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City Life

ISSUE 191

December 2025/January 2026 Edition

City Life is a free English newsletter published every even month by the International Division at the Sakai City Government to provide information to the residents of Sakai City. It is available at libraries, ward offices and other city facilities, or you can view it online at the Sakai City Government English website. Don't forget to also sign up for emails to know when each new edition is published! Scan the QR code for more information. If you have any questions or feedback, or would like the paper version sent to you (free for foreign residents who live, work or study in Sakai), please contact Lena at the following email address: kokusai@city.sakai.lg.jp



Legend: ☆Events ◆Exhibitions ※Important Notices ▲Campaigns ●Child & Healthcare ✿Environment ☎Help Lines

Let's ride the Osaka Sakai Balloon! ✨



In Sakai City, the tethered balloon ride is available in Daisen Park. You can enjoy a panoramic view of the World Heritage Site kofun (ancient burial mounds) and the cityscape of Sakai from approximately 100 meters above ground. Be sure to give it a try!



Location: Inside Daisen Park, south side of Doraike pond (2 Mo-zusekiun-cho, Sakai-ku)

Operating schedule: Open year-round.

(Operations may be suspended due to weather conditions, facility maintenance, etc. For more details scan the QR code to visit the Osaka Sakai Balloon website, in Japanese only).

Operating hours: 10:00-17:45 (around 15 mins per ride, last ride at 17:45)

Admission fees (tax included):

General	Adult	4200 yen
	Child	3000 yen
General (web discount)	Adult	4000 yen
	Child	2800 yen
Persons with disabilities	Adult	3600 yen
	Child	2500 yen
Sakai Resident	Adult	3200 yen
	Child	2200 yen

※ Child admission applies to those under 16 years old (under 3 years old is free).

※ Children under elementary school age must be accompanied by a guardian aged 18 or older.

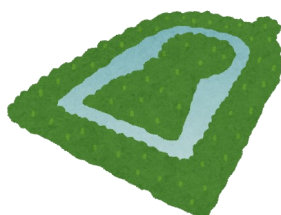
※ Those with heart conditions, fear of heights, those who are pregnant, or anyone deemed by staff to be at risk of unsafe boarding will be asked to refrain from participating.

※ For the Sakai Resident discount, please present proof of address (such as a driver's license, residence card, or My Number card) at the reception on the day.



How to purchase tickets:

You can pay cashless via the Osaka Sakai Balloon official website (until 15:00 the day before your flight), or pay by cash or by various cashless payment methods at the balloon site on the day. (Please confirm operation status on the website).



Events at city-affiliated facilities are updated on the Sakai City Government English website when City Life is released. Detailed information on opening hours, admission costs, access etc. is available there.



Museums & Facilities



Historical Sites



Temples & Shrines



☆Harvest Hill Illumination: Wonder Night Hill 2025

Dates: Designated days until February 23rd, 2026 (Mon/National holiday)

Time: 17:45-21:00 (last admission at 20:30)

Event days

December: 1st ~ 2nd, 4th ~ 8th, 12th ~ 16th, 18th ~ 30th

January: 2nd ~ 4th, 9th ~ 12th, 16th ~ 18th, 23rd ~ 25th, 30th ~ 31st

Admission fees: Adults (junior high school students and older) 1,500 yen (1,800 yen on Fri, Sat and Sun of Dec. and Dec. 23rd ~ 25th), children (4 years and older) 800 yen, persons with disabilities (junior high school students and older) 750 yen (900 yen on Fri, Sat and Sun of Dec. and Dec. 23rd ~ 25th), persons with disabilities (4 years and older) 400 yen, caregivers (18 years and older) 750 yen (900 yen on Fri, Sat and Sun of Dec. and Dec. 23rd ~ 25th) and dogs 600 yen.

For more information about the event, scan the QR code.



