Matsue City, Shimane Prefecture, Japan.

International City of Culture and Tourism

Matsue

Japan. Endless Discovery.
“The sun begins to set, and exquisite astonishments of tinting appear in water and sky.

Dead rich purples cloud broadly behind and above the indigo blackness of the serrated hills—mist purples, fading upward smokily into faint vermilions and dim gold, which again melt up through ghostliest greens into the blue. The deeper waters of the lake, far away, take a tender violet indescribable, and the silhouette of the pine-shadowed island seems to float in that sea of soft sweet color. But the shallower and nearer is cut from the deeper water by the current as sharply as a line drawn, and all the surface on this side of that line is a shimmering bronze—old rich ruddy gold-bronze. All the fainter colors change every five minutes—wondrously change and shift like tones and shades of fine shot-silks.”

‘Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan’ by Lafcadio Hearn
Welcome to Matsue

“The sun begins to set, and exquisite astonishments of tinting appear in water and sky.”

This is how the author Lafcadio Hearn (Japanese name: Koizumi Yakumo) described the beauty of Matsue and Lake Shinji. This beautiful town, surrounded by water and blessed with an abundance of beautiful natural scenery, is often referred to as the ‘City of Water’.

At the beginning of the 17th century, the feudal lord Horio Yoshiharu built a formidable castle on a beautiful area of land on the banks of Lake Shinji surrounded by pine trees. A town gradually emerged around the focal point provided by the castle, thus marking the beginning of the city of Matsue. The city, with its tranquil, affable demeanour and castle surrounded by an intricate network of moats, provides tantalising glimpses of an ancient Japan and bestows upon both visitor and resident alike a unique peace of mind. In 1951, Matsue City was designated as an International City of Culture and Tourism.

After the merging of Matsue City with neighbouring towns and villages in March 2005, Daisen and Oki National Park areas, historical hot springs, and other cultural assets were added, further enhancing the charms of the new Matsue City.

The people of Matsue, surrounded by an abundance of nature, also enjoy a tradition and culture unique to the area.

We hope that this guidebook will be of some help to you during your stay in Matsue, and that you will make many pleasant memories to take home with you.

Population: Approx. 200,000
Area: 573.01 km²
Climate: Average temp. February: 4.7 ℃
Average temp. August: 31.3 ℃
Yearly precipitation: 1561.5mm
Main Industry: Manufacturing (Electrical appliances), Commerce, Tourism
Specialty Products: Confectionery, Tea, Lacquerware, Agate, 7 delicacies of Lake Shinji
Other: Seat of the Shimane Prefectural government, political, economic and cultural center of the Sanin Region
Exploring & getting around Matsue

Lakeline Bus & Horikawa Sightseeing Boat Tour

Enquires about Lakeline Bus services to Matsue Transport Bureau (0852-60-1111)

Lakeline Bus & Horikawa Sightseeing Boat Tour:

- Horikawa Sightseeing Boat Tour:
  - Departures: 11:00-17:00 (90 minute intervals); plus sunset cruise
  - Bookings for more than 10 people may be made for weekdays during this period.
  - Weekend and national holiday operation for December, January, and February.
  - Full operation from March through November.

- Lake Shinji Pleasure Cruise (Approx. 1 hour)
  - Bookings for more than 10 people may be made for weekdays during this period.
  - Weekend and national holiday operation for December, January, and February.

Season

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Months</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Buses run at 20-minute intervals.</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>First Departure</th>
<th>Last Departure</th>
<th>Interval</th>
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<td>April 1st - September 30th</td>
<td>8:40 - 17:00</td>
<td>Buses run at 20-minute intervals.</td>
<td>Mar. 1st ~ June 30th</td>
<td>9:00</td>
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<td>Mar. - October - November</td>
<td>8:40 - 16:10</td>
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<td>July 1st ~ Aug. 31st</td>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>18:00</td>
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<td>Dec. 1st - February</td>
<td>8:40 - 16:10</td>
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<td>Sept. 1st ~ Oct. 10th</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Oct. 11st ~ Nov. 30th</td>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>16:00</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Dec. 1st ~ February</td>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>16:00</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
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Discounts Available to International Visitors

Full operation from March through November.
Weekend and national holiday operation for December, January, and February.
Bookings for more than 10 people may be made for weekdays during this period.
Departures: 11:00-17:00 (90 minute intervals), plus sunset cruise.

Enquires about Lakeline Bus services to Matsue Transport Bureau (0852-60-1111)
Lake Shinji is Japan’s 7th largest lake, and with a combination of both fresh and salt water, is home to a wide variety of fish and clam species. Only second to its sunset, Lake Shinji is most synonymous with its haul of shijimi clams, which are incorporated in various local dishes. The sight and sounds of the early morning fishers speckled across the lake offer a peaceful view for early risers. The sunset over the lake is noted for its vivid colours and beauty nationwide.

