

Tsuchiyu-onsen, Fukushima, Japan

Sansuiso & Yumori

Up-to-the-minute News

Issue No. 1

► All creating, publishing, and editing
SYUN Editorial Committee (Sansuiso)

Introducing Sansuiso's and YUMORI's joint newsletter!

Hello, everyone! We represent two of the many hot springs spots in Tsuchiyu Onsen—a small town nestled in the deep peaks of Mt. Azuma in Fukushima Prefecture. We love Tsuchiyu Onsen so much that it seems that it would be a shame to keep it to ourselves! Enter: SYUN (standing for Sansuiso + YUMORI + Up to the minute + News, as well as the Japanese word for “in-season”), your ticket and guide to all things Tsuchiyu Onsen and Fukushima.

First, about Sansuiso...

Sansuiso is a *ryokan* (traditional Japanese style inn) that has been humbly gracing the hills of Tsuchiyu Onsen for 68 years. It has several hot springs including expansive public baths that boast a beautiful view of the Arakawa River's two tier waterfall, an open-air bath called *taishi no yu*, and a total of five private baths! Its rooms range from superior rooms to bed and tatami rooms. Meals are prepared using fresh ingredients straight from the rich nature of Fukushima and are themed with every turn of the season.



From last year, we've had an influx of our premises being used for school trips. This is the first time since the East Japan Earthquake that we've hosted so many school trips--which means a lot of things catch us off guard! But, if we're even a little help in creating precious memories for these kids, it's all worth it.

The COVID-19 pandemic is continuing to upend lifestyles, but we know that *onsen* still equals life. So, we've reopened with new guidelines to help prevent the spread of infection—including avoiding the 3 C's (closed spaces, crowded places, close-contact settings), regularly sanitizing the premises, and checking staff health.

We understand that most people have stuck diligently to their homes. So, in order to whisk you away on an onsen journey within the confines of your home, we've created an online store, where we can send a little of Sansuiso to you.

Hello, everyone. It's lovely to meet you! I am the okami (mistress of the ryokan), Izumi Watanabe. Tsuchiyu Onsen has everything that good memories are made of—nature, hot springs and delicious spring water. Please come by and enjoy a fulfilling time by fortifying your body at Sansuiso! We look forward to seeing you!

...and next, about YUMORI Onsen Hostel!

In efforts to bring a new innovative twist to the *onsen* stay, Sansuiso built YUMORI Onsen Hostel. Hostels are seen commonly in bigger cities, but this one is the first to this small hot springs town. YUMORI was created to reach the niche group of people who wanted to enjoy all the wonders of hot springs but at a cheaper price. Our accommodation plans don't come with meals, but do come with free access to all shared spaces, including the spacious shared kitchen and lounge.

Whether you are a daytripper or staying the night, stop by YUMORI café on the second floor for a quiet space to read a book from our floor to ceiling bookcase or to do some business remotely or to meet new people! Our food and drinks are made primarily from malted rice, or *koji*. It's known to have great health benefits!

YUMORI strives to keep all the good of traditional *onsen* travelling. It is a place where people from all around the world, regardless of culture and language, can come together and enjoy the *onsen* culture, congregate with locals and just revel in the natural beauty of Tsuchiyu Onsen.

It's nice to meet you! I am the manager, Moe Watanabe. Our café utilizes fermented, or malted rice called koji (that is very much alive!) in our house made drinks and meals. Stop by for a snack and a dip in our onsen not only for a relaxing day but also for an inner and outer body cleanse ♥



History of Tsuchiyu Onsen

There are various theories for Tsuchiyu Onsen's origins. One old legend tells the story of Onamuchino Mikoto, who was inspecting the Mutsu Province. Suddenly, he stabbed his long spear into the banks of the Arakawa River that flows through our town even today. Miraculously, a fountain of hot water gushed from the hole it created. This hot spring was dubbed *Tsukiyu* (or, "Poked Waters")—sound familiar? Over the years the pronunciation eroded into the name *Tsuchiyu*, the formal name of our town today.



Another theory goes back to the year 587. The father of Prince Shotoku Taishi, Emperor Yomei, sent out Kawakatsu Hatano to spread the teachings of Buddhism. However, suddenly ailed by paralysis on one side of his body, Hatano was unable to immediately set out. As he fell half-asleep one night, the prince appeared in his dreams. "Go to the fountain of miracles in a place called Tsuchiyu in the Shinobu District. Bathe in the hot springs and you will recover," he told Hatano. Hatano dragged himself to the banks of the Arakawa River and arrived at Tsuchikawa. There, he found the foretold spring of miracles and bathed himself. After a few days, it was said that the paralysis of his body was eased.

Hanami spots in Fukushima



No. 1 Hanamiyama Park 🚗 About 19km from Tsuchiyu (40 min.)

One of the representative spots for *hanami* in the prefecture, Hanamiyama sees about 200,000 visitors every year. Over 70 types of flowers bloom on Hanamiyama. Shotaro Akiyama, one of Japan's most famous photographers considered Hanamiyama to be "a utopia in Fukushima."



Hanamiyama started out as a side project of a beekeeper. Then, starting in 1936, he thought, "I'm going to take this barren mountain of trees and turn it into a mountain full of flowers!" For the next fifteen years, he landscaped the area, planting and growing all kinds of flowers. As the flowers grew and flourished, he realized, "What a waste to keep the beauty of these blooming flowers just to us! It deserves to be enjoyed with and by all people!" Thus, in 1959, it was officially opened to the public as Hanamiyama Park. That one man's side project could bring so many people together to enjoy the beauty of nature truly is a wonderful thing.

No. 2 Jitokuji Temple 'Seed-Sowing' Cherry 🚗 About 8km from Tsuchiyu (15 min.)

This cherry tree is in the Sabara area of Fukushima City. For over 450 years, it's been letting farmers know when to plant rice seedlings. Once the cherry blossoms begin blooming pink all along its weeping branches, it's time to get planting!



♪ About us, the staff! ♪

Sansuiso Staff ①

Sales Division (for 20 years)
Masaki Onozuka



Q.What's your job?

A. I work in reservations and sales. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I haven't been able to do sales in person. But I've been able to do it remotely---by phone and email. I like to always be one step ahead of the customer, so I can catch anything that could go wrong before the customer even thinks about it.

Q. When do you feel your job is worth it?

A. Getting a guest in and out with no hiccups, and being rewarded with a "Thank you" at the end.

There is no night that we won't open for you! I'm doing my best to accept all guests while ensuring their safety!

YUMORI Staff ①

Overall Operations (for 2 years)
Kazuto Watanabe



Q.What's your job?

A. I look after reservations, front desk, and the cleaning of guest rooms and the overall premises. I try hard to see things from the guests' point of view. I want to share more about the hot springs I visit, food I eat, rooms I stay in, sake I drink and the places I visit with the guests.

Q. When do you feel your job is worth it?

A. When I'm chatting with guests during check in or just during their overall stay. I like being able to share what I know through my hobbies with other guests like hiking or snowboarding.

Of course, have fun, but please be mindful of infection preventative measures when traveling. I'm excited for when people can travel internationally freely, again!

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■ Mascot Characters: Kibokko-chan (©2013 土湯温泉 きぼっこちゃん 許諾第101号)・Yupacchi