☆Traditional Townhouse Museums FukuSuke Exhibition

FukuSuke dolls, which have been cherished as lucky charms that bring happiness since the Edo period, will be on display at the Old Yamaguchi Family Residence, Old Seigakuin Mountain Priest Dojo, and Old Gunsmith Workshop and Residence. Admission fee is required to view the exhibits.

Date: December 24th (Wed) ~ January 19th (Mon)

☆Live English picture book reading

Let's enjoy English picture book reading, hand games, and English songs! Free of charge, no registration required, just come directly to the venue.

Date/time: December 21st (Sun) 15:00-15:30

Location: Sakai City Kita Library, 3F training room (inside Kita Ward Office)

Access: 200 meters east from Exit 2 of Shinkanaoka station on the Osaka Metro Midosuji line. From Mikunigaoka station (JR Hanwa line/Nankai Koya line), take the Nankai bus and get off at Kita Ward Office stop and it is right in front.

☆Fortepiano Recital Series

Focusing on the teenage years of great composers, this recital series presents a carefully selected programme of works written in their youth. Enjoy the exquisite tones of fortepiano master Naruhiko KAWAGUCHI, performed on period-specific instruments.

Date/time:

Vol. 1: "With Sorrow and Joy..." December 20th (Sat) from 15:00 (doors open at 14:30)

Vol. 2: "With Longing and Nostalgia..." January 24th (Sat) from 15:00 (doors open at 14:30)

Venue: Fenice Sacay, small hall

Ticket prices (per concert): General 4,000 yen, 22 years and under

1,500 yen (limited quantity)

※ 22 years and under tickets not available via ticket purchasing websites. Proof of age required at entry.

※ Preschool children not admitted.

Capacity: 300 people

Application:

Online: Sacay mate, various ticket-purchasing websites

Phone: Sakai City Cultural Foundation ticket center (0570-08-0089)

In person: Fenice Sacay ticket counter (9:00-20:00)

Scan the QR code for event details on the Fenice Sacay website (Japanese only).



☆Sakai Illumination 2025

Sakai Illumination 2025 will be held from December 1st (Mon) to January 15th (Thu), 17:00-23:30. Spanning around 1.7km, the champagne gold lights and blue lights will colour the streets along the rows of the trees on Oshoji street, from Sakaihigashi station to Sakai station.

A lighting ceremony will be held on December 1st (Mon), starting at 17:00 at Mina Sakai (Citizens Plaza) in front of the City Hall. Additionally, a photo contest will be held during the event period. For more details, scan the QR code (Japanese only).



☆Indonesian Kopi (Coffee) and Film

Join us to explore the country and culture of Indonesia and learn about its coffee. While enjoying coffee made from Indonesian beans, which rank third in global coffee production, watch a documentary film that highlights the story of Indonesian coffee. (Audio: Indonesian, subtitles: Japanese & English). Free admission, capacity 50 people (lottery system if applications exceed the limit).

Application: Up to 4 people per application. Apply via Sakai City's e-application system (from December 19th 9:00 to January 14th 17:00), or by return postcard (must arrive by January 14th).

Date/time: February 1st (Sun), 14:00-16:00

Venue: Plaza of Multicultural Exchange Sakai, large meeting room

☆The Harmony Mucha Dreamed of

Alphonse Mucha is widely known as an Art Nouveau artist who portrayed elegant and graceful women. However, throughout his life, he created numerous works expressing his wish for the happiness of all people. This exhibition introduces a new side of Mucha's artistry under the theme of "Harmony." Centered around the museum's iconic large oil painting "Harmony" approx. H1.5m × W4.5m, the exhibition explores recurring motifs and compositions found in selected works from the collection, uncovering the messages Mucha sought to convey to the world.

Exhibition period: December 6th (Sat) ~ March 29th (Sun)

Venue: Sakai Alphonse Mucha Museum

☆Yassai Hossai

Date/time: December 14th (Sun) fire lighting and firewalking from 20:00-21:00 (time subject to change due to weather conditions)

Location: Iwatsuta Shrine (4-12-7 Hamadera-ishizu-cho Naka, Nishiku)

Nearest stations: Nankai line, Ishizugawa station or Hankai tramway, Ishizu station

A sacred ritual is held in which 108 bundles of firewood are burned before the deity, and participants walk through the fire while chanting "Yassai Hossai." It is said that taking home the remaining embers wards off evil spirits.

