

Kashiwazaki's Grand Fireworks Display Illuminates the Sea of Japan

Niigata Prefecture, situated roughly in the middle of the Sea of Japan coast on Honshu, hosts the coastal industrial city of Kashiwazaki. Every summer, this city holds the Gion Kashiwazaki Festival, which concludes with a renowned fireworks display. We spoke with an official from Kashiwazaki City about the highlights of this fireworks festival. (Text: TANAKA Nozomi)

Kashiwazaki City is located in the southwestern part of Niigata Prefecture along the Sea of Japan. Its 42-kilometer gently curving coastline offers views of crystal-clear waters. The area is dotted with 15 attractive beaches, drawing many visitors from both within Niigata Prefecture and beyond, making the beaches lively every summer.

One of the most prominent summer events in Kashiwazaki is the Gion Kashiwazaki Festival. The city is home to Yasaka Shrine, which shares its name and traditions with Kyoto's Yasaka Shrine. Historically, this shrine has hosted summer festivals aimed at warding off epidemics. Since 1950, the summer festival has merged with local shopping district events to form the Gion Kashiwazaki Festival, which continues to this day. Typically held over three days from July 24 to 26, the festival's highlight is the grand Seaside Fireworks display. This amazing event makes full use of Kashiwazaki's extensive coastline, offering a dynamic show. The fireworks are launched over a stretch of 1.5 kilometers, with approximately 16,000 fireworks illuminating the sea and sky. The display is dominated by fireworks larger than 5-inch shells¹, featuring a spectacular sequence that includes fireworks launched diagonally towards the sea and those striking the ocean surface, in addition to those

launched into the sky. This powerful combination of continuous launches makes for a breathtaking spectacle. In 2023, the festival attracted a bustling crowd of approximately 170,000 people.

KOYAMA Yoko from the Kashiwazaki City Commercial Tourism Division shares her thoughts on the fireworks festival: "It's an impressive spectacle set against the sea, on a grand scale with breathtaking intensity. Particularly striking are moments such as the two consecutive rounds of 100 synchronized fireworks and the amazing launch of 300 large fireworks in rapid succession against the backdrop



Large fireworks are launched against the backdrop of the Sea of Japan at twilight.

of the Sea of Japan at twilight, overwhelming in their sheer volume of sound and light. A standout feature includes fireworks unfolding on the sea's surface, a unique spectacle made possible by its expansive setting."

She continues, "Kashiwazaki is conveniently located about two and a half hours from Tokyo by taking the Shinkansen north and then transferring to local trains. We welcome visitors from overseas to come and visit us and enjoy the charm of the fireworks festival, a source of pride among local residents." **■**

1. The size of fireworks is expressed in gauge numbers. A 5-inch shell has an approximate diameter of 15 cm, reaches a height of about 190 meters upon launch, and has an average burst radius of about 85 meters when it explodes.



A scene from the fireworks festival, showing different types of fireworks being launched simultaneously.

Photo: Kashiwazaki City



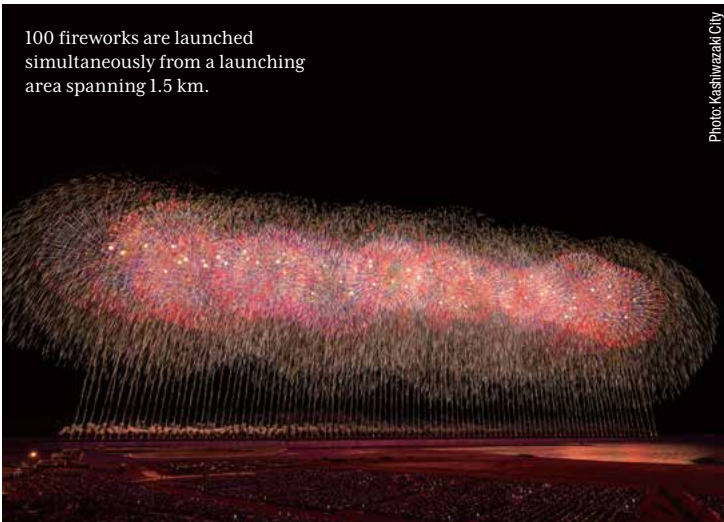
In the opening of the fireworks festival, continuous launches of fireworks decorate the twilight sky.

Photo: Kashiwazaki City



The fireworks display is a vibrant mix of sound and light, showcasing a range of fireworks from small to large.

Photo: Kashiwazaki City



100 fireworks are launched simultaneously from a launching area spanning 1.5 km.

Photo: Kashiwazaki City



The grand finale of the festival, where large fireworks known as 'shakudama' are launched in a series of 300 bursts, spanning approximately 6 minutes.

Photo: Kashiwazaki City