



World Heritage

Himeji Castle Marathon 2026

MO[∞]
Marathon
Challenge
Cup

Participation Guide

Thank you very much for your participation in the World Heritage Himeji Castle Marathon 2026.

In December 1993, Himeji Castle—a designated National Treasure nicknamed “Shirasagi (white heron) Castle”—was one of the first places in Japan to be registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and 2023 marked the 30th anniversary of this historic occasion.

The first World Heritage Himeji Castle Marathon was held in 2015 to commemorate the completion of a major restoration and preservation project for the castle, and this year is the 11th time the event has taken place.

The runners start directly in front of Himeji Castle before passing through areas with an abundance of nature, for example, the foothills of Mt. Shosha, Shiota Onsen Hot Spring Village, and Yumesaki River Cycling Road. With Himeji Castle’s main keep as a majestic backdrop, the race finishes in San-no-maru Square. We hope you will enjoy the varied scenery of Himeji while receiving the heartfelt support of local people.

To ensure you are in peak condition and well prepared for the day of the race, please familiarize yourself with the information contained in this participation guide.



Event Schedule

February 21	10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. 3:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. *Final admission 7:30 p.m.	Runner Check-in	10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. (scheduled) World Heritage Himeji Castle Marathon Festival
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*Runner check-in on the day of the race is not permitted. *Check-in will be temporarily closed from 2:30 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

*Those who attend the runner check-in will be presented with a free admission ticket to Himeji Castle (valid until the end of February 2027). Himeji Castle is open from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. (final admission 4:00 p.m.)

February 22	7:00 a.m. Changing and baggage drop-off areas open	9:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. (scheduled) World Heritage Himeji Castle Marathon Festival
	8:15 a.m. Marathon starting block lineup begins	
	8:45 a.m. Marathon starting block lineup complete, opening ceremony	
	9:00 a.m. Marathon starts	
	9:15 a.m. Fun Run starts (staggered start)	
	1:00 p.m. Awards ceremony	
	3:00 p.m. Marathon ends (time limit: 6 hours)	



Runner Check-in

Date and Time	February 21, 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m. (Check-in times are strictly observed/final admission 7:30 p.m.) Temporarily closed from 2:30 p.m.-3:00 p.m.)
Venue (See page 3)	Egret Himeji B1F (68-290 Hommachi, Himeji City) located to the south side of Otemae Park Approx. 900 m north of JR/Sanyo Himeji Station (approx. 15 min. walk)
Important Information	1) Check-in must be undertaken by the runner themselves. 2) Runner check-in is required in order to participate. Runner check-in on the day of the race is not permitted. Check-ins will not be performed outside the times listed.

What to Bring to Runner Check-in

- 1) Athlete bib voucher
 - *Please sign the athlete bib voucher pledge form and fill in your emergency contact information.
- 2) Proof of identity (copies not permitted)
 - *Confirmation of identity will be performed at the time of runner check-in; please present your passport or residence card. The name on your identification must match that on your athlete bib voucher.

What You Receive upon Check-in

- 1) An athlete bib set contains:
 - Athlete bib
 - Safety pins (four per bib)
 - Himeji Marathon baggage tag
 - Timing chip (to be attached to participants' shoes)

*Please confirm that your name is correctly printed on the athlete bib.

*Please fill in all the required information on the back of the athlete bib. This information may be necessary in the event of an emergency.

*Athlete bibs and timing chips cannot be reissued.
- 2) Commemorative T-shirt
- 3) Set of support message cards
- 4) Ticket for free admission to Himeji Castle (valid until February 28, 2027)
*Ticket cannot be used during special event periods.
- 5) Runner's bag (drawstring type)



Athlete bib



Back of athlete bib



Himeji Marathon Baggage Tag

Timing Chip

- 1) Please attach the timing chip to your shoes as it will be used to measure your official time. If for any reason the timing chip cannot be attached to your shoes (for example, if you have no laces), please come to the timing chip counter (February 21st: Egret Himeji B1F/February 22nd: Otemae Park general information counter).
- 2) Your timing chip must be collected after you finish the race.
- 3) If you receive a timing chip but do not participate in the race, please return it to the timing chip counter in the check-in area.
- 4) If you withdraw from the race, please be sure to return your timing chip to event staff.
- 5) If you forget to return your timing chip or it has not been collected, please mail it to the address below by March 10. If you do not return your timing chip, you will be billed for the cost of a replacement.

