

Festival for Abundant Crops

Ebumi Shrine hosts a number of festivals and celebrations throughout the year, the most famous of which is the annual Hassaku Odori Dance Festival. This unique celebration has been designated as an Intangible Folk Cultural Property by Kyoto Prefecture.

Traditionally a rite to pray for the harvest, the festival is now held on the last Saturday in August. It starts with the residents of Ohara, wearing ceremonial kimono, praying for a bountiful harvest as they approach the shrine. On reaching the open area at the base of the shrine steps, they form a circle and perform a series of traditional dances around a *kagura* stage. *Kagura* is a Shinto ceremonial dance.

Originally constructed toward the end of the Heian period (794–1185), Ebumi Shrine houses Uka no Mitama no Kami, the guardian deity of Ohara village. In classical Japanese mythology, he is also the deity associated with food and agriculture. The name means “the god of rice in storehouses.”