

Himeji Castle's Dual-Pricing Gamble Pays Off, For Now

世界遺産として知られる姫路城では、最近、多くの観光客が訪れる中で、入場料のあり方に変化の兆しが見られるようです。オーバーツーリズムが話題になる中で、訪れる人の条件によって料金を変える仕組みにも関心が集まっています。観光地を守りながら、多くの人に開かれた場所であり続けるには、どのような工夫が必要なのでしょう。



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

At Himeji Castle, a UNESCO World Heritage site in Hyogo Prefecture, visitors fell by just under 20% in the first month after [admission](#) fees were raised, compared with the same month a year earlier.

Even so, ticket [revenue](#) is expected to double.

Since March, Himeji Castle has adopted a dual pricing system. Admission for city [residents](#) aged 18 and over has been kept at ¥1,000 (about \$6), while the fee for non-residents was raised to ¥2,500 (about \$16).

Visitors under 18, meanwhile, are admitted free regardless of where they live, in a bid to give more young people a chance to connect with the castle.

Continued on next page.

Source: Himeji Castle's Dual-Pricing Gamble Pays Off, For Now

Japan Forward

1. Article

One month after the change took effect, visitors were split on the new policy. A woman in her 30s visiting from Kakogawa in Hyogo Prefecture said she "had not known about the price hike and felt ¥2,500 was too expensive."

A group of Indian tourists also voiced dissatisfaction, saying they would have preferred a lower price.

Others were more understanding. A German woman in her 60s said she understood that [preserving](#) cultural heritage costs money. She noted that "her hometown also has a World Heritage site, and that a dual pricing system there might make sense as well."

Himeji City officials say the drop in admissions was "within expectations." They also revealed that other [municipalities](#) grappling with overtourism have been making a steady stream of inquiries and study visits to their city.

Himeji's new pricing system is likely to draw wider attention as an early test case for so-called "dual pricing," which both public and private sectors in Japan are now exploring as a response to overtourism and the weak yen.

So how did the first month actually go? According to Himeji City, the preliminary number of paid visitors in March stood at around 140,000, down about 17% from the same month in 2025.

Asked for his assessment, Mayor Hideyasu Kiyomoto stressed that the "decline was expected and that there had been no major confusion."

He further explained that the number of Chinese tourists has been falling across Japan as a whole, saying that "it is difficult to determine whether the price increase and dual pricing were directly responsible [for the decline]."

What stands out most, though, is the impact on revenue. In March, total ticket income reached about ¥270 million (\$1.7 million), double the roughly ¥130 million (\$820,000) recorded in the same month a year earlier.

The city estimated in fiscal year 2025 that Himeji Castle would require ¥28 billion (\$176 million) over the next decade for upkeep, maintenance, and preservation repairs. The additional ticket revenue is set to help cover those costs.

Source: Himeji Castle's Dual-Pricing Gamble Pays Off, For Now

1. Article

So far, Himeji Castle's dual pricing system appears to be off to a strong start. "Dual pricing is a major issue for municipalities managing similar historic assets," Mayor Kiyomoto said, adding that "Himeji has received a large number of inquiries and study visits from other cities."

Chieko Ikeda, an associate professor at the Osaka Metropolitan University Graduate School and an expert on tourism issues, viewed the initiative positively but stressed the importance of explaining the dual pricing more clearly.

"It's necessary to communicate overseas that the new fees are meant to ensure the castle's long-term sustainability," she said.

The central government is also moving in a similar direction. In its 5th Tourism Nation Promotion Basic Plan, approved by the Cabinet in March, the government included a proposal to draft guidelines to make it easier for public facilities to adopt dual pricing.

The aim is not only to address tourism-related problems such as overcrowding and poor manners, but also to secure the funds needed to maintain tourist assets through the extra revenue such pricing can generate.

"The government needs to take the lead in crafting a broader vision from the standpoint of sustainable tourism management," Ikeda added.

2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. admission 入場

Hundreds of visitors waited in line for **admission** to the new amusement park.

2. revenue 収益

Online sales brought in more **revenue** this year for the clothing company.

3. resident 居住者

Each **resident** received a notice from the city about the water shutoff.

4. preserve 保存する

The university library staff works hard to **preserve** old maps.

5. municipality 自治体

The **municipality** repaired the damaged bridge quickly after the earthquake.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. How did visitor numbers change in the first month after the new pricing began?
2. How much in ticket income did the castle earn in March?
3. What kinds of costs will the extra ticket revenue help cover?
4. Do you think dual pricing is a fair way to protect famous tourist sites?
5. How should cities explain higher tourist fees to foreign visitors?

4. 世界遺産・姫路城「二重価格」作戦の勝算 市外2500円で収入倍増、入城者数は2割減

世界遺産・姫路城（兵庫県姫路市）の入城料値上げ後の1カ月間の入城者数が前年同期比で2割弱減少した一方、料金収入は倍増する見込みとなった。姫路市は入城者減少を「想定内」とした上で、オーバーツーリズム（観光公害）に直面する他都市から視察や問い合わせが相次いでいると明かす。観光公害対策や円安を背景に官民で導入が模索されている「二重価格」を巡る先例として注目を集めそうだ。

姫路城では3月から、18歳以上の市民料金を千円のまま据え置き、市民以外を2500円に引き上げる二重価格が導入された。18歳未満は、城に親しむ機会の増加を目的に市民かどうかを問わず無料とした。

導入から1カ月、城を訪れた人に賛否を尋ねた。兵庫県加古川市から訪れた30代女性は「値上げを知らなかったが、2500円は高い」。インド人グループの観光客は「もっと安い方がいい」と不満を漏らした。一方、ドイツから来た60代女性は「文化財の維持にお金がかかるのは理解できる。自分が住む街にも世界遺産はあるが、二重価格は取り入れたらいい」と理解を示した。

導入初月の3月の実績はどうだったのか。姫路市によると、有料の入城者数（速報値）は約14万人で前年同月比で約17%減った。見解を問われた清元秀泰市長は「（減少は）想定内。大きな混乱はなかった」と強調。国内全体で中国人観光客が減少している現状に触れ「値上げや二重価格が影響したかどうかの判断は難しい」と述べた。

注目に値するのが収入への影響だ。3月の料金収入の総額は約2億7000万円に達し、前年同月（約1億3千万円）から倍増した。市は昨年度、城の維持管理や保存修理などに「10年間で280億円が必要」と試算。増収分はこうした費用に充てる方針だ。

手応えもある。清元市長は「同じような歴史遺産を抱える自治体にとっては（二重価格は）大きな課題。他都市からの視察や問い合わせも多い」と話した。

次頁に続く

出典：世界遺産・姫路城「二重価格」作戦の勝算 市外2500円で収入倍増、入城者数は2割減
[Japan Forward](#)

4. 世界遺産・姫路城「二重価格」作戦の勝算 市外2500円で収入倍増、入城者数は2割減

上々の滑り出しとなった姫路城の二重価格。観光問題に詳しい大阪公立大大学院の池田千恵子准教授は取り組みを評価する一方、二重価格の必要性をより分かりやすく明示する重要性にも言及。

「持続可能な姫路城の実現のための設定だということを特に海外に向けて伝えることが必要だ」と述べた。

政府は3月に閣議決定した第5次観光立国推進基本計画で、二重価格を公的施設で導入しやすくする指針作りの検討を盛り込んだ。混雑やマナー違反といった観光公害対策のほか観光資源の維持に必要な財源を、二重価格設定による増収で賄う狙いがある。池田氏は「持続可能な観光地経営の視点から、国が主導してビジョンを作ることが求められる」と話した。