

Imayo Soka-shuku Area



Imayo Soka-shuku

In the early modern period, the road connecting Edo and various parts of Oshu area had been detoured from Senju to Hachijo and Koshigaya, however, before long shogunate repaired a new road connecting Senju and Koshigaya in the distance. Finally the new station established between Senju and Koshigaya. This was the beginning of Soka-shuku.

The "signposts" will guide you on your walks.

There are signposts in various spots in the Imayo Soka-shuku area that will help you with your walks. Feel free to use them as guides for your itineraries.

Characters of Soka Walking Map



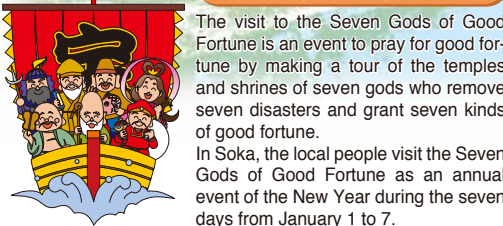
The Charms of Summer: Soka Morning Glory Market

This traditional event is held around early July every year on the Soka Matsubara Walking Trail. The ladies selected as "Soka Sawayaka-san" will participate in the sales event, dressed in yukata summer kimonos.



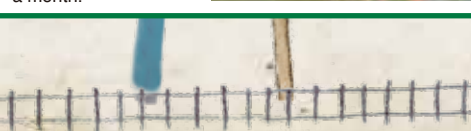
Visit to the Seven Gods of Good Fortune, Soka-shuku

Find the Seven Gods of Good Fortune on the map. Pay your New Year's first visit with the rest of your family. The visit to the Seven Gods of Good Fortune is an event to pray for good fortune by making a tour of the temples and shrines of seven gods who remove seven diseases and grant seven kinds of good fortune.



Japanese-style Traditional Boats

This is a hands-on sightseeing program conducted since April 2016 with the Nakane Association of Japanese-style Boat public association. Against the historical backdrop of the active boat transportation of commodities with Edo along the Ayase River, this program allows visitors to board a Japanese traditional wooden boat, view the nationally designated scenic spot Soka Matsubara from the surface of the river, and otherwise enjoy the existing sightseeing resources from a new perspective. The boat sails free of charge about once a month.



National Scenic Beauty

"Scenic Area of Oku-no Hosomichi Soka Matsubara"

草加松原
KA MATSU BARA

To National Scenic Beauty

On March 18, 2014, 13 scenic spots from 10 prefectures related to MATSUO BASHO's Oku-no Hosomichi were commended for their influence on the ideas of landscape held by later generations and for still conveying the atmosphere of the old days, and were named as nationally designated scenic spots.

A road traveled by MATSUO Basho

Located to the north of Soka-shuku, which appears in Oku-no Hosomichi, Soka Matsubara has been known since the Edo period as a scenic spot on the Nikko Road. This area has been recognized for providing an excellent landscape that conveys the atmosphere of the days of Oku-no Hosomichi.

In March (May in the current calendar) 1689, Basho left Fukagawa, Edo by boat for Senju, said goodbye to the people who had come to see him off, and later arrived at Soka, the second post station on the Nikko Road. "Hoping that I would return there alive, counting on my unreliable fate, I finally arrived at an inn in a town called Soka that evening." As it is written, Soka appears in Oku-no Hosomichi. It is said that Basho used a character meaning "quick" in writing the place name of Soka because he wanted to emphasize the halting pace on his first day of walking, while missing the people he had had to leave, and being bothered by the heavy load on his shoulders.

The appearance of the old trees

Among the 634 pine trees existing today, there are about 60 old trees. You can recognize them at first glance. They vary in appearance, ranging from trees with trunks as large as 2 meters in circumference, to those that extend branches over the Ayase River. You can enjoy viewing the appearance of the old trees while walking in Soka Matsubara.

