

## **Hachimanbori Boat Rides**

One of the most convenient ways to enjoy the traditional townscape of historic Omihachiman is by taking a boat ride on the Hachimanbori Moat. The canal was once a busy commercial waterway, and this history is reflected by the white-walled storehouses and elegant merchants' houses that line its banks. The ambience of the Edo period (1603–1867) is so well preserved here that one can imagine having slipped back in time, and historical dramas are in fact often filmed in the area.

Two companies, Waden and Shinmachi, offer boat rides on the Hachimanbori Moat. Waden has a fleet of motorboats that seat up to 12 people. Reservations can be made in advance, but available boats can also be boarded directly. Waden operates from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the summer and until 3 p.m. the rest of the year. Shinmachi has rowboats propelled by a boatman at the stern. These boats can seat four to six people and rides must be reserved in advance. Shinmachi operates from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. but is closed on Wednesdays and during the Obon and New Year holidays. In January and February, tours are given only on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

The boats of both companies are roofed and have a simple interior with a tatami-mat floor. When boarding, passengers should take off their shoes before entering the covered section and taking a seat on the tatami mat. All tours start and end in the moat's picturesque central section, and some also take in quieter parts toward the western end of the waterway.