☆Ebisu Festival

Date/time: January 9th (Fri), 10th (Sat), 11th (Sun) 10:00-22:00

Location: Sugawara Shrine (2-1-38 Ebisuno-cho Higashi, Sakai-ku)

Nearest station: Hankai tramway, Oshoji station

This is a festival honoring Ebessan, the deity of prosperous business. After worshipping at the main shrine, visitors offer a hatsuhoryo (first harvest offering) within the shrine grounds. They receive a fukuzasa (lucky bamboo branch), which is then decorated with charms symbolizing wishes for business success and household safety. The grounds also bustle with people receiving kumade (decorative rakes), auspicious items said to "rake in" good fortune and luck.



☆What is "Toshikoshi"? (New Year's Traditions Around the World)

The timing and customs of New Year's celebrations vary across countries and regions. This workshop offers a chance to explore different cultures and lifestyles through storytime with picture books and hands-on research using books.

Date/time: December 26th (Fri), 10:30-12:00

Venue: Sakai City Naka Library, 1F meeting room

Access: 15 mins walk from Fukai station (Nankai Semboku line), located in Sophia Sakai (library building)

Fee: Free

Capacity: 20 people (ages 5 and up, first-come-first-served)

Application: From December 12th (Fri) 10:00, in person at the library, by phone (072-270-8140) or fax (072-270-8149)

● Health Insurance Deadline for December and January

If you do not make payments from pension, the deadline for national health insurance payments (June through to March 2026) is the last day of every month, aside from December which is the 25th. The deadline for elderly person health insurance payments is the last day of every month between July and March 2026 (December's deadline is January 5th 2026, however automatic withdrawal is December 29th). If the due date falls on a bank holiday, it will be the next business day. Please make sure to pay by the due dates below:

National health insurance

December: December 25th

January: February 2nd

Elderly person health insurance

December: January 5th (payment by bill), December 29th (automatic withdrawal)

January: February 2nd (payment by bill and automatic withdrawal)

※Garbage Disposal Over the New Year Holiday Period

There will be regular collection of household garbage and recyclable waste till December 31st, then no garbage collection between January 1st to 3rd. For more information scan the QR code.



☆Hatsumode and Shrines in Sakai City

In Japan, it is traditional to visit a shrine or temple at the beginning of the New Year to pray for happiness and good health throughout the year. This first visit of the year is called "Hatsumode." Many people go between January 1st and 3rd. Below are some representative shrines in each ward. Why not try Hatsumode yourself?

● Aguchi Shrine

Kaino-cho Higashi 2-1-29, Sakai-ku

(Accessible via Hankai tramway, get off at Shukuin station)

● Hochigai Shrine

Kitamikunigaoka-cho 2-2-1, Sakai-ku

(Accessible via Nankai Koya line, get off at Sakaihigashi station)

● Otori Taisha (Otori Grand Shrine)

Otorikita-machi 1-1-2, Nishi-ku

(Accessible via JR Hanwa line, get off at Otori station)

● Mozu Hachimangu Shrine

Mozuakahata-cho 5-706, Kita-ku

(Get off at Nankai Koya line Mozuhachiman station or JR Hanwa line Mozu station)

● Suearata Shrine

Ueno 1215, Naka-ku

(Accessible via Nankai bus, get off at Ueno stop)

● Tajihayahime Shrine

Miyayamadai 2-3-1, Minami-ku

(Accessible via Nankai bus, get off at Miyayamadai-2 stop)

● Hagiwara Shrine

Hikishoharadera-machi 75-1, Higashi-ku

(Accessible via Nankai Koya line, get off at Hagiharatenjin station)

