

Events in December

1	FR	
2	SA	9:30 Hello World Club
3	SU	Closed
4	MO	Closed
5	TU	
6	WE	
7	TH	
8	FR	
9	SA	10:00 Parents' Salon
10	SU	Closed 10:00 AtsuHana: Japanese Convo. Club
11	MO	Closed
12	TU	
13	WE	
14	TH	
15	FR	
16	SA	9:30 Hello World Club 10:00 FIND: English Conversation Club 10:00 JICA Desk
17	SU	Closed
18	MO	Closed
19	TU	18:00 Christmas Movie Night
20	WE	
21	TH	
22	FR	
23	SA	13:30 Newsletter Preparation
24	SU	Closed
25	MO	Closed Merry Christmas!
26	TU	
27	WE	13:00 AWIA Office Cleaning Day
28	TH	
29	FR	Closed (New Year's)
30	SA	Closed (New Year's)
31	SU	Closed (New Year's)

Other Information

Japan-China Friendship Association

Make Jumbo Gyoza and Kozuyu!

Aizu's Japan-China Friendship Association has another great cultural activity planned! This time, make jumbo gyoza (even the wrapper!) and Aizu's traditional soup, kozuyu, while hanging out, playing games, singing karaoke etc.! Eat delicious food and make some new friends!



Host: AizuWakamatsu Japan-China Friendship Association
When: Jan 8th (Mon. Holiday) 9:30~16:00
Where: Ikki Community Centre (Kitatakezawa 2chome-5-6)
Cost: Adult: ¥1000 Student: ¥500 Child: Free!
To Bring: Apron / **Limit:** 30 people (first come first served)
Sign-up: Please contact Sanpei-san by Dec 25th (Mon)
 TEL: 090-5833-5821 Email: koki-s@gray.plala.or.jp

Christmas Charity Concert

Enjoy a saxophone and piano ensemble play a variety of Christmas songs! The Soroptimist International in Aizu is holding a charity concert to raise money to improve the lives of women and girls around the world.



Host: Soroptimist International in Aizu
Date: Dec 23rd (Sat)
Doors Open: 13:00 **Performance:** 13:30
Place: Aizu Fugado Performance Hall (Jotomachi 12-1)
Tickets: Adults: ¥2000 Student (High School and Under): Free!
Contact: Yamazaki-san TEL: 090-7667-7838

AWIA has some free tickets to give out! We have 10 Student Tickets and 4 Adult Tickets. The adult tickets are for those who will be accompanying a minor. First come, first served! **Contact AWIA by Dec 22 (Thu) to get tickets and go with your family!**
 (*Adult tickets will be given as a pair with Student tickets. Adult tickets will not be given out individually.)

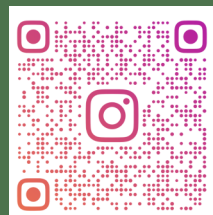
Satellite JICA Desk

Come chat with Ms. Matsuyama about her time overseas and/or about JICA! (drop-ins welcome, but appointments appreciated)
Date: Dec 16th (Sat) 10:00-17:00 @ AWIA Office
Apply: Contact Ms. Matsuyama via email: jica_fukushima_desk@jica.org

Call for Newsletter Volunteers!

Come help us fold, stamp, and pack our monthly publications for mailing! No need to sign up, just drop by if you can!

Date: December 23rd, Saturday **Time:** 13:30~
Place: Aizu Wakamatsu International Association Office



We're on Instagram!

Follow us for photos and news about our upcoming events!



AWIA_PHOTO



<https://facebook.com/awiajp>



Visit our Facebook page for updates in multiple languages!



Use this QR Code and access our email form to sign-up for events

965-0871 Fukushima-ken, Aizu Wakamatsu-shi, Sakae-machi 2-14, Lion D'or Garden 5th Floor

TEL: (0242) 27-3703 | FAX: (0242) 27-3704 | EMAIL: mail@awia.jp | SITE: <https://www.awia.jp>



Association News



AWIA Office Holiday Closures: Dec 29th, 30th, 31st, Jan 1st, 2nd, 3rd. Normal hours from Jan 4th (Thu) (9:00-17:45)

2023-2024 Unpaid Memberships: See the included form and confirm if you want to continue your membership.

~Thank you for all of your support this year! We hope you have a wonderful winter holiday!~

AtsuHana

AtsuHana, Japanese Conversation Club.

Come have fun and talk to others in Japanese!

This month, we're making *nenga-jo*! Japanese New Years Cards. Instead of sending your family Christmas Card this year, why not send a *nenga-jo* to update your friends and family on life events or to just say hi? Let's make some together!