Timing Chip Return Address

Timing Chip Return Office, World Heritage Himeji Castle Marathon
1-31-9 Haramachi, Meguro-ku, Tokyo 152-8533



Starting and Finishing Areas



*Only runners permitted in these areas



Start



Course



Runner Flow Line



General Flow Line



(return route)

Runner/General Flow Line



First Aid Station



Temporary Bicycle Parking Area



Toilet

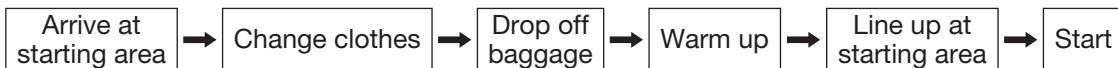


Pre-start Water Station



Starting the Race

Before the Start



*We recommend arriving at the starting area no later than 8:00 a.m.

*After dropping off your baggage, please make use of the water stations before the start.

Access

Approx. 900 m north of JR/Sanyo Himeji Station (approx. 15 min. walk)

***Parking is not available in the area, so please use public transportation. Also, please factor in extra time it takes to arrive to account for possible public transportation delays due to accidents, snowfall, etc.**

Changing Areas

Open: 7:00 a.m.

Men: Otemae Park Underground Parking Area

Women: Egret Himeji B1F

***Please do not change clothes in public.**

Baggage Drop-off and Pick-up

Open: 7:00 a.m. (baggage pick-up open until 4:00 p.m.)

Men: Otemae Park Underground Parking Area

Women: Egret Himeji B2F

***Both baggage drop-off and pick-up are done in the same location.**

***Please attach the Himeji Marathon baggage tag to your baggage when handing them over at the drop-off area.**

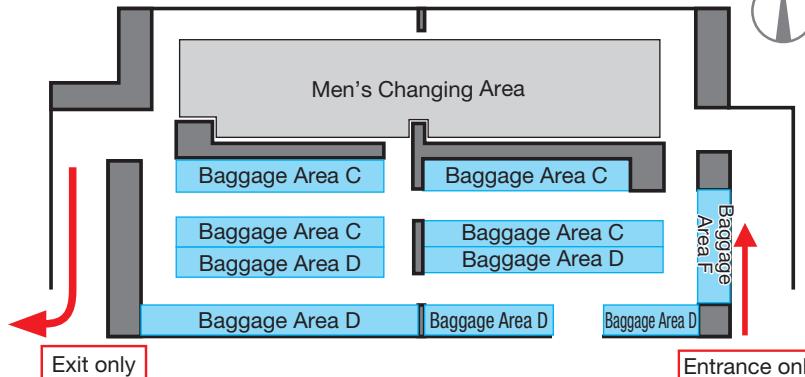
***Please combine all your belongings to be dropped off in one bag only, firmly shut to prevent items falling out.**

***Runners must show their athlete bibs when dropping off and picking up baggage.**

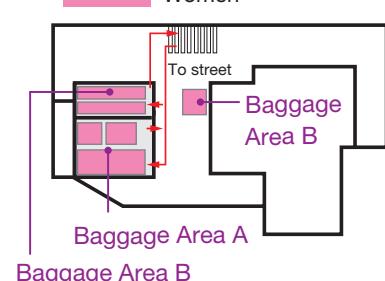
***Valuables, breakables, plants and animals, long umbrellas, dangerous articles, etc. will not be accepted.**



Otemae Park Underground Parking Area  Men



Egret Himeji B2F  Women



Warmup Area

Please use the designated warmup area (Karoyashiki Historical Park) to the west of the starting point.

Marathon Runner Lineup

Time: 8:15 a.m.-8:45 a.m.

