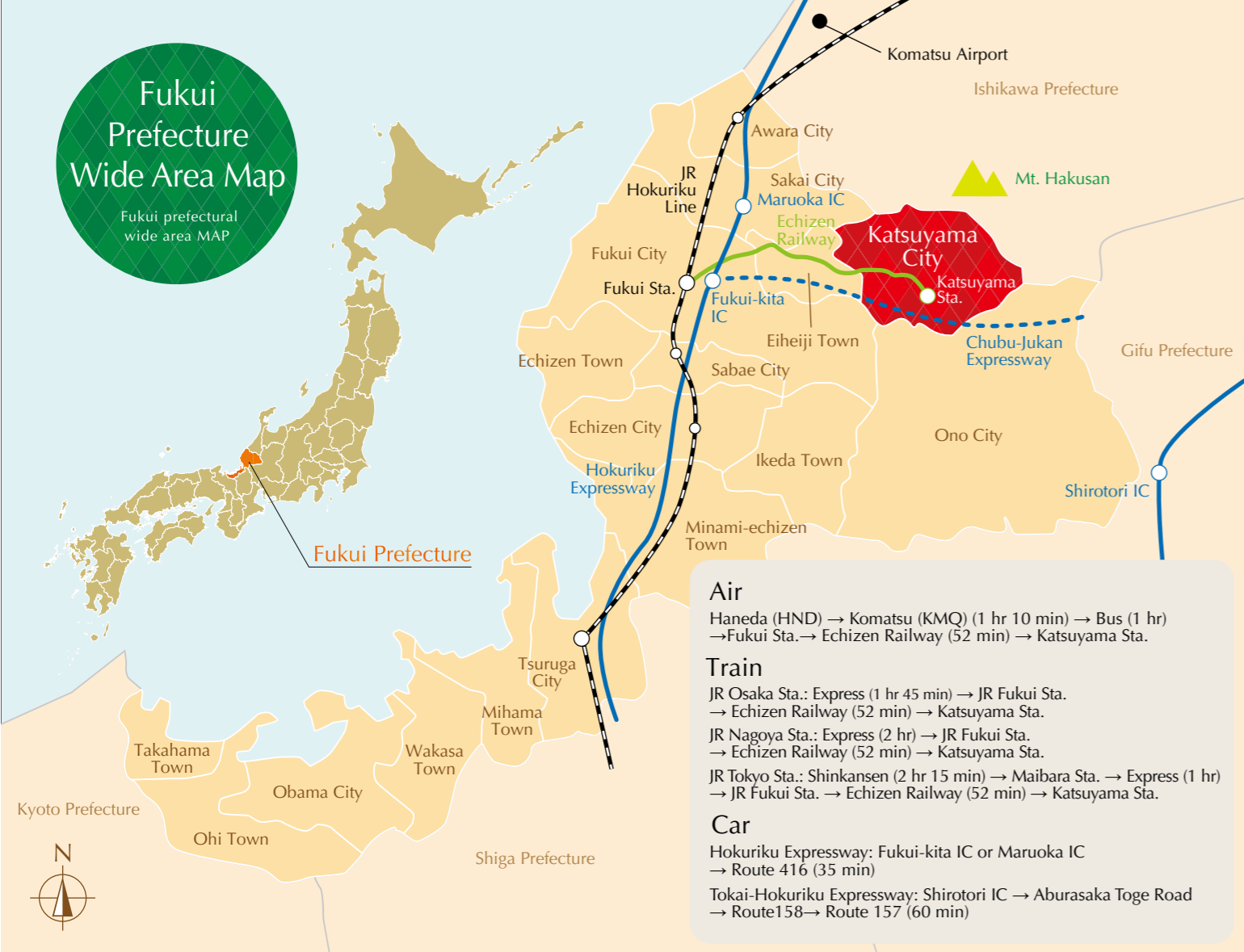


Fukui Prefecture Wide Area Map
Fukui prefectural wide area MAP

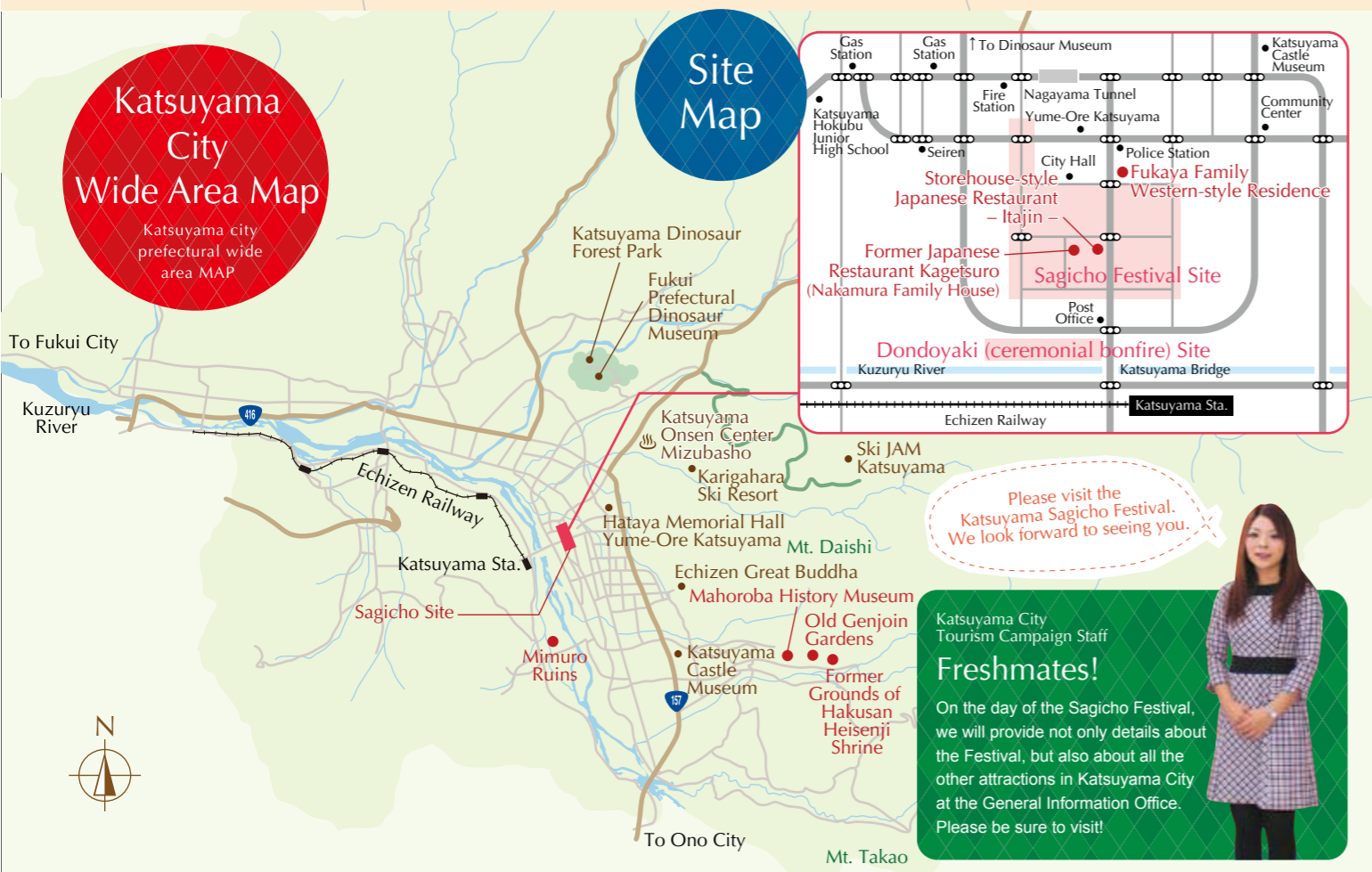


Air
Haneda (HND) → Komatsu (KMQ) (1 hr 10 min) → Bus (1 hr) → Fukui Sta. → Echizen Railway (52 min) → Katsuyama Sta.

Train
JR Osaka Sta.: Express (1 hr 45 min) → JR Fukui Sta. → Echizen Railway (52 min) → Katsuyama Sta.
JR Nagoya Sta.: Express (2 hr) → JR Fukui Sta. → Echizen Railway (52 min) → Katsuyama Sta.
JR Tokyo Sta.: Shinkansen (2 hr 15 min) → Maibara Sta. → Express (1 hr) → JR Fukui Sta. → Echizen Railway (52 min) → Katsuyama Sta.