Yomegashima (with a circumference of only 240 metres!) is the sole island in Lake Shinji. There is a legend about the formation of the island, telling the tragic tale of a young newly-wed bride who was desperately unhappy in her new home and who wished to return home to Matsue. As it was winter, the lake was frozen over, and the quickest route was to cross directly over the lake. Whether she simply didn’t notice, or whether it was out of sheer desperation to return we do not know, she continued on despite the ice forming cracks beneath her. Before reaching the shore, she fell through the ice and drowned. It is said that the gods witnessed her misfortune, and so raised Yomegashima Island to float atop the water’s surface, where the young woman’s soul could see the lights at night of her beloved Matsue.

The island also lends its silhouette to the backdrop of the sunset! (Lakeline bus stop 28, 31, 34)

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On the south bank of the river, there is a memorial stone (round-top pillar) for Gensuke, who was said to have been a human pillar, buried alive under one of the bridge pillars when the Ohashi Bridge was being built. In spring, the large cherry blossom tree is lit up in the evening, and is a beautiful sight.

(Lakeline Bus Stop 25/1 min. walk from ‘South Bank of Ohashi Bridge’)

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While the sunset from the lakeshore of the Prefectural Art Museum is stunning, there is also a sunset viewing spot further down route 9, with parking for 36 cars. (Lakeline bus stop 31, 34)

This mountain is a designated prefectural nature park, where you can enjoy a panoramic view of Matsue City, Lake Shinji and Nakaumi, Mt. Daisen (the tallest mountain in the Chugoku region), and even as far as the Oki Islands on a clear day.

Near the summit on the approach to Kezo-ji temple, there is a 9m Buddhist stone statue, the largest in Shimane prefecture.

This lighthouse built in 1898 according to French architectural design is now home to a restaurant with a view out over the Sea of Japan, with the Oki islands visible on fine days. The lighthouse itself is designated as one of the top 100 historical lighthouses in the world.

This webpage has been set up to express the wonder and beauty of the Lake Shinji sunset. It is also the first Japanese web site to provide sunset forecast information.

http://www.kankou-matsue.jp/shinjiko_yuuhi/
Matsue Castle was constructed in 1611 by Matsue’s first Lord, Hori Yoshiharu, and has become the city’s symbol. The elegance of the castle’s swooping roofs is often compared to the wings of a plover bird (‘chidori’), which has led to the castle’s alternative name as the plover castle (‘chidori-jo’). It is the sole remaining castle in the Sanin Region, one of only 12 remaining original castles nationwide, and designated as a national treasure in 2015. The castle tower offers a panoramic view of the castle grounds and surroundings year round, with the cherry trees within the castle grounds blooming each spring. (Lakeline bus stop 7)

This building was originally constructed in 1903 to host the Meiji Emperor. His visit was cancelled, but the building was later used as lodgings for the Crown Prince Yoshihito (Taisho Emperor to be) in 1907. The building is western in design with a Japanese style roof. It was designated as a tangible cultural property by Shimane Prefecture in 1969.

This museum, opened on March 19th 2011, was designed to resemble a samurai residence. The museum exhibit includes displays about life in Matsue over its 400 year history. There is also a view of the castle enhanced by the changing seasons that can be enjoyed from the tatami floored cafe within the museum building.

Matsue Castle Town District

I - 2 Matsue Castle - 松江城

Koun Palace - 興雲閣

Matsue History Museum - 松江歴史館

I - 3 Matsue Horan- enya Memorial Hall - 松江ホーランエンヤ伝承館

Exhibition centre with displays of the Horan- enya festival, a Shinto ritual. (Lakeline bus stop 9)

Samurai Residence (Buke Yashiki) - 武家屋敷

This 270 year old residence served as a home to a middle ranking samurai and his family. You can view many domestic items from the Edo period, and the stark contrast between the elegant entrance and guest room, and the minimalist simplicity of the private quarters highlight the distinction made by the samurai classes between their public and private lives. (Lakeline bus stop 10) 


Shiomi-nawate - 塩見線手

This long street running parallel to the castle moat is a sample of traditional Japan, and has been designated as a preserved area of traditional beauty since 1973. The 500m long street lined with pine trees is a culturally affluent area of Matsue. (Lakeline bus stop 10)

Horikawa Sightseeing Boat - 墨川遊覧船

This boat tour circles the castle’s historical inner and outer moats, passing points of interest, which you may not see otherwise. The boat also passes under particularly low-built bridges from time to time, meaning the passengers need to duck down as the roof lowers. The total length of the tour is approximately 40mins, but there are two addition boarding piers where you can disembark and explore before re-boarding to complete your ride. (Lakeline bus stop 8 / 11 / 23)
The Art of Tea

