

# Supporting the Hokuriku Region through Traditional Crafts

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TOKYO, Feb. 27, 2024 — Japan Tourism Agency has provided support to create special experiences and limited-time offers that would boost recovery of tourism nationwide and also to add value to tours and activities.

On January 1, 2024, an earthquake struck the Hokuriku region of Central Japan. Among the many cities affected by the disaster is the city of Wajima, located in Ishikawa Prefecture and well known as the birthplace of Wajima lacquerware.

All across Japan, traditional crafts have been cherished and carefully passed down through the centuries. These crafts make use of materials and techniques unique to the region they come from, and their quality and uniqueness cannot be replicated by mass-produced, machine-made products. Wajima lacquerware is one such example of these crafts.

There are currently 241 traditional crafts throughout Japan that are designated by the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. These crafts include ceramics, lacquerware, glassware, other types of Japanese tableware, textiles, dyed goods, Japanese traditional paper “washi”, ukiyo-e prints, and more.

In addition to Wajima lacquerware, the Hokuriku region is home to numerous traditional crafts. These include chopsticks made by Hyozaemon, a long-established company based in Obama, Fukui Prefecture, which employs the knowledge and techniques of local lacquerware craftspeople; Kutani plates, a type of colored iroe-jiki porcelain from Ishikawa Prefecture, designed by the famous potter Kei Akaji; and tumblers made by the manufacturer Nousaku that are adorned with traditional Japanese patterns crafted with the techniques of Takaoka copperware, which have been passed down in Takaoka City, Toyama Prefecture, from the Edo period. Nousaku produces a range of items, including brass Buddhist altars, tea utensils, and flower vases, as well as the world’s first tableware made of 100% tin.

The Hokuriku region is also rich in cultural heritage, with many festivals and traditions that stretch back for centuries. This includes the Nagaoka Fireworks Festival, one of the three major fireworks festivals in Japan. The event is held in Nagaoka, Niigata Prefecture, and attracts countless visitors every year. Jiro Konami, a photographer active both in Japan and overseas, has printed photos of the beautiful fireworks from the festival onto Japanese hand towels, a must-have item for daily life in Japan.

By supporting Hokuriku’s wonderful traditional crafts, you will directly contribute to the recovery of the entire region. Why not learn more about Japan’s craftsmanship and experience the charm of the Hokuriku region for yourself?

Click the links below to learn more about the traditional craftspeople and artists mentioned in this article:

Hyozaemon official website: <https://www.hyozaemon.co.jp/>

Nagaoka Firework Festival official website: <https://nagaokamatsuri.com/en/>

Kei Akaji official Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/akajitoubou/>

\*Japanese Only

Nousaku official website: <https://www.nousaku.co.jp/en/>

The post Supporting the Hokuriku Region through Traditional Crafts appeared first on [PressReleaseJapan.net](https://www.pressreleasejapan.net).

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