Car
Hokuriku Expressway: Fukui-kita IC or Maruoka IC → Route 416 (35 min)
Tokai-Hokuriku Expressway: Shirotori IC → Aburasaka Toge Road → Route 158 → Route 157 (60 min)

Katsuyama City Wide Area Map
Katsuyama city prefectural wide area MAP



Please visit the Katsuyama Sagicho Festival. We look forward to seeing you.

Freshmates!
On the day of the Sagicho Festival, we will provide not only details about the Festival, but also about all the other attractions in Katsuyama City at the General Information Office. Please be sure to visit!

Uita, uita!

Katsuyama Sagicho Festival Guidebook

Sagicho Matsuri Guide Book 2013

Complete Edition
Take Free



Katsuyama Sagicho Festival –
A unique festival heralding spring
Experience the history and culture of Katsuyama!!
Increase your enjoyment of the Katsuyama Sagicho Festival 10-fold!!



A strange festival that is a harbinger of spring Katsuyama Sagicho Festival

The Katsuyama Sagicho Festival is known as a unique annual event held in Katsuyama that summons spring to the Okuetsu area.

It has been celebrated for over 300 years.

Colorful paper strips dance in the air all around the town, while the sound of the Sagicho Taiko drums reverberate in the air.

The Tsuji-andon (paper lanterns decorated with pictures and witty art objects) invite strangers to enjoy Katsuyama culture.



4P

The Sagicho Bayashi lends bright color to the stage
Dancing wildly to the sounds of the shamisen, flutes and bells,
while beating taiko drums loudly.

5P

Unique illustrations and poems that reflect social conditions
Vivid colors bring the town to life

6P

“Tsukuri-mono” created just for this day

7P

A historical fire used to pray for bumper crops and
protection from fires
Heading for the climax! Pillars of flame soar into the winter sky!

8P-9P

Dissecting the Yagura
The 12 Sagicho Yagura are lit up differently in each district!

10P-11P

Walking around historical sites in the town
Imagine a streetscape from the past

12P

Fukui Prefecture Wide Area Map & Katsuyama Map
How to get here even from far away.



Highlights of the festival

Appreciate the fun of the Sagicho Festival to the full!

Ahh
Uita, uita!

Here they don't say "utsu"
(beat) the taiko drum,
but rather "uku."

Experience and feel this strange festival, which has continued for more than 300 years since the Ogasawara clan first ruled the area! Not to be missed is the Sagicho Taiko, where men and boys dressed in long-sleeved multi-colored kimono dance in time to the music, beating taiko drums buoyantly!



In each neighborhood, 12 Sagicho yagura are constructed. The two-story structures with their irimoya (half-hipped roofs with gables) are beautiful.



Five musical selections

There are five Katsuyama Sagicho Bayashi songs. The titles of these songs are "Daizuru," "Shicchome," "Gotaiten," "Senyu," and "Konpira Funefune." During the festival, "Daizuru," which includes the lyrics "Cho yo... Hana yo... Hana yo no nenne," is sung continuously.

The Katsuyama Sagicho Festival, which summons spring to the Okuetsu area, was held in 13 districts of the former Katsuyama town area in the past. Whether it began in 1675, when a huge fire spurred reconstruction of the town, or in 1691, when the Ogasawara clan started its reign of the area, leading to the town's development as a new castle town, this festival has been celebrated for more than 300 years.

Twelve Sagicho yagura are constructed around the town, men and boys dressed in red dance to the sound of the shamisen, flutes, and bells, while beating taiko drums cheerfully. This is called "Uku," or beating the drum.

Three people are involved in each taiko. One player strikes with a monotonous three-strike rhythmic beat, while the other player strikes using dance-like movements, and the third person sits on the taiko to dampen the sound. This unique performance is a characteristic of the Katsuyama Sagicho, and is not found anywhere else.

The players wield their taiko drumsticks in time to the rhythm in their own peculiar fashion, and their amusing actions and facial expressions entertain spectators. The shortness of the taiko drumsticks is another characteristic of this event.

1 The Sagicho Bayashi lends bright color to the stage

[Ohayashi (musical accompaniment)]

2 Unique illustrations and poems that reflect social conditions

[Tsuji-andon (paper lanterns with pictures)]

During the Katsuyama Sagicho Festival, tanzaku (long, narrow strips of paper in 3-4 vivid colors) are hung around the yagura, and Tsuji-andon are hung here and there along the streets to the delight of the people walking along them. The history of the Tsuji-andon started in the Edo period, when Ogasawara, the daimyo, or feudal lord, allowed the common people to put aside rank by permitting kosenryu and kyoka (short poems popular among common people that incorporated amusing observations and a wry sense of humor). Tsuji-andon that included both satirical observations of society and the earnest wishes of the common people were hung along the streets of the town and around the yagura.



