

## Himeji Castle Information

### Himeji Castle English Guided Tour

English guided tour for tourists to Japan by a professional guide.  
[Himeji Castle English guided tour]

《Operating days》Every day (excluding Himeji Castle's holidays and New Year holidays)  
《Times》10:00-11:45, 13:00-14:45  
《Time Required》Approx. 1 hour and 45 minutes (may fluctuate depending on how crowded the castle is.)  
《Fee》¥ 1000 for adults ¥ 500 for junior and senior high school students (free for elementary school students and younger, but maximum two students per adult)  
《Reception area》Next to the ticket gate "Reference Room" (Information)

### 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.  
※ 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 (include 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. (The app has a large capacity)



Drone flights are prohibited over Himeji Castle.



Free App "Himeji Castle Great Discovery" Download here!



#### Admission Fees

Category	Individual Admission (less than 30 people)	Group Admission (groups of 30 or more)	Remarks
Adults	1,000 yen	800 yen	18 and over
Children	300 yen	240 yen	Elementary, Junior and Senior High School students

◎ Hours: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm (gates close at 5:00 pm) ◎ Closed: December 29th and 30th

\* Hours may be extended on a seasonal basis.  
\* Admission is free for preschool children.  
\* Combined ticket that includes admission to Himeji Castle and Koko-en Garden: Adults 1,050 yen Children 360 yen.

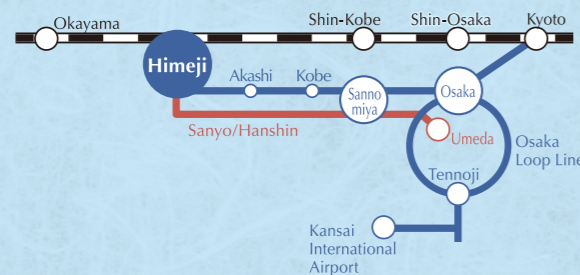
Himeji Castle's Handbook   
<https://www.himejicastle.jp/en/>

#### Access from major stations by Shinkansen



#### By local train

- [JR Special Rapid]
  - Osaka to Himeji 60 min.
  - Kobe/Sannomiya to Himeji 40 min.
- [Sanyo/Hanshin Electric Railway]
  - Umeda to Himeji 100 min.
  - Kobe/Sannomiya to Himeji 60 min.

