

Hyogo Map



Hyogo Prefecture Official Tourism Website:
"ANOTHER HYOGO"



From Kansai International Airport to Hyogo



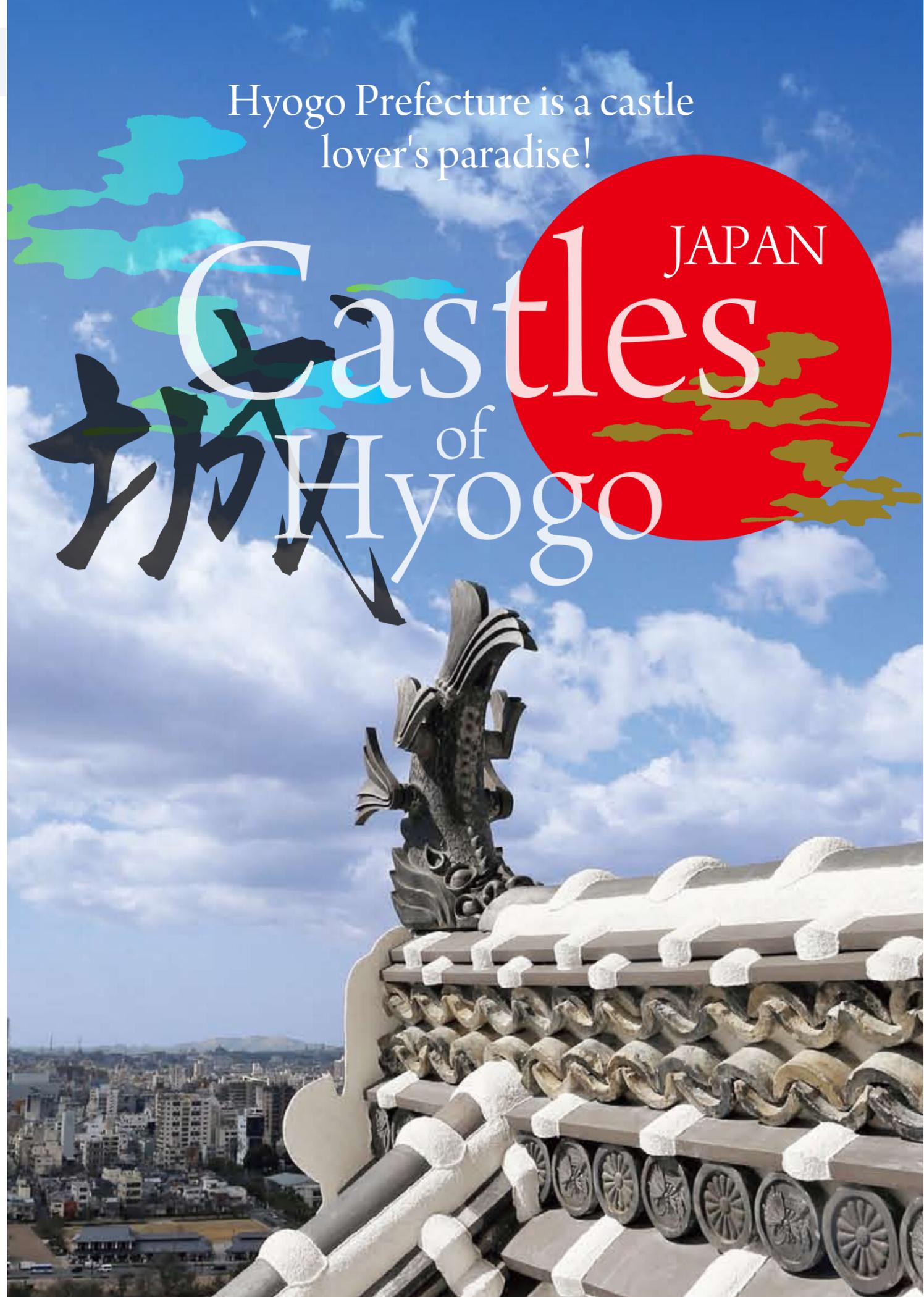
Hyogo Tourism Bureau

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Hyogo Prefecture is a castle
lover's paradise!

Castles of Hyogo

JAPAN





HIMEJI Castle



Major architectural features including the principal tower, guard towers, and gates remain unchanged from their original construction in 1609. One of the most distinguished castles in Japan in terms of compound size and number of National Treasures and National Important Cultural Properties. Designated as the first UNESCO World Heritage Site in Japan in 1993. Known as the "White Heron Castle" for its elegant white-plastered exterior.

