

## History of Sagiura

People have lived in Sagiura since ancient times. The earliest records of Sagiura appear in the 733 compilation of regional lore known as the *Izumo fudoki*, in which the district is referred to as “Sagihama.” Inasehagi-jinja Shrine is mentioned in the *Nihon shoki*, a collection of Japan’s earliest myths that was set down in 720.

By the middle years of the Edo period (1603–1867), merchant vessels from Kyoto and Osaka regularly traveled the Sea of Japan. With its fine harbor, Sagiura thrived, offering trade, lodgings, and safe anchorage to ships awaiting favorable winds. Local wholesalers also managed cargo shipments from distant regions of the country. The Shiwakuya company, whose former warehouse is now open to the public, made a fortune shipping salt from the Shiwaku islands in the Seto Inland Sea.

During the Meiji (1868–1912) and Taishō (1912–1926) eras, Sagiura remained a regular port-of-call for Osaka merchant vessels. At the height of the town’s prosperity, around 1888, one shipping agent might have handled the operations of more than 100 boats per year.

Copper mining, spurred by rapid modernization and a demand for natural resources, also brought additional industry to the area. By the late 1920s, however, the closure of the mines and the arrival of a national railway line that vastly reduced sea traffic spelled the end of Sagiura’s commercial boom. Today, fishing has replaced shipping as the primary industry.