

Urushi is grinded with spatula and then filtered with Washi (Japanese paper). Several layers of color urushi produce deep patterns

Tsugaru-nuri is made by a technique called "Kawari-nuri burnishing" that coats urushi dozens of times, burnishes and polished it to complete. Since drying time is necessary after painting the urushi, 48 steps for Kara-nuri needs about 3 months to complete. Most lacquerware are "drawing patterns on painted surface" but in the other hand, Tsugaru-nuri is "burnishing layers of color urushi" to make the pattern appears, which makes it deep and powerful. When making color urushi, artisans add colorant to clear brownish urushi and grind it with spatula many times until it becomes smooth and fine. Before painting, artisans pick color urushi with washi, twist the paper and use the squeezed out filtered urushi. After going processes such as burnishing and polishing using whetstone to make patterns, more washi are used to filter out impurity in urushi and then this fine-grain urushi is painted to make smooth surface at the finishing steps.

(Cooperated by Kimura Lacquer Studio)



Arabesque with cherry blossom designs, Saya designs (diagonal crossing) are drawn with brush on painted Nanako-base with yellow and vermilion blurred checkered pattern, shaded with green color, vermilion urushi added with tin powder is brush painted and burnished.

Nishiki-nuri (brocade painting)



Immediately after drawing and swelling up a picture or pattern with black urushi using brush, charcoal powder of chaff is sown on it and left to dry. When burnished, designs show up out of the charcoal powder.

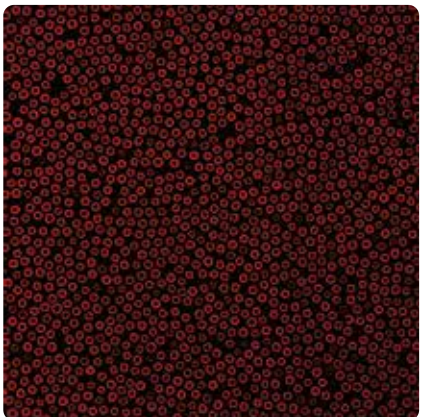
Monsha-nuri (charcoal painting)



Tsugaru's industrial development started by the clan leaders, from decoration of the sword sheath to furnitures.

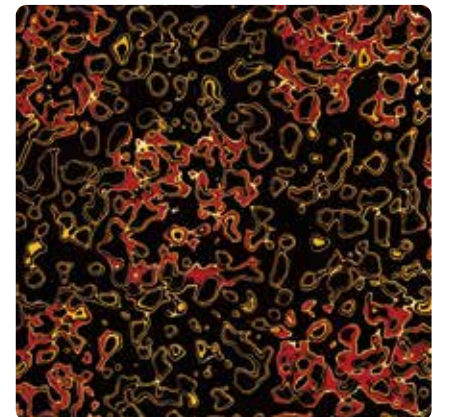
A chic painting which produce ring designs on speckle pattern with egg white mixed black urushi with viscosity and coating color urushi on the top of that. When burnished with whetstone or charcoal, layered pattern of color urushi appears.

Nanako-nuri (fish eggs painting)



Using a special spatula with many holes to put on speckle pattern with egg white mixed black urushi with viscosity and coating color urushi on the top of that. When burnished with whetstone or charcoal, layered pattern of color urushi appears.

Kara-nuri (rare painting)



Kawari-nuri (combination painting) of 5-levels Jubako from the Meiji period (1868-1912) [Collection of Hirosaki City Museum]



In the middle of Edo period (1603-1868) when Nobumasa Tsugaru, the 4th generation leader of the Hirosaki clan, reigned, cultural material from Kamigata region (Kyoto, Osaka) and Edo region (Tokyo) spread to rural areas due to trade expansion. As a part of industrial development within the clan, Nobumasa puts workshop for artisan in Hirosaki Castle, initially urushi painting is done on sword sheath to make it beautiful, but eventually accessories, furnitures, containers and Jubako (bento box) were also decorated with color urushi. It is said that the name "Tsugaru-nuri" was first used when there was a necessity to write production area at Vienna World Exposition in 1873. In 2017, Tsugaru-nuri was designated as "National Important Intangible Cultural Property (Craft Technique)", first in Aomori Prefecture. In the domestic urushi arts field, Tsugaru-nuri is the second known after Wajima-nuri from Ishikawa Prefecture.

