

Tambasayama's Major Initiatives as a UNESCO Creative City

Tamba Ware

Along with Seto, Tokoname, Shigaraki, Echizen, and Bizen, Tamba ware stands as one of Japan's Six Ancient Kilns, boasting a rich history spanning 850 years. These kilns represent enduring traditions that have persisted from medieval times to the present day. In recognition of their cultural significance, they were designated as a "Japan Heritage" by the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan in 2017, with Tamba ware rightfully included among them.



Tamba Pottery Festival—40,000 Visitors

The Tamba Pottery Festival has been a cherished annual craft event in Tambasayama City since 1978. In 2021 and 2023, the “Tamba Ware Village Tour in Autumn” offered visitors a month-long tour of kilns and galleries throughout the month of October, garnering enthusiastic responses from many participants.

These events were held over two days at one designated location until 2019. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic,* the event periods were extended to two to three weeks starting in 2021. By prolonging the event periods to stagger tourist visits and prevent infection, about 50 pottery studios were made accessible to the public. This change also naturally helped achieve the goal of facilitating deeper interaction between tourists and craftsmen. Additionally, tourists had the opportunity to take more time to select their favorite works, leading to an overall improvement in tourist satisfaction.



* In 2020, the event was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tambasasayama Townscape

The castle town of Sasayama and the post town of Fukuzumi have earned recognition from the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan as one of the “Preservation Districts for Groups of Historic Buildings.” This region is one of ten locations across the nation designated as model landscape renovation projects. A significant milestone was achieved in 2021 with the completion of removing utility poles from Ote-dori and Kawaramachidori, two streets important to the townscape. Further enhancements included burying electrical wires underground, beautifying pavements, and renovating streetlights, all of which were thoughtfully designed to enhance the overall aesthetic of the district. As a result, many tourists visit the city every day.



Tambasasayama Historic Street Art Festival—18,000 Visitors

The Tambasasayama Historic Street Art Festival is a biennale led by locals, held around Kawaramachi district, one of the “Preservation Districts for Groups of Historic Buildings.” The festival’s central theme centers on the concept of turning traditional *machiya* townhouses into art museums. Approximately 30 *machiya* have been creatively transformed into galleries, showcasing a blend of crafts and contemporary art. This event has not only

fostered a sense of civic pride but also facilitated cultural exchange and contributed to the promotion of tourism in the area. The festival venue includes cafes and hotels situated within renovated *machiya* and ordinary residences. The event attracted 46 exhibitors including artists, craftspeople, and architects from both within and outside the city.



Tambasayama Craft Village

Tambasayama City has seen an increase in the number of craft artists immigrating to the city in recent years. The “Tambasayama Craft Village” was established as a place for these artists to interact. In addition, the Craft Market and Open Factory Event was held in 2021, while Workshop-style Events were held in 2022 and 2023. Immigrants have established a new craft culture, and the town is being developed into a creative rural village known for its crafts and folk arts.

Many major initiatives were implemented through inter-city and international cooperation to achieve the objectives of the UCCN. Tambasayama City participated in some partnerships and exchange programs as follows:

- International Capacity Enhancement Workshop for Artisans and Craftsmen with UNESCO Creative Cities Network (Ceramics), Chang Mai, 2022
- 2023 Jinju Traditional Crafts Biennale



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