● Sugo Shrine

Sugo 178-1, Mihara-ku

(Accessible via Nankai bus, get off at Sugo stop)

☆First Shooting Archery Ceremony

Date/time: January 2nd (Fri), 11:00-12:00

Location: Mozu Hachimangu Shrine (5-706 Mozuakahata-cho, Kita-ku)

Nearest stations: JR Hanwa line, Mozu station or Nankai Koya line, Mozuhachiman station

To pray for peace across the land and abundant harvests, this ceremonial event will be held at a specially prepared archery range within the shrine grounds. Archers dressed in traditional attire will shoot arrows at a large target set 60 meters away. Come and enjoy the beauty of this historic ritual and the elegance of Japanese archery. Free to visit and observe.

※ Tax Payment

December is the third appointed time for Fixed Property Tax and City Planning Tax. The payment deadline is December 25th. January is the fourth appointed time for Municipal Inhabitant Tax, Prefectural Inhabitant Tax, and Forest Environment Tax. The payment deadline is February 2nd. Please make your payment by the deadline at your nearest financial institution, convenience store, etc. Payment can also be made using Pay-easy, mobile payment methods, and credit cards via the regional tax payment website (eLTAX). Scan the QR code for the English user's guide on the website. For those using automatic withdrawal, the third appointed time for Fixed Property Tax and City Planning Tax will be withdrawn on December 25th, and the fourth appointed time for Municipal Inhabitant Tax, Prefectural Inhabitant Tax, and Forest Environment Tax will be withdrawn on February 2nd. Please ensure you have sufficient funds in your account.



● December 1st: World AIDS Day and HIV testing



World AIDS Day is an opportunity for people worldwide to raise awareness of the disease and fight against discrimination towards those that are affected by it. It is commemorated on December 1st and was first established in 1988. The red ribbon is a symbol of support against prejudice and discrimination towards those living with AIDS. Sakai City is implementing HIV testing. For more information scan the QR code.



※Celebration of turning 20

Schedule:

January 12th (Mon, public holiday)

(1-part system)

Sakai, Naka, Higashi, Minami, Kita, Mihara Wards (from 10:00~)

(3-part system)

Nishi ward

● 1st-part: 9:00~

● 2nd-part: 10:45~

● 3rd-part: 12:30~

Eligibility: Those born between

April 2nd Heisei 17 (2005) to April 1st Heisei 18 (2006) who are on the Sakai City basic resident register (those who are eligible were posted an invitation in late November).



Wards	Venue
Sakai	Sakai Performing Arts Center Fenice Sacay
Naka	Education and Culture Center Sophia Sakai
Higashi	Hatsushiba Gymnasium
Nishi	Nishi Cultural Hall Westy
Minami	International Communication Center for Persons with Disabilities BiG-i
Kita	Sakai City Industrial Promotion Center
Mihara	Mihara Cultural Hall Artebell

☎Government Services During the New Year's Holidays

From Dec 27th to Jan 4th the City's business affairs will be closed. However, reception for the notice of family register, issuing of burial/cremation permits will still be accepted at the night and holiday reception counter at the east entrance of the city hall's main building, and the ward office's security guard counter will also be open. Plaza of Multicultural Exchange Sakai will also be closed from Dec 29th to Jan 3rd.



The Plaza of Multicultural Exchange Sakai (POME Sakai) can help you with language assistance for any of the processes in the city notices listed here. Check the back page for all their contact information!

FOR YOUR REFERENCE

Plaza of Multicultural Exchange Sakai

TEL: 072-228-7499

Email: kokusai@city.sakai.lg.jp

Address: 2-1 Minamikawara-machi, Sakai-ku (5F Sakai City General Welfare Hall)

Opening Hours: Sunday to Friday 9:00-17:30 (closed on public holidays and **New Year's break December 29th to January 3rd**)

General Consultations for Foreign Residents

Please drop by in person or call during these hours if you have any queries regarding daily life.

Mon to Fri 10:00-12:00 & 13:00-16:00

Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Spanish, and Thai.

