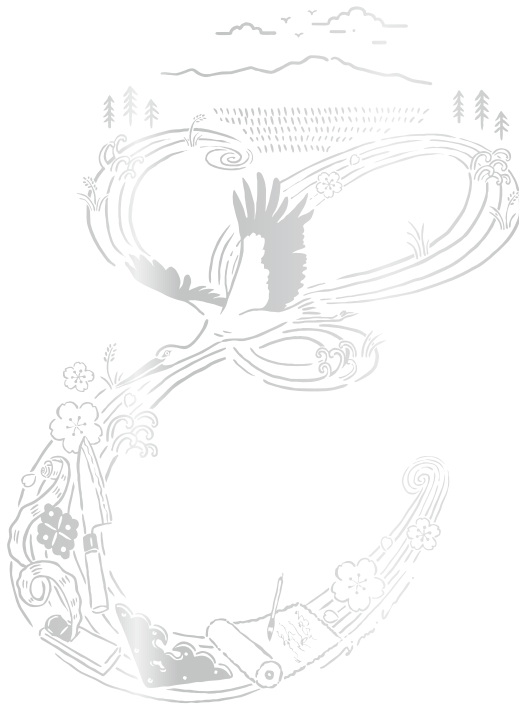


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Echizen City
Brand Handbook

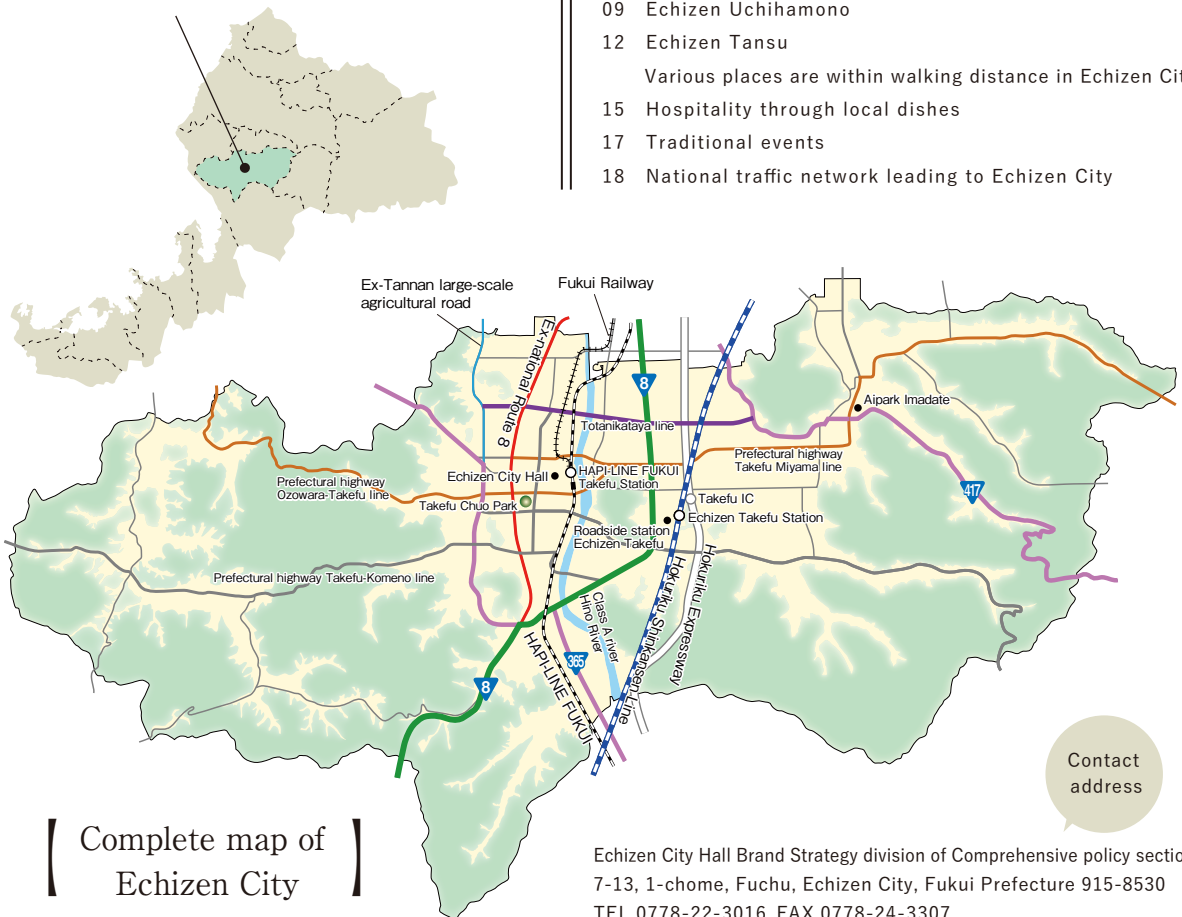


ECHIZEN CITY BRAND

This is our town.

Echizen City, Fukui Prefecture

Echizen city is located almost in the middle of Fukui prefecture. Hokuriku Expressway and National Route 8 run vertically through the center of the city and these main roads make our city the junction for transportation connecting not only major cities in Kansai and Chukyo area but also peripheral cities of Echizen City such as Fukui City, Tsuruga City, etc. Moreover, National Route 417, prefectural highways and major local highways run by crossing these major roads.



Complete map of
Echizen City

17 districts and 252 cho

ここにある、本物とほんとう。

The above message in Japanese expresses the contents of the sentences below.

Echizen City, Fukui Prefecture.
This is our town.

In this city, rich nature, artisanship and craftsman spirit inherited from old times have nurtured tradition and culture to create genuine products.

