



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Creative Cities Network

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# Kanazawa

UNESCO City of Crafts and Folk Art

For 420 years, since its construction as a Castle town, Kanazawa has flourished peacefully, avoiding both natural disasters and war time destruction. Over this period of time it has developed notable craftworks based on its unique Samurai culture and lifestyle. However, Kanazawa's artisan spirit encourages continuous innovations not only of traditional crafts but also of new industries creating high-value products in various fields.

## Fast facts

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- There are currently 22 major types of traditional crafts produced in Kanazawa including Kaga-yuzen (kimono), Kanazawa gold leaf and lacquerware.
- The city boasts the highest number per capita in Japan of artists/artisans designated by the Government of Japan as holders of Important Intangible Cultural Property.
- Kanazawa's cultural industries combine traditional craft techniques with contemporary products, such as using the distinctive colors and patterns of Kaga-yuzen on modern dresses, and integrating Kutani porcelain with glasswork.

## Institutions

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- **Kanazawa College of Art**  
This college was established by the City of Kanazawa more than sixty years ago in order to provide special education in crafts. A four-year college of art run by a local municipal government is rare in Japan. The college also makes international contributions to Southeast Asia by offering technical support.



City of Crafts  
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**KANAZAWA**

- **The 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa**

Opened in the center of the city in 2004, it was one of the most important projects of Kanazawa's challenge to foster both new cultural traditions as well as maintaining traditional culture. It boasts 1,500,000 visitors a year, over three times Kanazawa's entire population.

## Events

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- **World Craft Triennial**

The subsequent program to the Kanazawa Craft Award Competition started in 1989. It hosts craftworks from Japan and around the world, with the aim of maintaining traditional craft techniques as well as promoting the development of new artists/artisans.

- **Kanazawa Creative City Conference**

This event has been held since 1997 through a public-private partnership. With previous themes such as "the memory of cities and the creative power of humans" and "City's competitiveness" the conference discusses the suitable model in the future for a creative city.

- **Kanazawa Life & Fashion Week**

This event seeks new products fit for modern lifestyles while based on the cultural aesthetics and techniques of Kanazawa's traditional crafts. It has been held once a year in October since 2006 as a collaboration between the public and private sectors.

## Economic impact

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- In Kanazawa, there are approximately 900 manufacturing companies related to traditional craft industries, which constitutes 20% of the total number of companies within the city. These employ around 3,000 people, which correspond to 6% of the population.

