

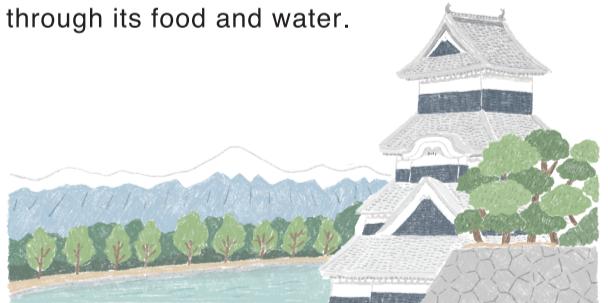


Matsumoto "Itadakimasu" Guide



Matsumoto is blessed with food and water nurtured through the four seasons. In this town cradled by mountains such as the Northern Alps, clear water and air help grow flavorful soba, fruits and vegetables.

Wisdom for enduring harsh winters gave rise to preserved foods. With this guidebook in hand, find the history and experience culture in Matsumoto through its food and water.



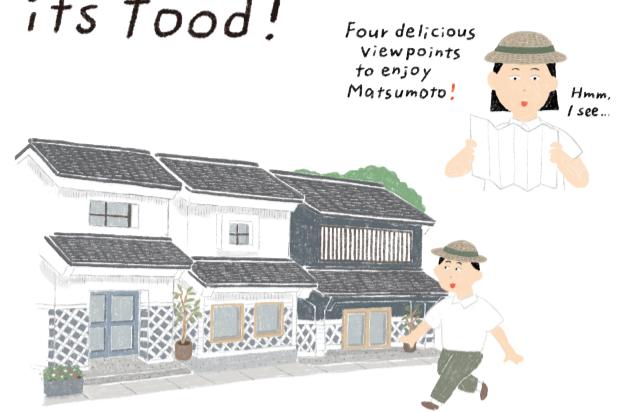
Culture City of East Asia 2026 Matsumoto

"Culture City of East Asia" is an international project. One representative city from each of Japan, China, and Korea hosts cultural exchange programs over the course of a year. Matsumoto will be the Japan's host city for 2026. Under the theme "ARTS & PEACE", the city will share the charm of community-rooted culture and our aspirations for peace with the world.

Published by the Organizing Committee of Culture City of East Asia 2026 Matsumoto



Come experience Matsumoto's land and culture through its food!



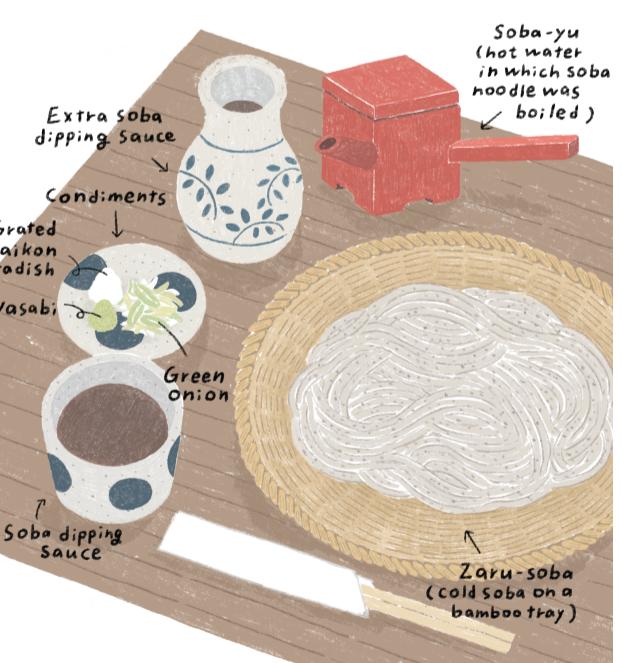
Point 1. Get to know the natural feature of Matsumoto

Matsumoto lies in a highland basin. Clear air and many sunny days create striking views of mountains, foothills, and blue sky. Living in harmony with the natural environment has nurtured Matsumoto's unique food culture.

Point 2. Get to know the area

Matsumoto Castle and the former Kaichi School are the National treasures of Japan. Historical buildings are scattered throughout town. Traditional Japanese warehouses along Naka-machi Street and townhouses along Nawate Streets maintains atmosphere of the old castle town. Step a little outside and you can enjoy world-class natural environment such as Utsukushigahara Highland and Kamikochi.