When	Sunday, December 10th 10:00-11:30
Place	Aizu City Learning Centre (Keikodo) 3F Rm 1
Sign Up	Contact mail@awia.jp by <u>Saturday Dec 9th</u>



Due to the nature of FIND and AtsuHana, we ask that participants wear masks. Thank you for your understanding.

FIND English Convo. Club

Why not speak English with people from all walks of life and maybe make some new friends? Anyone is welcome, no matter your English level. Get into the holiday spirit and come wearing some seasonal accessories or clothes!

When	Saturday, December 16th 10:00~11:30
Place	Aizu City Learning Centre (Keikodo) 3F Rm 1
Sign Up	Contact mail@awia.jp by <u>Friday Dec 15th</u>



Parents' Salon Christmas Party

The Parents' Salon is a multicultural gathering of parents and is a way to build a community with people also raising children in Aizu. Join us for a fun Christmas Party! We'll enjoy fun Christmas Traditions by making Christmas Crackers. There may even be a special appearance by Santa Claus!



Date: Dec 9th (Sat) 10:00~11:30
Place: Aizu Keikodo 3F Tatami Room
Limit: 15 Families (~30 ppl)
Cost: ¥500/per family (free for members!)

Sign-up: via Google Form by Dec 8th (Fri)



Christmas Movie Night!

Hear about Christmas in Canada and England, then enjoy a fun movie and the Christmas atmosphere of the AWIA office! We'll be watching 'A Muppet Christmas Carol.' Come join us!

- **Date:** Dec 19th (Tue) 18:00-20:00
- **Place:** AWIA Office
- **Cost:** Free!
- **Limit:** 15 people
- **Age:** Anyone!
- **Sign-up:** Contact



AWIA: (mail@awia.jp) by Dec 16
 Bring your own blankets/pillows for a more comfy movie experience!



会津若松市国際交流協会

TEL (0242) 27-3703

EMAIL: mail@awia.jp

AIZU WAKAMATSU INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

This Month in Aizu

TOHO Bank System Upgrade: Holiday ATM/Bank Closures

The Toho Bank system is undergoing an upgrade over the New Year's Holiday, so all banking services will be unavailable. Please be sure to do your banking/withdraw any money online or otherwise BEFORE the system maintenance starts because all services will be unavailable.

NO: Toho Bank ATMs, Convenience Store ATMs, Digital Wallet Account Access

Debit Cards, Online Banking, Banking Apps.

2023 12/29 (Fri)	12/30 (Sat)	12/31 (Sun)	2024 1/1 (Mon)	1/2 (Tue)	1/3 (Wed)	1/4 (Thu)
△ Until ~23:00	×	×	×	×	×	△ From about 7-8:00~



Don't get caught by the service disruption! Do you any banking early!

AizuWakamatsu Citizen Orchestra

Dec 17th 14:00-16:00



Enjoy the sounds of your fellow residents' playing beautiful classical music, Christmas songs, and more!. A few AWIA

members, including staff Nakamura-san will be playing! Plus, there will also be a Bell corner for you to make your own music!

Place: Kita Community Centre (Muramae-28 Koyamachi Oaza Kamikoya)

Limit: 80 people **Cost:** Free!

Contact the Kita Community Centre (0242-25-4044) or AWIA (mail@awia.jp) to sign-up to watch!

Aizu Railway: Topsy Train 2024

Enjoy some local sake and a special bento on the special Ozatoro Sightseeing Train this winter!

Dates: Jan 20th, 27th, Feb 17th (Sat) 2024

Meeting Time+Place: 17:00 @ NishiWakamatsu Station 2F ticket gate

(Estimated end time: 19:40 @ NishiWakamatsu Station)

Cost: ¥5900

Sign-up: Aizu Railway Co. LTD (0242-28-5885)

Sign-up start: Dec 19th (Tue)



For more interesting train-based events/activities, check out the Aizu Railway website:

<https://aizutetsudo.jp/>

Happy New Year at Tsuruga-jo Castle

Ring the bell at Tsuruga-jo Castle for good luck in the new year! In Japan, it is tradition to ring a Temple Bell 108 times at midnight. Head over to Tsuruga-jo and try it yourself!

Details: New Years (23:30 Dec 31st) - First 108 People

Place: Tsuruga-jo Castle Park - Castle Bell near the Tourist Information Centre



If you're heading to the Tsuruga-jo for the new year, why not head inside and see the beautiful view of the city from the top of the tower!