Tea Ceremony and Japanese Confectionary (‘wagashi’)

Matsue is known as one of the three great tea cities of Japan, the other two being Kyoto and Kanazawa. The prominence of tea culture in Matsue is thanks to one of the former feudal lords, Matsudaira Fumai-ko (real name: Harusato). He was a tea ceremony practitioner and tool enthusiast, so much so that the tea ceremony affected the way he ruled the domain. He even went on to develop a new style of tea ceremony known as the Fumai school. Tea drinking has thus become an engrained part of everyday life in Matsue, as guests are always warmly welcomed with tea. Sampling the green tea and traditional handmade confectionaries known as ‘wagashi’ are a must during your stay.

H-2 Lafcadio Heam Memorial Museum - 小泉八雲記念館

There are approximately 200 items and documents on display in Hearn’s memorial museum, including his notes, a notebook kept by his wife Setsu, and even the suit he wore on arrival to Matsue! Hearn’s pipe collection and specially designed tall desk help us imagine the great writer at work. (Lakeline bus stop 10) (Temporarily closed for renovation, Jan. 2016 to Jul. 2016)

H-2 Lafcadio Heam’s Former Residence - 小泉八雲旧居

Hearn resided here with his wife, Setsu, for a duration of six months, May to November of 1891. The gardens of this house are kept as they were during his time here, and the house itself remains largely unchanged. This house was originally constructed in the mid-to-late stages of the Edo period. It was home to a samurai of the Matsue domain, with the main building enclosed in a Japanese garden designed to recreate the natural landscape of mountains and rivers. There are three separate gardens, each with different styles. Hearn had a fondness for all things Japanese, and was known to enjoy strolling through and looking out over the three gardens.

H-3 Meimei-an - 明々庵

Meimei-an, a teahouse built at the request of the 7th Matsudaira Lord, Fumai, is perched on a low hill, duly affording visitors with a superb view of the castle. The inscription ‘明々庵’ (Meimei-an), located by the entrance, was written by Lord Fumai himself. (Lakeline Bus Stop 9/ Approximately 4 minutes walk from ‘Shiomi Nawate’ Bus Stop) Parking for 7 cars.
**Art museums & Studios**

**C - 4 **Shimane Art Museum - 島根県立美術館

This museum opened in 1999 and stretches out along the lakeshore, providing the perfect view of the famed Lake Shinji sunset. From March through September, the museum remains open until thirty minutes after sunset to accommodate those who wish to view the spectacle. The museum has exhibited works by an array of artists, from renowned native Japanese artists to European masters, including Courbet, Monet, and Rodin. The museum also supports local work by artists associated with Shimane Prefecture. It also features a variety of interesting souvenirs in the gift shop.


**J - 3 **Karakoro Art Studio - カラコロ工房

The Karakoro Art Studio is located in the former Bank of Japan building, clearly distinguished by its Greek architecture. The studio offers workshops and handicrafts for sale, including glasswork, agate stone, silverware, pottery, woodwork and cloth work. The heavy vault doors in the basement have been preserved and should not be missed!

(Lakeline bus stop 6, 23) Parking for 10 cars.

**Z - 2 **izumo Kanbe no Sato - 出雲かんべの里

Here you can enjoy listening to the myths and legends of the Izumo region as well as experience traditional folk crafts of the region. In the ‘Minwa-Kan’ you can listen to various Izumo legends. In the ‘Kogei-Kan’, traditional arts such as washi temari, wickerware, and ceramics are displayed. If you make an appointment, you can also try to make these works of art yourself. Bicycles are also available.

(Close to City Bus ‘Fudoki no Oka’ Bus Stop) Parking for 80 cars.

**C - 4 **Abe Eishiro Memorial Museum - 安部栄四郎記念館

Amongst the items on display here are works by Eishiro Abe, who was awarded the honour of being designated a ‘Living National Treasure’ due to his instrumental role in the preservation of the art of making unsized silk paper. You can also try making paper yourself.

**C - 3 **Kimachi Stone - 来待ストーン

This museum introduces the history and culture of Kimachi Stone, which is a unique regional stone used to make Izumo Stone Lanterns. You can get hands-on carving experience at the crafts centre, and can also experience glazing and ceramic making.
The Ancient Culture of Izumo

Y - 2  Yakumo Tatsu Fudoki no Oka - 八雲立土風上記の丘

In the southern outskirts of Matsue lies Yakumo Tatsu Fudoki no Oka, an area surrounded by a large number of ancient ruins and venerable shrines. These cultural assets are preserved and utilised under the collective banner of ‘Fudoki no Oka’. The site’s central institution, ‘The Fudoki no Oka Museum’, serves to give a profound insight into the world of Ancient Izumo through its showcase of archaeological artifacts.

