

### **Iizuka, Japan: Description and History**

Iizuka is a city of 214.13 square kilometers located in central Fukuoka Prefecture, Japan, on the confluence of the Honami and Onga rivers, with a subtropical climate. It was founded on January 20, 1932.

During the Edo Era, it was an important post station on the Nagasaki Kaido (Sugar Road). As Japan industrialized, the Chikuho district surrounding Iizuka became the center of the most productive coal fields throughout the nation, accounting for 50% of Japan's coal production. The word "Iizuka," derived from two Kanji (Chinese) characters, means "rice mound" and is reputed to be representative of the city's three remaining slag heaps rising above the city.

After World War II, Iizuka experienced a large population influx being one of the few areas offering jobs in its coal mines. When the mines closed, Iizuka's population declined, but it managed to maintain a steady economy due to its proximity to the cities of Fukuoka and Kitakyushu. Iizuka currently has a strong light industrial base and has grown to become a center for education and a rapidly expanding IT economy.

In 2006, Iizuka absorbed the towns of Chikuho, Honami, Kaita, and Shonai to create the new and expanded city of Iizuka. According to a 2015 census, its population is approximately 129,246.

Local universities include Kyushu Institute of Information Sciences, Fukuoka Institute of Technology, and the French-Japanese Institute of Kyushu.