

Karatsu, Saga, Japan

A feudal castle town on Kyushu's northwestern coast, Karatsu rewards curious cruisers with centuries-old ceramic traditions, a million-pine coastal forest, and some of the freshest squid sashimi in Japan.

 Pier (docked)  Typical call: 8-10 hrs  Currency: Japanese Yen (JPY)  Language: Japanese  Shuttle to center recommended

MY DAY IN PORT

Ship/Date: _____	Arrive: _____	All aboard: _____
Excursion: _____	Notes: _____	

GETTING ASHORE

Docking: Pier — Nishitaku Wharf (West Port) or Tobu Wharf (East Port)

Walk to center: ~3.5 km to Karatsu Station — taxi or free shuttle recommended

Best For: History, ceramics shopping, coastal scenery, seafood

Don't Miss: Karatsu Castle keep, Niji-no-Matsubara pine grove, live squid sashimi

 Getting around:  **Taxi**  ¥1,000–¥2,000

TOP THINGS TO DO

- **Karatsu Castle (Maizuru Castle)** — The 17th-century 'Dancing Crane Castle' sits on a hill above the bay.
- **Niji-no-Matsubara Pine Grove** — One million black pine trees stretching 4.5 km along the arc of Karatsu Bay — planted 400 years ago as a windbreak.
- **Yobuko Morning Market & Live Squid** — Japan's most famous morning market runs daily 7:30 AM–noon in the fishing village of Yobuko, 30 minutes by taxi.
- **Hikiyama Exhibition Hall — Festival Floats** — Karatsu Kunchi (Nov 2–4) is a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage festival.
- **Former Takatori Residence** — The palatial late 19th-century home of coal-mining baron Koreyoshi Takatori blends Japanese and Western architecture with a private indoor Noh...

BEST WALKS

- **Castle Hill to West Beach** ~1.5 km | Easy | 30–45 min — From Karatsu Castle, descend the stone steps (or slope elevator) and stroll west along the coast to Nishi-no-hama Beach for classic views of the castle above the sea.
- **Karatsu Station Ceramics Walk** ~1 km loop | Easy | 45 min — From Karatsu Station, browse Gallery Arpino, then follow the Katamachi and Gofukumachi shopping arcades for pottery boutiques, cafés, and local snacks.

WEATHER · DAYLIGHT · MONEY

 CLIMATE (AVG °F · RAINY DAYS)				 DAYLIGHT &  MONEY	
Mon	High	Low	Rain	Apr 5:50AM–6:50PM · Jun 5:10AM–7:31PM · Aug 5:42AM–7:06PM · Sep 6:03AM–6:26PM · Oct 6:24AM–5:46PM	
Apr	65°	51°	11d	 Currency: Japanese Yen (JPY)	
Jun	78°	66°	15d		
Aug	87°	76°	16d		
Sep	80°	70°	16d		
Oct	71°	60°	9d		

