

Rebirth of the White Heron Castle

The most recent restoration of Himeji Castle took place between 2009 and 2015. This restoration was performed using period-accurate techniques and materials in order to preserve its classical architectural elements and signature white plaster. In total, the project cost approximately 2.4 billion yen to complete.

The castle has undergone multiple restorations since its construction at the turn of the seventeenth century, but by 1912 the castle had fallen into disrepair. Many of its buildings were damaged and its plaster was faded and discolored. In 1964, the first full-scale restoration of the castle was completed, the walls were re-plastered, and the White Heron Castle was returned to its former beauty.

However, by the early 2000s, the castle's white walls had turned gray once again. The keep's walls and roofs were completely re-plastered using traditional materials—a mixture of hemp fiber, lime, and seaweed paste. All of the roof tiles were removed and assessed, and 80 percent of them were reused when the roof was reassembled. Earthquake-resistant reinforcements were added to the castle foundations, first floor, and sixth floor, and the castle's eaves, gables, and roof ornaments were completely repaired.

Overview of the Restoration

Total Cost: 2.4 billion yen over 6 years

Roof completely restored (80 percent of tiles reused)

Exterior walls of floors 1–5 re-plastered

Damaged floorboards and windows repaired

Earthquake-resistant reinforcement of the basement, 1st, and 6th floors