168 Honmachi, Himeji City
 Hours: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM (Open until 6:00 PM between April 27 and August 31). *Last entry 1 hour before closing.
 Closed: December 29-30 | Admission: 1,000 yen
 Transportation: Take the Special Rapid Service from JR Sannomiya Station to Himeji Station (40 min.), take the Shinkai Bus to 'Otemon-mae' bus stop, then walk 5 minutes.



A castle renowned for both strength and beauty

Special mechanisms to foil enemy attacks are found throughout Japanese castles. Himeji Castle has an especially large number of these defensive facilities, showing that it was one of Japan's most well-defended castles.



1. **Portholes**
Holes opened in the walls or guard towers for defense using arrows or firearms. About 1,000 of these portholes remain in the castle.
2. **Stone drop**
Built into principal tower, guard towers, and walls to drop rocks on enemies climbing the stone walls or fire at them.
3. **Folding-fan Slope**
The stone walls rise steeply and the upper parts curve outward making it harder to climb. Because of its appearance, they are called 'Folding-fan Slope'.
4. **Weapon racks**
For hanging firearms, swords, or bows, they cover the inner wall of the principal tower. They are a remnant of the principal tower's former role as an armory.
5. **Gates**
Designed to prevent enemies from easily approaching the principal tower, some have sturdy iron doors, while others are so narrow that one person can barely pass through them.

Drone video of Himeji Castle available on YouTube.
Himeji Castle Multicopter Aerial Video ▶

※Unauthorized usage or reproduction of this video is prohibited. Unauthorized drone flight in Himeji Castle area is also prohibited.



Famous historical figures of Himeji Castle

Senhime

A granddaughter of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first shogun of the Edo shogunate. Married Tadaoki in 1616, the eldest son of Honda Tadamasa who is the lord of Kuwana Castle. When Tadamasa became the lord of Himeji Castle next year, they also moved in Himeji Castle and Senhime spent about 10 years living there. She built a Tenmangu shrine in order to pray for the prosperity of the Honda family on Mt. Otokoyama, where can be seen from the cosmetic tower in western compound. It is said that she prayed to Mt. Otokoyama from the tower every morning.



「本多平八郎姿絵屏風 右扇」
徳川美術館所蔵
©徳川美術館イメージアーカイブ/DNPartcom

Recommended Souvenir



Himeji Hariko (papier-mache)

Toys made of layers of Japanese paper, typically animal masks and figurines. These were produced nationwide in castle towns, which had abundant scrap paper, and are believed to have begun production in Himeji approximately 150 years ago. Available at the shop inside the castle.



TAKEDA Castle

Side trip

A mountain castle ruin atop Mt. Kojozan (353 m. elevation). The majestic stone walls stretching 400 m. north-south and 100 m. east-west were built in the mid-1590s. This is one of the largest complete stone wall remains in Japan. Also known as the "Castle in the Sky" for the mystical views of its stone walls rising above a sea of cloud in the early morning fog on sunny days in late autumn.



Teramachi-dori

"Teramachi" (temple town) refers to a concentrated area of temples and shrines around a castle town. This area acted as a line of defense against enemy attack. Takeda's "temple town" has four temples and one shrine along a 600 m. stone-paved street. White walls, koi fish swimming in a stream, and a row of pine trees make this a uniquely atmospheric spot. Traditional residences renovated into hotels have also become popular in the Takeda Castle town in recent years.

■ Takeda, Wadayama-cho, Asago City
 ■ Transportation: 5-minute walk from JR Takeda Station.



■ Takeda, Wadayama-cho, Asago City
 ■ Hours: varies by season
 ■ Admission: 500 yen
 ■ Transportation: Take the Limited Express Hamakaze from JR Himeji Station to Wadayama Station(65min.), take the train to Takeda Station from there(7min.) and take the Tenku Bus to 'Takedajoseki' bus stop, then walk 20minutes.



AKO Castle



Built in 1661. Was dismantled due to the Ordinance Abolishing Castles by the Meiji Restoration government, and only the stone walls and moat remained. However, the guard towers, gates, walls, and garden were restored starting in the mid-1900s decade. The main compound garden features a reproduction of the layout of the lord's quarters, and an overview of the whole castle may be seen from the principal tower foundation.