The area includes the Okadayama Burial Mounds, the Yamashiro Futago Zuka Burial Mounds, the ancient ruins of the administrative offices of the Province of Izumo which date from the Nara Period (710-794 AD), and the ruins of the Izumo Provincial Temple. You can also find the main sanctuary of Kamosu Shrine, a designated National Treasure, and Yaegaki Shrine nearby.

Flowers & Gardens

F - 1  Matsue Vogel Park - 松江フォーゲルパーク

This is a park full of flowers and birds that are unusual in Japan. The greenhouses are amongst the largest in the world, and one can enjoy thousands of varieties of begonia and fuchsia blooming all year long. In addition, there is also two bird zones where you can look at the many bird species, feed the birds and enjoy an owl show. From the observatory platform, one can have a wonderful view of Lake Shinji.

Parking for 300 cars.
(Adjacent to Ichibata Railway’s ‘Matsue Vogel Park’ Station)

C - 4  Izumo Tamatsukuri Historic Park - 出雲玉作史跡公園

Izumo Tamatsukuri Historic Park lies in the hills to the rear of Tamayu Town’s Tamatsukuri Onsen district. The ruins uncovered represent the largest find of former jewelry-making facilities and workshops within Japan. The site contains artifacts dating from the Yayoi Period (300BC – AD250) through to the Kofun Period (AD250–538). The park also features many informative displays, and you can further study the art of ancient jewelry making at the site’s museum.

F - 4  Matsue English Garden - 松江イングリッシュガーデン

Here one can enjoy scenery created by many different plants from English traditional-style gardens. The flowers and trees combine to make a naturally picturesque environment that boasts around 500 types of plants all year round.

It is a 5-minute walk from the Ichibata Electric Railway station Matsue English Garden-Mae. There are 280 parking spaces.
B-5 Daikonshima (Island) - 大根島

Daikonshima is Japan’s largest producer of peony flower shrubs, which come to full bloom in late April, with winter versions also being grown here. Daikonshima also has a long history of producing medicinal grade ginseng. The exhibition conservatory, Green Stelliar, also houses Chinese peony flowers.

B-5 Yuushien Japanese Garden - 日本庭園由志園

This traditional Japanese garden, with the peony flower as its predominant symbol, is resplendent year-round with a variety of seasonal blooms. It also incorporates the volcanic rock on which Daikonshima is formed into the garden’s design. And unlike other gardens that are created to be viewed, Yuushien is designed as a walk-through garden. There is also a restaurant and café both serving high quality food and beverages.

A-2 Gessho-ji Temple - 月照寺

Gessho-ji Temple is the family temple of the Matsudaira Clan, who were feudal lords of Matsue. The graveyard and the tomb gates remain as they were in feudal times. In the grounds of the temple, there is a monstrous stone tortoise, which has a large stone pole driven through its back. According to legend, this pole was driven through the tortoise’s back in order to prevent it from walking about at night, as it was said to have done!

Gessho-ji is also renowned for its beautiful hydrangea blossoms, which are perfect for viewing in May.
(Lakeline bus stop 15/ ‘Gessho-ji Temple’ bus stop)
Parking for 30 Cars.

H-2 Jozan Inari Shrine - 城山稲荷神社

This Inari Shrine was established by Naomasa Matsudaira, who became lord of the Matsue domain in 1638. There are more than 2000 carved foxes surrounding the shrine, and a set of wooden foxes by a renowned sculptor of the time, housed within the shrine itself. Lafcadio Hearn is said to have often visited this shrine.

Q-1 Shirakata Tenman-gu Shrine - 白鴉天滿宮

This shrine is dedicated to Michizane Sugawara, and is known locally as “Tenjin-san”. Every year, on July 24th and 25th, there is a summer festival held here. People carry small portable shrines on their shoulders through the streets, and a large number of stalls are set up, selling food, drink, toys and so on.
Approximately a 7-min walk from JR Matsue Station.
The Province of the Gods

The Province of Izumo, in which Matsue is situated, has an abundance of legends and myths, and is therefore known as the ‘Province of the Gods’. Among these legends, stories about the deity Susano-o-no-Mikoto are the most famous. He was the hero who saved the beautiful princess ‘Inata-hime’ from an eight-headed serpent, ‘Yamata no Orochi’. This eight-headed serpent was red, and had eight heads and eight tails. Its body was the length of eight valleys, and was as tall as an eight storied building. Susano-o-no-Mikoto defeated the serpent by leaving barrels of Japanese sake for it to drink, and when it fell asleep drunk, he killed it. There are many other myths about this brave deity.

