

2008 KUNCHI Schedule

	Tuesday October 7	Wednesday October 8	Thursday October 9
S t a r t T i m e s			
Suwa Shrine	7:00 am		8:20 am
Kokaido Plaza	8:00 am	8:10 am	
Otabisho	9:10 am		7:00 am
Yasaka Shrine		7:00 am	

Performance Order

(each town's performance lasts approximately 30 minutes)

1	Shinbashi machi	Nishifurukawa machi	Enokizu machi
2	Suwa machi	Nigiwai machi	Shinbashi machi
3	Shindaiku machi	Kanaya machi	Suwa machi
4	Kanaya machi	Shindaiku machi	Nishifurukawa machi
5	Enokizu machi	Shinbashi machi	Nigiwai machi
6	Nishifurukawa machi	Enokizu machi	Kanaya machi
7	Nigiwai machi	Suwa machi	Shindaiku machi

Riding the Streetcars

Every trip on a streetcar, regardless of distance, costs exactly 100 yen. Exit at the front of the streetcar and drop your money in the collection box as you leave. It is possible to transfer between lines, but only between the blue and green lines at the Tsukimachi stop. To do so, as you exit at Tsukimachi, say to the driver, "Norikae desu.", and pay the fare as usual. The driver will give you a transfer ticket. Then switch to the other line and give the driver the transfer ticket when you get off at your destination.



Streetcar Line Information

No.	Color	Terminal Stations
1	Blue	Akasako — Shokakuji-shita
3	Red	Akasako — Hotarujaya
4	Yellow	Shokakuji-shita — Hotarujaya
5	Green	Ishibashi — Hotarujaya

Nearest Stops to Kunchi Venues and Other Sightseeing Places

Line(s)	Stop Name*	Location
Yellow, Green, Red	Suwajinja-Mae	Suwa Shrine
Yellow, Green, Red	Kokaido-Mae	Kokaido Plaza
Blue	Ohato	Otabisho / you-me-saito mall
Yellow, Blue	Shokakuji-Shita	Yasaka Shrine
Yellow, Blue	Kankodori	Hama-no-machi outdoor mall
Green	Oura Tenshudo Shita	Glover Garden / Oura Church
Blue	Dejima	historic Dejima Island
Blue, Red	Matsuyama Machi	Peace Park / Atomic Bomb Museum / Urakami Cathedral

*Not all stops are labelled on the above map.

All photos furnished by:



2008

Nagasaki Kunchi

English Language Guide



October 7th – 9th

What is "Kunchi"?

Kunchi comes from the ancient custom of holding a celebration on the ninth day of the ninth month of the lunar calendar, which was considered a lucky day. The ninth day is pronounced "ku nichi", which gradually changed into "kunchi" in Nagasaki, and came to mean a celebration holiday. Suwa Shrine was built in 1624. The Nagasaki Kunchi Festival began ten years later, and now has a history of more than 370 years.

created and distributed by the students of
Nagasaki Minami High School

More than 40 of Nagasaki city's historic towns perform at the festival, alternating with each other in a seven-year cycle. The performances are considered to be an offering to the deity of Suwa Shrine, called *Ujigamisama*. This year's performing towns (called *odoricho*) are:

- ① Kanaya-machi
- ② *Hon-odori*

- ③ Six dancers perform a classical-style *hon-odori* dance, called

"秋晴勢獅子諏訪祭日",

whose name translates as "clear autumn brave lion Suwa festival day dance". Four of the six dancers quickly transform themselves into two brave lions in the middle of the dance, a highlight of the performance. Children also join the dancing, signing a song whose lyrics humorously explain the origin of the town's name.



- ① Nishifurukawa-machi
- ② *Yagura-daiko*;
Hon-odori

- ③ A *yagura-daiko* is a

drum that was placed on top of an arms storehouse and beat to signal the start and end of a sumo wrestling event. In the Edo period, in Kyushu, the sumo tour was held only in Nagasaki. Because Nishifurukawa town, which organized this tour, had a strong link with sumo, they chose *yagura-daiko* as their main Kunchi offering, performing it for the first time in 1821. This year marks the town's first Kunchi performance in 14 years. The town will also present a sumo folk song, bow and arrow exhibition, and a *hon-odori* traditional dance.



Legend: ① *Odoricho* (Performing town)
② Performance ③ Performance Description

- ① Shindaiku-machi
- ② *Shibu*; *Hikidanjiri*

- ③ Young women wearing *hakama* (long, pleated skirts worn over a kimono) dance

elegantly to the song "Shukuga no uta" (song of celebration). And men bravely and energetically move around a boat called *hikidanjiri*, while lively classical Japanese music is played. The boat's roof is modelled after Kasuga Shrine in Nara.



- ① Suwa-machi
- ② *Ja-odori*

- ③ Suwa town's offering is the *ja-odori* (dragon dance), which

was first presented in 1886. The dragon is controlled by eleven people, called *jakata*. *Jakata* are periodically switched out with replacement handlers in the blink of an eye. The "twin dragon dance", in which a blue and white dragon each pursue a golden ball is the epitome of Kunchi. The town's *kasaboko* is decorated with embroidery of a white fox.



- ① Enokizu-machi
- ② *Kawabune*

- ③ Enokizu town will present the oldest *kawabune* (riverboat), made in 1949. With

various kinds and sizes of drums playing a melodic rhythm, the boat is repeatedly brought forward and back powerfully. Children who appear dressed as fishermen are a highlight of the performance. The performance is exciting and showy and will charm the audience.



- ① Nigiwai-machi
- ② *Tairyo maniwai*
Ebisu-bune

- ③ Nigiwai town had performed a *hon-odori* dance until 1986, when it was

replaced with the current offering so that many of the young people who live in the town could take part in the festival. The town's offering is a celebration of a good haul of fish. The main boat, called *Ebisu*, is 4.5 meters high and weighs 4 tons. There are also two smaller boats. The highlight is the dynamic pulling and turning of the *Ebisu*.



- ① Shinbashi-machi
- ② *Oranda-manzai*;
Hon-odori

- ③ *Oranda-manzai* is a dance that was created in 1933,

and tells the story of Dutchmen coming to Nagasaki. (*Oranda* is Japanese for "Holland".) Dancers representing Dutchmen carry fans or drums. The highlight is a scene in which they move comically as they meet four *geisha*. This performance is a fixture at Kunchi, performed by other towns as well.



What is a *kasaboko*?

Each *odoricho*'s performance begins with the dance of a *kasaboko*: a huge, parasol-like object. The *kasaboko* has a placard with the town's name, decorations representing the town placed on top, and a veil draped all around the sides. Each *kasaboko* weighs 130-150 kg, and is carried on the shoulders of one person inside. This person can't see around him, so a second person, the *kasaboko-toryo*, guides him by using a small flag.