

Showa no Machi

Showa no Machi (Showa Town) in Bungotakada is a nostalgic shopping district where the atmosphere of the mid-Showa era (1926–1989) is recreated. The area is not just a historic recreation, and the streets are still in daily use. Showa no Machi is divided into eight sections and has approximately 40 stores in total, and can easily be seen in about 30 minutes while making stops at specialty shops and sights along the way. The oldest store in the neighborhood is more than 100 years old and new stores continue to be added to the mix.

This central shopping district of Bungotakada was a prosperous area of the Kunisaki Peninsula from the Edo period (1603–1868) through the mid-Showa era. Bungotakada has been a hub for marine traffic since the Edo period and an anchorage for numerous vessels bound for the Kansai region in the early Showa era. Five main roads passed through Bungotakada, a key location on the peninsula which benefited from the coast and the nearby Usa area. However, over the years, Bungotakada was gradually left behind by a wave of modernization and it became increasingly isolated and quiet.

With the shopping district seemingly on its last legs, a project was launched to revive the energy of the 1950s and 1960s. In 2001, the Showa no Machi initiative began to breathe new life into the historical shopping district. Seven stores were originally designated as “Showa no Machi Certified Shops” and today there are over 40 participating outlets.

Today, Bungotakada’s Showa no Machi welcomes approximately 400,000 visitors annually, and the warm hospitality of shopkeepers keeps the Showa spirit alive. A walk through the town is like stepping back in time, and reveals how this pivotal era provided the foundations for Japan’s current lifestyle and culture.