

Rumor places the start of mining at Ikuno in the year 807 and written records confirm that the Ikuno mine has existed for over 1,000 years. It ranked among the top five silver mines in the country, and in 1868 the Meiji government chose it for the implementation of modern industrial techniques, like the use of dynamite. Several French engineers, including the mine expert Jean Francisque Coignet (1835–1902), were hired to modernize the mine. Another Frenchman, Leon Sisley (1847–1878) designed a new macadam road to replace the existing path between the mine and the port in Himeji. The Silver Mine Carriage Road (the Ikuno Kozanryo Bashamichi, now known as the Gin no Bashamichi) was completed in 1876 and allowed much faster transport of ore by horse-drawn carriage. Asakura Moriaki (1843–1924), acted as a translator for the French engineers and later became the mine's first director.

In 1896, the government sold the Ikuno mine to the Mitsubishi company, which continued operations there until 1973. The following year, one level of the mine was renovated for visitors. The exhibit includes mining tools and numerous mannequin workers, affectionately referred to as the "Ginzan Boys." Outside, there is an information center and a smaller building that explains the smelting process as it was performed in the Edo Period (1603–1867).