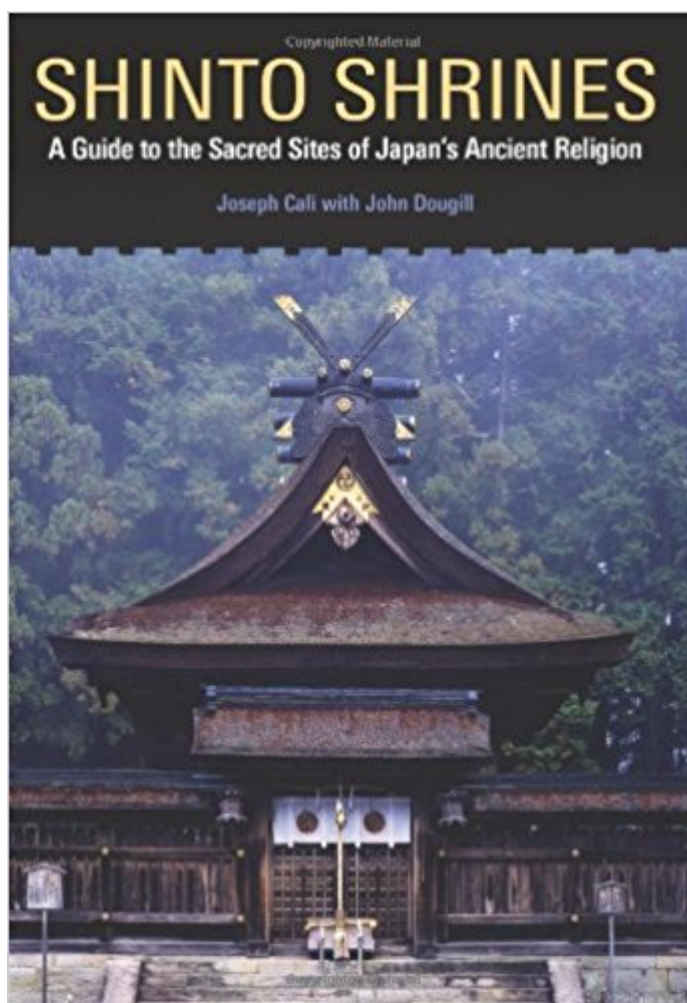


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Shinto Shrines: A Guide To The Sacred Sites Of Japan's Ancient Religion



Synopsis

In recent years, there has been a significant surge in interest in spiritual matters, including a noticeable move toward Eastern religions such as Shintoism. Until now, however, there has been no resource in English providing extensive information about Shinto shrines for the many Westerners who travel to Japan to visit these sites. With over 100 color photos, fifty black-and-white detailed illustrations, and maps, this handy guidebook showcases sixty-six major Shinto shrines, many of which are World Heritage Sites or National Treasures. In their opening section, the authors introduce both basic and fascinating aspects of this ancient religion, which remains intricately woven into the very fabric of Japanese culture. They discuss the history of Shintoism and its fundamental tenets; its relationship to Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and other Eastern belief systems; customs and rites; and types of festivals. The Guide portion of the book is organized by region of the country. For each shrine, there is a comprehensive entry highlighting important spiritual features, physical features of the structure itself (architecture, design, and art), associated festivals, and enshrined gods. The authors also note the prayers offered, and the best times for travelers to visit. The comprehensive histories of each shrine, taken as a whole, provides a comprehensive look at Shinto and its connection to such aspects of Japanese culture as martial arts, samurai, pirates and poetry. An excellent jumping off point on a tour of Japan and its culture.

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Customer Reviews

A native New Yorker, Joseph Cali has lived in Japan for over 30 years. He has written several

books, including *Create Your Own Japanese Garden*, published by Kodansha America and DeVecchi. John Dougill is a professor of cultural studies at Ryukoku University in Kyoto. He is the author of *Kyoto: A Cultural History* (2006) and an associate editor of the journal *Japanese Religions*. He spent his most recent sabbatical studying the roots of Shintoism, and serves on a committee looking to build a Shinto shrine in the United Kingdom.⁵

The authors' enthusiasm is infectious and the depth of their knowledge, and obvious love and respect for the subject, is evident on every page. Thoroughly researched, well written and cleverly illustrated, the book should be a must-read for anyone wishing to delve into this most fascinating aspect of Japanese culture. (Acumen: The Magazine of the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan) coupled with the excellent introduction to Shinto (with some really helpful illustrations) at the beginning, means that *Shinto Shrines* transcends being a mere travel guide and is in fact a solid resource for more serious students of the Shinto religion and its shrines. Friendly, detailed and clearly written with a lot of love, *Shinto Shrines* is a reference book for a new generation of Japanologists and other enthusiasts of Japan and Shinto – those who are not content with simple armchair research, and want to go out there and experience Shinto for themselves. (Green Shinto) Booksellers would not be wrong for putting *Shinto Shrines* in their "Travel" section. It looks and feels very much like a Lonely Planet-style guidebook – one that covers, in considerable detail, 57 prominent jinja (shrines) located all over Japan. Like a Lonely Planet book, *Shinto Shrines* is packed with full-colour photographs and the entries for each shrine all feature a table of useful information. What makes *Shinto Shrines* stand out from Lonely Planet, and in fact many other books on Shinto, is the attention given to details about the shrines – there's information here that you just won't find elsewhere . . . *Shinto Shrines* transcends being a mere travel guide and is in fact a solid resource for more serious students of the Shinto religion and its shrines. Friendly, detailed and clearly written with a lot of love, *Shinto Shrines* is a reference book for a new generation of Japanologists and other enthusiasts of Japan and Shinto. (Pagan, Shinto & Spiritual Book Reviews)

This is not a coffee table book to be casually perused, but more suited to those interested in learning about the Shinto shrines of Japan. It opens with an excellent short introduction to Shinto and its practices. It only covers 57 of the 80,000 plus shrines, but these are among the most famous and popular. It contains a wealth of information about each shrine's location, history, architecture, spiritual features, and best times to visit.

As a frequent traveler to Japan I found the information in the book useful in my desire to visit many of the shrines mentioned. I highly recommend the book for a good basic understanding of Shinto and the mythology of ancient Japan.

This is a very informative book for anyone visiting and understanding specific shrines in Japan.

This is the best guide book to learn about Japanese Shrines. It's not a ordinary travel guide book! This small book is nicely organized and contains a lot of useful and educational information. If you are interested in Japanese Shrines, this book tells us what it is all about. Highly recommended!

I know this book is currently in limbo, but I'm puttin' it out there for the universe to pick up on. I REALLY want this!! A lot! I go to Japan annually and my favorite thing to do is shrine crawl. Having a guide would be beyond fantastic!! Please, universe, get this into my hands!! I'll be your BFF. ^__^

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