Come to Shonai! A Fun Place with Delicious Food

Between Edo and beginning of Meiji period, some monks mummified themselves. Wishing for peace, they did so by voluntarily entering underground stone room at the end of their strict training. In Shonai, there are six mummies in five temples.

Nangakuji Temple
Address: 3-6 Sunadamachi, Tsuruoka city, Yamagata, Tel: 0235-23-5054
Opening hours: 9am to 6pm

Honmyoji Temple
Address: 388 Uchino, Higashiiwamoto, Tsuruoka city, Yamagata
Tel: 0235-53-2269 Reservation required

Dainichibo Temple (Yudonosan)
Address: 11 Nyudo, Oami, Tsuruoka city, Yamagata
Tel: 0235-54-6301
Opening hours: 8am to 5pm

Churenji Temple (Yudonosan)
Address: 30-1 Nakado, Oami, Tsuruoka city, Yamagata
Tel: 0235-54-6356
Opening hours: 8am to 5pm (May - October), 8am to 4pm (November - April)

Kaikoji Temple
Address: 2-7-12 Hiyoshimachi, Sakata city, Yamagata
Tel: 0234-22-4264
Opening hours: 8am to 5pm (April - October), 8am to 4pm (November - March)

Contact: Shonai Visitors Association
Tel: 0235-68-2511 Fax: 0235-66-4728 Mail: shonai@mokkedano.net

World Class Gastronomy City
Tsuruoka has nurtured and promoted over 50 kinds of local food and has not only protected but also developed their gastronomical traditions and culture by integrating with other industries in the city. In 2014, Tsuruoka was the first Japanese city to be appointed as UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy.

Photo: The Five-story Pagoda in Mt. Haguro, the oldest pagoda in Tohoku

Visit Shonai
Long time ago, people believed that the Ise (located in Mie Prefecture) in the west was “yin” and the Dewa Sanzan was “yang”, and begged must pay visit to both shrines at least once in their lifetime. Tsuruoka has nurtured and promoted nearly 50 kinds of local food and has not only protected but also developed their gastronomical traditions and culture by integrating with other industries in the city. In 2014, Tsuruoka was the first Japanese city to be appointed as UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy.

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Mt. Haguro
(The Dewa Sanzan Shrine)
The sanctuary where the gods of Mt. Gassan, Mt. Haguro, and Mt. Udono meet, offers a lot to see with brilliant architectural designs. Also at an extra cost, you can experience monk training at Taisei Cultural Memorial Hall while wearing the white shroud.
Contact: The Dewa Sanzan Shrine Address: Taisei Haguninmachi, Tsuruoka-city, Yamagata Tel: 0234-63-2155

Sakata Maiko
(geshia in training)
High class restaurant culture in Sakata represents the city’s success in sea trade business during the Edo period. Sakata offers cultural attractions such as traditional performances by “Sakata Maiko”,
Contact: Sakata Address: 1-125 Sakata-machi, Sakata-city, Yamagata Tel: 0234-71-2110 Open: 10am to 5pm Closed: Wednesday

Cruising down Mogami River
The valley between Furukuchi and Kakeke River meets spectacular scenery every season. Wild cherry trees blooming in spring, fallowed by fresh green in summer. Golden leaves in autumn, and ink painting-like scenery in winter.
Contact: Mogami Kyo Bancho Line Kanka: Furukuchi port Address: 86-1 Furukuchi, Tozawa-mura, Mogami-gun, Yamagata Tel: 0233-72-2001 Open: 9:30am to 3:30pm at Furukuchi port URL: http://www.ftf.jp

10 Gourmet Stops Recommend by the Locals

Al-ché-cianño
Where Italian Meets Incredible Shonai Ingredients
This Italian restaurant showed Japan that Shonai has incredible food. The locally sourced ingredients daily delivered to Chef Ghuda, write a seasonal menu each day.
Address: 83 Yamagata-review, Yamagata-city, Yamagata 990-0000 Open: 11:30-14:30 (L.O.) and 17:00-21:00 (L.O.) Closed: Monday URL: www.alcheccianno.com