Soba noodle



Soba has taken root in Matsumoto because the lean soils and cool climate suited the crop, and pure snowmelt water brings out its aroma. Since making and eating soba noodle was established in Edo period, soba cooks in Matsumoto have been honing their skills in how quickly they serve excellent soba noodle; grind buckwheat, knead soba noodle using the flour, and soon after that, boil it. Soba is a pride of Shinshu (Nagano Prefecture), raised by nature and human ingenuity.



Point 3. Learn the tastes of each season

Spring brings edible wild mountain vegetables. Summer offers watermelon and river trout from clear streams. Autumn is for matsutake mushrooms and apples. Winter is for tōji-soba (hotpot soba noodle). Enjoy local foods closely lined with seasonal events. Ingenuity in utilizing the blessings of mountains and fields has been passed down because Matsumoto is far from the sea. You can also savor regional specialties like Matsumoto Ippon Negi (single-stem green onions) and Inekoki-na vegetables.

Point 4. Savor history and culture through food

Behind Matsumoto's food lies a deep layer of history and culture. Through the local food, you can learn the history, climate, customs, traditional festivals, wisdom handed down through generations, and livelihoods that make use of the natural environment in Matsumoto.

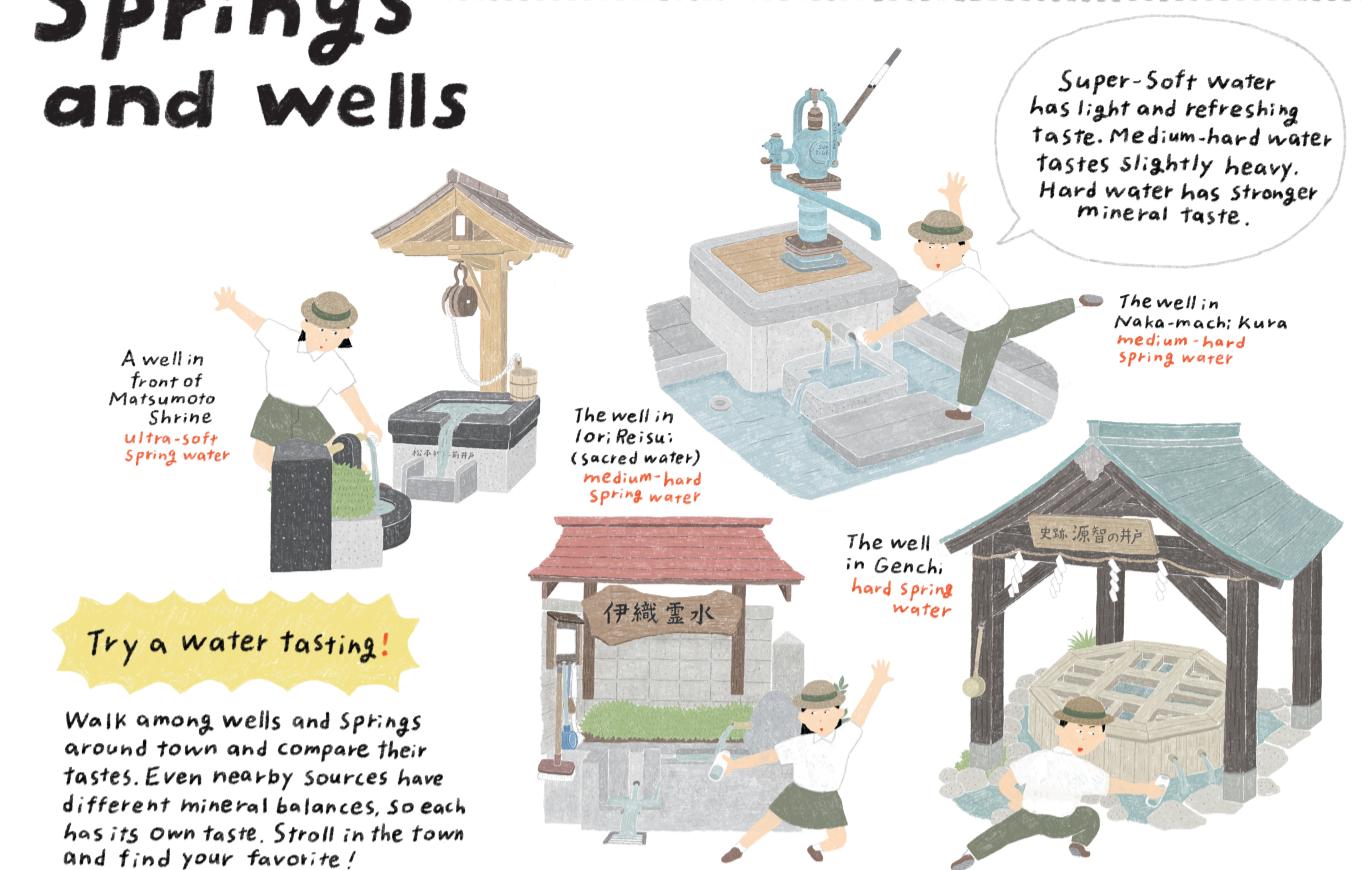
Four steps to deeply enjoy soba

There's so much more to enjoy soba noodles than just slurping. These four simple steps reveal its deeper charms—an elegant, insider's way to savor this beloved dish.

1. Sniff! "Mmm, that aroma!"
2. Dip in the dipping sauce! "Just a little touch!"
3. Slurp! "So good!"
4. Ahhh... "Warm and cozy!"

After finishing soba, if you like, pour some hot soba-yu (hot water in which soba noodle was boiled) into the remaining sauce and enjoy it.

Springs and wells



Try a water tasting!

Walk among wells and springs around town and compare their tastes. Even nearby sources have different mineral balances, so each has its own taste. Stroll in the town and find your favorite!

Do you know that you can drink natural spring water right in downtown Matsumoto? Snowmelt and rain that fall on the mountains surrounding the Matsumoto Basin slowly seep underground over many years, become subterranean water and then, spring up in various places across the basin. When you walk around the city, you will come across small wells and springs. The water is clear and cold. Its temperature is almost unchanged throughout the year. These springs appear in many locations, for example, beside stone walls or old

