

## Introduction to Fukutsu

Fukutsu is a small coastal city facing the Genkai Sea, located between the major cities of Fukuoka and Kitakyushu. The area has farms, beaches, and a historic merchant district with well-preserved houses from the Meiji era (1868–1912).

### *Famous shrines and beaches*

Fukutsu is best known for Miyajidake-jinja Shrine. This large Shinto shrine stands at the end of a long straight road to the sea, known as the Hikari no Michi (“path of light”). Twice a year, the setting sun lines up exactly with the path, causing it to glow with golden light.

Fukutsu has wide sandy beaches, including the main beaches of Tsuyazaki, Miyajihama, and Fukuma—with cafes, restaurants, and marine sports shops—and the quieter Shiraishi Beach.

### *World Heritage sites*

The Sacred Island of Okinoshima and Associated Sites in the Munakata Region was designated a World Heritage site in 2017. Visitors to Fukutsu can see the Shinbaru-Nuyama Mounded Tomb Group, where 41 burial mounds (*kofun*) were built between the fifth and sixth centuries for members of the Munakata family, which ruled the region until the sixteenth century.

### *Tsuyazaki Sengen historic district*

During the Edo period (1603–1867), the Tsuyazaki Sengen district was a wealthy merchant town, thanks to the area’s salt production. At that time, there were said to be over a thousand houses in the district. Most of the original Edo-period houses burned down, but several fine examples from the Meiji era have survived.

In July, during the Tsuyazaki Gion Yamakasa Festival, the narrow streets of the Tsuyazaki district are crowded with spectators. Teams representing Fukutsu’s three neighborhoods race through the streets carrying ornate wooden floats. This festival dates back over 300 years.