***Tagalog, Indonesian and Nepali is only available for in person consultations.**

*Languages other than Japanese/English will be conducted through a 3-way call or through the use of translation devices and interpreting services.

Free Online Consultations for Foreign Residents

The Plaza of Multicultural Exchange Sakai are offering free online consultations using Zoom for foreign residents living, working, or studying at school in Sakai City, in 13 languages. Get advice from immigration and law experts. Please make an appointment by phone



or e-mail one week in advance of your consultation day.

Administrative: January 23rd 18:00-20:00

Labour: Not available

Law: Not available

Immigration: January 9th 13:30-16:30

Daily Life: January 16th, 30th 13:30-16:30

Free Confidential Consultation

December 17th (Wed) & January 21st (Wed), 14:00-17:00

Consultations on naturalizations and immigrations with an administrative procedure specialists are available for discussing the status of or changes to applications. **Three slots available** (Reservations required). Those that require an interpreter must apply at least 10 days before the date of the consultation.

Volunteer Interpreter Service

Those who need interpretation can apply for a volunteer interpreter using the form available for download from the QR code. Please make sure to hand it in via post, fax or email **at least 10 days in advance**.



やさしい日本語 Facebook Page

POME Sakai has started a Facebook page which posts about emergencies, disaster warnings, upcoming events, etc., in Easy Japanese. This is a great resource for those who want to attain information in Japanese.



“Suirin すいりん” App for Waterworks

Download the official Sakai City Waterworks and Sewage Bureau app for these convenient features!

- Get notices about checkups and view up to 2 years of past water usage and bills.
- Get digital bills delivered through the app and pay using PayPay or at a convenience store.
- Get confirmations of automatic withdrawal payments.
- Apply for temporary stop and start of water services.
- Pay bills with your credit card (registration required).

For more details and to download the app, scan the QR codes (Japanese only).

For Android users



For iPhone users



Waterworks and Sewage Bureau Website



No smoking or littering on the street

The area in front of Sakaihigashi station and the public road on the south side, the squares in front of Sakai station (west and east), Oshoji street, and the area around the city hall are designated as non-smoking and no littering zones. Violations will result in a fine of 1,000 yen. Additionally, Sakaihigashi station's west side, Nakamozu station, Mikunigaoka station, Sakaishi station, Komyoike station, Fukai station and Izumigaoka station are designated as priority areas for improving smoking and littering manners. We appreciate your cooperation.



Emergency Numbers

110: Police

119: Fire or medical emergency (available in English, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Portuguese and Vietnamese).

When you call 119, the operator can set up a three or four-way call with an interpreter/s. It can take up to 10 seconds to connect, during which the caller should wait on the line and not hang up.

For sudden injuries or illnesses, there is a national 'Ambulance Use Guide'. It is available in multiple languages, so scan the QR code to access it.



Storing Water and Toilets in Case of Disaster

It is said that a person needs about 3 liters of water per day. Immediately after a major disaster, water supply will be cut off. Prepare three days' worth of drinking water to be ready for a disaster.

From the fourth day after a disaster occurs, you will be able to receive water at evacuation centers. Prepare portable toilets for times when your home toilet cannot be used.



Parking Ban-Zones for Bicycles & Minibikes

Abandoned bicycles (including minibikes) obstruct the safe passage of pedestrians and the entry of emergency vehicles. The areas around 27 stations in Sakai City (within approximately 300 meters of railway stations, excluding the Hankai line) are designated as a parking ban zone for bicycles. Bicycles and minibikes left in the zone will be removed, and a removal and storage fee will be required for their return. Please park your bicycles and minibikes in designated parking areas.



Sakai City CIR Facebook & Instagram Accounts

Get the most up-to-date information on what's happening in Sakai. Sakai is a beautiful place and we would love it if you shared with us what amazing places you know. Please follow and add #hellosakai to your posts!

Find us by searching 'Sakai City CIR' on Facebook and Instagram!!