O-andon

Tsuji-andon don't just come in small sizes. Large Tsuji-andon, called O-andon, are hung under both entrances at each yagura, and are decorated with illustrations based on the Chinese zodiac, or kyoka featuring international issues or social problems.



They convey the personalities of the people of Katsuyama, and create a feeling of warmth.

3 Vivid colors bring the town to life

[Tanzaku (long, narrow strips of paper)]

Starting one week before the Katsuyama Sagicho Festival, the streets of Katsuyama are decorated with tanzaku of various colors, and a festival mood begins to build rapidly. Each neighborhood decides on 3-4 different colors for the tanzaku, such as red, blue, green, yellow or white, and hang them along the roads to increase the liveliness of the festival.

The colors of each district's tanzaku are said to have their roots in the matoi (signal poles for fire fighting) used by five fire brigades during the Edo period. Until the middle of the Meiji period, tanzaku made of paper dyed red were tied to pine twigs and hung from the eaves of each house. Around the end of the Meiji period, the red color was changed to the currently used multiple colors that reflect the colors of the five fire brigades' matoi, since the Sagicho has close ties to the Chinkasai (fire-extinguishing festival).



4 “Tsukuri-mono” created just for this day

[Tsukuri-mono (witty art objects)]

Things you can enjoy while walking along during the Katsuyama Sagicho Festival are the tsukuri-mono. In each town, these art objects are displayed in a tatami-mat room in a house so that they can be seen from the street. The methods for making these have been handed down only within the town, and are closely guarded secrets.

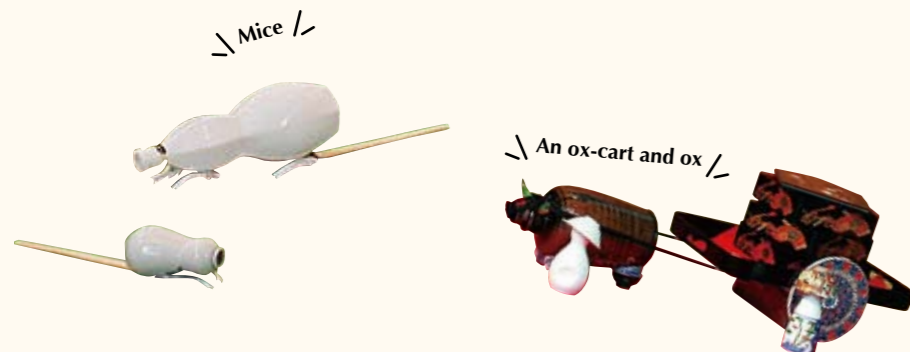
Handed down since the Edo period, the chief characteristic of Katsuyama Niwaka is the strong improvisation that makes the best use of materials. For the most part, the same kind of old-fashioned household goods, such as buckets, trays and measuring containers, are used to create items to be placed in front of folding screens covered in gold leaf. The themes used include that year’s Chinese zodiac animal, auspicious things, politics and economics and world affairs, among others.



Points worth noting about these tsukuri-mono are the harmony with the raw materials, as well as the element of surprise, and they are simple but have a wealth of imagination. Each tsukuri-mono is accompanied by two hanging scrolls, called “kaki-nagashi,” on which are written the meaning of the tsukuri-mono in syllable groups of 5-7-5-7-7. One scroll explains the significance of the tsukuri-mono, while the other uses plays on words to describe the materials used and the tsukuri-mono itself. The combinations of tsukuri-mono and kaki-nagashi are very interesting.

Combining old tools

Old household tools, including mortars, pestles, draining baskets, hampers, trays, pipes, serving trays, measuring containers, folding fans, sake bottles, stacked boxes, wooden steamers, carpenter’s tools, farming tools, paper lanterns, two-handed kegs and stands for small offerings, are used to make tsukuri-mono.



5 A historical fire used to pray for bumper crops and protection from fires

[Dondoyaki (ceremonial bonfire)]

On the Sunday afternoon of the festival, the “go-shintai” (object of worship) of each neighborhood is carried to the Bentei river bed, famed for its magnificent Bentei cherry trees, and preparations for the dondoyaki begin.

