

GUNMA PREFECTURE



Prefecture's Flag

Main City: Maebashi

Population: 1,985,000 people ranking 19/47 prefecture (2013) [1]

Area: 6,363 km² [2]

Latest update: August 2013



Geographical / Landscape description

Gunma Prefecture is located in the middle of Honshu, around 100km from the capital, Tokyo.

One of only eight landlocked prefectures in Japan, Gunma is the north western-most prefecture of the Kanto plain. Except for the central and southeast areas, where most of the population is concentrated, it is mostly mountainous. [2]

Climate

Because of its inland location there is a significant temperature difference between summer and winter. Thanks to the so called "karakaze" a strong, dry wind which occurs in the winter, and to the protection offered by the Echigo mountains, the prefecture records a relatively low level of winter precipitation. [2]

Time zone:

GMT +7 in summer (+8 in winter)

International dialling code: 0081

Recent history, culture

Held in the city of Annaka, the Ansei Tooashi Samurai Marathon is most likely the oldest marathon of Japan. Back in 1855 a local lord organised a race between his troops and the name of the finishers was recorded in the order of arrival. Today the peculiarity of this marathon is that participants are dressed in costumes of any kinds, from wearing samurai armour, running as an anime or video game character, dressed like Santa Claus or even a vegetable there is no limit to participants' imagination to make the event a joyful one. [3]

Economic overview

Gunma Prefecture, home to large corporations such as Fuji Heavy Industries (known for its Subaru cars), Sanyo Electric, and Sanden Corporation, is known as an automotive and electrical equipment industry hub. The total value of its manufactured goods output ranks it 15th in Japan. Small and medium-sized businesses across those industries boast outstanding technologies and skills, which allow them to efficiently manufacture high-quality products to a tight schedule and across various fields. [4]

Economic Indicators

| | Gunma Prefecture | All Japan |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Population (2013) [1] | 1,985,000 | 127,350,000 |
| Unemployment rate (2012) [5] | 3.5% | 4.3% |
| GPD (2010) [6] | 1.5% of Japan's | 495 trillion Yen |

Infrastructure

Road/railways

The Kanetsu, Joshinetsu, Kita Kanto, and Tohoku expressways cross in Gunma, making the prefecture a vital transport conduit to the Tohoku, Hokuriku, Tokai, and Kansai regions.

It takes about an hour to travel to Tokyo, Niigata and Nagano on the Joetsu or Nagano Shinkansen. The prefecture is also connected to downtown Tokyo by conventional railway lines as well as private railroads. [7]

Shipping

A route has been established to flow into the prefecture from the ports of Niigata and Keihin by way of land routes such as expressways. The prefecture has an inland customs facility Oota International Cargo Terminal. It serves as the marine port of entry to the inland prefecture and contributes greatly to reducing the distribution costs of corporations located in Gunma, and to shortening lead times. [7]

Civil Aviation

No local airport but good connections with those of nearby prefectures. [7]

Living Environment

With a low frequency of natural disasters such as earthquakes or typhoons, Gunma Prefecture is a safe place for companies to relocate. As a major earthquake is predicted to hit the Tokai Region and Tokyo Metropolitan Area sometime in the future, many companies select Gunma as a reliable area to establish support or auxiliary centres in case of natural disaster or calamity. [8]

Major types of economic activities

Agriculture, natural resources

Agriculture in Gunma Prefecture has continued to prosper due to the area's close proximity to the huge consumer market of the Tokyo Metropolitan area. Gunma has the highest production output of Cabbage which is cultivated under its cooler climate in the prefecture's mountainous regions, as well as konnyaku root (Devil's Tongue) and cucumber. The production volume of shiitake mushrooms, spinach, eggplants, lettuce, wheat, and Japanese apricots is ranked at one of the highest levels in Japan. Additionally, swine husbandry and the breeding of cattle for dairy and beef products are also carried out at substantial levels. [9]

Manufacturing

In 2011, the manufacturing industry's shipment value was principally composed of transport machinery (31.6%), food and related products (8.3%) and chemicals (6.9%).

Most businesses are concentrated around Takasaki city where the bullet train station is located and Maebashi city, the prefectural capital. [9][10]

R&D, Innovation, Scientific research

The Industrial Technology Centres are core institutions with regards to developing technology and supporting small-and-medium-sized business. The Centres carry out research and development regarding practical application and commercialisation of technology, as well as various types of analysis, measurement and evaluation related to manufacturing. Gunma Industrial Technology Center and Tomo Industrial Technology Center provide comprehensive support for small-and-medium-sized businesses in the region. The centres' three main principles are to provide: technological support, research & development and information collection & dissemination. [11]

Opportunities for EU Investors / Exporters / Importers

Promising sectors for cooperation

Long-established industries: transportation machinery, machinery, foodstuffs, electric equipment, agriculture. [3] [7]

Financial/logistic support

- *Business attraction subsidy (through the property tax) to factories, examination research facilities, new building construction of existing enterprises, and/or upgrading businesses
- *Low-interest financing systems by government-affiliated financial institutions
- *Long-term business site promotion funds with a fixed interest rate per annum
- *The "One Company, One Technology" policy, recognising private enterprises which specialize in a particular kind of technique and helping them to further develop it and continue to improve it
- *The "Business Partner System" through which a guidance, advice and on the field monitoring are offered by a particular prefectural employee whenever necessary
- *Several industrial technology centres supporting small and medium-sized businesses, established in Gunma, on technology and R&D issues
- *Special further education and training programs for employees developed according to local business needs

More information: <http://www.pref.gunma.jp/foreign/g1110022.html>

Setting up a business in Gunma

Industrial Development Promotion Office, Industrial Policy Division, Department of Industry and Economy
1-1-1 Otemachi, Maebashi-city, Gunma Prefecture 371-8570
TEL: +81(0)27-226-3326 FAX: +81(0)27-223-5470
E-mail : sangyo@pref.gunma.lg.jp

Other contacts:

Gunma prefecture

http://www.pref.gunma.jp/foreign/foreign_English.html

Gunma Industrial Technology Center

<http://www.tec-lab.pref.gunma.jp/>

Gunma Association of Tourism, Local Products & International Exchange International Relations

<http://www.gtia.jp/kokusai/english/>

Sources and footnotes

- [1] <http://www.stat.go.jp/data/jinsui/2.htm>
- [2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gunma_Prefecture
- [3] http://www.city.annaka.gunma.jp/kanko_gyouji/tooashi/tooashi.html
- [4] <http://www.JETRO.go.jp/en/invest/region/gunma/>
- [5] <http://www.stat.go.jp/data/roudou/pref/index.htm>
- [6] http://www.esri.cao.go.jp/jp/sna/sonota/kenmin/kenmin_top.html
- [7] <http://www.jetro.go.jp/en/invest/region/gunma/infra.html>
- [8] <http://www.pref.gunma.jp/foreign/g1110024.html>
- [9] <http://www.gunma-kokusai.jp/english/gunma-english/location-and-topography/>
- [10] <http://www.stat.go.jp/data/e-census/2012/sokuho/gaiyo.htm>
- [11] <http://www.pref.gunma.jp/foreign/g1110025.html>

Lake Ono and Akagi shrine in Mount Akagi



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