In November (the 10th month of the lunar calendar) each year, the gods from all over Japan gather in Izumo. Therefore everywhere else in Japan is known as the month without gods, whereas in Izumo it is known as the month when gods are present.

Y-1 Yaegaki Shrine - 八重垣神社

In the legend “Yamata-no-Orochi”, after slaying the eight-headed serpent, the deity Susano-o-no-Mikoto and his new bride, Inata-hime, were wed in this shrine and it has therefore come to be known as the shrine of happy marriages. In the shrine grounds you can find the “Mirror Pond”, which Inata-hime used as a mirror. There is a custom of placing a coin on a piece of paper and floating it on the surface of the pond. The length of time the paper takes to sink is said to signify your luck in love. It is next to the City Bus “Yaegaki Jinja” bus stop. Rental bicycles are available.

Z-2 Kamosu Shrine - 神魂神社

The main hall of this shrine is said to be the oldest standing sample of ‘Taisha’ style architecture, and as such, is designated as a national treasure. The shrine deifies Izanami-no-mikoto, the mother of the gods. The stone stairway leading to the shrine create a solemn and secluded atmosphere. Approximately a 3 minute walk from City Bus ‘Kanbe-no-Sato’ bus stop. Parking for 20 cars.

B-4 Sada Shrine - 佐太神社

Sada Shrine has the rare characteristic of being composed by three impressive Taisha-style buildings. Sada Shin-noh, a ritual dance designated as an UNESCO Intangible World Heritage, is performed at this Shrine. Parking for 60 cars.

C-4 Kumano Taisha - 熊野大社

Kumano Taisha, dedicated to the god Susano-o-no-Mikoto, is a beautiful shrine located in southern Matsue by Yuai Yakumo-kan Onsen. Parking for 100 cars.

B-6 Miho Shrine - 美保神社

Miho Shrine, located in Mihonoseki Harbour at the eastern tip of Shimane Peninsula, is the head of all shrines deifying Ebisu, the lucky god of fishermen and fortune, throughout Japan. This means that it is a shrine of great importance, drawing large numbers for two of its main rituals, morotabune and aofushigaki Shinto rituals.
Other Sights Worth Seeing

B−1 Izumo Taisha (Izumo City) - 出雲大社 (出雲市)

The ancient shrine of Izumo Taisha enshrines Okuninushi-no-Mikoto, the god of happy marriages, and with its magnificent main hall some 24 metres in height built in the Taisha Grand Shrine style, Izumo Taisha is designated as a National Treasure. In the 10th month of the lunar calendar, when the gods that reside throughout Japan are said to congregate in the Izumo region, a festival is held at the shrine welcoming the gods.

B−1 Shimane Museum of Ancient Izumo (Izumo City) - 鳥取県立古代出雲歴史博物館 (出雲市)

The Shimane Museum of Ancient Izumo was opened in March 2007. Ancient artifacts such as remains from Izumo Taisha’s stairway pillars, Japan’s largest collection of excavated bronze swords and bells, and the Izumo Fudoki (Japan’s most complete remaining chronicle of ancient history) are on display. Also on display are replicas of the ancient Izumo Taisha Grand Shrine, said to have reached nearly 50m in height.

D−5 Adachi Museum of Art (Yasugi City) - 足立美術館 (安来市)

The Adachi Museum of Art melds the work of contemporary Japanese artists such as Taikan Yokoyama and Kanjiro Kawai with an awe-inspiring Japanese-style garden that has been lauded both in Japan and abroad. The museum’s innovative design deftly frames the features of the garden through its numerous windows allowing visitors to view the garden as though it were a living, constantly shifting landscape painting.

Iwami Silver Mine (Oda City) - 石見銀山 (大田市)

The Iwami Silver Mine, located in Oda City, was registered as a World Heritage Site in 2007. At its peak, Iwami accounted for a third of worldwide silver production. Ryugenji-mabu is currently the only mine open to the public. This, together with the other buildings selected for preservation in Omori, provides a valuable insight into an important part of Japanese culture during the Edo Period.

Mt. Daisen (Daisen-cho, Tottori Prefecture) - 大山 (鳥取県大山町)

Mt. Daisen is a mountain whose demeanour and singular beauty evolves with the steadily changing seasons, and with an altitude of 1,709m it is the highest peak in the Chugoku region. The mountain itself boasts a wide array of tourist facilities, and offers the perfect location for a variety of different sports.
Onsen: Natural Hot Springs

The Matsue area is blessed with a wide array of hot spring facilities in which visitors can relax and enjoy the many health benefits the waters have.

