Esashi's 3 Main Festivals

Kamomejima Festival

First Sat. & Sun. in July

Featuring the *Kitamaebune* Regatta, a thousand-strong parade, a popular-song show and decorations with twisted straw ropes.

Ubagami Grand Shrine Togyo Festival

Aug. 9 - 11

A flamboyant, energetic festival, the oldest in Hokkaido, boasting more than 360 years of history and tradition.

National Esashi Oiwake Contest

National Senior Esashi Oiwake Contest / National Junior Esashi Oiwake Contest

3rd Fri., Sat. & Sun. in Sept.

Oiwake singers chosen nationwide for their talent gather to compete for the honor of being named the best Oiwake singer in Japan.

There are various other events throughout the year

●Spring Inishie Yume-kaido Early May

An event to invigorate the shopping district set among historical buildings and streetscapes

●Esashi Kaisen Minato Ikasashi Festival 1st Fri. in July

Enjoy fresh raw squid.

●Esashi Town Industry Festival Late Sept.

Fresh local produce and specialty products are exhibited and sold.

●Autumn Inishie Yume-kaido Early Oct.

An events to invigorate the shopping district set among historical buildings and streetscapes

●Esashi Tabakaze Festival Feb. 1 - 28

Various events such as an Oiwake seminar, cross-country ski meet and an exhibition of Esashi ceramics are held.

●Winter Esashi Bimi-hyakusai Hotpot Festival

1st Sat. & Sun. in Feb.

Delicious hotpot – the ideal winter dish!
Over 40 different types of southern Hokkaido hotpot dishes.

Welcome to the historic towns of the north
– introducing the neighboring towns that helped built the history

Kaminokuni

Conveying the north's Middle Ages to the present date

Kaminokuni's history is said to have begun in 1189, when settlers from southern Tsugaru moved to the town while escaping from Minamoto no Yoritomo's punitive expedition against Fujiwara no Yasuhira in Oshu.

Later, Takeda Nobuhiro, founder of the Matsumae Clan, came to Hokkaido and unified the Yamato people after suppressing the 1457 Ainu revolt of Koshamain. Kaminokuni prospered as the main political, economic and military base along the Sea of Japan coast until the Hiyama Guard Station was moved to Esashi in 1678.

Matsumae

Little Kyoto of the north

The southernmost town in Hokkaido, Matsumae, is also known as Japan's northernmost castle town. Called the little Kyoto of the north, the town has a nostalgic atmosphere.

In the early 16th century, the area was dominated by the Takeda family, who later received the territory under the Matsumae name in the days of Tokugawa Ieyasu. The area prospered through trade, and the *kitamaebune* (vessels operated by independent shippers and merchants involved in the herring trade) played important roles in the last days of the Tokugawa shogunate. Matsumae Castle and the streetscapes of Teramachi retain vestiges of the times, making Matsumae an attractive town.

Public Transportation Timetable

JR Hokkaido (Hakodate ⇔ Esashi)

Departs Hakodate	Departs Esashi
07:08	06:44
10:12	08:12
13:09	10:08
16:10	13:13
19:32	16:16
	19:00

One-way fare: 1,790 yen

Tel. (0139)52-0169
Journey time by JR: approx. 2 hr. 25 min.

Hakodate Bus (Hakodate ⇔ Esashi)

Departs Hakodate Sta.	Departs Nakauta-cho (Town Office)
07:10	07:18
10:30	07:58
11:53	11:03
14:42	12:08
15:53	15:18
18:41	18:23

One-way fare: 1,830 yen

Tel. (0139)52-0025
Journey time by bus: approx. 1 hr. 50 min.

Heart Land Ferry (Esashi ⇔ Okushiri)

	Departs Esashi	Departs Okushiri
Jan.1 – Apr.30	13:10	08:15
May.1 – Sepr.30	09:30 18:45	06:50 16:05
Oct.1 – Nov.30	10:25 16:05	07:30 13:10
Dec.1 – Dec.31	13:10	07:30

One-way fare: 2,200 yen

Tel. (0139)52-1066
Journey time by ferry: approx. 2 hr. 20 min.

Sapporo ⇒ Transfer at Yakumo ⇒ Esashi (Nakauta-cho) (JR Super Hokuto) (Hakodate Bus)

No. 02	07:00⇒09:32⇒11:19
No. 16	15:07⇒17:50⇒19:36

Esashi (Nakauta-cho) ⇒ Transfer at Yakumo ⇒ Sapporo (Hakodate Bus) (JR Super Hokuto)

07:02⇒09:25⇒11:47	No. 03
12:42⇒15:07⇒17:29	No. 13

Dates, times and fares as of January 1, 2010

Sapporo ⇔ Hakodate
JR: Approx. 3 hr. 20 min.
Airplane (New Chitose Airport): 40 min.

Aomori ⇔ Hakodate
JR: Approx. 2 hr.
Ferry: Approx. 4 hr.

Tokyo ⇔ Hakodate
Airplane: 1 hr. 20 min.

Nagoya ⇔ Hakodate
Airplane: 1 hr. 25 min.

Osaka (Kansai Int'l Airport) ⇔ Hakodate
Airplane: 1 hr. 40 min.

Esashi no Tabi (Travel in Esahi) "Kawara-ban," General Guide

江差
ESASHI

大島小島の間通り船はヤンサノエー
江差がよいか なつかしや
北山おろしで行先やくもるネ
おもかじ頼むよ 船頭さん
かもめのなく音にあと目をさまし
あれが蝦夷地の 山かいな
なにと夢みてなくかよ千鳥ネ
ままごとは江差の仮の宿

【江差追分】

History of Esashi

The first Yamato people to live in Esashi are believed to be the family of Fujiwara no Yasuhira after Minamoto no Yoshitsune committed suicide at Koromogawa in 1189. The town is said to be the birthplace of the Hokkaido culture.

In the Tokugawa period, the population of Esashi exceeded 30,000 thanks to the prosperous trade of Aomori cypress and herrings, using the *kitamaebune* along the Sea of Japan route.

The town was lauded in the verse "Even Edo is not as busy as Esashi in May" due to its development and prosperity as a commercial and cultural base. Esashi Oiwake, which is said to be the king of folk songs, and many other tangible and intangible heritages, including traditional performances and everyday culture, have been passed down and preserved here.

In addition, the Kaiyo-maru, a feudal government battleship that ran aground and sank off the coast of Esashi, has been restored, adding a touch of the atmosphere of the last days of the shogunate.

For additional information on sightseeing in Esashi, please contact

Esashi Town Industry Promotion Section's Tourism Division

Aza Nakauta-cho 193-1, Esashi, Hiyama-gun, Hokkaido 043-8560
Tel. (0139)52-1020 (main switchboard) FAX: (0139)52-0234
URL: http://www.hokkaido-esashi.jp E-mail: main@hokkaido-esashi.jp

Esashi Tourism Convention Association

Tel. (0139)52-4815 (direct line) FAX: (0139)52-0234
URL: http://www.h2.dion.ne.jp/~esashi E-mail: esashi_kankou@w9.dion.ne.jp

The cover picture is from the Esashi Byobu (folding screen), which was painted in 1750's, and depicts the prosperity of Esashi in times gone by.

The Birthplace of Hokkaido
A romantic town filled with Esashi Oiwake melodies