

Showa no Machi

Imagine yourself in a small Japanese town some years ago, strolling through the neighborhood streets on a shopping errand. That's what you'll find here at "Showa no Machi"—a part of Bungo Takada that has retained the atmosphere of the heyday of Japan's Showa period in the 1950s and '60s. The facades and interiors of the area's buildings celebrate those years when the country began to enjoy the peace and prosperity of the post-war era. Feel free to poke through the 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 in old warehouses host exhibitions related to the times—the interiors of houses, shops, and a typical schoolroom. On weekends, a "classic" bus, complete with guide dressed in period clothing, transports visitors on a route around town. Look for the 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, Showa no Machi represents a slice of time that older Japanese look back on with great sentimentality, and curious younger Japanese find quaintly fascinating.