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# TEACHING TUESDAY

## HANAMAKI MATSURI

SEPTEMBER 5, 2017

Starting every second Friday in September, Iwate Prefecture comes alive with the Hanamaki Festival for three days. Featuring spectacular displays of traditional folk culture, it's easy to get carried away in the excitement of the festival.

The Hanamaki Festival is said to have begun around 400 years ago, originally as a festival to pray for victory in battle. It eventually became a festival to commemorate the anniversary of the death of Nobuchika Kita, who established Hanamaki at the end of the 16th century. Originally the festival was simply floats paraded around town, but soon many performances of local folk entertainment joined the festival.

The Hanamaki Festival is known for its variety of events, from a parade of opulent floats lit by lanterns, to traditional Shishi-odori, or deer dances, performed using traditional Iwate deer costumes. The festival also features other traditional local performing arts like Kagura and the Hanamaki Bayashi Dance and is a great way to experience the local culture of Iwate.