- 1) Please line up in the starting block designated on your athlete bib. Starting positions are on a first come, first served basis (blocks will start in this order: A→B→C→D→E→F).
- 2) Runners who do not arrive in time to line up before 8:45 a.m. will wait in the delayed starters block and start after the runners in the F starting block.
- 3) Runners who do not take their positions before the starting time, even due to public transportation delays, will not be permitted to run in the race.

***Runners may be disqualified if they start from a block that is ahead of their designated starting block.**

Clothing and Carried Items

- 1) You will not be permitted to run without wearing your athlete bib. Please wear your athlete bib over your outermost item of clothing.

- 2) Please be sure to fill in the details on the reverse of your athlete bib.

- 3) Please ensure that the timing chip is attached to your shoes.

***Please do not carry the timing chip or place it in your pocket, as your time will not be recorded.**

***If for any reason the timing chip cannot be attached to your shoes (for example, if you have no laces), please come to the timing chip counter (February 21st: Egret Himeji B1F/February 22nd: Otemae Park general information counter).**

- 4) Clothing and costumes that cover your face or athlete bib or cause nuisance, discomfort, or potential danger to other runners are prohibited.

- 5) Please refrain from using portable music players while running.

- 6) Use of wheelchairs, baby strollers, and guide dogs or accompaniment by pets in the race is prohibited.



About the Race

Important Information

- 1) The race will be conducted in accordance with the 2025 rules and regulations of the JAAF and of this competition.
- 2) Runners shall not receive any assistance during the race.
- 3) Only registered runners are permitted to participate. Proxy runners are not permitted. Any proxy runners found to be participating will be excluded from timings and placings.
- 4) In the event of an emergency such as an accident or fire during the event, runners may be instructed by staff to stop running or make way to allow emergency vehicles (including bicycles) to pass.
- 5) **Green traffic cones will be placed to delineate the running course from the vehicle lane, which will be used by emergency vehicles.** Due to crowding at the start of the race, it may be difficult to see cones and other equipment on the road; please take care not to trip over.
- 6) In the event of illness or accidents during the race, the organizers shall bear no responsibility other than the provision of first aid. Runners injured during the race due to accidental causes may be entitled to compensation according to the organizers' insurance.
- 7) Runners may be instructed to withdraw from the race if deemed unfit to continue by officials and medical personnel, or if they are seen to be engaging in behavior that is disruptive or potentially dangerous to other runners.

Distance Markers

Located at every 1 km interval, course halfway point, and remaining 5 km-1 km points

Pace Setters (Pace Runners)

Pace setters can be identified by their bibs (vests) and the balloons attached to them.

Pace setter times: 3 hr, 3.5 hr, 4 hr, 4.5 hr, 5 hr, and 5.5 hr.

***Pace setters represent only an estimated time, and should not be used as an accurate measurement of time.**

Withdrawing from the Race

If you decide to withdraw from the race, please use one of the following methods to reach the finishing area.

- 1) Proceed to the nearest checkpoint or first-aid station and take a bus.
- 2) Take a bus that is traveling at the rear of the race.

***Your timing chip will be collected in the bus.**

First Aid Staff

-If you feel unwell, or if you see another runner feeling unwell, please alert a first aid staff (first aid staff will be wearing red jackets or bibs).

-If there are no first aid staff nearby, please alert the nearest event staff.



Volunteers

A large number of volunteers will be working to support this event.

Please remember their hard work and support while you take part in the race.

Notice

- 1) There may be some situations where vehicles or pedestrians may cross the course.
- 2) Some areas of the course are narrow. If you wish to overtake runners, please verbally let them know. Likewise, please allow other runners to overtake you.
- 3) Toilets are located in designated areas along the course. Please use only these toilets during the race.
- 4) Do not give trash from the water and food stations, etc. to volunteers. Instead, please use the trashcans provided.



After Finishing

Official Results

Official results are recorded as gross times (from the time the starting gun is sounded for each block to the time the runner crosses the finish line).

***Net time (the time from the starting point to the finish line) is also recorded for reference purposes.**

Awards

Overall awards (gross time): Men and women in first to eighth places

Certificate of Completion

Certificates of Completion will be issued online via RUNNET. *Paper certificates will not be issued at the race venue. Placings on the day listed on Certificates of Completion will be those announced immediately after the race. Definitive placings will be issued at a later date (sometime in mid-March).