Now Echizen City is aiming to realize the ideal state of future for the people and the society.

Creativity, development and their cycle generated by the harmony of novelty and things inherited from long ago—all these have created “Echizen City brand” we are proud of.

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(issued in March, 2024)

About Echizen City.

1 Geographical features

Echizen City is surrounded by the mountains which are 400 to 700 meters high such as Echizen central mountain range in the eastern part of the city, Niu mountain range in the western part and Mt. Hino (795 meters high) in the south called “Echizen Fuji” and this landform creates Takefu basin. In the center of Takefu basin is Hino River, one of the three major rivers in Fukui Prefecture, which runs north and south, flowing into the Japan Sea after confluenting with the Kuzuryu River.

2 The general climate of Echizen City

Echizen City has a climate unique to Japan Sea side with high temperature and high humidity in summer and snow in winter that sometimes piles up over one meter.

3 The population and gross area of Echizen City

Population **80,092** Households number **31,650**
(based on basic resident register as of March 1,2024)

Gross area **230.70km²**

4 Symbols of Echizen City



city emblem



city tree
(cherry tree)



city flower
(chrysanthemum)



city bird
(stork)

Topic

Events of the four seasons

Various flowers bloom all the year round and well-established events in each local area are held in Echizen City.



Hanagatami Festival
(Kakyo park)
(beginning of April)



Echizen City Summer Festival
(middle of August)



Takefu Chrysanthemum Doll Festival
(beginning of October to beginning of November)



Chrysanthemum Marathon
(November 3rd)

Murasaki Shikibu and Kokufu, the local government office



Murasaki Shikibu, author of *The Tale of Genji*, spent one year in “Takefu”, present-day Echizen City, where the local government office of Echizen Province was located when she was young and impressionable.

The place which nurtured the sensibility of author of “The Tale of Genji”

About one year in Echizen City was the only period of her entire life to live far away from Kyoto, the capital at that time.

Murasaki Shikibu is not only the author of “The Tale of Genji”, the best literary work among Japanese classical literature, but also a female writer representing the Heian period. Echizen City, which is deeply related to Murasaki Shikibu, is attracting attention because of a large-scale, long-running NHK TV series entitled “Hikaru kimie” broadcast in 2024 where she is portrayed as the main character.

Shikibu, who spent most of her life in Kyoto, lived away from there only once in her lifetime. It’s the place called “Takefu”, now known as Echizen City, where the local government office of Echizen Province in those days was located and known as an influential regional province then. She moved here to live with her father Tametoki Fujiwara who was transferred as Kokushi, the chief officer of Echizen Province in 996. It was only for about one year that she lived in Takefu due to her return to Kyoto alone before expiration of her father’s term of office. At that time, she was said to be an impressionable lady of around twenty-five years old.

Shikibu wrote four pieces of tanka poetry related to Takefu in “Murasaki Shikibu shu”, a collection of her tanka poetry she composed in

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Here in Takefu, snow is falling that covers Japanese cedar forest in Mt. Hino. I wonder if it is also snowing in a disorderly manner on the pine trees in Mt. Oshio in Kyoto today.

the later years of her life. The poem above starting with “Kokoni kaku” was composed watching Mt. Hino in Echizen City covered with the first snow of the season. In *The Tale of Genji* consisting of fifty four chapters in total, the name Takefu can also be found in the fifty-first chapter entitled “Ukifune” and fifty-third chapter entitled “Tenarai”. As these examples illustrate, the days she spent in her youth in Echizen Takefu must have been a precious period of time in her life which gave her great influence on her story writing and broadened her natural gifts as a writer.

Takefu was where the local government office of Echizen Province, an influential regional province at that time, was located

The local government office called Kokufu of Echizen Province, which used to be an influential regional province, was located in Takefu which is now called Echizen City. Kokufu was set in each province in order for ancient Yamato Imperial Court to govern the local areas. Provincial chief officer called Kokushi was sent from Kyoto and undertook a duty of collecting taxes, military affairs, public order, etc.

Echizen Kokufu was established from 708 to the 1100s. It is said that, within the range of approximately 800 square meters, facilities such as the government office called Kokucho, the residence for officials called Kokushikan and the government office related to administration called Mandokoro were located. It is thought that it was Kokushikan that Tametoki Fujiwara, father of Murasaki Shikibu, was transferred to and where Shikibu spent about one year.

It is estimated that Kokufu was located in the center of present-day Echizen City. However, the exact location has yet to be confirmed and there have been various speculations about it. This is because Echizen City has been constantly resided by people from ancient times to the present, which makes it difficult to conduct extensive excavational investigation.

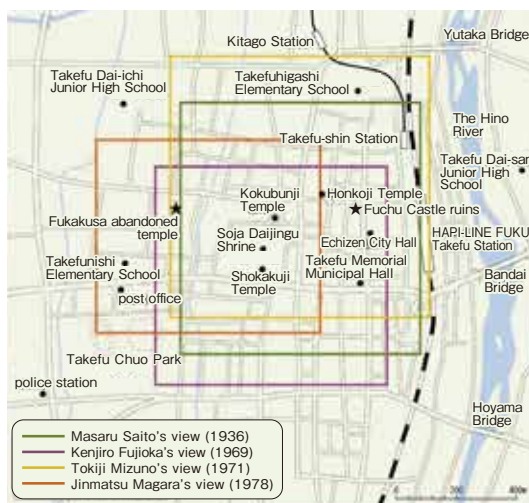
However, as the evidence that the local government office existed in the city area of present-day Echizen City, we can give such examples as the existence of "Soja Daijingu" shrine where major shrines inside Echizen Province were unified and "Kokubunji Temple", "Goryo Shrine", etc. that were built in each province. In 2023, excavational investigation was



A photo of excavational investigation



A photo of green glazed earthenware



Map of estimated location of the local government of Echizen Province up to the present (based on the map drawn by Mr. Kiyonori Kanesaka)

conducted in Honkoji Temple in 1-chome, Kokufu (Echizen City) which has been regarded as a possible site of Kokufu. They discovered for the first time the remains (ditches) dating back to the early Heian period which are estimated to have divided the facilities of Kokufu. They also discovered earthenware which is estimated to have been used by the officials working for Kokufu. These findings are expected to lead to further development of investigation and new discovery.