B - 2 Matsue Shinji-ko Onsen - 松江しんじ湖溫泉

The source of the Matsue Shinji-ko hot spring lies some 1,250 meters below ground, and the temperature of the water at its source exceeds 77°C. The spring water is rich in sulphates and chlorates, and it is thought to relieve neuralgia, rheumatism, and other ailments.

Matsue Shinji-ko Onsen Foot Spa

Visitors can soak travel-worn feet in the soothing waters of the natural hot spring found in front of Matsue Shinji-ko Onsen Station. This station and free foot spa are located at the entrance to the Matsue Shinji-ko Onsen district, which has plenty of lodging available to visitors.

C - 3 Tamatsukuri Onsen - 玉造温泉

This hot spring was mentioned in the Chronicles of Izumo Province (Izumo Fudoki), in which it is written that even the gods enjoyed bathing here. The winter scenery of steam rising in the chilly air and the springtime view of the cherry blossoms flowering along the Tamayu River should not be missed. Many Japanese style inns can be found here, and some bathing-only facilities are also available.

C - 3 Wishing Stone - 願い石

The nearby Tamatsukuri-yu Shrine is famous for its Wishing Stone, a popular power spot. Visitors can make a wish as they pour hot water on the stone, and then take home a small wish-granting stone as a souvenir.
O-shiro Castle Festival

End of March through mid-April

In spring, many cherry trees bloom around Matsue Castle, and many native residents and visitors alike come to the castle grounds to see them. Various events, such as performing arts and local specialty markets, are organised around the castle this time.

Musha Gyoretsu Warrior Parade

The first Saturday of April

During this event, residents clad in traditional warrior costumes parade through the streets of Matsue, recreating a spectacle first witnessed when Horio Yoshiharu, the first feudal lord of Matsue, strode into the city with his troops to officially occupy the newly completed castle.

Horan-enya

May, every 10 years

In 1648, the Matsue domain’s crops failed, and the deity of Jozan Inari Shrine, which is the deity of good harvests, was brought in procession to Adakaya Shrine on the outskirts of the city in order to pray for a quick recovery. The procession has been held every 10 to 12 years since then. Approximately 100 ships display flags and banners and sail in procession, while the rowers chant “Horan-enya!” There are five boats among them called “Kaidenma-sen,” on the bows and sterns of which dancers in Kabuki style costumes perform oar and baton dances. Currently held once every ten years, Horan-enya is known as one of the three great boat processions in Japan.

Suigo-sai Fireworks Festival

End of July through beginning of August

This summer festival best represents the “water city” image of Matsue. It began as the festival of Chikubu-jima Shrine on Yomegashima, an island on Lake Shinji. The fireworks display held during this festival lights up the night sky and is reflected on the surface of the lake.

Matsue Do-gyoretsu Drum Parade

The third Sunday of October

The “do” drums, which have a diameter of two metres, are placed on large floats which are pulled by children. The pounding of the drums is accompanied by flutes, and the sound of this energetic procession echoes throughout the city.

Matsue Dandan Food Festival

February

Following spring’s Castle Festival, summer’s Suigo-sai Fireworks Festival, and autumn’s Do-gyoretsu Drum Parade, the Food Festival is Matsue’s main winter event. At various locations throughout the city, you can savour a variety of delicacies made from local ingredients.

Matsue City’s Annual Schedule of Events

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<td>New Year Shrine Visits</td>
<td>Early January</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sagicho Tondo (Ritual to burn the New Year decorations)</td>
<td>Mid-January</td>
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<tr>
<td>Omochi-san Rice Cake Festival</td>
<td>Late Jan ~ Early Feb</td>
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<td>Kumano Grand Shrine’s Setsubun (Start of Spring) Festival</td>
<td>Early February</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matsue Dandan Food Festival</td>
<td>February</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sugawara Tenman-gu Shrine Spring Festival</td>
<td>Late March</td>
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<tr>
<td>O-shiro Castle Festival</td>
<td>Late Mar ~ Early Apr</td>
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<td>Musha Gyoretsu Warrior Parade</td>
<td>Early April</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aofushigaki Shinto Ritual</td>
<td>Early April</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peony Festival</td>
<td>Late Apr ~ Early May</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Shirakata Tenman-gu Shrine Summer Festival</td>
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<td>Matsue Suigo-sai Fireworks Festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matsue Obon Festival Flower Market</td>
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<td>Obon Floating Lantern Festival</td>
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<td>Matsue Shinni-ko Onsen Deity Festival</td>
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<td>Takeuchi Shrine Festival</td>
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<td>Matsue Suitoro Illumination Festival</td>
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<td>Kumano Grand Shrine Fire Extinguishing Festival</td>
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<td>Castle Garden Chrysanthemum Exhibition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kamiarizuki “Month of the Gods”</td>
<td>Mid-Oct ~ Late Nov</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matsue Do-Gyoretsu Drum Parade</td>
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<td>Sada Shrine Festival</td>
<td>Late November</td>
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<td>Morotabune Boat Ritual</td>
<td>Early December</td>
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The Seven Delicacies of Lake Shinji

Lake Shinji, which has a mix of fresh water and salt water, has given rise to a unique and varied food culture. The whitebait of early spring, the shiromai clams and eel of summer, the shrimp of autumn, and the bass, smelt, and carp of winter are collectively known as the seven delicacies of Lake Shinji.

