

Takasago History Tour 5

Since before the Heian period (794–1185), Takasago has been a popular destination for relaxation due to its scenic coastal setting, including a sandy beach and a pine forest.

Takasago is also known in Japan as Musubi no Machi (“matrimony town”). It has long attracted both couples and those seeking love who want blessings for a good marriage.

Over the past 400 years, the city’s layout has remained largely unchanged, and many buildings from the late Edo period (1603–1867) to the Showa era (1926–1989) are still standing. These include the former residence of the descendants of local businessman and inventor Kuraku Matsuemon (1743–1812); the former Takasago City Fire Department building; and cultural buildings such as Sone Tenman Jinja Shrine and Jurinji Temple.

Umegae-yu

Private baths in residential homes were uncommon in Takasago until the 1950s. In the past, the city had as many as seven public bathhouses, but the only one still in operation is Umegae-yu. The exterior and interior designs of the building retain a Showa-era ambience. The entrance is a mortar structure, while the brick additions at the back are a popular photo spot. Wood is still burned to heat the bathwater.

The building was constructed late in the Taisho era (1912–1926) or early in the Showa era; it was bought by its current owner in 1943. The bathhouse is open daily (3:30 p.m. until 11:00 p.m.) except on Thursdays.

Former Takasago Bank Head Office (current Chamber of Commerce and Industry)

Japan’s victory in the First Sino–Japanese War (1894–1895) sparked an economic boom; the Takasago Savings Bank was established in 1896. In 1907, its name was changed to Takasago Bank. The current building was constructed in 1932 as Takasago Bank’s head office. It is a rare example of classical architecture of the period. In 1980, the building became the property of the Takasago Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In 2017, it was designated a National Tangible Cultural Property and an Important Building for Landscape Formation in Hyogo Prefecture.

Former Takasago City Fire Department Building

This two-story reinforced concrete building was erected in 1935 in the style of a government office. The first floor is the fire truck garages, while the second floor has offices and a steel-framed fire watchtower on the roof. A one-story police box with a decorative gabled roof is attached to the south end of the building.

The fire building was used by the branch station of the Takasago City Fire Department until 2015. It has since been reinforced against earthquakes and is used to store equipment, such as sandbags, in case of flooding.

The building's second floor is open to the public on holidays to promote the history of firefighting in Takasago. It is designated a National Tangible Cultural Property and an Important Prefectural Landscape Architecture.