A plum tree in Honkoji Temple which is said to be related to Murasaki Shikibu

The area around Honkoji Temple in 1-chome, Kokufu in Echizen City is also regarded as one of the possible sites of the local government office. The legend has it that when Murasaki Shikibu returned to Kyoto, she planted a white-blossomed plum tree and her daughter Kenshi planted a red-blossomed one after mother's death in memory of her late mother. The present red-blossomed plum tree in the precincts of this temple is said to be its fourth generation.



A plum tree in Honkoji Temple

Murasaki Shikibu and Kokufu, the local government office

Topic

The design of two thousand yen bill with Murasaki Shikibu drawn on it will remain unchanged after the alteration of bank note designs in 2024.

Two thousand yen bill with the portrait of Murasaki Shikibu drawn on it was issued in 2000 when the Kyushu-Okinawa Summit was held and it is still used. Shureimon gate in Okinawa is drawn on the front of this bill. On the backside, the face of Murasaki Shikibu drawn in "Murasaki Shikibu Nikki Emaki" (illustrated handscroll of the Lady Murasaki's Diary) and the poem and the picture of "Suzumushi", the title of the 38th chapter of "The Tale of Genji Emaki" (illustrated handscroll of the Tale of Genji) are printed. This design of two thousand yen bill will remain the same even after the alteration of the bank note designs in 2024.

Simulation tour tracing the journey Murasaki Shikibu made only once in her lifetime

Murasaki Shikibu left Kyoto for Lake Biwa, where she traveled by boat across the lake, and headed for Echizen where Kokufu, the local government office, was located. In October 2024, based upon background research by scholars and experts, simulation tour tracing her journey in those days will be held by recruiting participants from all over Japan.

Murasaki Shikibu project
promotion council



SPOT

Meet the golden statue of Shikibu in Murasaki Shikibu Park.

Murasaki Shikibu Park

Murasaki Shikibu Park is the only Shinden-zukuri garden in Japan recreating the gardens in the Heian period by arranging a pond and an artificial hill, making use of Mt. Hino, the symbol of Echizen City, as a borrowed landscape behind it. Shinden-zukui refers to an architectural style representative of the residences of the nobles in the Heian period. The golden statue of Shikibu was produced by Mr. Katsuzo Entsuba who received the Order of Culture.



The residence related to Murasaki Shikibu in the local government office of Echizen Province where she once lived

Murasaki Yukari Museum of Echizen

The data library which opened in spring of 2021 provides you with the graceful display space that makes you imagine the young days of Murasaki Shikibu when she spent in Kokufu of Echizen Province. Kicho-style graphic and the image that looks like a picture scroll show you the scenery that might have spread in the mind of Murasaki Shikibu. Kicho refers to a partition made of decorated silk cloth used in the residences of the court nobles in the Heian period.



2

ECHIZEN CITY BRAND

Echizen Washi

~Handmade paper in Echizen~

Echizen Washi, which has been paid attention to by the world from long ago, has kept evolving even now and widening its applications.



Traditional craftsmanship of Echizen Washi has attracted global attention and it is still making constant progress even now.

Echizen Washi is a traditional craftwork with the long history of 1,500 years.

Echizen Washi has the greatest production amount nationwide in the category of handmade Japanese paper among the production areas of Japanese paper. Its origin goes back to approximately 1,500 years ago. The legend has it that a beautiful princess appeared in the upper reaches of the Okamoto river and taught the technique of paper making to the local villagers by saying, "If you make a living by making paper in this village blessed with pure mountain stream and beautiful mountains, you will lead a richer life." This is said to be the origin of making Echizen Washi. In the Muromachi period, "Echizen hosho", the official paper for court nobles and warriors, was created in Echizen. Hosho refers to thick Japanese paper of the best quality for ceremonial use. It had the seal of "Oue tenkaichi" affixed on it, proving that it was the best quality paper in Japan. In this way, high quality of Echizen Washi has enjoyed an established reputation of high quality since long ago. Moreover, in the Edo period, Fukui domain issued "hansatsu", a regional currency that is valid only inside the domain. Production of hansatsu was made in Goka area, the production district of Echizen Washi. Its special production technique is said to have been placed under strict management with the duty of confidentiality. In

the Meiji period, "Dajokan satsu", a new paper money, started to be produced by making use of this paper making technique. It was also craftsmen of Echizen Washi who created the technique of "kuro sukashi", a black watermark, which is also used for current bank notes. In the Showa period, paper for Bank of Japan notes was made in Goka for a time. In 1976, Echizen Washi was designated as a traditional craftwork.

Machine-made paper appeared with the change of the times. In paper making workshops, however, we can still see craftsmen making handmade paper earnestly. Echizen Washi has been produced by the local craftsmen who have continued much trial and error without being arrogant about their excellent techniques. Pride and responsibility of each and every craftsmen have been the driving force of the production area of Echizen Washi that has lasted over 1,500 years.