Before that, the go-shintai is constructed by each town out of live pine trees (or Japanese cedars) that measure about 4m in diameter. Four pine trees (or bamboo) are bound together to make a square, and the bundle is then erected in front of a yagura. A go-hei (Shinto ceremonial staff with plaited paper streamers) decorated with items such as folding fans featuring the rising sun is attached to the top of the go-shintai.

At 9 p.m., the head of each district receives sacred fire from Shinmei Shrine, to be used to set the go-shintai alight, and then carries it to the site of the dondoyaki. This process is called the Go-jinka Okuri. The Katsuyama Sagicho is not just a regular fire festival – it has a deeper meaning as a festival for the prevention of fires, and sacred fire from the Homusubi-no-kami (fire diety) enshrined in Shinmei Shrine is known as the go-jinka, or sacred fire.

The go-shintai are further decorated using New Year’s pine decorations and Shinto rope from each household, and are all gathered in one place. When a smoke signal is given, all of the go-shintai are set on fire simultaneously, using the go-jinka. The light from the fires reflects beautifully off of the clouds in the winter sky, and the brightly burning flames signal the end of the festival.



Heading for the climax!
Pillars of flame soar into the winter sky!

This dondoyaki is meant to pray to the god of fire for good luck and happiness and for the prevention of disaster. If people bathe in the heat from the bonfires and roast and eat rice cakes while praying for bumper crops and prevention of fires, it is said that they will have good health during that year. The Katsuyama Sagicho Festival is also said to summon spring to the Okuetsu area of Fukui Prefecture, and you can hear the footsteps of spring approaching Katsuyama.

Why not participate in the Ato-moyashi, or after-the-fire celebration?

Rice cakes are speared on long bamboo sticks, and then roasted over the embers of the dondoyaki and eaten. This is said to prevent sickness. In the old days, rice porridge was cooked the next morning over the embers of the dondoyaki fires, and rice cakes were roasted and taken home to eat. People smeared the ashes from the embers over their bodies to ask for good health.



6 Dissecting the Yagura

[Yagura]

Sagicho Yagura are made entirely of cypress and are very large, with a width of about 4m and a height of about 6m, and resemble the front of a shrine. In 1896, most of the yagura were destroyed in a fire, but 3 out of 12 escaped damage, and are now Tangible Cultural Properties of the city.

The yagura have two types of roof – irimoya, which are half-hipped roofs with gables, and kirizuma, which have two sides connected at the ridge. The taiko drums are displayed on the stage located on the second floor of the yagura. The first floor has a wooden floor, and is used as an anteroom and storage space. The second floor is a stage covered with tatami

mats and surrounded by a handrail.

One major characteristic of the Katsuyama Sagicho Yagura is that although it is made entirely of wood, it can be disassembled and reassembled. Now the yagura are stored in assembled form at the Yagura Hall, but in the past, they were assembled just before the Sagicho started, and taken apart when it was over and the parts stored separately.

When assembling the yagura, the first step is to create an earthen foundation, and on top of that erect ten pillars. In the center, the floor beams are erected and the second floor is constructed. Beams and joists are built over the top of the

pillars, and on top of that the hip rafters and ridge pole are added to create the basic framework of the yagura. Inside this framework, doors about the size of one tatami mat, ceiling panels, and roof panels are joined together to complete the structure.

Ceiling beams made of camphor wood are attached to the ceiling panels in advance, and the roof panels similarly already have rafters nailed in. And brackets and flexible plates that support the second-floor cornices are inserted in the same way as the pillars were.



The 12 Sagicho Yagura are lit up differently in each district!



Inside the yagura
No nails or metal fittings are used when assembling the yagura. They are all built by joining wood to wood, using traditional methods of wooden architecture that have been passed down since time immemorial.



Wooden architecture construction style

Other Highlights!



Hidden sightseeing spot

See the automaton clock!

An automaton clock is located above the front entrance to the Katsuyama City Public Library. Five times a day, every day, at 10 a.m., noon, 1 p.m., 3 p.m., and 5 p.m., the clock plays the Sagicho Bayashi. This hidden spot is largely unknown even to people who come every year for the Sagicho. Everyone, let's go see the Sagicho Automaton Clock!!