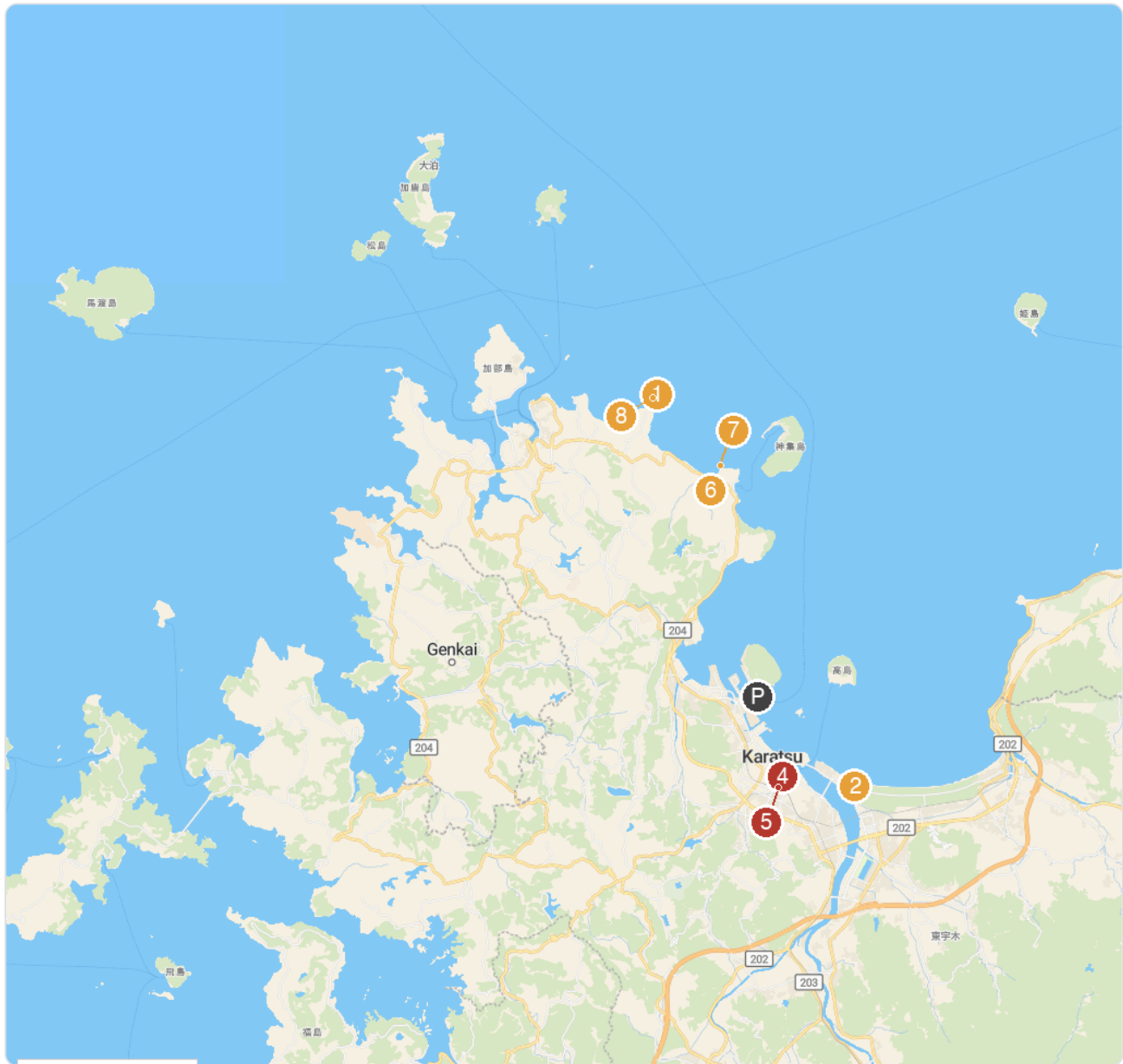
KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Bring yen cash. The Yobuko market, taxis, smaller pottery shops, and temple boxes are cash-only. ATMs at 7-Eleven and Japan Post Bank near Karatsu Station.
- Yobuko closes at noon. If the morning market is a priority, take a taxi straight from the pier — don't sightsee first or you'll miss it.
- Use the free shuttle. The pier is ~3.5 km from the city center along industrial roads. The complimentary shuttle is the easiest option; confirm times with your ship's excursions desk.
- Try ikizukuri squid. Karatsu's signature dish — live squid served transparently fresh, still glistening. Available at Genkou (near Karatsu Station) or restaurants in Yobuko.
- Weather varies by season. Summer (July–Sept) is hot and humid. Spring (March–May) is ideal — cherry blossoms and wisteria at the castle. Autumn (Oct–Nov) is crisp and often beautiful.
- Download Google Translate offline. English signage is limited outside Karatsu Station and the Castle. A screenshot of the port or ship name helps taxi drivers.

Karatsu, Saga, Japan — Port Map

cruiseports.org

Red = walkable sights · Amber = excursions farther out · P = cruise terminal. Numbers match the order you'd typically visit.



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|---|---|--|--|
| <p>1 Nanatsugama</p> <p>3 Shikinooka Park</p> <p>5 Hikiyama Exhibition Hall</p> <p>7 Tategami Rock of Minato</p> <p>P Cruise port / terminal</p> | <p>Seven sea caves carved by waves, accessible by boat.</p> <p>Hilltop park with seasonal flowers and panoramic Karatsu Bay views.</p> <p>Museum displaying magnificent floats from the Karatsu Kunchi Festival.</p> <p>Striking, unique rock formation rising dramatically from the sea.</p> | <p>2 Niji No Matsubara Pine Grove</p> <p>4 Former Karatsu Bank</p> <p>6 Minatoeki Shrine</p> <p>8 Nanatsugama Park</p> | <p>Historic, three-mile coastal pine forest, ideal for scenic walks.</p> <p>Historic, elegant Western-style building, now a cultural exhibition space.</p> <p>Small, traditional shrine near the port, offering local blessings.</p> <p>Coastal park offering stunning cliff views of the Nanatsugama caves.</p> |
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