



Fumoto - Defense Network of Satsuma Samurai Districts in the Edo Period MAP

Access to each Fumoto area

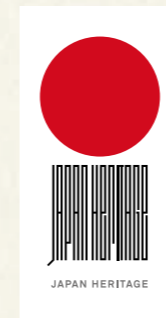
* For detailed information please check the website for each Fumoto

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>From JR Kagoshima Chuo Station
⇒ Via Japan National Route 10,
it takes about 10 minutes by car</p> | <p>From JR Sendai Station
⇒ Via Prefectural Road 42,
it takes about 25 minutes by car</p> | <p>From JR Kuchikino Station
⇒ Via Prefectural Road 39,
it takes about 5 minutes by car</p> |
| <p>From JR Kiire Station
⇒ 5 minutes by car to
Minamikata Shrine</p> | <p>From Sendai Port by high speed boat
⇒ Get off at the Sato Port,
Kamikoshikijima and walk about
for 10 minutes</p> | <p>From Aira IC
⇒ Prefectural road 57
⇒ Via Prefectural Road 25,
it takes about 12 minutes by car</p> |
| <p>From Minamiyushu City Hall
⇒ Via Prefectural Road 232,
about 3 minutes walk</p> | <p>From Sendai Port by high speed boat
⇒ Get off at the Nagahama Port,
Shimokoshikijima and drive about
for 20 minutes</p> | <p>From Tarumizu port by Tarumizu ferry
⇒ Via Japan National Route 220,
it takes about 10 minutes by car</p> |
| <p>From Minamisatsuma City Hall
⇒ Via Japan National Route 270,
about 5 minutes walk</p> | <p>From JR Izumi Station
⇒ Via Prefectural Road 373,
it takes about 6 minutes by car</p> | <p>From Shibushi Port
⇒ Via Prefectural Road 499,
it takes about 10 minutes by car</p> |

【Contact】

Japan Heritage 'Defense Network of Satsuma Samurai Districts in the Edo Period' Promotion Council
(Cultural Assets Division Kagoshima Prefectural Board of Education)

10-1, Kamoike-Shinmachi, Kagoshima City TEL.+81-99-286-5357

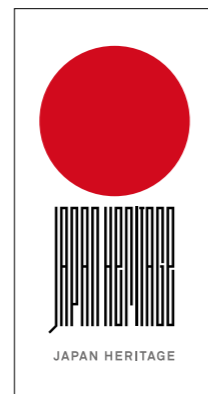


JAPAN HERITAGE



Defense Network of Satsuma Samurai Districts in the Edo Period





JAPAN HERITAGE

Japan's tangible and intangible cultural properties have been preserved through narratives based on unique regional histories and traditions.

By recognizing these stories as Japan Heritage, the Agency for Cultural Affairs plans to promote these historical legacies and to provide comprehensive support so that revitalize the local areas.

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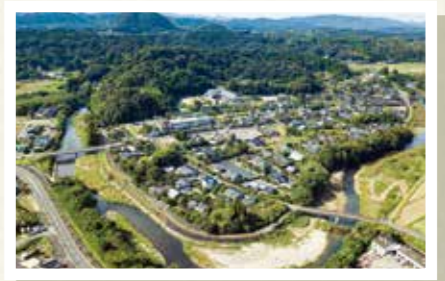
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Defense Network of Satsuma Samurai Districts in the Edo Period

During the Edo period (1603 - 1867), the Satsuma Domain covered an area that corresponds to present day Kagoshima Prefecture and parts of neighboring Miyazaki Prefecture.

Headquartered in Kagoshima Castle, the Satsuma Domain was divided into 120 administrative districts. The center of each district was called Fumoto and served as a military outpost to defend the domain from enemies. This system was unique to the Satsuma domain.