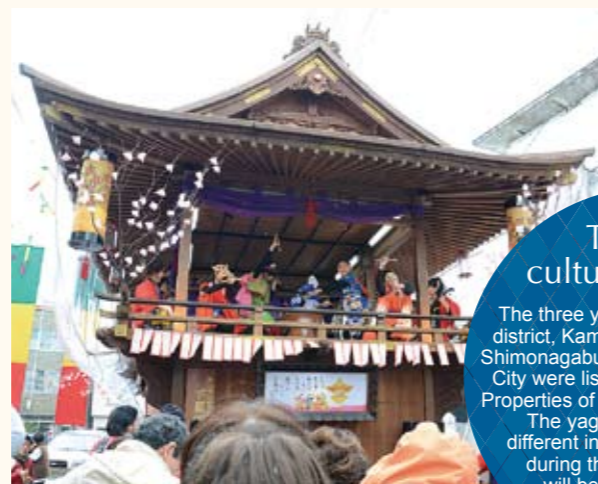
Cafe and souvenirs

Hataya Memorial Hall Yume-Ore Katsuyama

The building of a medium scale textile factory (1905-1998) in Katsuyama has been preserved and is now used as Yume-Ore Katsuyama. An integrated café and Katsuyama souvenir shop is located inside. Here you can purchase local specialty items as well as products made just for this shop.



Baked sweets and pudding made using locally produced fresh eggs and milk are popular here!



Tangible cultural property
The three yagura in Kamifukuroda district, Kaminagabuchi district, and Shimonagabuchi district in Katsuyama City were listed as Tangible Cultural Properties of Katsuyama City in 1995. The yagura look completely different in night as compared to during the day; at night, you will be captivated by the fantastic vision before your eyes.

Signs indicate yagura that are listed as tangible cultural properties.



Explore history

Walking around historical sites in the town

Imagine a streetscape from the past



SPOT 1

Katsuyama Station [National Registered Cultural Property]

The Katsuyama Station building is a stop on the Echizen Railway. It was opened for operation in April 1914. The two-story wooden structure has a hipped pantile roof, with an under-roof that allows air to flow through. The waiting area is on the opposite platform, across the tracks, and is a one-story house with eaves made of galvanized sheet iron; on the track side it has an open design. Most of the original shape remains, giving it value as a rare station structure.

Fukaya Family Western-style Residence [National Cultural Property]

The Fukaya Family Western-style Residence was constructed in 1879 as a medical clinic by Fujita Kyu-emon. The examination rooms and waiting room were on the first floor, and the patient rooms were located on the second floor. This building is an elegant wooden structure with a hipped pantile roof. Together with the garden, they present a tranquil view. There are few western-style structures from the Meiji era in Fukui Prefecture, so this building is very valuable.



SPOT 2



SPOT 3

Former Seiki-do Auditorium in Shinmei Shrine [City Cultural Property]

An elementary school in the city bears the same name as this academic hall. The school was opened in 1841 as a Katsuyama clan school, and in 1843 it was named the Seiki-do. This structure was originally built on the street leading to the main gate of Katsuyama Castle as an academic hall (place to study). In 1911, it was transferred to the ground of Shinmei Shrine. From the outside, it looks much as it did when it was first built, and was therefore recognized as a Katsuyama City Registered Cultural Property.

Former Japanese Restaurant Kagetsuro [National Cultural Property]

Long ago, this restaurant was constructed on Kawaracho-dori Street, an area that was prosperous due to the geisha quarters found there. The current building was constructed in 1904. Part of the building has been remodeled and is being used as a residence at this time. The ceiling, shaped like the ribs of an umbrella, is fantastic from a design viewpoint. It is one of the buildings that is symbolic of Katsuyama's former prosperity as a leader in the textile industry.