■ 1 Kamikariya, Aki City ■ Hours: 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM *Last entry 4:00 PM. Principal compound and Ninomaru Garden only. ■ Closed: December 28 – January 4 *Principal compound and Ninomaru Garden only. ■ Admission: Free
 ■ Transportation: Take the Special Rapid Service from JR Sannomiya Station to Banshu-Aki Station(75min.), then walk 20 minutes.



The Genroku Aki Incident aroused sympathy of common people

In the early 18th century, news of their lord's death by seppuku shook the Aki castle town. This conflict, later to be known as the Genroku Aki Incident, began in 1701 when Asano Naganori, the lord of Aki Domain, attacked and injured Master of Ceremonies Kira Kozukenosuke, against whom he held a grudge, in the Great Pine Corridor of Edo Castle. At the time, disputes were typically resolved by punishing both parties, but the shogunate ordered only Naganori to commit seppuku on the same day. About two years after Naganori's death, Oishi Kuranosuke, the head chamberlain of Aki Domain, led 47 loyal retainers in a raid on Kozukenosuke's house to avenge their lord. These 47 retainers paid for their loyalty with their lives, but their action was admired by the people as the ideal of the samurai spirit, and works known as "Kanadehon Chushingura" (The Treasury of Loyal Retainers) were created for Joruri and Kabuki theater based on this incident. Chushingura stories remain popular today, and have been featured in the countless number of films. The Hollywood movie "47 Ronin" was filmed at Aki Castle and released in 2013.



Oishi Kuranosuke, Chamberlain of Aki Domain (Aki Oishi Jinja Shrine collection)

Side trip



Aki loyal retainer historical spots

The area around Aki Castle features several locations with a connection to the loyal retainers, including Kagakuji Temple, which contains the graves of the 47, Aki Oishi Jinja Shrine, which has stone statues of each of them, and the Nagayamon Gate, a remainder of Oishi Kuranosuke's residence.





SASAYAMA Castle



Side trip



Samurai Residence Anma Family Museum

A foot soldier's residence built around 1830. The main building with thatched-roof is characterized by an L-shaped layout. Historical tools and weapons are displayed inside. 10-minute walk from Sasayama Castle.

95 Nishishinmachi, Tamba-Sasayama City
Admission: 200 yen

Oshoin Palace is the symbol of Sasayama Castle. It was built at the same time as the castle in 1609 and used for official functions of Sasayama Domain. The current Oshoin was reconstructed in 2000 and boasts a size equivalent to the Ninomaru Palace of Nijojo Castle in Kyoto in terms of residential wooden architecture in Japan. Don't miss the Jodan-no-ma room where the lord of the domain sat or the sumptuous interior furnishings. You can also try on samurai armor or a ninja costume (fee charged).



2-3 Kitashinmachi, Tamba-Sasayama City | Hours: 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM *Last entry 4:30 PM | Closed: Mondays (the next weekday when Monday is a national holiday), December 25 - January 1 | Admission: 400 yen | Transportation: Take the Limited Express Kounotori From JR Osaka Station to Sasayamaguchi Station(60min), take the Shinki Green Bus to 'Nikaimachi' bus stop, then walk 5 minutes.



