

The Machida Tourist Times

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■ Yosakoi

A form of dance that originally emerged in Kōchi prefecture. It is very popular throughout Japan.

■ Yumemai Kissui Matsuri

This is the official name of the *Yosakoi* dance festival.

■ Revitalization

Let's support events and industry in Machida in order to cherish the city!

■ Machida Tourist Gallery

The Machida Tourist Gallery is the visitor center of Machida. It is in the Poppo Building near Machida Station. English service for tourism information in Machida is available when an English-speaking staff member is available.

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Written and
by: Aya Itoh



YOSAKOI FEVER IGNITES COLD AIR

Yosakoi dancers take the lead in the Industry and Tourism Festival in November!



(Above: Team Honiya from the mecca of Yosakoi dance (Kochi), and Team Zokkon Machida '98 from Machida City)

This fall, the Machida City Tourism and Convention Bureau recommends a *Yosakoi* festival. It will be held in the main Hara-Machida area, which is adjacent to the JR and Odakyu Machida Stations. The event is officially called “Machida *Yumemai Kissui Matsuri*” as a part of the Industry and Tourism Festival, combined with the Agricultural festival. In addition, there will be hordes of stands that sell various foods, drinks, and products produced in Machida throughout several streets.

Originally, *Yosakoi* dance emerged in Kōchi prefecture on the island of Shikoku. The Origin of *Yosakoi* is still a mystery, but since the Chamber of Commerce in Kōchi held the first *Yosakoi* festival in 1951, the popularity has been disseminated and it is recognized nationwide today.

The reason for the relatively fast spread of *Yosakoi* throughout Japan was that it was often used as a means to revitalize a town. Local sponsors of *Yosakoi* do not have to drop big bucks whereas a standard festival that is usually held by a local shopping district risks no return on investment. Since *Yosakoi*'s main focus is on dance, promoters do not have to pay a lot to present, but they will surely gain a number of customers who come to watch the dance. Machida is a good example, taking this approach for both the renaissance of commerce and tourism.

Modern *Yosakoi* festivals all over Japan are nothing like the ones from the 1950s. The original and traditional *Yosakoi* features a traditional Japanese dance called *nichibu*. However, nowadays, if you can follow certain rules, a piece of music that will promote your team's local area can be arranged to be used, such as hip-hop, rap, samba, and more. Dancers carry instruments called *naruko* (basically Japanese castanets) to heighten the dynamics of the beat, and each team has very unique costumes so that viewers never get bored.

There will be 40 teams in the Machida *Yumemai Kissui Matsuri*, including groups from the mecca of *Yosakoi*. There are several teams from Machida: Zokkon Machida '98, for example, is one of the highlights of the festival; the team has attained popularity in Kōchi, by winning the *Yosakoi* festival there. This year, they are going to represent a fascinating dance in *Kabuki* style, with the theme of one of Machida's local legends in Nanakuniyama, that involves a *Tengu* (a mystical creature that has a long nose and uses magic).

There will be three chances for you to witness *Yosakoi*. They all take place on November 14th, but the location will move depending on the time of day. However, the main event will be on Hara-Machida Ōdōri (a big street right next to the 109 building) from 11:30 to 16:30. Let's all participate in the revitalization of Machida City!!

(For further information on Machida tourism, please contact: itou@machida-guide.or.jp)