Checkpoints

Checkpoints Checkpoints will be closed in sequential order to allow for proper traffic, security, and event management. Runners who do not reach a checkpoint before its closing time will not be permitted to continue the race. Runners who remain on the closed parts of the course after the closing of the checkpoints are instructed to follow the directions of event officials and staff, and board a bus either at the next checkpoint or at the rear of the race.

No.	Distance	Closing Time	Location
1	6.9 km	10:07	Yokozeki Park
2	12.7 km	10:55	Okishio Castle Ruins
3	18.1 km	11:40	Kochi Elementary School
4	23.2 km	12:23	Shimizu Bridge, Nishizume
5	26.8 km	12:52	Yokozeki Park
6	29.0 km	13:11	Kawanishidai Dai-ni Park
7	35.6 km	14:05	Yumesakidai Dai-nana Park
8	38.2 km	14:27	Yasumuro Elementary School
9	39.8 km	14:40	Kinoshita Hospital

First Aid Stations

- Ten locations along the course
 - Three locations at start/finish

First aid stations are operated in a manner that emphasizes emergency treatment. Only first aid measures will be given in the event of injuries during the race.

*First aid stations are not equipped with household medical items (indigestion/cold medicines, heating/cooling pads, etc.) or anti-inflammatory/painkilling sprays.



Toilets

Location is subject to change.

Distance	Side of Course
1.4	Left
2.3	Left
2.7	Left
3.3	Right
5.4	Left
6.9	Right
8.3	Right
9.7	Left
11.6	Right
12.7	Right
14.4	Left
16.1	Left
18.1	Right
20.4	Right
21.8	Left
23.2	Left
25.3	Left
26.8	Left
27.8	Right
28.9	Right
29.8	Left
31.6	Right
33.8	Right
35.6	Right
36.6	Right
38.0	Right
39.8	Left
40.9	Left





Water and Food Stations

Regardless of the weather conditions, please be sure to properly rehydrate during the race in order to prevent dehydration.

Please do not throw paper cups and other trash onto the course, but dispose of all trash in trashcans.

Event organizers hold no responsibility for any water or food stations other than those listed to the right.

Food items on offer may be subject to change up until the day of the event.

No.	Distance	Water	Isotonic Drink	Food (details subject to change)	Location
Start		○			Otemae Park West
1	4.5 km	○	○		Tadera-3 Intersection
2	9.6 km	○	○		Okishio-minami Community Plant Center
3	12.7 km	○	○		Okishio Castle Ruins
4	16.4 km	○	○		Shiota Community Center
5	20.5 km	○	○	Salt tablets, Kit Kats, bananas	Okishio Junior High School, South
6	23.5 km	○	○	Salt tablets, Kit Kats, mandarin oranges	7-Eleven, Yumesakicho Okimoto store
7	27.5 km	○	○		Sosa Elementary School
8	29.8 km	○	○	Bananas, chocolate bread	Kawanishidai Dai-ichi Park
9	33.8 km	○	○		Yumesakidai Dai-ni Park
10	36.6 km	○	○	Salt tablets, Kit Kats, mandarin oranges	Mitachi Park
11	38.2 km	○	○	Salt tablets, Kit Kats	Yasumuro Elementary School
12	40.1 km	○	○		Kinoshita Hospital



Other Important Information

Participation Terms and Conditions

- Runners' personal data, including name, age, gender, place of residence, recordings, and images, may be broadcasted, published, or used in media such as television, newspapers, magazines, the Internet, pamphlets, etc.
- By wearing costumes that are against public order or standards, or any other means, runners must not cause nuisance or discomfort to other runners. Please respect other runners and run responsibly.
- Entry fees will not be refunded in the event that the runner does not participate in the race.
- Entry and processing fees will not be refunded in the case of cancellation of the event due to reasons beyond the organizers' control.
- Dangerous items (poisonous substances, explosives, blades, etc.) and drones are strictly prohibited on Himeji Castle grounds, the race course, and surrounding areas.
- Please inform nearby event staff immediately upon discovering any suspicious items or persons.
- If you discover a suspicious item, DO NOT touch the item.
- Smoking is prohibited on Otemae Street, at Himeji Castle, and at Himeji Station North Square. A fine of ¥1,000 will be imposed on anyone found smoking in these areas (with the exception of locations where ashtrays have been provided).

