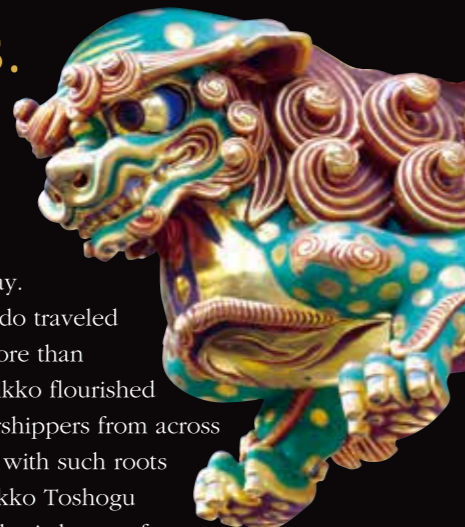


# Elegant and Magnificent Shrines and Temples that Captivate Travelers. Strolling through Nikko Sannai.



In Japan, it has been believed since ancient times, that "gods and spirits reside in all things." This is the basic idea of Shinto, a religion indigenous to Japan, which later harmoniously fused with Buddhism, which was introduced from mainland Asia and developed in its own unique way. The history of Nikko dates back to 766, when the monk Shodo Shonin traveled to the area. Shodo traveled to Nikko to enshrine the deity of the majestically towering and mysterious "Mt. Nantai." After more than 15 years, he successfully reached the summit and established a small shrine there. Over time, Nikko flourished as a major ascetic training site for Shugendo mountain worship, attracting many monks and worshippers from across Japan. "Nikko-zan Rinno-ji Temple" and "Nikko Futarasan-jinja Shrine" are historic religious sites with such roots and people continue to worship here even to this day. In 1617, "Toshosha Shrine" (currently Nikko Toshogu Shrine) was established to enshrine Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first shogun of the Edo Shogunate, who is known for leading the warring states period to peace. And in 1636, the third shogun, Tokugawa Iemitsu, who was known for his great respect for his grandfather, undertook the Great Reconstruction of Nikko Sannai, the sacred temple and shrine complex. After Iemitsu's death, his mausoleum "Taiyu-in" was established within the same Sannai complex, completing the layout that largely remains to this day. Nikko flourished as a pilgrimage destination for important figures, including shogunate family members and daimyo who ruled during the period. Recognized for historical significance and architectural artistry, the "Shrines and Temples of Nikko" were designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999. As an important existing cultural heritage of the world, the Shrines and Temples of Nikko will continue to be passed down to future generations.



### Tobu Bus

Convenient access by bus! A bus pass is also available, allowing you to get on and off as many times as you like.  
Pass can be purchased at: Tobu Nikko Station Tourist Center (+81 288-54-0864)

- World Heritage Sightseeing Bus**  
[Bus Pass: Valid for 1 day, ideal for exploring between the Station and the World Heritage area]
- Chuzenji Onsen**  
[Bus Pass: Valid for 2 days, ideal for exploring the above pass range area + the Lake Chuzenji area]
- Yumoto Onsen**  
[Bus Pass: Valid for 2 days, ideal for exploring the above pass range area + the Senjogahara area]
- Kirifuri Kogen**  
[Bus Pass: Valid for 2 days, ideal for exploring between the Station and World Heritage area + the Kirifuri Highland area]  
\*Bus operations are suspended during the winter season.

### Cars

Kiyotaki I.C. 6 km 8 min Nikko I.C. 6 km 8 min Imaichi I.C. 20 km 25 min Utsunomiya I.C.

