

The Slow Life Republic:
Your English Guide for Tanushimaru

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Konnichiwa!

Welcome to Tanushimaru! Life moves at a comfortable pace here and we in Tanushimaru pride ourselves on our friendly nature. Tanushimaru is the ideal retreat for those looking to escape from the rat race of the larger cities. We are a small agricultural community of over 20,000 people, located approximately half way between Kurume and Hita.

Most of Tanushimaru is situated on the fertile Chikugo Plain, between the Chikugo River and the Minoh Mountains, so is ideal for agriculture. Tanushimaru has a great number of vineyards in the southern part of town that grows the renowned Kyoho grape, a very plump and sweet red grape. Located in the foothills of the Minoh Mountains is the Kyoho Winery, which hosts the Kyoho Grape Festival in late August. Not only does Tanushimaru have a winery, but it also has a sake brewery, which has thrived over 14 generations, located in the town center.

These are a few of the many sites Tanushimaru has waiting for you to explore. We hope that you will enjoy your visit to our peaceful town and that you will come back soon.

FYI

The Legend of the Kappa

The Kappa is a fanciful and romantic animal that resides along side the citizens of Tanushimaru in the town's rivers and streams. Sometimes at night the Kappa is bored of the river and wanders about the town, looking for it's favorite food: cucumbers.

The Kappa is a curious looking creature, with webbed hands and feet, a humanoid figure with a tortoise-like shell on its back and one on its head. The Kappa is said to have great strength when the shells are wet. Children are advised to stay away from the rivers since the Kappa is so strong in the water. In addition, the Kappa's favorite hobby is to Sumo wrestle, so it can be very dangerous if you encounter a playful Kappa.

The Kappa is highly revered in Tanushimaru not only because it is the Kappa's home, but also because the Kappa protects the town when the rivers threaten to flood. In fact, the Kappa is so highly regarded here that the JR train station is built in the likeness of a Kappa and you can view a collection of Kappa figurines there, as well as other art. When you wander about the town, you'll find scores of Kappa statues and likenesses littered throughout the town, as well as a Kappa shrine.

History

Tanushimaru was originally established in 1614 on a short stretch of road by Kikuchi Tango-Nyudo, the leader of a powerful clan. The name, Tanushimaru, is said to be taken from Nyudo's life view, "born happily – tanoshiku umaru."

The town's motto literally translates as, "supply base of the green," which is a notation of Tanushimaru's agricultural economy. This will become apparent to anyone who travels throughout Tanushimaru. There is good reason for the abundance of cropland and the lack of urban contiguousness. Present-day Tanushimaru is made up of a handful of villages: Funagoshi, Kawai, Mizuwake, Shibakari, Takeno, Toyoki, and Tanushimaru. They were merged in 1954, in accord with the government's recommendation to consolidate municipal governments.

Geography

Tanushimaru is 18 km east of Kurume, 26 km west of Hita, and 55 km southeast of Fukuoka. To the north of town is the Chikugo River, the largest river on the island of Kyushu. The Chikugo is full of carp, eel, river shrimp, and sweet fish, so it's a great river for fishing. To the south of town is the impressive Minoh Mountain Range, also known as The Great Sleeping Blue Dragon. Many ancient tombs and castle ruins remain hidden within the Minoh Mountains, so it's a great place for exploring. Mount Takatori (802m) is the highest point in the Minoh Mountains and forms part of the town's southeastern boarder. Between the mountains and the river is the fertile Chikugo Plain, where many farmers have established themselves. Tanushimaru is one of a few areas in all of Japan that supply the nation with crops and landscaping vegetation.