Japanese-style storehouses, or are installed at street corners with a wooden bucket nearby. Long ago, the springs and wells served as essential household water for cooking and preparation for restaurants, and were also social meeting places for neighbors. Even today, locals come to fill their water bottles and travelers quench their thirst. Exploring these springs is a way to experience daily life in this town. With just a sip of clear water, you can feel the deep connection between nature's blessings and the lives of the people who live here.

Miso

fermented soybean paste



It is said that the origin of Shinshu miso dates back about 770 years when Kaku shin, a monk from Matsumoto, learned the method of making fermented black beans in China and brought the technique back to Japan. Shinshu miso is a rice-based miso made from rice koji and soybeans, known for its light and pleasantly sharp flavor. The pure local water gives it a rich aroma and a deep, rounded taste. In Matsumoto, some miso breweries still preserve a miso-dama zukuri, a traditional method of forming miso into balls for fermentation. Miso pairs well with vegetables and meat, and also harmonizes beautifully with other fermented foods such as cheese and butter. Some miso breweries offer tours and hands-on experiences, allowing visitors to feel the tradition up close.

MISO culture in East Asia

The food culture of miso, a fermented food, has taken roots in Japan, Korea and China!



Miso in Korea
The most common type is doenjang (fermented soybean paste) used for soups, stir-fries and stews. Deep umami is drawn out when simmered.



Miso in China
Made not only from soybeans but also wheat, broad beans, chili peppers and more. Deep umami and flavor of Chinese miso are drawn out when stir-fried.

Japanese Sake



Sake from Matsumoto is made from abundant, crystal-clear water and high-quality rice. The cool climate at elevation of around 600 meters helps a clean and refined fermentation, and thus gives crisp and refreshing flavor. While some of sake breweries in the city have long history, some of them were recently established by young chief brewers. Sake brewed by each of them has its unique character. Soft water used by most of breweries gives their sake a gentle aroma and a smooth taste. These sake match food beautifully. Some breweries use natural wind caves in Azumi district to slowly mature their sake at low temperatures and to produce exceptionally mellow and rounded flavor.

Pickles



Pickles in Matsumoto originally developed as preserved foods to help people get through the long, harsh winter. The rich produce grown in the Matsumoto Plain, such as Hodaira turnips, Bandokoro cucumbers and the local Kireba daikon, has long been used to make a wide variety of traditional pickles. Matsumoto Shiro-uri (white melon) and Inekoki-na pickles also offer flavors unique to this region. These pickles are lightly salted and known for the deep umami and aroma created through lactic fermentation. They are an essential part of the local food in Matsumoto.