120 122 120 119 169 119 169 10 min 25 min 30 min 40-60 min

World Heritage Shrines and Temples of NIKKO

Kirifuri Falls, Kirifuri Kogen

Kegon Falls, Lake Chuzenji

Senjogahara Marshland, Yumoto Onsen

**-Legend-**

- Tourist Attraction
- Bus Stop
- Road
- ℹ Information Center

### Bus Terminal ② Chuzenji Onsen

Lake Chuzenji, Kegon Falls, Yumoto Onsen, Nikko Station, Hangetsuyama (seasonal)

### Bus Terminal ① TOBU Nikko Station

2A Yumoto Onsen via Chuzenji Onsen  
2B World Heritage Sightseeing Bus  
2C Kiyotaki / Yashio no Yu / Chuzenji Onsen  
2D Kirifuri Falls / Kirifuri-kogen (seasonal)  
2E Kinugawa-Onsen Station (only weekends and holidays)

### Bus Terminal ① JR Nikko Station

1A Yumoto Onsen via Chuzenji Onsen  
1B World Heritage Sightseeing Bus  
1C Kiyotaki / Yashio no Yu  
1D Kirifuri Falls / Kirifuri-kogen (seasonal)  
1E Ashio

### Recommended Route

Popular Route for Exploring the World Heritage Shrines and Temples of Nikko (4 Hours)

15 min Shinkyo Bridge	10-minute walk	30 min Nikko-zan Rinno-ji Temple	5-minute walk	80 min Nikko Toshogu Shrine	5-minute walk	30 min Nikko Futarasan Jinja Shrine	3-minute walk	60 min Rinno-ji Temple Taiyu-in Mausoleum
Extend Your Journey	+60 min Nikko Tamozawa Imperial Villa Memorial Park	+90 min Kanman Path	+90 min Takino Path	+120 min Lake Chuzenji-Kegon Falls	+240 min~ Senjogahara Marshland			

# The World Heritage Shrines and Temples of NIKKO

## Exploring Nikko Sannai World Heritage Journey

- Nikko Toshogu Shrine
- Nikko-zan Rinno-ji Temple
- Nikko Futarasan-jinja Shrine

# Nikko Toshogu Shrine

Elegant and magnificent shrines and temples, resplendent in brilliant colors.



## Yomeimon Gate

The structure is adorned with over 500 carvings, depicting historical anecdotes, karako (Chinese children playing), and sacred beasts.

National Treasure

Tokugawa Ieyasu is one of the most famous military figures in Japanese history, who unified Japan during a time of war and turmoil, established the Edo Shogunate, and laid the foundation for a period of peace that lasted for over 260 years. He wished to protect Japan even after his death and left a will to establish a small shrine in the mountains of Nikko and requested that he be enshrined as a deity. It is said that, as Nikko lies nearly due north of Edo (currently Tokyo), Ieyasu would watch over the tranquility of Edo and the peace of Japan like the immovable North Star. The current main shrine buildings were reconstructed by the third shogun, Tokugawa Iemitsu. The 5,173 vibrant carvings, depicting sacred beasts, animals, birds, flowers, and plants, are a must-see, showcasing the craftsmanship of the skilled sculptors of the time.

National Treasure



## Honden, Ishinoma room and Haiden (Main Shrine)

Upon entering Haiden (worship hall), you will see sacred beasts on the partition doors on the left and right, and dragons painted on the ceiling. Further inside, you will find a door leading to Honden (main hall), with Ishinoma in front of it — a stone-paved passageway connecting the two halls. This is called Gongen-zukuri and became an important model for subsequent traditional Japanese architectural styles.



## Okusha (Rear Shrine)

Passing through the gate with the Sleeping Cat and climbing about 200 steps, you will reach Okusha Shrine, the mausoleum of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the enshrined deity of Toshogu Shrine. On the signboard that appears as you climb the stairs, Ieyasu's last instructions are written.

Important Cultural Property

## Three Wise Monkeys



Important Cultural Property

Adorning the top of the Sacred Horse stables are 8 intricate monkey carvings, including the renowned Three Wise Monkeys. These carvings impart the lesson "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil."