Various kinds of Japanese paper such as traditional "Echizen hosho" paper are made.



"Hansatsu" and "Dajokan satsu" made in Echizen City (owned by Paper & Culture Museum)

Echizen Washi

Japanese paper is used even for space suit made for space stay and also for building materials. The application of Japanese paper has been increasing.

Japanese paper, which has been widely used in Japanese daily life since long ago for paper sliding screens, sliding doors, etc. is, in fact, high-functional material. Its durability is said to be so high as to last for over one thousand years of preservation. Even now Echizen Washi is widely used for repairing domestic important cultural properties. In recent years, there are also many cases where Japanese paper is used as interior materials and building materials by making use of the designability, texture and durability of Echizen Washi. It has been used for interior materials of buildings not only in Japan but also around the world, demonstrating overwhelming sense of existence.

Moreover, since barks of the trees used for the material of Japanese paper shield ultraviolet ray and prevent germs from breeding, it has been confirmed that Japanese paper has significant effect of deodorization and antimicrobe. In recent years, fiber made of Echizen Washi was adopted as the material for space suit for space stay. This was the first case in the history of Japan where Japanese paper fiber product was used for space. Echizen Washi, which has 1,500 years of long history, has been widely used from the level of

our daily life to the space. It is now assuming new roles in modern times by changing its usage with the times.



Art work made of Echizen Washi used for a shop abroad dealing with famous brands



Echizen Washi attracts attention as the building material with excellent design.

Photos presented by Sugihara Washipaper, Inc.

Topic

Echizen Washi was used regularly by Picasso and Rembrandt. It has been the painting material paid attention to by the artists around the world.

Great painters of Japanese painting such as Taikan Yokoyama, Ikuo Hirayama, etc. used “hemp paper” of Echizen Washi regularly. It is said that “Echizen hoshi”, traditional Echizen Washi, was ordered even by Picasso. Moreover, fiber of *Diplomorpha sikokiana*, a material of Japanese paper, was discovered in a copperplate print work by a Dutch painter Rembrandt. This shows the possibility that Echizen Washi was used for his work. At that time, washi was exported through East India Company. Therefore, he might have used Echizen Washi regularly.

Growing expectations for the registration for UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage

Additional application of “Echizen torinoko paper” was made in March 2024 by the Japanese government for “the technique of Echizen Washi, the Japanese handmade paper” in UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage. This was recently reported as the big news that gave momentum to the registration for UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage the people in the production area have long hoped for.

Important Cultural Property that enshrines the goddess of paper making

Goddess of paper making / Okamoto Shrine • Otaki Shrine

This is a shrine with an old history that worships “Kawakami gozen”, the goddess of paper making, from whom Echizen Washi is said to have originated. Shrine buildings have the roofs covered with Japanese cypress barks which look like dozens of waves coming close to each other. Moreover, they have an unusual shape with the main hall and worship hall connected together. These buildings are designated as a National Important Cultural Property. Kawakamigozen is usually enshrined in “Okunoin”, the inner shrine, in Mt. Gongen rising behind the shrine. Only twice a year in spring and fall, people welcome Kawakamigozen to Gegu (Satomiya), a shrine located in the lowest place in the shrine precincts, and Reitaisai, a major shrine festival held once or twice a year, is held when a portable shrine with Kawakamigozen enshrined in it makes a ritual procession around Goka area.



Come to Papyrus kan if you want to experience paper making.

Papyrus kan

This is the workshop where anyone from children to adults can experience paper making. At the back of the first floor, you can buy EchizenWashi goods at “Washidokoro Echizen”, where they serve many kinds of Japanese paper for industrial arts and miscellaneous goods using Japanese paper.



You can see the technique of traditional craftsmen close by at Udatsu no Kogeikan.

Udatsu no Kogeikan

This is the ex-residence of Heiemon Nishino, a craftsman of paper making, in Echizen City dismantled and reconstructed at the present site. This is a rare facility even across Japan where you can see close by traditional craftsmen make paper using conventional tools.



3

ECHIZEN CITY BRAND

Echizen Uchihamono

~Echizen forged cutlery~

Echizen Uchihamono, which has been regularly used by first-class chefs both domestically and abroad, is a traditional handicraft that Echizen City boasts to the world.



Echizen Uchihamono has been overwhelmingly supported by first-class chefs as their reliable partners.

Echizen Uchihamono’s modern design has gained high reputation, as well as the sharp cutting quality and strength created by traditional techniques.

Echizen Uchihamono is a traditional handicraft Echizen City boasts to the world with having approximately over 700 years of long history. The forging technology has inherited from ancient times. “Forging” refers to the process of strengthening the heated metal by hammering it repeatedly. Even now, craftsmen elaborately sharpen the blades they forged by hand and finish them so that they have sharp cutting quality.

Echizen is the first knife industry area in Japan where its products were designated as “National Traditional Craft” in 1979, in recognition of the sophisticated traditional technology. In recent years, kitchen knives and steak knives are created using both traditional technology and modern design. This made them highly sought throughout the world. Due to orders pouring in from first-class chefs globally, production has struggled to keep up with the high demand.

Interest in Echizen Uchihamono has been increasing among people of various fields, such as when a famous actor fell in love with the cutlery after being impressed by its sharp edge while using it in a drama supervised by a first-class chef.



Echizen Uchihamono comes in various types such as double edge, single edge, etc. along with various sizes according to specific purposes of the customers.



Thin and strong blades are brought to completion using the traditional forging technology of shaping with heat.

