

Kanmon Strait Museum

The Kanmon Strait Museum is a state-of-the-art facility showcasing the history of the vital waterway flowing just outside its doors. The museum was established in 2003 and was reopened in 2019 after extensive renovations. It resembles a giant ship about to leave port, evoking a turn-of-the-century luxury cruise liner or a futuristic space vessel. The museum's audiovisual and interactive displays take the visitor on a voyage of exploration.

Spectacular Views from the Promenade Deck

The museum is designed to be experienced from top to bottom, starting on the fourth floor's spacious, brightly lit Promenade Deck lounge. As suggested by its name, the Promenade Deck was modeled after the observation lounge of a luxury cruise liner. Its floor-to-ceiling windows, leather sofas, and café make it the ideal spot to watch container ships, ferries, and patrol boats passing by below. On the walls are photographic reproductions of luxury cruises of yesteryear, such as passengers playing chess in the second-class smoking room of the *Kamo Maru* in 1934 and the *Lisbon Maru* steaming eastward for New York.

Kanmon Strait Atrium

This central exhibition area is accessed from the fourth floor. At the center of the atrium is a 162-square-meter curved projector screen (one of the largest in Japan) that shows four action-packed animations depicting the past and present of the Kanmon Strait. The eight-minute presentations are titled "A Day in the Life of the Kanmon Strait," "Sea of Light and Music," "Pictorial History of the Kanmon Strait," and "Story of Moji Port."

The galleries from the fourth to the second floors are connected by a spiral walkway. Touchscreens line the walkway's inner wall, and visitors can use them to play games such as "Challenge Fish Quiz" and "Battle on Ganryū Island." One simulation involves piloting a submarine to take photographs of marine life, which can then be downloaded as souvenirs. A QR code on the front of each ticket allows each visitor to indicate their language preferences and unlock certain features of the games.

History Brought to Life in the Kanmon Strait History Gallery

The Kanmon Strait History Gallery on the third floor displays a series of dioramas by 10 leading artists from Japan and the Czech Republic. The dioramas bring to life

different stories of the strait, including ancient legends, key battles, and historic scenes. The displays introduce historical figures as diverse as the legendary Empress Jingū (c. 200), Catholic missionary Francis Xavier (1506–1552), the illustrious swordsman Miyamoto Musashi (1584–1645), and the brilliant physician and botanist Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796–1866).

Other dioramas are devoted to less widely known events, such as the renowned Buddhist monk Kūkai's visit to Mt. Tonoue in 806, or the warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi's shipwreck in 1592. Each diorama has informative panels in Japanese, English, Korean, and Chinese.

Fun, Hands-On Learning in the Learning Zone

The Kanmon Strait Hands-On Learning Zone on the second floor uses interactive games and displays to convey the challenge of keeping the strait a safe and thriving waterway. Simulations such as “Challenge Container Crane Simulation” and “Kanmon Diver” put visitors in the shoes of the strait's custodians, from ship captains to coastguards and deep-sea divers. The “Ship Search” panels near the windows identify the vessels passing through the strait in real time at the touch of a button.

Travel Back in Time through the Retro Lane

The Kanmon Strait Retro Lane on the first and second floors is a reconstruction of street scenes of Moji Port during its boom years between the 1890s and 1920s. Each vivid vignette is marked by a spotlight that encourages visitors to stop and imagine themselves in that time and place. A streetcar glides through the recreated cosmopolitan town, where banana sellers banter with their customers and men wear bowler hats and flat caps with their traditional Japanese attire. On the second floor, exhibits of old photographs, maps, and everyday objects help conjure an image of the past. Connecting these is a long hallway that looks in on shops and restaurants frozen in time.

The Moji Port Banana Historical Archives are tucked into one corner of the Retro Lane. These exhibits detail the massive boom in overseas trade in Moji in 1899 and the culture of loud and boisterous banana auctions (*tataki-uri*) that still take place at the port.