

## DEMOGRAPHIA



### FUKUOKA AND KITAKYUSHU: END OF THE LINE

FAST FACTS: FUKUOKA		Similar To
Metropolitan Area (Labor Market Area)	3,300,000	Minneapolis-St. Paul, Melbourne
Urbanized Area* Population	1,950,000	Bucharest, Sapporo, Denver, Vienna
Urbanized Land Area: Square Miles	160	Sapporo, Marseille, Honolulu, St. Catherines-Niagara
Urbanized Land Area: Square Kilometers	415	
Population per Square Mile	12,200	Belo Horizonte, Kitakyushu, Sapporo, Nice
Population per Square Kilometer	4,700	
*Continuously built up area		

FAST FACTS: KITAKYUSHU		Similar To
Metropolitan Area (Labor Market Area)		See Fukuoka
Urbanized Area* Population	1,100,000	Suwon, Auckland, Columbus
Urbanized Land Area: Square Miles	90	Graz, Manaus, London (Canada)
Urbanized Land Area: Square Kilometers	230	
Population per Square Mile	12,200	Belo Horizonte, Kitakyushu, Sapporo, Nice
Population per Square Kilometer	4,700	
*Continuously built up area		

9 June 2004



Hakata Station Fukuoka

Fukuoka and Kitakyushu might be considered twin urbanized areas at the northern end of Kyushu, the island just to the south of Honshu, where most of Japan lives. Kitakyushu and Fukuoka are, respectively, the last stations on the Shinkansen high speed rail line that starts in Tokyo. The larger and more prosperous of the two urban areas is Fukuoka.

The trip to Fukuoka started at Kyoto Station, from which I took the Shinkansen southward to Kitakyushu, another urban area of more than 1,000,000. Kitakyushu and Fukuoka are barely 30 miles apart, but there is a mountain range



Tenjin

points. The most effective scheduling strategy may provide sufficient capacity for the highest demand portion of the trip --- probably either Tokyo-Nagoya or Nagoya-Osaka. Outside the highest demand route segment, there will be many empty seats, unless the scheduling strategy is to force overcrowding in the highest demand sectors, something the Japanese rail operators generally do not do. On the other hand, an airplane will fly from point to point. The lower demand segments of the route will have less service, and the result is that, generally, air load factors are higher than rail --- that is to say that the resources are more effectively used. The rail operators attempt to compensate for providing a higher level of service on the highest demand section of the route (Tokyo to Osaka), but empty seats are going to be there by the time the train gets to Kitakyushu, if not Hiroshima.

Fukuoka, like the Rhine-Ruhr-Wupper area, is one of those places few have heard of and like the German urban area, doesn't is often denied even the use of its name. Railroad timetables show

the city as Hakata, which is one of the former cities amalgamated to create Fukuoka. The station is in the old Hakata city, not far from former sister city, which provided the name, though not the railroad station for the new city. The same goes for Kitakyushu, where the train station is named for the former city of Kokura.



Kitakyushu: Kokura Station

In Fukuoka, the cores of the two former cities are very close to one another, within easy walking distance. There is a single central business district that has obviously grown together from the two previous smaller CBDs, Tenjin and Hakata. Here there are approximately 325,000 jobs, which makes Fukuoka's central business district larger than most in the world, including as San

and a good deal of open space between the two. It would probably be correct to consider Fukuoka and Kitakyushu a single metropolitan area (labor market). In a sense, the Japan National Rail system does. Local tickets are honored on the high-speed trains between the two stations (Hakata and Kokura). Besides making sense from a demographic perspective, it helps to sell seats that would be empty otherwise. This is one of the difficulties with an intercity rail line compared to airlines. A train starting out at Tokyo Station will generally stop at Nagoya, Kyoto, Osaka, Kobe, Hiroshima, Kitakyushu and Fukuoka. People will be on the train traveling between any of the



Kitakyushu from the Monorail

as comfortable here as they are in North American suburbs. But of course, they have more floors here, and the cars park in multi-story garages rather than the horizontal parking lots that surround their counterparts in Western Europe.

But this was not a rental car tour, per se. The principal purpose was to ride the train and see what could be seen. Nonetheless, it was obvious, not too far from Hakata station, that the single family dwellings that compose the sprawl surrounding Tokyo, Osaka, Sapporo and Nagoya (to the extent urban areas bounded by water can be surrounded) is here as well.

Like nearby Fukuoka, Kitakyushu is also the result of a municipal amalgamation. In this case, five cities, Kokura, Moji, Tobata, Wakamatsu and Yawata combined to form the new city in



Fukuoka: Single-Family Dwellings

detached housing. This is obvious even from the central city monorail. There is the view of the detached housing. And, there are advertisements for new detached housing.

But this often forgotten part of Japan is well worth the visit. And it's a nice train ride.

Francisco, Munich, Boston, Toronto, Philadelphia and virtually all in Western Europe except Madrid, Paris and London. With approximately 35 percent of the metropolitan area employment market, the Fukuoka-Hakata central business district may have the largest market share of any in a high-income metropolitan area of more than 1,000,000. With such a concentration of people, traffic is very intense. In fact, Fukuoka is one of the few places similar in size to Portland that has traffic as bad.

The principal retailing area is in the Tenjin central business district. Commerce appears to be dominated by huge indoor shopping malls that are

1963. American monorail enthusiasts often point to the many monorails in Japan as proof that the technology is under represented in the United States. But a visit to Japan makes it clear why monorails have been built --- there is no room on the streets, and the underground construction would be far too expensive. It also helps that population densities are higher and, in many cases, that private developers have built them to feed people to their retail establishments. These are principal reasons why monorails are also largely profitable in Japan.

Kitakyushu has a much smaller central business district than Fukuoka, with only 75,000 employees. And, Kitakyushu also has its share of



River Between Hakata and Tenjin



River Between Hakata and Tenjin



Tenjin Traffic



House Advertisement: Kitakyushu Monorail Station



Kitakyushu from the Monorail

By Wendell Cox

Return: [www.demographia.com/rac-ix.htm](http://www.demographia.com/rac-ix.htm)

Home: [www.demographia.com](http://www.demographia.com)