Topic

The secret of the sharp cutting quality

A unique technology of Echizen Uchihamono is called the “nimai hiroge”, which creates the distinguished sharp cutting quality of the kitchen knives that fascinates first-class chefs. Craftsmen strike the front and back surfaces of overlapped blades with a hammer. By quickly spreading two blades at the same time, it increases the strength of the blades, creating high quality cutlery with less irregularity on the blade surface.

The sharp cutting quality of Echizen Uchihamono that supports the delicious taste of French cuisine cooked by first-class chefs

Orders of kitchen knives of Echizen Uchihamono flood in from first-class chefs of well-known restaurants honored with Michelin stars. Yuichiro Watanabe, the owner of “Nabeno-Ism”, a French restaurant in Komagata in Asakusa, Tokyo, is a famous chef who has loved to use Echizen Uchihamono for many years.

As the executive chef of an exclusive restaurant in Ebisu, Tokyo, Chef Watanabe has gained a three-star evaluation from Michelin Guide for nine consecutive years. He opened “Nabeno-Ism” in 2016 and he has gained a two-star evaluation from Michelin Guide for five consecutive years since its 2019 edition.

He says, “I really feel that the dishes I cook have evolved further since I’ve encountered Echizen Uchihamono. Dishes are born through the combination of ingredients, people, and cooking tools. The sharp cutting quality of Echizen Uchihamono is also one of my indispensable seasonings for my dishes.”



Chef Watanabe cuts ingredients with a kitchen knife of Echizen Uchihamono.

He uses a butcher knife, a muscle pull knife, a petit knife, etc. properly depending on the dish he is cooking.

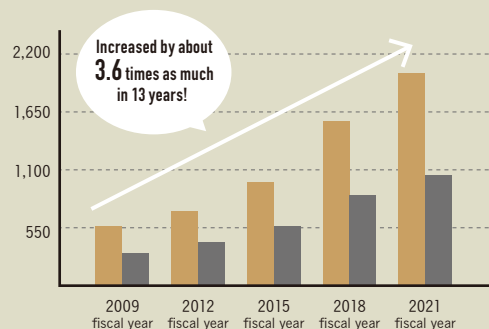
DATA

Production volume of Echizen Uchihamono increased more than three times in the past twelve years due to the increase of demand from overseas and rise of unit cost.

Echizen Uchihamono once fell into crisis of decline. However, it was revived by following many positive challenges by matching the change of the times. By taking advantage of high evaluation given by famous chefs overseas to Echizen Uchihamono that combines sharp cutting quality and modern designs, the demand soared in European nations and America.

Moreover, their unit cost also went up, contributing to sharp rise of production volume per one employee in the production area. Production volume in 2021 fiscal year increased by about 3.6 times as much as that of 2009 fiscal year. Success of the Echizen Uchihamono has attracted attention nationwide in Japan as the symbol of restoration of craftsmanship in Japan.

【 Production amount of Echizen Uchihamono 】



■ Production volume (Unit: million yen)
 ■ Production volume per one employee (Unit: 10 thousand yen)
 (Survey by Echizen Uchihamono production area cooperative association)

Echizen Uchihamono

SPOT

A collaborative workshop where craftsmen with the cutting-edge technology of Echizen Uchihamono come together

Takefu Knife Village

This is not only a collaborative workshop of Echizen Uchihamono but also a comprehensive tourist facility. A new building was completed in 2020. Here you can observe the workshop and also enjoy shopping for cutlery. Besides this, they have a “kitchen knife trial class” where visitors can experience the processes from forging to sharpening blades. This is a rare trial class nationwide and very popular with the visitors.



This is the facility that transmits the culture of traditional handicrafts of Echizen Uchihamono.

Echizen Chiyozuru Hall

This is a facility to convey the long history and technology of Echizen Uchihamono that have lasted for about 700 years. This history originates with Chiyozuru Kuniyasu, a famous swordsmith during the Northern and Southern Courts period. You can see not only exhibition of cutlery manufactured in various workshops that have inherited traditional techniques but also a demonstration of forging cutlery by traditional craftsmen. You can also have a hands-on experience of sharpening blades.



The shrine that worships Kuniyasu Chiyozuru, the founder of Echizen Uchihamono

Chiyozuru Shrine

The object of worship at Chiyozuru Shrine is a sword which is said to have been made by Kuniyasu Chiyozuru, the founder of Echizen Uchihamono. In the precincts of the shrine, there is a pond called “Chiyozuru no ike (the pond of Chiyozuru)” whose water is said to have been drawn by Kuniyasu Chiyozuru when he forged his sword. Kuniyasu is a swordsmith who moved to Fuchu (present-day Echizen City) from Kyoto around the turbulent period of the Northern and Southern Courts period. Legend has it that Echizen sickle originates from the sickle produced by Kuniyasu who was inspired by a crescent moon reflected on the surface of the pond of Chiyozuru. Echizen sickles with outstanding cutting quality spread all over Japan through peddlers and boasted overwhelming market share.



A guardian dog produced by Kuniyasu Chiyozuru

Legend has it that every time Kuniyasu made his sword, he carved a guardian dog with a grinding stone and submerged it under the pond with a prayer.

Echizen Tansu

~Echizen chest of drawers~



Echizen Tansu has a long history dating back to the late Edo period, fascinating many people with its high skill of artisanship.

Tradition and evolution of craftsmanship

Echizen Tansu has been developed by integrating multiple traditional techniques.

