

What is kofun?

Kofun is a collective term for the ancient tombs with earthen mounds that were actively constructed in the Japanese archipelago from the middle of the 3rd century to the late 6th century CE. In those days, members of the high-ranking elite were buried in kofun.

A burial mound was constructed by heaping up the soil that was dug from the ground around the mound site. The sloping sides of the mound were covered with stones, and the excavated area formed a moat, descending to a level lower than any other part of the tomb.

Kofun show a variety of shapes: keyhole-shaped mounds; scallop shell-shaped mounds; round domed mounds; and square mounds. Their size also varies, ranging from small tombs of around 10 meters to huge tombs of more than 400 meters.

The period in which most of these mounded tombs were constructed is called the Kofun period, and it was at this time that the earliest form of political centralization—the Yamato Kingly Power—started to form in the Japanese archipelago.



	Nintoku-tenno-ryo Kofun	Pyramid of Cheops	Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor
Length	486m	230m	350m
Height	35.8m	146m	76m
Volume	1.4 million m ³	2.6 million m ³	3 million m ³



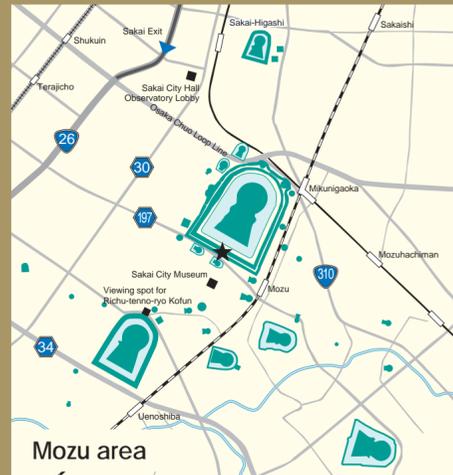
No.33-1 Ojin-tenno-ryo Kofun



No.26 Nakatsuhime-no-mikoto-ryo Kofun



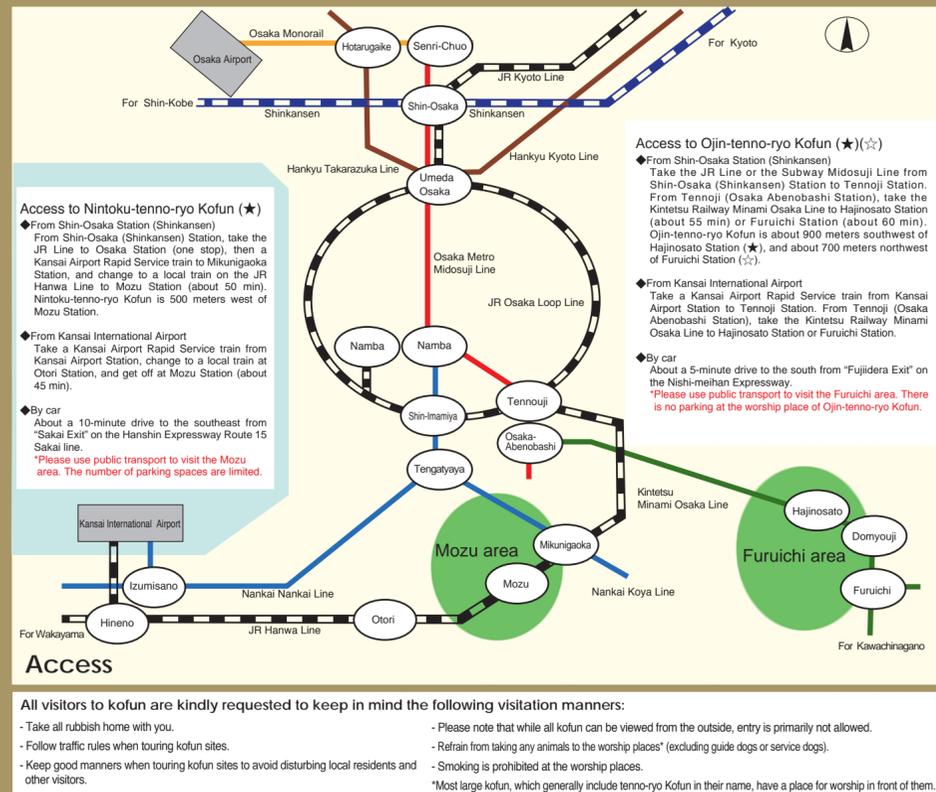
Furuichi area



Mozu area



Furuichi area



WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group

Mounded Tombs of Ancient Japan



What is the Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group?

The World Heritage property "Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group" is a tomb group of the king's clan that ruled the ancient Japanese archipelago. The tombs were constructed between the late 4th century and the late 5th century, which was the peak of the Kofun period. They are located in the southern part of the Osaka Plain which was one of the important political cultural centers and a maritime gateway to the Asian continent.

The kofun group includes many tombs in the shape of a keyhole, a feature unique in the world, with the largest measuring as long as 500 meters in mound length. They form a group, along with smaller tombs that are differentiated by their various sizes and shapes. In contrast to the type of burial mound commonly found in many parts of the world, which is an earth or piled-stone mound forming a simple covering over a coffin or a burial chamber, kofun are architectural achievements with geometrically elaborate designs created as a stage for funerary rituals, decorated with *haniwa* clay figures.



Mozu area



No.21 Nisanzai Kofun

Mozu area

—Sakai City—

The Mozu tombs are distributed in an area of a two-kilometer radius in Sakai City, with 23 kofun in 21 sites as components of the World Heritage property. They include giant keyhole-shaped tombs such as the largest burial mound in Japan Nintoku-tenno-ryo Kofun, which is also one of the largest in the world, and the third largest Richu-tenno-ryo Kofun.

Furuichi area

—Habikino City and Fujiidera City—

The Furuichi tombs are distributed in an area with a radius of two kilometers, stretching over the cities of Habikino and Fujiidera. The World Heritage components are 26 kofun in 24 sites, including the gigantic keyhole-shaped Ojin-tenno-ryo Kofun (second largest in Japan), with a mound length of over 400 meters.



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