Izumo Soba

This variety of soba (buckwheat noodles) is characterised by a grey-black colour, a firm texture, and a fine aroma. It is normally served in round dishes known as “warigo,” with seaweed, spring onion, and a thick sauce.

Dry Persimmons

Praised since the Warring States era for their colour, size and taste, Matsue’s dried persimmons are well known for attaining perfect texture and softness. In late autumn, there are many shops decorated with strings of the fruit as they dry.

Shijimi Clams from Lake Shinji

This variety of clam, known as Yamato Shijimi, is larger than other kinds of shijimi and is well-suited for miso soup and other dishes. Early in the morning, you can see fishermen in boats on Lake Shinji gathering these clams.

Local Sake

Shimane has a reputation for clear water, high-quality rice, plenty of fresh air, and skilled sake brewers—all of which are important factors in the production of exquisite Japanese sake. That is why the local sake has such a pleasant aroma and taste.

Green Tea and Japanese Confectioneries

Along with Kyoto and Kanazawa, Matsue is a city well-known for the tea ceremony. Tea has been an integral part of life in Matsue since the time of the 7th feudal lord, Matsudaira Harusato (nicknamed Fumai), who loved the tea ceremony and founded his own school, known as the Fumai school. There are many tea houses operating around the city, and confectionery shops that specialise in “wagashi,” which are decorative, traditional sweets that are the perfect compliment to green tea.

Matsue faces the stretch of the Sea of Japan between the Shimane Peninsula and the Oki Islands, and this stretch is rich with sea creatures. You can enjoy the taste of freshly caught mackerel, sea bream, squid, and yellowtail, as well as a wide variety of shellfish, such as turban shells and abalone. There are also seaweed varieties such as wakame and laver, which make for an enjoyable range of seafood.

Agonoyaki

Agonoyaki is a type of sausage made from grilled flying fish paste. The flying fish, or “ago,” is the prefectural fish of Shimane, and the meat of this fish is made into a paste, which is then grilled slowly over a charcoal fire. It has a very distinct taste and texture.

Eaten raw, squid is soft and flavoursome. It can also be dried naturally for a few days, then grilled and broken into strips by hand before eating. This brings out the flavour of the squid, and it is the perfect accompaniment for Japanese sake.
Yakumo-nuri Lacquer

This is a traditional folk craft that has been handed down since the time of the feudal lords, who employed master artisans to create lacquer goods for them. One characteristic of this type of lacquer is that the gloss becomes more transparent and the colour becomes more vivid with time.

Agate

The Izumo area has been well-known as a source of agate since ancient times. The brightness of the stone, which has been admired for centuries, is still used in accessories and ornaments today. Comma-shaped beads called “magatama” are a popular agate item.

Rakuzan Pottery

The Rakuzan kiln has been passed down for eleven generations, and is especially well-known for tea ceremony items that were commissioned by the lords of the Matsue domain.

Fujina Pottery

Originating from the Tamayu area of Southern Matsue, Fujina style pottery adopted the slipware technique for adding patterns with cosmetic mud.

Lake Shinji Shijimi Clam Centre

Located between at the northern bank of Lake Shinji in the Shinjo-ko Onsen area, this is the best place to choose from shijimi clam products, as well as other souvenirs.

Matsue Horikawa Microbrewery (Jibiru-kan)

Featuring a selection of locally brewed products, this centre is the perfect place to take a break and enjoy a beer indoors or outdoors. It is right next to one of the Horikawa Sightseeing Boat ports, making it a good starting or ending point for a boat tour or a stop along the way.
We have the following discounts available for international visitors. Please present a valid passport or resident card at the ticket office.

