

神宿る雪室のまち横手

秋田県横手市

「かまくら」は神の宿る雪室。

みなさんは、神の宿る雪室のまちをご存知でしょうか？ 日本の奥座敷、東北に位置する秋田県横手市は、昔から雪とともに暮らしてきた地域で、雪国ならではの日本文化が息づく街です。

この横手で毎年2月15、16日に開催される行事「かまくら」は、450年続く民族伝統行事で、最も日本の雪国文化を感じられる行事です。

雪室の中に神座を設けて「水神様」を祀り、中で地元の子どもたちが甘酒を飲んだりお餅を焼いたりして遊ぶという、世界でここだけの民族伝統行事が今もなお続けられています。冬の日本を訪れるのは、ここ秋田県横手市はいかがでしょう？

※ 「かまくら」が見られるのは、1月下旬から2月16日までです。またこの期間は、「かまくら」が作られているところを、見て体感することができます。

※ アクセス

① 成田空港から

成田空港→（85分）→羽田空港→（60分）→秋田空港からオンデマンドタクシー（75分）→横手

② 東京駅から

東京駅→秋田新幹線こまち（195分）→大曲→（20分）→横手

Yokote: Home of Snow Gods

Yokote, Akita prefecture

A *kamakura* is a shelter made from snow, similar to an igloo. However, according to local Yokote tradition, *kamakura* aren't just shelters for people, they are where our local spirits, or *kami*, dwell.

How well do you know about this local tradition in Yokote?

First of all, Yokote is located in Akita prefecture, which is way up north in Japan's Tōhoku region. Yokote is a place where, since long ago, traditional cultures have thrived along with the snowy winter conditions of this "snow country."

Here in Yokote, the Kamakura festival is held every year on February 15th & 16th. This event is a folk tradition that has been carried out for 450 years! This event gives spectators a true sense of what life is like in Japan's "snow country."

A small shrine for the *kami* is set-up in each of the snow shelters (*kamakura*) in honor of the Shintō Water Deity. Then, local children sit inside the *kamakura* with their friends and drink *amazake* (a type of sweet, rice drink), eat *mochi* (a sweet snack made from rice), and play. Yokote is the only place in the world with a folk tradition such as this!

If you're visiting Japan during winter, how about checking out this event in Yokote, Akita!

***Note:** If you're coming to see Yokote's *kamakura*, they are on display from the end of **January until February 16th**, every year. During this time the *kamakura* are built and you can experience relaxing inside them for yourself!

***Getting here**

From Narita:

From Narita airport, take the shuttle to Haneda Airport (approx. 85 mins.). Then from Haneda, go to Akita Airport (approx. 60 mins.). From Akita Airport, shuttles are available to take you to Yokote (approx. 75 mins.).

From Tokyo Station:

From Tokyo Station, take the Akita Shinkansen “Komachi” to Odate (approx. 3 hrs).
Then from Odate, take a local train to Yokote (approx. 20 mins.).