Statistics

Average Temperature: 17.2 Centigrade (63 Fahrenheit)

Average Rainfall: 1,750 mm (76 inches)

Area: 51 km square (31.9 miles square)

Population: 21,606 (3/2001)

Gross Agricultural Product, 1998: 8880 million yen (~\$80,730,000)

Major Products:	Trees	(3590 mil. yen)
	Rice	(1180 mil. yen)
	Grapes	(820 mil. yen)
	Potted Plants	(810 mil. yen)
	Persimmons	(490 mil. yen)

Getting Here & Getting Around

Tanushimaru can best be accessed by taking the JR Kyudai line that runs between Kurume and Hita. Daily westbound service begins at 6:09 and ends at 21:30. Daily eastbound service begins at 7:13 and ends at 23:08. Trains run about every 40 minutes or so. Otherwise, you can take the Nishitetsu Amagi line to the Kaneshima station in Tachiarai, near the Katanose area of Tanushimaru. There are also several buses that go to Tanushimaru from Kurume: buses 20, 23, and 25. There is also the New Life Amagi that connects Amagi with Tanushimaru. This bus follows route 719, stopping one block south of the bus terminal, and continues north to Amagi on route 33. The bus station is on route 210, to the north of Kappa Station. Buses come about every 20 to 40 minutes.

Since Tanushimaru is rather spread-out and mountainous in the south, the best way to get around the town is by car. Unfortunately, there are no rental car agencies in Tanushimaru, so if you don't have access to a car, you can rent one in one of the larger towns or cities. If renting a car is not optional, but you still want easy access to all of Tanushimaru, **Sawada Bike Shop** (2-2253) rents scooters for 500 yen a day(!) and is on the north side of route 210, east of the bookstore (100 m). Sawada-san just began the service and the fleet of scooters is limited, so make a reservation a couple days in advance. Otherwise, you can use a mamachari bike from the Tanushimaru station for free. This is an excellent way to get around for the budget traveler; however, it will be nearly impossible to ride to Hirabaru Park and a few other sites in the mountains. Your other options are riding the bus and hoofing it, of course.

Where To Stay

Fureai no Ie (Community House) (3-3337) is located on the south end of Hirabaru Park, this facility is very modern, but with simple accommodations. It is ideally suited for budget travelers who plan to spend most of their time exploring the mountains. Rooms have tatami mat floors and are shared with other guests during busy times. Fureai no Ie has communal bathrooms in addition to its large cooking facilities. Bedding may be rented for 150 yen; however, you must make a reservation two weeks in advance and your party can have no less than five members. Religious gatherings and business meeting are not allowed. Reservations for July 21, to August 31, must be made in April.

Kobayashiso (2-3168) is located in northwest Tanushimaru on route 81 near the Katanose Bridge (orange bridge going to Tachiarai). Kobayashiso is a hybrid between a ryokan and a hotel. It has nine rooms, each with a private bathroom, breakfast nook, TV, phone, and AC. Rooms are 8,000 yen during the off-season and 10,000 yen during the peak season (Aug., and winter). Prices include use of the onsen and two meals. For onsen use only: 500 yen. Kobayashiso also has tandem bikes that can be rented for 500 yen per hour.

Love Hotel (3-1892) is on route 70, less than 1 km south of Yamazuto Road. This is a cheap alternative to the other hotels (costs half as much). There is another Love Hotel (2-3648) further east and to the south of Yamazuto Road, by the winery.

Maruka (2-2181) is located to the east of Wakatakeya Sake Brewery, one block north of route 210, on the north side of the canal. You'll know you're there when you come to a wide concrete bridge for the driveway and a very talkative little dog. Maruka is a very nice and quiet place with an excellent location in central Tanushimaru. It has eleven rooms and guests can have breakfast and/or dinner if they so desire. Prices range from 4347 yen (no meals) to 7486 yen (two meals). Rooms have AC, phone, TV.

Ryueikan (2-3121) is located next to Kobayashiso on route 81. Ryueikan is a traditional Japanese ryokan (inn) with eleven rooms. Breakfast and dinner are served in the rooms. The rooms are enclosed with shojis (paper doors) and have AC and a phone. Prices vary depending on the season: 10,000 yen during the peak season (Aug., and winter); 8,000 yen during the off-season. These prices include full use of the onsen (spa). Ryueikan also offers massage services on Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays : 1000 yen per 10 minutes. For onsen services only: 500 yen. For all day onsen services with lunch and a private room (until 17:00): 3500 yen.