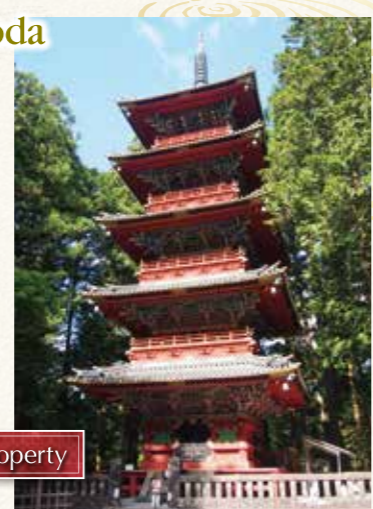
## Sleeping Cat

This cat carving is located above the gate of the eastern corridor, which leads to Okusha Shrine where Ieyasu rests. It is designated as a National Treasure and is one of the most famous carvings at Toshogu Shrine.

National Treasure

## Five-story Pagoda

This pagoda was dedicated in 1650 by the feudal lord of Obama (currently Fukui Prefecture). The current pagoda was rebuilt in the early 1800s. It stands 36 meters high, and under the roof of the first tier, you can see the carvings of the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac.



Important Cultural Property

# Nikko-zan Rinno-ji Temple

Take a look at the awe-inspiring sight of the colossal Three Buddha Seated Statues up close, and the Taiyu-in Mausoleum and consider Iemitsu's respect for his grandfather.



## Three Buddhas

Standing in front of the statues, you can see Senju Kannon (Mt. Nantai), Amida Nyorai (Mt. Nyoho) and Bato Kannon (Mt. Taro) from right to left.

Important Cultural Property

Shodo Shonin traveled to Nikko to enshrine the Shinto and Buddhist deities of Mt. Futara (currently Mt. Nantai) and established Shihonryuji Temple and Hongu Shrine, which later became Nikko-zan Rinno-ji Temple. Many Shugendo ascetic monks traveled to Nikko and it flourished as a training ground for Shugendo mountain worship. In 1613, Tenkai Daisojo was appointed as the chief priest, and the second shogun Hidetada established Toshosha Shrine (later Toshogu Shrine), and the Nikko mountains further flourished as a major sacred site. After the separation of Shinto and Buddhism in the late 1800s, Sanbutsudo, the great main hall of the Buddhist building, and Taiyu-in, the mausoleum of Tokugawa Iemitsu, came to be collectively referred to as "Rinno-ji Temple."



## Sanbutsudo (Main Hall)

Sanbutsudo is the great main hall of Nikko-zan Rinno-ji Temple, which is the largest wooden building in the Nikko Sannai area. Inside the hall, three Honjibutsu (the original forms of the deities of Nikko's three sacred mountains) are enshrined. The magnificent golden Buddha statues, each about 8 meters tall, are a sight to behold.

Important Cultural Property



## Daigomado (Goma fire ritual hall)

A site of ritual fire offerings by monks, praying for protection from evil and the fulfillment of wishes. Visitors can observe the ceremony.



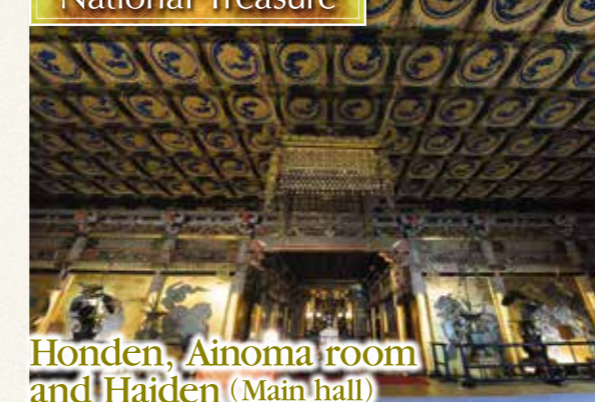
## Shoyo-en Garden

This Japanese garden was created in the early 1600s, and in the fall you can see the colorful autumnal leaves reflected in the pond.

## Taiyu-in Mausoleum

The third shogun, Tokugawa Iemitsu, was known for his great respect for his grandfather Ieyasu. During his lifetime, he oversaw a major renovation of Toshogu Shrine, transforming it into its current elegant and magnificent appearance, and the Taiyu-in Mausoleum was established at this site. In contrast to the gorgeous Toshogu Shrine of gold and white, Taiyu-in has a stately, calm atmosphere of gold and black, expressing Iemitsu's great respect for his grandfather by making it less prominent than Toshogu Shrine.

