

Retail

Hiroshima's retail sector has its roots in the feudal era, when merchants grouped around the reigning lord's castle to supply his household with provisions. But when the heart of the city was rebuilt after WWII, retail activity shifted to shopping areas adjacent to the main railway terminal. Retail outlets are now concentrated in several shopping arcades, plus four department stores or major supermarkets. Nearly 40 per cent of Hiroshima's population is involved in the retail sector and the city's outlets account for 40 per cent of all retail sales in the prefecture.

Major retailers based in Hiroshima City are shown in Table 6, while Table 7 describes other retailers with major branches in the Chugoku region.

Tourism

Chugoku offers vacationers an abundance of national parks, hot-spring resorts and other leisure resources. However, while the region is relatively accessible and enjoys a warm climate, its tourism potential has not been developed to the same degree as the Japan Alps and Hokkaido. On the drawing board are plans for the Seto-uchi Chuo Resort in Hiroshima featuring a variety of marine leisure activities.

Foreign Trade

While many of Chugoku's once-active export industries — most notably shipbuilding and steel production — are in decline, the region's automobile exports have been bolstered by the strong presence of Mazda Motors in Hiroshima prefecture.

Industrial machinery, sports equipment, engines and parts, paints, and oxidized steel rank among Chugoku's main exports, while needles, glass beads and foodstuffs comprise lesser exports. In some of the smaller industries, between 70 and 80 per cent of production is exported. This leaves the industry extremely vulnerable to rising yen values and to increasing competition from Asian companies.

In 1988, just over 50 per cent of Hiroshima prefecture's exports went to North America, 24 per cent to Europe, 8.9 per cent to Southeast Asia, and approximately 5 per cent to each of Australasia and Latin America.

In 1988, Hiroshima's imports included lumber (35 per cent), automobile bodies and parts (19.5 per cent), chemical products (14.3 per cent), machinery (5.6 per cent), and cereals (5.5 per cent). The majority of imports were from the United States (59.5 per cent), followed by Malaysia (7.6 per cent), Canada (7.4 per cent), and the EC nations (4.6 per cent).

Table 6

Major Retailers with Headquarters in Hiroshima City

Company	Outlets in Chugoku
Supermarkets	
Izumi	34
Midori	14
Sanyo Jusco	9
Hiroden Store	-
Manso	-
Food Retailers	
Shufu no Mise	
Spark	
Department Stores	
Fukuya	11
Hiroshima Sogo*	1
* affiliate of Tokyo-based Sogo	

Table 7

Retailers with Major Branches in Chugoku

Company	Head Office	Outlets
Nichii	Osaka and Tokyo	24
Daiei	Kobe	12
Nafco	Kitakyushu	8
Fuji	Matsuyama	4
Kotobukiya	Kumamoto	2
Mitsukoshi	Tokyo	2
Izumiya	Osaka	1