Soka Matsubara, now and then

One theory holds that the row of pine trees was planted when the Ayase River was improved in 1630. The first record of any pine trees being planted indicates that 1,230 saplings were planted in 1792. Later on, painters and literati depicted them in numerous works. In the Showa period, the scenery has reduced to little more than 60 trees. Local people worrying that such a landscape took the lead in planting additional saplings and protection, and the number of pine trees reached 634 later, it was designated by the national government as a scenic spot in March 2014. The walking trail is thus now loved as something that links the past to the future.

The Eight Views of Soka

To a nationally designated scenic spot

1. Nikko kaido Soka Matsubara (Imayo Soka-shuku Area)
2. Otodana Kashi (currently only stone monument) and Simozuma Kaido (Matsubara Soka Park Area)
3. Cherry Blossom Trees of Kasai Irrigation Canal (South of the Hisazu-jinja Shrine) (Kasai Irrigation Canal Area)
4. Minatun Bridge of Forest and cherry blossom (Between Kitaya 1-choume and Koyama 1-choume)
5. The Ten Bridges over the Tatsui River (Yatsuka Area)
6. Cherry Blossom Dike of Ayase River (Ayase River Area)
7. Precincts of Sengein-jinja Shrine (Yatsuka Area)
8. Precincts of Tofukuji Temple (Imayo Soka-shuku Area)

Soka's specialties

Edamame (Green soybeans)
The edamame soybeans of Soka began to be cultivated in earnest in the mid-1940s, and they are actively produced in the whole of the city. They are characterized by their sweet and delicious taste. Shipments peak early July, and they are harvested until mid-August.

Arrowheads
When you look at the young arrowhead tubers, you will see sharp-tipped buds extending from the small spheres. Since ancient times, this has reminded people of a Japanese phrase used to celebrate a good occasion, so arrowheads pods have long been used for good luck as a dish in celebratory events. They have a distinctive bitter-sweet taste as well as a soft and fatty texture. Shipments peak in December and January.

Chrysanthemums
Chrysanthemum production in Soka is said to have begun in the Meiji period. Although it is forced to suspend in the Yatsuka and Shinden districts. The chrysanthemums produced in Soka are still high in quality and highly acclaimed in the market.

Komatsuna
Also known by the beautiful names "Yuzuna" (winter vegetable) and "yukino" (snow vegetable), Komatsuna is popular as a yellow-green vegetable with a peak harvest period in winter. It has long been cultivated in greenhouses, so it can be stably cultivated throughout the year. Komatsuna in winter is thick-leaved, loses its bitterness and becomes soft, and develops some sweetness, so it grows even tastier.

Visit: Hands-on experience

*For visits and hands-on experiences, please make a reservation by contacting the shop of your choice.

- **Field trip**
 - 1) Globes: Watanabe Kyogyo Seisakujyo Co., Ltd. +81-48-936-0339 (3-20-14, Inari) (10:00-16:00 Tuesdays)
 - 2) Metal products: Inui Fusion Co., Ltd. +81-48-931-7399 (2-11-1, Matsue)
 - 3) Metal products: Higano Co., Ltd. +81-48-931-3321 (3-24-7, Aoyagi)
 - 4) Paper products: Mori Shiki Co., Ltd. +81-936-9321 (2-11-43, Aoyagi)
 - 5) Metal machine parts: Jun Seisakujyo Co., Ltd. +81-48-931-1125 (1-5-58, Aoyagi)
 - 6) Plastic products: So-seru Co., Ltd. +81-48-922-2251 (2-5-44, Yoshicho)
 - 7) Automatic packaging machines: Kawashima Seisakujyo Co., Ltd. +81-48-925-1573 (434, Yatsuka-kamicho)
 - 8) Fusuma paper: Kikuchi Fusuma Manufacturing Co., Ltd. +81-48-925-1245 (1355, Nisatocho)
 - 9) Precision metal processing: Senkei Seiki Co., Ltd. +81-48-925-5630 (565-17, Yanagishimacho)
 - 10) Acrylic tanks: Aqua Project Co., Ltd. +81-48-942-3665 (2-7-15, Kitaya)
- **Experience**
 - 1) Senbei: Kedaya Co., Ltd. +81-48-922-2061 (4-1-40, Yoshicho)
 - 2) Senbei: Soka Senbei Shimenya Honten +81-48-931-2666 (1-11-1, Shinmei)
 - 3) Senbei and Leather: Denjo Sangyo Tenji Shitsu, "Parisse" +81-48-931-1970 (in Soka-shi Bunka Kaikan, 1-1-5, Matsue)
 - 4) Senbei: Ichikuni Honten Co., Ltd. +81-120-037-129 (2-16-18, Aoyagi)
 - 5) Senbei: Yamako Senbei Honten Co., Ltd. +81-48-941-1000 (790-2, Kimicho)
 - 6) Tofu: Matsubara Shokuhin Co., Ltd. +81-48-936-5864 (2-19-11, Nakane)

