Shinto
Shinto at a Glance

Shinto or “the way of kami” is an almost strictly Japanese religion. The essence of Shinto is the devotion to invisible spiritual beings and powers called kami (神), to shrines, and other traditions.

Shinto is not a way of explaining the world. What matters are the rituals that enable human beings to communicate with kami.
Kami is not a God or gods. They are spirits that are concerned with human beings. They appreciate our interest in them and want us to be happy. If they are treated properly they will intervene in our lives to bring benefits such as good health, business success, and good exam results.
History of Shinto

Shinto is the indigenous faith of the Japanese people and as old as the nation itself. Before Buddhism arrived in the 6th century, there was no single religion, but many different local cults. Buddhism began to expand rapidly, and the idea was put forward that humans should follow the will of the ‘gods’ in political life. The word for government and religion soon became one. It wasn’t until more than 1000 years that Buddhist influences were filtered out and a shift toward Shinto was made.
Divinity of the Emperor

Many cultures have attributed divinity to their rulers. The rulers of ancient Egypt and Rome were treated as gods, and medieval kings. Westerners often misunderstand the Japanese concept of the Emperor’s divinity. They never saw the Emperor as a god in the sense of a supreme being. It was accepted that the Emperor was descended from the kami and was in contact with them and inspired by them.

When the Emperor gave up his divinity on the orders of the US following World War 2, he in fact gave up nothing that he ever had, but simply restated an earlier belief of the Imperial family.

Heisei/Reiwa
The end of State Shinto

Shinto was the state religion of Japan from the Meiji Period in 1868 till 1945.

Shinto was dismantled as the state religion of Japan after the Second World War by 3 key documents:

- The Directive for the Disestablishment of State Shinto (1945)
- The Imperial Rescript Renouncing Divinity (1946)
- The post-war Constitution
Shinto under Imperialism

Although Shinto is a heavily nationalistic religion, due to the strong imperialistic rule of Japan over a large amount of east Asia it also spread to other colonized countries. The biggest example of this is the ‘integration’ of shinto into Korean society. Under imperial rule, attendance to Shinto shrines was a requirement for school students. After the withdrawal of military presence in the region post-WW2, many Shinto shrines were burnt down and the predominant religion of the area returned to Christianity. Though there is still a presence of the religion in the area.
Festivals (sacred times)

Oshogatsu (New Year)
Seijin Shiki (Adults' Day)
Haru Matsuri (Spring festivals)
Aki Matsuri (Autumn festivals)
Shinto Shrine
Fushimi Inari Shrine - Kyoto
Although religion in general isn’t very prevalent in the region today, those who do practice a faith are mostly either Shinto or Buddhist. While there is also a significant Christian population.
The main reason for the incredibly low diffusal of Shinto is due to the low diversity of ethnicity of Japan. It boasts one of the highest homogeneity rates among developed countries.
-https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2056.html
-https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/shinto/