Where To Eat

It seems like no matter where you are in Tanushimaru, you're not far from a decent place to eat. The following list is a few of the many fine eating establishments in town.

Restaurants

Café Terrasse/Karatachi (3-1780) is located next to the 7-11 on route 210. Café Terrasse serves western food with a Japanese flare. Dishes include au gratin, pancakes, pasta, sandwiches, set meals, and dessert cake. Meals are reasonably priced – between 500 to 1300 yen.

Hyaku Man Ryo (2-2908) is a charming little restaurant on the north side of route 210, east of the 7-11 and across from the au phone store. The proprietors are a sweet little lady, who is a great cook, and her husband. The food is traditional Japanese cuisine and costs about 700 yen per person. Open from 11:00 to 13:30 and 17:00 to 23:00 seven days a week, except holidays and Sundays that are slow.

Kame Kichi (2-3051) is located on the north side of route 210 across from Sun Road Shopping Center. It's a very clean restaurant with a pleasant atmosphere. They offer a dozen or so different types of udon. It's very good and reasonably priced – lunch for 500 yen or less.

Koi no Su (2-2451) is located next to the Wakatakeya Sake Brewery on route 210. Koi No Su is a delightful little family run restaurant that specializes in eel and carp (yes, carp). The food is delicious, the atmosphere is charming, the service is very pleasant, and if your lucky, the hostesses grandson might show you his three-horned beetle – ummm, appetizing. Prices range from 1,000 to 2,000 yen per person. There is another Koi no Su (2-2451) just down the road to the east that is operated by the same family and is equally as charming.

Jyuan (2-0500) is on route 70, less than ½ km south of Yamazuto Road. This is a very stylish restaurant that serves gourmet Japanese cuisine. Lunches range from 2000 to 2800 yen. Dinners are even more expensive. This is fine dining so come prepared.

Maruichi (2-2841) is located on the arterial road just north of route 210, across from the old supermarket. Maruichi is an excellent choice of restaurants for those seeking a warm, traditional Japanese atmosphere with friendly service and great food. For finger food, try the mountain potatoes (seasonal) – small with a fuzzy skin, they are peeled and eaten raw. Open daily from 17:00 to 24:00.

Maruman (2-3034) is located west of the post office on route 210. Maruman is a traditional Japanese restaurant that offers a variety of fish and other Japanese dishes for reasonable prices.

Monpette Quoi (2-1234) is a stone's throw to the north of Kappa Station. It has a pleasant atmosphere, friendly staff, and the food is quite good. Monpette Quoi doesn't have any particular specialty but it does serve curry rice that is worth a go, and the lunch specials are a great value. You can also get a monstrously huge parfait for dessert, among other sweets, but do be aware of the dessert prices.

Nova (2-0438) is located on Yamazuto Road near Sekicho-tei and behind Athletic Trim Park. Nova offers Japanese barbeque in a mountain home atmosphere. The proprietor is a charismatic middle-aged man and he also operates Miyoshi, a karaoke bar. Nova costs 2,500 yen per person. Open daily from 11:00 to 21:00, but is closed on Tuesdays, except for large parties. Call ahead of time so that your grill and food will be prepared for you when you arrive. Nova also features a gallery.

Sekicho-tei (2-3479) is located on Yamazuto Road near Nova and Athletic Trim Park. Sekicho-tei is a very traditional Japanese restaurant and may break the bank for the budget traveler. However, if one can afford such an exquisite dining experience, it's worth it. Prices are upwards of 6000 yen for group set meals. Open daily for lunch and dinner. Closed for the last few days in December.

Sushi Masa (3-1987) is located ½ km to 1km south of the Katanose onsens where route 745 and route 743 intersect. It's a two-story building with no other buildings in the immediate vicinity. The sushi selection is somewhat limited, but very fresh and tasty. The

chef and his wife are very friendly, like all the proprietors in Tanushimaru. Has regular restaurant hours and the prices are very reasonable. Try the maguro – oshii!

