

# Saioh Festival

*The Saioh Festival falls on the first Saturday and Sunday of June every year when iris ensetsu is in full bloom.*



*Japan Heritage Recognition*

*Saiku, capital of praying princess Saioh*

*The Saioh system lasted for about 660 years from the Asuka period around 1300 years ago.*

*It is said that the first Saioh was Princess Ohku, daughter of Emperor Tenmu, who was sent to Ise Grand Shrine to serve there.*

*The Saioh Festival started as the remembrance of past Saiohs and people related to the land of Saiku, and it has been growing year by year.*

*Now it has become a grand festivity that attracts a lot of visitors from in and out of Mie prefecture.*

*Currently all the activities of the Saioh Festival are managed by dedicated volunteers.*



## Highlights of the Saioh Festival

### Saturday, the Festival Eve



You can enjoy a graceful world of performers with fancy clothing on the lighted-up stage in the dusk as if in the Heian-era picture scroll.



### Sunday, the departure ceremony to the welcome ceremony

The departure ceremony takes place at the lawn field behind Saiku station regarded as Nonomiya in Kyoto.

After the purification ritual, Saioh and her suites make the procession along the ancient street, beautifully reenacting the six day and five night journey from Kyoto to Ise.



At the Saiku Historical Museum site, the welcome ceremony is held by mayor of Ise city and director of Saiku bureau to greet Saioh and her suites.



Procession illustration presented by courtesy of Saiku Historical Museum

## Sad and sorrowful stories of Saioh

Saioh was an unmarried female who served at Ise Grand Shrine on behalf of the Japanese emperor. She was chosen from among daughters and sisters of the emperor.

After she was chosen by divination, the new Saioh spent about three years at the capital (Kyoto) for preparation, and then set out to the land of Saiku.

Saiohs who served God as High Priestess were not allowed to fall in love.

Among more than sixty Saiohs, there were many sad and sorrowful stories. Some committed suicide to prove their innocence. Some had to see off their lovers at the port after unpermitted affairs.



## Saioh Festival – Attractive events for people of all ages from children to adults



Part 1: Enjoy various fancy foods at the festival!

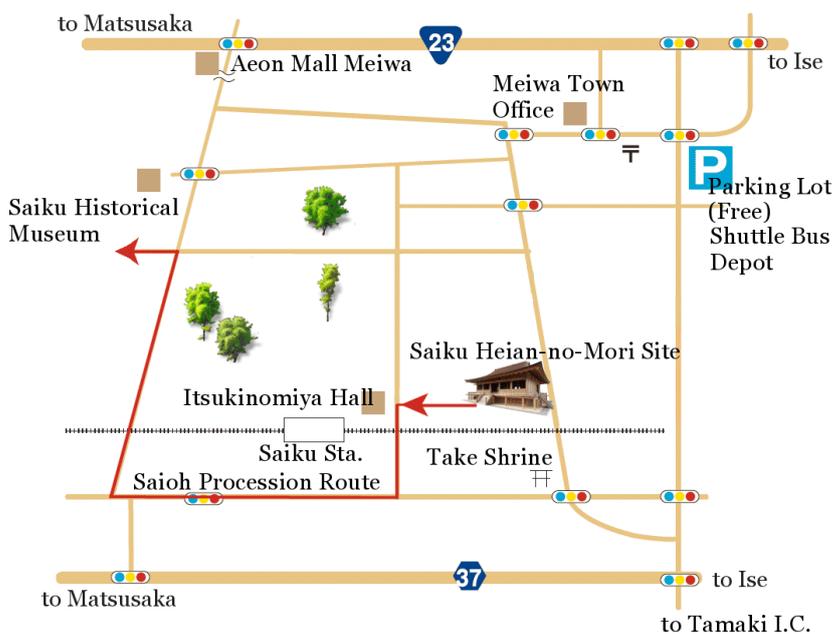
At the main site (Saiku Historical Museum), more than 100 booths of activities and food stands offer class B gourmet and local gourmet you can only taste in Meiwa town. Early eating tour is recommended since foods at popular stores may sell out quickly.

Part 2: Stamp rally for children (free of charge)

On Sunday, the main festival day, the stamp rally is held for children of primary school age and under. Find all the stamps hidden in the Saioh Festival and get a free gift!

Part 3: Take your own pictures and apply for the photo contest

The photo contest is held at the Saioh Festival. Submit your most impressive shots of the festival to the contest.



Access: The Saioh Festival is held on the north side of Kintetsu Saiku station, around Itsukinomiya Hall for Historical Experience, and around Saiku Historical Museum.

The Saioh Festival falls on the first Saturday and Sunday of June every year when iris ensata is in full bloom. Have a great time on the festival with beautiful flowers.

For more details please refer to the website of the Saioh Festival.

Issuer: Executive committee of the Saioh Festival

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