The Hirosaki City Museum houses 154 pattern samples made from the late Edo period (1603-1868) to the early Meiji period (1868-1912). These pattern samples sometimes can be found at the special exhibition etc, so please check up the exhibition contents before your visit.



Tsugaru handcraft

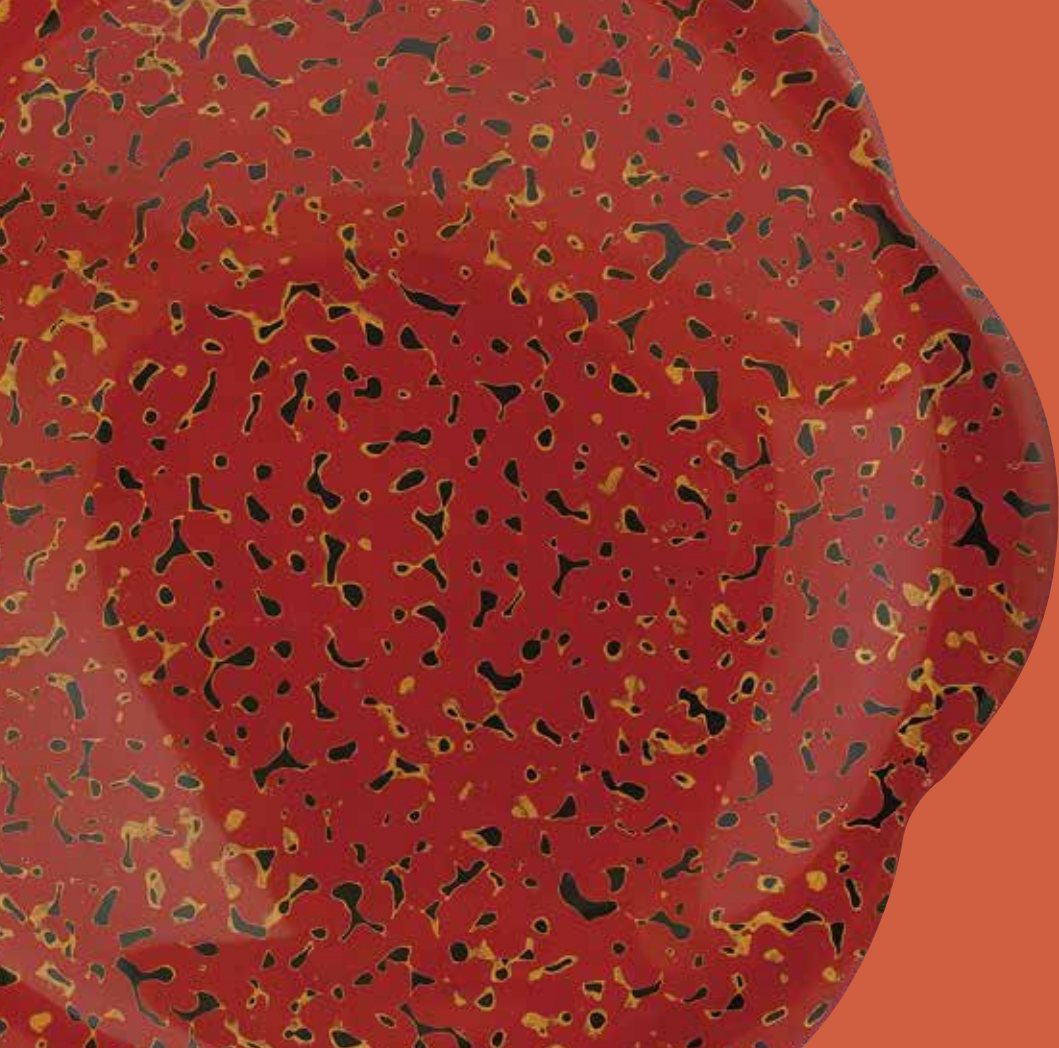
Tsugaru-nuri

[Tsugaru Lacquerware]

Take this map along
Explore Tsugaru
Search for handcraft

◆ Locations

- Izakaya "Bonshan-tei" ☎ 0172-36-6500 36-13 Dotemachi, Hirosaki
- Kimura Lacquer Studio ☎ 0172-27-6505 1-4-8 Kawasaki, Hirosaki
- Japanese Craft Shop "Yoshimura" ☎ 0172-32-6570 106 Daikancho, Hirosaki
- Craft & Japanese Café Takumi-kan ☎ 0172-36-6505 8 Kamisiroganecho, Hirosaki
- Tsugaru's side dish, Seasonal taste, "Jinbei" ☎ 0172-32-1408 16-3 Ekimaecho, Hirosaki
- Bar "Tai'an" ☎ 0172-33-5139 9-3 Shinkajimachi, Hirosaki
- Hirosaki Municipal Tourist Center ☎ 0172-37-5501 2-1 Shimoshirogane, Hirosaki
- Hirosaki City Museum ☎ 0172-35-0700 1-6 Shimoshirogane, Hirosaki



Tsugaru-nuri, handcraft technique passed down for 300 years from Edo period (1603-1868).