Wakurano (2-1481) is part of Wakatakeya Sake Brewery. They humbly describe their restaurant's special cuisine as simple brewery dishes. I rate it as being five sakes out of five. Wakurano offers a truly unique dining experience and is a must do if you have the means.

Coffee Shops

Moegi (3-0616) is located on Yamazuto Road in the Minoh foothills. This was once a ceramics shop and has many fine pieces on display. You can buy kappa figurines along with other crafts, teas, and sweets. Moegi serves coffee, espresso, tea, and cheesecake from 10:00 to 18:00. Moegi also serves various salads and light dishes for lunch from 11:00 to 14:00. The chicken curry is the best, as is the potato salad. Closed on Thursdays.

Take Five (2-0471) is located in west Tanushimaru just north of where route 210 intersects route 743. Take Five has a classic western motif going on. They play light jazz and offer tasty coffee and snacks (no espresso).

Nightlife

Robin's Valley (6-5073) is located in Yoshii, on the eastern edge of Tanushimaru, off route 210. Robin's Valley resembles a more western style bar combined with karaoke rooms. They feature a big screen television with satellite dish for all your sports-viewing needs.

Miyoshi (3-1498) is a karaoke bar located in central Tanushimaru on the river road, south of 7-11 and route 210. They offer friendly service, good company, new music, but a meager selection of drinks. Bring your singing voice 'cause this ain't no spectator's sport.

Karaoke Pool Hall (a.k.a. Champs) is located near Yoshii, to the east of Tanushimaru, 150 meters south of route 210. As you pass the road to Asakura, continue 200 meters until you see a sign with a pool rack on it and turn right. It has four pool tables (pay by the hour/600 yen), arcade games, and karaoke.

Snack Bars can be found throughout Tanushimaru along with the more traditional Japanese pubs that have the signature red paper lantern hanging out front. Beware though. If a woman wants to hang out with you and pour you drinks, you may be in the wrong place. Make sure you know what you're being charged for.

What To See & Do

Points of Interest

Beniotome (Shochu) Brewery (2-1050) is located just down the hill from the Kyoho Winery and next to Ryozan-tei. There are dozens of various kinds of Beniotome shochu that you can sample in their showroom, all of which are for sale. Most of the shochu is between 30% and 40% alcohol and is made from sesame seeds. If liquor is not your thing, you can try their different sesame products, like the salad dressing or the hard candies. Open daily from 10:00 to 17:00. Closed for Christmas and New Years.

Kyoho Winery (2-2382) should be on everyone's itinerary for Tanushimaru. It is in the Minou foothills just to the south of Yamazuto Road, east of route 70. Here you can take a tour of the wine cellars and sample the various wines unique to Japan. The Kyoho Winery gets its name from the Kyoho grape, a very large and sweet grape – not your typical wine grape. But this is not your typical winery. Many of the Kyoho wines are semi-sweet to go with Japanese cuisine. If you have difficulty shaking your western expectations, try the Riesling. It's a well-balanced wine with a crisp finish.

Ryozan-tei is in the Minoh foothills on the Kyoho Winery campus. It is a very well preserved Japanese house built in 1600. If you're curious about what daily life was like during feudal times, Ryozan-tei provides excellent insight.

Takayama's Cultural Center is north of Yamazuto Road from the Otsuka mound. Takayama-san is one of Tanushimaru's most interesting residents. He is rather befuddled in appearance and very amusing. Takayama is an organic farmer who is renowned for his many awards in grape farming. He speaks broken English and some Spanish. Takayama's Cultural Center is sure to be a unique experience for the company alone, but there are exhibits as well. You can see the interior of an ancient Japanese living room/kitchen with a hearth (irori). Also, in Takayama's bathroom is a goemonburo, a classic cast-iron bathtub/human boiling pot.