SUMOTO Castle

Side trip



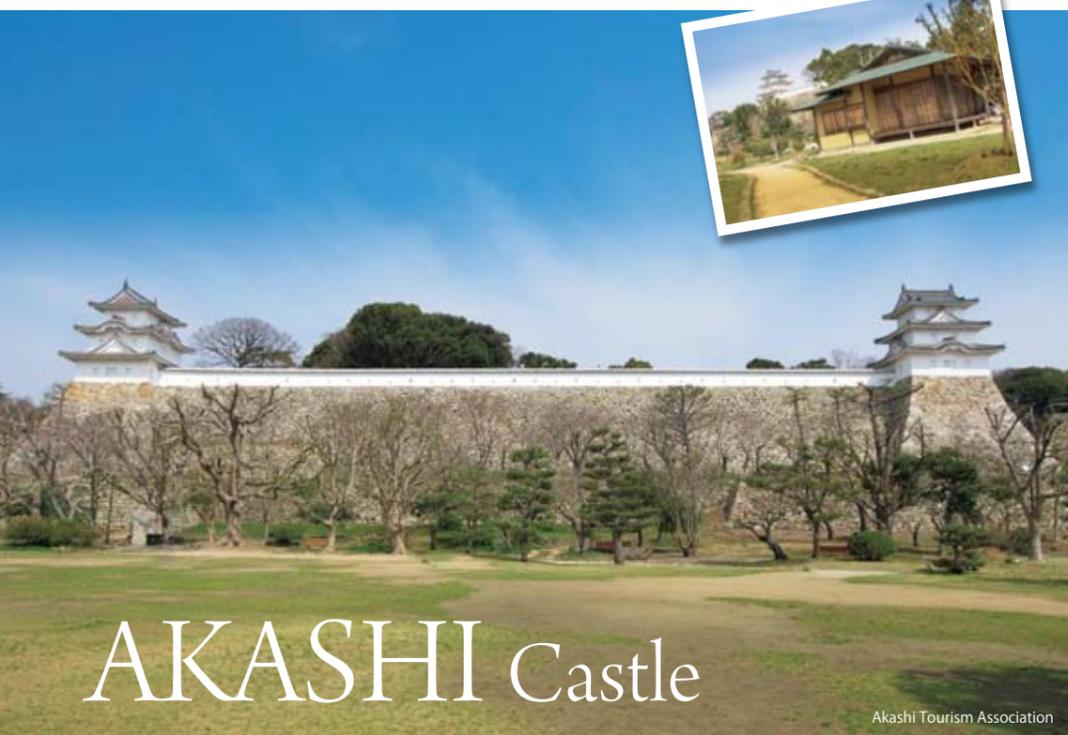
Sumoto Onsen

Large onsen ryokan (hot springs inns) and hotels line the coast near central Sumoto. Gaze out upon the beautiful Kitan Strait from an outdoor bath.

The major castle ruin of Awaji Island, Sumoto Castle has an expansive territory stretching 800 m. east-west and 600 m. north-south on Mt. Mikumayama (133 m. elevation). It has experienced several renovations since its building in 1526, and thus features stone wall from various eras with stones of different sizes and laying techniques. The principal tower foundation on the mountaintop offers a spectacular view of Sumoto City facing Osaka Bay.



1272-1 Orodani, Sumoto City | Admission: free | Transportation: Take the Express bus From JR Sannomiya Station to 'Sumoto Kosoku Bus Center' bus stop (90 min.), then 15 minutes by taxi.



AKASHI Castle

Akashi Tourism Association



Akashi local Specialty



Akashiyaki

Akashiyaki dumplings are believed to be the origin of Takoyaki (the popular treats in Kansai region) and are available at about 70 restaurants in Akashi. Akashiyaki are made of only flour, wheat starch, dashi broth, eggs, and octopus. They are cooked to round perfection in a copper pan and dipped in dashi broth to enjoy. Savor the exquisite texture of the soft dough and firm octopus.

The majestic stone walls reach to 20 meters in height and 380 meters in east-west width. east-west and the double three-layered guard towers retain their original appearance from the castle's construction in 1619. Legendary swordsman Miyamoto Musashi directed the layout of the castle town in parallel with the building of the castle. After the abolishment of castles during the Meiji Restoration, the castle remains were converted into Hyogo Prefectural Akashi Park. The Japanese garden designed by Musashi is recreated in lawn field.



1-27 Akashikoan, Akashi City | Admission: free | Transportation: Take the Special Rapid Service from JR Sannomiya Station to Akashi Station (15 min.), then walk 5 minutes. *The guard tower interior is open on Saturdays, Sundays, and national holidays during March-May and September-November.



AMAGASAKI Castle

Amagasaki local Specialty



Ankake champon noodles

Piping-hot champon noodles heaped with toppings and thick sauce. Available at about 20 Chinese restaurants in Amagasaki.

Built in 1617. Was dismantled due to the Ordinance Abolishing Castles by the Meiji Restoration government in 1873, but the principal tower was rebuilt in 2018 by a local philanthropist, aided by many citizen donations. Tower interior features a virtual reality theater that reproduces the bustle of a castle town and a commemorative photo corner where you can dress up in samurai or princess outfits.



27 Kitajonai, Amagasaki City | Hours: 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM *Last entry: 4:30 PM. | Closed: Mondays (the next weekday when Monday is a national holiday), December 29 - January 2 | Admission: 500 yen | Transportation: Take the train from Hanshin Umeda Station to Amagasaki Station (10 min.), then walk 5 minutes.