The ideal strategic site – a mountain fortress surrounded by rivers (Iriki Fumoto)



Stone walls, defensive hedgerows, and imposing gates – the perfectly planned samurai town (Izumi Fumoto)

Japan Heritag
Fumoto - Defense Network of
Satsuma Samurai Districts in the Edo Period
Discover Fumoto - The Strategic
Towns Lived in by the Samurai of Satsuma

The Background Behind Satsuma's Unique Defense Network

For the 400 years prior to the Edo period, the provinces of Satsuma and Osumi were under the control of the Shimadzu clan. Powerful landholders in both provinces rebelled against Shimadzu rule and a network of close to 1,000 mountain fortresses was constructed to maintain order. Towards the end of the 16th century the Shimadzu clan extended their territory to include the province of Hyuga, now part of Miyazaki Prefecture.



defensive network of 120 fortresses Reimeikan Museum Collection

The Shimadzu clan felt the need to protect their domain from the Shogunate, having opposed them at Sekigahara, and along with a central castle in Kagoshima created a defensive network of 120 fortresses across their domain. Samurai residences were built at the foot of these mountain fortresses in military towns called Fumoto, creating a highly effective defense network for the Satsuma domain.



Model of Mountain Fortress Exhibited at Reimeikan Museum



Construction of Fumoto

Fumoto were constructed at strategic locations close to the medieval forts employed by the Shimadzu clan and had good access to routes across land and sea. The towns were laid out with the manor lord's residence in the middle, and samurai houses forming a perimeter. The samurai houses had defensive features such as stone walls, tall hedges, and sometimes moats. Each house also had an entrance gate fitting of the owner's samurai status. The towns were located close to canals or rivers for ease of access.



In 1600 powerful lords from across Japan divided into Eastern and Western factions, eventually culminating in the largest conflict in samurai history, the Battle of Sekigahara. The Eastern side was victorious, and the Tokugawa Shogunate came to rule over all of Japan. Despite being on the losing side, the Shimadzu clan were permitted to keep the provinces of Satsuma, Osumi, and Hyuga, and these three regions were compounded into the Satsuma domain. To exert control over the powerful lords across Japan, the Tokugawa Shogunate decreed that all mountain fortresses should be demolished, and each domain was only allowed to have one central castle.



Typical Construction of Fumoto

The Life of Satsuma Samurai

The samurai living at Fumoto would spend their days working on regional administration and practicing the martial arts. The Satsuma domain had a much larger ratio of warriors than other domains (26% compared to the national average of 7%) and regional samurai needed to farm within the grounds of their residences to sustain themselves.

Some samurai also supplemented their income by making washi paper, clay dolls, or blacksmithing, and their workmanship has left a direct influence on the traditional arts and crafts remaining in Kagoshima today.

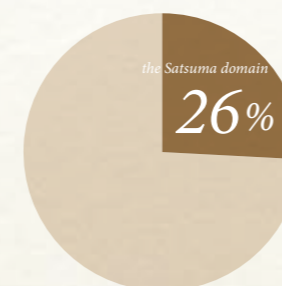
After a hard day of practicing martial arts and working the land, the samurai would relax in the evening and enjoy deep-fried fish cakes called Satsuma-age and local distilled spirit shochu. Both are still a local delicacy and are much loved by the people of Kagoshima today.



Unglazed Clay Dolls



Shochu



Ratio of Samurai in Satsuma



Swordsmanship Training



Satsuma-age

Kagoshima Castle



Main Gate of Kagoshima Castle



Moat and Stone Walls

P Free for Reimeikan Museum Visitors

♿ Reimeikan Museum Interior

Keystone of the Satsuma Defense Network

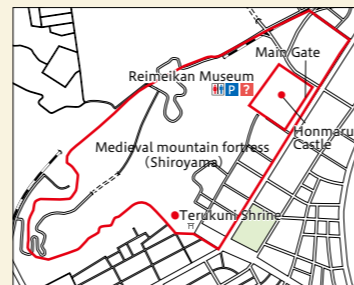
Kagoshima Castle was the keystone in Satsuma's defense network and the residence of the lords of the Shimadzu clan. The main gate of the castle was one of the largest in Japan and the castle's defining feature. A reconstruction of the gate was completed in 2020. The impressive stone walls and moat that surrounded the castle still exist, and the Reimeikan Museum is located on the site of the lord's residence.

This is the recommended starting point for exploring this Japan Heritage.