Echizen Tansu is a Japanese style chest made with unique technique without using nails. Its long history can be traced back to the brush writing of "Echizen" in India ink on the pedestal of Tachibana Fujin Zushi, a national treasure of Horyuji Temple. It is said to have been written by a craftsman from Echizen engaged in producing this zushi. Echizen Tansu has been produced for over one hundred years since the current technique was established in the late Edo period. It was designated as a traditional handicraft in 2013.



The metal fittings are made by the technique of Echizen Uchihamono (Echizen forged cutlery), and the surface is coated by the technique of lacquer ware. These traditional techniques unique to Echizen are combined together, creating tasteful texture and massive appearance.

Echizen Tansu

Echizen Tansu that evolves with the times



Left / A suitcase made by the technique of Echizen Tansu which attracts attention not only in Japan but also from abroad.
Right / Furniture of Echizen Tansu made totally of natural wood that combines excellent design and high practicability.

Craftsmen of Echizen Tansu have been challenging to manufacture their products in a creative manner by constantly meeting the needs of the time, while succeeding the tradition and technique accumulated over one hundred years. For instance, new types of chest have been produced such as the one with the legs at its base to make it easier to use or the one with various built-in mechanisms like a hidden door. Besides these, they also produce portable suitcases, etc. In this way, they have created various products from general goods to furniture that fits our modern lifestyle.

At the roadside station “Michino eki Echizen Takefu” located next to the Shinkansen Takefu Station, you are greeted by a reception counter made by using the techniques of Echizen Tansu.

“Michino eki Echizen Takefu” opened in the area next to the Hokuriku Shinkansen Echizen Takefu Station on March 18, 2023. At the tourist information center on the first floor, visitors are greeted by the reception counter made by traditional craftsmen of Echizen Tansu. A closer look at it enables you to feel advanced technical ability of the three traditional craftsmen who specialize in wood surface processing, metal fitting processing, fixing work, etc.



The reception counter of the tourist information center in Michino eki Echizen Takefu (Roadside station Echizen Takefu)

Various places are within walking distance in Echizen City.

Old city area of Echizen Takefu has retained the same old city streets where you can feel nostalgic atmosphere. If you stroll around this area, you can discover various tasteful atmosphere.

Tansumachi-dori street



This is the street where Echizen Tansu makers and workshops of cabinetwork craftsmen gathered from the end of the Edo period up to the beginning of the Meiji period. Even now, furniture stores and workshops stand in a row, adding tasteful atmosphere to this old street.

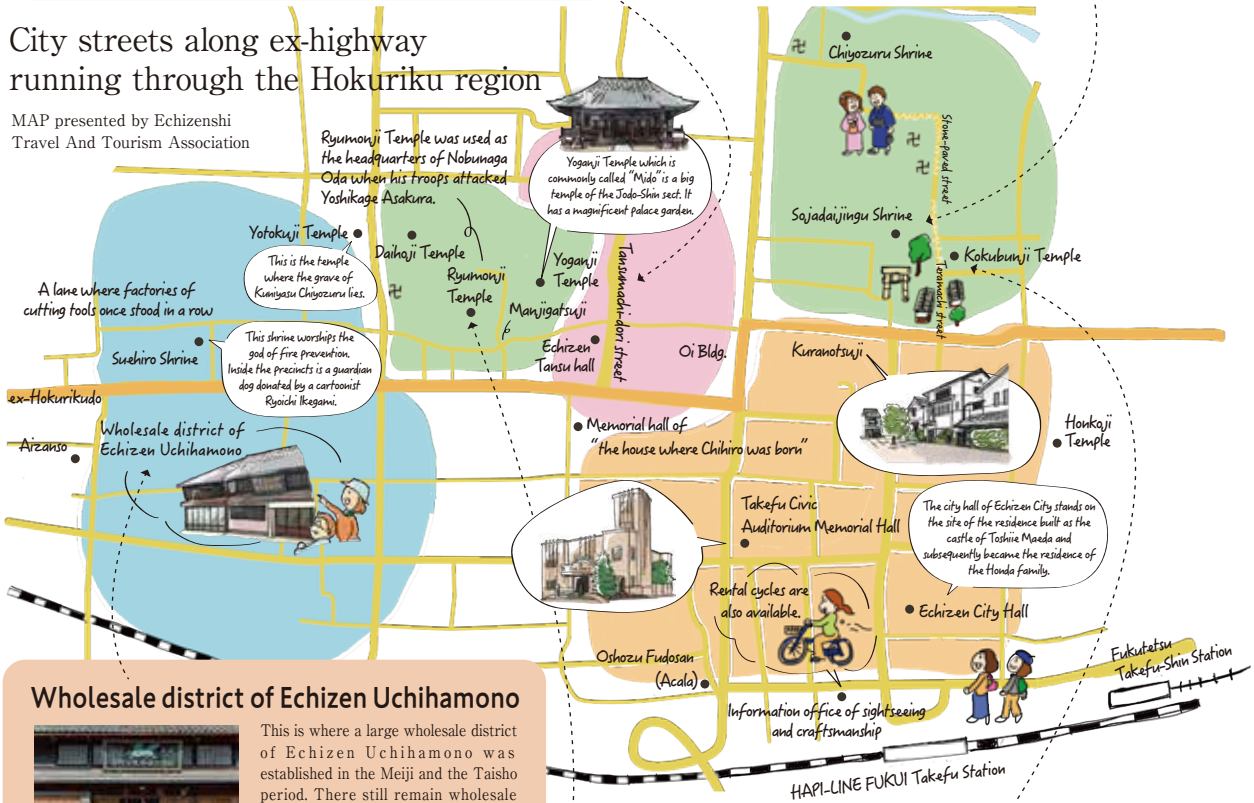
Soja Daijingu Shrine



This is a shrine where many gods, including those of Echizen province, are enshrined. The current main shrine was rebuilt in 1926 and it is affectionately called "Osonja san" by the citizens of Echizen City.

