

Sendai Tanabata Festival Guide

English August 6–8



History of the Tanabata Festival

The Tanabata Festival can be traced back to “The Festival to Plead for Skills” in China, which features the meeting of Orihime, the Weaver Princess star, and Hikoboshi, the Cow Herder star. In Japan, it was adopted by the Kyoto Imperial Palace during the Heian period and then gained widespread popularity among the general public by the early Edo period. Since the princess was skilled at making handicrafts, people expressed their wishes to acquire talents as well by celebrating the meeting of the two stars.

The Sendai Tanabata Festival was first popularized during the feudal period by Lord Date Masamune as a means to raise awareness of

the importance of women's roles in culture. The features of Sendai's Tanabata changed after the Meiji Restoration and the introduction of the solar calendar system. With the advent of the First World War and the serious recession that followed, the citizens of Sendai were disheartened and weary. In 1927, merchants decorated the town with large Tanabata streamers in an effort to raise peoples' spirits. Having touched the hearts of Sendai's residents, the Tanabata Festival was reinvented. Presently, the Sendai Tanabata Festival is considered one of the three major festivals in the Tohoku region, with over 2 million visitors coming to enjoy the festivities over the course of the 3-day event.

Loople Sendai “Tanabata Night Bus”



Visit all of the nighttime events along the Loople Sendai route on this special Tanabata Night Bus!

Days of Operation: Aug. 6–8

Timetable: Runs every 20 minutes from 17:20.
The last bus departs from the Sendai Station at 21:00.

Fare: Adults ¥260 / Children ¥130

Main Stops:



*Loople Sendai will operate as usual during the day.

*A one-day Loople Sendai pass, one-day pass for the Loople Sendai and Subway, Sendai Marugoto pass, SENDAI AREA PASS, IC card (icsca, Suica, PASMO) Senior pass, and Fureai pass can be used.

Q loople-sendai.jp



Wishing Upon the Seven Ornaments

Becoming familiar with the seven paper ornaments, or “Nanatsu-Kazari,” is an essential part of understanding Tanabata. Each of the ornaments have a special meaning, and you can find them throughout the city during the festival!



短冊 Tanzaku
Paper Strips

Strips of paper bearing written poems that express the desire to improve one's studying and calligraphy skills are an important feature of the festival. It was customary to use ink made from the evening dew on the leaves of taro potatoes.



紙衣 Kamigoromo
Paper Kimono

Paper kimonos are created to wish for improved sewing and artistic skills. The kamigoromo used to be released into the river at the end of the festival to wish for the safe and healthy growth of children, although this component of the custom is no longer practiced.



折鶴 Orizuru
Paper Crane

Paper cranes are made to wish for the long and healthy lives of one's family members. It is customary to fold as many paper cranes as the age of the oldest member of the household.



巾着 Kinchaku
Purse

During this festival, a purse represents the wish for wealth, thriftiness, and the flourishing of businesses.



投網 Toami
Catching Net

A catching net expresses a wish for large hauls of fish to be caught. The toami net also represents the desire to “catch” good fortune.



吹流 Fukinagashi
Streamers

Representing old weaving yarn, the fukinagashi symbolize Orihime (the star “Vega”). These streamers are made to wish for improved handicraft and weaving skills.

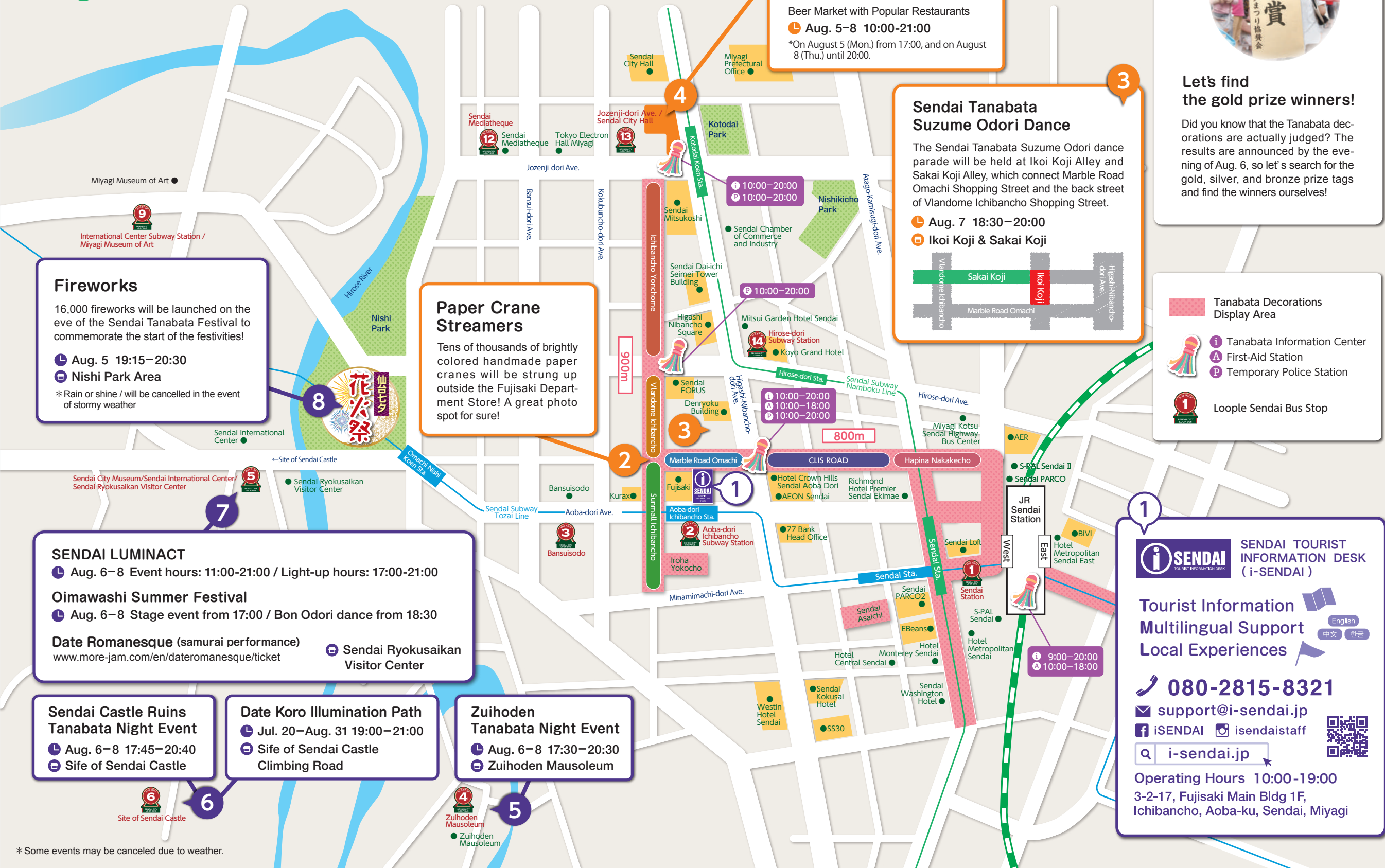


屑籠 Kuzukago
Waste Basket

A paper waste basket is also made to wish for cleanliness and frugality. The paper waste that results from making the various Tanabata decorations is placed in this basket.

Sendai Tanabata Festival MAP

August 6–8



* Some events may be canceled due to weather.