

## Experience the Traditional Crafts of Edo

### The Appealing Beauty and Skillful techniques of Amezaiku (Candy Art)

Tobu Railway Co., Ltd.

Asakusa, Tokyo, is part of the Shitamachi, an area of Tokyo famous for its local traditions, craftsmanship and proud distinctive culture. Since the Edo Period, Asakusa has prospered as a center of many trades. The culture of craftsmanship remains strong today. First-person craft experiences are recently extremely popular among foreign visitors to the district, with visitors trying their hand at crafts including traditional Edo Kiriko cut glass and paper lantern painting. Another popular craft experience is producing amezaiku, a style of 'candy art' which has for many years been a fixture of local festivals. We look at the appeal of these unique crafts.

#### Experience local craftsmanship, take home traditional craftwork as a souvenir



As overseas visitors to Japan now enjoy the country in increasingly diverse ways, many tourists are interested in authentic craft experiences. This month, we introduce some of the establishments offering traditional Japanese crafts which can be experienced in about an hour, including the popular Edo Kiriko cut glass and paper lantern painting courses, in and near Asakusa, a center of Tokyo's shitamachi culture. Many travellers also visit the Japanese Souvenirs shopping district and the Japan Experience Zone located in the TOKYO Solamachi close to Asakusa, which offers a range of traditional Japanese craft souvenirs from Sumida Ward and other parts of Tokyo and Japan. Asakusa Amezaiku Ameshin, which is also located in the TOKYO Solamachi, provides the chance to watch craftspeople creating amezaiku 'candy craft' at close quarters, as well as the opportunity to purchase the finished products. Also at Ameshin's Hanakawado Studio, located in Asakusa, visitors can experience Japan's traditions and craftsmanship skills up close, and try their hand at making the delicate amezaiku themselves. Why not stop by and produce your own one-of-a-kind souvenir?

TOKYO Solamachi website:

Floor Guide: <http://www.tokyo-solamachi.jp/english/floor/>

Souvenir Guide: <http://www.tokyo-solamachi.jp/pdf/souvenirGuide.pdf?ver20180910>

#### A craftsman who discovered the secrets of Amezaiku through self-study

Asakusa Amezaiku Ameshin's Shinri Tezuka

Shinri Tezuka tells us that "As a young boy, I used to love making things with my hands. If I wanted something, I would make it myself". Tezuka's amezaiku 'candy art' is so impressive and intricate that many overseas tourists come looking for his store after seeing videos and photographs of his work. Tezuka remembers that when he first became interested in the art there was nowhere for him to go and study as an apprentice, as the only amezaiku on sale were pieces intended for children at festivals. Tezuka felt that he could change the public's impression of the art by producing more complicated, higher quality pieces. Eventually he taught himself to create works including this lifelike goldfish that looks as if it could almost swim away. Tezuka, who now shows off his skills around the world, says the appeal of the art is that "in the short period of time while the candy is hardening, you only have an instant to get it right. It is a true test of your abilities".

Asakusa Amezaiku Ameshin is currently running courses for visitors. You can make a reservation via the website <http://www.ame-shin.com/en/>

You can also click the following link to see video of the art: <https://youtu.be/Pws5s93525I>



#### Travel like a local in Sumida Ward, a district of Tokyo retaining Shitamachi atmosphere

After enjoying the shitamachi culture in Asakusa, we are pleased to recommend the 'T-home', residential-style accommodation opened in June 2018, just one minute's walk from Oshiage Station (direct trains to both Tokyo Airports).

The rooms, decorated in a traditional Japanese style, providing guests with a true Japanese experience. Travel like a local in an area of Tokyo retaining strong traces of its traditional heritage.

Booking.com: <http://u0u1.net/X9mp>



The Taito, Sumida, Tokyo Shitamachi Excursion Ticket is recommended for visitors to the Shitamachi Area

The Taito, Sumida, Tokyo Shitamachi Excursion Ticket provides a ticket from stations on the Tobu Line to destinations in the shitamachi areas including SKYTREE TOWN, Asakusa, Ryogoku, Ueno and Yanaka, in addition to unlimited travel on the Skytree Shuttle Ueno / Asakusa Line, the Megurin Bus in Taito Ward, and the Sumida Hyakkei, Sumimaru-kun, and Sumirin-chan buses in Sumida Ward. These buses follow circular routes.

Please visit the website <http://www.tobu.co.jp/foreign/en/pass/taito-sumida.html>

#### <Information about recommended sightseeing areas along the Tobu Railways>

The Tobu Railway Group is a major Japanese corporate group consisting of approximately 80 companies. The Tobu Railways cover the longest operating distance in the Greater Tokyo area, and lead to many tourist attractions including Asakusa and TOKYO SKYTREE in Tokyo, Nikko and Kinugawa Onsen, famous as a world heritage and hot spring location, the Tatebayashi and Ashikaga area known for its beautiful blooming flower fields, and Kawagoe, where the atmosphere of the Edo era still live on.

Explore destinations around Tobu Railway Group at TOBU JAPAN TRIP: <http://www.tobujapantrip.com/en/>