

Tobata Gion Festival



History and highlight of Tobata Gion

The people involved in this festival walk through the town shouldering the giant 10 meter floats with 12 tiers of lanterns. They wear traditional coats (Happi) and headbands (Hachimaki) and to keep their steps in time they shout-out, “Yoitosa! Yoitosa!” The festival is concluded with a spectacular competition.

This festival originated from the Tobata Ward, back in 1802. The village people suffered a wide-spread plague. The people continuously prayed to the Gods for the epidemic to cease. Then one by one, those who were suffering from the plague recovered. The village people believed it was because of the praying, so they built the Yamagasa and celebrated in 1803. Decorations of the Yamagasa dated in 1829 and its curtains tell us its history and tradition.



The Tobata Gion summer festival consisted of 3 Shrine festivities, the Tobihata Hachimangu, the Sugawara Jinja, and the Nakabaru Hachimangu that are held every year for 3 days, including the 4th Saturday of July.

There are 4 giant floats with 12 traditional decorated flags that are carried through the town during the day. In the evening, the decoration style changes, and the float is called the “Pyramid of Light,” because of the 309 paper lanterns that hand in 12 tiers. Each float is 10 meters tall and weighs 2.5 tons, so it needs about 80 float carrier to shoulder it.

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There are 4 giant floats and 4 small floats that gather to compete at a competition called the Kyoenkai. The spectators are fascinated by the magnificence and bravado of the show.

