

## **Buzen Kaido**

The historic highway known as the Buzen Kaido passes many of Yamaga's major landmarks and attests to the city's vibrant past as a center of commerce and culture. The thoroughfare originally stretched from Kumamoto Castle in the south to the port of Kokura (present-day Kitakyushu City) in the north. In Yamaga, the Buzen Kaido runs from the banks of the Kikuchi River through the heart of town. Major local landmarks including the bathhouse Sakura-yu, the Yamaga Lantern Folk Art Museum, and the Yachiyoza Theater are located along its route.

The Kikuchi River was an important waterway for domestic trade during the Edo period (1603–1867), when rice grown in Kyushu was transported to Osaka via the river. Businesses related to rice production, such as sake breweries and rice cracker shops, flourished on the Buzen Kaido in Yamaga. Some of the shops still operating today were founded in the Edo period. The architecture and ambience of this street offer a glimpse of life in the local community centuries ago.

The Buzen Kaido is a bustling hub during citywide events like the Yamaga Lantern Festival in August. The historic storefronts are a reminder of the city's rich past, while the annual celebrations ensure the region's cultural heritage is passed on to future generations.