

Tokushima's Treasure: Awa Odori

Tokushima is well known for its Awa Odori (Awa Dance). This dance has over 400-years of history. It is one of Tokushima's traditional arts and is famous both domestically and abroad.

Awa Odori dance festivals are held every year throughout the prefecture during the middle of the month of August (during Obon). The largest festival is held in Tokushima City for four days from August 12 to August 15. Over a million people from all over Japan and the world visit Tokushima every year.

●Dance Styles

There are two dance styles: the men's dance and the women's dance. Both dance styles have the same dance foundation of alternating the movement of the right arm and right leg, and left arm and left leg in and out.

For the men's dance, dancers lower their hips and then dance with either strength or in a lively / jaunty manner. The men's dance is comprised of not only male dancers, but also women and children.

On the other hand, the women dance with their arms raised high and wear amigasa (straw hats) on their heads and geta (Japanese traditional sandals) on their feet. Their synchronized movements are very beautiful.

●Narimono (Instruments)

The narimono (instruments) used in Awa Odori include the gong, hand drum, shime-daiko drum, o-daiko drum, yokobue flute, and shamisen. These instruments create the distinct two-rhythm cheerful beat of the Awa Odori which is known as zomeki. Let's dance to the rhythm of the Awa Odori! Dancing the Awa Odori is much more fun than simply watching.

“Those who dance are fools, and those who watch are fools. If both are fools, then you may as well dance!”

