

EST. 1994

City Life

ISSUE 186

February/March 2025 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

☆Setsubun - "Bean Throwing Ceremony"



In Japan, Setsubun (this year is February 2nd) known as "the day to scatter beans and ward off demons" and especially in Osaka, is "the day to eat *ehomaki* (sushi rolls)". The history of warding off demons during Setsubun is long, said to have origins as an imperial court custom during the Heian Period (8th to 11th century). The act of scattering beans is said to have arrived from China in the 15th century.

Setsubun (literally meaning "seasonal division") originally marked the transition between the seasons and occurred 4 times a year. Perhaps the reason why only "spring Setsubun" remains is because spring is considered the beginning of the harvest year and therefore the most important season. Or perhaps it is because they felt that more protection from misfortune was needed in the season where chilly days linger and they were more susceptible to illnesses.

Ehomaki's origin is said to have started during the Edo Period (17th to 19th century) in the merchant town of Osaka. On the night of Setsubun, there is a folklore that your wishes will come true if you eat an uncut sushi roll (*makizushi*) in the lucky direction of the year ("eho"), as that's where the god of the year resides. That is west-southwest this year.



☆Kozen Park



With a land mass of 170 thousand square-meters, this vast park is known for its plum trees. Currently there are about 50 species and a total of 1,100 plum trees. The best time to see them is between mid-February to early March. Nearby there is Tajihayahime shrine, of which main hall was built in the 16th century and is designated as a National Important Cultural Property.

Cost: Free

For more information, please scan this QR code.



☆Promoting the appeal of Sakai

Using EXPO 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan as an opportunity we are promoting the appeal of Sakai through the special website and video which are open to the public now. Please feel free to watch.

◆Promotional video of Sakai

A promotional video where you can see the experience of tea ceremony culture, knives, a Japanese garden, shrines and temples, interaction with people in an immersive way unique to Sakai.

◆Special website

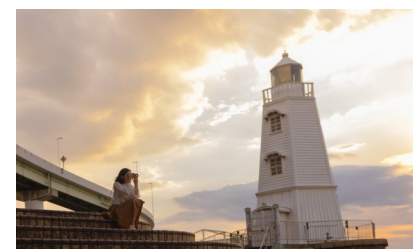
Based on the concept of "3rd destination" we are promoting to stop by Sakai and enjoy Japanese culture in your own time at many sightseeing spots and hands-on experiences in Sakai.



Promotional video



Special 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.



☆◆Daisen Park Japanese Garden

Camellia (until early March)



The camellia is a much-loved flower in Japan from ancient times. It is often used in art and music. It especially fills an important role in tea ceremony.

Also, the oil extracted from camellia seeds is widely used in cooking, hair products and cosmetics.

You can enjoy camellia from many different places in the Japanese garden.

Peach blossoms (peak viewing in March)

The peach tree is thought to have become the symbol of vitality and have abilities to ward off evil because it produces lots of fruit. Peach blossoms are also used to decorate for *Hinamatsuri* or girls' festival.



The Togendai area in the Daisen Park Japanese Garden blooms with peach blossoms, plum blossoms and peonies to enjoy in spring. The meaning of "togen" is utopia.

☆Hina Dolls for Girl's Festival

Period: March 3rd (Mon) ~ April 3rd (Thu)

Location: Traditional Townhouse Museums

Access:

Old Yamaguchi Family Residence: 1-2-31 Nishikino-cho Higashi, Sakai-ku. A 3-minute walk from Ayanochi station on the Hankai Tramway.

Old Gunsmith Workshop and Residence: 1-3-22 Kitahatago-cho Nishi, Sakai-ku.

Old Seigakuin Mountain Priest Dojo: 1-3-13 Kitahatago-cho Nishi, Sakai-ku. A 3-minute walk from Takasujinsha station on the Hankai Tramway and a 5-minute walk from Shichido station on the Nankai Line.

※There is no car park so please use public transport.

Opening time: From 10:00-17:00 (last entrance 16:30)

Closed days: Every Tuesday (in case of closed day being a public holiday the following week-day will be closed), year end and New Year period.

Entrance fee: General admission 100 yen (Old Seigakuin Mountain Priest Dojo), 200 yen (Old Yamaguchi Family Residence), 500 yen (Old Gunsmith Workshop and Residence).

• Group and combo tickets available.

• Free entrance for junior high school students and under, persons with disabilities and their accompaniment, those who are 65 and over living in Sakai.



☆◆Mihara History Museum

Bell-ringing experience

Every 1st Sunday of the month. Come and ring the temple bell of Kawachi foundry.

Date/time: February 2nd (Sun), March 2nd (Sun) 10:00-15:00

※Cancelled in case of rain.

Participation fee: Free



☆ Second Walking along the Green Roads of Minami event ~ Let's aim for 6 million steps in total together!

