

Embracing a Thousand Years of Mystery



# Usa Jingu

## Miko (Shinto shrine maiden)

# Experience

1300th Anniversary  
of the Enshrinement of Usa Jingu

The dates for experience in English are  
**Thursday, February 26,**  
**and Friday, March 27, 2026.**

"Usa Jingu" is the head shrine of approximately 40,000 Hachiman shrines across Japan. The deity enshrined here, Hachiman Okami, is believed to be the spirit of Emperor Ojin, the 15th emperor of Japan. Known for his exceptional skill in archery, Emperor Ojin was later deified as the god of bravery, earning the devotion of the samurai class. It is said that Hachiman shrines began to spread throughout Japan around the Kamakura period.

Usa Jingu is also known as the starting point of Shinto-Buddhist syncretism, a tradition that has profoundly shaped Japan's unique religious landscape. In the year 725, the Ichi-no-Goten, the first shrine of the three was established. Shortly thereafter, the shrine

received a divine message to assist in the construction of the Great Buddha at Todai-ji. Since then, Usa Jingu has been revered as "the second imperial shrine" after Ise Jingu, and is regarded as a guardian deity of the nation. To this day, it remains one of only 16 Imperial shrines in Japan, where an official envoy known as a "Chokushi", sent by the emperor, continues to pay ceremonial visits. During the Miko experience at Usa Shrine, you can enjoy activities that are not usually accessible to the public, such as learning about the history of Hachiman-Shrine, experiencing Kagura (traditional sacred dance), and practicing the proper way to worship.



[Application Deadline]

Please make your reservation at least seven days before the event date. For more details and to apply for the experience, please click here.

[Organizer]

1300th Anniversary of Usa Jingu Enshrinement Celebration and Chokusai Festival Memorial Project Executive Committee.





# Usa Jingu Miko (Shinto shrine maiden) Experience

The main hall of the shrine is the most sacred place, where the gods reside. It is typically located at the farthest part of the shrine, and regular visitors are not allowed to enter. In this experience, by becoming a Miko (Shinto shrine maiden) who serves the gods, you will have the unique opportunity to worship at the main sanctuary. To become a Miko, first change into the sacred shrine maiden attire, then wash your hands and mouth at the Temizusha (purification station). Afterward, take a stroll around the grounds to learn about the shrine. You will also receive guidance on the proper way to worship at Usa Shrine and how to offer a tamagushi (sacred tree branch).

After experiencing the sacred kagura dance, one of the important duties of a Miko, you can participate in the formal worship at the main shrine and the offering of the kagura.



## What is Miko?

A Miko (Shinto shrine maiden) is a woman who wears a white kimono and red hakama, working at a shrine to offer dances and songs (kagura) to the gods during religious ceremonies.

## Experience Schedule

Please note that the content and order of the schedule may change based on the shrine's circumstances.

12:30 PM  
-Gathering

### An Introduction to Usa Shrine [Assembly Hall]

Learn about the history of Usa Shrine, the unique fusion of Shinto and Buddhism, the role of miko, and the meanings behind their traditional garments and accessories.

### Miko Attire Dressing [Assembly Hall]

You will change into the sacred shrine maiden clothes.



### Worship Ritual [Assembly Hall]

You will learn the unique worship method of Usa Shrine, which follows the ancient custom of "two bows, four claps, one bow," including the correct angles for bowing and the proper way to clap.

### Kagura Dance Experience [Assembly Hall]

You will experience the kagura dance using the sacred bells and a hinoki fan.



### Purification Ritual [Temizusha]

You will wash your hands and mouth at the Temizusha to cleanse your body and spirit.



### Usa Shrine Grounds Tour [Shrine Grounds]

You stroll through the grounds of Usa Shrine with the shrine staff. The shrine features many notable sights, including the National Treasure main shrine and designated cultural properties.



### Formal Worship [Main Hall]

At the end of the day, you will perform a formal worship ritual to pay respects to the gods.



### Urayasu no Mai (Dance Offering) [Prayer Hall]

You will observe a professional shrine maiden perform the Urayasu no Mai, a dance offered to the gods. As you watch, you can reflect on the meaning of each movement in the kagura dance you learned during the experience.



4:00 PM -End

### After the experience, you will change back into your regular clothes.

By the end of the day, you will have experienced physical and mental relaxation, as well as gained an understanding of the beautiful and respectful worship practices. You will also receive a kagura bell charm as a souvenir!



## Event Dates in English

February 26 (Thursday), March 27 (Friday), 2026

Time 12:30 PM – 4:00 PM

Participation Fee 36,000 JPY (including tax)

Minimum Number of Participants

5 participants (Maximum capacity: 12 participants)

Meeting Place

Usa Shrine, Assembly Hall (Sanshu-den)

2859 Minami Usa, Usa City, Oita Prefecture, 872-0102, Japan

## Contact Information TEL 0978-33-3433

1300th Anniversary of Usa Jingu Enshrinement Celebration and Chokusai Festival Memorial Project Executive Committee.

- This women-only program offers a chance to experience a role that was traditionally performed by young girls.
- White tabi (Japanese-socks) are available for purchase at Usa Shrine 800JPY
- Due to costume requirements, participants must be at least 150cm tall.
- We kindly ask that participants avoid extravagant makeup and extreme hair coloring.
- Please refrain from wearing accessories or decorative items.
- There are no restrictions based on religion or sect for participation. However, please note that the experience includes worship rituals for the gods enshrined at Usa Shrine.
- Due to religious reasons (such as mourning periods), participation may not be allowed. For more details, please contact us.