

Chiba Update

Chiba MICE Newsletter



Chiba Japan
Convenient Conventions

No.008

Special Feature

The Katori Jingū Grand
Festival and Shinkōsai

Ayame Park, Katori

SPECIAL FEATURE

Spring has arrived—a season of gentle warmth, where trees awaken in fresh green and flowers burst into bloom. Festivals, shaped by generations of tradition, offer a window into the heart of a culture; to experience them is to better understand the people who keep them alive. For this edition, let us introduce the Katori Jingu Grand Festival and Shinkosai, held April 15-16, 2026.

The Katori Jingū Grand Festival and Shinkōsai

At Katori Jingu—one of Japan’s most venerated ancient sanctuaries—the Shikinen Grand Festival and Shinkōsai unfold only once every twelve years. This rare and solemn occasion offers a profound chance to witness and honor the sacred presence of Futsunushi no Ōkami, the revered kami enshrined within. It embodies renewal: a moment to purify past impurities and to pray for peace, protection, and prosperity in the years ahead.

The twelve-year cycle corresponds to the completion of the traditional zodiac, marking a meaningful turning point in time. Unlike annual festivals, this grand rite is something communities anticipate for years—carefully preparing and preserving traditions across generations.

Grand Procession (Shinkō Gyōretsu)

At the heart of the festival is a magnificent procession of around 3,000 participants. Dressed in armor and Heian-era court attire, they recreate an ancient imperial parade as they travel from the shrine toward Sawara. This procession symbolizes the divine journey of the deity—like stepping into a living historical scroll.

Mikoshi (Sacred Palanquin) Transfer

The spirit of the deity is ceremonially transferred into a mikoshi (portable shrine), which is then carried during the procession. This represents the kami leaving the shrine to bless the surrounding land and people.



River Procession on the Tone River

One of the most striking scenes: the procession continues onto the water. Participants board an ornate ceremonial boat, and the sacred journey proceeds along the Tone River. This waterborne ritual is rare and visually spectacular, blending nature with sacred tradition.

Omukae-sai (Welcoming Ceremony)

Midway, a special ritual takes place on the river where representatives from Kashima Jingu Shrine meet the procession. This symbolic “meeting” reflects ancient ties between the two shrines and their deities.

Throughout the festival, vibrant traditional performances bring both celebration and deeper ritual meaning, from spirited lion dances to the distinctive sounds of the band Oranda Gakutai, alongside disciplined martial arts demonstrations like Katori Shinto-ryu. As the festivities draw to a close on the second day, the entire procession returns through the town to Katori Jingu Shrine, completing the sacred journey in a graceful and symbolic homecoming.



Katori Jingū— An Ancient Shrine Where History and Nature Converge

Located in Katori City, Chiba Prefecture, Katori Jingu is the head shrine of over 400 Katori shrines across Japan and one of the few shrines honored with the prestigious title of “Jingū.” According to tradition, it was founded in the age of Japanese mythology and has long been revered by the imperial court and samurai as a central spiritual site in eastern Japan.



Other Major Festivals in Katori City

- Sawara Grand Festival. A UNESCO-listed event with massive, ornate floats featuring gigantic dolls, held in July and October.
- Suigo Sawara Iris Festival. Occurs from late May to late June at Suigo Sawara Ayame Park, showcasing 1.5 million irises.
- Sawara Hina Doll Tour & Hinabune Spring Festival. Spring events featuring doll displays and decorated boats on the Ono River.

|| Nearby Destination

OLD TOWN, SAWARA

[Sawara](#) is a town where history, nature, culture, and cuisine can all be enjoyed together—especially when combined with a visit to Katori Jingu Shrine and nearby attractions. Its charm lies in strolling through Edo-style streets while experiencing centuries-old waterway traditions and vibrant festivals.

Highlights of Sawara

Charming Edo-period townscape

Sawara is often called “Little Edo” for its well-preserved districts of traditional townhouses and merchant homes from the Edo period.

Historic Preservation District

Rows of old wooden buildings line the streets, where visitors can stroll while admiring storehouses and lattice-front architecture.

Riverside Streets

The area still reflects its past as a hub for merchants and river transport, offering a rich sense of history.

Onogawa River and Waterside Scenery

Sawara flourished through water transport connected to the Tone River system, with the Onogawa River flowing through the town. In Suigo Sawara, visitors can enjoy boat tours along the river and canals, experiencing the waterway culture of the Edo era. In spring, cherry blossoms line the riverbanks, while summer brings refreshing waterside views.

Hands-on experience for groups, and event venues

For reception venues, hands-on experiences, and other related matters, please contact the Chiba Convention Bureau for assistance.