Wakatakeya Sake Brewery (2-2175) is Japan's premiere sake producer and is a must see! It's in central Tanushimaru on route 210. Wakatakeya was started in 1699 when sake was first introduced to the common man and was no longer reserved for royalty alone. The brewery is still located in its original facility and has been operated by the same family for its entire existence – 14 generations! Wakatakeya's interior is very serene and pleasant. There you can sample the various kinds of sake they produce and learn about the brewing process. Don't miss the fine restaurant inside (see the "places to eat" section).

Galleries & Workshops

Akebonoya Kappa-Do Galley (2-2346) is located in the town center. Here you can view many arts and crafts dedicated to the Kappa. The gallery also features a kappa's hand! Call

before going though. The gallery's future is in limbo because the curator is old and his health is not the best right now.

Ryozanpaku Gallery (2-4567) is on route 70, just past the Love Hotel, by the number two road marker. This gallery features many fine pieces of pottery – mostly tea and sake sets. You can also have a cup of tea here as well.

Roukan Gallery (2-4703) is located 100m south of west Yamazuto Road. This gallery features ceramic pieces, mostly for serving food and beverages. You enroll in pottery classes as well, which are offered four times a week, or you can do just a single day class. Open daily from 10:00 to 18:00.

Chikusuan Gallery (2-3807) is located about ½ km south of west Yamazuto Road. This gallery features pieces from the artist Nishida-san, whose work can be described as contemporary realism. Open daily from 9:00 to 18:00.

Space Yu (3-1520) is in the Minoh foothills, 100m off Yamazuto Road, east of route 70. If you happen to live near Tanushimaru and you're interested in learning about stained glass, you can take lessons twice a month from Yu-san. He is very friendly, and quite talented.

Landmarks

Hanao no Taki is a small but unique waterfall because of the Buddhist monastery (seasonal) there along with its many ancestral artifacts. Local folklore claims that invisible hobgoblins play there, so beware! It's a nice hike up the sparsely traveled route 70. Jyouan restaurant and Some Gallery are also on this road in the foothills. Hanao no Taki is located after the number four road sign (2 km?). You'll see a large stone retaining wall and then a shrine. The trailhead is behind the shrine and the hike is very short one (100m).

Jitoku Mound is located on route 151, 100m east of where it intersects highway 70 (between route 210 & route 151). The mound contains a catacomb that can be explored with a guide who you can find at the town hall.

Otsuka Mound is on Yamazuto Road in the eastern foothills, up the road from Takayama's Cultural Center. If you wander along the east side of the mound towards the back, you'll find a trail that traverses the south side of the mound. The top is flat and covered with overgrowth and you'll find a very small shrine and a great view of the town – a fine place to picnic.

Temples & Shrines

Hakutoji Temple is located in the Katanose area, which can be tricky to navigate through, so you may need to ask for directions. Hakutoji is one of Tanushimaru's largest and most impressive temples. Take a peek inside to see the spectacularly gilded interior. This temple has nearly 7,000 volumes of tetstuganhan sutras.

Kannonji Temple is in southeastern Tanushimaru on the main road. This too is one of Tanushimaru's largest temples. It is best to visit in early spring when gigantic Camilla tree blooms.

Tsukiyomi Shrine is located in central Tanushimaru, just south of the central shopping district. This shrine honors Tsukiyomi-no-mikoto, the god of the moon, and is one of only a handful of shrines like it in Japan. Sanya-Sama is held here from 23 to 25 of January, May, and September. However, the Sanya-Sama feast in January is the most popular.

Parks

Athletic Trim (Torimu) Park is the place to get buff! The park is located in the eastern foothills, 100m south of Yamazuto Road, near Hirabaru Park. This park is one big obstacle course with various stations made of logs and such. A great place for all of you that missed out on summer camp.

Central Park is located south of central Tanushimaru and east of the train station and north of route 719. The park has a kappa sculpture, a gazebo, an extensive pond, a wooded knoll, and is a nice place to have a picnic or feed the koi.

