

**Audio Guide: Unzen Cityscape**

Look at the buildings around town. The hotels, the police box, even the public toilets have the same white walls and red roofs. This distinctive style comes from a blend of Western and Japanese architecture. The *ryokan*, or traditional Japanese inns, that were built in Unzen during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are unlike most *ryokan* built at the same time in other parts of Japan.

After Japan opened its shores to the rest of the world in 1853, the country began to modernize, borrowing new ideas from the West. The first hotels in Unzen were designed to appeal to the late-nineteenth-century European ideal of a resort town, and Japanese carpenters added European flourishes to Japanese buildings.

On your screen is an image of the oldest ryokan in Unzen. The corridor was added to the original building around the end of the nineteenth century to impress vacationing Westerners.

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