

Destination OSAKA: Summer Edition

One of the most attractive things about Japanese summer is traditional summer festivals “Matsuri” held across the country. Here are what’s happening in and around Osaka.

Tenjin Festivals in Osaka / July



The Tenjin Festival is the biggest summer festival in Osaka and one of the three greatest festivals in Japan. Thousands of people proceeds on streets with floats and cruise on the river with boats. The festival started in the 10th century and today takes place on July 24 and 25 every year. The main celebrations are held on the festival's second day, July 25, including a land procession and a river procession with fireworks.

Gion Festivals in Kyoto / July



Gion Festival is one of the largest and most historical festivals in Japan, and it takes place over the entire month of July. The most spectacular event is the grand procession of floats (Yamaboko Junko) on July 17th and 24th when Kyoto's downtown area is reserved for pedestrian traffic leading up to the massive parade.

Yodogawa Fireworks in Osaka / August



This year to be held on Saturday August 10th, the annual Yodogawa Fireworks Festival is ranked among the top 10 most popular firework in Japan. This event has close to 500,000 people watching the massive display of over 20,000 fireworks.

Daimonji Gozan Okuribi in Kyoto / August



The Daimonji Gozan Okuribi (Daimonji Bonfire) is an event held on the evening of August 16th, when gigantic Chinese characters and other motifs are depicted by fires lit to illuminate the surroundings for patrolling on the slopes of the mountains surrounding the Kyoto Basin. It signifies the moment when the spirits of deceased family members, who are said to visit this world during Obon (mid August), are believed to be returning to the spirit world-thus the name Okuribi (sending fire).

Tokae Lantern Festival in Nara / August



The Obon Holiday period, a celebration honoring one's ancestors and inviting their souls back into the homes, occurs in mid August. Lanterns are believed to guide the souls of the deceased back to their families. In order to share that tradition of fire and the 1300 years of Nara, this lantern festival takes place nightly from August 5 to 14 every year, turning World Heritage rich Nara Park into a sea of candlelight.

Kishiwada Danjiri Festival in Osaka / September



Kishiwada Danjiri Festival is a fun high-octane festival held in Kishiwada in the south of Osaka. A danjiri is a traditional Japanese wooden float that has elaborate carvings and is decorated with various ornaments. The wooden floats are made in the shape of a shrine or temple and are pulled through the streets during festival days. Many of the floats weigh over 6,000 lbs and are pulled by an eager team of up to 1,000 participants.



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