Using sports, you can enjoy the abundant nature and the interactions with people. The length of distance is based on your own body and fitness, and you can choose how far you go. There is also a booth at Kamotani baseball field which you can enjoy when you reach the goal. Every participant will receive an original towel. Some participants will be chosen through a raffle to receive Niwadani rice. In addition, if the total steps of all participants reach 6 million, the number of winners will increase. Anyone is welcome to participate. Cancelled in case of stormy weather.

Date/time: March 2nd (Sun), 9:00-12:15 (accepting between 8:30-10:00)

Location: Komyoike Greenway (start at Akasaka Park, Kamotani baseball field, Shiroyama Park, goal: Kamotani baseball field)

Access: Semboku Rapid Railway, Komyoike station

Participation fee: Free

Application: Apply by February 14th, ① via the Sakai City Electric Application System, ② by submitting an application form on the back of the flyer by mail, fax or by hand to Minami Ward office, Administration and Planning Office.

※For more information see the QR codes.



Flyer



Apply here



Website

☆◆Sakai City Museum

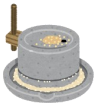
The documents of Inoue Sekiemon's Family

It is the 1-year anniversary of the opening of the Old Gunsmith Workshop and Residence which will be celebrated at Sakai City Museum. Through old materials of Inoue Sekiemon, the 3 viewpoints of guns from the Edo period in Sakai, production, sales and technology will be introduced. It will be related to the exhibition of the Old Gunsmith Workshop and Residence.

Period: March 8th (Sat) ~ May 11th (Sun)

Let's enjoy playing with old toys and tools

Let's make old toys such as button whirrigs and play with them and experience old tools such as a stone mortar, grinding



rice into flour.

Date/time: February 23rd (Sun) 13:00-16:00

Location: Sakai City Museum hall · study room (basement).

How to participate: Accepting walk-ins on the day.

The 20th Sakai Student Calligraphy Exhibition

Exhibition: February 7th (Fri) ~ 14th (Fri), 9:00-21:00

*opening day starts at 14:00, closing day ends at 16:00

Place: 1F Entrance Hall of the Main Building (*honkan*), Sakai City Hall.

Calligraphy works by students enrolled in primary schools, junior high schools, and special support schools in Sakai and university students from ASEAN countries will be displayed. The themes in the calligraphy include the culture, history, traditions and significant figures of Sakai, the students hopes for Sakai and international exchange. Come see this aspect of traditional Japanese culture! Admission free.



◆Kindergarten Children's Art Exhibition

We will be holding an exchange exhibition of art made by kindergarten children from Sakai City and from Sakai's sister and friendship cities: Berkeley City (USA), Lianyungang City (China), Wellington City (New Zealand) and Da Nang City (Vietnam).

Date: February 18th (Tue) ~ 28th (Fri)

Time: 9:00-21:00

*closes at 15:00 on the final day

Place: 1F Entrance Hall South Lobby of the High-rise Building (*kosokan*), Sakai City Hall

Cost: Free



Last year's display

※City Tax Notice

February will be the fourth appointed time for Fixed Property Tax and City Planning Tax. The deadline is **February 28th**. Please pay at the nearest banking facility, convenience store etc. Payment can also be made using the pay-easy mobile payment method and credit cards on the regional tax payment site (eLTAX for payment). For those that use the automatic transfer, the fourth payment period for Fixed Property Tax and City Planning Tax will automatically be deducted on **February 28th** so please check that you have sufficient funds.



※Declaration for Municipal and Prefectural Tax

This is an important procedure which provides the basis for the calculation of taxes in FY2025 and also enables taxpayers to be issued with tax certificates such as "Proof of Income" (所得証明書 *shotokusho-meisho*). To prevent congestion, please submit documents by post. The forms are available on the Sakai City Government website.



Who needs to make a municipal and prefectural tax declaration?

Anyone who had an address within Sakai City as of January 1st 2025 and received income in 2024, excluding:

- Anyone who informs the national tax office of his/her income individually
- Anyone whose income is solely derived from wages and the place of employment automatically informs the municipal government of their earnings

- Anyone whose income during 2024 is from public pension only and 1.55 million yen and under (1.05 million yen and under for those born on January 2nd 1960 and after)

If you had no income in 2024, but still want to receive a "Proof of Income", please make a declaration.

Declaration period:

February 17th to March 14th (excluding weekends and public holidays)

Time: 9:00-17:15

Place: City Hall Main Building 3F Meeting Room, Naka/Higashi/Minami Ward Office 2F Meeting Room, Nishi Ward Office Basement Meeting Room, Kita Ward Office 1F Meeting Room, Mihara Ward Office 3F Meeting Room

Necessary Items:

- Documents that can prove your earnings, e.g. income tax withholding slip (like 源泉徴収票 *gensen choshuhyo*)
- Documents that can prove a deduction from your income, e.g. payment receipts of national health insurance (国民健康保険 *kokumin kenko hoken*)
- ID (such as My Number card or the combination of My Number Notification card and Driver's license)

※Closure of 21st Floor Lobby

Due to renovations, the 21st floor lobby at Sakai City Hall will be closed.
Period: February 3rd ~ April 4th

※Illegally parked bicycles cause trouble

Illegally parked bicycles (including mini-bikes) cause disturbances to the safety of pedestrians and interruptions to emergency vehicles. Illegally parked bicycles will be removed within the parking-ban zones of the city's 27 stations (around 300m range from stations). The return of removed illegally parked bicycles will incur a removal and storage fee. Please use the bicycle parking spaces provided.