The big three local industries of Soka

Soka Senbei rice crackers are the most famous of all Soka specialties. Other local industries that have been cultivated over history include the art of yukata dyeing, with its long tradition, and high-quality leather products.

Soka Senbei

Soka Senbei are synonymous with senbei rice crackers. The baked 100-percent non-glutinous rice dough with the fragrance of soy sauce is absolutely irresistible. Soka Senbei is registered as a regional group trademark and accredited by the Japan Food Industry Association as a "genuine and authentic" food brand.

Leather

Since the mid-1920s, Soka has had many leather processors and distributors, and the city brings together all processes ranging from the treatment of raw leather to dyeing, cutting, sewing, and finished products. With a wide range of leather types, local distributors sell various products.

Yukata dyeing

This is a traditional product designated as a prefectural traditional handicraft. It is known under the "Tokyo Hanzome Yukata" brand. You will never tire of rolls of cloth and hand towels dyed with even deeper vividness by injecting the cloth with dye.

Traditional Industries Exhibition Room "Parisse"

Look at Soka's local industries and have a hands-on experience!

Permanently available on the first floor of the Soka-shi Bunka Kaikan (Soka City Culture Hall), this exhibition this room exhibits to present the history and production processes of Soka's big three local industries: senbei, leather, and yukata dyeing. You can also see local products on sale, have a hands-on experience of senbei by actually baking it by hand, and attend handcraft classes (reservations required).

DATA
Open: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Entry fee: Free
Closed: New Year holidays
Address: 1-1-5, Matsue, Soka City, Saitama Prefecture (in Soka-shi Bunka Kaikan)
Directions: Walk 5 minutes from the east exit of Dokkyodaigakumae <Soka-Matsubara> Station on the Tobu Skytree Line.
TEL: 048-931-1970

Things you should not miss in Soka City

The former Nikko Road and Soka-shuku

Soka-shuku, about 4 km from Senju, was on a road traveled by Tokoku region daimyos as they alternated living for a year in their domain and in Edo. This route was traveled by MATSUO Basho as well. Follow in their footsteps, and experience this history yourself.

B-4 Tofuku-ji Temple

Shojusan Fudojin Tofukuji
This temple is said to have been established by Kenyu in the 1606. The sanctuary, main gate, and bell tower were all built in the late Edo period. The sculpted transom windows in the outer chamber of the sanctuary, main gate, and bell tower are city-designated cultural assets.

B-6 Jizo-do of Asako House

The Asako clan, a family of successful merchants in the Edo period, is said to have picked up a stone statue of Jizo that drifted along the Akaboni irrigation canal, and enshrined it as a child-rearing Jizo. The sanctuary is made open to the public on the 24th each month, except in December.

B-4 Statue of KAWAI Sora

Enshrined in Osen Park, this statue commemorates the birth of Soka Senbei. It has a monument to commemorate the birth of Soka Senbei. It is a form of a natural rock that evokes a senbei cracker. It is an open space where people can take a rest.

B-5 Soka Station East Exit Square

Osen-san
Installed in the AKOS Plaza at the east exit of Soka Station, this is a statue of a woman baking senbei.

A-3 Shinmeigu Shrine

According to a history of Soka, this shrine was established by being enshrined in Inani delli, and then relocated to its current location at the request of the nine villages of Soka in 1713, as the general sacred protector.

