

Welcome to Ancient Izumo

The Shimane Museum of Ancient Izumo preserves and displays an extensive collection of artifacts related to the history of Shimane Prefecture—particularly the region known as Izumo. Often called the “land of the gods,” Izumo is one of three former provinces that make up modern Shimane. Izumo features prominently in some of Japan’s earliest written chronicles, and the region holds considerable significance in the country’s mythology and early political history.

Three themed exhibitions focus on the spiritual traditions and culture of ancient Izumo. One of these exhibits is devoted to Izumo Grand Shrine, a major Shinto shrine located just west of the museum. Other exhibits depict daily life in ancient times and display a massive trove of bronze swords and bells excavated from prehistoric sites in the region. The museum’s Mythology Theater shows four short films introducing myths set in Izumo. A general exhibition hall introduces the history and culture of the greater Shimane area from prehistoric to modern times.

Established in 2007, the museum was designed by internationally renowned architect Maki Fumihiko, who incorporated elements of local history in its design. The museum’s steel walls, for instance, reflect the Shimane region’s role in *tatara* iron manufacturing.

The avenue of katsura trees leading to the main entrance is roughly 109 meters long, echoing the length of the ancient staircase that once led to the main sanctuary of Izumo Grand Shrine.

Step inside to explore Shimane and the world of ancient Izumo!