

Shinkyo Bridge

All bridges that cross the Yorimo River into [Usa Jingu Shrine](#) can be classified as *shinkyo* (sacred bridges), since they lead into the shrine grounds. However, the arched Shinkyo Bridge located to the north is the one most well-known by that name, as it lies on the shrine's main approach. The sides and railings of the Shinkyo Bridge are painted bright vermilion to protect against evil and misfortune. Embellishments on the sides include *mitsudomoe*, crests with a swirling pattern of three comma-like shapes. Such crests are often found at shrines dedicated to the deity Hachiman.

The first permanent version of the Shinkyo Bridge was constructed in 1910, replacing temporary wooden plank bridges that were built anew every time a *chokushi* (imperial messenger) was dispatched to Usa Jingu. Another bridge originally built in the same year is the unadorned, cream-colored Shirohashi Bridge a short distance upstream that provides access for cars. The contrast between the two bridges emphasizes the more spiritual role of the Shinkyo Bridge, which leads directly to the large [Otorii](#) gate and marks the transition onto the sacred grounds of the shrine.