Health Check

- Please assess your physical condition using the health checklist on the back of your athlete bib voucher.
- Having received your athlete bib voucher, be sure to fill in your emergency contact details, etc. on the back of the athlete bib.**

February 22 weather data from the previous five years

Time	2021			2022			2023			2024			2025		
	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Weather												
9:00 a.m.	11.1	74	Sunny	2.7	61	Sunny	3.6	63	Cloudy	7.7	85	Rainy	2.7	62	Sunny
12:00 p.m.	19.3	45	Sunny	7.2	36	Cloudy	6.9	46	Sunny	9.3	69	Cloudy	7.2	33	Sunny

(Japan Meteorological Agency)



World Heritage Himeji Castle Marathon Festival

Time Place

February 21: 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., February 22: 9:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. (times may be subject to change)
Otemae Park (featuring sponsors' booths, etc.)





Information Regarding the Event

Final Decision Regarding Holding the Event

In the event of circumstances such as severe weather or disaster, a final decision will be made according to the following schedule.

Announcement date/time: 5:00 a.m. on Sunday, February 22, 2026

*Depending on the circumstances, an announcement may be made in advance.

Announcement method: 2026 World Heritage Himeji Castle Marathon Official Website

<http://www.himeji-marathon.jp/>

Himeji Castle Marathon



Other Important Information

Course-Side Spectators (See page 3)

Sakuramon Bridge and Otemon Gate will be closed. During the marathon, please go through Himeji City Zoo located to the east of Himeji Castle. As it is a detour, be aware that it will take longer than usual to get around the area.

From 11:00 a.m., it will not be possible to enter the zoo via the east entrance. After 11:00 a.m., please be aware that you will need to use the north entrance or Kisai-mon Gate, which are accessible via the pathway on the east side of the zoo. (See page 3)

Visitors are forbidden at all times from bringing bicycles and pets into the zoo grounds, and are requested to access the course via Kisai-mon Gate.

Runner Position Tracking

*Site will be active on Saturday, February 21.

This service makes it possible to search for runners by name or athlete bib number via a smartphone, tablet, or PC, and to view their times every 5 km, as well as their halfway point and finishing times.

*These are estimated times for reference only.

- Ouen Navi (Marathon only/from February 21st)
PC/smartphone: <https://v2.ouennavi.jp/teaser/?eid=000000000380613>



Ouen Navi

- *Icons will not appear until the runner passes the 5 km point.

- Online Certificate of Completion search page (Marathon only/from February 22nd)
PC/smartphone: <https://r.one.runnet.jp/results/380613>

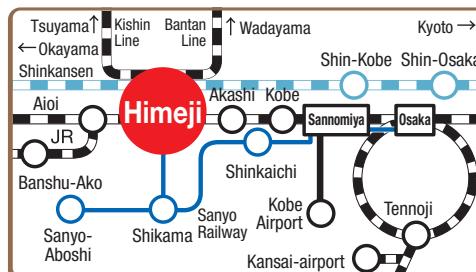


Online Certificate of Completion

Let's Use Public Transportation

Use Public Transportation to Access the Venue!

Himeji City is expected to experience large-scale traffic congestion during the day of the race. Runners are encouraged to use public transportation when coming to and leaving the event. (Temporary bicycle parking areas will be provided on race day.)



Inquiries

Regarding the Event

World Heritage Himeji Castle Marathon Runner Call Center

JTB Corp. JTB Sports Station

E-mail: jtbss@jtb.com TEL: +81-50-1732-4461

Hours of operation: Weekdays 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. *Excl. Sat, Sun, and Public Hols

X (formerly Twitter) @himeji_marathon Instagram @himeji_marathon

Please follow our official Twitter account, where we will post information about the event.

Follow Our Official Event Social Media