



NATIONAL ROUTE 66 CENTENNIAL KICKOFF CELEBRATION CONCERT ²IN



Susie
Alto Saxophone



Martha
Gorosu / Shinobue



Kimino
Trumpet



Komako
Chindon Taiko

From Aichi to Route 66: Bente brings Chindon to America

Aichi, Japan—widely known as the home of Toyota—is also the birthplace of a very different cultural export: Bente, an all-female chindonya troupe bringing vibrant Japanese street performance to the world.

Chindonya blends music, movement, and theatrical flair, with performers in colorful costumes playing instruments as they parade through streets. Bente has reimagined this tradition for modern audiences, creating performances that are both rooted in history and highly engaging. The group first toured across the United States in October 2019. After the pandemic, they returned in September 2023 for a 17-day journey along Route 66. That tour was filmed and is now being developed into a documentary, with production nearing completion and a premiere expected soon. They will next appear at the Route 66 Centennial kickoff in Springfield, Missouri, taking part in a

series of community events:

- Wed, April 29 – Springfield Public Schools Classroom Visits (TBA)
- Thu, April 30 – Centennial Kickoff Concert
- Fri, May 1 – Classic Car Show & Parade
- Sat, May 2 – ArtsFest
- Sun, May 3 – Gigs in the Garden Performance
- Mon, May 4 – Springfield Public Schools Classroom Visits (TBA)

From Japan to America’s most iconic highway, Bente continues to connect cultures through music, color, and live performance.

Since then, Bente has continued performing across the U.S., building a growing audience along Route 66 and beyond.

Discover Aichi—Bente’s Hub. Its culture and experiences

For American travelers looking to explore beyond the familiar, Aichi Prefecture offers a unique blend of history, culture, and innovation—making it an attractive destination any time of year. Conveniently located in the heart of Japan and connected by bullet train to Tokyo and Osaka—with Kyoto just a short trip away—Aichi serves as a gateway to authentic Japan, where centuries-old traditions exist alongside modern city life.



Inuyama Castle, National Treasure

A Living History

Aichi is the birthplace of influential historical figures such as Tokugawa Ieyasu and Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Visitors can step into Japan’s past at landmarks like Nagoya Castle and Inuyama Castle, National Treasure, where preserved architecture and surrounding towns tell the story of the samurai era.

Beauty in Every Season

Aichi’s scenery changes throughout the year, offering something special in every season:

Spring: Cherry blossoms and colorful flower festivals

Summer: Fireworks displays and lively cultural events

Autumn: Brilliant foliage, especially at Korankei Valley

Winter: Illuminations and serene landscapes

Each visit reveals a new side of the region.

Tradition Meets Innovation

Known as a center of manufacturing, Aichi is home to Toyota Motor Corporation. Museums and exhibitions dedicated to automobiles, aviation, and technology highlight the region’s spirit of craftsmanship and forward-thinking design.

Experiences You Won’t Find Anywhere Else

From cultural attractions to hands-on activities, Aichi offers memorable experiences for all visitors:

Ghibli Park, inspired by beloved animated films

Workshops in pottery, textiles, and traditional crafts

A Taste of Local Flavor

Aichi’s cuisine is rich and distinctive, featuring dishes such as grilled eel and hearty miso-based specialties. Each meal reflects the region’s deep culinary traditions and local pride.



Located at the heart of Japan, Aichi Prefecture is a place where tradition is still alive. Discover Nagoya Aichi Tours presents a wide range of immersive experiences that go beyond sightseeing. Here are three highlights from their unique cultural tour collection.

Sports: Sumo Experience Tour (photo tour 1)

Step into the world of sumo, Japan’s national sport with over 1,500 years of history. Rooted in ancient Shinto rituals, sumo still reflects its ceremonial origins through its traditions, movements, and rituals. This rare pre-tournament experience takes you inside a sumo stable to observe intense morning training up close and witness the discipline behind the sport. Afterward, meet the wrestlers, take photos, and enjoy chanko hot pot—their traditional, protein-rich meal. A separate grand sumo tournament viewing tour is also available.



Entertainment: Geisha Rehearsal Experience (photo tour 2)

Gain rare access to Nagoya’s Geisha Association and observe an authentic rehearsal—not a staged show. Watch geisha and maiko refine their art, learn the meaning behind their movements and attire, and experience traditions like the “Golden Shachihoko” dance. Guests can also try instruments and take photos.

History: Nagoya Castle After-Hours Tour (photo tour 3)

Explore Nagoya Castle in the quiet of evening, after it closes to the public. Enter the restored Hommaru Palace, admire its refined interiors, and access areas normally off-limits, including the shogun’s chambers—all without the crowds.



Experience More

These are just a few examples of the many cultural experiences available. Each tour offers a unique opportunity to connect with Japan’s traditions in an authentic and memorable way.