◎ Postponement of National Pension Payment for Students

If a student earned a fixed amount or under during the previous year (if you don't have dependents 1.28 million yen) they are eligible for a postponement of payment of contributions for National Pension. The approved period under this system counts towards the normal obligation time but is not reflected in your pension amount. Furthermore, if you happen to get a disability due to an injury or sickness in this period, you may be eligible for disability pension if you meet certain requirements.



To apply, please bring your pension book or Notification of Pension Number, My Number card/My Number Notification card with other personal identification, and student ID card or certificate to the Health Insurance and Pension Division at your local ward office. You can also apply by post or through 'Mynportal'. If you are continuing use of this system, please simply return the postcard when sent to you.

◎ Health Insurance Deadline for February and March

If you do not make payments from pension, the deadline for national health insurance payments (June through to March of the following year) 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 of the following year (for account transfer, the deadline in December is 28th). If the payment date falls on a closure date of financial institutions, the payment day will be the following day. The payment period for February and March are as follows:

February: February 28th
March: March 31st



◎Reduction of National Health Insurance Premium Before and After Delivery

In the case that a household covered by the National Health Insurance has an insured person who expects/delivered a baby/babies, per capita and per income portions imposed on the insured person from January 2024 and onwards will be exempted, and so the insurance premiums for the household will be reduced.

Eligibility: Insured person whose expected/actual date of birth is from November 2023 or after

Reduction period: 4 months from the month before the expected/actual date of birth (for multiple births, it will be 6 months from 3 months before the month of expected/actual date of birth)

Necessary documents: Documents that show the National health insurance number, documents that can confirm the applicant's personal identity and the mother-child health book with which the expected/actual date of birth can be confirmed

National Pension Payments Before and After Giving Birth

Payment of contributions to the National Pension before and after giving birth will be exempted upon notification. The exemption period will be considered the same as payment, however you can still make additional payments if you wish.

Eligibility: Primary insured person (*daiichigo hihokensha*) whose date of birth is 2019 February 1st, or later.

Exemption period: 4 months from the month before the expected/actual date of birth

(for multiple births, it will be 6 months from 3 months before the month of expected/actual date of birth).

However, it is limited to the period of 2019 April and after.

Necessary documents: Documents that can confirm the applicant's personal identity and the mother-child health book with which the expected/actual date of birth can be confirmed.

*To apply for the deduction/exemption please bring in necessary items to the Health Insurance and Pension Division at your local ward office, by post or the 'Mynportal' application system from 6 months before the expected date of birth.

* A power of attorney is needed if a person outside of the household comes to the ward office.

*Any pregnancy 85 days and over (around 4 months) is counted, including premature birth, stillbirth and miscarriage.



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!

☎ 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.

Labour: March 17th 13:30-16:30

Law: March 21st 18:00-21:00

Immigration: March 26th 13:30-16:30

Clinical Psychologist: March 23rd 13:30-16:30

Daily Life: March 25th, 27th 13:30-16:30

Free Confidential Consultation

February 19th (Wed) & March 19th (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 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.



※ Preventative measures against passive smoking in Osaka

From April 2025 within Osaka prefecture the smoking ban policy will be enforced. Around 5 years ago from April 2020, the country started to implement measures against passive smoking to prevent unwanted passive smoking, making smoking manners into rules.

Facilities that many people use in principle are non-smoking. You can only smoke in designated smoking rooms. In places where smoking is banned you cannot smoke. You may be subjected to paying a fine. In addition, those under 20 years old are not able to enter these smoking rooms. Furthermore, from April 2025, the ordinance of Osaka Prefecture will implement stricter regulations than national laws for the prevention of unwanted passive smoking. This may also be subjected to fines. Even the restaurants where smoking is permitted will be banned from April if they are larger than the criteria. When at a restaurant or cafe, please check the label at the entrance of the establishment.



☎ “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 by showing the barcode at your local 7-Eleven or Ministop.
- Get confirmations of bank transfer payments
- Apply for temporary stop and start of water pipes
- Pay bills with your credit card (registration required)



☎ Sakai City CIR Facebook & Instagram Accounts

Get the most up-to-date information on what's happening in Sakai, from upcoming events to emergencies & disaster warnings. Sakai is a beautiful place and this year, we're going to show just how amazing it is to the world! Please search Sakai City CIR on Facebook and Instagram.



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