

Miike Coal Railway

The first lines of the Miike Coal Railway were laid in 1878, between the Ōura Pit and the Ōmuta River, a distance of 2.7 kilometers. The trains were pulled by horses until the introduction of steam engines in 1891. The lines were extended to Miike Port in 1905 and cut through the hilly terrain between the mine and the coast. The train was fully electrified in 1923. Between 1964 and 1984, the railway carried mine workers and other commuters.

The engines displayed at the Mikawa Pit show the evolution of the trains used at the mine. The oldest is an American 15-tonne-class electric locomotive built in 1908. Others include a German 20-tonne-class engine made in 1911; a 20-tonne-class engine made in 1915 by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries that is the oldest domestically built electric locomotive; and a 45-tonne-class engine, which was made in 1936 by Toshiba and used until the mine's closure.

Today, track beds, brick tunnels, and iron bridges from the old railway can be seen around Ōmuta. At the Miyanohara and Miyaura Pits and the former customs house near Miike Port, visitors can see some of the railroad's wooden ties and iron rails.

In 2015, the Miike Coal Railway was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.