National Treasure



## Honden, Ainoma room and Haiden (Main Hall)

Haiden Hall with 140 dragons painted on the ceiling is connected to the glittering Honden Hall by a space called Ainoma. This is an architectural style known as "Gongen-zukuri," and it has been adopted in Toshogu Shrine.

## Yashamon Gate



Important Cultural Property

## Nitenmon Gate



Important Cultural Property

## Shihonryuji Temple

It is said that Shodo Shonin built a small thatched hut here and trained to worship the deity of Mt. Futara (currently Mt. Nantai), making it the birthplace of Nikko.

Important Cultural Property

# Nikko Futarasan-Jinja Shrine

This ancient shrine has a history of over 1,200 years and is the center of mountain worship, the foundation of Nikko's prosperity. It includes the oldest building in Sannai.



## Honden (Main Shrine)

This hall is the oldest remaining structure in Nikko. You can admire the beautifully restored roof and metal ornamentation from Shinen Garden.

Important Cultural Property

Shodo Shonin traveled to Nikko to enshrine the Shinto and Buddhist deities of Mt. Futara (currently Mt. Nantai) and established Shihonryuji Temple and Hongu Shrine, which later became Futarasan Jinja Shrine. After reaching the summit of Mt. Nantai, Shodo established Okumiya on the summit and Chugu on the shores of Lake Chuzenji, halfway between Mt. Nantai and Sannai. The main shrine was later relocated to its current site to avoid potential flood damage. All of the main shrine buildings are designated as Important Cultural Properties, and among them, Honden is known as the oldest remaining structure in Nikko. The principal enshrined deity, Onamuchi no Mikoto, is known as the god of matchmaking, and this historically significant shrine still bustles with many worshippers.

## Shin-en Garden (Sacred garden)

All the shrine buildings within Shin-en Garden are designated as Important Cultural Properties. Among them, Honden Hall, donated in 1619 by the second shogun, Tokugawa Hidetada, is the oldest remaining structure in Nikko. Major restoration work was completed in the fall of 2020, restoring its vibrant colors to their former glory.



Important Cultural Property

## Futara Reisen (Sacred Spring)

This is a sacred spring that draws water from two water veins: "Yakushi no Reisen" from Mt. Korei and "Sake no Izumi" from Takinoo Shrine. It is also known as "Water of Rejuvenation" and you can drink it on the spot or take it home with you.

## Hongu Shrine



Important Cultural Property

## Takino Shrine



Nikko Futarasan Jinja Shrine's main shrine, Takino Shrine, and Hongu Shrine are collectively known as "Nikko Sansha," which enshrine the deities of Mt. Nantai, Mt. Nyoho, and Mt. Taro, respectively. At the back of each Honden Hall, there is a door for worshipping the sacred mountains, serving as a reminder of a time when mountain worship was prevalent.



Important Cultural Property

## Daikokuden (Hall of Daikokuten)

Japan had a unique belief system that fused Shinto with Buddhism until the late 1800s. As Daikokuten, one of the Seven Lucky Gods of Buddhism, was considered the same deity as Onamuchi no Mikoto, the principal enshrined deity of Nikko Futarasan Jinja Shrine, both are enshrined within the sacred shrine grounds.



## Shinkyo Bridge

Important Cultural Property

According to this sacred bridge's legend, when Shodo Shonin was traveling to Nikko, he was blocked by a muddy stream, at which point a deity appeared and released two serpents which transformed into a bridge, allowing him to cross the stream. The current vermilion-lacquered bridge was completed in 1636. The beautiful contrast between the clear waters flowing from Lake Chuzenji and Kegon Falls and the surrounding valley's scenic beauty is one of Nikko's most iconic landscapes. Also, the bridge earns a position as one of the "Three Strangest Bridges of Japan." The bridge is illuminated from evening until 9:00PM all year round, an evening stroll is highly recommended.