City streets along ex-highway running through the Hokuriku region

MAP presented by Echizenshi Travel And Tourism Association



Wholesale district of Echizen Uchihamono



This is where a large wholesale district of Echizen Uchihamono was established in the Meiji and the Taisho period. There still remain wholesale stores of cutting tools with retro signboards that remind us of the atmosphere of old days.

Ryumonji Temple



This temple was established in 1299 and was used as a military base of Nobunaga Oda when his troops attacked Yoshikage Asakura and also when they subdued Ikko-ikki. Even now, the traces of moats and earthen walls can be seen as the remnants.

Kokubunji Temple



Kokubunji Temple was built by the imperial command of Emperor Shomu in 739. "Tenpai yakushinyorai zazo" (Seated statue of tenpai yakushinyorai), a Buddhist statue rarely shown to the public which is said to have been made by Gyoki, is enshrined as the principal object of worship.

Refer to this QR code to see "MAP for strolling the town of handwork" which also shows shrines and temples in Echizen City.



Hospitality through local dishes

In Echizen City where the local government office called Kokufu was established at one time, many people frequently came and went accompanied by active cultural exchange. As the transition of the time, unique food culture has been nurtured.

The place where “Echizen oroshi soba” was born

**Unforgettable taste for Emperor Showa
“I yearn for that soba noodle in Echizen.”**

Soba noodle is one of the soul foods of Japanese people. In Echizen City, “Echizen oroshi soba” is famous. It is served cold with soup, plenty of grated daikon radish, dried bonito flakes and finely chopped green onion. The origin of soba noodle in Fukui is said to date back to the Age of the Warring States. Takakage Asakura, a military commander of the Warring States period, who lived in Ichijodani in Fukui is said to have recommended growing soba as an emergency crop to prepare for wars and natural disasters. This is because it is more nutritious than rice and can harvest in short periods. “Echizen oroshi soba” has various episodes. The most famous one is about Emperor Showa who visited Takefu City in 1947. He ate “Echizen oroshi soba” and wanted a second helping. After returning to the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, he missed the tasty soba noodle he ate in Echizen. This episode is said to have spread the name of “Echizen oroshi soba” nationwide.

Echizen oroshi soba has profound taste because of the simplicity of each ingredient. Even now Echizen City has many soba noodle restaurants, providing exquisite taste which differs from restaurant to restaurant.



Was Echizen oroshi soba devised by Tomimasa Honda?



Wooden image of
Tomimasa Honda
(owned by Fujigaki Shrine)

Tomimasa Honda who became the domain lord of Fuchu, present-day Echizen City, in 1601, is said to have created “Echizen oroshi soba”. Legend has it that he invited Gonzaemon Kaneko, a soba chef, from Fushimi in Kyoto, and created soba noodle to eat with grated daikon radish on it so that it will be helpful to promote good health.

How to enjoy eating Echizen oroshi soba

The soba noodle used in “Echizen oroshi soba” is made of buckwheat flour including buckwheat husks. The soba noodle is characterized by the strong scent and flavor as well as its blackish tint. It is eaten by wildly pouring soup with grated daikon radish in it. Some eat by adding grated daikon radish separately and others by adding only the juice of grated daikon radish. Basically, people eat this soba cold even in winter.

Echizen City has about thirty soba restaurants, each of which serves you unique soba.

Echizen City has about thirty restaurants where you can enjoy “Echizen oroshi soba”. The types of buckwheat flour, milling method, daikon radish, taste of soup, etc. differ from restaurant to restaurant. You can enjoy unique soba noodle with different flavor, firmness, texture, etc. You can taste newly harvested soba of the year full of fragrance called Shin-soba from around the latter half of every November. Quite a few people visit soba restaurants in Echizen City to relish the fresh, tasty soba.

Old, elegant Japanese-style restaurants in Echizen City have nurtured the spirit of hospitality with the passage of time and have formed unique culture of hospitality characteristic of these traditional restaurants.

Echizen province in ancient times was visited even by foreign guests as the gateway from which the culture of the continent was rapidly diffused. The local government office called Kokufu which was the center of politics, economy and culture was established in Echizen City that enjoyed great prosperity. Echizen City also acted as the transfer station of business activities along the highway running through the Hokuriku region. Culture of hospitality was also created with the development of business

and transaction. Many traditional Japanese-style restaurants still remain in this old city retaining elegant atmosphere which fortunately avoided damage from the war. In these restaurants you can relish a variety of gorgeous dishes of fresh products both from the sea and the mountains in Echizen area in a sophisticated space. In winter, you can also relish “Echizen crabs” known as the gift to the Imperial family from Fukui prefecture in these restaurants in a relaxed manner.



This is a male snow crab called “Echizen crab”, a representative delicious food of Fukui in winter. During the annual fishing season from November 6 to March 20, we can relish various kinds of crabs such as female snow crabs called “Seikogani crab” and crabs right after shedding their skins called “Mizugani crab” .etc. depending on the period of the fishing season.



Elaborately designed room arrangement that makes us feel each different season of the year in the quiet and calm atmosphere separated from the noises of daily life is also one of the enjoyments of Japanese-style restaurants.

Traditional events passed down for generations

This is the performance of blessing that celebrates early spring of the Hokuriku region. The first performance is held on January 1st.

