

## Goshinkosai (Great Summer Festival)

Date: July 31st – August 2nd

The Goshinkosai is a major summer festival and the most popular event that takes place at [Usa Jingu Shrine](#). It was originally a purification rite in the Heian period (794–1185), and now the tradition of summer purification is combined with a ceremonial visit by the deities to the nearby community. In addition to ritual activities and the lively *mikoshi* (portable shrine) parade, the celebration includes traditional music and dance performances, as well as various market stalls with food, drinks, and games.

### *July 31: Departing Procession*

On the first day, the deities of Usa Jingu (Hachiman, the Hime Okami, and Empress Jingu) are ceremonially transferred from the sanctuaries at the [Jogu \(Upper Shrine\)](#) to three *mikoshi* and depart toward the [Tongu](#), a temporary enshrinement site, accompanied by a procession of about 250 participants. A parishioner portraying Sarutahiko, the deity of guidance, leads the way, followed by musicians, children dressed in colorful costumes, community representatives in traditional formal clothing, and the priests of Usa Jingu.

The *mikoshi* bearers descend the stairs to the large open space near the Haraedo platform, where they rotate their *mikoshi* three times and raise it high into the air. From this point on, a shrine carpenter rides on the supporting poles of each portable shrine. This tradition remains from the custom of “battling” to determine the order of the procession, which sometimes warranted mid-festival repairs. The parade crosses the river to visit [Nakamise Shopping Street](#) before heading to the Tongu. The ancient [Suganuki](#) purification rite takes place once the *mikoshi* arrive, and the deities are transferred to the Tongu sanctuary to remain there for three days and two nights.

### *August 1: Yabusame Horseback Archery Ritual*

In the afternoon of the second day, the path near the Tongu that leads to [O’o Jinja Shrine](#) is used for a *yabusame* horseback archery ritual that was introduced as part of the festival in 2019. It is performed by representatives of the Ogasawara school of mounted archery, which has a history of about 850 years. Trained riders dressed as warriors of the Kamakura period (1185–1333) gallop along the 270-meter-long lane, shooting arrows at three targets as an offering to the deities.

On the same day, the deities of [Wakamiya Jinja Shrine](#) are carried through the grounds of Usa Jingu and to Nakamise Shopping Street in a smaller-scale ceremonial visit.

*August 2: Returning Procession*

In the evening of the last day, the three portable shrines are returned to the Jogu, retracing the route of the first festival day and accompanied by the same procession. The deities are transferred back to the sanctuaries, and a prayer ritual follows. The Goshinkosai ends with a special fireworks display that serves as a rite to ward off disease and misfortune.