Reimeikan Museum

📍 7-2 Shiroyama-cho, Kagoshima City
☎ 099-222-5100

? Reimeikan Museum



Former Kiire Fumoto



Minamikata Shrine



Kobegabuchi Waterfall

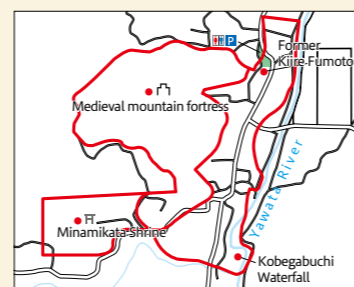
Discover the Original Landscape of Fumoto

In 1650, just after the start of the Edo period, the Fumoto at Kiire was relocated under the orders of the Shimadzu clan. Over the next 250 years until the end of the Edo period the layout of the region slowly changed, but it is still possible to see remains of the original setting from 1650. Ancient stone walls and waterways hem the narrow streets that curve around the base of medieval mountain forts and the rural landscape makes it easy to imagine life here over 400 years ago.

Kiire Community Center

📍 7000 Kiire-cho, Kagoshima City
☎ 099-345-3751

? Kiire Community Center



P Fureai Square (Free)

♿ Fureai Square

Izumi Fumoto



Former Takezoe Family House



Ox carriage for tourists

P Izumi Fumoto History Museum (Free)

♿ Izumi Fumoto History Museum Interior

Stronghold Defending the Borders of Satsuma

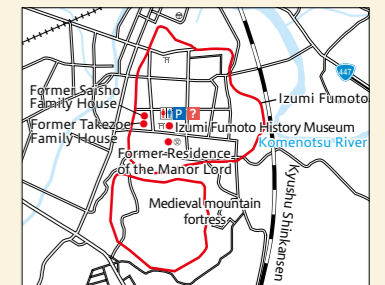
The Izumi Fumoto was a strategically important defensive position located at the north-western border of the Satsuma domain. The Fumoto is located on a flattened hilltop located close to the site of a medieval mountain fort, with latticed streets dug into the ground. The result is that the samurai residences here are higher than street level and occupy the highest location in the surrounding area.

One section of the samurai houses in this region are designated as a National Important Cultural Heritage Site.

Izumi Fumoto History Museum

📍 10-39 Fumoto-cho, Izumi City
☎ 0996-68-1390

? Izumi Fumoto History Museum



Iriki Fumoto



Former Masuda Family House



Samurai Gate of Iriki-in family

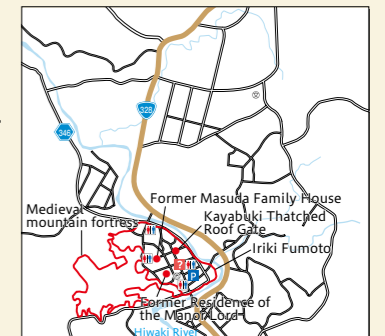
Samurai Houses Encircled by Rivers and Mountain Fort

Iriki Fumoto is an easily defensible town backed by a medieval mountain fort and surrounded by a meandering river. The winding streets of the medieval fortification and the lattice like layout of later Fumoto and samurai houses allow visitors to enjoy two time periods. Iriki Fumoto is also home to the only remaining thatched gate to a samurai residence in Kagoshima Prefecture. One section of the samurai houses in this region are designated as a National Important Cultural Heritage Site.

Iriki Fumoto Tourist Information Center

📍 35-2 Uranomoyo Iriki-cho, Satsumasendai City
☎ 0996-44-5200

? Iriki Fumoto Tourist Information Center



P Fumoto Chuo Square Iriki Branch Office (Free)

♿ Iriki Branch Office Former Masuda Family House Iriki Town Museum Iriki Fumoto Tourist Information Center

Sato Fumoto



Ishiganto (Stone tablet to ward off evil)



Site of Kame Castle

Strategic Port and Stronghold of Northern Koshikijima

The Satsuma domain was surrounded on three sides by the sea, so establishing Fumoto as naval defenses was highly important. Sato Fumoto is in the northern part of Koshikijima, and island off the west coast of mainland Kagoshima. During the Edo period Sato Fumoto was used as a lookout for Chinese and Dutch ships heading for Nagasaki to trade. The large round stones from the nearby beach used to create the walls around the town are particularly noteworthy. One section of the samurai houses can be seen from the observation deck located on top of the hill where the medieval mountain fort once stood.

