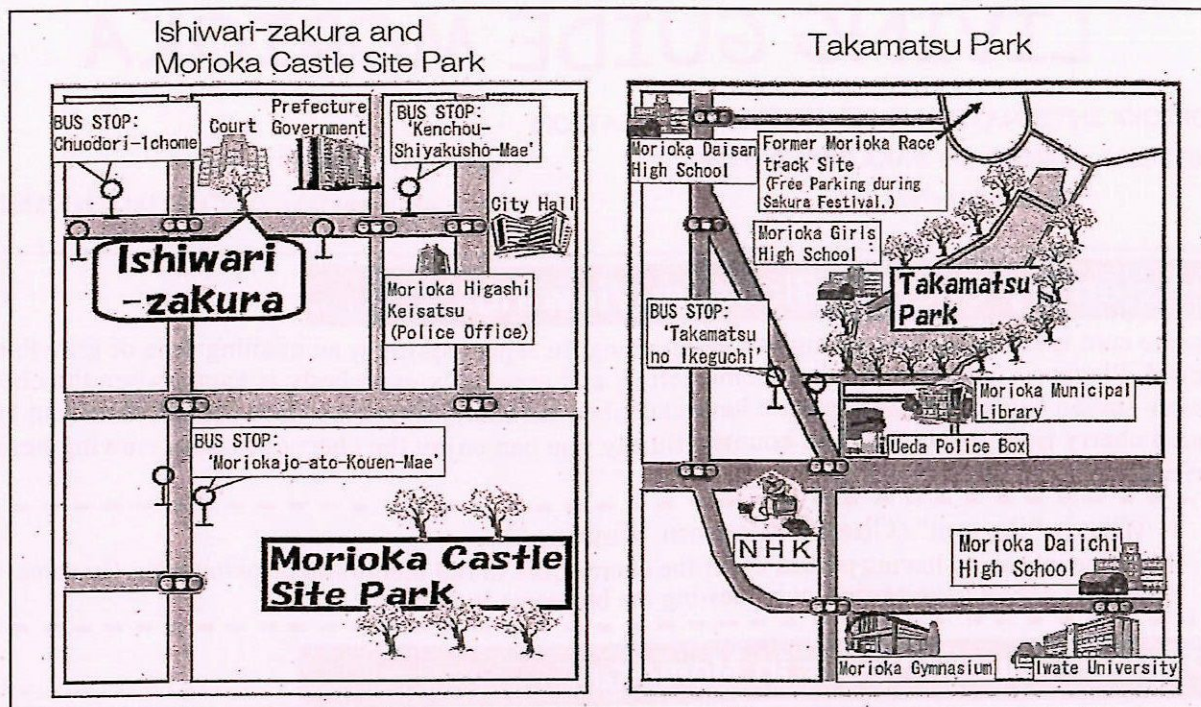
### ★ Takamatsu Park (Takamatsu)

◇ Late April to early May

Every spring many people enjoy the cherry blossom viewing here, having parties, walking or running on the 2 kilometers road around Takamatsu pond. On a mild spring day, you could even see the reflected Mt. Iwate in the surface of the pond with cherry blossoms. Takamatsu Park is one of Japan's "100 best cherry blossom spots".







The cherry blossom season is relatively short and famous cherry blossom spots can get very crowded. Let's observe the basic etiquette.

1. Please do not shout unnecessarily or be rowdy excessively.
2. Please take your garbage home.
3. Most Hanami spots have no free parking area, so please use public transportation. On-street parking is strictly prohibited.
4. Please do not break off a branch.

Each spot has its own rules or manners, please conform to them.

Are you ready to go out for "Hanami"?

## Regarding Higashi Nihon Daishinsai

A 9.0-magnitude earthquake hit the northeast and central Japan, around 2:46 p.m. on Friday March 11, 2011. Its epicenter was off the coast of Sanriku and in Morioka the quake registered an upper 5 on the Japanese intensity scale of 0-7. A powerful tsunami, which was triggered by this huge earthquake, claimed so many lives along the coastal areas.

Though Morioka did not suffer major damage from the earthquake, a lot of people including foreign residents spent

several days in the temporary refuge accommodations in this city.

Please stay calm when the earthquake occurs because aftershocks usually follow the main shock. It is best to always be prepared for the quake.

Morioka International Relations Association featured "Earthquake survival tips" in No.70 Living Guide Morioka which was issued in October, 2010. Please take a look at it and in case you need a copy of it, let us know.