Suggested Itinerary

Sawara & Katori Jingu Shrine – One-Day Sightseeing Itinerary

The Katori Jingu Shrine and Sawara is approximately 30 minutes from Narita Airport.

09:00 – Visit Katori Shrine

Stroll through the grounds and enjoy the stately main hall built in the Edo period, along with the tranquil forest atmosphere.

10:30 – Stroll Through Sawara’s Historic Townscape

About a 15-minute drive from Katori Shrine brings you to the preserved historic district of Sawara. Walk among traditional merchant houses and kura-style warehouses from the Edo period. Enjoy photographing lattice doors and scenic riverside views, and stopping by local souvenir shops and cafés is also recommended.

12:00 – Lunch (Sawara Specialties)

Savor eel dishes and freshwater fish cuisine, or any other international cuisines at a long-established riverside restaurant

13:30 – Ono River Boat Tour

Experience the charm of the “Suigō Sawara” area on a sightseeing boat along the Ono River. The townscape, bridges, and historic canal-side buildings seen from the water evoke the Edo-period water transport culture.

15:00 – Inō Tadataka Former Residence and Museum

Visit the former residence and museum dedicated to Inō Tadataka, an Edo-period surveyor. Learn about the history of mapmaking in Japan and his remarkable life.

16:00 – Traditional Culture Experience & Souvenirs

17:00 – End of Tour



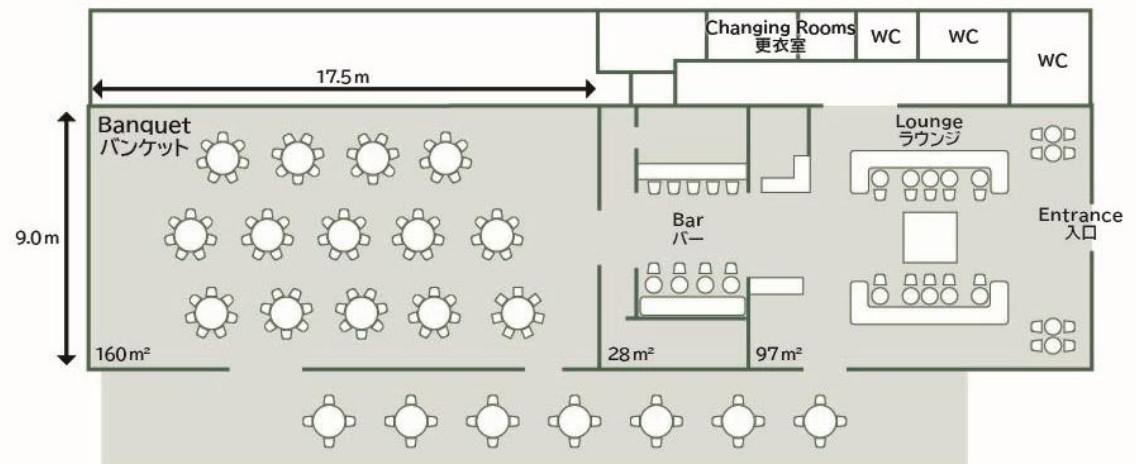
For Corporate Events in Sawara

NIPPONIA KAGURA

Immerse yourself in the beauty of traditional Japanese architecture and its historical context within spaces that shaped Sawara's prosperity—over 200-year-old merchant house. The venue is perfect if you are looking for a tranquil and sophisticated environment. Also, enjoy delicacies made with locally sourced ingredients unique to this area—featuring fermented foods such as sake lees—paired with sake delivered directly from nearby breweries.



Sawara Merchant Town Hotel NIPPONIA KAGURA Building
佐原商家町ホテル NIPPONIA KAGURA 棟



☀ Round Table (For 7 people) / 円卓 (7名用) ⊗ Table (For 4 people) / テーブル (4名用)

Banquet area 160 m² (96 seats with the normal layout) Bar corner 28 m², Lounge 97 m²



New Bid Win

Joint Conference of the International Neuropsychological Society and the Japan Society for Higher Brain Function

Event Name	Joint Conference of the International Neuropsychological Society and the Japan Society for Higher Brain Function
Dates	June 22 (Tuesday) – June 24 (Thursday), 2027 (3 days)
Venue	Makuhari Messe; Hotel New Otani Makuhari (Chiba City, Japan)
Local Host	Japan Society for Higher Brain Function
Expected Attendance	Approximately 1,200 participants (including around 750 international delegates)
Press Release	https://www.ccb.or.jp/mice/e/media/insjointconference.pdf

Case Study

2025 Photonics and Electromagnetics Research Symposium (PIERS 2025 Chiba)

Link	https://www.ccb.or.jp/mice/e/report/piers2025chiba/
JNTO Video	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v1yfS4ysOmk

For any MICE-related inquiries, please email us at request@ccb.or.jp



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