Men-kobo
Sarasicha
Sarasicha in Sakata: Eat as the Locals Eat
Sakata Ramen is a signature dish in Shonai. Sarasicha is a unique restaurant that serves rich and creamy “tonkatsu” (pork broth) ramen.
Address: 5-4-10 Kamegasaki, Tsuruoka City, Yamagata Tel: 0235-72-5000 Open: 11am-3pm Closed: Sunday

Shonal, Yamagata Prefecture Profile
Population: 261,506 (as of October 1, 2014)
Land: 2,405㎢
Noted Products: Rice (TSUYAHIME, HANAHUN, etc.), Daliashammers beans, red onions, tumpis, bamboo shoots, red pepper, eggplant, cucumber, potatoes, melon, strawberry, persimmon, pork, trout, oyster,ounder, shrimp, crab, sea beam

Shonai is gifted with quality food springs. Yamashita, Asuichi, Abumi, and Yutagawa each one has its own history. They offer options in location (sea, river, and mountain) and spring quality to choose from or you can enjoy them all.

Japanese Sake
Shonai is a leading sake production region with many famous sake in national sake tasting competitions. The secret lies in the pure underground water from the surrounding mountains and the rich rice for sake making. You may find comparing sake from different local producers to be very entertaining.

Mt. Chokai
Mt. Chokai, also called “Dewa Fuji” for its phenomenally beautiful volcanic peak, is the highest mountain in Yamagata Prefecture. It is perfect for hiking, offering seasonal scenes. When the weather is beautiful, you can see Mt. Chokai’s shadow reflecting over the Japan Sea at dawn.
Contact: Yuza Chokai Tourist Association Tel: 0234-63-2225

Sanko Warehouse
You can find the symbols of Sakata, the twelve warehouses built in 1893, as you walk among the rows of beautiful Zelkova trees. Inside the property has souvenir hall and rice history museum of the port city.
Contact: Sakata Tourist and Products Association Address: 1-1-20 Yama-nomachi, Sakata-city, Yamagata Tel: 0234-64-2225 Open: 9am to 6pm (souvenir hall), 9am to 5pm (museum) Closed: January 1st

Kumura no Sakaba
You can enjoy them all!
This shop offers delicious tempura, grilled fish, hot rice, as well as other fresh seafood caught from the local fishing cooperatives. Lines of fresh seafood are made by the local moms brighten up the shop.
Address: 308-1 Sugano, Sugasato, Yutagawa-gun, Yamagata 990-7263 Tel: 0234-71-7222 Open: 9am to 5:30pm (daily)
URL: www.kumuranosakaba.net

Yuza Curry
Healthy Curry with NO Preservatives
Yuza-machi is noted for vegetable production such as peppers, and this restaurant serves “Seasonal Vegetable Curry”. Healthy curry has over 10 kinds of vegetables as toppings.
Address: 1-17 Sakata Shiriizumi, Sakata-machi, Higashitagawa-gun, Yamagata 990-0985 Tel: 0234-66-2050 Open: 11am-2:30pm, 5:30pm-9pm Closed: Monday

Koeido Seikaho
Flip into Nostalgic Time and Place with a Glass of Sake
Locales have cherished this “sake” (Japanese bar) since its opening in 1961. Japanese bar fans love to accompany a variety of local sake. Ask Toshie-san for recommendation.
Address: 1-41 Kikumochi, Sakata-city, Yamagata Tel: 0234-24-1935 Open: 11am-2:30pm & 5:30pm-9pm (-Thurs) Closed: Monday

Amurame Hotel
Heartwarming Home Cooking Using Locally Sourced Ingredients
This Japanese style inn was founded a 100 years ago with a reputation for delicious home cooking. The young owner, Mr. Nami Kawamura entertains his guests with Japanese home cooking menu.
Address: 114 Sakata-machi, Amurame, Higashitagawa-gun, Yamagata Tel: 0234-62-2442 Chexkin start: 4pm Closed-in 10pm
URL: http://amuramehoteln-da.jp/