

Sakaiminato Fisheries Regional Wholesale Market

Sakaiminato, whose name means “boundary port,” has always been dependent on the sea for its livelihood. Although fishing was always an essential economic activity, from the sixteenth century onward Sakaiminato was primarily a trading city. At first, the trading network stretched eastward along the Japan Sea coast and westward to Kyushu, reaching as far as Osaka. After Japan colonized parts of the Asian mainland in the late nineteenth century, however, Sakaiminato became a major player in trade with Korea, China, and Russia. This collapsed with the end of the Second World War, and since that time, Sakaiminato has focused on developing its fishing industry. Now, it promotes itself as “the town of fish and Kitaro”—a nod toward its local fishing industry and its favorite son, the manga artist Mizuki Shigeru, whose most famous work featured a character named Kitaro.

Bustling Auctions and Fresh Seafood

Sakaiminato’s fishing wharves and markets, with their lively bustle and the prospect of dining on some of the fresh catch, have always held an appeal for visitors. The city has redeveloped the seafood market with larger facilities that have rendered the logistics, handling, and marketing of the daily catch more efficient and hygienic. The wharf-side market halls along the Sakai Channel are open to the public, and tours are available. The upper floors have vantage points from which visitors can view the auction and other market activities while keeping a safe distance from the chaos of carts and forklifts. There are several restaurants onsite and nearby to sample fresh sashimi, crabs, and other local delicacies.