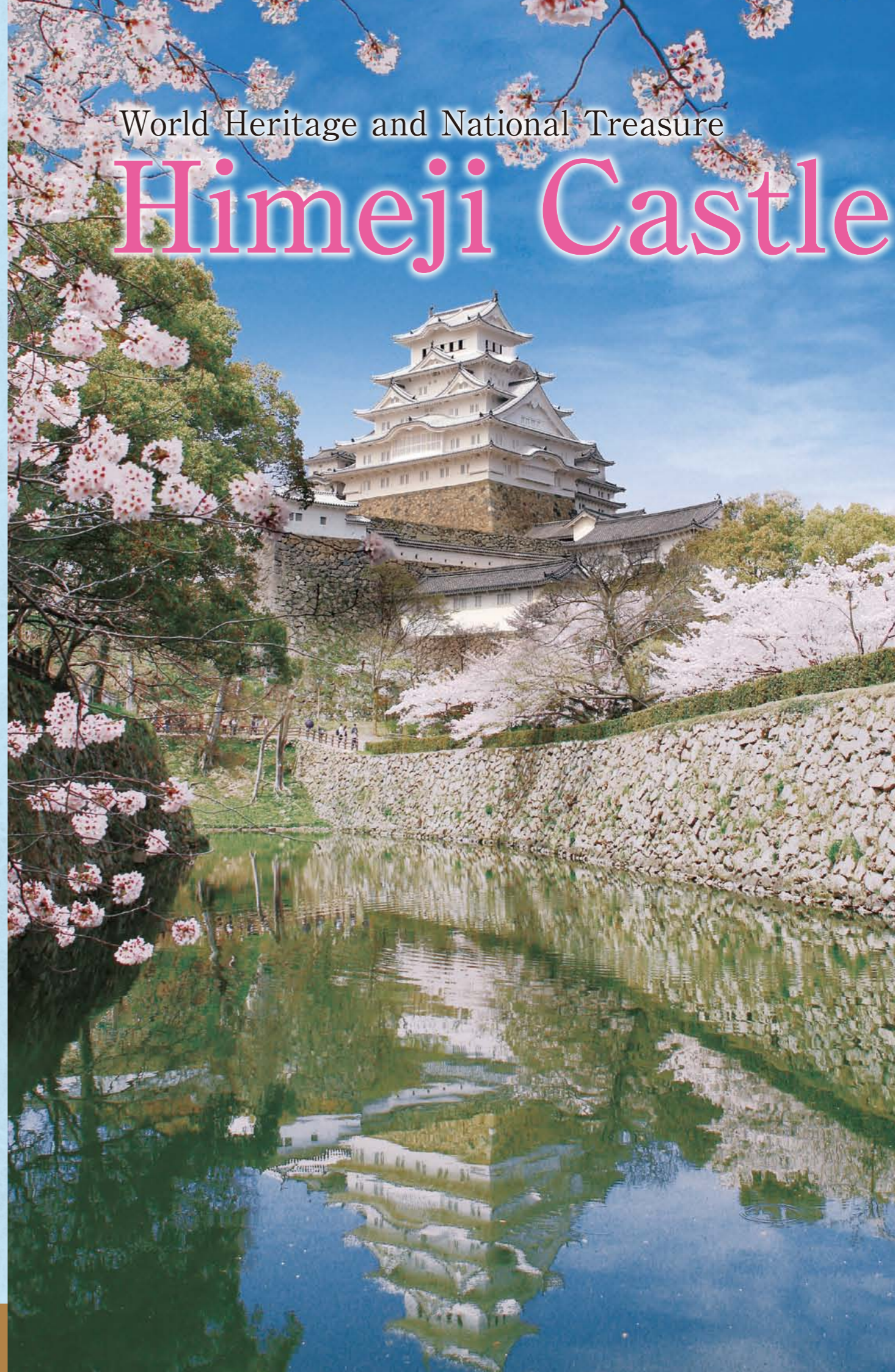


#### From airports

- About 2 hr from Kansai International Airport by Airport Limousine Bus
- About 1 hr 20 min from Osaka International Airport by Airport Limousine Bus
- About 1 hr from Kobe Airport by Port Liner and JR

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.



Major repair project undertaken during the Showa Era (around 1960)



Repair project undertaken during the Heisei Era

### ◆Himeji Castle by the Numbers

#### National Treasures

Eight structures: Main Keep, East, Northwest, and West small keeps, and I, Ro, Ha, and Ni corridors

#### National Important Cultural Properties

Total of 74 structures: 27 turrets and corridors, 15 gates, and 32 earthen walls

#### Architectural style

Flatland-mountain castle

#### Site

Inner compound: 0.23km<sup>2</sup> / 57ac

Outer compound: 2.33km<sup>2</sup> / 575ac

#### Height of Main Keep

91.9 m above sea level

#### Structure of Main Keep

7 stories, with 5 exterior roofs

#### Year of Registration as a World Heritage Site

1993

## Noteworthy Features

### Beauty

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 *chidori* and *kara* bargeboards gives the complex a brilliant appearance. This was a decorative feature of gable roof construction, used in Japanese castle architecture. Note the combination of majestic scale and delicate detail.

### Combined-keep Layout



Small keeps were positioned to the East, West, and Northwest, to protect the Main Keep. Corridors connect them, so Himeji Castle provides an intact example of a style of castle architecture known as combined-keep layout.

### Hishi Gate



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

### White Plaster Exterior Walls

In this style, a wooden base is covered with plaster (made by mixing glue with slaked lime), so that it is no longer visible. The material was chosen to protect against fire, including fires sparked by concerted 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.

### Loopholes



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 beautiful appearance.

### Machicolations



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

### Paths



### Gates



### "Buried" Gates



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

### Fan-shaped Curve



The angle of the castle's stone walls increases towards the top, creating a curved shape that resembles the contour of an opened folding fan. In addition, the shape is believed to have been used to make it difficult for attackers to scale the walls.