Himeji Castle Information

Himeji Castle English Guided Tour
English guided tour for tourists to Japan by a professional guide.
(To learn about Himeji Castle guided tours)
[Opening days] Every day (excluding Himeji Castle’s holidays and New Year holidays)
[Time] 10:00-11:00, 13:00-14:00
[Price] Adult: 1,000 yen, Child (under 12 years old): 500 yen
[Meeting Place] Himeji Castle entrance
[Reservation] 079-221-2116
[Refreshments] There are no refreshment facilities within the castle grounds.

Himeji Castle Audio Guide
This website guides you through the history and charm of Himeji Castle.
Enjoy audio commentary on each spot on your smartphone.
(PRICE) FREE
- You must connect to the Internet with your smartphone and access the "Himeji Castle Handbook" website.
- If you are responsible for the data and roaming charges for using the Himeji Castle Audio Guide.
- Please use earphones when using the audio guide.
- If you do not have any, you can buy them for 100 yen (including tax).
- Take your phone off of manner mode before use.

AR "Himeji Castle Great Discovery" App
Download the special AR "Himeji Castle Great Discovery" App and hold your smartphone over the points in the castle to find lots of fun content, including restoration CGs of buildings, reproduced images of the inside of the castle, and explanations of the defense mechanisms in the castle.
(PRICE) FREE
- Operation may be restricted depending on congestion.
- Please download the app before visiting the castle.
(Version is not available in English)

Free App "Himeji Castle Great Discovery" Download here!

Admission Fee

- Adults: 1,000 yen
- Children: 600 yen
- Special Rate: 500 yen
- Admission: Adults: 1,000 yen, Children: 600 yen
- Access from major stations by Shinkansen
- By local train
- From airports
  - About 2 hr from Kansai International Airport by Kansai Liner
  - About 1 hr 20 min from Osaka International Airport by Kansai Liner
  - About 1 hr from Kobe Airport by Port Liner and JR

Drone flights are prohibited over Himeji Castle.

World Heritage and National Treasure
Himeji Castle
World Heritage and National Treasure

Himeji Castle

Himeji was registered as Japan’s first UNESCO Cultural World Heritage Site, in December, 1993. The entire castle, including its Main Keep, comprises an unparalleled complex of wooden buildings. It symbolizes Japan’s culture of wood craftsmanship and artistry. IKEDA TERUMASA began its construction about 400 years ago, and it has never been attacked. The current castle provides an almost completely intact example of the state of castle architecture at that time.

Restoration of the White Heron Castle Keep

Himeji Castle is characterized by its soaring majesty. Due to the similarity of its overwhelming ambience to a white heron taking flight, it is also known as the White Heron Castle. Because the structure is made of wood, it requires periodic repair and restoration. A five-year project was recently undertaken to preserve the Main Keep, and ensure that this invaluable World Heritage and National Treasure can be passed on to future generations with its beauty intact. As part of it, the structure’s plaster walls were resurfaced, and its roof tiles were replaced, for the first time in 50 years. The completion of this work was celebrated with a grand reopening in March, 2015. Don’t miss this chance to gaze at Himeji Castle, now that its blazing white brilliance has been restored.

Noteworthy Features

Beauy

Design features such as the castle’s white plaster walls and Main Keep, and an overlapping layout that causes the three small keeps to highlight the presence of each other. Also, the use of slender and light-colored latticework gives the complex a brilliant appearance. This was a decorative feature of castle roof construction, used in Japanese castle architecture. Note the combination of majestic scale and delicate detail.

Hishi Gate

Hishi Gate is the castle’s largest gate. It is named for the carved wooden water chestnut (hishi) crest at the top of its columns. The gate is distinguished by design features such as kan-mado (shaped window), which give the structure an elegant ambience.

White Plaster Exterior Walls

In this style, a wooden base is covered with plaster made by mixing clay with slaked lime, so that it is no longer visible. The material was chosen to protect against fire, including fires sparked by concealed attacks from matchlock guns. These had become widely used around the time of the construction of this castle.

Impregnability

Himeji Castle incorporates numerous battle-related design features. Its interior is so complex that it resembles a maze, to preclude incursions by large numbers of soldiers. It also has a variety of defensive works. By observing the site from the perspective of a would-be attacker, you can gain an appreciation of its effectiveness as a defensive fortress.

Pathways

The castle’s turrets and earthen walls incorporate rectangular loopholes from which defenders could unleash arrows, as well as round, triangular, and square loopholes for use with matchlock guns. Thanks to their regular spacing, these defensive works give the castle a fearsome appearance.

Machicolations

Openings known as machicolations enabled defenders to drop stones or arrows scaling the castle’s stone walls, or shoot at those with guns. In addition to the keeps, the walls and turrets at Himeji Castle also have numerous machicolations.

Paths inside the castle form a sort of maze. Various features were designed to prevent enemies from easily reaching the Main Keep. These features include branching roads, strong gates with iron doors, and narrow gates that barely allow a single-file line of men to pass through.

Himeji Castle by the Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Treasures</th>
<th>National Important Cultural Properties</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eight structures: Main Keep, East, Northwest, and West small keeps, and , Ko, Ho, and Anri corridors</td>
<td>Total of 74 structures: 27 turrets and corridors, 15 gates, and 32 earthen walls</td>
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Architectural style: hilltop castle
Inner compound: 0.23 km² / 57 ac
Outer compound: 2.3 km² / 575 ac
811 m above sea level

Height of Main Keep: 40 meters, with a flat roof
Structure of Main Keep: 5 stories, with a flat roof
Year of Registration as a World Heritage Site: 1993