

## KEHI JINGU ANNUAL FESTIVAL

### Kehi's Long Festival (Keisan Matsuri)

Held every year at Kehi Jingu Shrine, this long-running festival begins with the Eve Festival on September 2 and continues through a series of ceremonies until the Monthly Festival on September 15. Today, citizens take part in the parades and traditional folk dances are also held during this period, and the celebration is widely known as the Tsuruga Festival.

### Yoimiya-sai Festival – Sep 2

The eve ceremony where the Yoiyama float is paraded from the former Miedo-mae area (now Kaguracho) to the Great Torii Gate, accompanied by festival music and children present charming traditional dances.

### Shinko-sai Festival – Sep 3

The day before the Grand Festival, a sacred procession takes place, with the Gohōren (deity's palanquin) led by Sarutahiko and accompanied by warriors, child attendants, and horsemen as it moves through the city.

### Mikoshi Procession – Sep 3

The divine spirit is transferred from the main shrine of Kehi Jingu to a mikoshi (portable shrine) and then purified. Sixteen mikoshi of various sizes from different neighborhoods gather at the Great Torii and then parade through the town in a lively procession.

### Reitai-sai Grand Festival – Sep 4

The most important annual ceremony of Kehi Jingu Shrine, commemorating the enshrinement of Emperor Chūai and Empress Jingū in 702. On this day the town comes alive with a spectacular parade of Tsuruga's yama (festival floats). The elaborately decorated yama are purified at the Great Torii gate and then pulled through the streets by the townspeople, adding excitement to the festival in this truly vibrant procession.

The Tsuruga Mikoshi Association is currently recruiting participants to carry the mikoshi. Scan the QR code to apply.



Sustainable Tsuruga offers exclusive Tsuruga Festival Experience Tours. These one-of-a-kind programs allow you to become part of the festival, including carrying a mikoshi, joining the yama float parade, and enjoying a special festival-themed dinner.

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# TSURUGA MATSURI MIKOSHI

## KEHI JINGU ANNUAL FESTIVAL



## KEHI JINGU SHRINE

Guardian Shrine  
of the Hokuriku  
Road Ichinomiya  
of Echizen  
Province

## YOIMIYA-SAI FESTIVAL

September 2

## SHINKŌ-SAI FESTIVAL

GOHŌREN  
PROCESSION

September 3

## MIKOSHI PROCESSION

September 3

## REITAI-SAI GRAND FESTIVAL

September 3

## KEHI JINGU ANNUAL FESTIVAL

### Yama Floats and Mikoshi Processions

The annual festival of Kehi Jingu Shrine traditionally took place according to the lunar calendar, with the **Yoimiya-sai** on the 2nd day of the 8th month, the **Shinkō-sai** on the 3rd, and the **Reitai-sai** on the 4th. When Japan shifted to the solar calendar in 1872, the dates were adjusted several times, and the festival is now held from September 2 to 4, with the **Mikoshi** Procession taking place on September 3.

In the early Meiji period, small yama floats were paraded on September 3, and large floats on September 4. After the major reforms of the Meiji Restoration, the large-float parade on the 4th was abolished in 1873, and the small-float parade was moved to the 4th.

With no parade left on the 3rd, the festival lost much of its liveliness on that day. To revive the celebration, a proposal was made to hold a mikoshi procession. In 1875, the procession of the **Gohōren** (the shrine's sacred palanquin) began, forming the basis of today's **Gohōren Junkō**.

Inspired by Kyoto's Gion Festival, the procession features banners, weapons, streamers, sacred sakaki branches, armored attendants, and priests on horseback. The costs were covered by the townspeople responsible for the yama.



Other neighborhoods began to commission new mikoshi and join the parade, and the number of participating towns increased each year. Towns involved in the festival became known as "yama towns," and "mikoshi towns," and they took steps to revive the festival traditions. The "mikoshi towns" of that era consisted of the eight districts of Matsuei, Kawasaki, Ōshima, Akebono, Daikoku, Tsunai, Kita-tsunai, and Minami-tsunai, contributing greatly to the festival's vibrancy.

On July 12, 1945, the Tsuruga air raid destroyed most of the storage houses holding the yama floats and mikoshi. Although the festival was suspended for several years, the strong desire of local residents to revive the traditions gradually restored the festival to its former state. Today, the festival—now widely known as the **Tsuruga Festival**—includes citizen parades and folk dances. The mikoshi procession is carried by more than **500 participants**, including local junior high and high school students and volunteers from across Japan.



**NPO**  
**Tsuruga Mikoshi**  
**Association**

**Chairman:** Yoshikazu Takenaka **Established:** December 8, 2000 **Members:** 198 (as of November 2025)  
The association works to preserve traditional festival practices such as mikoshi processions, promote regional culture, revitalize the community, and foster intergenerational learning and youth development. To continue these traditions, the association recruit participants from across Japan to help carry the mikoshi for the **September 3 Mikoshi Procession** during the Kehi Shrine Festival.

