

Cherry Blossoms and Snow Walls: Chokai Blue Line Opens Early

春になると、桜を見に出かけたくなる人も多いのではないのでしょうか。秋田には、春の花と雪が残る山の景色を同時に楽しめる場所があるようです。「鳥海ブルーライン」と呼ばれる山の道路も、この季節ならではの風景を楽しむ場所として注目されています。こうした自然を生かした観光は、地域のにぎわいにもつながるのかもしれませんが。あなたの地域には、季節ならではの魅力を生かした観光地がありますか。どのような場所か、紹介してみましょう。



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

The Chokai Blue Line is a **scenic** mountain road stretching about 35 kilometers (22 miles) along Mount Chokai, linking the mountain's fifth station with Nikaho City in Akita Prefecture and Yuza Town in Yamagata Prefecture. Following its winter closure, the Akita side partially reopened on April 17—about a week earlier than usual.

Snow removal was **accelerated** at the request of local groups, including the Nikaho Tourism Association, in hopes of **attracting** visitors during the brief period when cherry blossoms and towering snow corridors can be enjoyed at the same time.

Typically, both the Akita and Yamagata sides open simultaneously. This year, however, the remaining **section** beyond Hokodate Observatory on the Akita side, along with the entire Yamagata side, is scheduled to open on April 24.

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1. Article

At a reopening ceremony in Kisakata, cherry trees were in full bloom, with Somei Yoshino, weeping cherry, and wild mountain cherry all at or just past their peak. Higher up near the fifth station, snow walls reaching around 8 meters (26 feet) line the road.

A 76-year-old visitor from Yurihonjo City in southern Akita Prefecture was out with his camera, delighted to see the snow corridor made accessible by the early opening.

An official from the Akita Prefectural Yurihonjo Regional Development Bureau noted that temperatures near the fifth station can still drop low enough for snowfall at night as of April 17. Nighttime traffic [restrictions](#) will remain in place until around mid-May, as is typical each year.



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2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. **scenic** 景観の良い

The newly married couple chose a **scenic** route in the mountains for their road trip.

2. **accelerate** 加速する、加速させる

The computer chip company plans to **accelerate** its growth next year.

3. **attract** 引きつける

Bright colors can **attract** young children's attention.

4. **section** 部分

This **section** of the spy novel I'm reading is very exciting.

5. **restriction** 制限

The high school decided to put **restrictions** on phone use during class.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. Why was snow removal accelerated?
2. How high are the snow walls near the fifth station?
3. Why are nighttime traffic restrictions still in place?
4. Would you like to visit a place where you can see snow and cherry blossoms at the same time?
5. How can local communities attract more visitors during short seasonal events?

4. 「鳥海ブルーライン」秋田側が部分開通、例年より1週間早く 「桜と雪の回廊」で客増狙う

鳥海山（標高2236メートル）の5合目と山麓の秋田県にかほ市象潟町、山形県遊佐町吹浦を結ぶ山岳観光道路「鳥海ブルーライン」（総延長約35キロ）のうち、秋田県側が例年より1週間早く4月17日に冬期閉鎖解除となり、部分開通した。「桜と雪の回廊を同時に楽しめる時期の開通で観光客増につなげたい」という、にかほ市観光協会などの要望を受けて秋田県が道路の除雪を早めていた。

例年は秋田県側と山形県側が同時に全線開通するが、今年は秋田県側の5合目鉾立展望台（標高1150メートル）から先の一部と山形県側は24日に開通する。

開通セレモニーが行われた同市象潟町の山麓では、ソメイヨシノや枝垂れ桜、山桜がちょうど満開から花吹雪の頃合い。5合目近くでは、道路わきに高さ8メートルほどの雪壁がそびえる。

由利本荘市の男性（76）は「開通が1週間早まって雪の回廊を見ることができた」と満足そうに写真を撮っていた。

秋田県由利地域振興局の松塚忠政道路整備課長は「5合目近くでは、今も夜の冷え込みで雪が降る」と話しており、夜間は例年並みに5月中旬まで通行止めとなる。

出典：「鳥海ブルーライン」秋田側が部分開通、例年より1週間早く 「桜と雪の回廊」で客増狙う
[Japan Forward](#)