1. Matsue Castle
   - Adult: ¥560
   - Discount: 50%OFF → ¥280

2. Samurai Residence (Buke Yashiki)
   - Adult: ¥300
   - Discount: 50%OFF → ¥150

3. Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum
   - Adult: ¥400
   - Discount: 50%OFF → ¥200

4. Lafcadio Hearn’s Former Residence
   - Adult: ¥300
   - Discount: 50%OFF → ¥150

5. Meimei-an
   - Adult: ¥410
   - Discount: 50%OFF → ¥200

6. Horikawa Sightseeing Boat
   - Adult: ¥1,230
   - Discount: 33%OFF → ¥820

7. Matsue History Museum
   - Adult: ¥510
   - Discount: 50%OFF → ¥250

8. Horan-enya Memorial Hall
   - Adult: ¥200
   - Discount: 50%OFF → ¥100

9. Gessho-ji Temple
   - Adult: ¥500
   - Discount: 50%OFF → ¥250

10. Shimane Art Museum (Special Exhibitions)
    - Adult: ¥1,000
    - Discount: 50%OFF → ¥500

11. Adachi Museum of Art
    - Adult: ¥2,300
    - Discount: 50%OFF → ¥1,150

12. Yuushien Japanese Garden
    - Adult: ¥800
    - Discount: 50%OFF → ¥400

13. Matsue Vogel Park
    - Adult: ¥1,540
    - Discount: 30%OFF → ¥1,080

14. Shimane Museum of Ancient Izumo
    - Adult: ¥610
    - Discount: 50%OFF → ¥300

15. Yasugi-bushi Entertainment Hall
    - Adult: ¥600
    - Discount: 50%OFF → ¥300

16. The Izumo Museum of Quilt Art
    - Adult: ¥700
    - Discount: 50%OFF → ¥490

17. Tezen Museum
    - Adult: ¥600
    - Discount: 50%OFF → ¥300

18. Lake Shinji Pleasure Cruise
    - Adult: ¥1,450
    - Discount: 30%OFF → ¥1,000

19. Kojindani Archaeological Museum
    - Adult: ¥205
    - Discount: 50%OFF → ¥102
**Local Transportation and Sightseeing Information**

### Sightseeing Taxi (Japanese)

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<tr>
<td>Matsue Sightseeing</td>
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<td>(2hrs)</td>
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*It is possible to adjust the times according to your preference.*

### Bicycle Rental

- Nippon Rental (in front of Matsue Station)  TEL: 0852-21-7518
- Mazda Rent-A-Car (North Matsue Station branch)  TEL: 0852-26-8787

### Tour Guide Information

#### Matsue City Sightseeing Volunteer Guides (Japanese)
Free guided tours around the Matsue Castle area (reservation required).
Tours start at Matsue Castle’ s Otemae gate on Sundays from March to mid-December, 9:00 – 16:00.
Contact the Matsue City Guide Tourism Association to make a reservation.
TEL: 0852-27-5843

#### Izumo Mahoroba Tourist Guide Association (Japanese)
Guided tours of the historical sites around the Yakumo Tatsu Fudoki no Oka area (reservation required).
Contact the Yakumo Tatsu Fudoki no Oka Resource Centre to make a reservation.
TEL: 0852-23-2485

### Matsue City Sightseeing Goodwill Guide
Free English guided tours of the main tourist spots around the Matsue Castle area (reservation required).
Available on weekends March through November, 10:00 – 16:00.
Tours start near the ticket office at the top of the castle grounds.
Contact the Matsue City International Tourist Information Office to make a reservation.
TEL: 0852-21-4034

### Matsue International Tourist Information Office
Tourist information, reservations, and accommodation assistance
Located in front of Matsue Station
TEL: 0852-21-4034  FAX: 0852-27-2598  Open every day 9:00 – 18:00
472-2 Asahi-Machi, Matsue City, Shimane Prefecture, 690-0003
Email: annai1@web-sanin.co.jp

### Tourism enquiries

#### Matsue City International Tourism Division
TEL: 0852-55-5632  FAX: 0852-55-5550
86 Suet-su-cho, Matsue City, Shimane Prefecture
Email: kokusai@city.matsue.lg.jp

#### Tamatsukuri Onsen Japanese Inn Cooperative Association
Open Monday through Saturday (except holidays), 9:00 – 17:00
TEL: 0852-62-0634
32-7 Tamatsukuri, Tamayu-cho, Matsue City, Shimane Prefecture

#### Matsue Tourism Association
TEL: 0852-27-5843  FAX: 0852-26-8669
19 Nakahara-cho, Matsue City, Shimane Prefecture

#### Tamatsukuri Onsen Tourism Association
32-7 Tamatsukuri, Tamayu-cho, Matsue City, Shimane Prefecture

### Internet Information

- **Sightseeing Navigation in SHIMANE**
- **Welcome to Matsue**
  URL: [http://www.visit-matsue.com/](http://www.visit-matsue.com/)

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*The information above is subject to change.*

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*(Bicycles from either location can be returned to either location.)*

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This map is based on the 1:20,000 topographical map, the 1:25,000 topographical map, and the 1:10,000 topographical map published by the Geographical Survey Institute with its approval under Article 30 of the Surveying Law. (Authorization number: Heisei 24 Jo-shi, No. 541).

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