Fudaba Kashi Park A-3

Located at the south end of Soka Matsubara, this park reproduces an image of what the riverside used to be. The park includes a replica of the formerly bustling riverside wharf for boat transportation. There is also a pentagonal observation tower 12.5 m high (including the height of the stone walls as a foundation). The Soka-shuku Bashi-an rest house is also in service.

A-3 Jinnzaemon Sluice

This is a double-arched brick water gate for the Den-u River. This dam was used to control the water for paddy field. The existing dam was repaired in 1894 and has been designated as a cultural asset by Saitama Prefecture.

A-3 Statue of MATSUO Basho

This structure was erected to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the start of Basho's journey in Oku-no Hosomichi. The image shows him with his stick in his right hand, and a bamboo hat on his shoulder, looking back in the direction of Senju as if he was sorry to leave his friends and disciples.

A-2 Hyakutai Bridge

This is one of two drum-shaped bridges located on the Soka Matsubara Walking Trail. Erected in 1886, the bridge takes its name from Oku-no Hosomichi: "Days and weeks are like hundreds of people passing by." From over the bridge, you can have a good view of the row of pine trees, so the bridge is an ideal viewing spot.

A-3 Yadate Bridge

This is one of two drum-shaped bridges on the Soka Matsubara Walking Trail. Erected in 1994, this bridge (Yadate Bridge) takes its name from "Oku-no Hosomichi": "With the spring gone, birds are singing as if crying, and the eyes of fish look as if filled with tears, with which I begin my writing..." Here, "writing" was written with the word "yagate."

A-2 Zenso-an Travelers of a Hundred Ages

This wooden single-storied building of the sukiya type of Japanese residential architecture was named by Japanese literature scholar Donald Keene, who also wrote the name by calligraphy. The facility is designed to disseminate all kinds of things about the tea ceremony, flower arrangement, koto, shamisen, and other traditional Japanese cultural assets related to Soka. The facility also has a rest house designed for visitors from in and around the city, and tea is served for a fee.

Historical Archives Building (Museum of History and Folklore) B-4

National registered intangible cultural asset
In 1926, it is the first school that reinforced concrete in Saitama Prefecture. It was used as a schoolhouse for Soka Elementary School for a long time, but in 1983 it was reborn as a base facility for the protection of cultural assets in Soka City. In 2008, it was registered as a national registered tangible cultural asset.

DATA
Open: 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Closed: Monday (in the case of a holiday, the next weekday), New Year holidays
Address: 1-11-29, Sumiyoshi, Soka City, Saitama Prefecture
Directions: Walk 7 minutes from the east exit of Soka Station on the Tobu Skytree Line.
TEL: 048-922-0402

Soka City Tourist Information Center

The center for disseminating sightseeing information on Soka!
In addition to information on spots and events related to Soka City's tourism, industry, history and culture, we also serve as a reception desk for town walking guides by the guide volunteer "Soka Guides Association". Digital signage and pamphlet racks are also set up, so if you are looking for information on tourism and events in Soka City, please visit the Soka City Tourist Information Center.

DATA
Open: 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Closed: New Year holidays Maru's closing day
Address: Soka Maru 1st floor (2-9-1, Takasago, Soka City, Saitama Prefecture)
Directions: Walk 3 minutes from the east exit of Soka Station on the Tobu Skytree Line
TEL: 048-999-5970

For a guide in Soka, ask to the Soka Guides Association.

As you walk through the town, you will see merchant houses and whitewashed storehouses that evoke the atmosphere of what stations on the old highways used to be like. The premises of the temples are home to many monuments to commemorate literati as well as painters and calligraphers. Fudaba-Kashi Park also serves as a stage for expressing culture and literature beginning with the image of MATSUO Basho. The centuries-old pine trees of Matsubara speak of the emotions of the people who passed by. We consider it our task to present these attractions and scenes of Matsubara to our visitors, and that is why we provide different courses to meet the diverse wishes of various groups. A guide is provided to a group of at least five visitors as a rule. You should apply in advance.

[Application / Inquiry]
Soka City Tourist Information Center
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