Hirabaru Park is in the foothills of the Minoh Mountains in eastern Tanushimaru, about 1.2 km south of Yamazuto Road. Hirabaru Park has many maintained hiking trails that meander throughout the park. The park also has burial mounds, an athletic field, picnic facilities, camping, and is the place to go for cherry blossom viewing in the spring. Up the road to the south is Fureai no Ie, the Community House, which provides free lodging (bedding is 150 yen).

Kappa Park is located next to the central shopping district in the heart of Tanushimaru. The park has kappa statues and is a nice place to picnic or throw the Frisbee around.

Katanose Park stretches along the banks of the Chikugo River, beneath the Katanose Bridge (route 743), in northwest Tanushimaru. It has a playground and a small section of the Chikugo river bike path. A number of local festivals are held here as well.

Recreation

Biking in Tanushimaru is a great way to get around and see the town. There is a bike path that follows the Chikugo River that connects with other towns along the river and is the best way to traverse to northern edge of town. Yamazuto Road is good route to take for exploring the foothills of the Minoh Mountains. Traffic is usually very light. For exploring other areas of town, it is more interesting to use the side streets and avoid route 210 because of heavy traffic.

Fishing in Tanushimaru is very popular. However, it is only feasible for the true angler who's willing to pay. An annual license costs 5,000 yen, but students under 18 can fish for free. Licenses and fishing supplies can be purchased at Yakabe Bait and Tackle Shop (2-2375) on route 748, south of the Katanose Bridge. The best spots are on the Chikugo River, but anglers are often seen on the smaller rivers in town as well.

Hang-gliding is a popular activity among some residents, but there's not a hang-gliding school or outfitter in Tanushimaru. However, it is possible to meet some members of the local hang-gliding club. Perhaps if you offer one a nomihodai (all you can drink) evening, he or she will give you a lesson.

Hiking in the Minoh Mountains is excellent way to get away from the city life and unwind in the midst of a spectacular natural setting. It will take a full day to ascend (and descend) the mountains, so pack a lunch and bring plenty of water. The mountains are rather steep, so it can be difficult, but on a clear day, the summit is a great place to be. Otherwise, if you want to simply bound about in the forest, there are many random trails. Many are unmarked and not maintained, so be careful. Old forest service roads, relatively free of undergrowth, are good for exploring. It's a jungle out there, so check it out!

Onsens in Tanushimaru are a great way to unwind after a long day of exploring. There are the two Katanose onsens, which are inside the hotels in the northwest part of town (see "Where to Stay"). Otherwise, there is **Taketori no Yu** (2-4793), which is outside and has new facilities. Taketori no Yu is in the very southeast part of town. Take the last right before Yoshi if you're heading east on route 151. Go 50m to 100m and it's on your right. This is a very nice onsen – well worth a visit. Taketori no Yu costs 400 yen per person and is open Thursday to Tuesday, 10:00 to 21:00 (10:00 to 16:00 on holidays/800 yen).

Shopping

Central Shopping District is a red and green brick road that runs east/west, just a few blocks north of route 210. There you'll find various mom and pop shops. On the west end are two kimono shops and towards the east end is a small grocery store with a great produce section. Just south of the Central Shopping District is Kappa Manju, a shop that sells Japanese sweets. Also in the vicinity are many fine bakeries.

MaxValue/HomeWide Shopping Complex is your one stop shopping spot and is located west of the town center on route 210. There are half a dozen stores where you can buy anything from groceries to gardening supplies.

Kagashi-ya Stationary Goods (2-2542) is located in the town center on route 210. It's good place to buy some basic art supplies or unique writing supplies.

Sun Road Shopping Center is on route 210 on the east side of the town center. Features a very nice kimono shop, a salon, and a National/Panasonic store. A clock store and CD shop are nearby as well a bookstore.

Takefuji Bun Sendou (bookstore) (2-2355) is to the east of Sun Road Shopping Center on route 210. Sells mostly Japanese books, but its the place to go if you need a English-Japanese dictionary.

