

Toyota Kaikan Museum: Exhibits

The ground floor of the Toyota Kaikan Museum is divided into five themed zones: Eco and Emotion, Safety and Freedom, Production and Creation, Company and Society, and the Toyota Showroom. Each zone has a regularly changing lineup of interactive and informative exhibits. The lobby also has a temporary exhibition that is changed every few months. The museum is designed to be explored by moving through the building in a clockwise direction, and all the exhibits are explained in Japanese, English, and Chinese.

The **Eco and Emotion** zone is all about Toyota's efforts to make more environmentally friendly and sustainable vehicles. These include hybrid cars like the Prius, fully electric cars, and hydrogen-powered fuel-cell cars like the Mirai. Exhibits include full cross-sections of the Mirai and the Prius, showing how they differ from typical gasoline engine cars. There are videos explaining how car motors and engines work and how they have been refined by Toyota over the years. Concept cars are on display, and there is also a section on Woven City, a new city designed and built by Toyota that will run on green energy.

The **Safety and Freedom** zone focuses on the development of Toyota's various active and passive safety features. Visitors can experience advanced safety assist features like active braking and distance monitoring in a virtual driving simulator.

The **Production and Creation** zone highlights some of the company's innovations in efficiency and manufacturing. Toyota is known for its corporate philosophy of *kaizen*, or continuous improvement, and its policy of *karakuri*, which encourages workers to design simple, purely mechanical solutions to problems. The idea behind *karakuri* is that simple tools can be combined to achieve impressive energy savings. Further, unlike more complex automated systems, if a simple mechanism is broken, its problems can be identified quickly.

The company also pioneered the concept of just-in-time manufacturing, and its factories produce only what is needed, when it is needed. This avoids taking up large warehouse space with excess inventory. The origins of this method are explained, alongside interactive exhibits on painting and welding cars. There is a full-size working welding arm robot ready to greet visitors, too.

The **Company and Society** zone is dedicated to Toyota's corporate history and its different community programs around the world. There are scale models of key Toyota cars, including the Model AA, the first commercial car produced by Toyota. There is also a miniature robot built by Toyota for a joint mission by NASA and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency.

The **Toyota Showroom** features a changing selection of Toyota and Lexus vehicles, including some high-performance Toyota Gazoo Racing models. The cars on display in the showroom are rotated frequently.

A special area for children on the second floor has interactive displays that show how the basic parts of a car work, including the brakes and steering. There is also information about how cars are made and how old parts can be recycled. The museum shop offers gifts for car enthusiasts of all ages.