Kami Koshikijima Tourist Information Center

1619-13 Sato Sato-cho,
Satumasendai City
09969-6-3930



- Sato Port Carpark
- Sato Branch Office Carpark (Free)
- Sato Port Sato Branch Office
- Kami Koshikijima Tourist Information Center (Sato Port Terminal)

Kushikino Fumoto



Former Magistrates Office



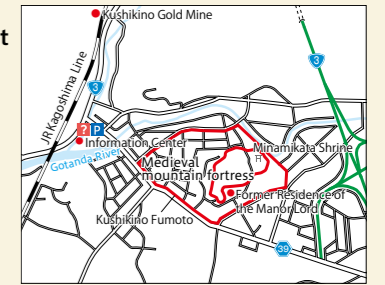
Minamikata Shrine

Traces of Samurai Life from the Edo Period

Kushikino Fumoto was located between Kagoshima castle and the northern border town of Izumi. Few of the original samurai residences still exist due to construction in recent years, but traces of the Edo period remain around the medieval mountain fort. The shrine located on the site of the mountain fort and the few remaining samurai houses nearby are worth a visit. Kushikino is still famous for shochu and Satsuma-age, and it is possible to explore the food culture of the samurai nearby.

Ichikikushikino City Tourist Information Center

3018 Kanmyo
Ichikikushikino City
0996-32-5256



- Information Center (Free)
- Information Center
- Information Center

Teuchi Fumoto



Former Tsukuchi Guardhouse



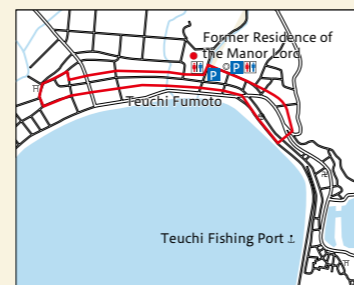
Shimo Koshiki Town Museum

Strategic Port and Stronghold of Southern Koshikijima

Teuchi Fumoto is located on along the edge of a curved bay in the southern part of Koshikijima island. During the Edo period the Satsuma domain had 24 lookout stations for approaching foreign ships, and a modern recreation of a lookout tower rises above the town today. Round stones collected from the nearby beach form the stone walls demarcating each house, and hedges of exotic tropical plants and flowers adorning them give the town a uniquely southern Japanese charm.

Shimo Koshiki Tourist Information Center

913-4 Nagahama Shimo Koshiki-cho,
Satumasendai City
09969-5-1800



- Shimo Koshiki Branch Office Carpark (Free)
- Shimo Koshiki Branch Office Shimo Koshiki Town Museum
- Shimo Koshiki Tourist Information Office (Nagahama Port Terminal)

Kamou Fumoto



Satsuma Samurai District



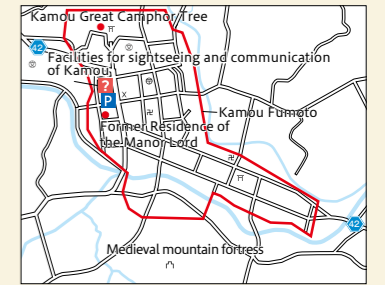
Kamou Great Camphor Tree

Samurai Gates and the Largest Camphor Tree in Japan

Kamou Fumoto is home to Japan's largest camphor tree, an age-old symbol of protection for the samurai of the town, and now designated as a National Special Natural Monument. The town itself is also wonderfully preserved and parts feature stone slab paving with cut-stone walls and hedges creating a truly historic atmosphere. Gates to the samurai residences remain around town expressing the status of the samurai family that lived there through their design.

Facilities for sightseeing and communication of Kamou

2308-1 Kamigyutoku
Kamou-cho, Aira City
0995-52-0748



- Free
- Facilities for sightseeing and communication of Kamou
- Facilities for sightseeing and communication of Kamou

Chiran Fumoto



Mori Shigemitsu Garden



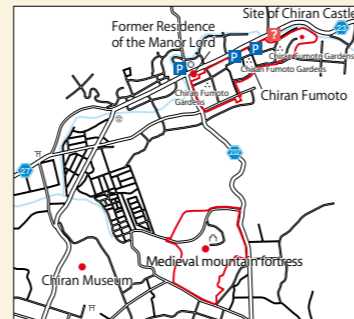
Hirayama Katsumi Garden

Elegant Residences Known as Satsuma's "Little Kyoto"

Chiran Fumoto features samurai residences fanning out on both sides of a historic street. Ancient stone walls, manicured hedges, and impressive gates line both sides of the street in a perfect example of how samurai residences of the Satsuma domain once were. Carefully constructed gardens borrowing the scenery of distant mountains accompany each of the houses. Chiran Fumoto was the first area of samurai houses in Kagoshima to be designated as a National Cultural Heritage site, and it is highly recommended as the first stop after visiting the site of Kagoshima Castle.