During the Edo period Genroku era (1688-1704), the leader of Tsugaru clan hired artisan who can paint items with urushi (japanese lacquer) grown within the clan, and used urushi painted weapons, accessories and furnitures oftenly. Urushi is painted then burnished, and again painted then burnished.
Flow of times of 300 years is reflected in daily life of Tsugaru from burnishing technique which the artisan repeated continuously, making the item robust and producing Tsugaru-nuri with deep beauty.



The view of Iwaki Mt. from Hirosaki Castle and the town is the "hometown of the heart" for Tsugaru people.

You'll love it on each discovery! Town walking map for Tsugaru-nuri

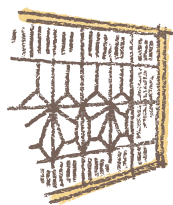
Lot of time and effort spent making a beautiful lacquerware. Use it and you will understand the familiarity.

Tsugaru-nuri, which repeatedly repeats the painting, burnishing and polishing process, is highly durable. When looking at the display of 48 steps of Kara-nuri at Hirosaki Municipal Tourist Center, you can understand that artisan takes time and effort through the whole process to complete a piece of lacquerware delicately.



Nishiki-nuri lipped bowl and tray [Yoshimura]

Find a bar that seems relaxing to drink alone.



There is antique furniture at the entrance and tapestry-like Kumiko-Ranma (lattice sliding door carpentry) on the wall. The setting is also lovely.

The glass's stem is painted by Tsugaru-nuri with special technique, which is the original design of the bar.



Taian

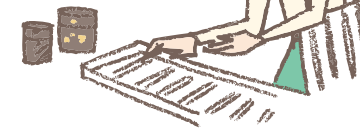


Yoshimura

Great selection of chic items such as Monsha-nuri and Nishiki-nuri

Bought Monsha-nuri chopsticks

The tips are red because it means charm against evil spirits



According to the owner, chopsticks with thin grip make women's hand looks more beautiful.

Lovely~

[The sample of the pattern is chopsticks]

A total of 48 steps of Kara-nuri can be seen in order on Jubako as a sample. The conscientious and excellent display makes you imagine the artisan's figure!

Hirosaki Municipal Tourist Center

20th steps /

The atmosphere of Kara-nuri finally gradually coming out around this step
Lacquer containing protein
Peel off after stamping

Applying pattern using special spatula



Walking around on the side when you know it

Bonshan tei

Courses and banquets are served with containers of Tsugaru-nuri

Get impressed with dishes with essence of Tsugaru

Warabi (eagle fern), hot spring bean sprouts, squid...

Jinbei

Rich varieties of regional cuisine! Come here if you want to enjoy matching dishes with Tsugaru-nuri.



Igamenchi (Fried Minced Squid)

Chewy crispy squid's tentacles. Different restaurants have different types. It is soft and chewy here

Kenoshiru (diced root vegetables miso soup)

Recommended for ladies. It is full of dietary fiber and will warm your body.

root vegetables, wild vegetables, Konjac, red kidney bean, frozen tofu. Beauty! ♥

Kinoko Nanban (Mushroom with green hot pepper)

Pulpy gagome kelp... Goes well with alcohol and meal too.

All containers are Kara-nuri painted owing to the owner's preference.



Zenzai (Sweet red bean soup with rice cake balls) served with Tsugaru-nuri bowl [Craft & Japanese Café Takumi-kan]



Display of 48 steps of Kara-nuri [Hirosaki Municipal Tourist Center]



Cocktail glass with Tsugaru-nuri painted stem [Taian]



Flower shaped Kara-nuri plate with the specialty of the house [Bonshan-tei]



Taste of Tsugaru with Kara-nuri containers [Tsugaru's side dish, Seasonal taste, 'Jinbei']