Open: Midnight - 2:30am, Jan 1st 2024 (Final entry at 2:00am)

Entrance fee: Adult ¥410 Child: ¥150

<https://www.aizukanko.com/event/89>



The first 5000 people who go to the Castle in the new year can receive a 'meshibera,' a wooden spatula, for good luck in the new year. They're branded with the animal zodiac kanji of the year, as well as 'Tsuruga-jo Castle Tower' so they're a great keepsake! These wooden spatulas provide good luck because of wordplay in Japanese. 飯取る → 「福を召し取る、敵を召し捕る」 Meshi toru → 'fuku wo meshitoru, teki wo meshitoru.' You can get food, and thereby also get luck, and 'get' your enemies, meaning you will have health, prosperity, and success in the new year.

Question Corner: We sometimes like to de-stress at the AWIA office by asking each other low-stakes questions. Since it's getting colder, we want to ask you! Send your answer to mail@awia.jp with the subject line: Stew.

Is 'stew' a main dish or a side dish?

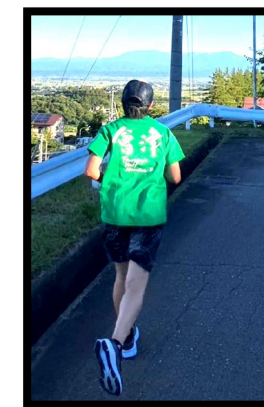
Do you eat Japanese cream stew with rice, like curry rice, or do you eat with a 'main' dish, like it's miso soup?



We'll feature your answers in the January edition of SynthesAizu! If you have a question you want to ask AWIA members, send it over!

AWIA Member Spotlight: Chua Xinyun

My Aizu from My Eyes



Chua Xinyun
a.k.a. Jennifer!

Chua Xinyun, affectionately known as Jennifer at the Association, loves to try new things. Originally from Malaysia, she can speak Malay, Chinese, English and Japanese really well! She especially loves enjoying the different things you can do each season. This fall despite not being a runner, Jennifer decided to challenge herself to the Tsuruga-jo Half Marathon. She's shared her thoughts on her journey with us at AWIA:

My First Tsuruga-jo Marathon

5 years ago, I was lucky and got the chance to come and live in Aizu. I've had a great time living here these past few years; however, I had never once taken the plunge and joined the Tsuruga-jo Half Marathon. This year, with the situation around COVID calming down, I heard that it would be coming back with force. After chatting with my husband, I decided to challenge myself here in Aizu applied to join the 10km road race. For both of us, this was our first road race ever.

Since we applied in May, with over 4 months until the actual race, we thought 'it'll be fine.' However, after submitting our application, the next day we attempted a 2km run and barely made it through. We were so out of breath, it made us realise we might have overestimated ourselves. But! Since we'd already paid, we had no choice but to train. Even if it went slowly, we decided we would finish that 10km run. If we went overtime or walked the whole time, no matter what, we would finish it.



Setting smaller goals for ourselves, and planning to train at the gym rain or shine, we first aimed to run 2km and slowly increased the distance to 3km, 5km, 7km, until we could finally run 10km. I remember I was over the moon when I first completed 10km. Then, when I was able to run 10km within the 80min time limit, I really felt just how far I'd come, and I was so proud of myself.

It was with these feelings we started our first road race, but on the day of the weather was bad, with wind and rain in the forecast from the morning. Right before the start, the rain stopped, and we felt we were blessed by the heavens. As everyone gathered at the start line, the atmosphere was energetic which was to be expected of a race with almost 8000 participants. Rather than run with the pack, I decided to enjoy the view of the mountains surrounding Aizu as I ran. This is such a beautiful place! As I expected, the sidewalks were full of spectators cheering on all of us runners.

I ran at the pace I trained at, and when I felt I still had some energy with 3km left, I sped up a bit and I was able to finish my first ever 10km marathon. My time was even a personal record! At the finish line, I saw my husband with his smartphone in hand, record that exact moment for me. After the race, I took a photo with him, and felt extremely grateful for the time he put in in the last few months, joining me on this new challenge.

Aizu really is a fabulous place. I think many people joined this event, not only just from around Japan, but also from around the world. I would really love more people to know more about this beautiful place and its lovely people.



Jennifer (right) with her husband after the race

Info from AWIA: Positions filled on the Board of Directors

On November 15th, at the 2nd AizuWakamatsu International Association Board of Directors Meeting, the Board filled a few vacancies, including that of the position of President, which was left vacant after the sudden passing of Mr. Miyazawa this summer. The positions were filled as follows:



- President: SAZE Masayuki (Aizu EU Association)
- Board Member: MEGURO Yoichi (Vice-Mayor of AizuWakamatsu)
- Board Member: SEKIZAWA Kazuyuki (Host Family Volunteer)

Mr. SAZE will be introduced in January's Newsletter. Look forward to his message!