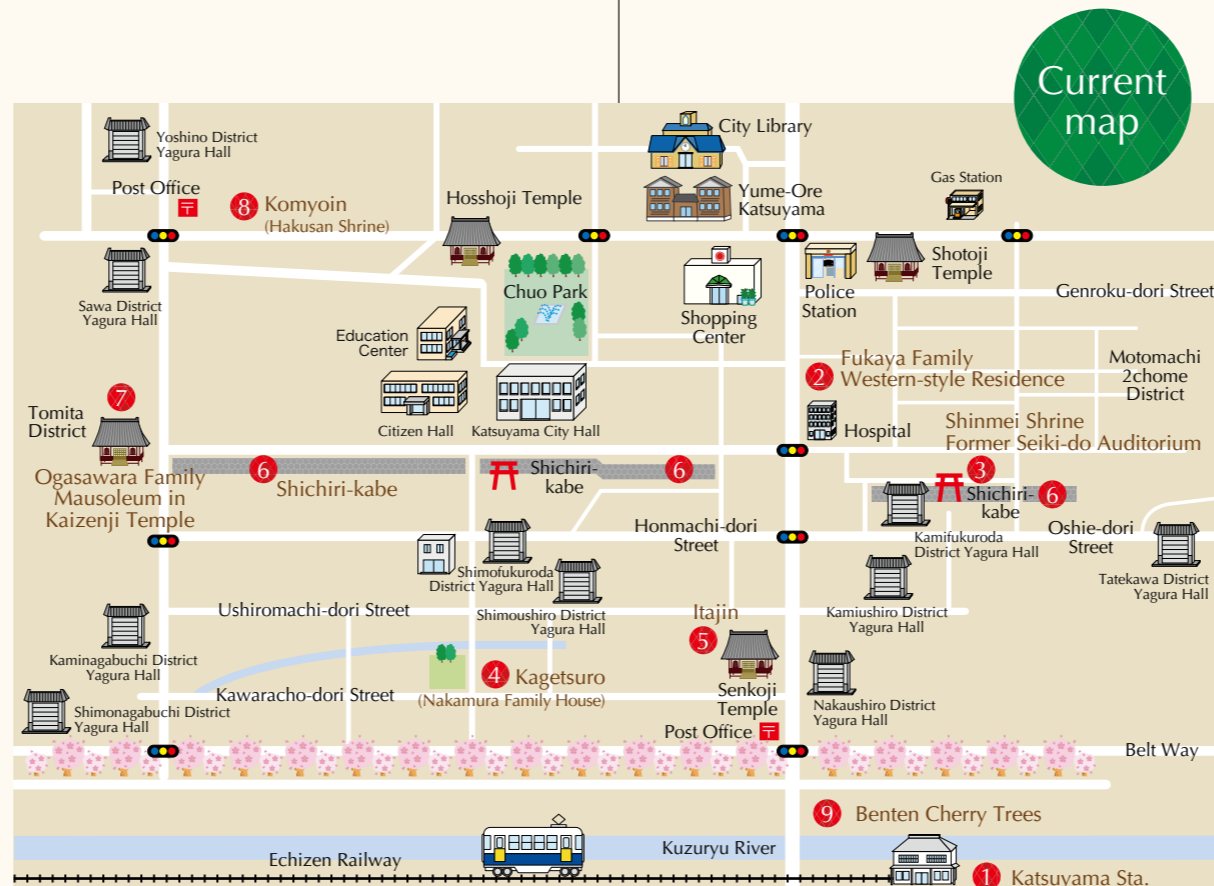
SPOT 4

Storehouse-style Japanese Restaurant – Itajin – [National Registered Cultural Property]



SPOT 5

This restaurant has a long history, dating back to the Edo period. The reception room at the back of the first floor is uniquely designed, with floors coated with black lacquer and dropped beams made of bamboo. Japanese novelist, Ryotaro Shiba once stayed in this room, and introduced it in his travel essays.



