

## **Showa No Machi: Sentimental Journey**

Nostalgia buffs will enjoy strolling around the shopping district known as Showa no Machi, or “Showa Town” —and absorbing the atmosphere of the 1950s and ’60s, the heyday of Japan’s Showa period (1926–1989). The neighborhood’s buildings celebrate the years when the country began to enjoy the peace and prosperity of the post-war era. Many seem to exist in a mythical area between a commercial operation and a museum, and browsers can poke through displays of old record players, TVs, toys, and popular animation figures from the past, or bite into the same style of “ice candy” popsicles that kids clamored for in simpler times.

Several museums housed in old warehouses host exhibitions related to the times, featuring toys and snacks, cars, storybooks—even the interiors of houses, shops, and a typical schoolroom. On weekends, a “classic” bus, complete with protruding bonnet and guide dressed in period clothing, leaves its garage to transport visitors on a route around town. Guests can dine at a restaurant that not only serves popular dishes from the era, but also does so at the shockingly low prices of the times. Part-museum, part-local shopping street, part “neighborhood under glass,” this is a slice of time that older Japanese look back on with sentimentality, and curious younger ones find quaintly fascinating.