

SNOW PRESENTS THE BEAUTY OF JAPANESE WINTER

*In some Japanese regions, snow falls heavily during the winter.
This season offers unexpected encounters with nature.
Even famous sites, visited in winter, reveal different scenery.
In the harsh weather, moving animals convey warm emotions.*



CASTLE IN THE SNOW

Hirosaki Castle, located in Hirosaki City, Aomori Prefecture, is one of the few castles with its original main tower still standing. Remains of the three-storied donjon, castle gate, and other features are open to the public in a large park, famous for its cherry blossoms in the spring and warm colors in the autumn. However, the castle in winter also stands apart. During the annual festival in February, snow lanterns and small *kamakura* (snow domes) are lit, and visitors find themselves immersed in a fantastical world, gazing up at the castle floating in the dark sky.



ANIMALS IN THE SNOW

Various animals adapted to snowy scenery live in Japan. The subspecies of the Siberian flying squirrel, Ezo-momonga, that is found only in Hokkaido has adorably large eyes on a small body of about 15 cm. Also found only in Hokkaido, a subspecies of the long-tailed tit, Shima-enaga, a small bird with cute eyes and downy feathers, is appropriately called the “snow fairy.” The likelihood of spotting these creatures is high in the winter, when the trees have shed their leaves. The famous snow monkeys, wild Japanese macaques who live in the monkey park in Nagano Prefecture, Jigokudani Yaen-koen, are the only monkeys in the world who soak themselves in hot springs. Precious wildlife seen only during the Japanese winter is something that you should see with your own eyes.