

The City of Nakatsugawa

Nakatsugawa flourished as a merchant town during the Edo period (1603–1867). Much of its traditional culture has been preserved, including one of its post stations along the Nakasendo highway and a *ji-kabuki* playhouse called Kashimo Meijiza Theater. Today, Naegi Castle and the Naegi Toyama **Historical** Museum are Nakatsugawa's top tourist attractions along with the post station area called Nakatsugawa-juku.

Nakatsugawa-juku is a short 10-minute walk from JR Nakatsugawa Station. It was a checkpoint on the Nakasendo highway that connected Edo (modern-day Tokyo) to Kyoto during the Edo period. Most traces of the old highway have been lost, but a section of the original road has been preserved in this historic district. The road is lined with sake shops, confectionery stores, and restaurants housed in traditional wooden buildings. Nakatsugawa also houses the Nakasendo Historical Museum, which displays artifacts from the town's rich history. The museum's exhibits include documents, wood-block prints, paintings, and other materials concerning the Nakasendo.

Another highlight of the city is the Kashimo Meijiza Theater, which is used to stage a form of local kabuki, called *ji-kabuki*, performed by amateur actors of the community.

A popular scenic attraction can be found in Tsukechi Gorge. Waterfalls and clear streams flow through its rugged and rocky terrain and lush foliage fills the valley with color from spring through late autumn.