Chiran Samurai Residences' Office

13731-1 Kori Chiran-cho, Minamikyushu City
0993-58-7878



- Chiran City Carpark
- Chiran City Carpark Interior
- Chiran Samurai Residences' Office

Tarumizu Fumoto



Former Residence of the Manor Lord



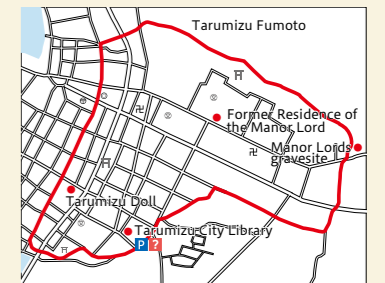
Tarumizu Doll

Home of Powerful Retainers Close to the Shimadzu Clan

There were many powerful factions within the Satsuma domain, but Tarumizu Fumoto was a large town where the highest status samurai families outside of the castle town of Kagoshima lived. The area where the samurai residences once stood has been developed into a modern town, but the walls made of red volcanic rock show how large this settlement once was. The nearby manor lord's gravesite is now a National Cultural Heritage Site.

Tarumizu City Library

38 Minamimatsubara-cho, Tarumizu City
0994-32-7111



- Tarumizu City Library (Free)
- Tarumizu City Library
- Tarumizu City Library

Kaseda Fumoto



Masuyama Waterway



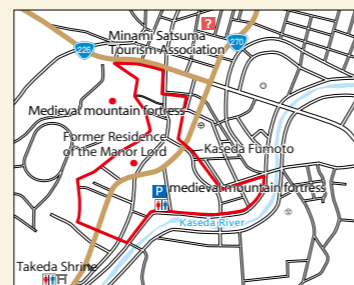
Chigo Odori (regional folk dance)

Historic Waterways Crossed by Stone Bridges

Kaseda Fumoto is located along a narrow winding road between two medieval mountain forts, making attack by large numbers of enemies impossible. Cut stone walls with quickset hedges on top mark the edge of each residence. Wide waterways running parallel to the walls are crossed intermittently by stone bridges leading to the impressive gates of each house, creating a uniquely beautiful historic atmosphere. The samurai houses in this region are designated as a National Cultural Heritage Site.

Minami Satsuma Tourism Association

34-2 Honmachi Kaseda, Minamisatsuma City
0993-53-3751



- Kaseda Community Center (Free)
- Amagajo Park Takeda Shrine
- Minami Satsuma Tourism Association

Shibushi Fumoto



Daijiji Temple



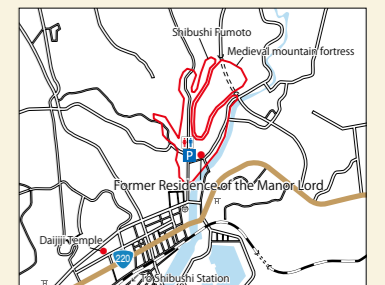
Spring Water

Medieval Town Blessed with Abundant Springs

Shibushi Fumoto was a strategically important area located on the north eastern border of the Satsuma domain. The samurai residences in Shibushi are located along the curve of a valley between medieval mountain fortresses, making the layout quite different to other Fumoto in Kagoshima. Underground springs located where each of the fortresses were located provide an abundance of fresh water to the town, and the gates and gardens hewn from natural bedrock give the town a uniquely historical feeling.

Shibushi City Tourist Information Center (JR Shibushi Station)

28-11 2 Shibushi, Shibushi-cho, Shibushi City
099-472-2224



- Shibushi Fumoto (Free)
- Shibushi Fumoto
- Information Center