Current map

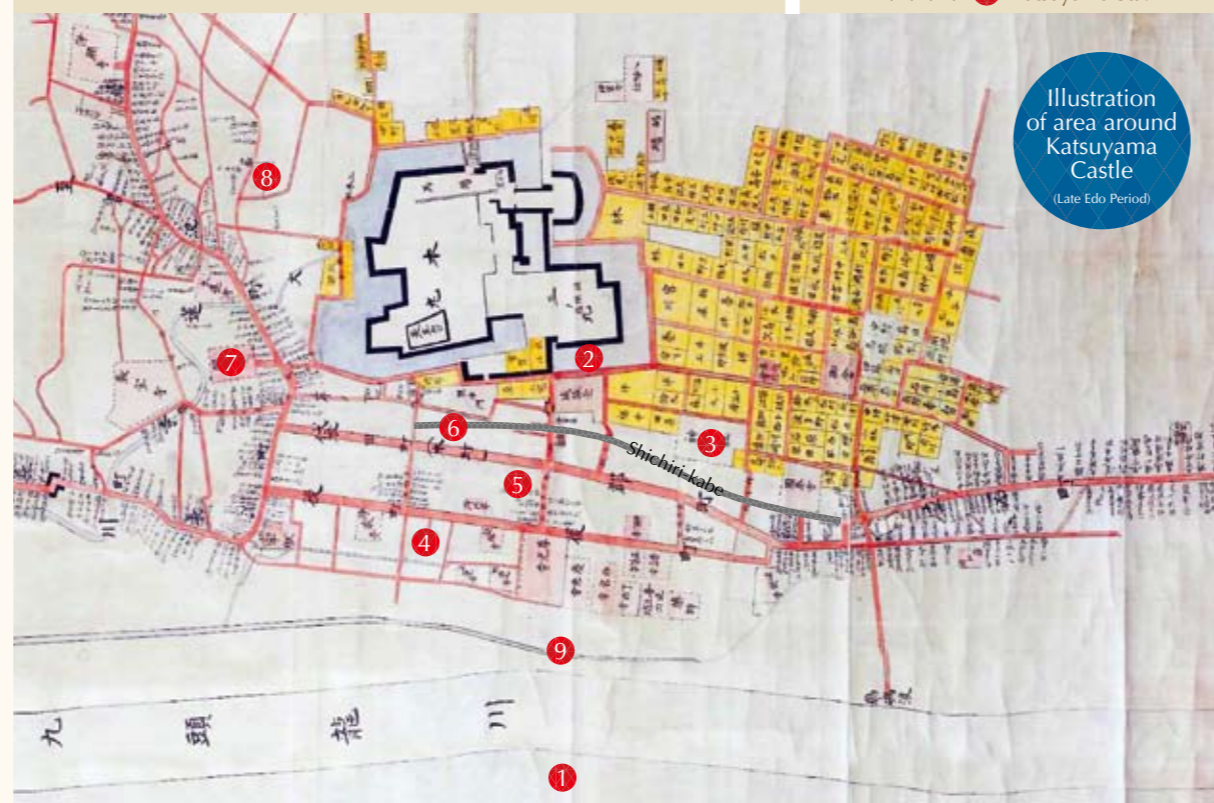


Illustration of area around Katsuyama Castle (Late Edo Period)



Famous spot for cherry trees

SPOT 9

Benten Cherry Trees

One famous spot for viewing cherry trees in the Echizen area is on the Kuzuryu Benten riverbank, where it is said you can see 1,000 trees at a glance. On the river's right bank, the trees continue for about 1.5km from Katsuyama bridge. Gen-emon Seki, then mayor of Katsuyama City, began planting the cherry trees in 1923, and following that, Sadakichi Ichihashi continued, creating the current appearance of the trees. The cherry trees look beautiful against the clear water and the lingering snow in the mountains, creating an exceptional view with a wealth of elegance and picturesque design. On Saturday and Sunday in mid-April, the Benten Cherry Trees Festival is held, and every year it is crowded with people there to view the cherry blossoms. From the beginning of April to the beginning of May, carp banners are strung over the Kuzuryu River.

Komyoin (Bettoji Temple of Hakusan Shrine)



SPOT 8

This temple is familiarly known as "Konmen-san," and is located along a prefectural road in the Sawa district. A statue of a seated Nyoirin Kannon (Katsuyama City Designated Cultural Property) was enshrined here. The deities of the former Hakusan Shrine and Shinmei Shrine were enshrined together in 1871, and Komyoin was renovated. In the Taisho period, the gables of the hall of worship at Shinmei Shrine were dismantled and rebuilt as the front roof of the main shrine at Komyoin.

Ogasawara Family Mausoleum in Kaizenji Temple



SPOT 7

This was the family temple of the Ogasawara family, the feudal lords of Katsuyama. At the end of the Kamakura period, Ogasawara Sadamune built a temple in Shinano (now Nagano Prefecture), and in 1691, after Ogasawara Sadanobu became the first of the Ogasawara family to control Katsuyama, he built Kaizenji Temple in Katsuyama. The ancestral mausoleum of the Ogasawara family is on the grounds of the temple, which is a Katsuyama City Designated Cultural Property.



SPOT 6

Shichiri-kabe

This terraced stone wall, which can be seen intermittently for some 20 km between Heisenji Town Owatari and Eiheji Town Naruka, is commonly known as Shichiri-kabe. When developing Katsuyama's castle town, this terracing was used to create a boundary between higher ground, where the castle and samurai residences were located, and ground one level lower, where temples, shrines and merchant's houses were built. In addition, during times of floods, the level ground next to the Kuzuryu River turned into island-like sandbars, so many place names in the community contain the word "island."