Events

January

Sanya-Sama (23rd – 25th)

This is a Shinto holiday held at the Tsukiyomi Shrine, named for Tsukiyomi-no-mikoto, god of the moon. People from all over Japan come to this unique shrine to pray to Tsukiyomi-no-mikoto for help with ailing eyesight, safe pregnancy, bountiful harvest, or successful fishing – all which are believed to be influenced by the moon.

February

Sazanka Festival (*first half of February*)

Sazanka is Japanese for Camilla and so people visit Kannonji Temple during this time because of the enormous Camilla tree there. Sushi and sweet bean soup is served at the Sazanka Festival so go on and get some!

April

Yamazuto Photo Festival (*end of April*)

A photo contest is held annually along Yamazuto Road.

May

Satsuki Azalea Festival (*mid May*)

Every year a contest is held at the Kappa Station for ten days to decide who has grown the most beautiful Azaleas.

July

Tanushimaru Town Festival (*late July*)

This is a chance for the locals to show their civic pride. Street ornaments are hung and many come out to shop and support the local business.

Ebisu Festival (*20th*)

A children's parade is held and there are dancing and fireworks, all in honor of the god of commerce.

Opening Day of Ayu Fishing Season (*late July*)

Shinto Priests come to Katanose Park to bless the fisherman so they all have a safe fishing season.

August

Kappa Festival (*8th*)

The children of Tanushimaru carry a kappa mikoshi (portable shrine) to the river where they hop in the water and carry it about in honor of the kappa. There is music, dancing, and fireworks for the children.

Katanose Fireworks Festival (*last Sunday in August*)

The festival is held at Katanose Park and the attendance is about 40,000 people. There is an open-air market where you can sample a number of delightful little morsels including takoyaki, a fried dumpling made up of octopus, cabbage, and other vegetables.

Kyoho Grape Festival (*late August*)

Held at the Kyoho Winery to celebrate the grape harvest. You can sample the new wine, grapes, and hors d'oeuvres. Local producers sell various jams and homemade treats. Be sure to ask for a chance to jump in the big barrel and stomp on some grapes.

September

Mushioi Festival (*late September every 3 years*)

This festival is over 1,000 years old and Tanushimaru is one of the few places in Japan to still celebrate Mushioi. It is held before the Harvest to rid the rice fields of all the nasty insects. The next one is to be held in 2004.

November

Yamazuto Arts Festival (*November 2nd & 3rd*)

This is a relatively new festival that is put on every year by the various businesses located on Yamazuto Road. There you'll discover many fine arts and crafts, as well as food.

Chrysanthemum Exhibition (*early November*)

Local gardeners bring their chrysanthemums to the Tsukiyomi Shrine to display their perennial passion.

Minou-no-Ichi Market (*early November*)

This is regarded as Tanushimaru's ichiban (#1) festival. Over 100,000 people come to the Green Center on the first weekend of November (unless either day falls on Nov. 5, then it's the following weekend). Many locals either set up booths to sell crafts or food, or they participate in stage performances involving music and dancing. A hang gliding exhibition is also held.

Butoku Festival (*23rd*)

This is a Japanese holiday where locals hold various martial arts competitions.

Other Information

Money

Tanushimaru has a couple of banks located in the town center on route 210. Bank lobby hours are weekdays from 9:00 to 15:00. ATM's can be accessed from 8:45 until 19:00 (18:00 – Fukuoka Bank) on weekdays, and 9:00 to 18:00 (17:00 – Fukuoka Bank) on weekends. Otherwise, for travelers with foreign credit cards, you can use the ATM at the post office (9:00 – 19:00 weekdays; 9:00 – 17:00 weekends).

Internet

There are no internet cafés in Tanushimaru; however, if you absolutely must access the internet, you can use the computer at the tourist office at Kappa Station. This may become a more readily available service if there is enough demand for it.

Websites

Municipal Site:

<http://www.town.tanushimaru.fukuoka.jp/>

Tanushimaru English Conversation Class:

http://eigomaru.gooside.com/kinrou_001.htm

Phone Numbers

Town Office (09437) 2-2111
Tourist Office (09437) 2-4956

Maps