

## Futamiura

The Meoto Iwa (“Husband and Wife Rocks”) of Futamiura are a famous sight in Japan. The two rocks, a large one and a small one, are joined by a thick rice straw rope. In the past, these rocks were thought to be a gate separating the divine world from the human world. They are now considered a symbol of wedded couples. It is a popular place for newly-married couples to visit. Protection charms for happy marriages are sold at the shrine facing the Meoto Iwa. There are many statues of frogs at the shrine, symbols of a safe journey home.

Between May and July, the sun rises between the two rocks. A beautiful full moon also appears perfectly positioned between them from November to February. Historically, this spot was used to wash and purify the body before continuing to the most important *jinja* (Shinto shrine) complex in Japan, Ise Jingu.

Nearby is the Hinjitsukan, a former imperial vacation residence, completed in 1887. Its interior reveals an intriguing blend of traditional Japanese and Western-inspired decor, best seen in the large banquet room. The style of the walls and the floor is Japanese, yet there are impressive chandeliers hanging from the ceiling.