

# Matsumoto Castle - From National Treasure To UNESCO World Heritage Listing



With a rich history spanning over 400 years,  
Matsumoto Castle is one of the most famous in Japan.  
The people of Matsumoto are extremely proud of the castle,  
which has become a beloved symbol of our city.



Nearly 140 years ago, Matsumoto Castle was on the verge of demolition following the Meiji Restoration. However, a citizen's movement was formed for the preservation and restoration of the castle, which helped lead to its designation as a National Treasure of Japan. It has been a long-cherished dream of local citizens to establish Matsumoto Castle as a World Heritage Site, transforming it from a treasure of Japan to a common heritage of humanity. Using insights from our neighbors around the world, let us take bold steps towards preserving and improving the environment around Matsumoto Castle for its inscription on the prestigious World Heritage List.



“National Treasure Matsumoto Castle for World Heritage Listing” Promotion Committee





# What is World Heritage?

In 1972, the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted the Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage (the World Heritage Convention). This convention aims to establish systems for international cooperation and assistance in order to protect and conserve cultural and natural heritage for humanity as a whole from threats of damage and destruction as well as to pass them on to future generations.

World Heritage Sites are classified as “cultural heritage”, which includes monuments, groups of buildings, and sites, “natural heritage”, containing natural habitats of animals, plants, and natural landscapes, and “mixed heritage” that combines aspects of both. To be inscribed on the World Heritage List, it will be necessary for a property to meet strict criteria, such as being of outstanding universal value.

-Translation of an excerpt from the “National Federation of UNESCO Association in Japan” website

## Process for World Cultural Heritage Listing

### Local and National Governments

- ↓ A proposal is submitted to the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs by municipal and prefectural governments.
- ↓ The proposal is evaluated by the Council for Cultural Affairs.
- ↓ The property is selected for tentative World Heritage listing.
- ↓ A nomination file is submitted to the World Heritage Committee.

### UNESCO World Heritage Center

- ↓ Accepts nominations from governments worldwide.

### International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

- ↓ Researches and assesses each nominated property.
- ↓ Provides its evaluation.

### UNESCO World Heritage Center

- ↓ Collects all application reports.



**World Heritage Committee decides on which properties will be inscribed on the World Heritage List**

## Nomination Efforts to Date

### November 2006

Matsumoto City and Nagano Prefecture submit a proposal to the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs that Matsumoto Castle be added to Japan's tentative list of properties to be considered for World Heritage status. The Agency for Cultural Affairs approves the proposal for further revision.

### December 2007

A revised proposal and progress report are submitted to the Agency for Cultural Affairs, explaining a decision to carry forward study and research on “Japan's Modern Castle Group Led by Himeji Castle”.

### March 2008

The first hearing is conducted by a special subcommittee on cultural assets for the Council for Cultural Affairs, within the Agency for Cultural Affairs.

### September 2008

The results of deliberation by the special subcommittee explain that the castle falls under a Category Ib\* site, a designation in which all academic research, investigation, and World Heritage proposal preparation are to be conducted locally.

### Present Day

Research activities are ongoing for inclusion of Matsumoto Castle in the World Heritage List as a collective nomination by a modern castle group. Additional research on “internationally recognized universal values of castles and towns” is being conducted according to instructions from the Agency for Cultural Affairs.

\* Category Ib:

Academic investigation and research must be, for the time being, thoroughly carried out relating to the main topic under the lead of the proposing local public organization. Once a direction of the proposal, including the main topic and a composition of assets, becomes fixed, further preparation of the proposal should be undertaken by related local public organizations.



## What is the Promotion Committee?

Established in July 2001, the Promotion Committee aims to have Matsumoto Castle inscribed on the World Heritage List to permanently preserve the castle as a common treasure of humanity, to foster a mindset and culture of preserving cultural properties, and to promote local business industries. A total of 56 organizations currently make up the Promotion Committee.

### Promotion Committee Offices

#### Shinano Mainichi Shimbun, Matsumoto Head Office

2-10 Miyata, Matsumoto City, Nagano Prefecture, 399-8711, Japan TEL. 0263-25-2153 FAX. 0263-26-8730

#### Matsumoto City, Department of Culture and Sports, Cultural Promotion Division

3-8-13 Ote, Matsumoto City, Nagano Prefecture, 390-0874, Japan TEL. 0263-34-3000 FAX. 0263-34-3018

<http://www.oshiro-m.org/>