

Gateway to Tsuchizaki: Port Tower Selion

Port Tower Selion has everything visitors need to begin their exploration of Tsuchizaki. Located a short walk from the cruise terminal, the tower has an observation deck with panoramic views of Akita Port. Several restaurants serve lunch and sweets, and a shopping area offers local delicacies and traditional crafts. Between spring and autumn, a stall near the entrance of the tower periodically sells a popular local specialty: a colorful banana- and strawberry-flavored ice cream sculpted in the shape of a rose.

Entrance to the 100-meter-high observation deck is free and affords a bird's-eye view of the surrounding area, including the coastal and offshore wind turbines that dot the Sea of Japan coast. When the skies are clear, Mt. Chōkai (2,236 m) is visible on the horizon to the south. To the southeast, downtown Akita can be seen in the distance behind the large, forested hill that was once the site of Akita Fort.

Sahara's Noodle Vending Machine

One of the most popular attractions at Port Tower Selion is a vending machine that serves bowls of udon and soba noodles in warm broth. This unusual machine originally belonged to a nearby store called Sahara Shōten, which primarily sold food, clothing, and other essentials to the crews of ships that docked at Akita Port. In 1973, its owners set up the machine after noticing a lack of places that offered hot meals to workers at odd hours. The savory broth and locally made noodles have made the vending machine a long-standing symbol of the community.

The vending machine was moved to its current location when Sahara Shōten closed in 2016. Acquiring parts for repairs has become increasingly

difficult, as the model has not been produced since 1980. The noodle machine remains popular, however, and it sells around 200 bowls of noodles on a busy day. Broth-flavored ice cream and merchandise featuring the machine's logo can be purchased at Port Tower Selion.