

## **Nagahama Railway Museum**

The Nagahama Railway Museum has both Japan's oldest extant station building and a pair of decommissioned locomotives that visitors can climb aboard and explore. Its exhibits tell the story of early Japanese train travel and Nagahama's role as a nexus for transport and commerce.

The museum's entrance is a brick-accented station building that was completed in 1882. From 1884 to 1899, it served as the southern terminal for a line that connected Lake Biwa to the Sea of Japan. The late nineteenth-century structure still retains its period charm with antique furnishings, a replica ticket booth, and life-sized figures depicting station staff and travelers in contemporary clothing. Modern trains still rumble past on the adjacent JR Hokuriku Main Line, contributing to the ambience.

Two additional buildings behind the old station complete the Nagahama Railway Museum. The first is a large exhibit hall with dioramas and illustrations showing the development of rail travel in Nagahama, including a miniature train loop modeled on the present-day city. A multilingual audio guide is available for those who wish to further explore the historical and technological roots of Japan's railways.

The museum's final building houses two locomotives: a black D51 steam engine built in 1942 and a red ED70 electric locomotive from 1957. Visitors can climb inside the conductors' cabins to examine the controls or peek into the coal firebox. They can also go up to the second-floor observation deck for a bird's-eye view of the locomotives.