Echizen manzai



The origin of this performance is said to date back to the period before the middle ages. After the early modern times, the performers of Echizen manzai visited not only various domains of Echizen region such as Fukui, Sabae, etc. but also places as far as Kanazawa and Daishoji in Kaga region. It was commonly known as the familiar performance celebrating early spring of the Hokuriku region.

This is a unique festival held on February 17 where guests are treated to a heap of cooked white rice and burdock.

Goboko



This is a unique festival also known as "Soda shogatsu juushichinichiko". As much as five go (0.9 liter) of rice served in a rice bowl called "Mossomeshi" whose height is about fifteen centimeters, a heap of burdock sliced and mixed with miso paste, etc. are prepared by the house on duty and treated to the male guests in the community.

This is the festival where men and women of all ages march across the street pulling a float on February 11.

Oraishi



This is one of the Shinto rituals of Okamoto Shrine which is said to have begun for the purpose of celebrating the enthronement of Emperor Keitai. Many people from children to the elderly march across the street pulling a float, praying for productiveness of grains, peaceful reigns over the land, etc.

This is a festival held from May 3rd to 5th to welcome Kawakamigozen, the goddess of paper making.

Festival of god and paper



This is an annual festival held in spring in Washinosato during the Golden Week holidays at Okamoto shirine and Otaki shrine which worship Kawakamigozen, the goddess of paper making, who is said to have taught the local people how to make paper. During the festival, the local people welcome Kawakamigozen by carrying mikoshi which the goddess is said to ride on from Okunoin, the inner shrine, and send the goddess back to Okunoin again at the end of the festival.

Nationwide traffic network leading to Echizen City is getting more and more convenient.

“Echizen Takefu Station” opened on March 16, 2024 when Hokuriku Shinkansen was extended to Fukui Prefecture. The entire line of Chubu Jukan Expressway will be available in spring 2026.

Access to Echizen City after March 16

【Shinkansen】 Time required (Unit: hour / min.)

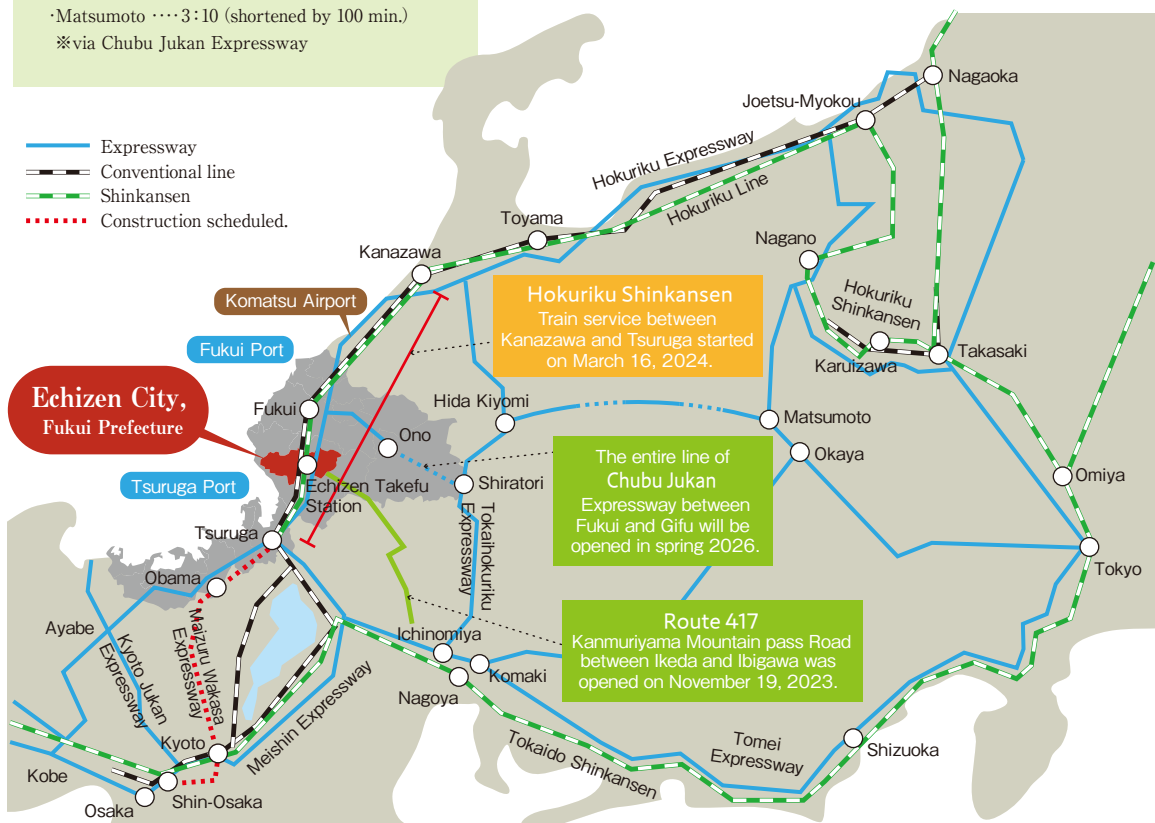
- ・Tokyo 3:06
- ・Nagano 1:44
- ・Kyoto 0:45 (shortened by 28 min.)
- ・Shin-Osaka ... 1:04 (shortened by 33 min.)
- ・Nagoya 1:25

※Time required is based on trial calculation when Shinkansen is extended to Osaka.

【 by car 】 Time required

- ・Tokyo 5:55 (shortened by 50 min.)
- ※via Chubu Jukan Expressway
- ・Matsumoto ... 3:10 (shortened by 100 min.)
- ※via Chubu Jukan Expressway

Echizen Takefu Station





※Echizen Washi is used for both front and back covers.



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