

Main Shrine

The main shrine of Iwashimizu Hachimangu is Japan's largest and oldest example of the *hachiman-zukuri* style of shrine architecture. It dates back to a reconstruction completed in 1634 under the third Tokugawa shogun, Tokugawa Iemitsu (1604–1651). Many of the structures are designated National Treasures.

Visitors pray at the two-storied gate that comprises the front of the main shrine. The gate extends into covered corridors that enclose the buildings within. Past the gate is the prayer hall where priests perform rituals. The prayer hall is in turn connected to the shrine's main sanctuary. The buildings are decorated with over 150 colorful woodcarvings of plants, animals, and mythical creatures.

The main sanctuary is characteristic of the *hachiman-zukuri* style. It looks like two separate buildings from the side, but is comprised of a single structure with two roofs. The interior is divided into an outer hall and an inner hall, both containing three rooms side by side, one for each enshrined deity. Between the roofs is a golden rain gutter donated by the prominent warlord Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582).